

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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March 21, 2017

TO: Design Review Board Members
FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Andrea Gaffney, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; andrea.gaffney@bcdc.ca.gov)
SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of March 6, 2017 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Safety Announcement.** Design Review Board (Board) Chair Karen Alschuler called the meeting to order at the Bay Area Metro Center, 375 Beale Street, Yerba Buena Room, First Floor, San Francisco, California, at approximately 5:30 p.m., and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Other Board members in attendance included Cheryl Barton, Stefan Pellegrini, and Gary Strang. BCDC staff in attendance included Andrea Gaffney, Tinya Hoang, and Brad McCrea. The presenters were Ben Botkin (Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)) and James Heilbronner (Architectural Dimensions). Public comment via email was submitted by Laura Thompson (ABAG).

Andrea Gaffney, the BCDC Bay Design Analyst, reviewed the safety protocols, meeting protocols, and meeting agenda.

Ms. Gaffney stated the design team for the Mission Bay P22 Bayfront Park met with staff. They have addressed many of the issues brought up by the Board in the December Board meeting. The design team plans to submit their revisions along with a letter requesting approval to the Board so they can begin the schematic design process.

The next Board meeting will be on April 17th. The Board will review Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond restoration project and the East Bay Regional Parks District Albany Bulb Beach replenishment project.

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DRB MINUTES
March 6, 2017

2. **Report of Regulatory Director.** Brad McCrea, the BCDC Regulatory Director, presented his report:

a. The Scott's Pavilion project in Jack London Square was reviewed in April of 2015. Last month, the BCDC Enforcement Committee recommendation that the revised Cease and Desist Order include a penalty of \$395,000 and a revised Public Access Plan will be considered by the Commission next month.

b. The Harbor Bay Hotel in Alameda, the Fairfield Inn, was reviewed in May of 2016. The Commission voted last month to deny the application for failing to provide maximum feasible public access.

c. The Crane Cove Park project was reviewed in July of 2014 and will be considered by the Commission this summer.

d. The San Francisco Waterfront Land Use Plan proposal will be presented to the Board this summer.

3. **Approval of Draft Minutes for December 5, 2016, Meeting.** Mr. Strang asked to add "counting on a thorough review of the fundamental assumptions of the project, especially the hill" to the end of the sentence under 5(g), at the bottom of page 7, that reads that the Board did "not feel they needed to see it again."

Mr. Strang stated the need to add a sentence about the BCDC approach or policy to dealing with existing pier finish floor elevations to the end of his comment under 4(g), on page 5.

MOTION: Mr. Pellegrini moved approval of the Minutes for the December 5, 2016, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Design Review Board meeting as revised, seconded by Ms. Barton.

VOTE: The motion carried with a vote of 4-0-0 with Board Chair Alschuler and Board members Barton, Pellegrini, and Strang voting approval with no abstentions.

4. **West Gateway Public Access Area at the former Oakland Army Base, City of Oakland, Alameda County; (Second Review).** The Board held their second review of a proposal by the California Capital and Investment Group and the City of Oakland to redevelop an approximately 91,476 square-foot public access area located west of Wharf 7 in the West Gateway area of the former Oakland Army Base, in the city of Oakland, Alameda County. The proposed project originally included approximately 80 to 100 parking spaces, drive aisles, walkways, landscaping, site furnishings, lighting, and an improved viewing area. The revised project presented at this meeting reduces the number of parking spaces to 57 spaces to accommodate a larger pedestrian realm.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Tinya Hoang, the BCDC Coastal Program Analyst, provided an overview of the project, accompanied by a slide presentation, and summarized the issues identified in the staff report, including whether the revised proposal provides an attractive public access area that encourages diverse activities, whether the proposed improvements are appropriate, whether the modified pathway allows for a safe, seamless, and continuous connection to the Burma Road sidewalk and crossing to the north, and whether the revised public access area is designed to enhance and take advantage of the views of the Bay and shoreline.

b. **Project Presentation.** Jim Heilbronner, the President of Architectural Dimensions and Program Manager for the Oakland Army Base redevelopment, provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the modifications made to the proposed West Gateway project, based on Board comments and recommendations at its first review in October of 2016.

c. **Board Questions.** Following the presentation, the Board asked a series of questions:

Ms. Alschuler asked about the intent of the park and what neighbors it. Mr. McCrea stated the East Bay Regional Park District has its own design process and the ultimate buildout of the park is unclear.

