San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
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April 29, 2026

TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: **Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project in the City of Berkeley, in Alameda County; Second Pre-Application Review**
(For Design Review Board consideration, May 11, 2026)

Project Overview

Project Proponents
City of Berkeley and San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA)

Project Representatives
Liza McNulty, City of Berkeley Capital Improvement Program Manager

Project Location
The project is located at the Berkeley Waterfront along the San Francisco Bay in the City of Berkeley, Alameda County. As shown in Figure 1, the project site encompasses the closed Berkeley Pier, including the entry plaza for the Berkeley Pier; the San Francisco Bay waters around the closed Berkeley Pier; the parking lot on Seawall Drive; and adjacent roadways, including Seawall Drive and University Avenue up to Interstate 580 (I-580).

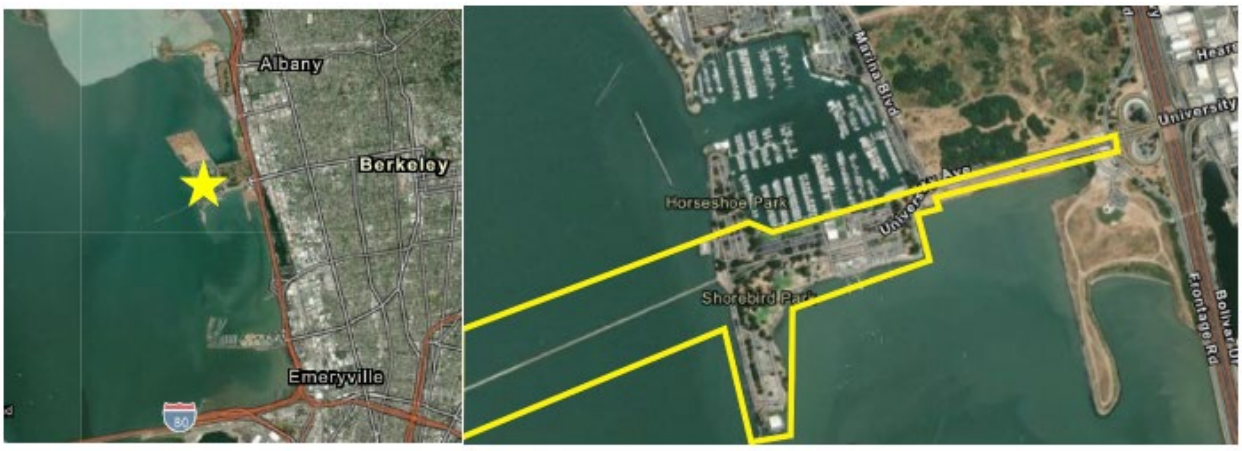

Figure 1. Project location and site boundary

Project Overview

The Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project (project) includes construction of a new pier, breakwater, and ferry terminal in San Francisco Bay, as well as landside improvements, including a new plaza, a public restroom, a Class IV bikeway (cycle track) on University Avenue, an improved San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) segment along Seawall Drive, and electric vehicle charging stations. The project would introduce a new, zero-emissions electric ferry service, operated by the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), linking Berkeley to San Francisco and Larkspur.

The proposal includes demolishing the existing closed fishing pier (BCDC-required public access) and replacing it with a new 1,080-foot-long public pier that would provide public access and include a ferry terminal. The new pier would be constructed with a new 400-foot-long breakwater. To support ferry operations, dredging would occur along an existing navigation channel, and infrastructure would be added, including ferry charging floats and embarkation facilities.

The project also includes improvements to the surrounding Berkeley Waterfront and roadways, such as roadway repaving and restriping of portions of University Avenue and Seawall Drive, expansion of existing AC Transit bus facilities, and the addition of passenger drop-off zones. The project will also involve parking lot renovations, landscaping, signage, lighting, and bike parking.

Summary of Previous Meetings

Design Review Board

The Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project has been presented before the Design Review Board at two previous meetings—first, for a project briefing on May 12, 2025, and, subsequently, for the project's first design review on November 3, 2026. The topics covered in these meetings are summarized below. ***Appendix A*** to this staff report provides a summary of Board comments and applicant responses.

1. **Project Briefing (May 12, 2025).** The project proponents presented a preliminary briefing on the project to the Design Review Board during the early design and environmental review stages. The intent of the briefing was to introduce the overall project concept within the context of the broader Berkeley Waterfront. At this meeting, the Board advised on project logistics, programming, circulation, parking, ferry operations, and community engagement.

2. **First Design Review (November 3, 2025).** During the first design review, the project proponents presented an overview of the major project elements with 30-percent design completed. This provided a more in-depth look at the Pier-Ferry, the Ferry Pier Entrance Plaza, and improvements to University Avenue. This presentation did not cover plans for planting, lighting, or signage for the project site, or the designs for the Seawall Drive Peninsula parking lot or Bay Trail extension. These project elements were identified as topics for a future review.

The May 11, 2026 review will be the second design review for this project. The presentation will cover the comprehensive design with the completion of 60-percent design materials, including plans for the Seawall Drive Peninsula, planting, lighting, and signage, which were not reviewed previously. This review will also address revisions made to the project since the November 2025 meeting in response to Design Review Board comments.

