

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

FROM: Will Travis, Executive Director [415/352-3653 travis@bcdc.ca.gov]
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SUBJECT: San Francisco Marina West Basin Expansion Project; First Review
(For Board consideration on April 12, 2010)

Project Summary

Applicant: San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department

Project Representatives: Craig Lewis, Winzler and Kelly; Mary Hobson, San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department

Project Site. The project area is within the West Basin of the San Francisco Marina, which is located along the northern waterfront in the City and County of San Francisco, between Crissy Field to the west and Fort Mason to the east (Exhibit 1). The West Basin is bounded by Marina Boulevard and the western edge of the Marina Green to the south, Yacht Road and the outer jetty to the north, the harbor entrance to the east, and Yacht Road to the west. The Golden Gate Yacht Club and the St. Francis Yacht Club are also located along the shoreline of the West Basin. The West Basin covers about 1,100,000 square feet of water area (25.25 acres) and approximately 39 acres of land area (including sidewalks, gangways, and parking areas) (Exhibit 2). Existing facilities within the project site include the Harbormaster Office Building (which houses public restrooms and tenant showers), a refreshment concession stand at the west end of the marina, four parking areas (a total of approximately 719 spaces), and slips to accommodate 322 boats (Exhibits 3 and 4).

Background. The San Francisco marina is used year-round as a recreational boating center. Berths at the marina are in high demand, with an active waiting list of several hundred boat-owners. Both harbors have degraded due to deferred maintenance, damage from wave action and storms, and routine use. Some damaged marina facilities have been removed over the years (due to the cost of repairs), and many of the existing docks and associated utilities have become obsolete or unsafe for marina tenants, guests, and other users.

Project Purpose. The goals of the proposed project are to: (1) upgrade the marina facilities and utilities to meet current marina standards and to provide ADA-compliant features; (2) install breakwaters to attenuate wave and storm energy; and (3) provide a new layout that improves navigation and berthing conditions and accommodates larger and more boats in the West Basin.



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Project Status. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared by the City of San Francisco Planning Department (Planning Department) and certified on January 11, 2007. Since that time, the applicant made modifications to the project design, including substituting a floating breakwater for one of the proposed fixed breakwaters, adding additional rip rap to repair the outer jetty and seawalls, and modifying the layout of the floating docks and boat slips to accommodate a larger number of boats. The Planning Department issued an addendum to the EIR on February 25, 2010 that includes an analysis of the revised project. BCDC staff received an application for the project, which involves a material amendment to an existing major permit, on October 7, 2009. The application has not yet been filed as complete. The Commission will likely hold a public hearing and vote on the project sometime this summer.

Proposed Project. Proposed improvements to the West Basin include: (1) installing a 300-foot-long by 15-foot-wide floating breakwater and a 185-foot-long by 1.5-foot-wide fixed sheet pile breakwater; (2) removing the Scott Street mole (breakwater) and a portion of the West Street mole; (3) replacing, expanding and reconfiguring the floating docks and boat slips which would result in an increase in the number of boat slips from 322 to 369; (4) upgrading the electrical, water, and telephone systems, installing a fire suppression system, and adding new lighting to the docks; and (5) placing rip rap to repair the existing sea walls and outer jetty.

The reconfiguration of the boat docks and slips would include replacing all piles, installing two new ADA-compliant gangway ramps, installing an oily water and sewage pumpout and refurbishing two existing pumpouts, and realigning approximately 40% of the slips from a north-south orientation to an east-west orientation to face the prevailing winds for safer maneuvering. In addition, the project proposes to renovate the interior of the existing Harbor master's office to create showers and rest room facilities for tenants and to upgrade existing public restrooms so that they are ADA-compliant, and renovate the vacant Degaussing Station building for use as the new Harbormaster's Office.

Along with improving the marina facilities and dock layout, the project proposed to excavate an 18-foot-deep sand trap on the southeast side of the outer jetty to capture sand which accumulates at the entrance to the West Basin on a regular basis. The Commission previously authorized the excavation of a 55-foot-deep sand trap outside the mouth of the harbor, to the north of the tip of the outer jetty, in 2007, but the applicant never excavated the sand. The proposed project would relocate the sand trap inside the outer jetty to an area where sand shoals form on a regular basis and inhibits navigation in and out of the West Basin.

The proposed project would result in an increase of approximately 33,460 square feet of floating fill in the Bay (new boat docks and floating breakwater) and would a net decrease of approximately 16,000 square feet (8,150 cubic yards) of solid fill through the removal of the Scott Street Mole and a portion of West Street mole. In addition, the project would add 2,985 square feet of cantilevered fill (new ramps and gangways) and 1,075 square feet of pile-supported fill (upper ramp landings and public access seating area).

Existing Public Access. The West Basin of the San Francisco Marina and the surrounding areas (such as Crissy Field and Marina Green) are heavily used by the public. Within the project site, access currently exists along sidewalks (both paved and unpaved) that run around the entire West Basin and along the entire outer jetty, on the Scott Street Mole, and on an approximately 1,245-square-foot area of the West Mole where the public can sit on benches and also access the public restrooms inside the Harbormaster's Office (Exhibit 3). Other public access attractions within the vicinity of the project area include the Wave Organ (at the tip of the outer jetty), the historic

lighthouse (adjacent to the Golden Gate Yacht Club), and Last Chance Beach (on the north side of the outer jetty). The four parking lots within the project site also provide a total of approximately 719 parking spaces; approximately 495 spaces are open to public, 206 are solely for boaters using the marina, and 18 spaces are for disabled persons.

