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TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: **Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve, First Pre-Application Review**
(For Design Review Board consideration on March 9, 2026)

Project Summary

Project Name
Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve (Project)

Project Proponent
Marin County Parks (MCP)

Project Representatives
Tara McIntire (Marin County Parks), Rob LaPorte (Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy), John Gibbs (WRT), Cristina Bejarano (WRT)

Project Location (Exhibit 4)
The approximately 124-acre Project site is located primarily within the Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve (Preserve), in Marin County, along the Richardson Bay shoreline. The Preserve is managed by Marin County Parks (MCP) and includes areas of City of Mill Valley and County of Marin jurisdictions. The Mill Valley-Sausalito Multiuse Pathway, part of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail), is a critical pedestrian and cycling thoroughfare that runs through the Preserve and is managed by MCP. The Project site is bounded by Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio Creek to the north, and spans just south of Coyote Creek. The site is also adjacent to Tamalpais High School to the northwest, City of Mill Valley parks in the north, Richardson Bay to the east, and the Tam Valley community and the Tam Junction business district to the southwest. The Bay Trail continues south along the Caltrans Highway 101 right-of-way.

Project Overview (Exhibit 2)

The Evolving Shorelines Project at Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve (Project) aims to restore and enhance tidal marsh habitats and adapt the Mill Valley-Sausalito Multiuse Pathway (Bay Trail) to address current, regular flooding impacts and prepare for anticipated sea level rise. The Project has been identified as a priority for Marin County and supported by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy through the One Tam collaboration. The Project would include restoring and enhancing tidal marsh habitats; reconnecting important sedimentation processes that support longevity of the marsh habitats over time; relocating and improving the Bay Trail; improving an existing trailhead and creating two new trailheads; adding a public parking area and new trail amenities; and improving connections to adjacent cycling and pedestrian facilities. The Project will maintain important regional trail connectivity and ensure usable public access into the future as sea levels rise.

The Project was awarded funding under Measure AA from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, and the project team is currently going through pre-application meetings with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration (BRRIT), an interagency team with representatives from BCDC and six other regulatory agencies, to obtain agency feedback on the project design.

Prior Review by Design Review Board

The Project has not been reviewed previously by the Design Review Board.

Project Site

Site History

Before the 1850s, much of the current Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve would have been open water and inter-tidal mudflat, with the mouth of Coyote Creek located a quarter mile farther inland than its present-day location. Before European settlement, the area was home to Coast Miwok communities. A narrow band of tidal marsh existed along the west side of North Bothin Marsh. Extensive tidal marsh areas were mapped along the mouths of the creeks in areas that have largely been developed today.

The late 1800s included several railroad alignments in the area. The existing Bay Trail alignment was first installed as a wooden trestle supporting a rail track in the 1880s. In 1924, the trestle was replaced with an earthen embankment with a single wide bridge at the mouth of Coyote Creek. Sedimentation began and artificial fill was added to support commercial development. From 1942-1968, both creeks were re-routed into new engineered channels, and more fill was added to North and South Bothin Marsh to support future development. By 1970, the railroad line was decommissioned. The Trust for Public Land purchased Bothin Marsh in 1971 and turned it over to Marin County in 1981. Under County ownership, the Preserve was established, the Bay Trail was built, fill placement was halted, and the dikes around the Preserve were allowed to degrade. In 1987, tidal flows were reintroduced to South Bothin Marsh when the tide gate was replaced by a 26-foot bridge (referred to in the exhibits as Bridge #2). However, the bridge is not large enough to provide full tidal prism to South Bothin Marsh, and the site suffers from a lack of adequate sediment and tidal flows. Today, the very popular Bay Trail in the area floods more than 30 days a year, a condition that would be expected to worsen with sea level rise.