Engineering Criteria Review Board

The project has been presented before the Engineering Criteria Review Board at one meeting, on February 25, 2026, and is anticipated to return for a second meeting on May 27, 2026. The February meeting prompted multiple questions from the Engineering Criteria Review Board regarding the following topics: relevant engineering codes, shoreline stability, wave conditions and loading, sea level rise and elevation constraints, sleeve pile system design, and cumulative displacement. These topics will be the focus of the next meeting, when the project returns on May 27, 2026. The project team has provided additional information in response to these comments, which is available here: https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/354/2025/11/COWI-Responses.pdf

Project Site

Site History

Prior to its development, the Berkeley Waterfront was a tidal marsh, and its first known inhabitants were the Huchiun-Ohlone people. The site of one of the Bay Area's oldest Ohlone shellmounds, currently an asphalt parking lot at 1900 Fourth Street, is less than half a mile east of the project site. From the Gold Rush until the mid-20th century, the primary use of the Berkeley Waterfront was for commercial maritime transportation. As public pressure for Bay conservation mounted in the 1950s, Berkeley Waterfront land uses shifted from primarily industrial to a mix of commercial development, recreation, and public access.

The Berkeley Marina, as it exists today, is located entirely on Bay fill, the placement of which began in the early 20th century with the construction of private wharves, followed by the harbor now known as the Berkeley Marina. Filling continued through the early 20th century and ended after the establishment of BCDC in 1965, at which time the Commission approved a few final fill projects (through 1968) to expand public access, recreation, and limited commercial activity. César Chávez Park, located north of the Marina, was originally constructed in 1957 as a municipal landfill, but was capped and opened to the public as a park in 1991. Figure 2 shows the history of Bay fill at the Berkeley Marina from 1957 through to its current configuration established in 1993.

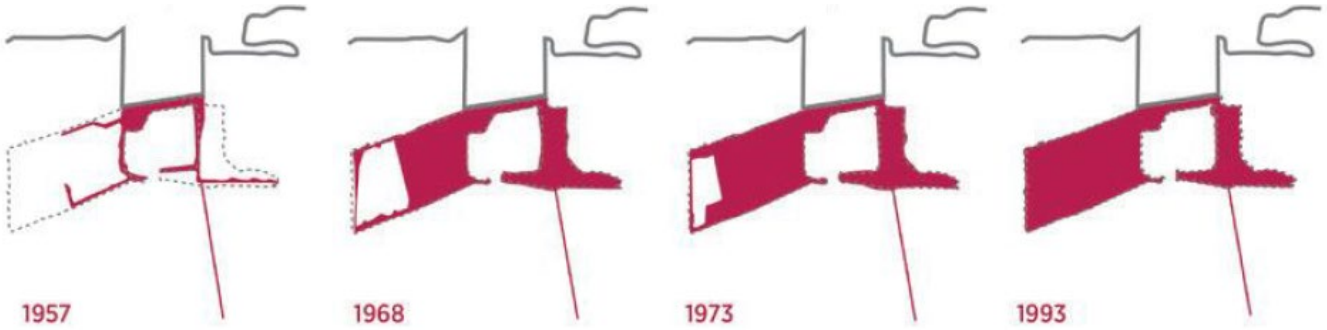

Figure 2. Bay Fill at the Berkeley Marina from 1957 to 1993
Source: 2024 Draft Berkeley Waterfront Specific Plan

In 1926, the Golden Gate Ferry Company constructed the Berkeley Municipal Pier to serve as a causeway extending from the original Berkeley shoreline at Second Street (east of Interstate 80) out to deeper water, where automobiles could board a ferry bound for San Francisco. The causeway was

acquired by the City of Berkeley following the opening of the Bay Bridge in 1937, which caused most ferry services in the region to be discontinued. The City operated the structure as a public fishing pier until its closure in 2015 due to structural deterioration. At this time, a condition assessment confirmed active instability and deemed it no longer safe for public use.

In 2019, in partnership with WETA, the City of Berkeley initiated a feasibility study to determine the feasibility and preferred layout for a new pier that would provide both recreation access and an all-electric ferry terminal. In 2021, after a multi-year process that included both technical analyses and public engagement, a preferred alternative was presented to the Berkeley City Council and WETA Board of Directors.

BCDC Jurisdiction

The project involves work in both BCDC's Bay jurisdiction and 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. Due to a complex history of Bay fill at the Berkeley Marina, coupled with insufficient aerial imagery during 1965, jurisdiction to the south of University Avenue within the Marina is difficult to confirm. Following an in-depth investigation of historical imagery and records, and coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' permitting division, BCDC staff feel comfortable accepting the jurisdictional boundaries presented by the project proponents and included on the exhibits to this staff report. Should new information become available, the jurisdiction determination may change. Regardless of the outcome of a jurisdictional determination, the design in this area supports public access improvements and, for that reason, is anticipated to be consistent with Bay Plan policies and the McAteer Petris Act.

BCDC Permitting History

Existing BCDC Permits at Project Site

The permitting history at the Berkeley Waterfront is extensive, ranging from minor capital improvement projects to major dredging, fill, and shoreline protection projects. The selected permits listed below are most relevant to the proposed project.

- **BCDC Permit No. 1966.028.00.** Authorized use of 40,000 cubic yards of dredged material from the South Sailing Basin to fill 4.6 cubic acres adjacent to the shoreline in 1966 "for a marina restaurant, public beach, park area, automobile parking, and a relocated and expanded University of California sailing facility." This permit has not been amended since the original authorization. Figure 3 shows the Bay fill authorized by this permit.

