

APPENDIX A: RESPONSE TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD COMMENTS FOR THE BERKELEY PIER-FERRY PROJECT

1 - Response to Design Review Board Comments for the Berkeley Pier-Ferry Project

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
Logistics-01	5/12/2025	Vice Chair Strang requested a phasing plan to the extent that one can be put together to illustrate how each project can be brought to completion as standalone.	Exhibit shows how Project construction could be phased. Actual phasing plan will be dependent on Project funding sources and timing.	11/3/25 Exhibit 9
Logistics-02	5/12/2025	Vice Chair Strang observed that it's easier to find funding to build new construction than for maintenance of existing facilities. He requested that the project team describe those challenges and how they plan to ensure maintenance will continue as needed.	City is considering a variety of approaches to maintenance of new facilities, including placing some maintenance requirements within new lease agreements or MOUs.	
Logistics-03	5/12/2025	Chair McCann stated it would be helpful to identify if there are work items that could covered by the City's operational budget or resolved through maintenance rather than being included in this project's scope of work.	The Project scope is generally the construction of new recreation and ferry terminal facilities and does not include work items that can be resolved through maintenance. Repairing the current pier is not feasible.	
Logistics-04	5/12/2025	Board member Hall suggested that if there may be a need for future dredging, the project team should consider that now and do everything to ensure that the system works as planned.	Design team is conducting sedimentation and future dredge need analyses. This information will be presented to Engineering Criteria Review Board. Future dredge needs are dependent on the eventual vessel specifications which are unknown. Future maintenance dredging, if needed, would occur under a separate permit.	Project presented to ECRB on 2/26/2026; second ECRB presentation scheduled for 5/27/2026
Logistics-05	11/3/2025	Board member Pellegrini stated that he has questions related to the needs of the recreation users and the access they require, especially given the public concern about recreational access as it relates to long standing availability of parking at this location. He noted he doesn't see issues related to physical public access based on the project design presented thus far and noted that while free parking is a welcome asset, many public places in the Bay Area find that the way to maximize access can't be done through the delivery of free parking.	The City has conducted extensive data collection and analysis to understand, document, and plan for the parking needs of recreation users. The detailed parking analysis identified specific parking lots that are currently under-utilized and suitable for shared use with recreation and ferry visitors. The Project includes improved recreation access to the shoreline through an improved Bay Trail, new Plaza and public restroom, amenities such as seating and picnic tables and new laydown area and rinse stations to support on-water recreation and reconstruction of the now-closed Berkeley Pier.	11/3/25 Exhibits 3 - 6 5/11/26 Exhibits 3, 4, 9 - 13
Logistics-06	11/3/2025	Board member Pellegrini noted that the edge condition for this area of the marina doesn't encourage people-centered activity along the shoreline. He noted the existing condition has a lot of passive open space, limited sight lines and urban public access unlike other active and programmed waterfronts, such as Treasure Island. He continued that the existing pier is not usable and accessible from the approach, noting that the lawn and promenades are on the perimeter of parking. He felt that the new plaza design will enhance the existing level of public access but questioned if it is the best approach to maximize usability.	The edge-condition design connections have been refined to provide amenities and safe, intuitive transitions to existing conditions at the Project limits to encourage activity along the shoreline both within and outside of the Project limits. The Plaza design has been refined to streamline circulation, simplify materials, and incorporate interactive art to serve as a destination and activation.	11/3/2026 Exhibits 4, 5, 6, 9, 13

