

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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**TO:** All Design Review Board Members  
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**SUBJECT: Crane Cove Park at Port of San Francisco Pier 70, City and County of San Francisco  
(Second Pre-Application Review )  
(For Board consideration on June 10, 2013)**

## Project Summary

**Project Proponent and Property Owner:** Port of San Francisco

**Project Site.** Pier 70 is a 69-acre site owned by the Port of San Francisco, generally bound by Mariposa Street at the north, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street at the south, Illinois Street at the west and San Francisco Bay at the east (Exhibit 1). The site is the longest continually operating civilian ship repair yard in the United States and is home to the largest drydock on the west coast of the Pacific. Ship repair uses are limited at the northeastern boundary of the project site, which the *San Francisco Bay Plan* ("Bay Plan") designates as a Port Priority Use Area (Exhibit 3). The remaining areas are primarily composed of deteriorated and unused industrial facilities related to historic shipbuilding uses. The shoreline consists of discarded concrete, debris, and sheet pile walls.

The project for this Design Review Board meeting is limited to the nine-acre area proposed for the creation of Crane Cove Park located within the Pier 70 boundaries. The proposed Crane Cove Park surrounds and includes an intact concrete ship-building slipway (a ship-launch ramp used to construct ships) and includes two additional buried slipways, smaller pile supported slipway over the Bay, buildings, a historic fence, remnant rail tracks, welding platforms, two cranes, other industrial structures, and debris.

**Proposed Project and Public Access.** The Port of San Francisco conducted a multi-year planning process with the goal of developing Pier 70 into a mixed-use district with restored historic structures, public open space, and on-going ship repair operations at the northeastern corner of the project site. Crane Cove Park would be the first project implemented under the Port's plan and would be a part of the proposed National Register Historic District. Future projects would include rehabilitation of historic buildings near 20<sup>th</sup> Street and the development of the southern waterfront portion of the site (Exhibit 3). A portion of the proposed Crane Cove Park site would be built within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. Proposed shoreline treatment and rehabilitation would occur within the Commission's Bay jurisdiction.

As proposed, Crane Cove Park would consist of the following different areas as shown in Exhibit 7.

1. **Open Green.** An open, multi-use lawn bordering Illinois Street constructed with a playground and seating areas. Creation of the open space would involve relocation of a building near Illinois Street, with retention and relocation (to construct a sidewalk along Illinois Street) of a historic iron fence along Illinois Street with openings at various points along the street.



2. **Slipway 4 and Keel Park.** Crane Plaza would be created using the edges of Slipway 4. One of two large cranes (Crane 30) at the slipway would be preserved and used as a visual element at the plaza. Keel Park would be constructed within the preserved portion of Slipway 4. Keel blocks would be reused on the concrete slab as seating areas, ramps, and visual interest elements. The concrete slipway would offer water access for launching human-powered boats. The second of two large cranes (Crane 14) at the slipway would be placed near the shoreline at the slipway, in line with 18<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. **Building 109 Forecourt.** A forecourt would be created around Buildings 109/110. The forecourt would consist of decomposed granite (DG) and be planted with trees for shade, retention of freight rail tracks would be integrated into the DG, provide seating, picnicking areas, and a playground. Building 110 is proposed to be used as an outdoor café.
4. **Maritime Fields.** This area has been substantially redesigned since the first pre-application Design Review Board review on January 7, 2013. See response to Item 10 below for more details.
5. **Waterfront edge.** The waterfront edge would be cleared of debris. A landing and launching area for human-powered boats would be located between Slipway 4 and the Ramp Restaurant at Mariposa Street, and would consist of a sloped beach of gravel or rounded pebbles bordered by riprap. A curved walkway would connect the public access adjacent to the Ramp Restaurant and Illinois Street to the interior of Crane Cove Park.