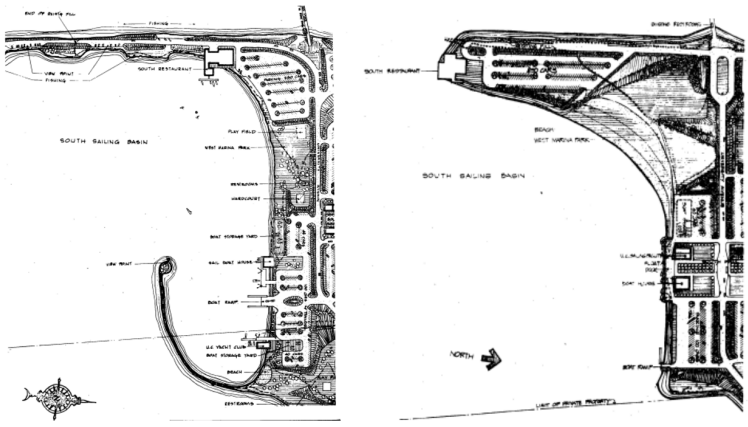

Figure 3: Fill authorized by BCDC Permit No. 1966.028.00 (before and after 1965)

- **BCDC Permit No. 1967.002.00.** Authorized filling of approximately 4.3 acres adjacent to the Berkeley Marina for a pedestrian plaza, automobile parking area, and waterfront walkway north of University Avenue and along Seawall Drive from the Berkeley Yacht Club to the fishing pier.

- **BCDC Permit No. 1979.005.17.** Authorized the mooring and use of no more than 100 live-aboard vessels, maintenance of wooden pilings and docks, repairs to utilities and marina infrastructure, and dredging activities within the Bay. Within the shoreline band, it authorized the establishment of several public access areas, landscape improvements, maintenance and expansion of public pathways, and use and maintenance of approximately 25,550 square feet of public parking lot. Required public access improvements included enabling the construction of a public access connection between the City's property and the neighboring parcels to the east and west to facilitate the completion of the Bay Trail. This is the primary permit for activities within the Berkeley Marina and has been amended 17 times since the original authorization.

- **BCDC Permit No. M1985.050.02.** Authorized construction activities at Shorebird Park, including the installation of ADA accessibility improvements for pedestrian circulation, site furnishings, restrooms, and access to recreation activities such as the tidepool areas and exercise courts. The permit also requires riprap maintenance and other general in-kind maintenance at the Berkeley Marina.

- **BCDC Permit No. 1982.006.03.** Authorized improvements to the Berkeley fishing pier. The fill placed to upgrade and expand the pier was permitted as fill for water-related recreation use and public access. Therefore, the entire length of the pier was required to be open for public access.

- **BCDC Permit No. M1982.088.01.** Authorized the placement of riprap as well as the replacement of an existing dock with a dock of equal size and the installation of a new 1,250-square-foot dock at the foot of University Avenue at the South Sailing Basin, with both docks to be used for hand-carried watercraft. The entire project area referenced in this permit is intended for public access, and additional public access improvements include: a new public path, site furnishings, and a boat drop-off area.

- **BCDC Permit No. M1998.063.00.** Authorized the construction, use, and maintenance of approximately 7,130 linear feet of a 12-foot-wide Bay Trail and rock slope protection along West Front Road from Virginia Street to Point Emery.

- **BCDC Permit No. M2007.008.04.** Authorized the construction of approximately 2,440 feet of a Bay Trail spur segment and improved windsurfing and water access between the UC Aquatic Center and Adventure Playground at the South Sailing Basin. The required public access improvements include a 1,400-square-foot footbridge, a 160-square-foot bus pad, landscaping improvements and site furnishings, a 500-square-foot windsurfer ramp and staging area, and a new public restroom.

- **BCDC Permit No. M2020.020.00.** Authorized street improvements, including at Spinnaker Way, Marina Boulevard, and University Avenue. Required public access included providing designated crosswalks connecting to existing Bay Trail, existing trail networks, and existing public recreation amenities; accessible curb ramps, connector paths, pedestrian access points,

and pedestrian refuge islands; a contiguous green space between the south side of the eastbound lanes and the Bay Trail; and replacement of old trash receptacles. Note that Permit No. M2020.020.00 also requires a new, comprehensive public access signage program that overlaps with the Pier Ferry project area. Proposed locations for "Public Shore" and "Bay Trail" signs related to the Pier Ferry Terminal work are included in Exhibits 17A and 17B.

Existing Conditions

Existing Uses and Public Access

The site is situated along the southwestern Berkeley Waterfront, which the San Francisco Bay Plan designates as a Waterfront Park/Beach Priority Use Area. Adjacent to the South Sailing Basin, the waterfront area to the south of University Avenue is a key destination for both land- and water-based recreational opportunities in the East Bay, and encompasses popular open spaces such as Shorebird Park, the Shorebird Nature Center, and Adventure Playground. At the South Sailing Basin—a popular destination for windsurfers, swimmers, and sailors alike—organizations like Cal Sailing and Cal Adventures provide water-based recreation services alongside public amenities such as the South Cove Launch Plaza (a public sailing dock), and a windsurfing staging area. At the end of Seawall Drive next to the former HS Lordships restaurant, which has been vacant since 2018, is a popular informal launch by advanced board sailors and swimmers. North of University Avenue, recreation amenities include the Inner Harbor Pathway and Horseshoe Park. Figure 4 identifies existing BCDC-required public access at the project site.

The Berkeley Marina is the largest public marina in the San Francisco Bay. It provides over 1,000 boat slips ranging in length from 20 feet to 84 feet. The Berkeley Marina is also home to the Berkeley Yacht Club and numerous other boating organizations, such as the Berkeley Racing Canoe Center and charter boats. Nearby commercial uses include the Skates on the Bay Restaurant, Hana Japan and Marina Dockside restaurants at Marina Mall, and the City of Berkeley Marina Offices.

