

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

TO: All Commissioners and Alternates

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Andrea Gaffney, Bay Design Analyst (415/352-3643; andrea.gaffney@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Approved Minutes of April 17, 2017, Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Safety Announcement.** Design Review Board (Board) Chair Karen Alschuler called the meeting to order at the Bay Area Metro Center, 375 Beale Street, Yerba Buena Room, First Floor, San Francisco, California, at approximately 5:30 p.m., and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Other Board members in attendance included Cheryl Barton, John Kriken, Tom Leader, Roger Leventhal, and Jacinta McCann. BCDC staff in attendance included Brad McCrea, Andrea Gaffney, Brenda Goeden, and Jaime Michaels. The presenters were Amanda Brown-Stevens (Resilient by Design), John Bourgeois (California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)), Patrick Miller (2M Associates), and Jeff Peters (Questa Engineering). Also in attendance were Karla Cuero (East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD)), Matt Gerhart (SCC), Claire Griffing (City of Albany), Dave Halsing (Environmental Science Associates (ESA)), Dillon Lennebacker (AECOM), Susan Moffat (Resident), Anne Morkill (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)), Bob Nesbit (EBRPD), Francesco Papalia (Resident), Jeff Rhoads (Resilient Shore), Kathy Schaefer (Resident), Andrew Sullivan (Resident), and Isaac Swanson (WRA Environmental Consultants).

Andrea Gaffney, BCDC Bay Design Analyst, reviewed the safety protocols, meeting protocols, and meeting agenda.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2017. The West Gate Public Access Area is tentatively on the agenda along with a San Francisco Bay Trail update from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

2. **Report of Chief of Permits.** Jaime Michaels, the BCDC Chief of Permits, stated no permit applications have been submitted to the Commission since the last meeting.

The Port of San Francisco updated the Commission on the San Francisco Waterfront Plan. They showed a video, which is available online, that explains the process. The Port of San Francisco will present their goals and principles for updating the Waterfront Plan at a future Board meeting.

info@bcdc.ca.gov | www.bcdc.ca.gov
State of California | Edmund G. Brown, Jr. — Governor



3. **Approval of Draft Minutes for March 6, 2017.** Ms. Alschuler asked to change her comment under e(2) on page 5 to “suggested considering a limited number of signature trees” instead of the current sentence that specifies planting oak trees.

MOTION: Ms. Barton moved approval of the Minutes for the March 6, 2017, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Design Review Board meeting as revised, seconded by Ms. McCann.

VOTE: The motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0 with Board Chair Alschuler and Board members Barton, Kriken, Leader, Leventhal, and McCann voting approval with no abstentions.

4. **Albany Beach Restoration and Public Access Project (First Review).** The Board reviewed a proposal by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to redevelop the EBRPD’s Albany Beach Park and incorporate it into the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park in two concurrent phases. The proposed project would include parking, beach overlooks, a vault toilet, and a San Francisco Bay Trail extension. Public access improvements include a vehicular entrance, a 20-vehicle parking area, two beach access points from the Bay Trail, and other public amenities.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Ms. Gaffney stated a hard copy of the public comments received over the last week was included in the meeting packet. She provided an overview of the project, accompanied by a slide presentation, and summarized the issues identified in the staff report, including the diversity of the proposed activities and whether the project would create a “sense of place”; appropriateness of the amenities and additional public amenities that may enhance the site; the adequacy of the proposed public access widths, circulation, connections, and parking; the appropriateness and viability of the proposed landscaping; the adequacy and desirability of expanding and fencing natural areas; and the benefits of accessible beach mats.

b. **Project Presentation.** Patrick Miller, Owner of 2M Associates, the landscape architect for the project, introduced Jeff Peters, Owner/Principal at Questa Engineering, the primary designer and lead for the project, Karla Cuero, Project Coordinator at EBRPD, and Bob Nesbit, Assistant General Manager at EBRPD.

