

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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**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 September 11, 2023 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting**

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

a. **DRB Board Members.** Chair Jacinta McCann, Bob Battalio, Leo Chow, Patricia Fonseca Flores, Kristen Hall, and Stefan Pellegrini were present in person.

b. **BCDC Staff.** Ashley Tomerlin, Yuriko Jewett, and Schuyler Olsson were present in person.

c. **Project Proponents.** David Froehlich (SFRPD); Christine Boudreau (Boudreau Associates, LLC); Katherine Liss (GGN Ltd.); Chihiro Shinohara (GGN Ltd.); Katie Chamberlin (Anchor QEA); Sean Hart (Moffat & Nichole), Dilip Trivedi (Moffat & Nichol).

2. **Staff Update.** Ashley Tomerlin provided an update on the recently completed Bay Trail gap closure project along Doolittle Drive in East Oakland as part of MLK Regional Shoreline Park and new boat launch facilities. The DRB reviewed the East Bay Regional Parks District project back in 2016.

3. **India Basin Shoreline Park (Second Pre-Application Review).** The project involves the redevelopment of the existing India Basin Shoreline Park. It would include building the park on a system of terraces, with a sloping lawn in the center that would terminate at a gravel shore beach, held in place by two Mixed-Stabilized Earth (MSE) retaining walls. The Project would include a variety of site improvements and support diverse recreational and educational opportunities, including walking/jogging, bicycling, fishing, basketball and other sports, nature viewing, and outdoor picnics and barbecues. Water access would be provided at the gravel beach and at a large recreational pier and floating dock. The Project would also include shoreline recontouring, shoreline protection, and marsh creation and enhancement. The Project is eligible for funding under Measure AA from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, and the pre-application process is underway with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), an interagency team with representatives from BCDC and five other regulatory agencies, to obtain agency feedback on the project design.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Schuyler Olsson provided a staff introduction to the project site and context.

b. **Project Presentation.** Katherine Liss, designer with GGN, Ltd. provided an overview of the project with a slide presentation. The presentation focused on the project goals, background, local context, existing site conditions, and a detailed description of the proposed project design.

c. **Public Comment.** Eight public comments were received for the project.

(1) Lily Brown, Transportation Planner, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)/Bay Trail (by email ).

- I. MTC appreciates the proposed gap closure and creation of a continuous shoreline trail experience along India Basin.
- II. Would like clarity of the proposed width of the Bay Trail through India Basin Shoreline Park. The trails in this area are likely to have a higher level of use due to the proposed amenities. MTC recommends that all Bay Trail segments be designed with a 26-foot width.
- III. MTC appreciates that the proposed project has many amenities. To add to the amenities for trail users, consider adding drinking fountains with bottle fill stations as well as bicycle repair stations.

(2) Jackie Flynn (now Jackie Bryant), Executive Director of A. Philip Randolph Institute (in person)

- I. Supports the project noting that SFRPD continues to capture community feedback on the project.
- II. In terms of equitable development, members have gone through trades programming to work on site or in other projects in San Francisco and work with youth programming.
- III. The project is inspiring the next generation of park stewards. Everyone in the community are park people and they need park spaces. A tech hub/community innovation space was created to support this area. This space is essential to our community members. APRI plans to continue leading the way to bring community voices to the park project.

(3) Elsworth Jennison, neighborhood resident for 43 years (in person)

- I. Main concern is the project impact to habitat and would like to see it protected. Notes that the site currently hosts snowy white egrets and herons.
- II. The proposed floating dock is not in a good location given the mudflats at the site that extends to Heron's Head. India Basin Shoreline Park is unprotected and in mud. It is not safe for children. The 900 Inness site would be better for a dock.

- III. Has concerns regarding maintenance of the site. The boulders at Heron's Head Park were exposed only six months after construction. The park would be best suited for green grass or walkways and not much more, like Dolores Park.

(4) Jill Fox, India Basin Neighborhood Association/neighborhood resident (online)

- I. Comments are her own and is not speaking on behalf of the association.
- II. Longtime neighbor and advocate for the park and is happy to see improvements are being made to the site. Noted that a neighborhood improvement is ultimately a regional improvement.
- III. Feels that access is important and there needs to be more parking. The availability of parking is not enough now, and the new project appears to provide the same amount and will not accommodate growth. Currently, people drive on the grass to get to the basketball court, for example. Need to provide better bicycle access. Need to consider water access like water taxis connecting from the ferry building to the neighborhood. Better transit will allow for tourism. Support bikes and more bike parking further down into the site and near the program areas. Bikes are better for nature and the neighborhood.

