

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 10600 • San Francisco, California 94102 (415) 352-3600 • Fax: (415) 352-3606 • www.bcdc.ca.gov

October 6, 2016

**TO:** All Design Review Board Members

**FROM:** Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; [larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov))  
Andrea Gaffney, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; [andrea.gaffney@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:andrea.gaffney@bcdc.ca.gov))  
Tinya Hoang, Coastal Program Analyst (415/352-3622; [tinya.hoang@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:tinya.hoang@bcdc.ca.gov))

**SUBJECT: West Gateway Public Access Area; First Review**  
(For Board consideration on October 17, 2016)

## Project Summary

**Project Sponsors.** California Capital Investment Group; City of Oakland.

**Project Representatives.** Phil Tagami (California Capital Investment Group Oakland Global), Doug Cole (City of Oakland).

**Project Site.** The site for the West Gateway Public Access Area is located at the Oakland Touchdown of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (Bay Bridge), at the terminus of Burma Road (currently under construction), and west of Wharf 7 in the West Gateway area of the former Oakland Army Base, in the City of Oakland, Alameda County. The site is also located adjacent to the future Gateway Park, and south of the Bay Bridge bicycle path. Directly east of the subject site, a bulk and oversized terminal is planned, but not yet permitted by BCDC.

**Public Access Requirements.** The project is being proposed pursuant to a requirement of BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01. The permittees are required to provide an approximately 91,476-square-foot West Gateway public access area with improvements including “approximately 80 to 100 parking spaces, drive aisles, walkways, landscaping, an adequate amount of site furnishings, such as seating and trash receptacles, lighting, an improved viewing area at the south end of the public access area, and other improvements to be determined by the BCDC Design Review Board process. Cost and safety, among other factors may be taken into consideration when determining what specific improvements are appropriate for the West Gateway public access area.” Special conditions require that the design and improvements of this area be reviewed by the Design Review Board. Other special conditions, regarding continuity with the future Gateway Park and resilience of the improvements to sea level rise and flooding, apply, as described in further detail below.

Further, the permittees have “agreed to construct the public access improvements required [in the permit] because they intend to rely on the public access improvements...as some, if not all, of the public access improvements necessary to find that the future development of the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal...provides the maximum feasible public access consistent with the project.” However, this terminal has not yet been fully designed nor has it been permitted by BCDC.

**Proposed Project.** The proposed project includes a 90,583-square-foot public access area (Exhibits, Sheet X-1914), with 98 parking spaces, a painted pedestrian pathway along the west side of the parking lot, a “commemorative” boardwalk with historical interpretive signage, a bicycle rack, benches, light poles, landscaping and trash receptacles. The drive aisle through the parking lot would terminate at a roundabout, which would lead to an entrance to the future planned terminal to the east of the site. An 8-foot-tall chain-link fence with razor wire would be installed along the eastern edge in order to separate the parking lot from the terminal site. A 42-inch-tall guardrail would be installed along the edge of the wharf and along a portion of the western edge of the parking lot. The south end of the public access area would be furnished along the edges with benches, trash receptacles and light bollards. Landscaping is proposed at the parking entrance, on the eastern edge of the parking lot and the roundabout.

**Design Review Board Issues.** The Board’s advice and comments are sought on the following issues relative to the applicable BCDC policies and guidelines and the requirements of the BCDC permit:

### 1. Design of Public Access

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

- “A proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible....”
- “...maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline....”
- “The improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, 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.”

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

- Public access should be designed to create a “sense of place” and “in a manner that ‘feels public.’
- Project design should delineate “between public areas and private development – use fences, planting, elevation and signs where private or conflicting uses are proposed...”
- Use “site furnishings...to provide visual cues that the shoreline space is available for public use.”
- “Provide basic public amenities such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities.”

Further, BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01 requires:

- “...the permittees shall make the approximately 91,476-square-foot (2.1-acre) West Gateway public access area...available to the public and shall construct improvements within this area that include approximately 80 to 100 parking spaces, drive aisles, walkways, landscaping, an adequate amount of site furnishings, such as seating and trash receptacles, lighting, an improved viewing area at the south end of the public access area, and other improvements to be determined by the BCDC Design Review Board process. Cost and safety, among other factors may be taken into consideration when determining what specific improvements are appropriate for the West Gateway public access area.”
- “The West Gateway public access area...shall be designed in coordination with the Gateway Park stakeholders. Prior to any construction of the west Gateway public access area..., the design and public access improvements shall be reviewed and approved by the Commission’s Design Review Board.<sup>1</sup>”

The proposed project would provide 90,583 square feet of public access area (approximately 893 square feet less than required in the existing permit), which would include the following improvements: 98 parking spaces; a painted pedestrian path on the west side of the parking lot; a “commemorative” boardwalk with historical interpretive signage (Exhibits, Sheet X-1917) along the southern shoreline; a bicycle rack; landscaping including trees in the parking lot (Exhibits, Sheet L-1); and benches, trash receptacles and light poles around the perimeter of the south end of the public access area (Exhibits, Sheet X-1916). It is expected that trucks associated with the adjacent terminal would pass through the parking lot and roundabout in order to enter the terminal, as a secondary entrance. The curb-free roundabout would have a continuous surface with the wharf, except for the boardwalk area.