Mr. Miller provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the introduction, background, public planning process, and public access components of the project.

c. **Board Questions.** Following the presentation, the Board asked a series of questions:

Ms. Alschuler asked about the relationship of the project to the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail. Mr. Miller stated the beach is already used as a Water Trail access point. The project will enhance that access by providing parking and loading and unloading points. He noted that South Cove and Point Isabella provide greater nearby access to the Water Trail.

Mr. Leventhal asked about ecological resources. Mr. Miller stated enhancing the habitat areas and adding eelgrass was part of Phase 1. The Phase 2 ecological resources will be the sand dunes and wetland areas.

Mr. Leventhal suggested clarifying what is being proposed in future presentations, such as the quantities and type of fill required and other restoration design details. He asked if the coarser sand will be confined to the dune area or used throughout the project. Mr. Peters stated the fill will be imported for the access roadway, parking area, and Bay Trail. He approximated eight feet of material will be required to raise the dunes - four feet of imported fill and four feet of a combination of imported sand and material removed from the beach area excavation. The excavated beach area will be filled with coarser sand that will be less erosive to stabilize the beach and dune areas.

Mr. Leventhal asked about anticipated settlement in the fill. Mr. Peters stated the fill will be placed on pavement, which will be crushed in place to provide a firm yet permeable foundation.

Mr. Leventhal asked if the wetlands drain through the beach. Mr. Peters stated the wetlands drainage system will be through the new wetlands; no new channels will be graded. Part of the purpose of the rain gardens is to store water and slowly release it through the beach and wetlands.

Mr. Leventhal asked about the industrial nature of the access control fencing and whether it was approved by stakeholders. Mr. Peters stated the fencing was intensely discussed during the Environment Impact Report (EIR) process. The goal is to meet the mitigation requirement of keeping individuals and their pets out of the dunes and wetland areas.

Mr. Kriken asked about possible plans to connect the project to the Aquatic Park on the east side of the freeway. Mr. Peters stated the Aquatic Park Improvement Program is underway by the city of Berkeley.

Mr. Kriken suggested including destination-type land use, such as a berm for visitors to sit on to watch the U.C. Berkeley sailboat races. Mr. Peters stated the easement limits destination spots but the project will include two vista overlook areas. This project is part of the larger McLaughlin Eastshore State Park plan. Other areas within the plan have been designated as destination sites, such as the Brickyard Cove with its interpretive center.

Ms. McCann asked about existing conditions - where the public tends to cluster and what they do there. She asked about the view corridor. Mr. Miller pointed out areas that are technically closed to public access, although individuals go through the gate, migrate through the designated wetlands, and use the beach. He pointed out the end of the project that has high dog use. Most of the public enter the beach by way of an existing pathway from Buchanan Street or they go through a gate and cut across the sand area. The project area is heavily used by dog-walkers and moderately used by picnickers and Bay watchers. Regarding the view corridor, the Bay Trail is as close as possible to the Bay to afford the best views. The sand dunes obstruct the view to the Bay so the project includes overlooks in those areas. Also, the eucalyptus trees tend to block views at the north end of the project.

Mr. Leader asked about the dimensions of the parking stalls and if the roadway is curbed. Mr. Miller stated the parking stalls are 9 feet by 18 feet; the project will also include accessible stalls. The curbed roadway is 20 feet wide. CORRECTION: Roadway is called out as 20 feet wide in exhibit Figure 5 and 24 feet wide in exhibit Figure 11.

Mr. Leader asked if the emergency access needs to be asphalt with curbs. Mr. Peters stated asphalt is preferred for its durability.

Ms. Barton stated the future land use of Golden Gate Fields, whether to remain as a racetrack or a mixed-use development, affects the stabilization and protection of this area and the grading of this area for sea level rise. Mr. Miller stated nothing is guaranteed but the project proponent is trying to keep future design options open.

Ms. Alschuler asked if any trees will be retained. Mr. Peters stated most of them will be removed, but the eucalyptus grove will remain.

d. **Public Hearing.** A hard copy of the public comments received over the last week was included in the meeting packet. Four public comments were given at the meeting as follows:

(1) Claire Griffing, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Albany, representing the city manager and planning director, spoke in support of the project.

