

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415-352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
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SUBJECT: Draft Summary of the December 11, 2023, BCDC Design Review Board Meeting

1. **Call to Order and Meeting Procedure Review.** Design Review Board (DRB) Chair Jacinta McCann called the hybrid meeting to order on Zoom, at approximately 5:00 p.m.

a. **DRB Board Members.** Chair Jacinta McCann, Bob Battalio, Kristen Hall, Gary Strang, and Stefan Pellegrini were present in person.

b. **BCDC Staff.** Ashley Tomerlin, Yuriko Jewett, Katharine Pan, and Jessica Finkel were present in person. Harriet Ross was present on Zoom.

c. **Project Proponents.** Eric Tecza, Blue Rise Ventures; Matt Malone, Perkins&Will were present in person. Angelo Obertello, CBG Engineers was present on Zoom.

2. **Approval of DRB Meeting Summaries for November 6, 2023.**

a. This item was listed on the agenda but the materials had not been posted for review. This meeting summary will be brought to the January 8, 2024 DRB Meeting for review and approval.

3. **Staff Update.** Ashley Tomerlin provided updates on 1) BCDC Staff are pursuing grant opportunities to fund an update of our Public Access Guidelines to address our Climate Change and Environmental Justice policies. The Guidelines were last updated in 2005. Staff will keep the Board updated on the grant status and plan to brief and engage with the Board during the update process, and 2) BCDC staff recently went on a site visit to the newly reopened public access at Herons Head Park. Finally, the next DRB Meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 8 and will be a first review of DePave Park in Alameda, and a second review of the redevelopment project at 1301 Shoreway in Belmont.

4. **Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda.** There was no public comment.



5. **Wind River Project (Second Review).** The project involves the development of The Research Park at Marina Village, the final phase of the office and R&D campus at 200 Wind River Way, in the City of Alameda, Alameda County. The project would construct a three-story, approximately 120,000-square-foot office and R&D building at the newly-created intersection of Atlantic Avenue, Clement Avenue, and Sherman Street. The project would also involve public access improvements, including removal of a degrading timber wharf to create open water and enhance views to the Bay, renovation of the remaining concrete portion of that wharf with pedestrian paths offering Bay Trail connectivity, and public access amenities such as seating, game tables, and a bocce ball court.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Shruti Sinha provided a staff introduction to the project site and context.

b. **Board Clarifying Questions following staff presentation.**

(1) Bob Battalio requested clarification on whether the ART maps had added sea level rise to BFE.

(2) Jacinta McCann asked if there is a limit on the length of authorization; does it expire? Staff explained that BCDC permits run with the land and conditions are applied for life of project.

c. **Project Presentation.** Eric Tecza, representing Blue Rise Ventures, and Maggie Morrow, designer with Perkins&Will, provided an overview of the project with a slide presentation. The presentation focused on existing site conditions, the site history, and a detailed description of the proposed project design.

d. **Public Comment.** There were four public comments on the project.

(1) Lee Huo, Bay Trail at MTC/ABAG. Included at the end of this summary.

(2) Michael Gorman, Co-Director Junior Sailing Program at Encinal Yacht Club. Included at the end of this summary.

(3) Tracy Reigelman, Vice Commodore of Oakland Yacht Club. The work of Blue River will improve the usage of the Bay Trail and Public Access. The site is currently used as a parking for nefarious activities; this project will clean up the site, remove access for illegal anchor outs, and minimize the attractiveness of anchoring in the Alaska Basin. This project will be a big benefit to the area. It will improve safety; people currently jump off the wharf. This site has been ignored for many years and this project will only make it a safer location.

(4) Chris Davis, Commodore and Encinal Yacht Club. The Encinal Yacht Club Board supports this project because it improves the waterfront; improves the utilization and infrastructure; removes some of the hazardous materials like the wharf that is encroaching on the Alaska Basin. The proposal will vastly improve the utilization of the area that is now just a parking lot. Improve the public safety and the community will benefit from the jobs that will be created and enhance the community. Wind River and Blue Rise Ventures have historically been a great supporter of the use of the waterfront. The club have enjoyed working and being adjacent to these facilities.