Existing Conditions (Exhibit 7 to 13)

Marsh conditions

The Bothin Marsh Preserve is home to the largest patch of tidal marsh habitat in Richardson Bay. Bothin Marsh formed from sediments deposited by Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio and Coyote Creeks. The Preserve contains subtidal, mudflat, low and high tidal marsh habitats and supports special-status species, including California black rail, California Ridgway's rail, and Point Reyes bird's beak.

Portions of the marsh habitats are degraded due to historic land uses and existing ecological and hydrological barriers. The habitats are at risk of greater degradation and loss in the future as sea levels rise. Some areas of North Bothin Marsh experience poor tidal circulation due to historic placement of dredged sediment, resulting in a much lower density of tidal channels compared to natural tidal marshes, poor drainage during low tides, and limited vegetation growth.

The marshes within South Bothin Marsh are at low elevations relative to the tide range and are sediment-starved, in part because the existing Bay Trail embankment and under-sized tidal inlet restrict tidal circulation in this area. Portions of South Bothin Marsh have been converting to mudflat in recent decades, due to ongoing sea level rise and erosion.

Portions of the bayward edges of both North Bothin Marsh and South Bothin Marsh are experiencing ongoing erosion due to wave action, causing degradation of the berms around the marsh perimeter and loss of transition zone habitat. If erosion continues, segments of the perimeter berms could fully degrade, allowing waves to begin impacting and eroding marsh habitats interior of the berms. Marsh soils can erode much more quickly than compacted berms, and MCP is concerned that full degradation of the berms could lead to more rapid erosion and loss of tidal marsh habitat.

Public access conditions

The Bay Trail through the Project site is used heavily by pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. It is a key link in the primary north-south bicycle route in Marin County's multi-modal transportation network and a critically important commuter route for cyclists. It also experiences high use as a designated Safe Route to School for students in Mill Valley. Additionally, the Bay Trail directly connects to the Charles F. McGlashan Pathway at the southern end of the Preserve, which leads users safely across Highway 1 and links to regional trail networks, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the California Coastal Trail in the Marin Headlands. The typical width of the asphalt trail in the preserve is 10 feet, with less than 2-foot shoulders, leading to safety concerns for different user types. The trail experiences frequent inundation during king tide and other high tide events, causing significant deterioration along the paved trail edges – especially south of the Miller Ave. trailhead.

Currently there is only one trailhead to the Bay Trail within the Project area, the Miller Ave. Trailhead. It includes wayfinding signage and stamped concrete to denote the intersection. The trail junction allows faster cyclists to access the bike lanes on Miller Ave, and allows pedestrians to access the bus stop and informal parking across Miller Ave. The area is significantly flooded during king tides.

The existing south-west border of the Bothin Marsh Open Space Preserve at Tam Junction is used as informal parking and driveway access for adjacent businesses. There is currently no formal public access to the Preserve or Bay Trail at this location. Unmarked parallel parking spaces are also located

along the north-bound shoulder of Almonte Blvd. Much of this zone of the Preserve is comprised of imported fill and invasive plant species.

