

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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**TO:** Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: Mariners Cove; First Pre-Application Review**  
(For Design Review Board consideration June 8, 2020)

## Project Summary

### Project Proponents

City of Vallejo (Property Owner) and Callahan Property Developer, CPC (Developer)

### Project Representatives

Afshan Hamid and Shannon Eckmeyer (City of Vallejo); Joe Callahan (CPC); Steve Lichliter (RJA Engineers); and Rusty Case (Gates & Associates).

### Project Location (Exhibits 2 - 3)

Mariners Cove is located within the City of Vallejo's Northern Waterfront, a 33.4-acre area owned by the City. The Northern Waterfront area is bounded by the Napa River, Mare Island Causeway, and Mare Island Way.

## Project Site

### Existing Conditions (Exhibits 4-5)

The focus of this report and the Board's review is an approximately 27-acre project site along the Northern Waterfront. Neighboring land uses include the open space and River Park to the north; developed residential neighborhoods to the south and east (including a neighborhood corridor and a food mart to the east); and Mare Island Straight to the west.

The project site is bisected by Harbor Way. Northeast of Harbor Way, the site is largely undeveloped and includes seasonal wetland areas. Along the Bay, southwest of Harbor Way, the project site consists of an approximately 10- to 15-foot wide Bay Trail, the 1.1-acre Dolores Huerta Park, other grassy lawn areas, several parking lots, and facilities associated with the Vallejo Municipal Marina. The promenade from the Harbor Master building north to Mare Island Causeway is framed by mature shade trees. Also south of Harbor Way Road, but outside the project area, are Vallejo Boatworks, the Zio Fraedos and Sardine Can restaurants, and surface parking lots for these businesses.



The Commission's *San Francisco Bay Plan* ("Bay Plan") identifies the shoreline and Dolores Huerta Park along the project site as a Waterfront Park, Beach Priority Use Area. There are several existing BCDC permits (M1971-050; 76-50; 9-82; 6-84 and 1-86) that have required public access in the project area, totaling 231,924 square feet. The required public access includes an 1,100-foot-long Promenade (the Bay Trail), at least 3 benches and 2 trash cans, a courtyard with seating and planting, a concrete aggregate plaza, at least 4 public access signs, and lighting and landscaping for all public access areas (Exhibit 5).

