

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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March 27, 2013

TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Ellen Miramontes, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; ellenm@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of February 11, 2013 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** The Design Review Board's Chair, John Kriken, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 p.m. Other Design Review Board members in attendance included Karen Alschuler, Cheryl Barton, Ephraim Hirsch, Jacinta McCann and Stefan Pellegrini. BCDC staff in attendance included Bob Batha, Jaime Michaels and Ellen Miramontes.

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for January 7, 2013 Meeting.** The Board approved these minutes with the one addition. Chair Kriken asked that the following statement be added to Board Discussion item number 4 on page 4:

"Mr. Kriken further stated that existing water-related uses, including The Ramp and boat repair areas, are very important to preserve as waterfront activities and these types of uses should not be removed in order to make way for higher cost public park areas."

3. **Bon Air Bridge Replacement Project, City of Larkspur, Marin County (Second Pre-Application Review)** The Board conducted its second pre-application review of the City of Larkspur's proposal to replace the Bon Air Bridge located above Corte Madera Creek in the City of Larkspur, Marin County. The proposed pile-supported bridge would include one vehicular lane in each direction, sidewalks and Class I bike lanes. In its review, the Board mainly focused on the four issues raised at its meeting of December 10, 2012: the bridge height and possible clearance for recreational boaters; the lighting design and effects on public safety and wildlife; the lane widths and feasibility of building belvederes on the bridge; possible Bay view impacts associated with bridge railings; and how bike lanes and sidewalks on the bridge would connect to facilities located on either end of the bridge.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Jaime Michaels introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report.

b. **Project Presentation.** Bob Cermak, a Senior Project Manager with Parsons Brinckerhoff, introduced Mary Grace Houlihan who is the new Director of Public Works and City Engineer for the City of Larkspur. He then described the project and how the proposal had changed since the Board's first review. Don MacDonald, with MacDonald Architects, also contributed to the presentation regarding several design aspects. In summary Mr. Cermak and Mr. MacDonald responded to the following five issues raised by the Board at their previous review as follows:

(1) **Feasibility of Water Access:** Mr. Cermak explained that the underside of the bridge would be approximately 1.5 feet lower than it currently is and that the types of boats that use this waterway would continue to be able to do so.



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(2) **Lighting:** Mr. Cermak described the lighting analysis that had been conducted and explained that it had been determined that the proposed lighting would be sufficient. The proposal includes six 21-foot-high lights on each side of the bridge.

(3) **Bridge Width:** Mr. Cermak described the bridge cross section which includes two 12-foot-wide lanes, two 5-foot-wide shoulders, two 5.5-foot-wide bicycle lanes and two 6-foot-wide sidewalks. He provided justification for all of the widths chosen. Ms. Houlihan addressed the Board's previous comments regarding the desire for belvederes. She explained that the city council was concerned about creating an attractive nuisance by providing belvederes, which had been considered in earlier design concepts.

(4) **Railing Transparency and Height:** Mr. Cermak explained that the project proponent was able to reduce the outer railing height from 54 inches to 42 inches due to a change in the standards. Mr. MacDonald explained how the design of the grass reed railing had been simplified. Mr. Cermak discussed the comparison of void versus solid space percentages between the existing and proposed railings.

(5) **Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections:** Mr. Cermak explained how the sidewalks and bicycle lanes connect at all four corners of the bridge.

c. **Board Questions.** The Board members asked the following questions:

(1) Mr. Hirsch asked for clarification between what was shown on Exhibits 2 and 4. He also asked why the light pedestals could not be pulled closer in and made smaller. It was explained that the lights needed to be set outside of the sidewalk area.

(2) Ms. McCann asked whether there was a revised elevation for the bridge. Mr. Cermak said there was not although he described how the overall design had been revised.

(3) Mr. Kriken asked what color the metal work would be. Mr. MacDonald explained that it would be teal green based on input from the community.

(4) Ms. Alschuler wondered whether the lighting placement had been affected by the diagonal alignment of the bridge supports. Mr. Cermak explained that during the design process they determined that they needed to skew the pilings in order for them to align with the creek current. Ms. Houlihan further noted that from a perspective in the water the lights would line up with one another.

(5) Mr. Kriken observed that it appeared the light would shine upwards from the acorn-style light. Ms. Houlihan noted that a shield would be placed within each fixture to prevent light from shining upwards.

(6) Mr. Hirsch asked whether the 21-foot-high light was an optimum height and wondered whether it could be shorter. Mr. Cermak explained that if the light were shortened, it would no longer meet the requirements to allow for facial recognition.

(7) Mr. Hirsch asked whether the grass reed railing is a standard item to which the applicants responded that it is a custom design.

(8) Mr. Pellegrini inquired about the geometry of the light pedestal resting atop the horizontal girders set on an angle. Mr. MacDonald provided a simple sketch to explain how these elements would fit together.

d. **Public Comment.** There were no public comments.

e. **Board Discussion**

(1) Ms. McCann appreciated the project proponent's efforts to respond to the Board's questions and stated that she believed the changes enhanced the design.

(2) Mr. Kriken agreed and stated that he was pleased with the responses provided.

(3) Ms. Alschuler was pleased to see the smooth connections on and off the bridge at each corner. She noted that it was hard to judge whether future recreational boating access would be affected.

(4) Mr. Kriken shared that a 6-foot-high clearance was provided for the San Antonio (Texas) river walk and observed that even with projected sea level rise, this clearance would nearly be maintained (the clearance was estimated to be 5.45 feet in 2050).

(5) Ms. Hirsch questioned the curved nature of the top rail on the grass reed outer railing.

(6) Ms. McCann noted that the inner vehicular barrier railing and the outer grass reed railing exhibit two very different characters. She observed that in order to help resolve this difference in character, it may be worthwhile to explore the use of stronger horizontal members for the outer railing.

(7) Ms. Alschuler noted that the lowered height of the outer railing would provide improved visibility towards the creek.

(8) Mr. Pellegrini stated his appreciation for the revisions and agreed that the lowered outer railing would be beneficial. He also shared his belief that a shared pedestrian and bicycle path, rather than a separated sidewalk and bicycle lane, could function well for this location. He further noted that the new Caltrans standards adopted in January (2013) still need to be tested and understood regarding how they may affect public access.

e. **Project Proponent Response.** Ms. Houlihan stated her appreciation for the Board's attention to detail. She further noted that the City of Larkspur is a very strong cycling community and there is a belief that it is important to keep bicyclists separate from pedestrians. She also mentioned that careful consideration regarding the construction timing and staging was underway in order to minimize impacts upon wildlife. She concluded by stating her belief that the proposed railings would be wonderful to look through and she thanked the Board for its input.

f. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board had no further conclusions beyond what they shared during their discussion.

4. **Adjournment.** Mr. Kriken adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN MIRAMONTES
Bay Design Analyst

Approved, with corrections, at the
Design Review Board Meeting of April 8, 2013.