

APPENDIX A - DESIGN REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

APRIL 5, 2021

3.22.2021

Log of: Design Review Board & staff from the October 7, 2019

Oakland Athletics Howard Terminal Masterplan BCDC DRB comment log

COMMENT	RESPONSE	Early SD	Late SD	Early DD	Late DD	N/A
GENERAL NOTES						
The ballpark development in general was well received by the Board. Comments that it is reticent of an Olympic plan were voiced and the Board is looking forward to seeing the next level of design in detail.	No response required					
Does the project have a bird-friendly design? Please address the general topic of wildlife compatibility with the project at the next scheduled meeting.	Bird friendly design considerations will be included as part of the Ballpark design pursuant to Oakland's bird friendly policies. For all other buildings, these requirements will form part of their individual design and approval process.		x			
CONNECTIONS TO THE WATERFRONT						
Both the Board and staff are concerned with how the project will address compatibility with existing Port operations. Please consider adding grade separated crossings to avoid mobility conflicts and ensure the public's safety to access the site on both game and non-game days.	A pedestrian grade separated crossing is included in the DEIR as a mitigation measure. Jefferson Street is the most likely location for this crossing. A vehicular grade separated crossing may be required by the Oakland City Council as described in the Alternatives chapter of the DEIR. Brush Street is the likely location for this crossing, if required.	x				
The rail crossings are problematic in relation to moving people to the waterfront and moving goods to and from the port. How will the project address these circulation conflicts? How can the project improve or remove these conflicts?	The project includes a significant investment in railroad safety, both in the grade separated crossings described above, and in the at-grade safety improvements between the project frontage and Broadway. These at-grade improvements include quad gates and signals at every intersection, safety fencing, vehicular circulation changes to limit turn movements across the tracks from Embarcadero, and traffic control officers on game days to manage the flow of pedestrians across the tracks.	x				
One Board member requested a rendering to show how the project would engage with the Jack London neighborhood beyond the entrance of the ballpark.	See renderings from DEIR in exhibit set. As the design process progresses, additional renderings will become available, further detailing the connection of the project site to the surrounding neighborhoods.		x			
Neighborhood connections are critical to understand, both the Board and staff would like to see in more detail how the adjacent neighborhoods, specifically social vulnerable areas, would be invited to enjoy the waterfront. Historically, the adjacent community youth could easily access the pier. In regards to improving the conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods, how can the project improve the social vulnerability of the surrounding communities? What social vulnerability mapping color will this new neighborhood look like? How can the project shift the social vulnerability map color of the adjacent communities without causing displacement?	The existing pier is not currently accessible to the community. The project will open up a large swatch of Oakland's waterfront to the public by providing 18 acres of new public space on the Estuary, with diverse amenities, spaces large and small, flexible and intimate. The rooftop park allows for panoramic views of the bay, a waterfront experience unprecedented for the Oakland community. It is this range of amenities, combined with future programming curated to welcome a broad range of community organizations, schools and individuals that will serve to connect the community to the new district. New jobs, increased access and connectivity, healthier spaces for recreation and leisure all contribute to the fortification of the community and provide opportunities to those most vulnerable. Off-site infrastructure improvements will improve transit, bike, and pedestrian access to these waterfront amenities from the West Oakland, 12th Street City Center and Lake Merritt BART stations. This will connect many neighborhoods to the project and new waterfront amenities, including West Oakland, Old Oakland, Downtown, Chinatown, and Jack London District.					