Ms. Alschuler asked if the Board will see the development of the terminal when it is designed. Mr. McCrea stated there is a public access component to that larger project, so it will come before the Board in the future. Ms. Barton asked what was proposed at the terminal. Mr. Heilbronner explained the general nature of the shipping activities, which would not include container shipping, and that the specific use will depend on the tenant.

Ms. Alschuler asked if the landscape architect was in attendance. Mr. Heilbronner stated the landscape architect went out of business. He stated, once the working drawings are done, another landscape architect will be engaged.

Ms. Barton asked if the strength, quality, and light trespass of the repurposed site lighting and string lights had been considered. Mr. Heilbronner stated much consideration went into the design of the light poles that originally were used on the bicycle path for the Bay Bridge. They are durable, meet or exceed the city's requirement in foot candles, and will provide an even light distribution.

Ms. Barton asked if the lighting will create any habitat issues. Mr. Heilbronner stated an impact issue study was not done but the surrounding road areas already contain street lights as required by the city.

Mr. McCrea asked for more detail about the lighting height and durability of the string lights. Mr. Heilbronner stated the 14-foot, white, aluminum light poles come with a guy-wire, but the issue of vandalism is an ongoing problem in public areas.

Mr. Strang asked if the boardwalk is elevated. Mr. Heilbronner stated it is on grade. There will be asphalt paving under the boards that slopes to the west for drainage and the boards will be on rubber pads to protect against puddling.

Mr. Strang asked if the boardwalk will remain as part of the future park plan. Mr. Heilbronner stated the park plan will join future paths to the old-growth redwood and Douglas fir boardwalk. The design intent is that the boardwalk will be a permanent feature.

Mr. Strang asked about the perimeter fence lighting. Mr. Heilbronner stated they are 12 feet high, are 15 to 20 feet on center, and are on a taller pole that will also carry the string lights. Ms. Gaffney stated the security fence lighting is on a chain-link fence on the other side.

Mr. Pellegrini asked how the bicycle lane on West Burma Road will transition into the site area. Mr. Heilbronner stated the Class 2 bicycle lane is on both sides of West Burma Road and is on the street. The south side runs adjacent to a sidewalk that flows into the park. The bicycle lane on the right side flows onto the army property access drive and up and over a sidewalk, which could be widened to allow for better bicycle flow.

Mr. Pellegrini asked if the perimeter bollards have been selected. Mr. Heilbronner stated they would be standard 24-inch-diameter steel bollards meant to keep vehicles off the deck.

Mr. Pellegrini asked about bicycle racks. Mr. Heilbronner stated there are several bicycle racks depicted in the drawing, and they can be moved to wherever they make sense.

Mr. Pellegrini asked if the bicycle racks are meant for cyclists to park their bicycles and access the future park on foot. Mr. McCrea stated the bicycle racks and power outlets are meant to increase the flexibility of this space in the future.

Ms. Alschuler asked who would watch over the programming in the future park. Mr. Heilbronner stated the project area will be part of a city-owned, land-leased, vertical development with tenants who would share common area charges for its upkeep, which would be carried out by a facilities district under the larger umbrella of the city of Oakland.

Ms. Alschuler asked about water availability for future programming events. Mr. Heilbronner stated there are fire hydrants throughout the project, but stated there may be areas where portalets or hose receptacles would be helpful during events. He stated it would not be a far stretch to put the main water line to this point. There is also a 30,000-gallon water tank that can be used. The issue is EBMUD's rules on domestic water versus fire water.

Ms. Barton asked about the tree wells. Mr. Heilbronner stated the current soil would not support the growth of the trees, so the planting holes will be amended with improved material to give the trees a good start.

Mr. Strang asked about the elevation of the parking lot. Mr. Heilbronner stated the elevation of the deck is five to six feet above the water.

Ms. Alschuler asked about plans for sea level rise strategies. Mr. Heilbronner stated the land areas that are being developed for buildings are set above the predicted sea level rise of 2050 and the roads have been designed for high-tide 100-year storm events. Calculations predict very little flooding will occur when the streets are rebuilt. Additional details will be forthcoming later in the process.

d. **Public Hearing.** Ms. Gaffney directed the Board's attention to the written comments and attached site plans submitted by Laura Thompson, the Bay Trail Project Manager at ABAG, included in the meeting packet. Ms. Hoang read Ms. Thompson's comments on pinch points, connections, boardwalk, and buffer.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board members discussed the following:

(1) Does the revised proposal provide an attractive public access area that encourages diverse activities?

Mr. Strang stated that the design is simple but has a lot of elements, and that it should be made coherent with a palette of materials. Managing the various lighting details is important for uniformity and coherence. He suggested raising the bar on the furnishings and lighting. He questioned the durability of the wood boardwalk and suggested raising the wood up on sleepers to extend the life of the redwood. Concrete planks may be a solution worth considering.