e. Board Clarifying Questions following project presentation

- (1) Stefan Pellegrini asked whether the current permit required views to the bay. Response was staff reading through the public access requirements of the current permit.
- (2) Stefan Pellegrini requested clarification on whether the permitted master plan already anticipated the required maximum feasible public access. Response was that as long as the development remains consistent with what was originally envisioned in the master plan, then public access would likely have been accounted for but if there's an increase in level in density or occupancy as is the case here, BCDC may seek a change to the public access requirements.
- (3) Bob Battalio asked if the wharf being removed is the required public access area. Response was it is but that the proposal is moving the public access inland, so the total square footage of public access is increasing.
- (4) Bob Battalio asked whether the building and parking fall within the shoreline band and whether the presence of the shoreline band influenced the design? Response was there is some public parking and private parking within the shoreline band and the original building footprint was also partially within the shoreline band.
- (5) Bob Battalio requested clarification on the flood level elevations and the presenter's statement that the water level would be 1' above the existing pier height of +13.8. 2100 BFE is +16 so there would be about 3' difference. Response was 3' is correct.
- (6) Bob Battalio asked what will happen when the water gets that high. Response was that FFE is +15.8 and at the 100-year flood in 2100, the water level will be 0.9' above FFE. By the year 2100, if there is 7' of sea level rise, the team anticipates raising the Bay Trail to protect the site. The pier would likely need to be renovated or rebuilt by that time as well.
- (7) Bob Battalio responded to the use of the MHHW elevation and clarified that HHW is higher than MHHW, so the project team should anticipate flooding, and MHHW is not a good indicator for buildings.
- (8) Kristen Hall requested clarification on the BCDC jurisdiction lines. Response was that with historic piers that predate the agency, the BCDC Bay jurisdiction line is at the outer edge of the structure. If at some point the structure undergoes work that extends its useful life, then the jurisdiction may change to include the area of the pier.
- (9) Gary Strang asked if the planned future raising of the Bay Trail would extend beyond this 200 Wind River site. Response was that it would need to and would likely be written into the permit as a condition.

- (10) Gary Strang requested more description of the site plan to understand the logic of the small parking lot - that it is an important juncture for pedestrian access and circulation and it seems like there's a bottleneck happening. Response was that the project does not really have a back of house, it's surrounded by pedestrian access on all sides. There is an existing planned driveway at that entry and it seemed like a good place for the public access parking for ease of navigation. It would be a long way to navigate to find a shoreline parking space from the primary vehicle access to the campus is 1/4 mile away that is shared between all the Wind River buildings. The team prioritized the pedestrian corridor connecting to Jean Sweeney Park and prioritized the north building frontage as the main entrance.
- (11) Gary Strang asked where the crosswalks are located and what is across the street. He further asked for the condition of the sidewalk and what the approach to the site is like. The presenter used an aerial to orient the Board to the neighborhood context and the recent nearby developments.
- (12) Jacinta McCann asked for further detail on the other uses of the public access parking lot. Response was that it will be the operations and delivery for the building. There is no back to the building and because the smaller driveway was already located there, it seemed logical to put the building operations and delivery on that side. Typically, there will be 1-2 trucks accessing that lot daily.
- (13) Jacinta McCann asked how connectivity to Jean Sweeney Park was considered with site planning, what was the thought process on the shape and positioning of the building in relation to that park. The response was the team recognized with the new roadway configuration that this route was the primary pedestrian connection from the Park to the water and wanted to address that connection with a big gesture –which resulted in Sherman Court that connects the crossing to the shoreline for bike and pedestrians.
- (14) Jacinta McCann asked for more detail on the circular paved zone between the waterfront and the building and if it is a loading zone? The response was that it is another parking area. It seemed like a good place for some additional parking and fills the negative space created by the building.
- (15) Gary Strang requested further detail on how the team determined parking counts. The response was that the campus as a whole is over parked at 4 spaces/1000 SF. The City of Alameda has removed any parking requirements and with the addition of the new building, the new parking count would be about 3 spaces/1000 SF.
- (16) Kristen Hall echoed the need to see the site connections in context of the adjacent spaces, particularly the entrance to Jean Sweeney Park, and asked how the new street connections work. Response was that Sherman Court is a pedestrian corridor connecting the shoreline to the intersection and continues to the north.

(17) Gary Strang asked whether cars can enter Sherman Court. The response was that it's only an EVA. It wasn't allowed to be vehicular by the City because it would be a new curb cut across an existing cycle track.