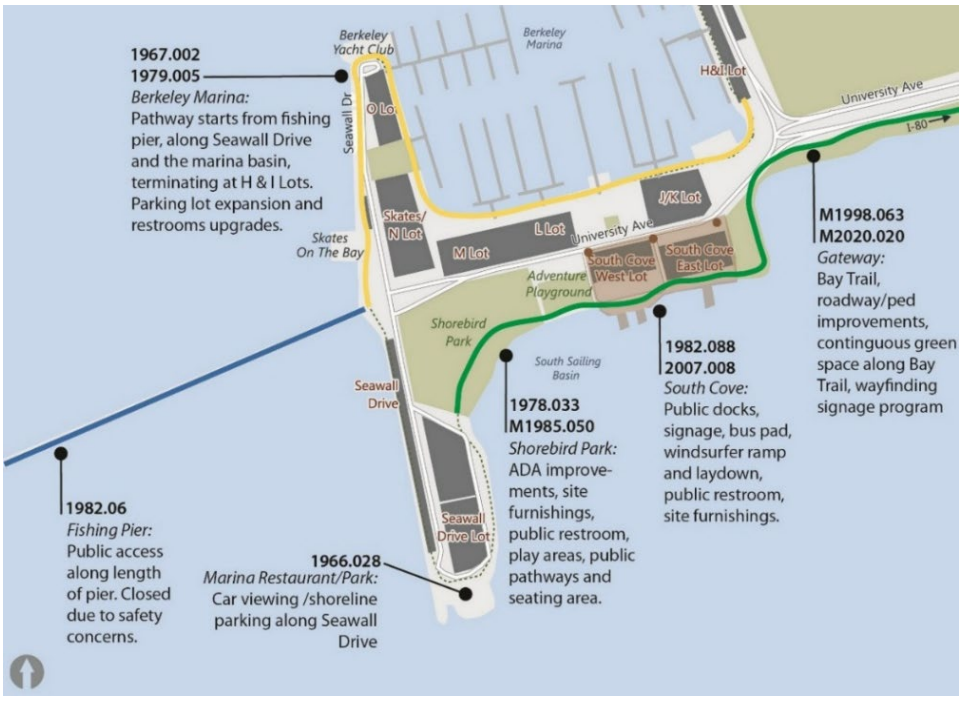

Figure 4. BCDC-required public access at the Project site

Site Circulation

The project site is currently accessed via University Avenue, which provides transit connections via bus through AC Transit line 51B. The existing Bay Trail alignment at this portion of the Berkeley Waterfront connects from Frontage Road and runs along University Avenue. The City of Berkeley recently improved the section of Bay Trail south of University Avenue from Frontage Road to the north side of Shorebird Park. From there, the trail connects to an existing section that is identified as Bay Trail on MTC's Interactive Bay Trail map, but that was not recently improved by the City, although it has been identified as a future project. This unimproved Bay Trail segment travels southwesterly through Shorebird Park.

The trail starting at the south side of Shorebird Park and continuing around the Seawall Drive Peninsula is an identified gap in MTC's Interactive Bay Trail map. The conditions at this section are varied. The surface is generally paved but fairly old, with roots and cracks, transitioning to dirt once you reach the parking lot on the eastern side of the peninsula. The trail in front of the former Hs Lordships restaurant is sidewalk, and the section along the western side of the parking lot that would be improved as part of this project is generally asphalt and at the same grade as the parking lot.

Project Description

Project Elements (First Design Review) – Summary of Previously Reviewed Elements

The project elements previously reviewed by the Design Review Board include:

1. **Pier, Breakwater, and Ferry Landing (Exhibits 1, 3-4, and 15).** The project includes construction of a new pier that is 22 feet wide and 1,080 feet long, connecting directly to the new plaza, with a 400-foot-long breakwater. The Pier and breakwater would be constructed at elevation +17.6, transitioning to elevation +16.5 feet at the Plaza (City of Berkeley Datum). This corresponds to a constructed elevation of +17 feet North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD88) for the Pier and breakwater, transitioning to an elevation of +15.9 feet NAVD88 at the Plaza. The layout of the Pier reflects the preferred alternative selected during the Feasibility Study. The proposed alignment generally follows the existing Pier alignment, with the addition of a breakwater.

   Updates: At the first design review for this project, the Design Review Board generally expressed support for the Pier design, layout, and connections, while requesting that the project proponents ensure furnishings and finishes were coordinated through the project as a whole. Additional information on lighting on the Pier was requested. The City of Berkeley plans to coordinate all final furnishing selections and all fixtures (including but not limited to guardrails, shade canopy elements, and light fixtures). A lighting plan has been presented for this review, and is presented in Exhibit 12 and discussed in the next section of this staff report. Site furnishings are presented in Exhibit 11. The color palette for the project would be neutral grays and metal with white accents provided by the canopy structure, and artist-created panels as gate infills at the Pier entrance. Site furnishings have been selected with a consistent design vocabulary of natural stone, metal, and concrete elements.

2. **Plaza (Exhibits 1, 3-4, 9A, and 15)** The Plaza would serve as an embarkation area and community space between Seawall Drive, University Avenue, the Pier, and the Bay Trail. A retaining wall with a guardrail along the Bay-side of the Plaza would be constructed to establish the finished elevation of +16.5 feet City of Berkeley Datum (+15.9 feet NAVD88). The Plaza

would include a public restroom (gender-neutral, with self-sanitizing fixtures), secure bicycle lockers, open-air bicycle racks, seating, planting, lighting and carefully framed views of the Bay. The Plaza design incorporates emergency vehicle access corridors to the Pier, as required by the City's Public Safety officials.

