San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
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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 the August 5, 2019, BCDC 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 Board Vice Chair Gary Strang and Board Members Cheryl Barton, Bob Battalio, Jacinta McCann, and Stefan Pellegrini. BCDC staff in attendance included Walt Deppe, Andrea Gaffney, Yuriko Jewett, and Ethan Lavine. The presenters were Charles D. Anderson (Schaaf and Wheeler Consulting Civil Engineers), Glen Ceridono (SyRES Properties), Terry Huffman (Huffman-Broadway Group, Inc.), Paul Lettieri (Guzzardo Partnership Inc.), Jeff Moneda (City of Foster City), and Robert Perrera (Huffman-Broadway Group, Inc.). Public comment via email was submitted by the Loma Prieta Sierra Club and Ben Botkin (San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail). Also in attendance was Mandi Browning.

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

2. **Staff Update.** Ms. Gaffney provided the staff update as follows:

a. The state passed the budget for 2019-2020 and in that budget was the funding for a second Bay Development Design Analyst. Recruitment will begin soon.

b. One of the Sea Grant Fellows was hired as Planner for the Suisun Marsh to help update plans and policies.

c. The BCDC is moving to the Bay Area Metro Center, 375 Beale Street, Suite 510, San Francisco on Monday, August 19th.

d. A Briefing on the San Francisco Estuary Institute's Adaptation Atlas is scheduled for the October Board meeting.

e. A Briefing on the San Francisco Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) will possibly be scheduled for the October Board meeting.

f. The Commission issued the permit for the Alcatraz Island Embarkation at Piers 31, 31 1/2, and 33 last Thursday and had an interesting discussion about public access and activation for special events.

g. The state has required BCDC to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) website accessibility requirements. As a result, the submittal schedule for the Board has

been shifted. Applicants are now being asked to submit their draft exhibits 45 days prior to Board meetings instead of the usual 24 days, and to submit their final documents 14 days prior to Board meetings to allow time for staff to review documents and exhibits for content and to make them ADA accessible.

(h) There is currently nothing scheduled for the September Board meeting. Ms. Gaffney suggested that the Board spend that time discussing potential Board member recruitment.

Ms. Gaffney asked Board members about their preferences for digital versus paper files for staff reports and exhibits. Board members agreed that having access to both digital and paper files is helpful.

3. **Approval of Draft Minutes for June 10, 2019, Meeting**

MOTION: Mr. Strang moved approval of the Minutes for the June 10, 2019, meeting as presented, seconded by Ms. Barton.

VOTE: The motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0 with Board Chair Alschuler, Board Vice Chair Strang, and Board Members Barton, Battalio, McCann, and Pellegrini voting approval with no abstentions.

4. **Mixed-Use Development at 557 East Bayshore Road, Redwood City, San Mateo County (First Pre-Application Review).** The Board held their first pre-application review of a proposal by SyRES Properties to redevelop a 14.36-acre site bounded by East Bayshore Road to the south, Smith Slough to the north, and existing commercial parcels to the east and west. The proposed project would consist of two five-story residential buildings with 480 units, an athletic club, and a spa. Shoreline public access improvements include a shared-use path, picnic areas, and other public amenities.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Yuriko Jewett, BCDC Shoreline Development Permit Analyst, introduced the project, showed a video from a recent site visit, and described points of interest as the video played. She summarized the issues in the staff report including whether the project:

(1) Feels public and allows for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people.

(2) Provides a unique “sense of place” that would attract all users to the shoreline.

(3) Encourages diverse Bay-related activities.

(4) Provides a clear connection to the adjacent levee Bay Trail and the Bair Island Trail.

(5) Enhances the public invitation to the site from East Bayshore Road.

(6) Includes a design of the Paseo that maximizes views and physical connections to the shoreline.

(7) Includes shoreline improvements that preserve and enhance views along the waterway.

(8) Includes shoreline plantings and activities that respond to the adjacent natural wildlife habitat areas in Smith Slough and Bair Island.

(9) Includes amenities that allow for and enhance the viewing and study of wildlife.

(10) Includes public areas that are appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise.

b. **Project Presentation.** Glen Ceridono, Senior Vice President, SyRES Properties, introduced the project team. He provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the background, context, existing site conditions, site plan, and site access of the proposed project.

Paul Lettieri, Owner, The Guzzardo Partnership Inc., landscape architect for the proposed project, continued the slide presentation and provided a detailed description of the proposed project.

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

Mr. Strang asked what the previous smaller project looked like and how the current iteration was determined. Mr. Ceridono stated the Redwood City planning staff has undergone a large turnover and the makeup of the city council has changed over the past five years. The larger iteration consisted of 550 units and the smaller iteration contained a single building with a massive parking area.

Mr. Ceridono stated project proponents have tried to find a middle ground. The current project consists of 480 units, 20 percent of which will be affordable units spread evenly between the two buildings.

Mr. Strang asked if the rest of the units will be market rate rental units. Mr. Ceridono stated that is correct. He stated SyRES Properties has owned this site for 30 to 40 years. The intent is to build something nice and substantial and continue to hold it for the next 30 to 40 years and continue to invest in the community. Much thought and attention has been put into materials and details so it will be a piece of the community for the long-term.

Ms. McCann asked if the private courtyards at ground level are private for the units or if they are for a communal space. Mr. Ceridono stated it is resident-only communal space for residents and their guests.

Ms. McCann asked about the alignment of the future trail at the west end and how it will connect in the future. Mr. Lettieri referred to the Site Plan slide and stated the trail was originally meant to bridge across the ditch, but this option is currently unavailable. Review proponents are in discussion with PG&E. If a future connection is unsuccessful, the bridge could go to a neighboring parcel.