(5) Maya Rogers, San Francisco Parks Alliance (virtual)

- I. Works on the Blue Greenway project and lifelong resident of Bayview Hunters Point and is showing support for the project.
- II. The project transformation of the neighborhood and the equitable development plan supports the neighborhood, it works for the community and the project. Creates spaces and preserves cultures, welcoming to everyone. The balance developed by this partnership has created a synergy.

(6) Sarka Volejnkova, Trust for Public Land (virtual)

- I. TPL has been working for many years with SFRPD and Parks Alliance to design and implement this park, along with the landscape architecture consultants. It is important to the community and an important landmark park for the City.
- II. Notes that the project will continue to provide recreational access to the waterfront especially along the south end of the community. The design is in line with what the community wanted and has many elements that were important to the community.
- III. Appreciates the access connected with this park and good to integrate water activities for San Franciscans and likes that the habitat areas are integrated into the design. The park is very usable by multigenerational visitors. There's something for everyone to enjoy.

(7) Stephanie Troyon, San Francisco Parks Alliance

- I. As a partner, Parks Alliance has been working with SFRPD and others to implement the 13-mile Blue Greenway. This park is integral to the connections and will close a critical gap in the Bay Trail. The park will transform areas to a usable space.

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

- (1) Kristen Hall noted this is an area of low car ownership and asked for clarification of bicycle parking locations. The project team stated that bicycle parking for the project is proposed in three locations: near the “porches” near Hunters Point Boulevard; the turnaround area in the parking lot near the boathouse; and in the basketball court area.
- (2) Kristen Hall requested status of the soil on the site. Is remediation required? The project team stated that unlike the neighboring site at 900 Innes, this area was not used for industry and shipbuilding. The filled lands here were always for park use and soil testing showed that the site did not require remediation.
- (3) Kristen Hall commented that it appears that the connection from India Basin Shoreline Park to Heron’s Head Park will flood by 2050. How will this connection be maintained? SFRPD stated they are working to partner with property owners (PGE, Port, and private owners) to coordinate maintenance of continuous access, but details are not available yet. The project goal has always been to have the site read as one continuous shoreline.
- (4) Bob Battalio commented that the floating dock will be exposed to waves probably up to 2-to-3 feet, much larger than what you experience in a marina, for example. Is the design of the dock able to withstand these conditions? the project team stated the stability of the floating dock has been reviewed by the coastal engineer and it should withstand such conditions.
- (5) Bob Battalio asked whether the team considered a less lawn-like space between the Bay Trail and gravel beach? Waves can push gravel up and have it flatten-out and in nature there is often a transition zone. The gravel beach could be larger and travel further upslope. The project team stated they had looked into it and can look into it again.
- (6) Several Board members had clarifying questions related to the Bay Trail, including connectivity to the adjacent 900 Innes site, grade transitions, materiality, trail width and specific amenities that the project will provide along the trail. The project team stated there is a smooth transition between the two parks and the trail has grades of approximately 4%. Materials include exposed aggregate paving in both parks. The width ranges from 12 feet to 14 feet with 2-foot shoulders on each side. There will be fixed benches along the Bay trail.

- (7) Stefan Pellegrini asked if there has been coordination between the improvements being made to the right-of-way in this area and the frontage of the park. The project team stated there will be a new sidewalk at the frontage of the park and that is included in the scope of the project. Raised crosswalks and curb ramps at Hudson and Hunters Point are also part of this project in partnership with DPW; MTA is currently implementing a road diet pilot project with K-Rails and a multiuse path on each side as part of the public right-of-way adjacent to the site. PGE is also implementing work along Hunter's Point Boulevard that will result in right-of-way improvements; and The 700 Innes development project is required to make streetscape improvements in this area, including new curb rumps, raised crossings, and signalized intersections.
- (8) Stefan Pellegrini requested clarification of other amenities the project will provide related to water access at the site beyond the boathouse and dock. The project team stated the project will provide a boat washing station. Feasibility of providing open water swimming is being discussed with stakeholders, and SFRPD is working with the Port to develop policies related to fishing. Heron's Head currently offers fishing and there is a desire to continue that program at India Basin Shoreline Park as well.
- (9) Patricia Fonseca Flores asked for clarification on the adaptive capacity of the pier and floating dock; what is the life span of the materials for the dock? The project team stated the materiality of the floating dock has been designed for a 50-year lifespan.
- (10) Leo Chow asked how much seating is provided along the Bay Trail. Formal seating is important, and a bench count is important. The project team stated there are benches along the Bay Trail, as well as the nature pathways throughout the park. Benches provided on intermediate pier, where paths cross, and seating is provided adjacent to program entry. Count: 37 benches including swings.
- (11) Leo Chow requested further detail on the windy conditions at this site, especially in the late afternoons. Is there a digital analysis of this condition available? The project team stated the site can be windy at times with winds coming from the west. The decks are level with the street, however there is a 4 to 5-foot grade change to the lawn area so that the landform will provide protection as you make your way to the water. Programs such as the basketball area and the playground are on lower terraces, tucked into the slope to allow for more comfort from the wind. The team has not modeled the site digitally for wind and there is no wind consultant on the project.
- (12) Leo Chow expressed concern about the geese at the site and requested clarification for how this will be addressed with the new design. The lawn should be useable and other projects reviewed by the Board have identified the difficulty of managing geese population. The project team acknowledged there is a geese population at the park now. The project team will have to investigate this topic more as it relates to maintenance.