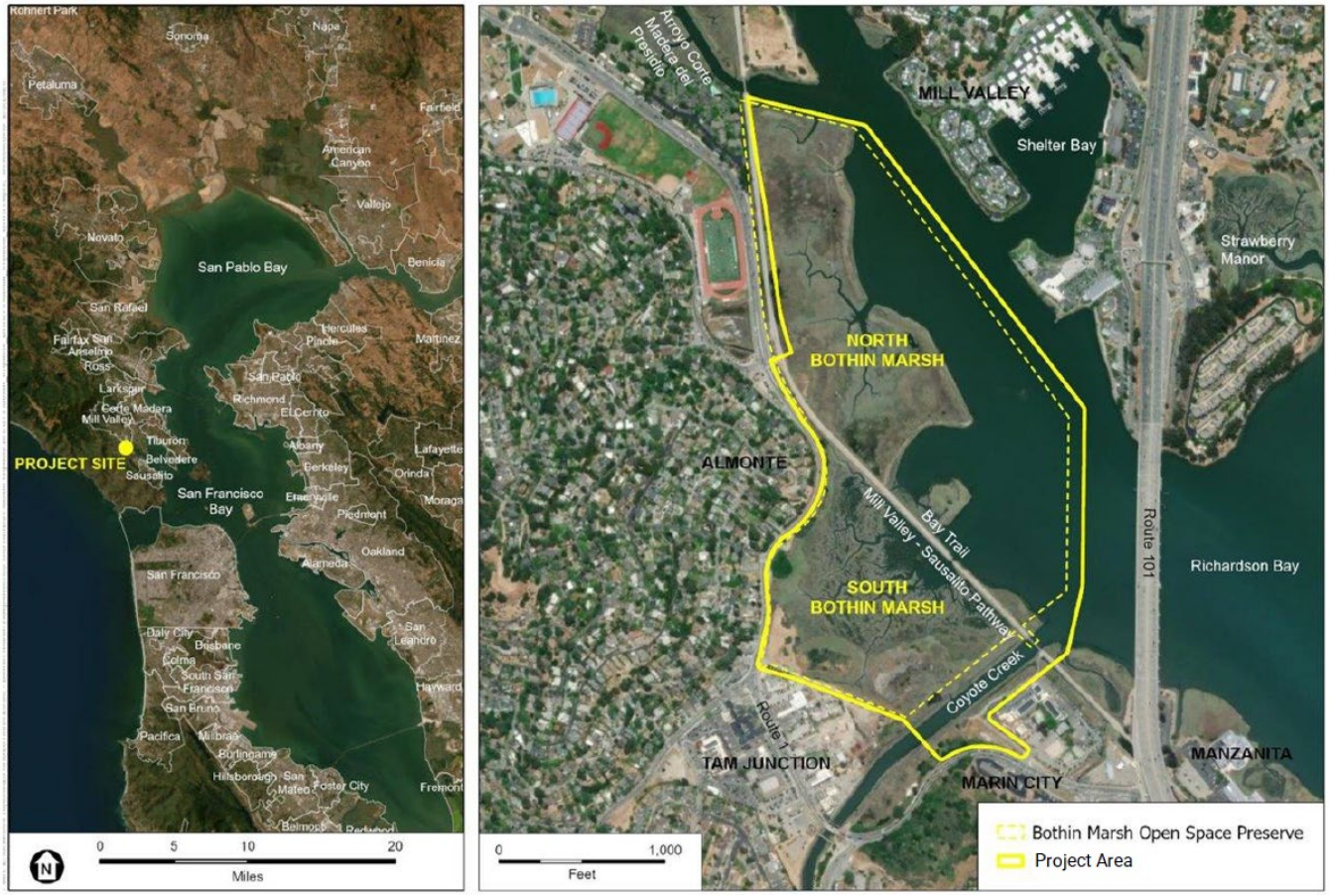

Figure 1. Vicinity map indicating location of project site. Figure provided by project team (WRT).

Social and Environmental Context

According to BCDC's Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool (2023), the areas around Richardson Bay do not experience significant contamination vulnerability, but there are several census block groups in and around the Project area that experience moderate and high social vulnerability. Along the edges of the Project area and the shoreline of Richardson Bay, Block Group 2 (Census Tract 1262) experiences moderate social vulnerability, ranking highly (i.e. 70th or 90th percentile) for the following indicators: "No Vehicle, Single Parent, Over 65 Alone, Severe Housing Cost Burden, and Very Low Income." South of the Preserve, the central Marin City area (Block Group 1, Census Tract 1290) has high social vulnerability, ranking highly for: "Renter, Under 5, No Vehicle, Single Parent, Over 65 Alone, and Very Low Income." Finally, the broader Marin City area (Block Group 2, Census Tract 1290) has moderate social vulnerability and ranks highly for "Renter, No Vehicle, Single Parent, and Very Low Income."

Proposed Project

Project Goals (Exhibit 22)

The Project is based on the following design goals:

- **Wetland restoration:** Reduce erosion, create high-marsh, and restore natural processes.