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
Logistics-07	11/3/2025	Board member Pellegrini noted that shifting the shoreline road could create larger amounts of open space and public access, and a reconfiguration of the program activities could take place in this location. He highlighted that waterfronts are transitioning from suburban style-restaurant uses to uses that are less reliant on car travel. He also noted that the triangle is “left over” space and could be reconfigured to create additional open space opportunities.	Reconfiguring Seawall Drive ('the shoreline road') between University Avenue and the Seawall Parking Lot would have significant impact on Shorebird Park, which is outside the Project limit. South of this constrained section the Project does re-align Seawall Drive to allow for a landscaped, multi-use buffer area separating the shoreline and Bay Trail from the roadway / parking lot while still maximizing the number of parking stalls provided (a high priority based on public feedback). The 'triangle' is a median in the middle of University Avenue that will be primarily dedicated to stormwater treatment and is not suitable for use as open space. Expansion of this median would require significant reconfiguration of University Avenue, Shorebird Park and the northern parking lot (Skates/N), much of which is outside the Project limit.	
Logistics-08	11/3/2025	Chair McCann asked Board member Pellegrini to expand on the idea of road reconfiguration to create more shoreline space recreation. She raised concern that a reconfiguration may create less parking, for example. Board member Pellegrini responded that there is so much extra space, it's not clear that those two uses are exclusive. He highlighted the berming of the site and the issues with sight lines, and encouraged rethinking the landscape. He noted that the space could be more than accommodating people waiting for the ferry; a greater opportunity for seating or lawn space to picnic to draw people here to participate in new activities that didn't historically happen is possible. He noted that this area is based on a suburban model that is car reliant and this project is an opportunity to rethink that model and allow for new uses. Improving bus access and bike access will create a new opportunity for people to use this area in different way.	See above. The area between Shorebird Park and the shoreline is constrained, and re-grading of the existing berm or other improvements to Shorebird Park are not in the scope of this Project. The existing berm in the Seawall Parking Lot will be removed by this Project which will improve sight lines.	
Program-01	5/12/2025	Chair McCann emphasized the need to identify existing and contemplated site users, understanding potential conflict points and safety concerns, and identifying maintenance needs. She emphasized putting effort into mapping user groups, conflict points, and tying back to parking. She suggested exploring an exercise like A Day in the Life: engaging with the site users for where and when they're at the waterfront and using parking spaces. She observed that diagramming these things can really illustrate how the site is used. These are important questions to help clarify the access questions.	See exhibits related to water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups. The City has conducted extensive public outreach and data collection and analysis to understand, document, and plan for the circulation and parking needs of existing and new recreation users, including ferry riders using a variety of transportation modalities.	11/3/2026 Exhibits 3-8 5/11/2026 Exhibits 3, 6

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
Program-02	5/12/2025	Board member Battalio also emphasized the need to clarify access and recreation zones on land and in water to understand the temporal and spatial dynamics of the site. He emphasized the need to consider latent demand for the space. He recognized that CEQA typically examines existing conditions, but added the City could consider this through the public outreach and explore the latent demand for parking and public access.	<p>See exhibits related to water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups. Increased visitation (i.e. realization of latent demand) with improved recreation facilities is both expected and desired. As documented in the Project Parking & Transportation Study, over half of the parking spaces in the Berkeley Waterfront are currently unoccupied during the average weekday. The Parking and Transportation Study identifies specific measures to be implemented in the future to further support parking management as needed.</p> <p>The City is actively working on a detailed Parking Management Plan that will implement the parking strategies outlined in the November Design Review Board presentation. The detailed Plan will describe the stalls proposed to allow full day vs. time-limited parking as well as the specific time or duration limits implemented in the southern Waterfront area. The City anticipates publishing a Draft Plan in early May and will conduct a public process on the Draft Plan prior to finalizing for inclusion in the BCDC permit application.</p>	11/3/2025 Exhibits 3-6 5/11/2026 Exhibits 3, 6, 9-13
Program-03	11/3/2025	Board member Batallio stated that he was concerned that at both meetings held for the project so far, public comment voiced inadequate outreach to water recreation users.	As of April 1, 2026, the City has conducted over 50 public engagement events for this Project, including focus groups, in-person surveys, public presentations and workshops, and agency presentations. At least 19 of these events focused specifically on engaging existing waterfront recreation users. Public feedback has been incorporated into the design in significant ways, including but not limited to the layout and location of the Pier and Ferry landing. The City continues to engage the public and incorporate public feedback as the Project progresses.	5/11/2026 Exhibits 2-3
Program-04	11/3/2025	Board member Hall stated that she was having trouble understanding the public comment related to the fear around the cost of parking. She commented that free parking in the San Francisco Bay Area is a scarce resource and that charging for parking is a way of organizing behavior that facilitates spaces for recreation uses but pricing can be quite sensitive to ensure that parking is affordable for the many people that want to recreate within the Bay.	The City concurs with this comment and proposes to implement paid parking for some full-day parking stalls as a tool for managing and protecting public shoreline access.	
Program-05	11/3/2025	Board member Hall noted that this is a significant recreational asset and the Board is hearing from the recreation community that their needs are not represented. She felt that the design for the ferry use and parking is being well represented in the drawings, but it is unclear what recreation uses are being planned and designed for since they are not shown. Recreational uses such as swimming and boardsailing represent a community. When those uses are not in the presentation drawings, then it will appear that you're not planning for it. Right now, this feels like a single-minded plan about the ferry and there is a lack of clarity on how the	The Project scope improves shoreline recreation access for pedestrians, bikers and anglers through the construction of an improved section of Bay Trail, a Class IV Cycletrack, a public pier, plaza and fish cleaning station. Improvements related to in-water recreation are in direct response to feedback from existing users and include landslide amenities to support uses at the existing unimproved water access point at the southern limit of the Project. The Project improvements are designed to coordinate with other projects currently in the planning and design phases to contribute to the long-term Berkeley Waterfront vision.	5/11/2026 Exhibits 6-10