Updates: The Plaza design has been refined in response to Design Review Board feedback. The Plaza circulation has been streamlined, and paving materials have been simplified to an all-concrete palette (replacing the prior mix of asphalt and concrete) with reduced contrast of colored concrete surfaces to create a more subtle and cohesive material differentiation. The revised design maintains flexible, open space to allow for future temporary programming such as mobile vendors, markets, and events. In response to Board feedback encouraging more diverse public activations and a design with greater 'dignity' and connectivity, the project proponent has integrated public art as an interactive, connective, and activating element within the Plaza and adjacent landscaping along University Avenue and the Bay Trail. Art locations have been designated for a monumental sculptural beacon, interactive art in the Plaza, artistic gate infills at the Pier entrance, a parade of smaller sculptures along the Bay Trail, and artistic benches. These art pieces will be developed through the City's Public Art Commission process and installed as funding becomes available.

3. **University Avenue (Exhibits 1, 3-5, and 9A).** The project includes construction of a new raised and protected Class IV bicycle lane (cycle track) on University Avenue. The cycle track is intended to reduce demand for vehicle parking by ferry users, and to reduce user conflicts on the adjacent Bay Trail by providing bicycle commuters with a dedicated, direct route between the waterfront entrance and the Ferry. The project also proposes the relocation and expansion of AC Transit bus infrastructure at the western end of University Avenue and a designated passenger loading zone for personal and car-share vehicles.

   Updates: Based on feedback received during a public presentation at the Berkeley Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission in Spring 2025 and incorporated into the 60-percent design in December 2025, the sidewalk was reconfigured at the AC Transit Bus stop to allow for a 10-foot-wide sidewalk between the Bus Island and Plaza, which was previously designed at 5 feet. Additionally, striping to provide direction to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles throughout the project site has been designed to be consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Bay Trail Design Guidelines. This includes the use of bicycle and pedestrian images on pathways, the cycle track, and the Bay Trail; sharrows and lane markings where bicyclists transition to roadways; crosswalk striping; and text where appropriate.

4. **Parking (Exhibit 5).** The project would involve significant changes to Berkeley Waterfront's current parking and transportation demand management (TDM) strategy. In March 2025, Berkeley released a public draft of the Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project Parking and TDM Plan, as well as a May 2025 Addendum. The project contemplates utilizing three existing parking lots for future ferry user parking, including the Seawall and Skates/N Lots, which are immediately adjacent to the Ferry Plaza and within a 5-minute walk, as well as overflow perpendicular street parking at Marina Boulevard and adjacent lot, which is approximately 0.5 miles from the existing fishing pier, or a 10- to 12-minute walk.

Updates: The City is actively working on a detailed Parking Management Plan that will implement the parking strategies outlined in the previous BCDC Design Review Board presentation (specifically, the allocation of 200 parking spaces in the Seawall Drive Lot south of the pier and 75 parking spaces in the Skates/N Lot north of the pier to paid, full day parking; free full day parking on Marina Blvd; and the use of time limits to prohibit full-day parking by commuters at other parking stalls). The detailed plan will describe the particular stalls proposed to allow full-day versus time-limited parking as well as the specific time or duration limits implemented in the southern Waterfront area. The City anticipates publishing a draft of the plan in early May and conducting a public process on the draft plan prior to finalizing it for inclusion in the BCDC permit application.

The City of Berkeley has additionally compiled comments from Board members received at both the briefing and first design review meetings, and responses are included as ***Appendix A*** to this document.

Project Elements (Second Design Review) – New Elements for this Review
New Project elements that are being presented for the first time at the May 11, 2026, meeting include:

Bay Trail (Exhibits 6A-6C, 8, and 9B)
The project includes construction of a new Bay Trail segment along Seawall Drive, connecting the Plaza at the western terminus of University Avenue southward along the shoreline to the southern end of the Seawall Drive Peninsula. The existing pathway in this location is narrow, approximately 3-4 feet wide, and the surface is generally asphalt and at the same grade as the parking lot.

The new Bay Trail segment will be a minimum of 12 feet wide and constructed of asphalt. It will generally maintain a minimum 2-foot shoulder on each side, with one approximately 15-foot-long section as the trail enters the Plaza from the south where there is not room for full 2-foot-wide shoulders on both sides. The constrained shoulder in this section is a trade-off needed to have accessible parking closer to the plaza. The Bay Trail will be built at approximately the existing shoreline elevation, which is the post-project top-of-curb elevation for Seawall Drive of +13.5-14 feet City of Berkeley Datum (+12.9-13.4 feet NAVD88).

The trail design responds to three distinct conditions along its length, which are described below.

Bay Trail Next to Parallel Parking

Where the trail passes adjacent to parallel parking stalls along Seawall Drive, the trail width would be maintained at 12 feet minimum without the shoulders, with the parking configuration designed to avoid conflicts between trail users and parking activity. This allows for the placement of an accessible parking stall directly adjacent to the Plaza.

Bay Trail with Planted Buffer

Along the northern half of the parking lot, a landscape buffer would separate the Bay Trail from the parking lot drive aisle, with seating along the shoreside of the landscape buffer. The landscape buffer improves the user experience on the Bay Trail while providing habitat value, a windbreak and stormwater treatment.

Bay Trail at In-Car Bay Viewing

A section of the trail would run along perpendicular parking stalls preserved for an in-car Bay viewing experience. The trail would run in front of the parking stalls facing toward the Bay. The design for the Bay Trail in the area has been configured without a planting buffer to support an in-car viewing experience (Exhibit 8). The popularity of in-car viewing has been identified through the project's outreach and engagement process, and this feature has been included in the design in response to public comment.

Seawall Drive Parking Lot (Exhibit 10)

The Project includes the reconfiguration of the existing Seawall Drive Parking Lot. The proposed design was selected to maximize the number of public parking spaces while also incorporating the following improvements.