- **Keep trail dry and improve connectivity:** Elevate and re-align the Bay Trail, maintain regional Bay Trail network, and increase neighborhood connections.
- **Improve user experience:** Retain and improve shoreline experience, improve safety with minimum design trail width of 18 feet, and maintain separation from roadways.
- **Permittable project:** Ensure no net wetland loss or need for off-site mitigation, and balance public access with restoration.
- **Buildable project:** Ensure the project can be constructed feasibly, is aligned with regional funding, and has strong community support.

Project Description (Exhibits 23-50)

The Project includes marsh restoration elements and trail improvements to enhance the ecosystem and provide resilient public access as sea levels rise. The Project would relocate, elevate, and widen the Bay Trail, provide new community access locations and overlook areas, and provide a net increase in wetland areas and habitat quality.

Marsh Restoration Elements (Exhibit 49)

The Project would include several measures aimed at enhancing the quality and resilience of the existing tidal marsh and adjacent transition zones and uplands, including:

- Restoring tidal marsh and shoreline habitats within the footprint of the Bay Trail segment that would be decommissioned and relocated;
- Removing Coyote Creek Bridge (Bridge #1) and South Bothin Marsh Bridge (Bridge #2) and widening the inlet channel to South Bothin Marsh;
- Excavating new tidal channels in South and North Bothin Marsh and creating areas of high marsh and transition zone;
- Constructing gravel and cobble beaches, headlands, gravel sills, nearshore reefs, and other natural and nature-based features to reduce erosion; and
- Removing debris within South Bothin Marsh and restoring native vegetation in those areas.

Public Access Elements (Exhibits 23-48)

Trail Alignment (Exhibits 23)

The proposed trail alignment would replace the existing Bay Trail segment between the Miller Ave. Trailhead and Coyote Creek. After extensive evaluation and community engagement process to compare three concept alternatives, including raising the trail in place on an embankment and on an elevated structure, the “Ring the Marsh” concept was selected as a preferred alignment. This alignment would remove the Bay Trail from the historic rail berm and re-route it along the shoreline to the west, as explained in the next section. MCP determined this option provides the best combination of long-term resilience for the trail and wetland habitats. The additional trail length would provide important new connections to the community, while still providing an experience within the Preserve and overlooking the wetlands and Bay. Importantly, removing the trail from the mouth of South Bothin Marsh would restore natural flows of tidal water, sediment, and wildlife between the marsh and the Bay, which will improve habitat conditions and help the marsh keep pace with sea level rise.

Trail Construction and Phasing (Exhibits 26)
The Project would be constructed in two major phases to sequence funding, minimize trail closures, and improve hydraulic connections to enhance marsh habitats.

Phase 1 includes constructing the new trail segment along the outer perimeter of South Bothin Marsh from the existing Miller Ave. Trailhead to a newly constructed Tam Junction Trailhead, and a second newly constructed trailhead at Rosemont Ave. This phase would provide new community connections and safe routes to schools while elevating the Bay Trail to minimize present-day flooding and improve sea level rise resilience. The existing trail through the marsh would remain in place during Phase 1 construction. Limited and temporary closure and appropriate detours of the existing trail are anticipated while a new trail intersection and roundabout are built. The Phase 1 trail segment structure would be primarily an elevated causeway. Phase 1 has been designed to a 30% level of detail and will reach 65% by summer of 2026.

Phase 2 includes constructing a new trail segment from the Tam Junction Trailhead south along the perimeter of the marsh and across Coyote Creek, connecting to the existing Charles F. McGlashan Pathway and a future trail (anticipated to be built by Caltrans) that would continue south along Shoreline Highway and Highway 101. The Phase 2 trail segment would be primarily an embankment with a sheet pile wall, along with a new bridge spanning across Coyote Creek. The sheet pile wall would connect with anticipated future flood control improvements along Coyote Creek that would be constructed as part of a separate project.

