

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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October 26, 2023

**TO:** Design Review Board Members

**FROM:** Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; [larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)) and  
Ashley Tomerlin, Senior Bay Dev. Design Analyst (415/352-3657; [ashley.tomerlin@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:ashley.tomerlin@bcdc.ca.gov))

**SUBJECT: Draft Summary of the August 7, 2023 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting**

1. **Call to Order and Meeting Procedure Review.** Design Review Board (DRB) Acting Chair Gary Strang called the hybrid meeting to order on Zoom, at approximately 5:00 p.m.

BCDC Board Members in attendance included Board Vice Chair Gary Strang and Board Members Guneet Anand, Leo Chow, Tom Leader, and Stephan Pellegrini.

BCDC staff in attendance included Ashley Tomerlin, Yuriko Jewett, Shruti Sinha, Jessica Finkle, and Katharine Pan.

1301 Shoreway Project Team: Rich Yang (Four Corners Properties), Rene Bihan (SWA), Connor Fahey (SWA), Raquel Fones (BKF), Dilip Trivedi (Moffat Nichol), Karen Kuklin (DGA), and Craig Bacheller (DGA)

San Leandro Shoreline Development Project Team: Jon Hughes (Griffin Structures), Chuck Gardella (Gates & Associates), Kevin Nguyen (BKF), Patrick Chan (BKF), Katie Bowman (City of San Leandro), Avalon Schultz (City of San Leandro), Nick Thom (City of San Leandro), Daniel Shafir-Schorr (Gates), Shaye Diveley (Meyers-Nave), Liz Allen (WRA), and Dilip Trivedi (Moffatt & Nichol)

2. **Approval of Draft Review Summaries for December 12, 2022 and April 10, 2023 Meetings as corrected by the Board.**

3. **Staff Update.** Ashley Tomerlin provided an update on the newly opened public access trail at the Foster City Levee project.

4. **1301 Shoreway Life Sciences Development in City of Belmont, San Mateo County (First Pre-Application Review).** The Design Review Board will hold its first pre-application review of the proposal by Four Corners Properties to redevelop a 6.91-acre site with a life sciences campus at 1301 Shoreway Road in the City of Belmont, San Mateo County. The project proposes to demolish the existing four-story office building on site and construct two 7- to 8-level office/R&D buildings and a 9-level parking garage. The project proposes both on-site and off-site public access improvements, including constructing a new sidewalk along Sem Lane to provide public access from Shoreway Road to the shoreline, widening the Belmont Creek Trail, and refreshing the landscape with seating areas and trail serving amenities.



- a. **Staff Presentation.** Shruti Sinha provided a staff introduction to the project site and context.
- b. **Project Presentation.** Rich Ying and Rene Bihan provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of project goals, background, local context, existing site conditions, and a detailed description of the proposed project.
- c. **Public Comment.** Shores Business Center Association submitted a letter in support of the project and the proposed Shoreline Trail improvements.
- d. **Board Clarifying Questions from Project Presentation**
  - (1) Tom Leader requested clarification on the C3 requirements and how the site is draining. The project team stated that site will all drain to the private development. Private development using the same plant palette/ecology so C3 is a feature.
  - (2) Guneet Amand requested clarification on the adaptation zone in relation to the property line. The project team stated the adaptation zone is in the SBCA ownership.
  - (3) Stefan Pellegrini requested clarification on the levee and why improvements on the levee are outside the purview of this project. The Board request context to where the levee actually is and how it overlays with the site improvements. The project team stated the trail is located on a berm, not a levee. The creek is outside the property and this project is just enhancing the creek because it is outside the property line.
  - (4) Stefan Pellegrini requested clarification on the embankment and whether this side of the creek is a FEMA levee. The project team stated this side of Belmont Creek is not a FEMA certified levee; the FEMA certified levee is only on Twin Dolphin side. There is opportunity for placement and changes to the berm without all the coordination needed on the other side of the creek.
  - (5) Gary Strang requested clarification on the requirements setting the FFE for the development and whether there was consideration for going higher. The project team state the City of Belmont set it at 12 because of the FEMA flood zone designations and with conforming to street elevations, it would be difficult to raise the site without impacting accessibility.
  - (6) Leo Chow requested clarification on the configuration of the redeveloped site and whether that is influencing the size of program nodes along the public access trail. The project team stated that the largest node corresponds to the largest area right now, one of the benefits to the greater public is that the site triangulates in front of the PGE station, so the court and planting will help screen that. The larger gathering node is approximately the same size as the existing configurations. It has more to do with the geometry of the site; there's space near the sports court and they don't want to overscale the spaces, there's not currently a lot of use because of the Sem Lane dead end.