Proposed Public Access. As noted above, the proposed project would eliminate approximately 2,700 square feet of public access by removing the Scott Street mole. To compensate for the loss of this access and to increase public access on-site, a number of improvements are being proposed (Exhibits 5 and 6). Firstly, the project would open up the entire West mole to the public, which would create approximately 7,445 square feet of new access. The new open space on the west mole would be designed to eliminate the existing parking spots (with the exception of retaining one spot for loading and unloading) and would provide a seating area at the end with two benches (Exhibits 7 and 8) and six additional benches in the center. In addition, the project would create an approximately 2,200-square-foot public access plaza area on the east side of the Harbormaster's Office. This plaza would have install four new benches in and around the plaza area and removable bollards at the southeast corner to allow emergency vehicles access to the West mole as needed. Interpretive signage would be added to create a public overlook on the north side of the plaza; in addition, the applicant has proposed the possibility of using the upper ramp of the ADA-accessible gangway, located approximately 95 feet to the east of the plaza, as a public overlook area. Further, the project would create two bulb-out seating areas along Marina Boulevard (a total of 840 square feet) by eliminating four tenant parking spaces (Exhibit 9) and installing benches and planters in each location. Finally, the project would install four new benches on the north side of the West Basin in a grassy knoll adjacent to the St. Francis Yacht Club, construct a 1,700-square-foot guest dock and a new 600-square-foot human-powered boat launch at the east end of the West Basin (both of which would be usable by the public), allow access on two ADA-compliant gangways (one on the north side and one on the south side of the basin), create 2 new ADA-accessible parking spots, install a new crosswalk and other sidewalk improvements along Marina Boulevard, and add new directional signage throughout the project area (Exhibit 5).

With the creation of the new public access area on the West mole, the new plaza and overlook at the east end of the Harbormaster's office, and the two new bulb-out seating areas along Marina Boulevard, the project would result in a net increase of approximately 7,785 square feet of public access area.

Issues. At this first review of the proposed project, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department will be presenting an overview of the preliminary project design and public access features. The Board's advice is sought on whether the proposed public access design is consistent with the Commission's *San Francisco Bay Plan* policies on Public Access and Recreation and the Commission's *Public Access Design Guidelines*:

1. **Adequate, usable, and attractive public access spaces.** The *San Francisco Bay Plan* policies on Public Access state that "a proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible" and that the public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval "should be consistent with the project and the physical environment..." and "...should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline..." The *Public Access Design Guidelines* state that public access spaces should be designed to create a "sense of place", and should "maximize comfort, [and] take advantage of existing site characteristics." The *Guidelines* further state that "[v]iew opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site's inherent public access opportunities."

The Board should evaluate whether the general sizes and dimensions of the proposed public access areas are appropriate to accommodate the expected level of use by the public in and around the West Basin site. The Board should also consider whether the new spaces would provide attractive and inviting experiences for the public (for example, are the bulb-out seating areas designed to provide a comfortable experience for users, would the public regularly venture out to the new public access area on the West Mole, etc.) or whether alternative public access improvements would provide a greater public benefit. In addition, the Board should consider whether the total amount of proposed public access areas and improvements is the maximum feasible public access relative to the scope of the project and relative to the adjacent uses along the waterfront. Finally, the Board's advice is sought on the details of the proposed public access improvements.

2. **Connections to the Proposed Public Access Areas.** The *Public Access Design Guidelines* state that, "access areas are utilized most if they provide direct connections to public rights-of-way such as streets and sidewalks..." and "should be planned in collaboration with local governments" to provide for future connections. The *Guidelines* further state that this may be accomplished by "providing connections perpendicular to the shoreline at regular intervals...to maximize the opportunities for accessing and viewing the Bay" and by "connecting shoreline public access with the local park and open space system, public buildings, shopping districts and other public spaces."

The Board should evaluate whether the proposed design and locations of the public access areas and features provide, maintain and enhance the visual quality of the Bay, waterfront and adjacent developments. The Board's opinion is also sought on whether the proposed design provides continuity and clear connections to public rights-of-way and other adjacent public access areas, such as Crissy Field, the Marina Green, Fort Mason, and along the northern San Francisco waterfront.

3. **Diverse and Accessible Water-Oriented Recreation.** The *San Francisco Bay Plan* policies on Recreation state that "diverse and accessible recreational facilities...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 board range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels." These Recreation policies also state that "...marinas should include public amenities, such as viewing areas, restrooms, public mooring docks or floats and moorages for transient recreational boaters, non-motorized small boat launching facilities, [and] public parking..." Further, the policies state that non-motorized small boat launching facilities "should be accessible and designed to ensure that boaters can easily launch their watercraft." The *Public Access Design Guidelines* further state that projects should "provid[e] opportunities to get close to the water or access the Bay by incorporating facilities such as tidal stairs, ramps or floating docks" and that "public access areas must be developed to allow use by the public, free of charge."

The public access proposal includes a new guest dock and dinghy dock for non-motorized small boats. However, these facilities would be located at the far east end of the reconfigured boat docks and would be behind locked gates. The public would have access to these facilities but would have to make arrangements with San Francisco Marina staff to gain entry to the dock area and may have to pay a fee to use the facilities.

The Board should advise the Commission as to whether the proposed public access areas and design features provide an adequately diverse and accessible water-oriented recreation

experience for the public. The Board's opinion is also sought as to whether the design and location of the small non-motorized boat launch adequately serves the public.