Ms. McCann asked for verification that there is no link to the Bay Trail at this time. Mr. Lettieri stated that is correct. There is a current proposal for a residential development on the neighboring property to the west that might open up possibilities.

Ms. Alschuler stated the Staff Report states there are currently 171 trees on the proposed site. She asked if any will be saved. Mr. Lettieri stated there are a few palm trees that may be saved. The landscaping at the site has been abandoned for approximately 16 years. Many trees are popular 1970s species such as eucalyptus that are growing in parking lot islands and are not healthy or desirable. Also, raising the site the proposed three feet removes the opportunity to save existing vegetation.

Ms. Barton asked about the underlying quality of the soil. She stated native plants require native soil. Mr. Ceridono stated a Phase 1 EA Report has been completed, which looks historically at what the site was. The determination was that no additional environmental studies are required. A full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is currently in progress with the city and will include further study on the soil.

Mr. Lettieri stated the current soil is not native and fill will be brought in, after which an Agricultural Suitability Test will be done. A native and native-adaptive plant palette will be chosen, based on the test results.

Ms. Barton asked about the hydrology of the Smith Slough and if there is a flow pattern to it. Ms. Gaffney stated the ditch has been a conundrum. A flap gate or flow source cannot be found. Many individuals from BCDC and engineers have looked at it. A drawing was located that had a storm drain moving across from the movie theatre site to Smith Slough that moved through the ditch. It is possible that it has leaked over time and enabled thatwater transfer to occur. It may just be moving through the fill of the levee. There is as much pickle weed in the ditch as there is in the slough.

Ms. Alschuler asked to look at the location one step back on the presentation slides. She stated she has been to the site but did not try to make the connections back to the residential area. She asked who the users of the site would be.

Ms. Alschuler stated BCDC has an equity policy that has to do with access and the Board tries to look at where individuals come from and what will encourage them to come to the site. The proposed project site is a large area of land that does not connect to the Bay Trail or the Bair Island Road and Bridge that has recently been completed and is well-designed. She asked why individuals would visit the proposed site other than the individuals who live there.

Mr. Ceridono stated individuals can go through the Paseo and along the east edge.

Ms. Alschuler asked where individuals will come from and who will bicycle to the site. They cannot go across Highway 101. Mr. Ceridono stated they can come across Whipple Avenue. He noted that the city has been looking at making a bicycle and pedestrian path underneath Highway 101.

Ms. Gaffney asked if the Redwood Creek Bike Bridge, also known as the "Bike Bridge to Nowhere," is being completed. Mr. Ceridono stated the bridge has been completed but the city is currently looking at the Blomquist Bridge and Street Extension Project, which will be part of the proposed project's EIR study. The Blomquist Bridge and Street Extension Project has been in the works for a number of years and is tied to much of the surrounding development.

Mr. Battalio stated the building pads are at +13 feet, which is three feet above the 100-year flood elevation. He asked how that was determined. Mr. Ceridono stated it was the criteria given by the civil engineer looking at the updated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood maps. Research has shown that +13 feet (NAVD88) is needed to be in compliance in the future.

Mr. Battalio asked where the storm drain leads from the buildings, roofs, and roads. Mr. Ceridono stated the project site is currently almost 100 percent surface parking and drains toward the slough. The site as designed will comply with the C3 Stormwater Management Program but would then still pick up into the slough. There would be less overall discharge and it would be filtered versus what is on site currently.

Mr. Battalio asked if the water flows into a pipe. Mr. Ceridono stated there currently is a pipe and a pump station that would remain.

Mr. Strang asked about the ground floor uses at the elevation three feet above the existing grade. Mr. Ceridono pointed to a building on a presentation slide and stated it would be five stories of residential above grade. He pointed out the VillaSport Athletic Club and Spa and stated it is a workout facility with two indoor pools, a main lobby, and café. There is another smaller workout facility on the second floor. There are also two outdoor pools and a children's water slide.

Mr. Strang asked if there are units on the ground floor. Mr. Ceridono stated the garage is in the middle of the building with units on the ground floor.

Ms. Alschuler asked for verification that some units open out into the Paseo. Mr. Ceridono stated that is correct. The front doors open onto the Paseo.

Mr. Lettieri added that the red boxes on the presentation slide represent courtyard entrances.

Mr. Pellegrini stated his understanding that the property on the Whipple Avenue side potentially will be redeveloped, the public access along the slough will have the potential to be reconfigured, and a connection between the proposed site and Bair Island can be improved by what happens at that adjoining property.

Mr. Lavine stated there is a proposal to redevelop that site and it could provide a connection to the entrance to Bair Island.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the existing Bay Trail is on PG&E land. He asked about the timeframe for that easement for PG&E to provide access. Ms. Gaffney stated it is unknown. It is an easement to the city and will depend on PG&E's plans to maintain it because it is PG&E's maintenance levee to access their towers.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the drawings show that the Bay Trail configuration is impacted by the 2050 flood condition, when the site is supposed to be demonstrating resiliency. The assumption is that the need to shift the public access over to this site within the 2050 flood zone time horizon may be more important than other conditions the Board has reviewed on the Bay. He asked if it is a reasonable assumption that these properties along the southern side of the slough should be expected to accommodate the resiliency condition, because the PG&E Bay Trail configuration does not provide resilient access to 2050.

Ms. McCann added that, for PG&E to continue to maintain access to those power towers, they will have to upgrade access. She asked if there have been conversations with PG&E about that. Mr. Lavine stated there have not. The Bay Trail extension was built relatively recently, almost concurrent with the climate change policy updates. BCDC will have to look at the proposed project as if nothing will happen there.

