

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: China Basin Park Component of the “Mission Rock” Mixed-Use Development;
Second Post-Permit Issuance Review**
(For Design Review Board consideration June 8, 2020)

Project Summary

Project Proponents

Mission Rock Partners, a Joint Venture between the San Francisco Giants and Tishman Speyer (Project Developer) and the Port of San Francisco (Property Owner).

Project Representatives

Jack Bair, Heather Tazalla, and Julian Pancoast, Mission Rock Partners (Project Developer); Ryan Wassum, Port of San Francisco (Property Owner); John Donnelly and Will DiBernardo, Scape Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architect – Mission Rock Park); Jeff Miller, Miller Company Landscape Architects (Associate Landscape Architect – China Basin Park); Willet Moss and Justin Aff, CMG Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architect – Paseos and Streets); Dilip Trivedi, Moffat & Nichol (Coastal Engineer); Justin Simeon, WRA (Regulatory Guidance).

Project Location (Exhibits 2-3)

China Basin Park is an existing waterfront park, which is planned to be redeveloped and expanded as part of the redevelopment of the Port of San Francisco-owned Seawall Lot 337, in the Mission Bay neighborhood, in the City and County of San Francisco. China Basin Park is currently bound by: Mission Creek to the north; Piers 48 and 50 to the east; Terry Francois Boulevard and a parking lot (“Lot A”) to the south; and Third Street to the west. Pier 48 and Lot A are used for parking and occasional special events. Pier 50 is used for marine industrial activities, including vessel dry docking.

Project Site

Existing Conditions (Exhibits 2 - 3)

The existing China Basin Park consists of a lawn, a multi-use path, a rip-rapped edge, and a “Junior Giants” baseball diamond. The approximately 2-acre park is primarily located within BCDC’s 100-foot shoreline band and was originally constructed as a required public access area pursuant to BCDC Permit No. 1997.010, which authorized the construction of the Giants’ Major League Baseball ballpark.



Social and Environmental Context

China Basin Park is within the China Basin neighborhood of San Francisco, just north of the Mission Bay neighborhood, and south of the South-of-Market (SOMA) and South Beach neighborhoods. Mission Creek was historically an active industrial waterfront, but has more recently been re-developed with higher density residential and mixed-use buildings. The neighborhood includes Oracle Park, several restaurants, and the Caltrain railroad station. The Commission's community vulnerability ranking for the project site is within a census block group that covers the entire Mission Rock development site as well as some of the land north of Mission Creek, and is ranked as having moderate social vulnerability because more than 70% of the population fit within the following categories: Renters, Not U.S. Citizens, Without a vehicle, Limited English proficiency, and Severely housing cost burdened. The group is ranked in the 90th percentile for the Without a vehicle characteristic. Of the approximately, 9,541 people in the area, 66% are renters, 25% are very low income households, 63% are people of color, 42% are foreign born, and 41% are Asian.

Permitted Project (Exhibit 5)

BCDC Permit No. 2017.004.00, originally issued on June 29, 2018, authorized the "Mission Rock" project, a 21-acre mixed-use development with residential, office, commercial, and open space improvements, adding up to 3,525 residents and 4,750 employees to the area.

As part of the project, China Basin Park would be redeveloped and roughly doubled in size (from 2.1 to 4.4 acres). Approximately 3.85 acres of the Park would be reserved for public access and planted areas, and the rest would be utilized for retail, cafes, shoreline protection, and other non-public access areas. The existing park elements would be retained yet redesigned, which include a shoreline promenade, passive lawn, active recreation facilities, picnic facilities, seating, and a Bay overlook at the knuckle wharf. Additional authorized program elements include public plazas, a public dock, planted areas, a public restroom, permanent or temporary public art installations, and public programming and special events.

In addition to the redevelopment of China Basin Park, the Mission Rock project would also include several other major public access areas. A second major park, the 1-acre Mission Rock Square, would be developed several blocks south of China Basin Park. A new approximately 6,700-square-foot public access plaza would be developed on a portion of the Pier 48 ½ marginal wharf. Finally, an approximately 1,180-foot-long segment of Terry Francois Boulevard would be redeveloped as a "shared street" with a separated Bay Trail and various other public access improvements. As mitigation for the closure of the existing public access at China Basin park while the initial phase of Mission Rock is under construction, the project will provide interim access at the Pier 48/50 marginal wharf and an audio tour.