- i. The Board requested a description of the connections to the other side of the creek. The project team stated there is no crossing of the creek until Shoreway. There's no additional crossing/connection provided or contemplated because of property ownership.
- ii. Stefan Pellegrini requested clarification on the potential for shared public use of the spaces adjacent to the Public Access areas (sports courts, courtyard). The project team stated life science use creates more security demands and there is a hardline for maintaining security in the courtyard.
- iii. The Board requested further description on the sports court and whether that was required to maintain the same level of security. The project team stated it did not but there is definitely a preference to maintain private use of court.
- iv. Gary Strang requested clarification on the extent of the shoreline trail to the south and whether it's possible to extend this further around PGE station. The adjacent trail property seems to have been improved somewhat recently. The project team stated they weren't sure on dates but that the property south of the PGE site seems to have undergone some recent renovation.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board discussed how the project addresses the seven objectives for public access found in the Public Access Design Guidelines, provided feedback on the proposed public access improvements with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity, and addressed the staff questions listed below.

The seven objectives for public access are:

- (1) Make public access **PUBLIC**.
- (2) Make public access **USABLE**.
- (3) Provide, maintain, and enhance **VISUAL ACCESS** to the Bay and shoreline.
- (4) Maintain and enhance the **VISUAL QUALITY** of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent developments.
- (5) Provide **CONNECTIONS** to and **CONTINUITY** along the shoreline.
- (6) Take advantage of the **BAY SETTING**.
- (7) Ensure that public access is **COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE** through siting, design, and management strategies.

Staff also has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

- (1) How does the project proposal result in public spaces that "feel public," and does the project proposal allow for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people?

- (2) The proposal includes both passive and active public access uses along the shoreline integrated with campus-oriented uses like the sports court and parking. Does the siting of these public and campus-oriented programs enhance and activate the shoreline in a manner that is inviting to public users?
- (3) What additional improvements could enhance the public access experience from the publicly accessible courtyard to and along the shoreline?
- (4) Given the increase in scale and size of the buildings onsite, does the proposed design provide legible connections from the adjacent roadways and bike/pedestrian networks to draw users into and through the site to the Belmont Creek Trail and shoreline?
- (5) Are the public access areas appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise in balance with ensuring high-quality public access opportunities?

f. **Summary of Key Issues**

(1) **Site Design**

- i. **Gary Strang:** The presentation needs to provide information on the site planning and building massing; the omission of this is limiting the Board's ability to discuss views, connectivity, and the interface of the development with the public access area. There's a lot to talk about that just isn't here. How does the courtyard interface with the public access area. How do buildings respond to the public access area? Are there mediating factors or recesses buffering the public access? The Board wants to see more about the condition and quality of that interface, more information on site planning, building impacts to public access areas (climate, perceptible), and demonstration of what is happening in the middle piece between site planning and shoreline improvements.
- ii. **Stefan Pellegrini:** The project needs to demonstrate the visual connections to and from the public access area even if it's to private spaces.

(2) **Circulation and Orientation**

- i. **Guneet Anand:** The public access area is "behind the building" - it needs signage/wayfinding that is inviting so you don't feel like you landed in a space you're not supposed to be. Encouraging people to use the spaces.
- ii. **Stefan Pellegrini:** The objective should be to maximize public access at this location with the limited connectivity. Look at Sem Lane as an enhanced connection point or gateway to the trail network; the public access parking and signage is all positively enhancing how someone can access the site. Clear signage or a trail map to orient someone to where you are, what you can get to, how you can get there. The idea of passing through nodes to get to one point to the next is positive.

- iii. Tom Leader: Trailhead should include a clear explanation of how I'm going to get to Bay Trail from here, orientation and amenities would be good.
- iv. Tom Leader: Consider a traffic table for the crosswalk connecting from the Campus courtyard.