Ms. Gaffney stated that the PG&E trail segment is required public access and there are maintenance conditions on that permit that require it to be addressed when flooding occurs. One way of addressing it is potentially shifting access to the proposed site but PG&E could also build up the levee or do something else to provide that access. There are currently many unknown factors.

d. **Public Hearing.** One member of the public provided the following comments:

Ms. Gaffney read the written comments submitted by the Loma Prieta Sierra Club. She stated it is a comment letter to the Notice of Preparation to the city, which highlights issues concerning views, flooding, and wildlife impacts. There are other issues included but the purview of the Board is to look at public access, recreation, appearance, design, scenic views, and sea level rise in relation to public access. The listed concerns include night lighting, view impacts, habitat impacts, and pesticide and plant management.

Mr. Strang stated there is a reference in the Sierra Club letter to an additional lane on the freeway. Ms. Gaffney stated it is in reference to the Blomquist Bridge and Street Extension Project that Mr. Ceridono mentioned. It should be noted that there is a jurisdictional determination further up Redwood Creek that excludes that portion from BCDC jurisdiction.

Ms. Barton stated the Sierra Club letter includes specific wildlife mitigation aspects in addition to pesticides, such as no pets on the site and rental agreements. She asked about night lighting impacts on wildlife and how the problems with pets and wildlife are accommodated in the proposed design.

Mr. Ceridono stated the design team will be sensitive to the lighting issue since this is a residential project. Pet policies vary from facility to facility, but there are loopholes around policies. He stated he is seeing that, even in no-pet-policy areas, individuals can get doctor's notes that say they need to have an animal.

e. **Board Discussion.** Ms. Alschuler stated she was delighted that Mr. Ceridono's family has been on this parcel for 30 to 40 years and wants to be there for another 30 to 40 years. She stated the Board will be there to look at the long-term view with him.

The Board responded to questions from the staff report as follows:

f. **Public Use and Bay Setting**

(1) Do the public spaces "feel public" and allow for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people?

Mr. Strang stated the questions are who would come here and who would know to come here. The proposed site feels private by the nature of it and that it is landlocked, but that is not a design flaw. He stated he did not know what to do to improve that situation.

Mr. Strang stated there is visual access down the center and at spaces along the shoreline but the question would be if it would be inviting enough for individuals to spend time there, given much of that area is in close proximity to the buildings.

Mr. Strang stated whether the character of those spaces feels separated from the residences needs more discussion. There is a chance that individuals would feel they are invading someone's privacy with the fenced courtyards, swimming pool, and units looking out.

(2) Do the public access areas provide a unique "sense of place" that would attract all users to the shoreline?

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

(3) Does the proposed design encourage diverse Bay-related activities?

Ms. Alschuler stated, having made the investment in that larger public area and having the sports club on the site, there will be large numbers of people coming near. She suggested thinking of other things that individuals could do at the site.

Ms. Alschuler stated working with the sports club may make a big difference in drawing individuals to the site. She suggested activities such as bicycle rentals, functions, events, or other things to do that will encourage individuals to visit the site. She suggested asking the city to connect the path to adjoining parcels whether or not there is planned development there.

Ms. Alschuler stated the other thing is programming of the space. There is a need to think about what is happening there if individuals will want to do their own events or bringing school children there or other things that would open it up to the Redwood City community.

g. **Connections and Continuity**

(1) Does the proposed project provide a clear connection to the adjacent levee Bay Trail and the Bair Island Trail?

Ms. McCann stated there is a challenge for sites that are deep from the street. She stated many individuals were out walking at the site during the weekend she visited. In the near-term, for the next 20-plus years, the Bay Trail will have plenty of people walking along it who will look across the ditch to the proposed site.

Ms. McCann stated there will be good public access with the sports club and there is a great plant palette. She suggested considering bringing in environmental signage to help direct individuals to the public areas at the edge.

Ms. McCann stated priority number one, at least for the next 20 years, would be to negotiate some type of bridge crossing across the ditch. Making that connection will make many potential concerns moot. The development and everyone who is using the existing trail will benefit.

Ms. Alschuler stated, usually when the Board sees a project that will be part of the Bay Trail, there is a way of getting to the edge and connecting. She suggested finding a way that it is clearer in the plan that eventually individuals will be able to bike to the edge.

Ms. McCann suggested negotiating some type of temporary crossing or trail. It is not a long distance and will not take anything sophisticated to make that connection but would be a terrific thing to accomplish. Simple, prefabricated structures are available.

Mr. Battalio stated a bridge may not be necessary, especially if the drainage ditch is not draining much. He suggested varying the landscaping along that edge to potentially create some sort of wetland on the property. He suggested putting a couple of water-level recorders in the ditch to determine its drainage area and hydrology from a flood management standpoint for the proposed property, but also there may be opportunities to soften this odd linear feature.

(2) Does the proposed design enhance the public invitation to the site from East Bayshore Road?

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

h. **Visual Access and Visual Quality**

(1) Does the design of the Paseo maximize views and physical connections to the shoreline?

Mr. Pellegrini commended the applicant for opening up the middle of the site to public access in a way that is not required. He stated this will set an example for the adjacent properties for providing perpendicular access. Also, the addition of the health club is an interesting and compelling publicly accessible use that creates an anchor for individuals to come to the site.

(2) Do the proposed shoreline improvements preserve and enhance views along the waterway?