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
		various uses for a transit hub and recreation area will work together. She also stated that there appears to be potential for Hs Lordships to develop into something similar like the Dolphin Club with saunas and facilities serving the recreation groups.	The vacant restaurant at 199 Seawall (former Hs Lordships) is outside of the limits of this Project. Future changes to that structure or its use would be subject to BDCD approval.	
Program-06	11/3/2025	Vice chair Strang agreed with other board members that the amount of public comment raises concern and is a communication issue, noting the challenge to resolve all of these issues for all users. He stated that ultimately this is an emergency transportation project and that there needs to be more transparency around that use, emphasizing that this is a safety project, not a development project. He stated the need to create revenue is part of the solution and noted that none of the improvements would be possible without WETA's role in the project.	The City has conducted over 50 public engagement events for this Project, including focus groups, in-person surveys, public presentations and workshops, and agency presentations. At least 19 of those events focused specifically on engaging existing water recreation users. The City concurs that this is not a development Project, and that the inclusion of the WETA Ferry is a foundational element of the feasibility of the Project.	5/11/2026 Exhibit 2-3
Circulation-01	5/12/2025	Chair McCann requested that the Bay Trail and other circulation paths are clearly illustrated. For the Bay Trail, a clear diagram showing the width of the trail as proposed as well as a clear and thoughtful diagram on the Bay Trail improvements.	See exhibits related to Bay Trail, including cross sections showing the width of the trail, amenities and edge conditions, and coordination with future adjacent Bay Trail improvements.	5/11/2026 Exhibit 5, 6, 8, 9, 12
Circulation-02	5/12/2025	Board member Strang observed that overlaying all the different types of means of circulation, recreational bikes, commuter bikes, public transit, cars, would be informative and possibly help find a means of balancing parking demand with demand for open spaces.	See exhibits related to water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups.	See 11/3/2025 Exhibits 3-8 See 5/11/2026 Exhibit 5, 6
Circulation-03	5/12/2025	Board member Hall requested more information on connections to the waterfront, observing ferries and bikes go hand in hand, and emphasized the importance of clearly showing how people are safely getting to and from the waterfront.	See exhibits related to circulation, water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups.	11/3/2025 Exhibits 2-6 5/11/2026 Exhibit 2
Circulation-04	5/12/2025	Chair McCann requested information on the wayfinding and orientation strategy around the waterfront including clarification on how people will be oriented to waterfront destinations, and how people will know/find where they're supposed to go.	The City has submitted a comprehensive Waterfront Signage Plan to BCDC, including proposed new signage related to the Pier-Ferry Project. See referenced exhibit.	5/11/2026 Exhibit 17
Circulation-05	11/3/2025	Chair McCann emphasized that the enhancements to the Class IV bikeway are pretty clear and appreciate the tabletop connection, and the rationale on the bus and loading zones makes sense.	Thank you for this comment, the City concurs.	
Design-01	11/3/2025	Board member Leader stated that the plaza feels a bit "agitated," and would like to see a more simplistic design. He highlighted the opportunity to create a public promenade along the southern alignment of Seawall drive that connects to the plaza and pier. He would like to see more diverse public activations, public spaces that are linear and have more dignity than parking. He commented that while the presentation was thorough, he has concerns that the design doesn't include the connections	The Plaza design has been refined to streamline circulation, simplify materials, decrease contrast, coordinate finishes and incorporate interactive art to serve as a destination and activation. The design of edge-condition connections have been refined to provide safe, intuitive transitions to existing conditions at the Project limits and amenities to encourage activity along the shoreline both within and outside of the Project limits.	5/11/2026 Exhibits 4, 6,-11, 13