Prior DRB Reviews (Exhibits 5 - 6)

The project was reviewed by the Design Review Board at two meetings prior to the permit issuance on December 5, 2016, and November 6, 2017. Through that review, the Board concluded that the facilities were appropriate, but some members questioned if there would be adequate space for circulation during big events, and whether spaces would be durable enough to withstand influx of visitors from

large gatherings. The Board expressed general support for the types of facilities included, and considered the complexities involved in future sea level rise adaptation of an urban infill site. The revised project was reviewed by the Board, post-permit issuance, on November 18th, 2019. The Board asked the project to return to address several Board questions and comments regarding park amenities, entrance points, circulation, resilience, and adaptation of tidal shelves, programming, and more.

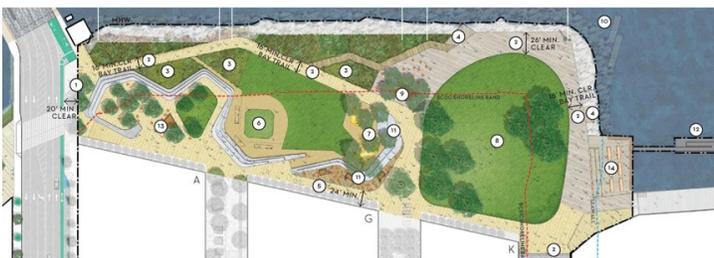
[Design Controls \[link to document\]](#)

The project's Design Controls were addressed at length at the 2019 DRB meeting. The Design Controls guide the specific design of the open spaces, streets, and buildings at Mission Rock, ensuring that the site will be developed in a way that is consistent with the project's vision. There are standards and guidelines for review around circulation, program and use areas, resiliency and sea level rise, and ecology, habitat and management for China Basin Park. There are nearly 300 individual controls listed in the project's compliance checklist.

Proposed Project

Permitted and Proposed Project Comparison (Exhibits 5 – 10)

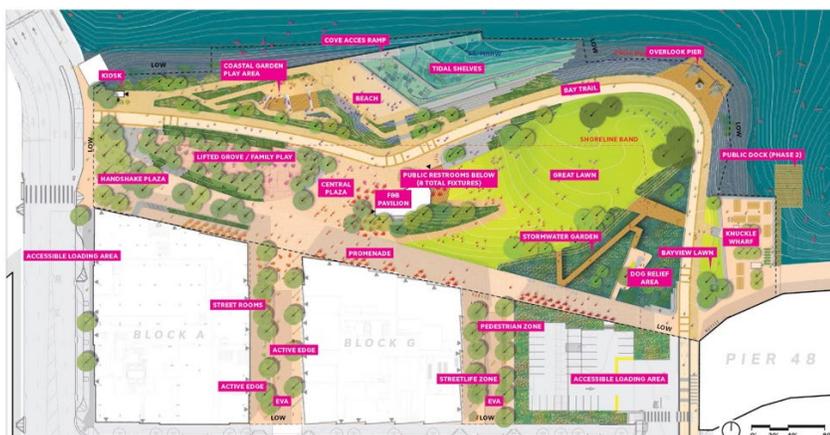
The permitted park project was a preliminary concept design that included the Bay Trail situated prominently along a planted shoreline, a wide promenade along the building frontages, a large flexible use lawn, an entry plaza from third street, a kiosk structure with a bathroom, another flexible field play area, the existing knuckle wharf and a new kayak launch. The revised design introduced additional programs to the park such as the beach, tidal shelves, and a dog play area.



Permitted Conceptual Site Plan of China Basin Park



Site Plan as reviewed by DRB in November 2019



Current Site Plan of China Basin Park

Summary of Design Changes since November 2019 (Exhibits 11 - 70)

Since the November 2019 submission, permittees have worked with BCDC staff to further refine the park design in the following ways:

- The park's entrance at Third Street has been expanded to reduce conflicts at the junction of the Bay Trail and Third Street.
- The beach area has been expanded and connects to the play area.
- The play area has been designed as an active embankment to be an inclusive waterfront space for all ages.
- Seating has been added at the base of the embankment within the play area.
- Accessibility is addressed programmatically throughout the park.
- What were previously shown as kiosk structures adjacent to the Lifted Grove and along the Knuckle Wharf edge are now designated areas for push carts and temporary vendors.
- The Knuckle Wharf design has been revised to meet existing grades at Pier 48 and Terry Francois Boulevard. To mitigate the grade and make the entrance to the park from Terry Francois Boulevard read like a main entrance, a Bay Viewing Lawn has been added with trees that frame the towers of the Bay Bridge.
- Materials and plant palettes have been refined throughout the park.
- The park's resilience strategy has been articulated, using the best available science to meet local, state, and BCDC guidance.