Mr. Pellegrini suggested that the experience of the Paseo be brought up to Bayshore Road. It is worth considering how to unify the view corridor, such as through consistent tree planting that comes through, materials at the ground plane, or a sidewalk on both sides from the southwestern parking lot to the street corner.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the health club is not reading significantly differently as a public building or amenity than the architecture of the residential buildings. It is worth exploring that and differentiating the materials or roofline so it will stand out as a public piece of architecture that can be seen from the freeway to draw people in.

i. **Wildlife Compatibility**

(1) Do the proposed shoreline planting and activities respond to the adjacent natural wildlife habitat areas in Smith Slough and Bair Island?

Mr. Pellegrini stated this brings up what is resilient and what is adaptable on the site and to what extent. He asked, if there is habitat and public access to habit at the edge of the property that might be significantly underwater by 2050, then there is a role to create public access on this site or adjacent sites to help make some of that habitat more adaptable. He also asked if there needs to be space for upland migration.

(2) Do the proposed amenities allow for and enhance the viewing and study of wildlife?

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

j. **Sea Level Rise**

(1) How can the public areas be appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?

Mr. Pellegrini asked whether the adaptability strategy, which basically puts a sea wall at the edge of the flat area, is the most appropriate longer-term solution. The habitat seen in the area that is ramped today would be inundated in the future and that edge condition would be very different than it is today.

Ms. Barton stated the adaptable sea wall is four to six feet high.

Mr. Strang stated the Board has been commenting on that for many projects recently. There is a section that shows the mitigation strategy, but it would count on the neighboring sites to complete the strategy. It is not a viable strategy - mitigation should be accomplished by using other means.

Mr. Battalio stated he had a similar reaction - that a wall that tall is not something to rely on, given that there is potentially high ground water with sea level rise and there is not much difference in elevation between the building floors and the future water level. In fact, at extreme water levels, the public access space would be underwater. The stormwater management with future sea level rise may have an issue draining.

Mr. Battalio asked if it is possible to look at raising the trail either as part of this design or in the future in combination with a shorter wall. He stated his concern that there may be more like two feet instead of three feet for the buildings at sea level rise and what the implications are to the trail.

Mr. Pellegrini stated this has come up in recent projects where there is a Paseo-like design with residential development that comes right down to ground level. The degree this transition that can be designed as a comfortable space where individuals using the Paseo are not necessarily on the same eye level as the individuals inhabiting the ground floor of that residence and the transition between the patio spaces on those units and the public corridor is worth thinking about in more detail to ensure that there is a good transition.

Mr. Pellegrini stated part of the strategy to make the view corridor feel public means making a good place for the public to move through but also a good place for the residences on the sides to feel that they can inhabit the edge of that. He suggested, if there is space, elevating the private space or using landscaping and other things to create that transition. The current design makes it difficult to understand how that may play out.

Ms. Alschuler recommended looking at that. She agreed with extending the sense of welcome all the way to East Bayshore Road. She stated the need to also consider interpretation. The design does not contain much about signage or interpretation. She suggested making it fun to come in there and follow the path to learn something - something that draws individuals in with something to learn at each step along the way and, when they get to the end, individuals will see Bair Island and they can learn about that. This might be a way to bring individuals to the site, as well.

Mr. Strang stated the elevation looks like it will be pretty vulnerable in 2050. The building, the finished floor, and the units will be vulnerable. The plan includes a short-term solution. Important areas at the site will be flooded at king tide in 2050. He noted that this was the first point in the Sierra Club letter. He asked what this means for open space, access, and transitioning the site into other uses.

Ms. Gaffney stated the Flood Explorer images shown do not account for the three feet of soil that will be added to the site but the drawings do. She referred to Slide 20, Shoreline Cross Section 2, and stated there is a cross-section where there is the Bay Trail and the site with public access and the 100-year storm is at 11.9 elevation, which is just cresting the top of the bank.

Ms. Alschuler referred to Slide 27, Sea Level Rise Potential Scenarios, and stated it indicates that most of the park area and the building sites are still dry but that access points are subject to flooding.

Ms. Gaffney stated the access points being subject to flooding may be the result of adjacent areas being flooded. The water is possibly coming from somewhere else.

Ms. Alschuler stated now is the time to plan for continued accessibility in that area because it will be part of a regional connection by then.

Mr. Battalio suggested adding one foot to the first-floor elevation to help ensure resiliency. He stated he was skeptical to achieve three feet of sea level rise accommodation considering that the site is large and flat. He stated high ground water situations could result in nuisance flooding.

k. **Applicant Response.** Mr. Ceridono responded positively to the Board's discussion and suggestions. He stated the project team will take the Board's comments into consideration and will come up with an improved design.

l. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board did not summarize their conclusions. (Please refer to the Board Questions and Discussion.)

Ms. Alschuler stated the Board would like to review this project again.

5. **Foster City Levee Protection Planning and Improvement Project (Second Review).** The Board held their second review of the proposal by Foster City to rehabilitate and raise approximately six miles of the existing levees that surround Foster City along the bayfront, in San Mateo County. Public access improvements associated with the project would include reconstructing and widening the Bay Trail along the levee and modifying access pathways, parks, and amenities along the trail. The last Board review of this project was in February of 2019.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Walt Deppe, BCDC Coastal Program Analyst, reviewed the project and showed a video from a recent site visit. Mr. Deppe described points of interest as the video played. He reviewed the seven public access objectives from page 11 of the Staff Report:

(1) Make public access public.

(2) Make public access usable.

(3) Provide, maintain, and enhance visual access to the Bay and the shoreline.

(4) Maintain and enhance visual quality of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent developments.

(5) Provide connections to and continuity along the shoreline.

(6) Take advantage of the Bay setting.

(7) Ensure that public access is compatible with wildlife through siting, design, and management strategies.