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CONNECTIONS TO THE WATERFRONT						
The connection down Market Street to the water is an important connection. How will pedestrians and cyclists move along the street from the adjacent communities to the waterfront? What are the street sections and views to the water?	Market Street will receive improvements to its pedestrian infrastructure, ensuring sidewalks have sufficient effective width and tripping hazards are removed. Market Street will have sidewalks and buffered bike lanes on both sides, and two lanes of vehicular traffic in each direction. Due to the narrow width of the estuary and the presence of Alameda immediately beyond the Estuary as seen from Market Street, there are no views to the water from Market Street.	x				
MASTER PLAN						
The Board questioned whether or not the road network would support the approximately 3000 residential units proposed for the development, as well as the many visitors the project hopes to draw. Please consider showing more detail of the mixed-use portion of the development detailing how the land uses of the project will be a “good neighbor” to the other surrounding areas already in place.	The road network has been studied and developed with input from a traffic engineer based on the full development goals including the ballpark. Additional design for the mixed-use portion of the development will form part of the design and approval process moving forward.		x			
Please provide clarification as to why the Block 20 is significantly larger than the rest of the proposed development. One Board member specifically asked this question.	Block 20 provides flexibility in the masterplan to accommodate demand for larger contiguous commercial floor space while also creating an edge between Schnitzer Steel plant building and the new pedestrian neighborhood.					
The Board noted that the neighborhood has a “gritty and maritime character” and that element should continue to resonate in the design.	The design team agrees. The intention is to celebrate the industrial character of the site. Material palette and furnishing designs will be developed and visualized through Schematic design.	x				
The Board and Staff would both like to understand the three-dimensional character of the proposed development in relation to the waterfront parks and views. Please provide additional 3D views of the development for the next review.	The maximum envelope is included in the DEIR, and 3d renderings are provided in the latest exhibit package to the DRB. Visualization of this will be develop through the design process. However, the exact shape and character of each building will vary through the build out of the full site.	x				
How does this project become a great neighborhood?	A robust public infrastructure, a diverse mix of services and business and the energy of a ballpark all add up to a rich, diverse neighborhood.					
Who lives there?	The project will be home to a diverse population, the specific makeup of which is not known at this time.					
How will they get around?	The project includes infrastructure for all modes of transportation, pedestrian improvements for walking, bike lanes for cycling and micromobility, transit infrastructure for buses, and parking spaces for vehicles.					
Is there sufficient space and network to serve the ballpark and the Development?	Yes, the on-site road network is fine grained providing many connections for walking and biking with ample space to accommodate them. The at-grade crossing will also be substantially improved with fencing and vehicle and pedestrian gates to enhance safety for all those crossing the tracks. On site ballpark parking is intentionally limited to leverage existing off-street parking garages in downtown Oakland through an advanced pay reservation system. This means that those who drive will have a reserved i.e., pre-paid parking space in one of the downtown garages. Once parked they will walk to the ballpark on one of the widened sidewalks to accommodate ballpark fans walking between downtown, Chinatown district, jack London district, and the ballpark.					
Will there be additional open spaces within the development parcels?	This is generally unknown, however each parcel is required to address stormwater management per local codes, which will most likely lead to some open space.					x
Staff believes the waterfront park experience should include the rooftop park and the waterfront parks. How do they all work together to create a single notion of the Howard Terminal waterfront park?	The design and project team agrees. The orientation of the rooftop park has been rotated approximately 30 degrees southwest to strengthen the connection between the rooftop park and the waterfront park. This moves creates a strong visual connection between the two spaces. In addition, the geometry of the rooftop serves to welcome the public, and allow for great visual connection between the two.	x				