(2) Susan Moffat, resident, City of Albany, thanked the EBRPD for their work on this project, especially in increasing accessibility to the shoreline. She spoke in support of the project but expressed concern about conflicts between through-traffic and pedestrians crossing at the two locations on the Bay Trail in the current design. She stated Albany residents would like to work with the EBRPD on details to address questions and concerns, such as the Bay Trail geometry at the northern end connection to Buchanan Street.

(3) Francesco Papalia, resident, City of Albany and a member of the Albany Waterfront Committee, spoke in support of this project. He affirmed it will be an enhanced destination and stated the restroom facilities will be a welcome addition for families and groups visiting the Albany Beach Park. He also encouraged better bicycle racks than the illustrated wave-style racks. He suggested U-shaped racks, which are more suitable for stable bicycle parking. He suggested an area called the Cove, which is just outside the plan, as an alternative picnic area.

(4) Andrew Sullivan, representing 380 kitesurfers who regularly use a number of beaches in the area, spoke against the current design. He stated he uses this area for kitesurfing, stand up paddle boarding, and kayaking five times per week. He stated the current design does not accommodate the kite for kitesurfing, making it dangerous, and does not have a sufficient number of parking spaces for individuals to drop off their kayaks and paddle boards.

Ms. Alschuler asked for more detail on the danger of the current design. Mr. Sullivan stated kitesurfers require approximately 70 feet to land. The parking lot is vital to launch the kites from but other individuals visiting the beach area, pedestrians/cyclists, gravel lots, wind direction, and barriers such as fences make it potentially dangerous. He pointed out directions and locations on the PowerPoint slides to illustrate his point.

Ms. Gaffney directed the Board's attention to the written public comments included in the meeting packet. A number of stakeholders provided similar comments to those spoken today. She highlighted the comments provided from Susan Schwartz, President, Friends of Five Creeks, who wrote in support of the design because of the preservation and recognition of Fleming Point as a significant landmark in the Bay. **NB:** A compilation of emailed public comments has been attached to these meeting minutes.

Ms. Alschuler stated the written public comments included a number of comments about the striping of the Bicycle Trail.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board members discussed the following:

(1) **The Design of the Proposed Public Access.** Mr. Leader stated the need for a greater sense of arrival coming off Buchanan Street because it is difficult to determine when to stop and park. He suggested designing a vehicle loop at the top, as has been suggested by the community, rather than bringing the road all the way to the bottom with parking at the mid-point. A dirt road to the bottom of the project site for emergency vehicles could keep the main traffic out of the bottom area. The bottom of the site could include a drop-off lot for watercraft. It allows the bicycle lane to move over and creates more room for the park.

Ms. McCann agreed with keeping the vehicle traffic at the north end. She suggested utilizing the currently-paved area for greater potential as a destination site or enhancing recreation-related activities.

Mr. Leventhal suggested a separate dog-walking portion of the beach because of the high dog-walking population at the site.

Mr. Kriken suggested thinking about making this project part of a future mega-community.

Ms. Barton stated the concern about the number of potential conflicts raised by the public - kites, dogs, parking, children, and bicycles.

Ms. Alschuler suggested working with the kitesurfers to learn more about what is required for the sport. She agreed with the suggestion about including a drop-off lane for watercraft.

Ms. Alschuler stated the need to consider what will replace the interim features after they fade away.

(2) **Flooding and Sea Level Rise.** A Board member suggested that the project proponents present before the Wetlands Design Review Board*. He suggested using coarser-grade sand and driftwood. He asked for greater detail on fill types and where they are coming from in future presentations. (*POST SCRIPT: The Wetlands Design Review Board is an ad-hoc committee that is convened by the San Francisco Joint Venture as a service to its member agencies. It is not regulatory in nature; the comments are advisory, no minutes are prepared, and regulatory agencies such as BCDC have not been invited to the meetings because the member agencies are looking for advice, not requirements.)