More details have been provided for the paseos, Block K, vehicle circulation, event space, site materiality, public art locations, and views. Several studies have been completed to address Board questions regarding the tidal shelves, the site's overall resilience, and microclimate conditions.

The following new elements are proposed for the redesigned China Basin Park:

1. **Tidal Shelves (Exhibits 41-47) [see Tidal Shelf Memo].** Along the park's northern boundary, tidal shelves would be developed to step down into McCovey Cove and mark the changing tides. Since November, tide pool modules have been dispersed within the intertidal and subtidal zones to create pockets where park visitors can observe marine life. An accessible walkway would also be provided along the top shelf so that all visitors can experience this unique feature.
2. **Beach (Exhibits 36 and 41).** Along the top tidal shelf, a sand shell beach would be constructed. This area is flexible programming space and allows for passive recreation. Over time the beach would become the terminal tidal shelf, showcasing China Basin Park's sea level rise adaptability and the growing effects of sea level rise. Since the previous DRB review, the beach area has been enlarged to accommodate the number of expected users.

3. **Coastal Garden Play Area Embankment (Exhibits 36-40).** The play area was considered in the permit in concept as a family play area. However, in the November plan its location was shifted to the northern edge of the park along the waterfront. This accommodated the landward relocation of the stormwater treatment facility to meet new requirements, but also provided a unique opportunity to connect the play area to the proposed Beach, Tidal Shelves, and shoreline. Consisting of climbable wooden panels and embankments slides, this area invites park visitors of all ages. Since November, the play area has been further developed to show actual play features, materials, fencing, and seating.
4. **Planting in Riprap (Exhibits 27 - 28).** Along the China Basin Park shoreline, pockets of low planting have been integrated into the existing riprap. In addition to softening the park perimeter, these pockets create habitat and would revive coastal ecologies at the water's edge. This low planting would not block views or access.
5. **Dog Relief Area (Exhibit 61-62).** To support pets and their owners, a small enclosed area would be provided to allow dogs to relieve themselves in a controlled environment. The permittees believe this change would benefit park visitors without dogs as well, as it would provide a separate enclosure for dogs to be let off-leash and would manage dog waste to keep other sections of park safe and clean. Since the previous DRB review, the form of the dog relief area has been updated and all entrances to the Dog Relief Area are accessible.

Phasing (Exhibit 4 and 31)

The overall project phasing has changed since permit issuance. Building F was added to Phase 1, and Building K was removed so that the applicants can deliver more housing and create a complete intersection at the Shared Public Way and Exposition Street, which they believe would enhance the feeling of a more completed neighborhood in Phase 1. The Port Commission has approved this phasing change. The Park will still be completed adjacent to Building K, and the Building will be infilled in a later phase. The knuckle wharf has been moved to Phase 2 of the Park along with the kayak dock.

Special Events (Exhibit 12)

The permit allows for regular special events within China Basin Park. Special events would include daily "small" events, covering less than 10,000 square feet and up to 100 "medium to large" events each year, covering no more than 30 percent of the Park's total area. Medium to large events are to be held on no more than four weekend days per month. Most events are to be free and open to the public, however the permit established that a limited number of events each year could require tickets or be held as private (i.e., invitation-only) events. All events are required to stay outside of circulation routes for pedestrian and bicycles, including the Bay Trail, the Promenade, and other areas. Annual reporting and a time-limited authorization of 10 years is required to ensure the events are not creating impediments to the public's use and enjoyment of the Park.

Resilience and Adaptation to Rising Sea Level (Exhibits 33 – 35) [See Risk Assessment Memo].

The permitted concept design for China Basin Park is anticipated to experience coastal flooding in its lifetime as sea levels rise. Therefore, the permit issued by the Commission requires a Sea Level Rise Risk Assessment to be submitted to the Commission every five years to monitor conditions and likelihood of flooding impacts to China Basin Park and the other public access areas required for the project. The permit also requires permittees to develop an adaptation strategy in advance of the time that regular flooding of China Basin Park is anticipated. The permit requires the initiation of Phase 1 adaptation with 8 inches of sea level rise, and the initiation of Phase 2 with 36 inches of sea level rise, at which time the trail and sea wall barriers on the permitted park would likely need to be raised.