Ms. Barton agreed and suggested simplifying and ordering the furnishings, lighting, and landscaping within the current budget to create a family of elements.

(2) Are the proposed improvements appropriate given the site's location and future adjacent uses?

Ms. Barton suggested rethinking the plant pallet because the area is subjected to harsh elements and will be difficult to make coherent and beautiful. The proposed plant materials may not survive the salt water intrusion. She suggested trading off the landscape elements to create the infrastructure that could support the flexible space.

Ms. Alschuler suggested keeping the proposed signature trees or planting oak trees instead.

Mr. Strang stated the Lagerstroemia, Robinia, and Aesculus are formal, suburban inland trees that are not appropriate for waterfront conditions. Also, a four-foot-deep hole containing soil amendments is only about ten percent of the soil volume required to support a small tree. He suggested planting shrubs instead or nothing at all.

(3) Does the modified pathway allow for a safe, seamless, and continuous connection to the Burma Road sidewalk and crossing to the north?

Mr. Pellegrini stated his appreciation for the more clearly delineated bicycle and pedestrian paths along the western side of the project in the revised design, as opposed to the somewhat narrow, shared bicycle and pedestrian path in the first iteration. He agreed with the ABAG comments that the bicycle and pedestrian paths have transition issues at the northwest corner of the project. Mr. Pellegrini suggested switching location of the bicycle and pedestrian paths along the parking lot edge between the wharf cul-de-sac and the proposed Bay Bridge Trail connection as a way to resolve the transition issues but continue to use the curb cut on Burma Road as planned.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the boardwalk is defined on one side by lighting with benches in between. That viewing edge could easily shift, particularly because the permanent fence is on the western side. It makes sense for the viewing edge to be set apart from the permanent fence and slightly elevated above the level of the bicycle track to make it a more comfortable space.

Ms. Barton agreed as long as the level change was universally accessible.

Mr. McCrea stated there are difficulties in making the boardwalk universally accessible that may necessitate the use of an alternative material.

Mr. Strang asked if the asphalt could be raised by adding a layer of gravel under it.

Mr. Heilbronner agreed with the earlier suggestion to simplify and stated the design team was trying to utilize the existing tarmac. Changing the elevation impacts the drainage design. He suggested a wide path made of concrete with changeable benches, a concrete curb, and ramps for accessibility that is not separated by elements for simplification and cost-effectiveness.

Ms. Alschuler suggested making a bicycle corral area at the end of the parking lot next to the wharf for cyclists to leave their bicycles to explore the area, take in the views, and attend events.

Mr. Pellegrini suggested making a short boardwalk section at the bicycle corral area to give the message for cyclists to slow down, leave their bicycles there, and walk to the viewing areas. Mr. Pellegrini stated that the curvature of the boardwalk is odd and suggested a hard edge. Ms. Alschuler stated that the end of the wharf would not have vehicular access but that there might be a desire for vehicles for events. Mr. Heilbronner suggested that the bollards be removable for food trucks.

Mr. Heilbronner stated, even with a short boardwalk section, the flat wood surface presents a drainage problem and must be elevated to allow for drainage. He stated there are ways to create a feature that alerts cyclists to slow down and to park their bicycles, such as speed bumps.

Chair Alschuler asked about the pinch point at the wharf cul-de-sac mentioned by Ms. Thompson. Mr. Heilbronner stated the area is 11 feet wide. If the boardwalk is made of concrete, a traffic curb could be made for pedestrian safety, tapered out to allow food trucks in, and then picked up again. Ms. Alschuler asked whether the boardwalk should start at the transition to the wharf or if it should only be located at the end of the wharf.

Ms. Barton asked for further details on the curb. Mr. Heilbronner stated a six-inch curb would be pinned to the deck to keep pedestrians behind it and out of the street. Ms. Barton cautioned that it would be a tripping hazard.

Mr. Strang asked about the dotted line with the word "wharf" on one of the presentation slides. Mr. McCrea stated the light gray is concrete; the dark gray is asphalt. Mr. Heilbronner stated the concrete is the existing concrete deck that is up off the ground on piles.

Mr. Strang stated a rectangular layout of wood would be more wharf-like and more expressive of an elevated structure. Vehicles would be restricted to the turnaround, but a wood deck would allow event vehicles to drive over it. Also, the edge of the restraining curb that keeps vehicles from coming onto the wood deck while in the turnaround would be like an elevated sidewalk.