- (13) Jacinta McCann requested clarification for arrival zones at the site. It appears the same number of parking spaces are provided, but the project is aiming for a lot more activation. While activation is a good thing, understanding how sports teams, large parties of people carrying heavy things, will transition to using the site is a concern. The project team stated the parking lot will have 24-26 spots and there is turn around for drop off. Dropoff at 900 Innes site is also possible. There is also on-street parking along Hunter's Point Boulevard to the south. The project team is working with community/MTA to implement a shuttle program to better connect the neighborhood. MTA will be the agency to plan and implement the transit stops.
- (14) Jacinta McCann clarified that native planting is proposed for the site, but asked if the park will have irrigation. How will the planting be maintained? The project team stated that irrigation is included with the design and the maintenance building at 900 Innes site and will serve both parks.
- (15) Jacinta McCann asked if there is an education program planned for the site? The project team stated there is a special events and programming plan required as a condition of the BCDC permit for the 900 Innes site. The shipwright cottage community center serves as the visitor center. There will be a community classroom and a shop building to accommodate community activities, arts, and crafts, etc. All of the open spaces have potential to be programmed. SFRPD is still working on logistics and whether the programs will be implemented with inhouse or with outside vendors.
- (16) Jacinta McCann requested clarification on the planting categories and if a tree list will be included and if they will also be native species. The project team stated the trees will be native species and a list will be provided in a later submittal.
- (17) Jacinta McCann asked if the park is fully funded? The project team stated the project is close to reaching its goal. The India Basin Waterfront Park initiative consists of both sites to make up one park and totals approximately \$200M. This includes \$15M for the development and implementation of the equitable development plan. 85% of the initiative has been funded so far. The 900 Innes phase is fully funded and the shoreline park that we are reviewing now is close to 80-90% funded.

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) Does the project successfully complete the India Basin shoreline system in a cohesive and inviting manner?
- (2) Are park programs and spaces sited so as to minimize potential conflicts between the design objectives and planned uses?
- (3) Are the scale and design of the water-oriented public access features (gravel beach, associated Marineway wall, and recreational pier and floating dock) necessary and appropriate for the success of the water access objective?
- (4) Are the water access elements designed in a way to minimize future required maintenance needs?
- (5) Does the shoreline protection strategy adequately address current and future site resilience? Is there opportunity to use more natural and nature-based shoreline protection features in areas where riprap is proposed?

**f. Summary of Key Issues and Board Comments**

**(1) Overall Site Design**

- I. Board members agreed that the project successfully completes the India Basin Park Shoreline. General comments included that the design is thoughtful and appears to be built on a community process to meet the design goals on a small site.
- II. The Board agreed that pulling the hardscape inland from the shoreline edge makes for an attractive design.
- III. The Board appreciated the programming of the site, underscoring that basketballs won't bounce into BBQ areas for example. The concept to "stack" the programs throughout the park works and helps protect activities from the elements such as wind.
- IV. The Board noted that the sightlines to the water were generous and that the ability to get to the shoreline was clear. Better understanding how the sightlines work at night was requested, there could be some safety concerns for some areas.