The new design of China Basin Park would reconfigure the northern shoreline, thus requiring the project to be re-evaluated for its resiliency and long-term adaptability to flooding. New project elements include the Tidal Shelves, Coastal Scrub Garden, Beach, and Cove Access Walkway, which would sit at a lower elevation than the rest of the park, and mostly below the current 100-year flood elevation (10 ft. NAVD88) to facilitate water access (Exhibit page 29).

Beach and Tidal Shelves

Using the State Guidance for medium-to-high risk sea level rise projections and looking at the 100-year storm in 2050, the tidal shelves and most of the beach area would be anticipated to experience 22 inches of flooding. In the year 2100, the beach would flood almost daily and the tidal shelves would be submerged. The beach and tidal shelves are designed to experience varying degrees of tidal inundation at current water levels. The upper tidal shelf is anticipated to be within the lower intertidal zone within 80-100 years, according to the Shoreline Engineering Assessment conducted by Moffat and Nickel. Future adaptations to maintain the tidal shelves could include extending the tidal shelves into the beachfront. The project team has stated that decisions for the maintenance of these low lying areas would need to be made based on future considerations including cost, public safety, and achieving a balance with other forms of public access. However, the team is confident that the form and structure of the tidal shelves as currently contemplated will continue to provide ecological benefits regardless of whether or not the tidal shelves are below sea level in the future.

Upland Park and Bay Trail

The Bay Trail would be anticipated to experience flooding during a 100-year storm just after 2070, or by a 25-year storm in 2080.

Exhibit 34 shows the areas that are protected to 2100 BFE, as well as those areas that would require further protection through adaptation measures. Exhibit 35 shows proposed adaptation measures including: a future tidal shelf at the beach area; “protective” and “multiple adaptive” measures for northern edge of park, southern edge of tidal shelves, eastern edge of park, and the pier; and the option to raise Bay Trail, perimeter path, and the southwestern corner of park.

Construction Timeline

The public access improvements for the Mission Rock project would be constructed in phases over an anticipated period of 10 years. China Basin Park is anticipated to commence construction as part of the first phase of the project.

Community Engagement

The project developer, Mission Rock Partners, conducted community engagement and provided opportunities for neighbors to view and comment on various aspects of the project, including updates to the China Basin Park designs. The updated park design was presented during a Central Waterfront Advisory Group (CWAG) meeting which is open to the general public. CWAG is a citizen advisory group composed of community leaders representing residents, businesses, nonprofits, and neighborhood organizations from the central and southern waterfront neighborhoods. Mission Rock Partners also invited a small group of leaders representing surrounding neighborhoods to review and comment on park update variations. The project is scheduled to be reviewed by the Port's Mission Rock Design Advisory Committee on June 1, 2020.

The team also presented to individual neighborhood businesses and organized a presentation for China Basin business tenants to review the details of the updated park and overall project. Long-term partners, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, met with the team to consider adjustments to the broader site bike network in light updates to park. The team hosted an open house with breakout stations for each ear of the Park, and received comments including ideas for water access, programming, maintenance, park security, and phase one parking.

These various engagements described are in addition to the half dozen regular monthly resident, advisory, or local business meetings attended by a member of the Mission Rock Partners team in order to provide project updates or be available for project questions or comments. Overall the team has received overwhelming praise for the park's thoughtful design, bold engagement with the waterfront, and commitment to delivering the park in phase one of construction.

Applicable Policies, Findings, and Design Guidelines

The new components of the redesigned Park and those that are found to be inconsistent with what was permitted, will be assessed for their consistency with the policies noted below. The reconfigured areas of the proposed plan that are not new elements will be reviewed for consistency with the permit and the Design Controls.

San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan (SAP)* policies on **Public Access** state that "maximum feasible public access should be provided in conjunction with any development in the area."

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) Public Access policies state in part that access should be designed—using the Commission’s *Public Access Design Guidelines*—“to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline,” be conveniently located near parking and public transit, “permit barrier free access for persons with disabilities to the maximum feasible extent...and include an ongoing maintenance program.”