Ms. Alschuler summarized that the intent is to have an easy, safe flow that is easily understood to ease the connection coming around the curve at Burma Road for pedestrians and bicycles, which would be at the same level, somewhat raised above the street, with a curb. Coming into the project, there is a 26-foot-wide path with benches and lights and other furnishings that transitions at the other corner, where it becomes more pedestrian with a simple configuration of wood.

Mr. Strang stated the turnaround is sized at an approximately 150-foot radius to accommodate large trucks, which will be future users of a yet-to-be-determined facility. He suggested sizing down the turnaround to a 115-foot radius to accommodate automobiles because the trucks will mount an apron to complete their turns. The apron would be difficult to do with wood decking, but done with another material, it could take a straight edge across and not require a circular turnaround. He suggested a heavily-textured material in the center rather than a painted stripe to narrow the lane around that delivery trucks can drive over. Trucks can also drive over a three-inch curb.

(4) Is the public access area designed to enhance and take advantage of the views of the Bay and shoreline?

Ms. Barton stated the interior fence image is under-scaled for the need and should be heftier.

Mr. Strang stated the amphitheater by the renovated warehouse (the Bridge Yard) sets a railing precedent, although the metal railing could be improved. The mesh material could continue throughout the project for coherence, even if wood posts are used.

Ms. Alschuler suggested that the eight-foot chain-link fencing evolve to something more attractive and that more seating be provided where the view is the best for individuals to gather. She stated it would be beneficial to imagine different programs in this space - for example, how it would work during a festival, on a quiet day, or with food truck deliveries - so the project progresses from concrete to wood as it nears the water, and then only wood at the far end in a rectangle that works as a destination with artifacts from the port or the bridge.

Ms. Barton questioned the durability of the string lights and whether they would be a target of vandalism. She suggested simplifying the lighting palette. Mr. Strang suggested removing the string lights altogether because the bright lights will obstruct the view across the water at night.

f. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Heilbronner responded positively to the Board's suggestions about a simplified plan and stated the design team will take the Board's comments into consideration and will come up with an improved design, such as a wood stage area farther out rather than a wood boardwalk along the project.

g. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board made the following summary and conclusions:

- (1) Use a uniform, coherent palette.
- (2) Simplify and order the furnishings, lighting, and landscaping within the current budget to create a family of elements.
- (3) Use durable landscaping, lighting, and decking materials that can withstand the harsh climate.
- (4) Raise the boardwalk up on sleepers to extend the life of the redwood.
- (5) Concentrate the bicycle racks.
- (6) Move the monument sign to a better location.
- (7) Add water and electricity for future flexibility of the site.
- (8) Reduce the radius of the turnaround to 115 feet.

Ms. Gaffney asked the Board if they would like to see this plan again before it goes into construction. Board members collectively stated they would like a quick update at the April meeting.

5. Briefing on the Latest Planning and Guidance for Water Trail Sites Around the Bay. The Board received a briefing on the latest planning and guidance for Water Trail sites around the Bay. Ben Botkin, the Planner for the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail at ABAG, provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the background, outlook, and suggestions for improving water access for future projects that come before the Board. He reviewed the Water Trail vision, site designation, and accessibility plan. He stated the BCDC has been a key partner in planning and implementation of Water Trail projects. He summarized the design considerations that the Board should be aware of during project review, such as the types of users, amenities, safety, and wildlife. Mr. Botkin showed slides of examples of past projects, discussed what he hoped to see approved in upcoming projects, and shared a short resource list for further information.

a. **Board Questions.** Following the presentation, the Board asked a series of questions:

Ms. Alschuler asked Mr. Botkin to send staff the link to the River Management Society resource "Prepare to Launch! Guidelines for Assessing, Designing, and Building Access Sites for Carry-in Watercraft."

Ms. Alschuler referred to Slide 2 and noted there is a gap of launching sites in the widest part of the Bay on both sides. Mr. Botkin stated the airport and shallow, subtidal areas are major constraints, and ABAG has yet to contact site owners in all locations. He stated the San Mateo County Parks District is currently improving the western span of the beach at Coyote Point and then will designate the water trail. As restoration occurs, there may be opportunities for additional launching sites.

Ms. Barton asked how the Water Trail projects are funded. Mr. Botkin stated most of the funding comes through Coastal Conservancy grants. The Conservancy is currently working on another grant round.

Ms. Barton asked if funding is for construction alone as opposed to providing funding for ongoing management operations. Mr. Botkin stated ABAG provides construction and, in some cases, planning funds but does not provide management funding.

6. Adjournment. There being no further business, Ms. Alschuler adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.