

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

February 25, 2011

TO: All Design Review Board Members

FROM: Will Travis, Executive Director [415/352-3653 travis@bcdc.ca.gov]
Karen Weiss, Coastal Program Analyst [415/352-3669 karenw@bcdc.ca.gov]

**SUBJECT: Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, City and County of San Francisco;
First Pre-Application Review**
(For Board consideration on March 7, 2011)

Project Summary

Project Sponsor: Candlestick State Parks

Project Representatives: Steve Musillami, California State Parks

Project Site. The 132-acre site is located along an approximately 3.3-mile-long section of the southeastern waterfront in the City and County of San Francisco (Exhibit 3). The project site includes the existing 72-acre Candlestick Point State Recreation Area (State Park), and an expansion area that includes, Yosemite Slough to the west, the south side of the South Basin, and all land areas bayward of Hunter's Point Expressway.

The existing 72-acre State Park is unpaved with trails, restrooms, picnic facilities, two fishing piers, lookout points, an abandoned boat launch, and a popular windsurfing beach adjacent to Hunters Point Expressway (Exhibit 6).

The State Park contains Monterey pine and cypress trees that serve as nesting and foraging habitat for common bird species. During spring and fall, small numbers of migrant songbirds forage in the trees. The adjacent Bay provides foraging habitat for grebes, ducks, gulls, terns, double-crested cormorants, and California brown pelicans. In the South Basin, foraging and resting waterbirds are common, including surf scoters, greater scaup, lesser scaup, double-crested cormorants, and Caspian terns. Intertidal mudflats are limited primarily near the mouth of Yosemite Slough. Double Rock, an island in the South Basin, supports 10 to 15 pairs of nesting western gulls.

Proposed Project and Public Access/Amenities. The proposed project would involve expanding and improving the existing Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. The proposed 132-acre park would include zones of tidal marsh habitat, grassland and coastal native shrub areas, active recreation areas, urban agriculture areas, beaches, and administrative/maintenance facilities (Exhibits 12, 15 and 16). According to the project proponents, the State Park would create a vibrant recreational waterfront park that would provide multiple connections to the redevelopment proposed by the Candlestick Point-Hunters Point Development Project landward of the State Park. The proposed State Park extends the existing San Francisco Bay



Making San Francisco Bay Better

Trail from Yosemite Slough along the shoreline of the entire park to create an approximately 3.3-mile-long Class One trail (Exhibit 8). The project also includes a California State Parks information center within the surrounding community to further interface with residences and visitors.

The project would also increase public transit to the surrounding area and provide approximately 300 to 500 parking spaces throughout the park for visitors. The parking lots would be located at: the Last Port; behind Hermit's Cove; near the windsurfer facility; adjacent to Jack Rabbit Beach; west of Candlestick Meadows; and on both sides of Yosemite Slough (Exhibit 7).

Distinct Character Areas. The proposed redeveloped State Park would consist of six distinct character areas that include:

1. **Yosemite Slough.** Although the restoration of Yosemite Slough has already been permitted, the complete restoration of this area would be completed as part of the expansion of the State Park. General improvements in this area would include view overlooks, a picnic area, bird habitat with a bird viewing area, a parking lot and a park maintenance facility. Major components of the redevelopment of this area include tidal marsh restoration, a community garden and an interpretive center (Exhibits 13).
2. **South Basin Shoreline.** Located east of Yosemite Slough, the South Shoreline Basin will connect to the Yosemite Slough improvements via a boardwalk underpass under a bridge proposed by the Hunters Point Redevelopment Project. The proposed project would convert the existing parking lot to State Park land that would include: a segment of the Bay Trail, an overlook, an outdoor classroom and interpretive center, a new fishing and viewing pier, as well as tidal marsh restoration areas, upland grassland habitat and a small lawn for recreation (Exhibit 26, 27 and 28). In order to create tidal marsh along the south basin, portions of the shoreline would be removed and an adaptive management zone area would be created to withstand sea level rise up to 36 inches.
3. **Candlestick Meadows.** According to the project proponents, Candlestick Meadows is proposed to be an active area serving as an urban interface to the proposed redevelopment inland. The tidal marsh area would continue along the slough, and portions of this area would be graded to create a terraced amphitheater, provide wind protection and spatial definition, and a network of trails. In addition, the proposal includes a rain garden and bioswale with a pedestrian bridge to collect and filter stormwater. Recreation improvements include a parking lot with nearby transit connection, a restroom and a large amphitheater that would provide Bay views and host occasional special events (Exhibits 29 and 31). This portion of the park would also be constructed to withstand a 36-inch sea level rise and adaptive management (Exhibit 30).
4. **Heart of the Park and the Point.** The Heart of the Park area is intended to provide multiple recreational activity opportunities. The project proponents propose to alter the shoreline edge to enhance and expand Jack Rabbit Beach, create landforms for wind shelter, and withstand sea level rise up to 36 inches. Active recreation activities include a pier for an ADA-accessible non-motorized boat launch, recreational lawns, a bicycle and boat rental facility with educational boating programs, concession stands, and a restroom (Exhibits 32, 33, and 34).