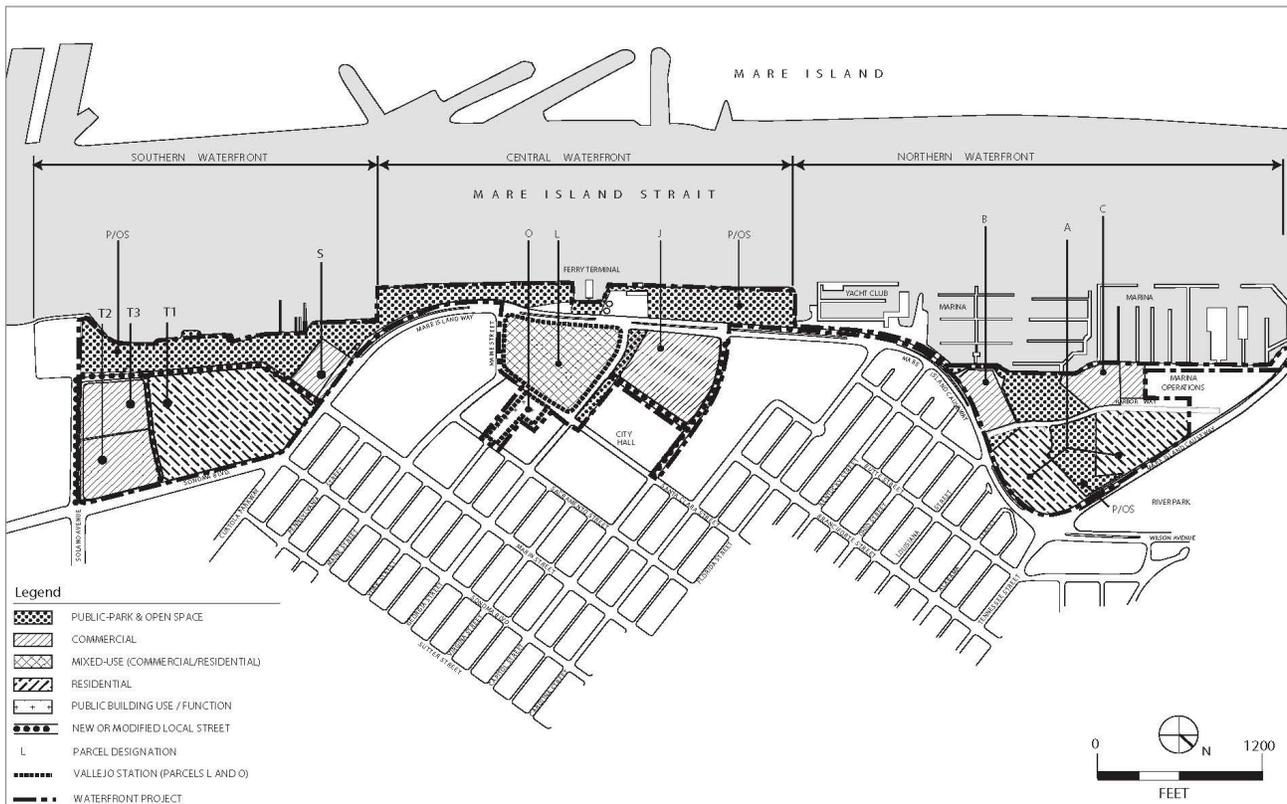


An aerial image showing the Waterfront Beach/Park Priority Use designation in green, and the required public access paths in purple.

According to the project proponents, approximately 90 to 100 people frequent the site each day. Dolores Huerta Park is used mainly as a passive recreation lawn area. The existing recreational marinas would remain in place and include a kayak rental facility. The City Marina includes 40 berths for liveaboard boats, or 5 percent of the total berths. In addition, there is some informal fishing activity along the waterfront, and two boat haul outs at the northern end of the marina.

### **Social and Environmental Context**

The Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan and Design Guidelines was originally published in 2007 and amended in 2013. The Master Plan envisioned three districts along the waterfront with a series of waterfront open spaces as a unifying connector between the northern, central, and southern waterfront areas. The Master Plan and Design Guidelines established the goals and design standards for the land uses, development density, two public parks, and open space programs along the waterfront, including the consideration of boat-related festivals and "periodic use during the Annual Jazz Festival," along the Northern waterfront.



Land use diagram from the Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan, March 2007.

The Commission’s community vulnerability index ranks this larger area (census block group) within the moderate social vulnerability category. For this census block group, the moderate level of social vulnerability was assigned because more than 70% of the population fit within the following categories: Renters, Low income, Without a Vehicle, and Severely housing cost burdened. Approximately 63% of the residents are people of color.

### Proposed Project

The proposed 27-acre Mariner’s Cove residential-focused mixed-use development would include: 175-single family residences, two public parks (the 3.9-acre Promenade Park and 4.0-acre Wetland Park), a waterfront trail/promenade (1 acre), three parking lots (3.1 acres), and a commercial lots (12.9 acres) with three single-story buildings (1.4 acres). Approximately 5.55 acres (241,898 square feet) of the 27-acre project site would be located within the Commission’s 100-foot shoreline band (Exhibits 4 - 8).

#### Promenade Park (Exhibits 10-24)

The 3.9-acre Promenade Park would be located adjacent to the existing marina and Harbor Master Building. Promenade Park would be geared towards group gatherings and active uses. Auto access to the Park would be provided via Harbor Way, and the future parking areas are sized to accommodate shared use by park users and the planned retail development. Existing public restrooms are located at both the north and south ends of the park. The park would have various types of seating including

picnic tables, bench seating and low seat walls, as well as waste and recycling receptacles and bike racks dispersed throughout. Trees would be positioned to provide shelter from the wind and shade to the picnic and play areas throughout the park. Adjacent to the southeastern edge of the park, a bar and/or restaurant, a retail use, and a second joint parking area would be developed.

Being a predominately green park, the central feature would be an approximately 35,000-square-foot multi-use lawn, shaped and sized to accommodate informal group sports and other recreational activities. A 10-foot-wide multi-use pathway would be constructed along the perimeter of the park to accommodate pedestrian and maintenance circulation, and link to the Park's picnic areas, the two park entry points, and the existing Promenade. The picnic areas located around the Park's perimeter, would include tables and waste bins to accommodate groups of various sizes. Picnic areas would be accessible from parking areas.