Once the Phase 1 and 2 trail segments are completed, Phase 2 would also include removal of the existing Bay Trail through South Bothin Marsh and wetland habitat restoration in that area, including removal of the two existing bridges and their pilings. Finally, a new pedestrian boardwalk and marsh overlook would run from the Phase 1 trail southeast along the existing Bay Trail alignment through a portion of the marsh. In addition to providing public access for marsh viewing, it will provide access to the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) towers and boardwalk, and for project maintenance and adaptive management activities. A second overlook is proposed on the south side of Coyote Creek at the landing of the bridge to be removed. Phase 2 has been designed to a 10% level of detail and will reach 30% by summer of 2026.

Trail Envelope (Exhibits 28-29)
The improved trail envelope would consist of an 18-foot-wide paved separated use trail with a 2-foot-paved shoulder, two 5-foot-wide bike lanes, and one 6-foot-wide pedestrian lane. When the trail is on-grade, there would be a 3-foot-wide vegetated buffer adjacent to the 2-foot-wide paved shoulder and a 5-foot-wide vegetated buffer along the pedestrian lane. When the trail is elevated on the causeway structure, a 48-inch guardrail would enclose the sides of the paved trail.

Signage (Exhibits 30-31)
The Project would include appropriate wayfinding and interpretive signage at the trailheads and along the Bay Trail. All signage elements would be consistent with the MCP Mill Valley-Sausalito Pathway trail signage and wayfinding family.

Planting (Exhibit 48)
Planting at the trailheads would be comprised of a range of upland coastal native species, including trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses.

Trailheads (Exhibits 33-46)
The Project would include modifications to the existing Miller Ave. Trailhead and creation of two new trailheads (Rosemont Ave. Trailhead and Tam Junction Trailhead), as further described below.

Miller Ave. Trailhead. The Project would include widening the existing at-grade pathway to accommodate the transition to the new 18' separated-use trail. The connection to Miller Ave. would use textured colored asphalt to denote the intersection and would continue to allow faster cyclists to shift onto the adjacent Miller Ave. bike lane. A roundabout will facilitate circulation between the existing at-grade pathway, the spur trail to the overlook, and the new trail alignment. The new trail alignment would be sloped at 4.5% between the at-grade roundabout and the new causeway, which would be elevated to 13.5' North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88).

Rosemont Ave. Trailhead. The Project would create a new trailhead and connection to the Bay Trail from the Almonte Neighborhood at the existing Rosemont Ave. bus stop. This portion of the trail alignment would be built on an embankment at 13.5' NAVD 88 and connect to the new causeway. Access to the trail would be via a pedestrian and bike ramp with handrails, stairs, and an American with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible pathway. A new overlook with interpretive signage would provide views of South Bothin Marsh. Seating elements would low concrete walls adjacent to the stair access and wooden benches on the overlook. A new boardwalk connection would be installed to maintain access to the existing PG&E towers.

Tam Junction Trailhead. The proposed trailhead would provide a new connection from Tam Junction to the Bay Trail. This portion of trail would be built on an embankment elevated to 13.5' NAVD 88, connecting to the causeway. The new trailhead would replace the informal car park with a parking lot with nine regular spaces and 2 ADA parking spaces. The improved access drive would include a turnaround and a bike and pedestrian crosswalk connecting to the trailhead entrance. ADA accessible paths would connect from the parking lot/Almonte Blvd. to the new trail. Additional trailhead improvements and amenities would include a prefabricated restroom with a water bottle filling station and bike repair station; bike racks; and a shaded central gathering space with seating elements, including low concrete walls and wood benches. The trailhead would serve as the connection point to the Project Phase 2 trail.