- **Seawall Drive Realignment.** Seawall Drive would be re-aligned to provide space for the expanded Bay Trail while maintaining in-car Bay viewing and the landscape buffer between the drive aisle and the Bay Trail and shoreline. This separation improves the safety and experience of trail users and allows for a more pedestrian-scaled edge condition along the Bay Trail.

- **Electric Vehicle Charging.** A minimum of 10 percent of the parking stalls would be equipped with electric vehicle charging infrastructure, consistent with the City's sustainability commitments.

- **Future Solar Panels (Exhibits 10 and 14).** The parking lot layout and lighting infrastructure are designed to accommodate future installation of solar panels over parking stalls should funding become available. The power generated by the solar panels may be used by WETA to power the electric ferries, or it may be used to support other uses at the project site. It is unknown if the solar panels will be included as part of the BCDC permit.

- **Shoreline Revetment Repair.** The project includes repair of the existing shoreline revetment (rip-rap seawall) along the Seawall Drive Peninsula, addressing existing deterioration and improving long-term shoreline stability.

The parking lot reconfiguration has been designed to maintain parking access for all existing waterfront user groups, including those accessing the Bay Trail and informal water access point, and the future ferry terminal. The parking layout, including designation of short-term and long-term spaces, will be consistent with the Draft Parking Management Plan for the Berkeley Waterfront, which is currently under development.

Landscaping (Exhibits 16A-16C)

A cohesive planting palette has been developed for the three primary landscape zones of the project: the Plaza, University Avenue, and Seawall Drive/Parking Lot. All plantings have been selected for performance in the coastal Bay environment, with an emphasis on California native and Mediterranean climate-adapted species that are drought-tolerant, wind-resistant, supportive of local habitat and likely to be resilient to changing climate. Trees have been selected based on demonstrated success within the Berkeley Marina.

Lighting (Exhibit 12)
The project includes comprehensive site lighting, intended to provide safe and attractive illumination across all project elements. All lighting would be dark sky compliant, minimizing light spillage and protecting the nighttime environment of the Bay. Fixtures are by the same manufacturer where practical. Most fixtures would be a light gray color to help them blend into the background during the day; lights attached to the white Pier canopy will be white.

The lighting design incorporates five fixture types coordinated to serve distinct functions and zones:

- An architectural quality Pedestrian Pole Light (16-foot poles) would provide pedestrian-scale illumination along much of the project at paths, the Bay Trail, and the Pier.

- In the plaza, taller (25-foot-poles) elegant directional multi-headed pole lights would allow for broad and even illumination within the plaza while maintaining a freely navigable open space free of poles.

- In the plaza and on the pier, Integrated Handrail Lighting in the pier and plaza guardrail would provide low-level lighting that aids wayfinding and adds ambient illumination accenting the pier edge.

- In-Ground Accent Lighting and Canopy Downlights would provide low-level lighting in the plaza and under the pier that provide visual interest and highlight art and gateway elements.

- In the parking lot, 23-foot-tall pole lights would provide efficient illumination of the parking lot and Seawall Drive. Their spacing will accommodate future photovoltaic panels shading parked cars.

Edge Conditions (Exhibits 8, 9A-13, and 16A-16C)
The project includes transitions to existing conditions at various locations, as described below.

Northern Plaza

North of the project, an existing sidewalk would continue along the shoreline. The pedestrian-only pathway along the Plaza would connect directly to this sidewalk. In areas where cyclists are on the roadway, on-pavement “sharrows” consistent with MTC Bay Trail Design Guidelines would alert drivers that cyclists are merging with the road in this location. Future improvements by others would continue the Bay Trail northerly from this location.

Shorebird Park

The existing section of Bay Trail that runs along Shorebird Park travels from Adventure Playground southwesterly through Shorebird Park, continuing south around the perimeter of the Seawall Drive Parking Lot. The segment of Bay trail starting at the south side of Shorebird Park and heading toward the former HS Lordships restaurant and leading around the peninsula is an identified gap in MTC’s Interactive Bay Trail map.

Under the new configuration, cyclists and pedestrians traveling westerly through Shorebird Park on the existing trail would have the option of connecting to the improved Bay Trail along Seawall Drive via an interim multi-use connector trail at the southern end of Shorebird Park, providing a safe and logical

option for users to continue to the shoreline and Pier without having to navigate the parking lot. See Exhibits 6A-6C.

Southern Limit of Bay Trail Improvement

The project would improve the Bay Trail along Seawall Drive. At the southern limit of the improvement, pedestrians will have the option of continuing along an existing sidewalk that continues past the vacant former restaurant and connects to the perimeter trail described above. "Sharrows" on the pavement will indicate to drivers that cyclists may be entering the roadway at this location. Future improvements by others would provide the connection between this project's Seawall Drive Bay Trail section and the improved Shorebird Park Bay Trail section.

To create a sense of destination and support existing uses of the informal water access point, the project proposes amenities such as a small laydown area, potable water connection, and seating and/or picnic tables.

Signage (Exhibits 17A-17C)

The project includes a comprehensive signage plan, including proposed locations for "Public Shore," "Bay Trail," and other public regulatory signage. As noted previously, an existing BCDC permit (BCDC Permit No. M2020.020.00) also required a comprehensive public access signage program for the street improvement project at the Berkeley Marina, which overlaps with the Pier Ferry project area.

Project Schedule

The City has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the project that was published on February 27, 2026, with the public review period closing on April 28, 2026. The City is preparing permit applications for BCDC, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and other jurisdictions with authority with expected submittals in summer 2026. Construction is expected to begin as early as April 2027. Completion of construction and initiation of ferry service is proposed for the end of 2028. The overall phasing of construction has not yet been determined and would depend on obtaining funds to construct the project, as well as completing permitting, final design, and bidding for construction. The Project may be completed in a single or multiple phases depending on these factors.