Mr. Deppe summarized the issues in the staff report regarding the design of the proposed public access and sea level rise as follows:

b. **Design of the Proposed Public Access**

(1) Visual access to the Bay and view impacts from the proposed levee raising project.

(2) Physical shoreline access

(a) Low-lying public access areas on the water side of the floodwall.

(b) Access during construction.

(3) Trail configuration for the public's enjoyment of the Bay setting, visual access, and visual quality.

(a) Railings and floodwalls

(b) Wayfinding and interpretive elements

(4) Trail access points

(a) Formal access

(b) Informal access

(5) Appropriateness of site amenities, signage, planting, railings, interpretive elements, and lighting such that the public spaces are inviting and enjoyable to the greatest amount of the public.

(6) Public Access impacts during construction.

(a) Detour signage and wayfinding for impacted activities.

c. **Sea Level Rise.** Resilient design and signage strategies for public access areas subject to storm-based flooding.

d. **Project Presentation.** Charles D. Anderson, Schaaf and Wheeler Consulting Civil Engineers, introduced the project team. He reviewed the changes made to the design of the proposed site since the February 11, 2019 Board meeting. He provided an overview with a slide presentation of the project location, description, and construction schedule for the proposed project.

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

Mr. Battalio referred to Slide 34, Adapting to Future Sea Level Rise, and asked for verification that the open bay graph has more wave runup on it in addition to the still water than the slough graph. Mr. Anderson stated that is correct.

Mr. Battalio asked if the blue line is the low risk aversion curve. Mr. Anderson stated the blue line on the graph is the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) 50 percent probability high emissions scenario, which is the low risk with high emissions information. OPC calls it the median.

Ms. Gaffney stated it technically is below the low risk aversion category.

Mr. Battalio stated that curve is not one that would typically be used for high-consequence flood events. What is being shown is that the amount that the levees can be raised is limited by other factors and Slide 34 shows one scenario. He pointed out that it is not necessarily conservative to design for the 50th percentile or the median projection, but he stated he understood that the design is based on what can practically be done and not based on sea level rise.

Mr. Anderson stated the slide represents the resiliency of the current design. It is resilient through 2050 with 99.5 percent certainty. The graphs were a mechanism to show the adaptation plan and what may be expected at the 50th percent value.

Mr. Battalio stated the open bay graph includes wave and wave runup. He asked if the wave runup or total water level was assumed to increase the same as sea level rise or if the amplification that will occur was considered. Mr. Anderson stated project proponents did not consider amplification. They ran FEMA's dynamic model with the extra sea level rise and then reran the wave runup calculations.

Mr. Battalio stated it is important to recognize that the wave runup elevation may increase more than the amount of sea level rise. He commended the project proponents for running that important calculation.

Mr. Pellegrini referred to page 5 of the Staff Report where it states the east side of the San Mateo Bridge would have a FloodBreak wall. He asked Mr. Anderson for further detail. Mr. Anderson pointed out the location on a presentation slide and stated the area will stay at ground level under the bridge for clearance reasons. There needs to be a gap at Werder Pier and the abutment for the San Mateo Bridge that provides flood protection but there is no room for them to get up and over so the FloodBreak was put in that location. He stated, other than wave splash coming across that FloodBreak, it will not ever be tested because the elevation 13.5 is the 2050 100-year level.

Mr. Pellegrini asked about the wall treatments shown on Slide 22 of the exhibit. He asked for verification that the wall is one of two materials - either concrete or steel. Mr. Anderson stated that is correct and noted that the cap is always made of concrete.

Mr. Pellegrini asked for verification that the different treatments would apply to the different subareas that have been defined. He asked what the strategy or methodology would be to apply the different treatments along the wall.

Mr. Anderson stated the corrosion engineers suggested that the best thing to do is to leave the Bay side untreated, to leave it as weathering steel. The interior side will be a dark gray coated steel. Mr. Anderson showed a presentation slide and stated the major access

points are depicted by red stars. He showed another slide of the treatment that may be used at those access point locations. Project proponents are currently working that out with the city. The treatment could go one of two ways - it could be very unique to the site or part of the same unified theme. He noted that the concrete cap is uniform throughout the project and ties the project together.

Mr. Pellegrini asked for verification that, at the access point, there are concrete panels and to the east and west there is painted steel on the land side. Mr. Anderson stated that is correct and added that the Bay side will also have a painted steel treatment.

Mr. Strang stated there is also the CMU or dry-stacked wall. Mr. Anderson stated that is correct but it is larger than a CMU. It is similar to an Allan Block that looks like masonry with a stacked, battered block look with some texture to it. Allan Blocks have a number of different finishes.

Mr. Strang referred to the site plan presentation slide and asked for more detail on the plantings. He asked for verification that there are plantings at the important entry points and the majority of it is ice plant. Mr. Anderson stated that is correct. Areas where the ice plant does not grow or banks will contain native plants.

Mr. Strang asked about the number of locations for the new plantings. Mr. Anderson stated the new plantings will be at the red and yellow stars on the presentation slide. The openings to the Bay or trails will be framed with the new plantings. The field will remain in ice plant, and where there is no ice plant, California native plants will be planted.

Mr. Strang asked if those areas would be irrigated. Mr. Anderson stated the new plantings will be irrigated but the ice plant areas will not.

Mr. Strang asked if the new engineered backfill will be revegetated. Mr. Anderson stated it will. In locations with ice plant, the ice plant will be saved and replanted on the new fill.