### **(3) Public Access**

- i. Stefan Pellegrini: With the context of the other projects that we've seen in this area, there's a huge positive to the enhancements being made to the public spaces. There are multiple projects adjacent to each other; the access in this location is not great because there are not good connections to adjacent and nearby areas.
- ii. Leo Chow: There is opportunity for a trail map to orient at a district wide scale, to create awareness and encourage use. The connectivity to the larger district is an opportunity that should be pursued.
- iii. Leo Chow: The larger seating area at the sports court, in the original site plan made sense because the court was at the terminus of a direct driveway from Shoreway. Now that the court is cut off by the garage, it's at the terminus of a drive aisle off Sem Lane and the location of this node does not make the same sense.
- iv. Guneet Anand: The visual connections are limited by things outside the project site so the focus becomes the publicness of the site. The court is a great opportunity for an anchor of public access use. It is a draw, it signals to passersby that this is an opportunity for public use. The site needs amenities for public users like drinking fountains. Appreciate the concept of the fitness nodes and the idea of addressing it as a cohesive trail system, it brings an element of playfulness. Power of the small moves of wayfinding and public serving amenities.
- v. Tom Leader: Sports court should be public, especially when viewed in context of the fitness equipment.
- vi. Stefan Pellegrini: The sports court seems like a great opportunity to enhance public access at that locations. Recommend pushing the envelope to increase public access in that location.

### **(4) Shoreline Protection**

- i. Stefan Pellegrini: Is the strategy to elevate the shoreline areas outside of the certified levee and then further down the road there could be an agency-driven flood control project within the creek corridor? The Board recognizes site resilience is a regional problem but would like to understand how the existing flood protection measures are adaptable in the future.

- ii. Gary Strang: The cross-sections of the levee/berm seems to show adequate flood protection, but when seen in plain view, there appear to be weaknesses. The Board would like to understand the extent of the berm; whether the berm/levee continues beyond the project site; and how it conforms to adjacent properties. Will the berm be effective without improvement on adjacent properties?

The Design Review board directed the 1301 Shoreway project to come back for a second review.

**5. San Leandro Shoreline Development Project, City of San Leandro, Alameda County; (Fourth Pre-Application Review).** The Design Review Board will hold their fourth pre-application review of a proposal by Cal Coast Companies, LLC, and the City of San Leandro to redevelop the San Leandro Marina and surrounding land. The proposed project would include a waterfront park, hotel, restaurant, residential and condominium buildings, and a commercial building. The project has undergone significant design and land use changes since the second review in 2016.

- a. **Staff Presentation.** Jessica Finkle provided a staff introduction to the project site and context.
- b. **Project Presentation.** Jon Hughes and Chuck Gardella provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of project goals, background, local context, existing site conditions, and a detailed description of the proposed project.

**c. Public Comment**

- (1) Lee Huo, MTC Bay Trail, submitted a letter regarding the Bay Trail facilities included in the proposed project. The comments included the following recommendations: the Bay Trail should provide more of a loop experience than out and back alignments; with the high potential use at the site, designing the Bay Trail should have a consistent 26-foot width, that 18-foot is the minimum width per Bay Trail guidelines; all proposed Bay Trail improvements should be completed in Phase 1; and the addition of other trail amenities such as drinking fountains with bottle fill stations and bicycle repair stations.

**d. Board Clarifying Questions from Project Presentation**

- (2) Gary Strang: Requested the reasoning for why the project is not going further with shoreline improvements to the basin. The project team stated that they looked at slopes, ramps, beaches, and steps as approaches to shoreline design but want to activate it in a way that is ecologically and financially responsible. In terms of the riprap, the slope is very steep as it was designed as a marina basin. Wave action is minimal so some erosion protection is needed; some hardening is needed unless they bring in a lot of fill. Wherever possible above the elevation of erosion protection they've gone for a softer slope to accommodate planting. The project team did look into bringing in some level of recreation opportunities but the water

depth doesn't support it. It's not high enough to sustain a pickleweed marsh and there isn't enough sediment to sustain a marsh. The team believes it will be a mudflat and remain as one until 2100. It's difficult to bring a large restoration project into this development project - there are opportunities but it needs a strong proponent. The team looked into piers and bird islands but don't want it to create a hazard and strand people. Bird islands don't seem suitable here, if there is nesting, buffer zones could limit public use of the shoreline. The basin is suitable for foraging but not nesting. The presence of cord grass suggests a possibility of habitat but there's no room for upland migration as water rises. The City is unwilling to engage in restoration and subsequent monitoring. Sedimentation is not expected to keep up with sea level rise at a certain point. The basin is currently too shallow for eel grass, but by midcentury, it could potentially sustain subtidal vegetation. Compensatory mitigation would likely be triggered if the project were to bring in the fill necessary to soften the slopes on the shoreline.