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MASTER PLAN						
The Board noted that the ballpark will block views to the waterfront when approaching the site from the north at Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. As a result, they emphasized that MLK Plaza will be critical arrival point and that the Vistra Building is a landmark. How will MLK plaza welcome the public to the site and lead people to the water?	Agreed. MLK plaza will serve as a mayor pedestrian gateway to the project, at the point of entrance for all means of transportation. See latest renderings provided as part of the exhibit package. Additional visualizations will form part of the design and approval process moving forward.		x			
Please provide additional plans/sections/details on Athletics Way and how it will be inviting to the public on non-event days. How will it feel and function as a public street?	Additional visualizations will form part of the design and approval process moving forward. See latest renderings provided as part of the exhibit package.		x			
Where will balls go if there's a home run? Will they fall into the public waterfront park?	MLB home run distance consistently average 400' year after year. It is ~450' from home plate to the edge of the ballpark. Vertical barriers are also present in this 450' distance (fencing, building edge etc.). As such, homerun balls will land within the ballpark.					
Please ensure that all proposed uses for blocks 7/8 are trust-consistent uses as the parcel falls within the filled lands area of the property.	Confirmed					
What is the overall public programming and activities for the rooftop, concourse (Athletics Way, and ground levels (Waterfront Parks)? What programs will be offered at the rooftop park to ensure they don't compete with what is being offered on the ground level public realm?	The programming of the public realm will be critical for the activation and success of the new waterfront. The specific design and curation of this will occur in future phases of the project.				x	
ROOFTOP PARK - Programming and Invitations to the Public						
Will the park be open at night for stargazing? Evening strolls? Fireworks? What are the anticipated hours of operation?	The specific operating hours of the rooftop park are not yet determined, but it will likely be open during daylight hours.					
With approximately 96 event days (approximately 25%) scheduled per year, it will be critical to draw the public to the rooftop area and communicate that it is available for use on non-game days. What is the range of programs and activities available to the public on the rooftop park?	The programming of the public realm will be critical for the activation and success of the new waterfront. The rotation of the ballpark rooftop park makes for a stronger connection to the waterfront park, and will create a stronger draw for the public up to the rooftop park. The specific design and curation of this will occur in future phases of the project.					
Please provide more detail at Rickey Plaza and the transition to the rooftop park. How will the public move through these spaces on a typical day and an event day? Where will the fences, gates and security be located on event days and stored away on non-event days?	Fences and other temporary barriers will be required for gameday operations. These logistics are under coordination. Additional visualizations will form part of the design and approval process moving forward.		x			
GAME DAY/EVENT DAY						
Please map city-wide impacts for game-day events so we can understand how this will affect people's ability to access and enjoy the nearby waterfront destinations.	This information is detailed in the DEIR.					
How will Fan Fest work in Jack London Square and around the ballpark and still allow the non-fan public to enjoy the waterfront ?	While the detailed layout of specific future events is not known at this time, the design the site and ballpark allow for a natural separation between Athletics Way and the Waterfront open spaces, if needed during events.					
Please consider other alternatives for the Bay Trail route on game day. Staff has particular concern with the proposed route and the "pinch point" created near the Vistra building.	The routing of the Bay Trail on site provides for two options, one more direct route through the site near Vistra, and a more expansive route around the waterfront parks and up Market Street to MLK Jr Way.		x			
WATERFRONT PARK and BAY TRAIL						
Please provide a more resilient design approach to address sea level rise. The wharf is only resilient to 2050 and more could be done to ensure that this critical connection for circulation and public space remain in place as sea levels rise.	The Wharf has loading limitations. As we consider the proposed live loads of a waterfront park, the permanent improvements proposed are to be light weight and with minimum fill. The current Warf elevation provides enough height to accommodate 2070 projected SLR elevations. At moments of flooding, the waterfront park remains connected through a series of secondary paths. Additional measures, such as a parapet along the work edge could be implemented in the future (If needed after 2070), but are not proposed as part of the initial design.					

