

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600, San Francisco, California 94102 tel 415 352 3600 fax 415 352 3606

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

FROM: Larry Goldzband, Executive Director [415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov]
Erik Buehmann, Principal Permit Analyst [415/352-3645; erik.buehmann@bcdc.ca.gov]

**SUBJECT: Burlingame Point, City of Burlingame, San Mateo County
(First Post-Permit Review, BCDC Permit No. 2013.001.01)
(For Board consideration on September 12, 2016)**

Project Summary

Project Proponent and Property Owner: Burlingame Point, LLC; City of Burlingame.

Project Representative: Jay Wilson for Gensler

Project Overview and Site Conditions. On November 24, 2014, the Commission issued BCDC Permit No. 2013.001.00 to 350 Beach Road, LLC, and the City of Burlingame, authorizing the construction of a replacement shoreline rock riprap revetment system, two 100-foot-wide, 815-foot-long public access areas along the shoreline, a realigned roadway, and new stormwater infrastructure. The authorized project included the development of a campus composed of six buildings (including a parking structure and an “Amenities Building”) a realigned road, and a pedestrian/bicycle path bridge, at an approximately 20-acre site located north of state Highway 101 and east of Sanchez Channel, at 300-333 Airport Boulevard, in the City of Burlingame, San Mateo County (Exhibits 2, 3, and 4).

After the BCDC permit was issued but prior to construction, the property was purchased by Burlingame Point LLC and the project was redesigned, including the public access areas. Burlingame Point LLC seeks an amendment to the existing BCDC permit to allow changes to the originally-approved design, including the redesign of the public access areas. (Exhibit 4).

The project site, formerly a drive-in movie theater, is presently undeveloped, except for Airport Boulevard located at the eastern and northern site boundaries. (Exhibits 2 and 3). Shoreline protection along the western shoreline at Sanchez Channel is comprised of oversized concrete roadway segments from the former San Mateo Bridge that was demolished decades ago. Shoreline protection along the site’s eastern shoreline is comprised of similar concrete road segments and degraded riprap. The San Francisco Bay Trail is located along both Beach Road and the project site’s eastern shoreline.

BCDC Permit No. 2013.001.00 required two 100-foot-wide public access areas spanning the length of the site, on the east side of the site adjacent to Sanchez Channel and on the western side adjacent to the Bay, totaling approximately 3.7-acres (161,172 square feet). (Exhibit 18). The permit required two 815-foot-long, 12-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian paths along each shoreline public access area, four Bay overlooks, irrigated landscaped areas with lighting, a minimum of 20 benches, ten trash receptacles, and six drinking fountains divided between the two areas, a minimum of eight public access signs, four way-finding signs, four interpretive signs, 30 public bicycle parking spaces, and 20 dedicated public vehicle parking spaces.

The revised project includes construction of five buildings providing a total of 766,757 square feet of commercial office space is proposed: two 5-story buildings, one 7-story building, and one 8-story building; and a two-story Amenities Center, all located outside of the Commission's jurisdiction. A parking structure is also proposed outside of the Commission's jurisdiction. Airport Boulevard would be realigned away from the eastern shoreline and through the proposed campus. Approximately 100-foot-wide public areas would be developed adjacent to both Sanchez Channel and the eastern Bay shoreline.

Pre-Application DRB Reviews. The project, as originally designed, was reviewed by the Board twice prior to permit issuance. At its first review on July 11, 2011, the Design Review Board (DRB) requested that developer consider creating wind protected areas, revise the Bay Trail alignment to straighten the pathway at the northern site boundary and the creation of an improved pedestrian connection from Beach Road through a corridor between the proposed Amenities Building and the parking structure, provide more developed plans showing the proposed bay overlooks, educational nodes, and originally-proposed reach-downs, illustrate proposed stormwater treatment features, landscaping, site furniture and lighting, and identify public parking.

At its second review on October 8, 2012, based on revisions and additional exhibits and plans provided by the developer, the Board recommended using cellular material for planting in place of riprap, warned against using invasive plantings, but otherwise supported the project.