(18) Kristen Hall asked for clarification on how employees arrive at the site. The response was that employees enter at the main entrance to the campus to the north, parking, and then crossing Sherman Court to get to the building.

f. **Board Discussion.** The Board discussed how the project responds to the seven objectives for public access found in the Public Access Design Guidelines, provided feedback on the proposed public access improvements with respond to the Commission's policies on sea level rise and environmental justice and social equity, and addressed the staff questions listed below.

(1) The seven objectives for public access are:

- i. Make public access PUBLIC.
- ii. Make public access USABLE.
- iii. Provide, maintain, and enhance VISUAL ACCESS to the Bay and shoreline.
- iv. Maintain and enhance the VISUAL QUALITY of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent developments.
- v. Provide CONNECTIONS to and CONTINUITY along the shoreline.
- vi. Take advantage of the BAY SETTING.
- vii. Ensure that public access is COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE through siting, design, and management strategies.

(2) Staff also has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration

- i. How does the project proposal result in public spaces that "feel public," and does the project proposal allow for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people?
- ii. What additional improvements would enhance the public access program along the shoreline? Are there additional elements that would further develop the recreation program as currently proposed?
- iii. Are the public access areas appropriately designed to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise, ensuring high-quality public access opportunities over time?
- iv. Does the design provide legible connections from the adjacent roadways and bike/pedestrian networks to draw users into and through the site to the Bay Trail and connecting with the entire campus and its shoreline?
- v. Has the current design proposal adequately addressed the change in visual access to the Bay with the relocation of the Building 5 site? Does the Board have suggestions for maximizing views through the site to the Bay?

g. Summary of Key Issues and Board Comments

(1) Overall Site Plan

- i. Kristen Hall observed that the Bay Trail goes through the center of the shoreline area separating an elevated terrace that is a semi-private space on the building side and a recreation deck on the waterside. Most people will perceive the deck as the public space so making sure there are public facing activating programs is essential. When there's built in recreation like what's proposed, it may feel less public if someone needs to bring their own bocce set and may read more as a campus space than a public space. Making the deck area feels public is critical to the success of this park. Recommend having a more obvious public access program.
- ii. Jacinta McCann stated the public recreation activities could be enhanced. The perception from someone on the Bay Trail would be everything west of the trail is campus and everything east is public space. It seems like the project is giving a lot of the shoreline band to a campus-oriented landscape and reducing some of the opportunities for emphasizing the trail.
- iii. Jacinta McCann stated the character and materials need to emphasize the public nature of the spaces.
- iv. Stefan Pellegrini commended the project, it seems like a beneficial piece in the context of recently opened public access in the area.
- v. Gary Strang stated using the existing plant palette makes sense and strengthens connections to the greater site. The site has tough conditions so it's good to go with tough plants.
- vi. Kristen Hall stated protection of views to the water from Clement didn't need to be a priority because Clement is an inland street until you get to basin and the geometry of the basin is so long and linear that removing the wharf will enhance the visual access to the water.
- vii. Jacinta McCann stated there is a good view to the water from the southern end of basin and will improve with removal of the wharf. There is not a view to the water from Sherman Court but there is a clue to openness at the end of the site that would be inviting. It seems like a positive solution and holds the corner well. There are a lot of positives in the site plan.

(2) Site Entrances

- i. Jacinta McCann emphasized the importance for clarity of entrances and creating a sense of arrival to the waterfront. There is a strong approach at Sherman Court on the north for those approaching from the west and north, but the southern entrance is setback and may conflict with the back of house use that doesn't reinforce the sense of a strong southern arrival. The entrance to the south is not as coherent – someone moves through the service yard to an entry courtyard for the building. It would be helpful to have a broader concept plan and clearer idea to the connections being

made onsite and offsite. Finessing the concept could clarify the public entry points, paths, and circulation. Sherman Court will be natural to enter because of the crosswalks but you're also walking into an office park. Struggling to determine if there is adequate arrivals that invite people into the shoreline spaces.

- ii. Kristen Hall stated it would help the legibility of the public access if the shoreline read as a linear north-south park with a strong southern entrance; it currently feels like campus oriented space with the primary bike/pedestrian entrance being next to the back of house parking lot.
- iii. Stefan Pellegrini observed the site plan shows there are three pedestrian routes that culminate at the northeast corner of the site - there is an opportunity to make this an assembly area for picnicking or other uses. It seems like the natural gathering space.