The Point would be accessed via a boat landing on the beach or pedestrian and bicycle trails. Facilities for a bicycle or boat-in camping facility would be provided, as well as a restroom and viewing area. The existing pier would provide additional fishing opportunities and sweeping views of the Bay.

5. **The Neck and Hermit's Cove.** The south side of the proposed State Park would enhance the existing windsurfing staging and launching area and provide a water access ramp and secondary non-motorized boat launch. The existing pier at The Neck, which is currently closed due to vandalism, would be relocated slightly to the west and re-constructed as a groyne to facilitate the accretion of sand and the expansion of the existing beach at Hermit's Cove. The relocated pier would continue to provide opportunities for viewing and fishing. The beach at Hermit's Cove would be enhanced and grassy terraces adjacent to the beach would provide easy beach access and picnic areas (Exhibits 35, 36 and 37).
6. **Last Port.** The southern point of the park would include a park entry node from the peninsula, as well as meandering trails along the shoreline. Proposed improvements include an enhanced beach at Candlestick Cove, a parking lot and restroom, and an interpretive plaza with iconic art to mark the park's end (Exhibits 38 and 39).

Bay Fill. Bay fill for the proposed enhanced State Park would be limited to public access viewing and fishing piers. The proposed project would utilize the existing pier at The Point, while a new pier directly north of Jack Rabbit Beach would provide ADA-accessible access to the Bay for non-motorized boats, such as kayaks. A second new public access pier proposed along the South Basin Shoreline would provide additional viewing and fishing opportunities in the northern portion of the park.

Further, the tidal marshes proposed along the slough would result in Bay fill removal and enhanced Bay habitat along the shoreline. Since the proposed project is still in a conceptual design phase exact Bay fill and removal numbers have yet to be determined.

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies. The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) **Public Access** policies state, in part that, "a proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible." Further, these policies state that access should "be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline," be designed—using the Commission's *Public Access Design Guidelines*—"to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline," be conveniently located near parking and public transit, "permit barrier-free access for the physically handicapped...and include an ongoing maintenance program." Additionally, these policies state in part that, "public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife." Further, "[s]iting, design, and management strategies should be employed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife, informed by the Public Access Design Guidelines."

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state in part that, "all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay" and that "maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore." These policies also state, in part, that "[s]horeline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay," and, further, "towers, bridges or other structures near or over the Bay should be designed as landmarks that suggest the location of the waterfront when it is not visible especially in flat areas."

The Bay Plan **Recreation** policies state that development “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, beaches, public parking, [and] substantial physical and visual access...” These policies also state in part that, waterfront parks should also include launch facilities for a variety of boats, including non-motorized, and camping facilities accessible by boat.

The Bay Plan **Safety of Fills** policies state in part that, “[t]o prevent damage from flooding, structures on fill or near the shoreline should have adequate flood protection including consideration of future relative sea level rise as determined by competent engineers.” Additionally, the policies state that, “[t]o minimize the potential hazard to Bay fill projects and bayside development from subsidence, all proposed development should be sufficiently high above the highest estimated tide level for the expected life of the project or sufficiently protected by levees...”.