(3) **Effects on Public Views.** Ms. McCann asked what determined the railing height. Mr. Miller stated 48 inches is consistent with the Bay Trail Guidelines and is viewed as a safe height to keep bicycles on the trail. 48 inches is also the standard height for access control fencing. The goal is to keep people and dogs out.

(4) **The Balance Between Public Access and Wildlife.** Mr. Leader stated there is a high point on Fleming Point where there is a rocky area with existing vegetation, which has character. It would be a shame to lose the trees. Ms. Alschuler agreed.

f. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Miller responded positively to the Board's suggestions about a sense of arrival at the end of Buchanan Street but stated the current turnaround area line belongs to the city of Albany and an encroachment permit would be required to continue the Bay Trail to the existing trail and to drive off of the circle. He also stated the serpentine layout of the trail is to ensure that it stays within the 5 percent maximum slope requirement, because the area is three to five feet higher than the rest of the project and would require a major redesign of city property.

Mr. Miller stated the space at Fleming Point is 30 feet and requires the tree removal to allow room for the trail.

Mr. Peters stated a large amount of coastal engineering analyses have been done; the reports have been submitted to staff.

g. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board made the following summary and conclusions:

(1) The Board recommended that the applicants consider circulation, a different kind of traffic loop, more potential for recreation, a sense of destination, more trees in the plant palette, and keeping as many trees as possible.

(2) The Board asked to be kept informed of long-term regional changes of the potential mixed-use development, next steps, and long-term options when interim components of the Bay Trail fade.

(3) The Board encouraged the applicants to use coarser-grade sand and driftwood.

(4) The Board recommended that the applicants consider presenting before the Wetlands Design Review Board.

(5) The Board recommended that the applicants consider the sequence of the experience of the place - visitors enjoying the views from the Bay Trail or driving to the location to drop off watercraft.

(6) The Board recommended that the applicants analyze how the location will be used over time and throughout the year, and how the circulation and amenities will work during crowd-gathering events.

(7) The Board emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety of kitesurfers and visitors to the site.

Ms. Gaffney asked the Board if they would like to see this plan again. Board members collectively stated they would like to see it again.

POST SCRIPT: After the meeting, Mr. Leventhal sent an email to other board members and BCDC staff with further comments and recommendations, which are summarized below:

Regarding the beach, Mr. Leventhal sees the main design issue is going to be wind transport of the permanently denuded trampled areas open to foot traffic and dog use, and the downwind deposition concentrated at the fence line. If the only fencing is the galvanized link fence (access control fence shown in Figure 8), it will likely trap all the wind-blown sand in a concentrated linear wind-shadow ridge, and starve all the planted dunes downwind.

Because the permanent trampling outside the fence will maintain a permanent wind transport area, it will likely become a structural source-sink relationship. He suggested the designers should look at using wind-permeable fencing with no significant roughness, so it doesn't cause localized deposition of sand. He suggested that cable fences are effective, but may be less effective in keeping people and dogs out. He commented that the chronic backshore output of sand beyond the "recall" of storm waves will cause a beach sand budget deficit.

He further suggested that it might be better to let a foredune develop and cyclically erode, returning more sand to the beach compartment, which would mean setting a fenceline along the vegetation edge parallel with the shore, around the storm drift-line position. Mr. Leventhal notes the proposed design includes a big artificially wide beach at the north end that will just deflate, and deposit sand into the landscaping (not just in the designated vegetative dunes at the Southeast).

Mr. Leventhal further commented that the planting design is based on the outer Pacific coast, and is not based on SF Bay natives. He noted the plant palette as a mix of outer coast foredune species that also occur in SF Bay (*Abronia*, *Ambrosia*, *Elymus*) mixed with erratic species including very old stabilized (early soil formation) dunes that would not occur in SF Bay. He also noted that native foredunes in SF Bay from Pinole to Berkeley actually include saltgrass (*Distichlis*), western ragweed (*Artemisia psilostachya*) and alkali-heath (*Frankenia*), poverty-weed (*Iva axillaris*) so close to the salty water table, with low wave energy.