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WATERFRONT PARK and BAY TRAIL						
Both the Board and staff agree that keeping the industrial cranes in the project is an integral part of the history of the site.	The design intent is to retain, however the viability of this, location quantity and design is under study.			x		
Please clarify how additional interpretive elements proposed for the waterfront park will be incorporated.	Interpretive elements will be detailed later in the design process. They are not known at this concept stage.					
Staff requests that the project consider widening the Bay Trail to accommodate up to 24 feet; similar to that of the Bay Trail near the SF Giants ballpark. Areas where the public and the ticket holders will both be circulating needs additional consideration for how these areas will feel to the public on game days. How can they serve to invite the public to the waterfront and manage the queuing and security requirements of entering a baseball game?	<p>The project accounts for an 18' wide Bay Trail. That said, the Bay Trail runs in parallel to athletics way. In those areas where ticket holders and the public will overlap, this adjacency provides plenty of space for both fans and the general public.</p> <p>The narrowest portion of the waterfront occurs where the ballpark is closest to the waters edge. There is a 100ft clearance here, dimension which accommodates the Bay Trail, but also provides ample space for fans along athletics way.</p> <p>In other areas of the project, such as the bay trail along Market St, the Bay Trail is typically adjacent to additional sidewalks and plazas, allowing for a visual perception of a wider path, while limiting constraints of the Bay Trail to the required 18ft width.</p>					
At Rickey Plaza/Pier Park: Is a mounded green space that acts as an edge between the plaza and pier park the best transition for this area or should it be a less defined edge to invite people to the water?	The mounded green space has been shifted to act as a generous and open public viewing area where the public can have a view into the ballpark and see games without purchasing a ticket. The proposed edge extends the game experience to the non-ticketed public while also creating a highpoint at Pier Park, for the public to enjoy the harbor. These subtle topographic moves allow us to create intimacy and protection for the public on gameday, while also providing a sense of discovery and surprise as you approach the waterfront. We consider the scale of the waterfront park itself, and the public's instinctual attraction to the water, combined with the scale and geometry of paths along athletics way will serve as a great invitation towards the waterfront park.					
Please show more detail of Pier Park/Beach. How will the design connect to Overlook Park to create a unified open space?	See updated exhibit package. Additional visualizations will form part of the design and approval process moving forward.	x				
The Board requested a detailed rendering be provided for their review to better understand the scale of the 100-foot-wide connection at Water Plaza. With required EVA and other limitations, they expressed concern that the width is not sufficient.	<p>See updated exhibit package. Additional visualizations will form part of the design and approval process moving forward.</p> <p>As a point of comparison, Water Street in Jack London Square currently hosts the A's annual FanFest, an event that draws 30,000+ people. A crowd of this size is analogous to a sellout crowd at the proposed ballpark. Water Street is only 35' wide and accommodates 30,000+ people very comfortably, without overwhelming the waterfront. Given this, we are confident that open space as proposed can accommodate the general public and event attendees at the ballpark.</p>	x				
Please provide more detail of Overlook Park and the proposed land uses at Blocks 7/8.	See updated exhibit package. Block 8 (previously split into two blocks) 7/8 is a trust consistent parcel that could be the home of a future hotel. Detail design of this program is not part of the current concept level planning efforts.					
How will the design address the grade changes associated with this portion of the site and provide an invitation to the public along all sides?	Overlook park provides a series of ramps and overlooks that invite the public to view the waterfront from the highest vantage point along the waterfront park.					
Both the Board and staff are concerned with the hotel parcel at Blocks 7/8 and noted that a 400 room hotel will also feature meeting spaces and other amenities. We would like to see a detailed plan and/or rendering to better understand the scale of the building's design as it relates to the surrounding open space and edge condition of the waterfront for both base line and maritime reservation scenarios.	The Design of the potential hotel is not being developed as part of the concept level planning efforts. The design of each parcel will undergo their individual design and approval processes.					x