Sea Level Rise (Exhibits 13-15, 28-29)

As described above, significant portions of the current Bay Trail are regularly subject to flooding during king tides and other significant high tide and storm events. Likewise, marsh habitats in Bothin Marsh, especially the lower-elevation, sediment-starved South Bothin Marsh, are experiencing ongoing erosion or conversion to mudflat due to wave impacts, storms, sea level rise, and hydrological and ecological barriers that restrict the flows of water, sediment, and wildlife. The Project is intended to address both current and future flooding and sea level rise impacts by aligning the trail further inland to a higher elevation and restoring critical hydrological and ecological connections between the Bay and Bothin Marsh.

Current water levels for the Site are the following, based on ESA Tidal Datum Reconning Worksheet (2021) and NOAA Tide Station No. 9414819:

- Mean Higher High Water (MHHW): 5.9 feet
- Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT): 7.2 feet

- 10-yr Flood: 8.3 feet
- 100-year Flood: 9.8 feet
- Base Flood Elevation (BFE): 10 feet

Exhibits 13-15 show cross sections of the current trail in relation to current and future water levels, demonstrating that the trail would be completely inundated during a 100-year flood at current sea levels.

The Project design and associated elevations are based on sea level rise projections from California Ocean Protection Council's 2024 State of California Sea-level Rise Guidance (OPC Guidance), which projects 0.5-1.2 feet of sea level rise by 2050, and 1.0 to 6.6 feet of sea level rise by 2100, depending on the scenario. The project team has stated that the design life of bridges and other high-value structures is 50 years (approximately 2080), while the trails, recreational facilities, and ecological enhancement measures have a design life of 30 years (approximately 2060).

According to the OPC guidance, the Bay Trail should be designed for resilience to the intermediate-high scenario, as it can be considered "a multi-use path that provides public access and is part of a critical transportation network." Based on this scenario, approximately 3.0 feet of sea level rise would be expected through 2080. At this level of sea level rise, MHHW would be approximately 8.9 feet, and the Base Flood Elevation would be approximately 13 feet. Given the projected level of sea level rise and accounting for significant storm impacts, the elevation for the Bay Trail and associated public access elements would be 13.5 feet. This corresponds approximately to a 100-year storm plus 3.5 feet of sea level rise, meaning the Bay Trail would be expected to be resilient to storms throughout its design life. Exhibits 28 (embankment) and 29 (causeway) show cross sections of the design elevations for the proposed new trail alignments relative to current and future water levels.

While the project team has provided preliminary sea level rise information, they would be required to conduct an in-depth climate change risk assessment pursuant to Climate Change Policies 2 and 3 of the San Francisco Bay Plan.

Community Engagement (Exhibits 20-21)

Community engagement for the Project began in 2017 and has been extensive, involving various approaches to gather input and foster participation. Community engagement is ongoing and would continue throughout the Project design phase. Throughout the planning process, community stakeholders have voiced strong support for the Project. Over the past two years of the Preliminary Design Phase, there have been more than 40 workshops, meetings, and community events.

The engagement has focused on several areas, including various community and partner events, youth programming, community stewardship and volunteering programs, presentations (online an in-person), and communications (such as a project website, an email list and quarterly newsletter, an online story map, local television, and other local media). The project team's primary approach to meaningful and direct engagement with equity priority communities is through the Parks Conservancy's LINC (Linking Individuals to Natural Communities), IYEL (Inspiring Youth Emerging Leaders), and Urban Trailblazers programs. These programs bring youth from underserved communities from across the Bay Area together for a variety of local service projects, to deepen understanding of ecology and climate change, and to gain career and leadership skills.

According to the project team, the overall project design goals were developed during the community visioning process. Exhibits 20-21 describe the key priorities and considerations that were voiced during community outreach efforts.

During the development and evaluation of potential adaptation concepts, three options were presented over the course of 5 public presentations and with an online survey with over 800 respondents. Community feedback demonstrated very high support for the project overall, with the "Ring the Marsh" concept (the chosen alternative) the most favored approach considering themes of public access, ecological function, costs, and regional guidance and regulations.