Two play areas would be located on the southern edge of the Park, and both are intended for children of all ages and abilities. The eastern play area would be more traditional in design, equipped with climbing structures, slides, and maritime-themed elements. The western play area would be a nature play zone consisting of elements to encourage more imaginative play, including elements made to look like real rocks, oversized birds' nests, and hollow logs.

Gardens would be placed on the eastern edge of the Park adjacent to Harbor Way, allowing for opportunities to learn about the low-growing native and drought-tolerant plants. The Park would also be equipped with a series of plazas and terraces. The plaza towards the northern edge of the Park would include decomposed granite surfacing and rows of trees. The plaza toward the southern waterfront edge would include two semi-circular shade elements and seat walls for informal gathering or small events. The upper Promenade zone would provide for additional gathering space, encouraging lower profile events such as farmers' markets or art shows to be staged. Lastly, the Park would include a fenced dog park area, west of the Harbor Master building along the waterfront, with separate spaces for small dogs and larger dogs, as well as benches, trash and waste stations, and lighting. The dog play area would maintain the bifurcated walkway along the waterfront.

### **Vallejo Shoreline – Promenade Path (Exhibits 13 - 15)**

The existing Shoreline path runs half a mile from Mare Island Way north to the Mare Island Causeway passing a variety of marina and working waterfront maritime uses. The project proponents are not proposing to widen or raise the grade of the existing pathway, but add improvements such as lighting, railings, and low-maintenance plantings. A multi-purpose, ADA-compliant switchback trail connection would be created to connect the Mare Island Causeway with the waterfront promenade path and River Park. Additional improvements are proposed to the lower path that passes under the causeway.

### **Wetland Park (Exhibits 25-28)**

The 4.0-acre Wetland Park would be located east of Harbor Way, and would include 1.5-1.7 acres of vegetated swales; open meadows for passive and informal use; interpretive elements; benches and lighting; a vegetation buffer to the surrounding development; a 10-foot-wide loop pathway; and an at-grade connection to Promenade Park across Harbor Way. The tidal pond in the center of the Park

would have a permanent pool, at elevation +3.8 feet NAVD88, and would be controlled by two underground outlet pipes, allowing the pond to rise with the tides to elevations slightly below the Napa River ( between +5.5 NAVD88 and mean higher high water at +6.0 NAVD88).

A 2006 Settlement Agreement and the approved Planned Development Master Plan established the design of the Wetland Park with the input of the Vallejo Waterfront Coalition (VWC), a community-based interest group. The agreements require the construction of a tidally-influenced Wetland Park as part of the proposed project. The overall design of the park was shared with the VWC for input and feedback and was revised accordingly.

*Specific design elements of the Wetland Park include:*

Vegetated swales would range from 10 to 40 feet wide feet, including the adjacent vegetated buffer areas. The presence of the dense bulrush buffer would act as a deterrent to pedestrian encroachment into the water. Clusters of evergreen trees, shrubs, and grasses along the park edge would separate the public open space from the single-family residences.

A series of open space areas would connect the residences to the Park, providing space for individuals and groups to relax and enjoy the natural surroundings. There are no fences proposed throughout the Park. Informational and interactive signage would showcase the natural processes of the Wetland Park and provide an educational opportunity for visitors. Bench seating, trash receptacles, and post-top lights, would line the 10-foot looped walkway that encircles the Park.

*Maintenance:*

The 2006 Settlement Agreement states that once the Wetland Park is established, it shall be dedicated to and maintained by the City through assessments generated by a Landscape and Lighting Maintenance District, or other similar funding mechanisms outlined in the Development and Disposition Agreement and subject to the City's annual budgetary process. The Settlement Agreement also outlines the success criteria for the Park, which would be evaluated by the City's Design Review Board and City Council, with input from the community.

