

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

50 California Street • Suite 2600 • San Francisco, California 94111 • (415) 352-3600 • Fax: (415) 352-3606 • www.bcdc.ca.gov

September 28, 2012

TO: Commissioners and Alternates
FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653 lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Lindy Lowe, Senior Planner (415/352-3642 lindyl@bcdc.ca.gov)
SUBJECT: Briefing on the San Francisco Waterfront
(For Commission information only)

Staff Summary

On March 1, 2012, the Commission approved amendments to the *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan* allowing the relocation of the City and County of San Francisco's primary cruise ship terminal to Pier 27 and the possible retention of the entire Pier 23 shed. The amendment, which was requested by the Port of San Francisco, eliminated an open water basin, reduced public access and Bay views on and around Pier 27, and changed the public plaza planned for Pier 27. In order to replace these public benefits, the amendment required that public access and shed removal be sited on nearby piers and that the Port and BCDC initiate public processes to identify a new open water basin, new locations for public spaces and an evaluation of the Port's historic resources and its approach for preserving the Embarcadero Historic District. This staff report provides an overview of the public process that the Port and BCDC staffs have developed for this planning.

Staff Report

Background. Over the last decade, the San Francisco waterfront has undergone a number of changes. There are more public spaces, more restaurants and retail, better views and public access, and many areas that the public could not access are now popular, well-loved spaces. The pace of this change over the last several years has continued and appeared to increase, including the relocation of the Exploratorium to Pier 15, the 34th America's Cup events, the James R. Herman Cruise Ship Terminal and the development of the Brannan Street Wharf public open space.

Many of these recent projects have required amendments to the *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan* (SAP) and this has created a concern that, rather than being comprehensively planned, the waterfront is being planned with a project-by-project approach. Rather than projects fitting into a well-considered network of open spaces, Bay views and public access and adhering to comprehensive approaches to parking, transportation and historic preservation, some believe these issues are being addressed as an afterthought. In response to these concerns, the recent amendment for the cruise ship terminal project required a planning process to examine key issues, taking a waterfront-wide approach. It is anticipated that this process will engage other issues too, including other waterfront development plans and proposals.



Making San Francisco Bay Better

On March 1, 2012, the Commission approved a resolution to amend the SAP. The amendment, requested by the Port of San Francisco, relocated the City of San Francisco's primary cruise ship terminal to Pier 27, allowed the possible retention of the entire Pier 23 shed and affected a number of the public benefits that the SAP required at Pier 27. The affected public benefits include an open water basin located between Piers 19 and 27, the removal of a portion of the Pier 23 shed to open up views of the Bay, a public plaza oriented to the new open water basin and shed removal and public access along the apron of Pier 27 and the end of Piers 27 and 29. In order to ensure that equitable benefits will be provided along the waterfront, the amendment required that public access and shed removal be sited on nearby piers. Additionally, the amendment required that the Port and BCDC staffs initiate several planning efforts to identify new locations for an open water basin, new public spaces and an evaluation of the Port's historic resources and approach to preserving the Embarcadero Historic District. The purpose of this briefing is to outline the process for these planning efforts, including the groups and organizations that will be included in the San Francisco Waterfront Working Group, the subcommittees, an overview of the material that will be developed and a schedule for the planning efforts.

Required Planning Processes. The cruise ship terminal amendment required the following planning efforts be conducted:

1. Identify the location and design of an open water basin and public plaza around Pier 43 in Fisherman's Wharf and develop a strategy for financing and implementation of both the open water basin and the public plaza by 2015;
2. Identify the location for an open water basin in the Northeastern Waterfront geographic area from Pier 35 to China Basin, focusing on an area between Pier 29 and Pier 33 and a plan for Phase 2 of the open space required at the end of Piers 27-29. Develop a financing and implementation plan for the open water basin and pier end open space by 2015;
3. Identify strategies for ensuring that the contributing resources to the Embarcadero Waterfront Historic District are either rehabilitated or removed within a certain number of years of being closed to occupancy; and
4. Address the relationship between maritime use and public access and other issues that are raised during the planning process.

Scope of Planning Process. Initially, the planning processes required in the SAP amendment were envisioned as three separate processes. While developing the work plan for these three planning efforts, it became clear that there was a need for a process that considered all of these issues comprehensively, but allowed for more detailed analysis based on geographic location, or to address a specific issue. The process, developed collaboratively with Port staff, attempts to achieve this balance by convening a waterfront-wide working group that will be responsible for looking at all of the issues comprehensively and creating several subcommittees to work on specific issues, or within certain geographic areas. The current plan is to work with the waterfront-wide working group for the first six to nine months, develop the necessary subcommittee(s) during that time and begin working with these subcommittee(s) in the Summer or Fall of 2013.

The following is an overview of the work tasks associated with the planning efforts in 2013:

1. In partnership with the Port of San Francisco, convene a San Francisco Waterfront Working Group consisting of the following groups—San Francisco Architectural Heritage; Telegraph Hill Dwellers; Save the Bay; San Francisco Tomorrow; representatives from geographic areas including the Northeast Waterfront, Ferry Building, South Beach and, Fisherman's Wharf; and stakeholders representing: the public realm; San Francisco city-wide interest(s), walking and biking, maritime industry, water recreation, economic development and the legislative aides for Supervisors David Chui and Jane Kim;

2. In partnership with the Port of San Francisco and the San Francisco Waterfront Working Group, create subcommittees to work on specific geographic areas or subject matter issues. Examples include: a subcommittee to assist in the planning for the Fisherman's Wharf open water basin and public plaza and/or a subcommittee to assist in developing strategies for stewardship of the Embarcadero Historic District; and
3. Provide quarterly updates to the Port and BCDC Commissions regarding progress and outcomes of the planning process.

The current timeline for the project is:

1. October–November 2012: Convene working group.
2. December 2012 or January 2013: First working group meeting where Port and BCDC staffs will present background and overview material, including the objective of the planning process and needed outcomes. The background material will include an analysis of the pier and shed condition and elevation. Additionally, the costs and opportunities for various strategies, including rehabilitation and re-use or removal of all or a portion of the piers and sheds will be presented. Define meeting schedule and subject matter for each meeting. Begin to identify subcommittee needs.
3. February 2013–December 2013: Bi-monthly meetings of working group. Topics and issues addressed at these meetings will include: (1) waterfront public spaces, bay views and recreation (including public access, open water basins, shed removal, public plazas, water-oriented recreation) (this topic will require two meetings), (2) financing strategies for public improvements and historic resource preservation, (3) historic resources and the Embarcadero Historic District, (4) transportation and parking, (5) Fisherman's Wharf public plaza and open water basin opportunities, (6) opportunities for an open water basin at Piers 29-33 or other site between Piers 35 and China Basin, and (7) current and future Port projects and development plans.
4. January 2013–December 2013: Provide regular updates to the San Francisco Port Commission and BCDC.
5. September 2013: Begin to convene and work with any necessary subcommittees.
6. December 2013- onward: Determine the next steps for the process, including working with subcommittees, identifying the necessary components of an amendment to the SAP and continuing to work closely with the Port to develop the planning, financing and implementation strategies necessary for the development of a public plaza and open water basin in Fisherman's Wharf, a new open water basin in the Northeast Waterfront from Pier 35 to China Basin and a strategy for maintaining the integrity of the Embarcadero Historic District.