Nineteenth Street, which is proposed to be extended, would provide direct access to Crane Cove Park. The proposed Crane Plaza would be open at the intersection of 19<sup>th</sup> and Illinois Streets. Access would be available from Illinois Street through openings in a preserved historic fence. Building 109 would include a pedestrian walk through the building opening to Slipway 3. The area north of the Kneass Boatworks building at the northern end of the project site and an opening at 18<sup>th</sup> Street would provide a gateway into the waterfront edge area. Water access would be available at the boat launch beach and at Slipway 4. The park would be adjacent to the San Francisco Bay Trail located on Illinois Street. Eventually the Bay Trail would be aligned in the park as the remainder of Pier 70 and the former Potrero Power Plant area is developed. Water access into and out of the park would allow Crane Cove Park to become a designated San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail access point

**Relevant Commission Law and Policies.** The McAteer-Petris Act (“Act”) provides—and the Bay Plan reiterates—that maximum feasible public access consistent with the project be provided.

The Bay Plan policies on **public access** state, in part:

“[Required] public access improvements...should be consistent with the project and the physical environment...and provide for the public's safety and convenience. The improvements should...permit barrier free access for persons with disabilities to the maximum feasible extent, should include an ongoing maintenance program, and should be identified with appropriate signs.”

“Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided...”

“Public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding.”

The Bay Plan policies on **appearance, design, and scenic views** state, in part:

“All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, [and] from the Bay itself...”

The Bay Plan policies on **recreation** state, in part:

“General Recreation Facilities should...be well distributed around the shores to the Bay...”

“New beaches should be permitted if the site conditions are suitable for sustaining a beach without excessive beach nourishment.”

“Public launching facilities for a variety of boats and other water-oriented recreational craft, such as kayaks, canoes and sailboards, should be provided in waterfront parks where feasible...”

“Because of the need to increase the recreational opportunities available to Bay Area residents, small amounts of Bay fill may be allowed for waterfront parks and recreational areas that provide substantial public benefits and that cannot be developed without some filling.”

**First DRB Review.** In its first pre-application review of the project on January 7, 2013, the Design Review Board (DRB) and the Port of San Francisco’s Waterfront Design Advisory Committee (WDAC) requested that the project applicant consider the following, as stated in the minutes from the meeting:

1. There should be a common understanding of what the future development sites might contain including proposed uses and heights;
2. Sea level rise should be carefully considered and with this exploration more detailed cross sections should be provided. Once people become connected to a public space they often want to protect it and may not be willing to allow rising sea levels to inundate the shoreline as a part of the intended design. The proposal to allow for sea level rise should be explicitly thought through;
3. More information about the phasing of the project should be provided;
4. Public safety should be carefully considered;
5. Treatment of the Bay edge should be further refined;
6. A clear and continuous path closer to the shoreline edge should be provided;
7. The industrial feeling of the site should be maintained;
8. Stormwater treatment should be carefully considered;
9. An opportunity to be elevated in order to provide views down should be explored;
10. The uses and design of Zone 4 (Maritime Fields) should be reconsidered;
11. Explore design concepts to pull the whole design together; and
12. Provide more information on the proposed boating facilities and how they will function.

The project proponents responded to the Boards’ feedback as follows:

1. **There should be a common understanding of what the future development sites might contain including proposed uses and heights.** The project applicant states:

“The Port’s 2010 Pier 70 Preferred Master Plan balanced goals across entire site, including historic preservation, retention of ship repair, creation of new open space, new development and remediation of site contaminants and delivery of new infrastructure to support site access and uses. In doing so development was distributed across the entire site, including adjacent to the future Crane Cove Park.

Once more detailed planning began for Crane Cove Park, it was recognized that one of the parcels (between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Street) compromised the visibility and access from Illinois Street and ultimately the park and thus the site between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> street was relocated to the north of the park. It must be recognized that the development parcel located between 18<sup>th</sup> street and the Kneass building is within BCDC's Shoreline jurisdiction and that acceptance of this use within BCDC jurisdiction is an ultimate benefit to the overall park design and plan, rather than placing it outside their jurisdiction near 19<sup>th</sup> street.

The Port has begun to study the adjacent development parcels including height and massing; preliminary recommendations for the parcels include:

- a. Design and programming should support the activation of the park;
- b. New development will be compatible with the Pier 70 Historic District;
- c. Size and scale should be compatible with surrounding development;
- d. Curb cuts along Illinois Street will be limited;
- e. Sufficient buffer will be provided between rear of building and park to ensure the park is recognized and enjoyed as public space;
- f. New buildings will be designed to accommodate views and access to park site;
- g. A concept under consideration is to relocate the Kneass building towards Mariposa Street to consolidate the new development parcel.