**Parking Plan (Exhibit 6)**

The project includes approximately 443 public parking stalls along Harbor Way and within the six parking lots west of Harbor Way. The parking stalls would be available to the public as well as employees and patrons of the existing and proposed commercial buildings, and guests of the residential development. Given that each home in the proposed development would be equipped with a two-car garage and the development includes additional public parking along streets A, B and C, residential use of the parking lots west of Harbor Way is anticipated to be minimal. The 18 diagonal parking stalls fronting the Wetland Park would be allow for 3-hour parking during daylight hours, which is a requirement of the Settlement Agreement (Exhibit 6, Parking Area 4A). The existing Dolores Huerta Park would be converted to an 81-space public parking lot.

### **View Corridors (Exhibits 9 and 28)**

The proposed development provides a series of open spaces that provide views from Mare Island Way and Mare Island Causeway to the Wetland Park and down to Promenade Park and the waterfront.

### **Phasing (Exhibit 9)**

The public improvements would be constructed in three phases along with the adjacent development. Harbor Way, Street A, (Lots 1-82) and the Wetland Park would be constructed with Phase 1. Street B (Lots 83-124) and the Promenade Park would be constructed with Phase 2 when a certificate of occupancy is issued for the 115th residential unit. Street C (Lots 125-175) would be constructed with Phase 3. The private improvements would be defined more specifically with Tract Maps and Improvement Plans. It is anticipated that the initial phase of residential units would be constructed in four sub-phases of roughly 20 units per phase. The schedule for development of the commercial parcels is has yet to be determined but would likely occur concurrently with the completion of the Project's Phase 2 and 3 Tract Map public improvements.

### **Community Engagement**

Two community outreach meetings were conducted for the Project on December 13, 2018 and January 16, 2019. These community outreach meetings were held as part of the Settlement Agreement. City of Vallejo Staff provided an overview of the Project and the CPC team presented the elevations, perspectives, and site plans of the architecture. Issues were raised regarding soil stabilization, sea level rise, height of the project, and guest parking. The developer's team provided responses to the design concerns at the Vallejo DRB Study Session on September 12, 2019. The team confirmed: necessary surcharging would be completed, interim sea level rise improvements to an elevation of +13 feet NAVD88 would be included in the project, building heights would remain within the limits established by the Settlement Agreement, and the project would include an overall parking plan to accommodate site use. The concerns outside of architecture and landscape would be discussed at the Vallejo Planning Commission in the third quarter of 2020.

The applicant's team and City of Vallejo have met with the Vallejo Waterfront Coalition (VWC) throughout the Project since adoption of the Settlement Agreement in 2006. CPC's team has solicited feedback on the Project design, Wetland Park, Promenade Park, and as a result of input have made modifications to the site plan and park design.

### **Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level**

For site planning purposes, the project proponents have used the following sea level rise estimate: 3.5 feet by 2070, which is consistent with the medium-to-high risk aversion category in the State of California's 2018 Sea Level Rise Guidance document, and assumes the high emissions scenario. The proponents are currently working on Climate Adaptation Plan with an analysis of existing sites. The development is expected to be in use beyond the end of the century, typical of residential developments.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) the current 100-year-flood elevation for the project site is +10 feet NAVD88. The existing site elevations along this area of the shoreline are at approximately +10 feet NAVD88.

1. **Promenade Park.** The existing promenade would remain at +10 feet NAVD88, with the adjacent seat wall and park at +12 feet NAVD88. Based on projections in the State Guidance, the lower walkway could flood with 3 inches of water during a 10-year storm at 2050. However, the lower walkway is designed with concrete and would likely be resilient. During a 100-year storm at 2050, the lower promenade walkway could experience approximately 23 inches of flooding. The higher park elevations would not experience tidal flooding impacts at mid-century. By 2070, the lower walkway could experience flooding on a monthly basis including 10 inches of flood water at king tides. The park could experience minor flooding in 2070 with a 25-year storm event. At 2100, with a projected 6.9 feet of sea level rise, the lower promenade would be under water continuously except at the lowest monthly tides. The park would experience flooding daily at mean high water levels.
2. **Wetland Park.** The path around the wetland park is proposed to be at a minimum of +13.5 feet NAVD88. The water level in the wetlands would slowly rise with sea levels encroaching on the transition zone edge planting. The pathway could experience flooding at king tides at the end of the century and up to 34 inches of flooding with a 100-year storm at the end of the century.
3. **Buildings.** Residential buildings are proposed to be at a minimum of +15 feet NAVD88, which could experience minor flooding at the end of century with a 10-year storm event, and up to 23 inches of flooding with a 100-year storm.