He noted some of the photos in the packet show non-native invasive southern CA subspecies (some introduced to Crown Beach in 1980s, like the shrubby subspecies of beach evening-primrose (subsp. *suffruticosa*), which is also taking over SF due to mistaken introduction to Crissy Field in 1990s. He further comments that the *ceanothus* and *Agrostis* species would not be in SF Bay dunes, and *Ericameria ericoides* (called "Aplopappus" in drawing) isn't native to SF Bay either.

5. **Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (First Review).** Jacinta McCann recused herself from the discussion and decision-making with regard to this agenda item pursuant to Commission policy.

The Board reviewed a proposal by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to restore the South Bay Salt Pond. Phase 2 of the proposed project would include four pond clusters within the Alviso and Ravenswood Pond Complexes and would restore former industrial salt-production ponds to Bay habitat. Public access improvements include new and enhanced trails, four viewing platforms, and interpretive signage.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Brenda Goeden, BCDC Sediment Program Manager, introduced the next speaker.

b. **Project Presentation.** John Bourgeois, the Executive Project Manager of the SCC, introduced Anne Morkill, the Project Leader of the USFWS, Matt Gerhart, the Bay Program Manager of the SCC, Dave Haling, the Deputy Project Manager of ESA, and Dillon Lennebacker, the Consultant with AECOM.

Mr. Bourgeois provided an overview, accompanied by a slide presentation, of adaptive management restoration; Phase 1 planning, construction, and implementation; Phase 2 project goals; and public access features and amenities of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. He stated the project's main goals are restoration, flood risk reduction, and public access and recreation. He showed a Google flyover image and pointed out features of the project area to the Board.

c. **Board Questions.** Following the presentation, the Board asked a series of questions:

Mr. Kriken asked about private boating. Mr. Bourgeois stated a new boat launch was installed at Eden Landing as part of Phase 1.

A Board member asked if Mr. Bourgeois is in contact with the Exploratorium Bay Conservatory. Mr. Bourgeois stated he has been in contact with them, had an exhibit, and given presentations at the Conservatory.

A Board member suggested raising the elevation of the viewing platforms yet maintaining Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to allow better views of the ponds in connection with the Conservatory to bring more attention to the project. Mr. Bourgeois agreed that even a small rise in elevation opens up a whole new vista but ADA regulations and building on Bay mud are challenges. He also stated the need to deter raptor perches to encourage endangered species into the area.

A Board member asked if the 30:1 slopes at the cross section of the Ravenswood levy will be left bare or if riprap will be used for erosion control. Mr. Bourgeois stated the slopes will be planted with vegetation. The slope ratios vary throughout the project to learn the benefits of one slope ratio versus another. Projecting out 50 years, less of those slopes will be upland and more will become wetlands. Part of the reason for the slopes is resiliency to sea level rise.

Ms. Alschuler asked how much fill will be used in the project. Ms. Goeden stated this project stands out from others in that there are specific policies for restoring salt ponds. These policies focus on maximizing open water rather than minimizing fill. The fill for this project will be done prior to breaching.

A Board member asked if riprap will be used. Ms. Goeden stated a small amount of riprap will be used around the bridges.

Ms. Alschuler asked about Mountain View, the Palo Alto flood basin, and Charleston Slough and how it relates to the project. Mr. Bourgeois stated that is a much-discussed topic. He pointed out features using a PowerPoint slide and discussed the background and challenges of those areas.