Ms. McCann referred to page 24 of the exhibit that is labeled between Mariner's Point and San Mateo Bridge and asked if there is an estimate of the percentage or an exhibit that would diagram out areas where the view to the Bay would be lost from the road. Mr. Anderson stated the Bay currently cannot be seen from the road.

Ms. McCann asked about the percent of the levee that will be altered. Mr. Anderson stated 100 percent of the levee will be altered. The levee must be raised so the view will be altered everywhere.

Ms. McCann asked about the detail between the wall in the renderings on the Bay edge of the trail. She asked if strips of decomposed granite or a different material are typical details. Mr. Anderson stated the product is GraniteCrete, which is like a decomposed granite but it has a binder in it. It is 18 feet wide from edge to edge of the trail and 12 feet will be paved, but it will not necessarily be centered. He stated the proposal is to make a 4-foot-wide strip along the Bay side with marked, paved pedestrian and bicycle lanes.

Ms. Alschuler asked how that compares to the current location. Mr. Anderson stated the current width is approximately 10 feet total. The proposal will almost double the space. He pointed out a location on a presentation slide that was too narrow and stated the shoulder was dropped in this area to make it 15 feet wide.

Ms. McCann stated many individuals use the informal trails on the Bay side of the trail at Station 200. She asked about the future of those trails. Mr. Anderson stated two public trails will be provided because the project proponents have rights to be on the property that is state lands. Paths to the shell beaches will be provided as part of the proposed project. There also will be access points at Shorebird Point. It cannot be guaranteed that individuals will stay on the marked paths, but formal access will not be provided along the slough to the wildlife area.

Mr. Battalio asked for confirmation on the height of the walls and whether individuals in wheelchairs can see over the wall. Mr. Anderson stated a three-and-a-half-foot-high wall is against the open Bay and serves as fall protection. Someone in a wheelchair could not see over it. In those areas, viewing platforms have been provided. Mr. Anderson stated individuals in wheelchairs should be able to see over the two-and-a-half-foot-high wall along the slough.

Mr. Battalio asked how the elevation of the trail was established and whether the potential for groundwater and the combined stormwater flooding was considered. Mr. Anderson stated for the most part the trail is set at three and a half feet below the top of the wall. The wall is providing 100-year flood protection through 2050 so the trail, by default, is protected from the sea. He stated, regarding the question about the trail becoming inundated from the landside, the trail is at elevation 15 and most of Foster City is approximately at elevation 5.

Mr. Anderson noted that the Mariner's Point and Baywinds Park areas will be left at elevation 12 to provide access to the beach. Where the trail is at elevation 12, flood protection is being done on the inboard side of the walls. Those locations are subject to flood hazards from the Bay but they will still be resilient to 100-year storm surge through 2050.

Mr. Battalio suggested looking at the king tide with sea level rise and considering the trail elevation from that perspective, as well.

Mr. Strang asked if there are overhead structures proposed. Mr. Anderson stated there are shade structures primarily in the larger picnic area similar to what is now in Shorebird Park.

Mr. Strang asked about the number of shade structures proposed. Mr. Anderson stated there are currently three but two more are being considered to be added to the picnic area for a total of five.

Mr. Strang stated the plantings are mostly low. He asked if that was intentional. Mr. Anderson stated it is very intentional because it is still a levy.

Mr. Strang noted that on the staff bicycle tour video there were occasional clumps of small multi-trunked trees or large shrubs that provided an accent to the journey. Mr. Anderson stated something like that would not obstruct the levy. No trees will be removed that are not in the path.

Terry Huffman, Ph.D., President, Senior Wetland Regulatory Scientist, Huffman-Broadway Group, Inc., the Environmental Consultants, stated one thing being done to mitigate the O'Neill Slough in San Mateo County, which is long and linear, is to make it into a full tidal area by opening it up. There is only one culvert serving it now and it is crushed so the tide is muted. The channels at both ends will be opened up and bridges will be put across those points. In the process, structured plantings of one of the Atriplex bushes that grows several feet high will add dimension and diminish the linear look in some places.

Mr. Battalio asked where that area is located on the plan. Dr. Huffman pointed out the area on a presentation slide and noted the area that is currently completely closed to tidal action. He stated the crushed culvert will be replaced, a channel will be dug, and a bridge will be put across there to connect with Redwood City. He stated this location is also important because it is an emergency egress for Foster City.

Ms. Alschuler asked for clarity on the amenities. On page 3 of the Staff Report, there is a table that shows the pre- and post-project numbers of various amenities. She asked about the philosophy behind this. She stated she also was influenced by the staff bicycle tour video. She stated it reminded her that there are few benches and places to stop throughout the six miles of this project. There are currently 39 benches and there will be 35 benches post-project.

Ms. Barton added that the table on page 3 of the Staff Report indicates that trash receptacles will dramatically decrease from 35 to 19.

Ms. Alschuler asked if the project proponents have thought about who will use the trail and how often they may need to stop and sit down along the way. Mr. Anderson stated much of it is that function follows form. It is a linear trail; benches and trash receptacles cannot be put just anywhere. They must be placed where the trail can bump out or with a structure.

Ms. Alschuler asked if individuals can sit on the shorter walls. Mr. Anderson stated no one should sit on the three-foot fall-protection wall, but they may be able to sit on the shorter walls.

Ms. Alschuler stated much attention has been spent on Beach Park Boulevard and the experiences there but she expected something more dramatic. She referred to Levee Rehabilitation Types on page 4 of the Staff Report where the three major components - a sheet pile floodwall, earthen levee, and conventional floodwall - had a certain balance, but now the project proponents are proposing to replace the originally proposed sheet pile wall along Beach Park Boulevard adjacent to State Lands property with an earthen levee. She asked if "adjacent to State Lands property" means the only area that was changed is the green area shown at the beginning of the presentation or if it was the whole Beach Park Boulevard. Mr. Anderson stated it is the one area approximately 1,400 feet long at Shorebird Park.