According to the project proponents, existing improvements such as the Promenade walkway (Bay Trail) and existing parking lots would remain at their current elevations as part of this project. However, the City is currently beginning preparation of a City-wide Climate Adaptation study which would consider long term designs, costs, and funding of sea level rise along its entire frontage of the Napa River. That study would consider the Bay Trail and the public parks in the Northern Waterfront (as well as other areas of the City) and it would establish a plan for ongoing assessment to determine if and when further flood protection is warranted.

While the project proponents have not yet articulated a proposal for the project site’s long-term adaptation options, considerations for sea level rise within the life of the project, including an adaptation plan that addresses how and when inundated areas of the project site would be adapted, will be required in the BCDC permitting process.

### **Project Approvals and Proposed Construction Phasing Plan (Exhibit 9)**

CPC has submitted applications to the City of Vallejo for a phased Vesting Tentative Map (VTM) and a Unit Plan for the project. The City will hold its own Design Review Board and Planning Commission hearing on these applications after BCDC’s DRB meeting. Parcels A and B (Wetland Park), along with the residential areas are to be acquired by CPC from the City. CPC’s objective is to complete receipt of its discretionary entitlements (VTM, Unit Plan approvals) by fall 2020 and commence mass grading activities to enable the development of the project as proposed. After the Wetland Park is improved Parcels A and B would be dedicated back to the City. The first phase of residential development

(southeast of the proposed Wetland Park) could commence as soon as the existing surcharge stockpile of soil currently located there is moved to the Phase 2 area. The soil under Phase 1 has been surcharged and is now stabilized. Development timing of the residential Phases 2 and 3 (west and northwest of the Wetland Park) will be dependent on completion of the soil stabilization in those areas and market conditions.

Public trust lands (Exhibit 8) exist within the project site, portions of which lie within the 100-ft shoreline band. The final package would include a copy of the recorded Parcel Map showing the four existing parcels in the Northern Waterfront, with an overlay of the State Lands encumbrance (the public trust). As illustrated on the Parcel Map, Parcels 2 and 3 are free of the trust due to an earlier exchange. As Parcel 1 and Parcel 4 of the project site includes land that is subject to the Public Trust, the project proponents plan to go negotiate a land exchange with State Lands Commission for Parcel 1 and part of Parcel 4.

### Applicable Policies, Findings, and Design Guidelines

#### San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) Public Access policies state, in part, that “...maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline...” Further, these policies state, in part: “[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare;” and that “... improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, should provide barrier free access for persons with disabilities, for people of all income levels, and for people of all cultures to the maximum feasible extent, should include an ongoing maintenance program, and should be identified with appropriate signs – including using appropriate languages or culturally-relevant icon-based signage.”<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the policies provide that “[p]ublic access should be sited, designed, managed, and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding,” and that access should be designed consistent with the physical and natural environment.

The **Bay Plan Map No. 2**, which designates the shoreline at the project site as a Waterfront Park, Beach Priority Use Area. The Map includes a Commission Suggestion to “[p]rovide continuous public access to the shoreline from Napa Bay to existing Park (River Park). Protect views of strait from hills.”

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<sup>1</sup> Emphasis added to highlight recently amended Bay Plan policies focused on Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

The Bay Plan **Recreation** Policy 1 states, in part: “Diverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities, such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers, should be provided to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population... and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels...waterfront parks should be provided wherever possible.” In regard to **waterfront parks**, Bay Plan Recreation policies state that they should “emphasize hiking, bicycling, riding trails, picnic facilities, swimming, environmental, historical and cultural education and interpretation, viewpoints, beaches, and fishing facilities” and that “[p]ublic parking should be provided in a manner that does not diminish the park-like character of the site.” The following facilities should be encouraged in waterfront parks:

