

# SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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October 6, 2016

**TO:** All Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: Pier 70 Waterfront Site; First Pre-Application Review**  
(For Board consideration on October 17, 2016)

## Project Summary

**Project Proponents.** Forest City and Port of San Francisco

**Project Representatives.** David Beaupre, Port of San Francisco (Property Owner); Kelly Pretzer, Jack Sylvan and Bronson Johnson, Forest City (Developer); Richard Kennedy, James Corner Field Operations (Landscape Architect); Laura Crescimano, SITELAB Urban Studio (Urban Designer), Dilip Trivedi, Moffatt Nichol (Coastal Engineer), Justin Semion, WRA (Regulatory Guidance).

**Project Site.** The approximately 28-acre project site (the “Waterfront Site”) is located within the Port of San Francisco-owned Pier 70 property in the City and County of San Francisco (Exhibit 1). The proposed project is one among several that would ultimately result in the redevelopment of the majority of the 69-acre Pier 70 property as a mixed-use neighborhood and new shoreline and upland parks, including the proposed Crane Cove Park reviewed by this board in recent years. Ship repair operations would continue within the northeastern waterfront of the project site, which is a San Francisco Bay Plan-designated Port Priority Use Area (Exhibit 2).

The project site is bound by Illinois Street to the west, the BAE Ship Repair Yard to the north, the Bay to the east, and the former Potrero Power Plant to the south (Exhibit 2). The site currently contains industrial structures from the time of its operation as a ship repair facility (Exhibits 7 and 8), three of which will be rehabilitated and adaptively reused as part of the proposed project. The site is within the Union Iron Works National Register Historic District.

**Project Description.** The project proponent has provided conceptual designs for a shoreline open space area that would span the 1,380-foot eastern length of the project site. Outside of the Commission’s 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, the Waterfront Site would also include residential, commercial office, retail, parks, arts and culture spaces, and light industrial/PDR uses. At full build-out, the project proponent estimates that there will be between 2,500 and 4,900 new residents and 5,400 and 8,700 new workers at the project site.

Approximately three acres of the proposed shoreline open space area would be located within the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction. Another approximately six acres of open space and upland parks would be located outside the Commission's jurisdiction within the Waterfront Site development and the adjacent Illinois Parcels. As depicted on Exhibit 3, the project proponent conceptualizes the shoreline open space as three distinct settings: (1) the "Waterfront Terrace" along the northern half of the project site's shoreline, consisting of a public lawn, and a picnic and seating area which would contain space for commercial food and beverage vendors (Exhibit 11); (2) the "Slipways Commons," much of which extends beyond the Commission's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction, and would consist of large gathering spaces, art installations and an event pavilion; and (3) the "Waterfront Promenade," along the central and southern shoreline of the project site, consisting of a café terrace with areas reserved for both public and commercial use, picnic and seating areas, access to existing historic craneway structures for fishing and Bay viewing, and a six-foot-wide path running parallel to a rip-rap revetment (Exhibit 12). Each of these areas also contains a section of the 16- to 20-foot wide Bay Trail/Blue Greenway, and 20- to 30-foot-tall "viewing pavilion" art installations intended to frame key views of the Bay (Exhibit 9).\*

**Design Review Issues.** The Board's comments are sought on the proposed public access improvements, and the Board should consider the following applicable policies and guidelines during this initial review. Specifically, the Board's recommendations are sought on the following:

#### 1. **Physical Access Areas.**

The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state that:

"...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 Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views state, in part, that:

"All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay..."

BCDC's Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, 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." "View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site's inherent public access opportunities."

The shoreline open space area would include: a trail network consisting of the 16- to 20-foot-wide Bay Trail/Blue Greenway and a secondary 6-foot-wide path just inland of a rip-rap revetment (Exhibits 5 and 6); a 13,500-square-foot public lawn; a 7,500-square-foot picnic area with benches and tables; a 330-foot-long seating promenade in the northern half of the site (Exhibit 11); an area

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\* The project proponent indicates that all dimensions on the project plans and referenced in this project summary are preliminary.

of 9,500-square-foot area for public and café seating, an undetermined area of which would be reserved for private use by restaurant customers; a planted buffer of trees and a planted slope with a stand of trees and native plants on the southern end of the site (Exhibit 12); four “viewing pavilions” public art pieces (between 20 and 30 feet tall and 30 to 80 feet long) to frame key views (Exhibits 8 and 9); and site furnishings consisting of seating elements, bike racks, litter and recycling receptacles, designed with materials and at a scale to suggest the industrial heritage of the site. The existing craneway structures at the site would be repurposed to allow for fishing and Bay viewing out over the water, although the project proponent has limited direct access to the water in the site’s design citing environmental and wave and tidal constraints and the potential for conflicts from the adjacent ship repair facility.