***The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following considerations regarding the design of the public access:***

- a. *Does the proposed project provide an adequate public access area that encourages diverse activities and creates a “sense of place” that is unique?*
- b. *Are the proposed improvements appropriate given the site’s location and future adjacent uses?*
- c. *How can the roundabout area be designed to maximize public use?*
- d. *Is the location of the walkway appropriate?*
- e. *Given the industrial waterfront activity in the area, is the location and amount of landscaping appropriate and adequate?*

---

<sup>1</sup> The Design Review Board should provide design recommendations.

## 2. Public Access Connections

The 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....”

Further, BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01 requires:

- “The permittees shall create safe, seamless, and continuous connections with adjacent public access trails and the future Gateway Park, including using similar public access furniture, landscaping palette, fencing, trail surfaces, etc. Prior to the opening of Gateway Park west of the West Gateway public access area, any fencing along the western boundary of the West Gateway public access area shall be removed and all grading shall be completed to provide a seamless connection between the West Gateway public access area and the park.”

Nearby public access includes: Class II bicycle lanes on the north and south sides of Burma Road; a sidewalk along the south side of Burma Road and around the Burma Road terminus; the Bay Bridge trail and an associated parking lot; and the future Gateway Park. In addition, a special condition of the permit requires that the permittees (i.e. the project proponents) coordinate with Caltrans to plan and implement a safe and direct pedestrian and bicycle crossing from the West Gateway public access area to the Bay Bridge trail.

It is unknown as to what type of furniture, landscaping, fencing, etc. would be used at Gateway Park and whether the proposed amenities would be consistent with Gateway Park’s design. A 42-inch-tall guardrail would be installed on the southwestern edge of the parking lot, separating the parking lot and the existing shoreline area to the north, that would be improved as part of Gateway Park. It is unknown as to whether this guardrail would be removed prior to the opening of the Gateway Park west of the site, and no grading is currently proposed.

***The Board’s advice and recommendations are sought on the following considerations regarding public access connections:***

- a. Does the location of the walkway allow for connections with nearby public access and the future Gateway Park?*
- b. What improvements could be made to allow for a safe, seamless and continuous connection to the shoreline to the north?*

## 3. Public Views

The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views include, 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 view of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas....”

The public views towards the Bay are to the west and southwest of the site. Physical connections are currently obstructed by a fence on the Gateway Park property, but visual connections are immediately accessible. A 42-inch-tall guardrail, constructed of wood and wire mesh (Exhibits, Sheet X-1915), would be installed on a portion of the western edge of the parking lot and along the edge of the wharf. The view down the drive aisle is towards the corner of the public access area at the south end of the wharf.

***The Board's advice and recommendations are sought on the following considerations regarding public views:***

- a. *Is the public access area designed to enhance and take advantage of the views of the Bay and shoreline?*
- b. *Is the guardrail designed to minimize view impacts?*

**6. Sea Level Rise and Flooding**

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

- "Public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding."
- "...public access...should...be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby."

Further, BCDC Permit No. M2013.013.01 requires:

- "The public access improvements...shall be constructed and maintained to avoid damage and flooding caused by changing shoreline conditions and/or sea level rise for as long as the authorized improvements to Wharf 6 ½ and 7 and Burma Road are in use.... If necessary, such maintenance of the public access improvements shall include raising land elevations and structures or redesigning or relocating public access features to ensure the usability of the public access improvements in the face of sea level rise. When such maintenance becomes infeasible (e.g., the maintenance required to prevent damage or flooding from sea level rise is exceedingly costly, impractical, or potentially damaging to natural resources), the permittees shall work with the Commission and other stakeholders to provide alternative public access inland..."

It is unclear how long the public access area is expected to remain viable in the face of sea level rise and flooding, given that the re-development of Wharves 6 ½ and 7 has not yet been proposed or authorized by BCDC. Sea level rise and flooding information have not been provided, and the proposed project does not include any measures, such as raising land elevations and structures or other measures as described above.

***The Board's advice and recommendations are sought on the following considerations regarding sea level rise and flooding:***

- a. *How can the proposed public access be located and designed to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise and flooding?*
- b. *How might the public access areas be adapted in the future to accommodate rising sea level?*