Key project elements incorporated as a result of community engagement include a trailhead at Rosemont Ave. with connections to a crosswalk, bus stop, and a route for bicyclists; formalized parking along Almonte Blvd. and the dirt access road behind Tam Junction businesses to improve circulation, ADA access, and reduce congestion; a public restroom facility; amenities such as shade trees, seating, bicycle parking, and a small gathering space; physical separation of the Bay Trail from Almonte Blvd.; and the boardwalk and old trail overlook that would be constructed along the old (existing) alignment.

Approval & Construction Timeline

The project team is currently going through the pre-application review process with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT). The project team hopes to receive all regulatory permits by 2028 and begin construction of Phases 1 and 2 in approximately 2028 and 2030, respectively.

Commission Plans, Policies, and Guidelines

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) contains several policy sections relevant to the design of the public access areas for this project, including the sections on Public Access; Recreation, Appearance, Design and Scenic Views; Shoreline Protection; Climate Change; and Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

Public Access Policy No. 2 states, 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…" These policies also provide specific details on the locations and types of features that should be included in public access areas. Policy No. 10 states, in part, that "access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare" and Policy No. 8 states, in part, 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."

In natural areas and where habitat or species may be impacted by public access, Policy No. 4 states, in part, that "public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife…" and that "siting, design and management strategies should be employed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife, informed by the advisory principles in the Public Access Design

Guidelines." In considering this balance between public access and wildlife, the Commission needs to consider the likely human use of the area, the potential for significant adverse effects (such as impacts to species, impacts on breeding and foraging areas, fragmentation of wildlife corridors, etc.), site specific information, and the best available scientific evidence and expert advice. These effects are also to be considered within a regional context.

In considering public access designs and potential future climate change, Public Access Policy No. 6 states, in part, that "public 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. Public Access Policy No. 7 states, in part, that "Any 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 **Recreation** Policy No. 1 states, in part, that "diverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities, such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers, should be provided to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population… and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels…waterfront parks should be provided wherever possible." And Policy No. 5 requires that within these parks, the Bay resources should "be described with interpretive signs. Where feasible and appropriate, waterfront parks and wildlife refuges should provide diverse environmental education programs, facilities and community service opportunities, such as classrooms and interpretive and volunteer programs."

The Bay Plan Recreation Policy No. 3a encourages construction of recreational facilities, such as parks, along the Bay so long as "they are located, improved and managed consistent with the following standards:…(3) Be feasible from an engineering viewpoint.; and (4) Be consistent with the public access policies that address wildlife compatibility and disturbance. In addition:…(7) access to marinas, launch ramps, beaches, fishing piers, and other recreational facilities should be clearly posted with signs and easily available from parking reserved for the public or from public streets or trails…(8) To reduce the human health risk posed by consumption of contaminated fish, projects that create or improve fishing access to the Bay at water-oriented recreational facilities, such as fishing piers, beaches, and marinas, should include signage that informs the public of consumption advisories for the species of Bay fish that have been identified as having potentially unsafe levels of contaminants…"

Regarding water recreation, Recreation Policy No. 3d states, in part, that "launching lanes should be placed where wind and water conditions would be most favorable for smaller boats." The policies state that "(3) Additional launching facilities should be located around the Bay shoreline, especially where there are few existing facilities. These facilities should be available free or at moderate cost. Launching facilities should include adequate car and trailer parking, restrooms, and public access…(6) Fill for ramps into the water, docks, and similar facilities should be permitted."

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 "shoreline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay."

The Bay Plan **Shoreline Protection** policies state, in part, that, "all shoreline protection projects should evaluate the use of natural and nature-based features such as marsh vegetation, levees with transitional ecotone habitat, mudflats, beaches, and oyster reefs, and should incorporate these features to the greatest extent practicable. Ecosystem benefits, including habitat and water quality improvement, should be considered in determining the amount of fill necessary for the project purpose. Suitability and sustainability of proposed shoreline protection and restoration strategies at the project site should be determined using the best available science on shoreline adaptation and restoration." The policies also state, in part, that "adverse impacts to natural resources and public access from new shoreline protection should be avoided. When feasible, shoreline protection projects should include components to retain safe and convenient water access, for activities such as fishing, swimming, and boating, especially in communities lacking such access. Where significant impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation or alternative public access should be provided." Finally, the policies state "the Commission should encourage pilot and demonstration projects to research and demonstrate the benefits of incorporating natural and nature-based techniques in San Francisco Bay."