(3) Circulation and Parking

- i. Stefan Pellegrini observed it is difficult to identify the front door and public face of the site because half of the community lives to the east, half to the west, and the front door faces the parking lot on the north. Sherman Court is a clear connection from the road to the water as opposed to the bike/pedestrian access located at the southeast corner where the back of house uses for the building are located. The juncture of Sherman Court and the Bay Trail is a key opportunity for creating a larger, more public feeling public space, perhaps with reduction of some of the parking in that area. It would emphasize Sherman Court as the front door for the project.
- ii. Gary Strang observed there is more parking than the public access parking spaces in the southeast lot. Consider removing some of the other parking, reorienting the public access spaces to parallel parking and increasing the vegetation buffer to create a greater sense of arrival/ transition.
- iii. Gary Strang observed that Sherman Court is a fire lane, and it will read as a vehicle way because it's 26' wide.
- iv. Kristen Hall stated Sherman Court feels like it was supposed to be a vehicle entry and shifted its role to be the grand entrance to the park that it wasn't designed to do. The design of Sherman Court needs to feel parklike to be welcoming and should include park elements like benches. The drive aisle that crosses it at the northeast corner infringes on the parklike/public potential.
- v. Kristen Hall observed that the southeast entrance is the quickest way to access the shoreline but is under designed as an entry because of the parking area. Reducing the size of the lot and shifting the curb cut would create the space for an inviting entrance that feels like a proper entry.

(4) Programs and Activation

- i. Gary Strang observed the bocce court takes up a lot of space and unless it's going to be used by the community, there may be another use that is more beneficial. The bocce seems more related to the building. Good seating and passive opportunities can be better than over programming.
- ii. Jacinta McCann emphasized the importance of seating: family friendly seating, accessible seating, places where the community could come and relax. This segment of the trail should have diverse types of seating, picnic tables, possibly exercise nodes. Create a hangout space where people can come and just enjoy the shoreline.
- iii. Jacinta McCann suggested incorporating playful elements children can climb on and engage with, not necessarily a play area but interesting marine elements. It will be a very desirable place for families to hang out.
- iv. Jacinta McCann observed there is precedent for people fishing and enjoying the water's edge at this site and wondered whether those activities could help shape the content of this park.
- v. Bob Battalio questioned whether water access would be desirable at this site. Is there a way for people to get down to the water at this site? Fishing, swimming, may not be good idea but something more public that doesn't require a bike or a boat to enjoy the space. Getting to the water seems like a good reason to go to the shore. There is active boating nearby but it's a different type of water access.
- vi. Jacinta McCann observed there is some interesting site history and good potential for a strong interpretive program. The reference to the rails in the site design is a good move.
- vii. Jacinta McCann suggested further study of the connections and activations to the north where there's an employee basketball court.

(5) Resiliency and Adaptation to Sea Level Rise

- i. Bob Battalio commented that the potential for future inundation needs to be looked at beyond this building site.
- ii. Bob Battalio observed the flood elevations shown on plans have only 2' of vertical capacity if the project intends to maintain the 2' FEMA freeboard.
- iii. Stefan Pellegrini observed the timeline for adaptation is likely paralleling the timeline for site renovation and that seems reasonable. He stated he didn't feel there was sufficient information about the flood risk to request the team to raise the Bay Trail at this time.

(6) Summary

- i. The site plan has a lot of merit but the Board would like more resolution on entrances and connectivity; delineation of what people are experiencing; clarity of public access to Bay Trail, and more detail on the programs and

the quality of the spaces. Include quantities for elements like bike parking and formal seating types to ensure public needs are being addressed.

- ii. Programmatically, the design should be family friendly and explore the maritime history in material selection. Explore necessity and alternatives for the additional parking area in the shoreline band at the northeast of the building. The back of house and southern parking area should be refined to reduce the footprint of those spaces and improve the transition into the shoreline band.
- iii. Connectivity and understanding connections Jean Sweeney Park; more context in the plan and how the site plan connects into city network.

The Design Review Board stated that they would like to see the Wind River project come back for a third review.

h. Project Proponent Response.

6. Meeting Adjournment. Vice Chair Strang moved to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Battalio seconded the motion. The meeting concluded at 7:23 p.m.