*The Board’s advice is sought on whether the proposed public access for the project is sufficient to accommodate the expected level of use, designed to take advantage of existing and new site characteristics, and of an appropriate scale.*

- *Are the appropriate sorts of amenities provided?*
- *Does the design of the public space take advantage of the Bay setting, and does it provide for adequate opportunities to get close to and experience the water?*
- *Are the site furnishings, public art pieces, and plant palette attractive and appropriate to the site, and do they help create a “sense of place?”*

2. **Circulation.** The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that:

“Improvements should be designed and built to encourage...movement to and along the shoreline...” and that “[a]ccess 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....”

BCDC’s Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that a 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.”

Exhibits 6 and 7 show the proposed circulation network for the Waterfront Site. Within the shoreline open space area, the network consists principally of: (1) the 16- to 20-foot-wide multi-purpose Bay Trail/Blue Greenway; and (2) a secondary six-foot-wide pedestrian path located directly adjacent to the rip-rap revetment running the length of the shoreline. The Bay Trail/Blue Greenway is shared by pedestrians and cyclists, and the final striping or mode separation features have not yet been designed. Access to the project site would be primarily from 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets. Maryland Street is the primary north-south street within the project site. All streets would have sidewalks, and Class II or Class III bicycle facilities.

*The Board's advice is sought on whether the proposed project provides adequate and desirable connections to future shoreline open space areas and adjacent developed areas.*

- *Does the shoreline open space area's design encourage movement to and along the shoreline within the park, and for all users including persons with disabilities?*
- *How could the design minimize the potential for conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists?*
- *Will bicycle through-traffic be able to easily move along the shoreline unimpeded, while also not impacting pedestrian circulation negatively?*

3. **Views.** The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views state, in part, that:

*"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..."*

BCDC's Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that:

*"View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site's inherent public access opportunities."*

The proposed project would create new view corridors to the Bay by extending 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets to the point of the shoreline public access area. Within the shoreline public access area, the project proponent proposed to install the three large-scale "viewing pavilions" as discussed above, which are intended to serve as a framing structure for views to orient the public to particular features beyond the project site. At the southern edge of the site, two vegetated rows with stands of trees (species to be determined) serve to delineate the Bay Trail/Blue Greenway.

*The Board's advice is sought on whether the project site would be organized to take advantage of and allow maximum Bay views.*

- *Do the viewing platforms enhance or detract from Bay views and visual access to the Bay?*
- *Are the planted areas on the southern edge of the project area designed so as to allow for adequate visual transparency?*

4. **Sea Level Rise.** The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that:

*"...public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding."*

*"Any public access provided as a condition of development should either 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."*

The proposed shoreline open space area would be designed so that the Bay Trail/Blue Greenway and other public amenities, such as the viewing platforms and benches, would be constructed at an elevation that would not require flood protection through mid-century. The Bay Trail/Blue Greenway would be raised to an elevation of +15.4 feet NAVD88, to allow for over 24 inches of sea level rise plus future total water levels, and would be about 72 inches above the current 100-

year still water level (Exhibit 10). The lower pedestrian path (+11.4 NAVD88) would be subject to inundation and storm action within the life of the project. In the near-term the project proponent indicates the path would be designed to provide safe public access to the water, and that it would later serve as an area within which shoreline protective works or other adaptive management techniques could be implemented.

*The Board's advice is sought on whether the proposed public access areas have been sited and designed to adequately avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding.*

- Is adequate public access to the shoreline provided at higher elevations during periods when the lower pedestrian path is inundated and unusable to the public?*
- Will the public access facilities be managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts during periods of shoreline flooding?*