Design of development of these parcels will be subject to design review."

2. **Sea level rise should be carefully considered and with this exploration more detailed cross sections should be provided.** The project applicant has incorporated sea level rise projections into its design for Crane Cove Park, providing protection for most of the public access amenities while accepting some flooding over time into slipways and along the waterfront edge. Exhibits 11-14 illustrate sea level rise projections to 2100.
3. **More information about the phasing of the project should be provided.** Exhibit 15 illustrates the phasing plan for the project. The Port notes that Phases 2 and 3 could be switched. The schedule for Phase 3 depends on the evolution of the future development parcels and the need to elevate the area up to four feet.
4. **Public safety should be carefully considered.** The project applicant states:
 

"The Master Plan, including the phasing program was developed with public safety as a consideration. The park was designed for maximum visibility from the adjacent street and will be lit for safety and security. The later phases will be fenced off and the initial phase will allow park closure during evening hours. In addition, accommodations have been made for emergency vehicle access, and the Port is working on tenanting and maintenance strategy (within park and adjacent) to maximize activity within the park."
5. **Treatment of the Bay edge should be further refined.** As described in Response #10, the Maritime Fields area has been substantially redesigned to replace the previously proposed hard seawall with a dynamic wetland environment, subject to tidal action, and transitioning to upland scrub and meadow vegetation. This is illustrated in Exhibits 8-10.
6. **A clear and continuous path closer to the shoreline edge should be provided.** Exhibits 16-18 describe the potential pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle routes through the site. The Board should consider these proposed diagrams and whether any potential movement conflicts may occur. The Board should also determine whether "a clear and continuous path closer to the shoreline edge" has been provided.

7. **The industrial feeling of the site should be maintained.** The applicants have highlighted the historic industrial elements of the site while balancing opportunities for recreation and open space. Additionally, although the Port has redesigned the Maritime Fields to provide a more natural shoreline experience, the redesign maintains some of the historical traces of the slipways while also providing protection from contaminants.
8. **Stormwater treatment should be carefully considered.** Exhibit 20 provides a description of the proposed soil, paving materials, and infiltration across the site.
9. **An opportunity to be elevated in order to provide views down should be explored.** The project applicant states:

“This concept was explored, the primary opportunity exists through the use of the historic cranes, however to provide required accessibility to all would alter the historic resource (crane) in a manner that would impact the historic integrity. Additionally the cost of doing so make the opportunity prohibitive.”
10. **The uses and design of Maritime Fields should be reconsidered.** The Port has redesigned the Maritime Fields area in response to Board comments. The filled slipways would be excavated to expose the area to tidal action. A tidally-influenced shoreline would be created, transitioning north-to-south from intertidal shoreline plants followed by upland scrub, no-mow meadow plants, and ending in a decomposed granite paved area. Traces of the industrial character would remain by retaining the existing remnant concrete crane foundations, however the area would function as habitat. Slipways 2 and 3 would include seating and event space, while the no-mow meadow would be available for relaxation. Upland scrub and tidal areas would use recycled ship building cribbage for informal access, and the area would include relics from throughout Pier 70 to provide interpretive opportunities. Slipway 1, which was originally excluded from development, would remain in its current condition due to its weakened structural integrity, but would feature a fenced off-leash dog area. The original design included a boardwalk along the northern edge of Slipways 2 and 3 to provide an overlook for visitors. This has been replaced with a new wharf bridge extending over the proposed tidal shoreline.
11. **Explore design concepts to pull the whole design together.** The project applicant believes the planning context seamlessly incorporates the management, interpretation, and use of historic resources with new recreational and open space opportunities. Each element highlights the historic character of Crane Cove Park, providing a unified design concept.
12. **Provide more information on the proposed boating facilities and how they will function.** Exhibit 19 depicts where hand-launch boats would be stored and indicates movement from and to those areas. Exhibit 19 indicates where vehicular circulation would be allowed for boat drop-off. Exhibit 21 illustrates the proposed boat launching facilities within Slipway 4. The Board should consider the proposed plan for boating users at the site.

*The DRB should consider whether the project proponent has adequately responded to and addressed its earlier requests to further enhance proposed public amenities and provide additional design details for the proposed project.*