Ms. Alschuler asked if there have been conversations with the city of Mountain View about future protection of this area. Mr. Bourgeois stated the city of Mountain View is a financial partner on this project and protecting the landfill and improving the levy are already part of their capital improvement program.

d. **Public Hearing.** Ms. Gaffney stated she received an email from Laura Thompson, the Bay Trail Project Manager at ABAG, stating her support of the project, especially that the project connects Bay Trail segments, prepares future connections, and includes viewing platforms, which provide good places to experience the landscape.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board members discussed the following:

(1) **The Design of the Proposed Public Access.** A Board member suggested that a South Bay Recreation Trail Map be put together highlighting the salt ponds, bicycle lanes, pedestrian trails, parking areas, and how the area fits into surrounding trails and parks.

Ms. Barton agreed and suggested including an explanation of the ecology of the area and what will evolve over time. She suggested a video of the area, including sequential aerial views and a higher view than platform.

Ms. Alschuler suggested that individuals receive a stamp for visiting each viewing platform to encourage them to visit all of the platforms.

Mr. Bourgeois suggested creating an app for visitors so that, when they reach points of interest along the trail, the app pings, and visitors can read or listen to information about the spot or watch a short video about it.

Ms. Alschuler questioned if two benches were enough at the Bay edge section. Mr. Bourgeois stated his experience building other ponds shows that most users stay on the spine closer to the parking lots. Few individuals walk the 1.1 mile out and back.

Mr. Leader asked about including something more natural and casual than benches, such as 15-foot timbers that lay on the ground, to accommodate visitors who may have jogged or bicycled to the area.

(2) **Public Views.** Ms. Barton asked if the benches have backs and armrests. Mr. Bourgeois stated they do and added that the platforms have elbow rests for bird watchers.

(3) **Public Access Connections.** The Board did not offer any access connection suggestions.

(4) **Wildlife Compatibility.** A Board member asked if visitors can walk their dogs on the levees. Mr. Bourgeois stated dogs are not allowed in the refuge but are allowed in the city park. There will be signage and fencing to help keep pets out of habitat areas.

Ms. Barton asked if visitors will be educated about the nature of these areas such as trying to keep children from throwing stones at the wildlife. Mr. Bourgeois stated the city is partnering to educate the public and has instituted a drone policy since it is a sensitive species habitat.

f. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Bourgeois responded positively to the Board's suggestions and stated the design team will take the Board's comments into consideration to improve the design.

g. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board did not summarize their conclusions.

6. **Bay Area Resilient by Design Challenge Briefing.** Amanda Brown-Stevens, the Managing Director of the Bay Area Resilient by Design Challenge, provided an update, accompanied by a slide presentation, of the work being done, collaborative research and design, and site selection criteria for the Resilient by Design Challenge.

a. **Board Questions and Discussion.** Board members asked clarifying questions about the makeup and knowledge base of the jury and research advisory committee, the flexibility of the designs, and ensuring that the designs meet the needs of the community. Ms. Brown-Stevens stated information sessions will begin on May 11th from 10:00 to noon. Further information and finalized dates will soon be available on the website.

b. **Public Comment.** Three public comments were given as follows:

(1) Isaac Swanson, WRA Environmental Consultants, asked if the design phase will overlap with the research phase and whether the participants in the research committee will be published before the teams are formed. Ms. Brown-Stevens stated the lists of jurors and research advisors will be posted on the website as soon as that list is finalized, which will be before teams will need to respond.

(2) Jeff Rhoads, the Director of Resilient Shore, stated the region is composed of many different communities with many different characteristics and there are individuals who are experts in their area. This challenge feels awkward in that respect. He stated the concern that a good idea takes approximately 10 to 15 years to implement. Community advocates are important for success. This challenge does not have the capacity to build that advocacy at the local level to engage communities.

(3) Kathy Schaefer, resident, stated the concern that the role for citizen advocacy that will see the projects through is lacking and would be helpful to include. She stated FEMA Regulations do not permit new construction waterward of mean high tide, which may eliminate some great designs, and FEMA Regulations may change in the future. She also asked about the funding for this challenge.

7. **Adjournment.** There being no further business, Ms. Alschuler adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ANDREA GAFFNEY
Bay Design Analyst

Approved, with minor corrections at the
Design Review Board Meeting of May 8, 2017.