## (2) Site Arrival Zones

- I. The Board expressed concern around the arrival zones of the park, specifically noting that large groups arriving at the site will have a difficult time getting to where they need to go. Sports teams, large parties for picnics arriving by car will have a lot of distance to travel across the lawn area. The drop off area near the boat house does not seem sufficient for vehicle access.
- II. One Board member noted that part of the adventure of visiting a park is to travel there; no one wants to picnic right next to a restroom or parking area. Consider ways to make that long journey more successful with key elements that provide smaller moves of activation or elements for play on the lawn, such as the red chairs at Presidio Tunnel Tops, or example.
- III. The curbside access with the K-rail and temporary bike path that is there now also seems to invite conflict of users getting to the site. Board members requested that be looked at again since the condition is part of a pilot program.
- IV. Another Board member noted that the upper section of the park appears to feature a lot of secondary paths, potentially creating superfluous movements that don't have the same meaning as intended.
- V. The Board appreciated the coordination with other agencies and emphasized how important timing of the implementation of the overall improvements will be key with the opening of the park.

### a. Bay Trail

- I. The Board discussed the Bay Trail width and if it is sufficient for the site. Board members noted that the Bay Trail is an offroad condition that the city bicycle network does not always offer. There are design moves the project could do to slow the bikes down and better share the trail with slower moving travel, while the city bike route could be the "faster" mode of travel. A narrow trail can accomplish this, but too narrow and there will be conflicts with a variety of modes sharing one trail. The Board recommended not going less than 20 feet to avoid creating user conflicts.
- II. The Board noted the proximity of the playground and the Bay Trail and the Hudson ROW and making sure there's a way to keep these programs separate. Not necessarily fencing, but planting and other methods of containment could be accomplished here. The Board also suggested moving the trail upland in the lawn area to create a better edge condition and help mitigate conflicts between habitat and public access; it is important to get this balance correct.



**b. Public Dock**

- I. Feedback on the dock were generally favorable, noting that boating is an opportunity for community stewardship of the park. There are few opportunities to get people out that far on a dock. Offering the opportunity to picnic at the end of the dock for example is a unique feature and not present at most parks in the city.
- II. The Board expressed concerns regarding the stability of the dock in this location due to waves and requested further study.

**c. Shoreline Protection**

- I. The gravel beach seems too narrow and the Board recommended possibly expanding it. The EcoAtlas shows an extensive beach for this area of the Bay, and here it is between two walls. If the paths and trails are set back even further you will have more success to get the ecotone in there now and provide scrub brushes as a buffer between the lawn and beach.
- II. The Board felt that the shoreline protection seems reasonable; it does provide a hard edge to establish the upper planting area and the park could go with a low-risk adaptation scenario on the elements that are outboard of Bay Trail.
- III. The Board also noted that the Marineway walls seem like a big investment. Another thing to consider here is that the walls may reflect some of the strong waves to other shorelines. If that wall goes in, the patterns of sediment in that cove may change in unforeseen ways but the walls are necessary to frame the beach and maintain beach material.
- IV. The Board felt the beach will be a popular recreational site.
- V. While the PGE site is adjacent to the park and outside the scope of this project, it is worth noting that it is a critical piece of shoreline that can connect the India Basin neighborhood to Heron's Head. There is an opportunity for a gravel beach and back beach area at that parcel. A Board member recommended looking at the overall habitat programming for this section of shoreline and weighing the benefits, a gravel beach at this location would help protect marsh at that site.

**d. Landscape and Planting**

- I. The Board encouraged the project to seize the opportunity for nurturing park stewardship through volunteer programs to enhance the native planting and engaging the community during construction.
- II. The Board requested the project better analyze the distribution of shade throughout the park, such as shade structures in the BBQ area and especially encourage further study of the trees.

- III. Related comment regarding soil amendment and understanding the salinity of the site. Large gaps can be created through the loss of 2-3 trees so maintaining plant health will be essential to success.
- IV. The Board also requested that the appropriate caliper trees are budgeted to allow for immediate wind protection and long-term success. While striving for a complete native palette is a good goal, note that the melaleuca trees on site are healthy and while not native, are providing good protection now.

#### 4. **Comments from Project Proponents**

- I. The project proponents clarified that while the comment to provide a gravel beach to enhance the connection between India Basin Shoreline Park to Heron's Head is a thoughtful one, this area is not in the scope of this project.
- II. Concerns of managing the geese in the lawn area have been heard and will continue to be studied by SFRPD.

5. **Conclusion and Meeting Adjournment.** The Board stated the project has completed its Board review and design refinements can continue at the staff level. Board member Kristin Hall moved to adjourn the meeting. Board member Bob Batallio seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.