Social and Environmental Justice Planning Context

The Commission has developed a Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool to help inform its analysis of how socioeconomic indicators and contamination burdens contribute to a community's vulnerability to climate change. The mapping tool collects information at the level of Census block groups using American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 5-year estimate data and at the level of Census tracts using CalEnviroScreen 4.0, and is used by Commission staff to help identify communities where environmental justice may be a concern. These communities include those disproportionally affected by environmental pollution and hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation, and those with higher concentrations of people with socioeconomic characteristics indicative of a higher degree of social vulnerability.

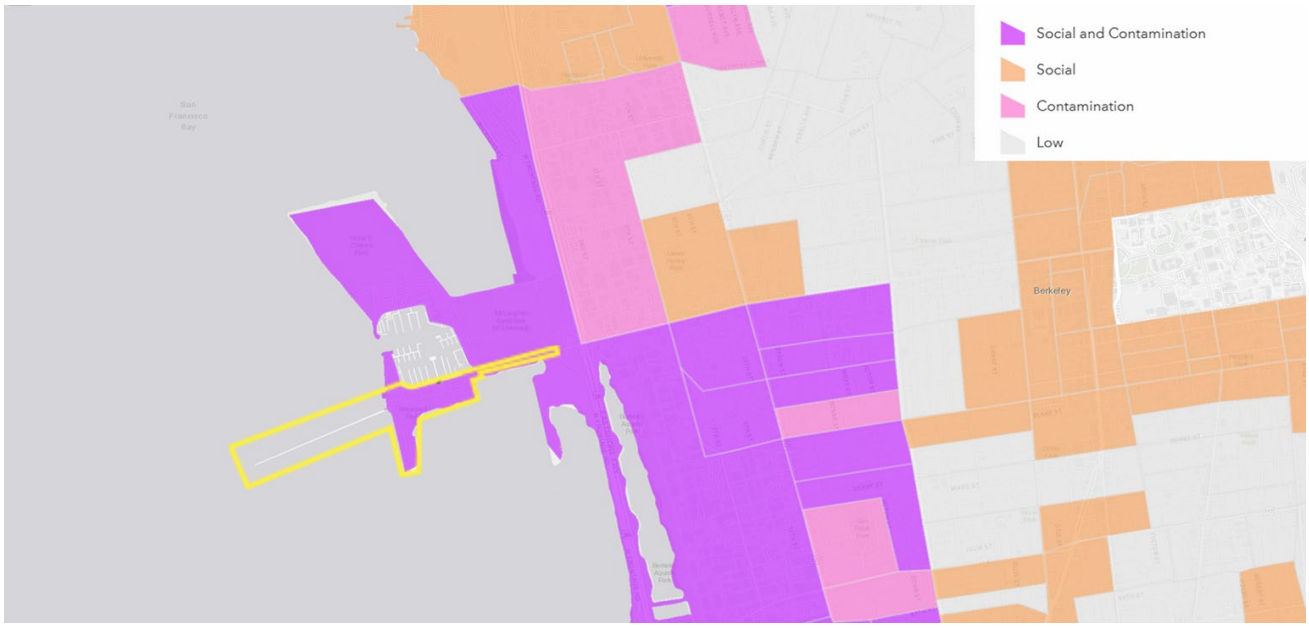

Figure 5. Community Vulnerability

According to the Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool, the project is located within a Census block group with a reported population of 1,698 people. The tool identifies the Census block group as having Moderate social vulnerability and Highest contamination vulnerability, based on the following indicators in the 90th percentile: presence of nearby cleanup sites, groundwater threats, presence of nearby hazardous waste sites, and vicinity to impaired water bodies. There are no social vulnerability indicators in the 90th percentile, and the social vulnerability indicators in the 70th percentile include: prevalence of renters, households with no vehicle, single-parent households, and individuals over 65 living alone. Other areas near the project site vary from Low to Moderate social vulnerability and Highest to Moderate contamination vulnerability.

Community Engagement

The City of Berkeley and WETA conducted virtual public outreach from January 2021 to October 2021 as part of the Feasibility Study for the proposed project. Activities included three focus group meetings, three community workshops, two City Council working sessions, and one questionnaire.

As of April 1, 2026, the City of Berkeley has conducted over 51 public outreach meetings, including meetings with the following groups and organizations:

- AC Transit
- Berkeley Black Ecumenical Ministers Alliance
- Berkeley Business District Network
- Berkeley Chamber of Commerce
- Berkeley Design Advocates
- Berkeley Democratic Club
- Berkeley Youth Commission
- Berkeley Neighborhood Council
- Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission
- Bike East Bay

- East Bay Conservation Committee
- Gilman Coordinating Committee
- Healthy Black Families
- Live Oak Community Center (Community Partner Resource Night)
- Save the Bay
- Shuttle operators
- Telegraph for People
- UC Berkeley Urban Studies Student Association
- Washington Elementary School (Black History Month Celebration)
- Walk/Bike Berkeley
- West Berkeley Shuttle Board
- WETA
- Youth & Parks Commission

Public feedback for the project received during this outreach effort was generally supportive, with specific suggestions relating to design elements (such as bicycle safety and parking, signage, and planning for future programming). The most common concern expressed during public engagement was that ferry riders will impact the ability for current and future recreation visitors to find parking.

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 Recreation; Public Access; Appearance, Design and Scenic Views; Shoreline Protection; Environmental Justice and Social Equity; and Climate Change.