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
		to the south and north of the pier. He would like to see these elements better defined in the next review to see how all these design phases work together.		
Design-02	11/3/2025	Vice chair Strang noted that the railing at the ferry pier seems well designed, but there needs to be more harmony for all of the elements; the railing, canopy and furnishings appears to be done by different folks. He expressed that there is an opportunity to put more design energy and bring all these elements together so the gates for example won't seem like they are an afterthought. He also stated the project will need a lot of lighting and moving forward the design team should pay attention to the right form, quality and colors.	All material finishes, including lighting, will be coordinated for a cohesive design and user experience. In general, metals, including gates, will be galvanized matte finish, while light fixtures will be painted gray to match. The shade structure will provide intentional accent colors of white and blue, with light figures attached to the structure painted white. Artist created panels will be used as gate infills at the Pier entrance. City will continue to work with BCDC staff to ensure cohesive finishes on all Project elements.	5/11/2026 Exhibits 10-13
Design-03	11/3/2025	Vice chair Strang noted that trash cans are another key amenity proposed in the design and he highlighted that the city needs to keep them maintained or start a campaign to pack it in, pack it out. If anglers for example use the trash can for that use, it could ruin the experience on the pier for everyone.	City staff will manage waste at all trash cans. Extra trash cans will be provided at the Fish Cleaning Station to serve that specific use.	
Design-04	11/3/2025	Chair McCann agreed with a previous comment to keep the plaza design simple with coordinated furnishings. She encouraged the design team to look at the paving and confirm that the current pattern is the best approach. She noted that keeping the plaza in the foreground compared to the rest of the project is a good idea and also likes the separation of pedestrians and bicycles. She highlights that this the first review and there are a lot of good things in the design now and expects the design to progress the next time it comes before the Board.	The Plaza design has been refined to streamline circulation, simplify materials, decrease contrast, coordinate finishes and incorporate interactive art to serve as a destination and activation.	5/11/2026 Exhibits 7, 9-11, 13
Design-05	11/3/2025	Chair McCann noted that the questions regarding the location of the fish cleaning station should be located where the anglers will be concentrated and their feedback should inform this decision.	The City is in the process of consulting with anglers regarding the placement of the fish cleaning station. Preliminary feedback supports the proposed location, but this is ongoing and the location may be adjusted in the final permit application if a different preference emerges through this process.	