Ms. Alschuler stated there was a long discussion at the February meeting about whether a landform treatment could be done or a more expansive, wider treatment that at some point might be possible because of the significant width of Beach Park Boulevard. The response seemed to be largely that the project proponents do not own the land so it could not be done. She stated it looks like other kinds of agreements will be needed in the future. She stated she was not convinced that something could not be done just because the project proponents did not own it. The city owns it and there is an advantage to the city handling this problem and understanding the adaptation in the long-term.

Ms. Alschuler asked if the response was that it will not be done now due to the tight timeline and whether it was discovered that there might be benefits of broadening and changing the types of adaptations done. This is a question that will be applicable around the Bay in many places. It would be helpful to learn what the project proponents are thinking about this issue.

Mr. Anderson stated time, costs, and the need to go back through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements were deterrents because taking out that much right of way is a substantial change. As it is, the contractor will be given one lane during construction and that in and of itself is major. He stated another problem is making those changes will bring the levee closer to the residential buildings. It is currently set farther away and is hidden behind the wall. He stated project proponents could find no benefit that would outweigh the issues.

Ms. Gaffney stated it is a consideration in the adaptation plan.

Ms. Alschuler asked what it is that might be done. Mr. Anderson stated the levee cannot go up any further. There are three possibilities: to go out into the Bay, onto the street, or a combination of these options. The decision about the direction the levee will grow has been deferred to the future and will depend on the regulatory environment, cost, time, and other factors.

Mr. Battalio asked, while going through the EIR analysis, if it was projected how the Bay shore, landforms, and vegetation would change with sea level rise. He asked what happens between the levee and the Bay as the levee is raised. There may not be much shore left at certain areas. He stated the answer to that question will affect the future adaptation strategy, opportunities, and constraints associated with future planning.

Mr. Anderson stated the project proponents asked Professor Mark Stacey at Berkeley if there is anything the proposed project will do that will change the shoreline and his answer was that nothing is being changed below the top of the levee. Mr. Anderson stated the marshes may change over time, but the line of protection does not depend on those marshes. The direction the levee will go in the future will become clear as more information becomes available.

Mr. Battalio stated there may be adaptation schemes that may not be as attractive to landowners or the city but that may end up with more habitat or other assets that the broader public supports. It might be worth taking another look at that in the future.

Ms. Gaffney stated the adaptation plan considers the inland expansion of the levee into the right-of-way as one possibility.

Ms. Barton asked if there are groundwater intrusion possibilities and if that is in the calculations. Mr. Anderson stated the soil is not porous; it is Bay mud and is impervious. Water takes a long time to get through Bay mud. Foster City is entirely built on an interior lagoon system; any groundwater intrusion can be pumped out. He stated it is like a bathtub with a pump.

Mr. Pellegrini asked if there is a public art project that is part of the overall budget. Mr. Anderson stated not yet.

f. **Public Hearing.** Two members of the public provided the following comments:

Mandi Browning, world champion kite surfer, stated the need to ensure the safety of individuals accessing the Bay. She stated many of her concerns have been addressed during the process but she was concerned about construction preventing access during the kite surfing season.

Ms. Gaffney stated Ben Botkin, Water Trail Planner, San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail, thanked Foster City staff and the design team for making the changes to meet the needs of the windsurfing and kiteboarding communities. She summarized Mr. Botkin's written comments as follows:

- This particular area at Third Avenue is the most heavily-used kiteboarding site on the Bay.

- There is a need to ensure that its continued use is available and that elements and improvements do not snag kite lines.

g. **Board Discussion.** The Board discussed the following:

Ms. Alschuler asked the Board to respond to the seven big-picture Public Access Design Guidelines on page 11 of the Staff Report.

Mr. Pellegrini stated the Board does not often see projects of this size. This is the third time that Foster City has had to raise this levee and the city is indicating that this will be the last time before they radically change their strategy.

Mr. Pellegrini stated in terms of interpreting this experience, the Board has to find comfort in the fact that public access, in the way the Board thinks about it where individual properties or groups of properties have maximum public and physical access to the shoreline, is a tradeoff where the linear system is being improved and allowing improved access onto that linear system, which should give everyone access to that amenity. However, the views from individual homes and opportunities for neighborhoods to have an experience similar to what they have now is going to change. This is interpreting things a little differently than how the Board would try to fulfil the intent of the Bay Plan policies. That is important to consider here.

Mr. Strang referred to Public Access Design Guidelines 4, 5, and 6 on page 11 of the Staff Report and stated, as a fallback, there is the language of material and details that could be developed more.

Ms. McCann stated, because this project will be undertaken in one stage and includes 6.4 miles of the Bay, it will be of intense interest to everyone around the Bay. She suggested thinking about how to communicate to the community what this project is about. This project can be a model for others to follow about how to think about building resilience in the Bay in a more comprehensive way. She encouraged thinking about the community relations program in a robust way because it is a hugely important project for the San Francisco Bay as a whole.

Ms. Alschuler suggested five- or ten-year reviews of the project. She stated someone needs to program, watch over, and maintain all of this corridor, and identify places for other amenities to bring more people there.

The Board responded to questions from the staff report as follows:

h. **Design of the Proposed Public Access**

(1) Visual access to the Bay and view impacts from the proposed levee raising project.

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

(2) **Physical Shoreline Access**

(a) Low-lying public access areas on the water side of the floodwall.

(b) Access during construction.