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PHASE TWO BASELINE SCENARIO						
Block 18/19 needs more detail and design development. Please clarify the programs and uses and how they relate to the waterfront park and inviting the public to the west end of the site. How does this area relate to the adjacent industrial maritime uses?	The program for Block 16 (previously block18/19) shall also be trust-consistent use. That said, specific program is TBD. It could be the home of a future performance venue. The West End park, is of a more rugged and industrial character than the rest of the park, alluding to some of the larger landscapes of the bay area, using topography to create a buffer between Schnitzer steel and the proposed masterplan.					
Block 7/8 hotel needs careful consideration for how it meets and invites the public on all sides. Design of this block should be different for the Baseline and MSR scenarios.	Block 8 is a trust consistent parcel. Detail design of this program is not part of the current concept level planning efforts. Because Phase 1 (including block 8) could be developed before the Port opts to implement the turning basin expansion, Phase 1 must be identical between the Baseline and Maritime Reservation Scenarios.					x
As one moves to the west, what is the experience and use of the park? What are the invitations to go to the west end of the park?	The waterfront park is seen as combinations of spaces, which transform from the more civic and active spaces around the ballpark, with a heavier concentration of plazas and hardscape areas to the more intimate gardens, and topographic moves within the west end park. Within the waterfront there are multiple spaces for families, such as picnic groves and flexible lawns, intimate gardens and special moments such as the amphitheater and the Filbert St. seating steps - which celebrate the harbor.					
PHASE TWO MARITIME RESERVATION SCENARIO						
The turning basin could be a major draw to the public. How can the design make this an asset?	Within the development, we propose amphitheater at the waterfronts edge, which will serve as a small performance area, with the activities of the turning basin as its backdrop.					
Given the significant change in the footprint of the developable area, does the grid pattern of the development need to remain the same? How can the urban design be more responsive to the proposed waterfront edge and surrounding context? If the exact shape and size of the turning basin is not defined, how can this design approach be articulated in design principles?	The Maritime Reservation Scenario is based on the same principles of the Baseline Scenario focusing on activating the waterfront with public open spaces which connect to the adjacent neighborhoods of Jack London Square and West Oakland. The street grid layout preserves views from West Oakland to the waterfront and creates a dense urban core to support a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. The turning basin is the maximum extent required, should the full extent not be needed the masterplan design can respond to an increase in development area.					
The ballpark feels tight up against the waterfront in this scenario. How can this be adjusted? How does the design and character of blocks 7/8 change in this scenario?	The dimensions of the open space around the ballpark do not vary between scenarios. The proposal is designed to accommodate the maritime scenario construction limits, while allowing the completion of Phase 1 to be equal in both scenarios. This is necessary due to the timing of the agreements. Because Phase 1 (including block 8) could be developed before the Port opts to implement the turning basin expansion, Phase 1 must be identical between the Baseline and Maritime Reservation Scenarios.					

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<p>Please continue developing design options for the waterfront edge condition in the maritime reservation scenario that respond to the change in condition from a wharf edge to an earthen shoreline. How can the edge be varied to invite people to the water?</p>	<p>As the expansion of the turning basin would be a separate project implemented by the Port and Army Corps of Engineers, the seawall for the maritime scenario will need to be designed by the Port of Oakland to meet their technical requirements. Edge variation, although desired is most likely not possible under the ports technical constraints.</p> <p>The plans shown today represent the maximum possible cut that could come with the expansion of the turning basin. In this instance, the edge cannot be varied as we are using the Port and Army Corp's specifications for the turning basin expansion.</p> <p>However, the landscape design as shown in the concept level plans show variations as one moves along the waterfront edge in the MRS. Some areas are more expansive, some are more intimate. Some areas are more active, while others are more passive. This, combined with the spectacle of ships in the turning basin, will create an amazing waterfront experience, unlike anything else in the Bay Area.</p>					
<p>If the proforma for the MSR scenario remains the same as the baseline scenario, please demonstrate how the equivalent waterfront public access and open space can be provided in both scenarios. We recommend reducing the development footprint on parcel 12 to create a more balanced open space area in both development scenarios.</p>	<p>The project proforma for the Baseline Scenario is not the same as the Maritime Reservation Scenario, as the latter requires a more dense and therefore more expensive buildout if the full program is to be reached. As a result, and as discussed during the DRB presentation, the MRS waterfront design implies a more urban character than that of the baseline scenario. The public space between proposal will be different in character, yet will provide similar quality and range of experiences.</p> <p>The percentage of open space relative to site area remains the same in both scenarios, around 33%. This is equal to if not above, the typical open space percentages that BCDC has approved on prior projects around the Bay.</p>					