Design Review Issues. The Board's comments and advice are sought on four general issues regarding the proposed redesign of the public access improvements at Burlingame Point, while considering applicable BCDC policies and guidelines as noted below:

1. **Do the redesigned shoreline public access areas provide adequate pedestrian and bicycle connections to and along the shoreline and is the choice of paving appropriate for the use at the site?**

The San Francisco Bay Plan (Bay Plan) policies on *Public Access* include, in part:

“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.”

BCDC's Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“[Shoreline development should] provide a clear and continuous transition to adjacent developments,...use local public street networks to inform shoreline site design and to extend the public realm to the Bay,... [and] provide connections perpendicular to the shoreline....”

The Guidelines recommend that designers, “[u]se paving surface materials, such as asphalt, concrete or stabilized decomposed granite, that are appropriate for the level of use at the site and that relate to adjacent developments.”

As redesigned, the shoreline pathways along both the east and west have been straightened. (Exhibit 4 and 7). The proposed connections provided by the originally-approved design are maintained. The redesigned project includes a more defined connection between the two shoreline public access areas through a promenade at the center of the site, outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction. (Exhibit 7). Paving proposed for the site varies. (Exhibit 6). The developer proposes paving the pathway along Sanchez Channel with decomposed granite and the pathway along the eastern side of the site with asphalt. Unit pavers and concrete would be used throughout the interior of the site, using pavers at the promenade connecting the two shoreline areas. Overlooks at the eastern shoreline would be surfaced with wood decking.

2. Does the modified project design provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access space appropriate to the scale of adjacent authorized development and the site in its entirety?

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Public access provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment...[t]he improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline....”

The Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“Shoreline access [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 redesigned public access areas incorporate most of the amenities required by the existing permit. However, one of the overlooks proposed for the original design has been removed along the Sanchez Channel public access area. In its place, the developer has proposed a large dining plaza and overlook terrace at the western edge of the promenade, stepping down to the shoreline public access area. (Exhibits 12 and 15). A plaza at the center of the eastern shoreline has been redesigned, and will incorporate an open public dining area that is associated with the restaurants that will be on the first floor of the adjacent buildings. Seating would be open to the public (Exhibits 10 and 16).

3. Does the addition of a 30-foot safety and maintenance setback diminish the public access along Sanchez Channel? In addition, do the planting setback areas and areas open to the underground parking lot adversely affect the public’s use of the shoreline areas?

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment...and provide for the public’s safety and convenience.”

The revised project includes a 30-foot-wide buffer area separating the public access area from the shoreline along Sanchez Channel. (Exhibits 5 and 12). The developer states that the “safety and maintenance setback” is necessary due to the deteriorating shoreline revetment. The developer states that the shoreline under existing conditions could “undergo a small amount of deformation” in a seismic event. The applicant states that the setback would provide for a 2:1 slope from the shoreline to a height of 15 feet and would provide space for future shoreline protection work if needed. The setback area will be delineated by a cable rail pedestrian barrier. (Exhibit 12, insert). In addition, the revised proposal includes several “flow-through planter setback” areas along the edge of the shoreline band adjacent to buildings and underground garages. (Exhibit 5). These bioretention areas will not be publicly accessible and will be separated from the public access area by a cable rail pedestrian barrier. (Exhibits 11 and 13).

4. Is the planting plan appropriate for the public access area, including the row of trees along Sanchez Channel?

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access include, in part:

“Public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project and the physical environment, including protection of Bay natural resources such as...plant communities...”

The Public Access Design Guidelines include, in part:

“Use native plants that provide habitat for wildlife wherever possible and appropriate.”

Pre-application Board comments stressed the need for adequate wind protection, particularly along the western side of the site adjacent to Sanchez Channel. The current proposal includes a row of Monterey cypress along the Sanchez Channel to assist in wind cover. A new planting plan has been proposed for the entire development. (Exhibits 8 and 9).