Regarding Climate **Change**, the Public Access Policy No. 7 states, in part, that, "any 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 Policy No. 5 states that "wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged."

Bay Plan policies on **Environmental Justice and Social Equity** state, in part, that "equitable, culturally-relevant community outreach and engagement should be conducted by local governments and project applicants to meaningfully involve potentially impacted communities for major projects and appropriate minor projects in underrepresented and/or identified vulnerable and/or disadvantaged communities…" (Policy No. 3), and that "if a project is proposed within an underrepresented and/or identified vulnerable and/or disadvantaged community, potential disproportionate impacts should be identified in collaboration with the potentially impacted communities. Local governments and the Commission should take measures…to require mitigation for disproportionate adverse project impacts on the identified vulnerable or disadvantaged communities in which the project is proposed" (Policy No. 4).

As it relates to community engagement in the design of shoreline public access, Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that "public access that substantially changes the use or character of the site should be sited, designed, and managed based on meaningful community involvement to create public access that is inclusive and welcoming to all and embraces local multicultural and indigenous history and presence. In particular, vulnerable, disadvantaged, and/or underrepresented communities should be involved. If such previous outreach and engagement did not occur, further outreach and engagement should be conducted prior to Commission action" (Policy No. 5).

Priority Use Area and Special Area Plan

The Bay Plan Maps designate those areas that should be reserved for priority land uses on the Bay shoreline. The project site is not located within a priority use area but is subject to the policies of the Richardson Bay Special Area Plan (RBSAP).

Many of the public access policies for the RBSAP are very similar to the public access policies of the Bay Plan. Among the policies relevant to the Project that are not substantially reflected in the policies cited above are the following.

Policy No. 1 requires that "A continuous unified public access system should be provided around the entire periphery of Richardson Bay."

Policy 5 requires that "Pedestrian and bicycle paths should be separated wherever possible. Access paths for pedestrian use only should be a minimum of six feet in width, and paths designed for bicycle use only should be a minimum of ten feet in width wherever such widths are feasible. Paths designed for joint pedestrian and bicycle use should be 13 feet in width wherever possible."

Policy 14 states that "Plant materials for shoreline landscaping should be selected and sited to dramatize and enhance views of the water for shoreline users. The plant materials used should have demonstrated capacity to thrive with minimum maintenance under high wind speed, high atmospheric salt content, a highly saline water table, and poor subsurface soil with varying drainage capabilities. Whenever possible, native plant materials should be used."

Public Access Design Guidelines

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

Board Questions

Staff recommend the Board frame its remarks of the proposed project considering the public access objectives found in the Commission's Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed project with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.

The seven objectives for public access are:

- Make public access **PUBLIC**.
- Make public access **USABLE**.
- Provide, maintain, and enhance **VISUAL ACCESS** to the Bay and shoreline.
- Maintain and enhance the **VISUAL QUALITY** of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent developments.
- Provide **CONNECTIONS** to and **CONTINUITY** along the shoreline.

- Take advantage of the **BAY SETTING**.
- Ensure that public access is **COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE** through siting, design, and management strategies.

In addition, Staff has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

1. Are programs and spaces sited to minimize potential conflicts between the design objectives and planned uses?
2. Does the Board have any recommendations on the programming elements, trail materials, or site features?
3. Is the proposed plant palette appropriate to site conditions?
4. Is the project designed in a way to minimize future required maintenance needs?
5. Does the project successfully integrate into the existing community in a cohesive and inviting manner?
6. Are there any guiding design objectives that should inform the design development and detailing as it progresses?