The Berkeley Waterfront is a designated Waterfront Park Priority Use Area, and is identified in **Bay Plan Map 4, Policy 15:**

> "Preserve marina, beach, small boat launch, windsurfing access, fishing pier, interpretive center and multi-use trails**.** Possible ferry terminal. Allow if compatible with park and marina use; serve with bus public transit to reduce traffic and parking needs. Provide signage regarding fish consumption advisories for anglers."

Recreation

- **Policy 1:** "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 should be well distributed around the Bay and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels."

- **Policy 3.a(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.

- **Policy 3.f. "**Fishing piers should not block navigation channels, nor interfere with normal tidal flow."

- **Policy 9: "**Ferry terminals may be allowed in waterfront park priority use areas and marinas and near fishing piers and launching lanes, provided the development and operations of the ferry facilities do not interfere with current or future park and recreational uses, and navigational safety can be assured. Terminal configuration and operation should not disrupt continuous shoreline access. Facilities provided for park and marina patrons, such as parking, should not be usurped by ferry patrons. Shared parking arrangements should be provided to minimize the amount of shoreline area needed for parking."

Environmental Justice and Social Equity

- **Policy 3**: "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," and "evidence of how community concerns were addressed should be provided."

Climate Change

- **Policy 3**: "Projects should be designed to be resilient to a mid-century sea level rise projection. If it is likely the project will remain in place longer than mid-century, an adaptive management plan should be developed to address the long-term impacts that will arise based on a risk assessment using the best available science-based projection for sea level rise at the end of the century."

- **Policy 5**: "Wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged."

Shoreline Protection

- **Policy 1**: "New shoreline protection projects… should be authorized if:

    a. The project is necessary to provide flood or erosion protection for… proposed development, use or infrastructure that is consistent with other Bay Plan policies;

    b. The type of protective structure is appropriate for the project site, the uses to be protected, and the causes and conditions of erosion and flooding at the site;

    c. The project is properly engineered to provide erosion control and flood protection for the expected life of the project based on a 100-year flood event that takes future sea level rise into account;

    d. The project is properly designed and constructed to prevent significant impediments to physical and visual public access;

    e. The protection is integrated with current or planned adjacent shoreline protection measures;

f. Adverse impacts to adjacent or nearby areas, such as increased flooding or accelerated erosion, are avoided or minimized."

- **Policy 5**: "All shoreline protection projects should evaluate the use of natural and nature-based features...and should incorporate these features to the greatest extent."

Public Access

- **Policy 2**: "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."

- **Policy 5**: "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."

- **Policy 6**: "Public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding."

- **Policy 8**: "Public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project, the culture(s) of the local community, and the physical environment, including protection of Bay natural resources."

- **Policy 10**: "Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means."

Appearance, Design and Scenic Views

- **Policy 2**: "All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay."

- **Policy 14**: "Views of the Bay from vista points and from roads should be maintained by appropriate arrangements and heights of all developments and landscaping between the view areas and the water."

Transportation

- **Policy 4**: "Transportation projects on the Bay shoreline and bridges over the Bay or certain waterways should include pedestrian and bicycle paths that will either be a part of the Bay Trail or connect the Bay Trail with other regional and community trails. Transportation projects should be designed to maintain and enhance visual and physical access to the Bay and along the Bay shoreline."

- **Policy 5**: "Ferry terminals should be sited at locations that are near navigable channels, would not rapidly fill with sediment and would not significantly impact tidal marshes, tidal flats or other valuable wildlife habitat. Wherever possible, terminals should be located near higher density, mixed-use development served by public transit. Terminal parking facilities should be set back from the shoreline to allow for public access and enjoyment of the Bay."

Public Access Design Guidelines

- Public access should be designed "so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user's appreciation diminished by large nearby building masses, structures, or incompatible uses."

- Public access improvements should be designed for a "wide range of users" and should "provide basic public amenities, such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities."

- Designs should maximize "user comfort by designing for the weather and day and night use."

- Viewing the Bay is the "most widely enjoyed 'use'," and projects should be designed to "enhance and dramatize views of the Bay and the shoreline from public thoroughfares and other public spaces."

- Designs should incorporate "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."

Public Access Design Objectives

- **Objective No. 3**: "Provide, maintain, and enhance visual access to the Bay and shoreline," for example, by "locating buildings, structures, parking lots, and landscaping of new shoreline projects such that they enhance and dramatize views of the Bay and the shoreline from public thoroughfares and other public spaces."

- **Objective No. 4**: "Maintain and enhance the visual quality of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent spaces," for example, by "providing visual interest and architectural variety in massing and height to new buildings along the shoreline," "using building footprints to create a diversity of public spaces along the Bay," "locating service facilities away from the shoreline," and "utilizing the shoreline for Bay-related land uses as much as possible."

Board Questions

Staff recommends the Board frame its remarks of the proposed public access improvements considering the existing permit requirements and the proposed development project. The Board may wish to refer to the public access objectives found in the Commission's Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed public access improvements with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.

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 Board have any recommendations on the proposed trail networks and the adequacy of connections to and along the waterfront? Does the various programming along the edge conditions of the new Bay Trail segment feel cohesive?
2. Does the Board have recommendations on the proposed plant and materials palettes?
3. Are there questions or concerns from the previous review that the Board would like to revisit? As different design elements have been presented across multiple reviews, does the Board feel that any additional information is needed showing how the design works as a whole?
4. Is the design of the proposed solar canopy at the Seawall Drive parking lot configured in a way that minimizes view impacts to the Bay? Are there other layouts that could be considered to help maximize Bay views?
5. Is the proposed Pier elevation sufficiently resilient to sea level rise for the life of this structure, given that the existing pier was in use for close to a century? Does the project design overall provide sufficient flexibility for future adaptation to sea level rise?