1. To capitalize on the attractiveness of their bayfront location, parks should emphasize hiking, bicycling, riding trails, picnic facilities, swimming, environmental, historical and cultural education and interpretation, viewpoints, beaches, and fishing facilities.
2. Public launching facilities for a variety of boats and other water-oriented recreational craft, such as kayaks, canoes and sailboards, should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.
3. Limited commercial recreation facilities, such as small restaurants, should be permitted within waterfront parks provided they are clearly incidental to the park use, are in keeping with the basic character of the park, and do not obstruct public access to and enjoyment of the Bay. Limited commercial development may be appropriate (at the option of the park agency responsible) in all parks shown on the Plan maps except where there is a specific note to the contrary.
4. Trails that can be used as components of the San Francisco Bay Trail, or links between them should be developed in waterfront parks. San Francisco Bay Trail segments should be located near the shoreline unless that alignment would have significant adverse effects on Bay resources; in this case, an alignment as near to the shore as possible, consistent with Bay resource protection, should be provided.
5. Bus stops, kiosks and other facilities to accommodate public transit should be provided in waterfront parks to the maximum extent feasible. Public parking should be provided in a manner that does not diminish the park-like character of the site. Traffic demand management strategies and alternative transportation systems should be developed where appropriate to minimize the need for large parking lots and to ensure parking for recreation uses is sufficient.

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state, in part, that “all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay” and that “maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas...” These policies also state, in part, that “[s]horeline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay.” The majority of the open space in the proposed project is provided along the shoreline or along view corridors to the shoreline.

On the subject of **Climate Change**, the Public Access policies state that, “[a]ny public access provided as a condition of development should either be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby.” The Bay Plan’s Climate Change policies state, in part, that “[w]herever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged.”

The Bay Plan **Transportation** Policies state that, “[t]ransportation projects on the Bay shoreline and bridges over the Bay or certain waterways should include pedestrian and bicycle paths that will either be a part of the Bay Trail or connect to the Bay Trail with other regional and community trails. Transportation projects should be designed to maintain and enhance visual and physical access to the Bay and along the Bay shoreline.”

The **Public Access Design Guidelines** state that public access should feel public, be designed so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by structures or incompatible uses, and that there should be visual cues that public access is available for the public’s use by using site furnishings, such as benches, trash containers, lighting and signage. The *Public Access Design Guidelines* further state that public access areas should be designed for a wide range of users, should maximize user comfort by designing for weather and day and night use, and that each site’s historical, cultural and natural attributes provide opportunities for creating projects with a “sense of place” and a unique identity. The Bay Plan Public Access policies on these Design Guidelines state “The Design Review Board should encourage diverse public access to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population. Public access should be well distributed around the Bay and designed or improved to accommodate a broad range of activities for people of all races, cultures, ages, income levels, and abilities.”

## Board Questions

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the design proposal.

1. **Does the proposed project provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access that maximizes public use and enjoyment of the area?**
  - a. Would the proposed design for the Promenade Park, Wetland Park, and promenade pathway encourage diverse activities and create a “sense of place,” which is unique, enjoyable, and inviting to the public?
  - b. Do the proposed public access improvements create diverse recreational opportunities for people of all races, cultures, ages, abilities, and income levels?
2. **Are the proposed public access amenities sited and designed to maximize public use?**
  - a. Are the components of the Promenade Park (meadow, plazas, gardens, play area, dog park, path, picnic areas) an appropriate enhancement to the waterfront? Are they distributed and designed to meet and balance the needs of the public? Are there any additional considerations for the promenade to make the waterfront an inviting space for the public to enjoy?
  - b. Will the Wetland Park feel inviting to the public to enjoy?

- c. Are there adequate micro-climate considerations for all users, such as access to wind protection and shade?
  - d. Considering the planned development intensity and the beach/park priority use designation, do the proposed amenities expand the enjoyment of the shoreline experience?
  - e. Are the proposed parking areas suitable for the park and the waterfront?
  - f. Does the Bay Trail design meet user needs in this area?
  - g. What advice do you have for events that may occur at the proposed parks?
3. **Does the arrangement of the various facilities proposed within the Promenade Park, Waterfront Promenade, and Wetlands Park result in the best possible configuration in terms of circulation, views, enjoyment, and safety?**
- a. Does the design of the project provide for adequate circulation throughout the waterfront for a variety of users?
  - b. Does the Board anticipate conflicts or congestion points, and what measures could be taken to avoid or minimize such conflicts?
  - c. Does the proposed design preserve and enhance important views to the Bay?
4. **What advice do you have for designing the public access areas and amenities to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?**