Lastly, the **Bay Plan Map No. 5** identifies the proposed Candlestick Point State Recreation Area as a waterfront beach/park priority use area with the note: “Some fill may be needed. Preserve fishing, camping, picnicking, windsurfing, hiking and viewing opportunities. Potential water trail camping site. Provide signage regarding fish consumption advisories for anglers.” The Bay Plan Map also identifies part of the proposed Hunters Point Shipyard site as a port-priority use area noting: “Develop shoreline park and integrate with Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, consistent with San Francisco redevelopment plan. Potential water trail camping site. Some fill may be needed.” It should be noted that implementation of the proposed project at the Candlestick site would require an amendment to Bay Plan Map No. 5 to change or delete the site’s current waterfront beach/park priority use designation. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency is working with BCDC planning staff on a Bay Plan amendment for the project.

Public Access Issues. At this conceptual stage, the applicant and staff are seeking the Design Review Board’s input and advice on the general concept of the proposed public access and open space, habitat improvements and recreational facilities.

The staff believes that the project raises four primary issues for the Board to address in its review: (1) whether the proposed project provides adequate, usable and attractive public access spaces, and whether the project provides adequate connections to and continuity along the shoreline; (2) whether the proposed public access is sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife; and (4) whether the proposed project is adequately designed to address the effect of sea level rise on public access areas.

1. **Does the proposed project provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access spaces?** In addition to the Bay Plan Public Access policies, the *Public Access Design Guidelines* (Guidelines) state that public access spaces should be “designed and built to encourage diverse, Bay-related activities along the shoreline”, to create a “sense of place”, and be “designed for a wide range of users.” The Guidelines also state that, “access areas are utilized most if they provide direct connections to public rights-of-way such as streets and sidewalks...” The Guidelines further state that this may be accomplished by “incorporating the designated Bay Trail route into shoreline projects and providing clear and continuous transitions to adjacent developments.”

The proposed project would link an approximately 3.3-mile-long section of the Bay Trail, north to the proposed Hunters Point redevelopment site, provide a park entry node to connect to the community to the south, and create numerous connections throughout the State Park to the proposed redeveloped community to the west. It would also create a variety of habitat and recreational opportunities including: marsh restoration, three public access piers, beaches, two small boat launching facilities with rental options, concession stands, restrooms, picnic tables, a plaza with art installation, an amphitheater and outdoor class room, a camping site, a windsurfer launch area, and recreational lawn areas.

The Board should advise the Commission and the project proponents whether the proposed public access areas are sufficient to accommodate the expected level of use and variety of users, whether they are designed to take advantage of existing site characteristics and opportunities, whether they facilitate access in and through the developed areas, and whether they are conveniently located near transit and parking facilities.

2. **Is the proposed public access sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife?** In addition to the Bay Plan Public Access policies, the *Public Access Design Guidelines* (Guidelines) state that public access spaces should, “employ appropriate siting, design and management strategies (such as buffers or use restrictions) to reduce or prevent adverse human and wildlife interactions,” and “providing visitors with diverse and satisfying public access opportunities to focus activities in designated areas and avoid habitat fragmentation, vegetation trampling and erosion.”

The proposed project includes marsh restoration along Yosemite Slough, a bird habitat area, as well as a bird viewing area. The proposed project also includes a variety of habitats including tidal marsh, grassland and scrub habitat, coastal native landscaping, a seasonal rain garden, and lawn areas.

Board should advise on whether the proposed project is sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife.

3. **Is the proposed project adequately designed to address the effect of sea level rise on public access areas?**

The project proponents propose an adaptive management strategy for addressing future sea level rise and flooding. The strategy would involve initially raising shoreline areas to withstand an approximately 36-inch sea level rise, with the option to adapt to a larger increase in the future (Exhibits 19, 20, 21, 27, 33 and 36).

The Board should advise on whether the proposed adaptive management approach for addressing sea level rise and flooding would be adequate for maintaining the public’s maximum use of the shoreline and views of the adjacent Bay.