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
Parking 01	5/12/2025	Board member Hall emphasized the importance of tying the parking analysis to the different user groups and their needs. She expanded that understanding the access points and water areas those groups are using may illustrate where conflict is happening, where it's perceived, and where conflict isn't present.	See exhibits related to circulation, water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups.	11/3/2025 Exhibits 2-6 5/11/2026 Exhibit 2-6, 9
Parking 02	5/12/2025	Board member Hall suggested further description of parking management strategies that could minimize user conflicts. She suggested that introducing paid parking may facilitate organization of transportation behaviors and balance the needs of all users. Vice Chair Strang added that with regard to paid parking, it is worth exploring providing free parking to Berkeley residents.	See exhibits related to water and land-based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups. The City has conducted extensive data collection and analysis to understand, document, and plan for the circulation and parking needs of existing and new recreation users, and ferry riders using a variety of transportation modalities. See exhibits related to water and land based user groups and existing and post-project parking spaces for these various user groups. The City has drafted a detailed Draft Parking Management Plan consistent with the prior exhibits presented to the Board and is in the process of gathering public feedback on this Draft.	11/3/2025 Exhibits 2-6
Ferry-01	5/12/2025	Board member Hall stated it would be helpful to illustrate how the ferry relates to the regional circulation context, noting that she was surprised to hear public concerns about environmental impacts but against a zero-emission transit option. In response, she suggested quantifying and identifying the benefits of the ferry.	See City developed exhibit showing connection to regional transportation hubs (AC Transit, Amtrak, bicycle overpass, etc.). Plan Bay Area 2050+ provides additional information regarding existing and future regional transportation and circulation context.	5/11/2026 Exhibit 2
Ferry-02	11/3/2025	Board member Battalio stated a need to analyze the ferry's wake projections, noting that it can become an issue in the public process. The waves generated by the ferry are not just localized but also relates to the routes and operations so there may need to be restrictions necessary to avoid throwing waves in certain areas. He emphasized that this is an important consideration for WETA and the importance of being responsive to conflicts with existing water dependent uses. Board member Battalio requested an analysis on wave reflection and potential impacts to recreation uses related also to the breakwater design.	Detailed Coastal Analyses, including wake analyses and wave reflection, were presented to the BCDC Engineering Criteria Review Board on 2/25/2026. A follow-up presentation to address ECRB questions and recommendations is scheduled for May 27, 2026.	
Sea Level Rise-01	11/3/2025	Board member Battalio repeated his previous clarifying comment that for a major infrastructure project such as this, only raising the pier 1.6 feet is not acceptable unless there is another constraint like views. He noted that the project will go before the ECRB for further review on the topic, but he emphasized that the project needs a sea level rise adaptation plan.	The proposed pier is raised 6 feet above the existing pier, not 1.6 feet. Initially, the 'Intermediate Scenario' from the 2024 California Sea Level Rise Guidance was selected to establish sea level rise design values, consistent with current guidance for projects with this design lift and typical risk tolerance. After feedback from both the DRB (11/3/2025) and the BCDC Engineering Criteria Review Board (2/25/2026), the Intermediate-High Scenario was selected to account for more extreme sea level rise outcomes, to improve	5/11/2026 Exhibit 15

Comment Key	Presentation/ Comment Date	Design Review Board Comment	City of Berkeley Response	Notes
			<p>confidence under uncertain climate change conditions, and to support long-term resilience.</p> <p>The ECRB has asked for additional documentation regarding the use of the intermediate-high scenario, site constraints and long-term adaptation approach, and generally concurred that given those factors, the proposed Pier elevation is appropriate.</p>	
Sea Level Rise-02	11/3/2025	Board member Hall agreed that the elevation of the pier needs to be designed for a longer horizon, noting there are a number of other ferry terminals in the Bay constructed to a higher elevation and there appears to be enough space for this request to be accommodated by design ramps and stairs to get people up to a higher elevation. She stated that public access and public transportation needs to be resilient.	<p>The proposed Pier elevation is higher than any existing ferry terminal pier in the San Francisco Bay.</p> <p>The proposed Pier is elevated 2+ feet above Seawall Road and University Avenue. Further increasing the Pier elevation via ramp and stairs would not allow for the required emergency vehicle access to the Pier.</p>	5/11/2026 Exhibit 15