- (3) Gary Strang: Describe how the project is planning for sea level rise impacts to the privately owned property/single family homes? They seem to be heavily impacted by anticipated sea level rise. The project team stated the developer is putting homes at 2070 elevations.
- (4) Stefan Pelligrini: What is the plan for maintenance, how will the City be maintaining this area in light of the new approaches to landscaping? Are there similar parks in the City? The project team stated the city has put together a community facilities district to finance this project. The project team has worked with the City's Public Works Department to ensure the project is consistent with their practices and needs. There is funding in place to finance in perpetuity.
- (5) Stefan Pelligrini: How do lighting and site design for natural surveillance respond site security and public safety? The project team stated generally the park is lit in the hotel and the apartment areas. Everything past the parking lot would close at dusk, there may be ambient lighting but it's not expected to be fully illuminated. A vehicular gate will limit after hours vehicular access. Also working with Police to ensure its maximizing site lines.
- (6) Guneet Anand: Please speak to the eastern side of the marina and the public access connectivity? The project team state there are existing uses/leases that extend for a number of years so these parcels are not included in this project. There is existing public access required; the existing conditions will remain unchanged with this project.
- (7) Guneet Anand: With regrading of the site, how does the connectivity work with existing public access areas? The project team stated there will be some tricky grading but the project will maintain ADA accessible circulation.

- (8) Guneet Anand: Has there been consideration to providing retail or other areas in the hotel/apartments that could enhance publicness and be more inviting? The project team stated that there is a restaurant separate from the hotel, and a market is required of the developer. The hotel has a restaurant as well. They envision something like Trader Joe's, or someplace to get snacks/picnic/drinks.
- (9) Leo Chow: With the shorebirds and proximity to the airport, is there any concern for avian conflict? The project team state there is no anticipation of or perceived conflict with this project; the bird species here are not the species that conflict with airports.
- (10) Leo Chow: Has there been a wind study? Do the berms relate to that? The project team stated that the wind comes primarily from west to east. They looked to use the berms to protect the recreation zones on the peninsula but are also balancing CPTED with wind protection. The prevailing winds come from the west; the berms are being placed on western side of the park to protect the recreation zones (lawns). The project is trying to balance CPTED with the climate protection and keeping berms to 3 feet in height. There is a 5-foot elevation change between the upper and the lower walkways and the project team is placing benches to take advantage of the elevation change to provide some weather protection.
- (11) Leo Chow: Do the seating areas accommodate fishing? They are placed every 150 feet but there are other walkways that don't have seating. The City stated they have observed existing anglers scrambling down rip rap on west side. The project has also extended the boat ramp to provide more space for fishing there if people want to use that location. The project team wants to observe how the space is used and have that informs where additional benches should be made. Circulation was intended to facilitate movement through the park and benches were placed at viewing opportunities. City has found that people don't use the existing fishing pier for fishing. Benches are easy to add, and City may observe certain areas that require an additional future bench. City wants to being able to observe how the park is used and respond with additional amenities as needed and where desired.
- (12) Tom Leader: Is there going to be active management of the mudflat? Are there bad things that could happen or that will need to be mitigated? The project team stated the depth will increase and by midcentury or later century, the basin could accommodate other uses/habitats.
- (13) Tom Leader: Are there invasive species in the basin? The project team stated that the extent of spartina in the basin lends to it being possible to irradicate at this location. It will likely need coordination with the invasive spartina project. There will be some management of debris and flotsam.
- (14) Tom Leader: Would the basin return to open water in about 40 years? The project team stated it is possible for improved retention of sedimentation with the progressive buildup of vegetation, and the encouragement of the good variety of cord grass, which would lend to the marsh building out further but this project does not include deliberate action to bring in material to create a marsh.



- (15) Gary Strang: Is there potential for offensive odors from the mudflat? The project team stated there are existing odors but it's related more to outfalls, not the sediment arriving on site and it's not an existing/historic marsh with sulfur. The marina is likely the biggest source of contaminants in the basin. It's a great prospect for a restoration project but the current project schedules don't align. The project team is keeping the restoration opportunity open. The City's goal is to solve an acute issue but that doesn't preclude future improvement to habitats/restoration.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board discussed how the project addresses the seven objectives for public access found in the Public Access Design Guidelines, provided feedback on the proposed public access improvements with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity, and addressed the staff questions listed below.