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

(3) Trail configuration for the public's enjoyment of the Bay setting, visual access, and visual quality.

(a) Railings and floodwalls.

(b) Wayfinding and interpretive elements.

Mr. Pellegrini stated he mentioned including a public art project because the story would be important to tell as individuals who are visiting the site are experiencing it. He stated the story could include the following:

- The infrastructure needed to be put in to meet a future condition.
- The infrastructure represents the maximum extent of how high it can go before something else needs to be done.
- The levees have been improved over time.

- Areas that look natural are fairly new and manmade, such as the shell beach.
- Where the shoreline used to be.
- Where existing and future flood events might be.

Mr. Pellegrini suggested giving the opportunity for a public art program or an interpretive program to help tell the story of the environmental condition and what everyone should get ready for in the future so they can help make informed decisions when the time comes.

Mr. Strang stated a public art project is a great idea. He stated, for a project of this scale, there could be a wayfinding strategy as well as a public art strategy, which would unify all the materials, details, colors, finishes, metals, graphics, and signage.

Mr. Strang stated, by having a few key indicators, this experience can be marked and the whole sense of being out there can be elevated. He suggested enlisting the services of a graphic designer. When ordering this amount of furniture, a furniture supplier typically can do something custom that is unique to this project.

Mr. Strang stated the block wall, for example, is a good industrial retaining wall strategy but it is hard to put an attractive cap on it. Also, putting a railing on top of a block wall is even harder to make attractive.

(4) Trail access points.

(a) Formal access. Ms. Alschuler suggested helping individuals locate reasonable access points so they are done right.

(b) Informal access. Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

(5) Appropriateness of site amenities, signage, planting, railings, interpretive elements, and lighting such that the public spaces are inviting and enjoyable to the greatest amount of the public.

Mr. Strang asked if small multi-trunked trees or large shrubs could be planted in the ice plant areas that are not being improved. They would be planted in native soil and it would help break up the vast spaces with more vertical markers.

Ms. McCann stated she likes the fact that the trail will be widened. This is a popular trail and individuals find every new way of getting around, not only by bicycle. She stated she also likes that there is a separation strip between the wall and the paved trail. She suggested occasional small pockets of groundcover plantings to help break the linear wall junction to the trail. She encouraged not having the same detail running for a long distance without change.

Mr. Strang suggested taking the opportunity to do restoration-type landscape techniques, such as growing native plants - planting small seedlings in plugs in the fall - or doing a no-irrigation plant restoration as opposed to getting plants in cans that are grown industrially, irrigating them for a couple of years, and then abandoning the irrigation system.

Mr. Strang stated cool climate areas around the Bay present opportunities to do effective coastal scrub restorations. It is much more effective and successful in this type of setting and it would relieve the city of a huge maintenance burden. This is different than conventional landscaping but the biologists can give direction on that type of technique.

Ms. Alschuler stated residents will need to know where the project is heading, that there is a need for flood protection alternatives in the Bay, and to understand how an urban edge can be a positive experience. She suggested looking for opportunities to put together the art and storytelling to help the community learn about flood protection that is in place now and to understand what the next steps will be.

(6) Public Access impacts during construction.

Mr. Strang stated public comment included the request to keep certain access points open during construction or timing of the seasons.

(a) Detour signage and wayfinding for impacted activities.

Suggestions to this question are incorporated in the suggestions to other questions.

i. **Sea Level Rise**

(1) Resilient design and signage strategies for public access areas subject to storm-based flooding.

Ms. Alschuler stated her concern that there will be thirty years between now and when something else will need to be in place for sea level rise. These six miles of the Bay provide an incredible opportunity to learn. It is beneficial to be experimental in some way. For example, one of the regional studies that are happening around the Bay could use the proposed project site as a model to try a different way of doing the next step of protection.

Mr. Battalio suggested looking at the trail elevation relative to some sort of operational criteria such as the elevation of the trail relative to future king tide levels.

Mr. Battalio encouraged the project proponents to think and rethink about the adaptation strategy and updating it because it currently deals with things such as expectations, plausible liability, or lack of certainty, and what can be done is constrained. As things roll out and sea level rise occurs, an update to the adaptation strategy would be prudent.

Mr. Battalio suggested opening it up to different ideas. Other projects have used floating structures and put buildings on piles. It is not convenient but it is better than other alternatives.

Ms. Alschuler asked the BCDC to consider Foster City as a possible test site.

j. **Applicant Response.** Norm Dorais, Public Works Director, Foster City, stated the Department of Public Works is part of the San Mateo countywide agency that was formed as part of the Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency. Many of these larger, long-term projects will be addressed on a countywide basis. One of the powerful things behind that is the region

will be able to attract more federal dollars to try to address these huge issues. This affects nine counties throughout the Bay Area.

Mr. Dorais stated the Department of Public Works is attacking this problem for the short-term and looking at adaptation plans for longer-term, but when looking at 2100, 2200, and beyond, those are large issues that one small city cannot address on its own. The county Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency should be able to help with the larger-term projects. They are studying many different alternative solutions worldwide.

Ms. Gaffney stated the proposed project has a pending application and is tentatively scheduled to go before the Commission this fall.

6. **Adjournment.** Ms. Alschuler asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Strang moved to adjourn the August 5, 2019, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Design Review Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Pellegrini.

VOTE: The motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0 with Board Chair Alschuler, Vice Chair Strang, and Board Members Barton, Battalio, McCann, and Pellegrini voting approval.

There being no further business, Ms. Alschuler adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ANDREA GAFFNEY
Bay Design Analyst

Approved, with no corrections at the
Design Review Board Meeting of October 7, 2019.