The Bay Plan **Recreation** policies state in part, that “recreational facilities, such as waterfront parks, trails, marinas, live-aboard boats, non-motorized small boat access, fishing piers, launching lanes, and beaches, should be encouraged and allowed by the Commission, provided they are located, improved and managed,” following certain standards. As they relate to non-motorized small boats, the Recreation policies state, in part, that “where practicable, access facilities for non-motorized small boats should be incorporated into waterfront parks, marinas, launching ramps and beaches, especially near popular waterfront destinations,” that “access points should be located, improved and managed to avoid significant adverse affects on wildlife and their habitats, should not interfere with commercial navigation,” that “site improvements, such as landing and launching facilities, restrooms, rigging areas, equipment storage and concessions, and educational programs that address navigational safety, security, and wildlife compatibility and disturbance should be provided, consistent with use of the site,” that “facilities for boating organizations that provide training and stewardship, operate concessions, provide storage or boathouses should be allowed in recreational facilities where appropriate,” and that “launching facilities should be accessible and designed to ensure that boaters can easily launch their watercraft. Facilities should be durable to minimize maintenance and replacement cost.”

The Bay Plan **Recreation** findings and policies further encourage certain facilities over others within waterfront parks. Facilities are to “capitalize on the attractiveness of their bayfront location,” and are to “emphasize hiking, bicycling, riding trails, picnic facilities, swimming, environmental, historical and cultural education and interpretation, viewpoints, beaches, and fishing facilities,” over facilities that do not need a waterfront location. “Public launching facilities for a variety of boats and other water-oriented recreational craft, such as kayaks, canoes and sailboats, should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.” “Limited commercial recreation facilities, such as small restaurants” are permitted “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.” The Bay Trail is to be developed along “an alignment as near to the shore as possible, consistent with Bay resource protection.” Public transportation is to be provided to waterfront parks, as is public parking “in a manner that does not diminish the park-like character of the site.” “Interpretive information describing natural, historical and cultural resources should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible.” Public utilities and services are allowed “provided they would be unobtrusive, would not permanently disrupt use of the site for recreation, and would not detract from the visual character of the site.”

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 **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.

The 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...” and that “[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available.” 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.”¹ 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. These policies state in part that “public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife,” and that, “whenever public access to the Bay is provided as a condition of development, on fill or in the shoreline, the access should be permanently guaranteed.” These policies further 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.”

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

Additionally, the policies state that “The Public Access Design Guidelines should be used as a guide to siting and designing public access consistent with a proposed project so that “that public access should feel public, be designed so 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 and lighting.” The Design Review Board should advise the Commission regarding the adequacy of the public access proposed. The Design Review Board should encourage diverse public access to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population. 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.

Board Questions

The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following issues regarding the revised design proposal of the required public access area.

- 1. Does the revised design provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access that maximizes public use and enjoyment of the area?**
 - a. Would the revised design for the Park encourage diverse activities and create a “sense of place,” which is unique and 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 Beach, Cove Access Walkway, and Tidal Shelves an appropriate enhancement to the Park? Are there any additional considerations to making this an inviting space for the public to enjoy?
 - b. Does the design and location of the play area maximize public use and enjoyment of the waterfront?
- 3. Does the arrangement of the various facilities proposed within the Park, including trails, stormwater plantings, proposed public art and other amenities result in the best possible configuration in terms of circulation, views, enjoyment, and safety?**
 - a. Does the design and alignment of the Bay Trail, Park Promenade, park entry points, and the secondary pathways through the park provide for adequate circulation through the park for a variety of users?
 - b. Does the Board anticipate conflicts or congestion at points within the Park, 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? Does the Board have concerns related to the proposed siting of structures such as the waterfront café and kiosks, trees, or other project elements in terms of their effect on views?
 - d. Does the entry to the Park at Terry Francois Boulevard provide a sense of arrival and guide visitors to the Bay or other points of interest?
 - e. What considerations should be made for special event programming considering the addition of program areas between the Bay Trail and the waterfront?
- 4. Are the tidal shelves adequately designed to colonize and sustain the targeted intertidal species mentioned in the memo provided by the project proponents?**
- a. Does the Board have any advice on additional considerations that should be given to key characteristics for species growth, texture, invasive species management, public interaction, monitoring, and management?
- 5. Are the public areas and amenities appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?**