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- (7) Ensure that public access is **COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE** through siting, design, and management strategies.

Staff also has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

- (1) Does the peninsula "feel public," and allow for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people? Is the space inviting with sufficient facilities to support public use?
- (2) Does the updated phasing plan address the Board's concerns about making the space feel usable and welcoming before the project is fully completed?
- (3) Are there clear connections and wayfinding to the shoreline from the community and Monarch Bay Drive?
- (4) Does the proposed Bay Trail alignment along Monarch Bay Drive complement the current and planned pedestrian and bicycle circulation networks? Does the Phase 1 design adequately provide for south bound Bay Trail traffic?
- (5) Does the proposed shoreline protection approach enhance the experience of the shoreline? How could the design improve these physical and visual connections?

- (6) Does the proposed design provide adequate opportunities for fishing without creating points of conflict with other site users?
- (7) Is the design of Pescador Point and the boat dock adequate to accommodate current and anticipated user groups, including public recreational use and a commercial water taxi service?
- (8) Does the design provide sufficient flexibility for future adaptation and public access connections?

**f. Summary of Key Issues**

**(1) Overall Site Plan**

- i. Tom Leader: There don't seem to be big flaws and convinced to the approach in the basin.
- ii. Gary Strang: Although the developer has agreed to raise all the residential units to be adaptive to predicted 2070 sea levels, it is important to consider the lifespan of the buildings. By the time the single family and townhomes are complete, we may be only ~40 years out from 2070. Concern that the planned single family and townhome development will be at risk of flooding beyond the capacity of an HOA to mitigate.
- iii. Stefan Pellegrini: Orient the restaurant and market to Mulford Point Drive and enhance Mulford to make it feel like the front door.
- iv. Guneet Anand: Make spaces around apartment building more publicly usable.
- v. Guneet Anand: It's commendable to see the comparison of existing condition and proposed with much more softer and usable materials. The southern part of the site feels very vehicular; particularly at the Pescador Point plaza - is there a softer and more generous space that could be more usable as public access.

**(2) Bay Trail – Monarch Drive**

- i. Leo Chow: The project should maintain continuity along the shoreline to the north and south of this site where the Bay Trail is on the west side of the road. Is there any reason other than driveways that is driving that decision? The amenities are on the west side, it will feel more public, and the continuity of trail alignments all lend to the preferred alignment being on the west side of the road.
- ii. Gary Strang: Two smaller bike lanes on Monarch, Class II facilities seem more appropriate. Concerned about crossing Monarch Bay Drive.

**(3) Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation**

- i. Tom Leader: Not in favor of Bay Trail suggestion to ring peninsula with bike access, fear it may create user conflicts.

- ii. Stefan Pellegrini: Bay Trail as recreational access vs multimodal users. It may make sense to create the loop and shift the Bay Trail to the west side of the Hotel and Horacio's sites in a future phase or when those sites are adapted. That may make the northwest corner of the apartment more significant to the activation of public access than the northeast corner.
- iii. Stefan Pellegrini: Improving Mulford Point beyond class III. There is a great variety of users that will be accessing those spaces. Ensuring it's safe for families with kids and also continuing to serve adult riders.
- iv. Leo Chow: The trails leading off the roadway into the site feel like they're programmed at a vehicular scale, rather than pedestrian scale. There seems to be more opportunities to create cross connectivity from Bay side to basin.
- v. Leo Chow: There doesn't seem to be a pedestrian walkway on the south side of Pescador Point and it seems you really need one there where people are loading/unloading.
- vi. Guneet Anand: Acknowledge the grading challenges in creating the loop trail, but retaining walls are disruptive to circulation. The lower basin trail could connect around and help stitch the site together with programming and trail amenities.

**(4) Water Taxi Use of Recreational Dock**

- i. Leo Chow: Recommended the project teamwork with staff. There is not enough information to understand use loads for the proposed/anticipated uses and provide meaningful direction.
- ii. Tom Leader: The project team should identify the anticipated sizes/scales of boats, who is using it, when, frequency, duration, and landside facilities needed to support the service.

The Design Review Board stated that the San Leandro Shoreline Development project did not need to return for another review and to work with staff.

**6. Meeting Adjournment.** Board Member Leader made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Member Pellegrini. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.