

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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March 1, 2024

TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415-352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Ashley Tomerlin, Senior Bay Dev. Analyst (415-352-3657; ashley.tomerlin@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJECT: Draft Summary of the January 8, 2024, 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, Vice Chair Gary Strang, Cody Anderson, Leo Chow, and Stefan Pellegrini were present in person. Tom Leader attended online.

b. **BCDC Staff.** Ashley Tomerlin, Yuriko Jewett, Julie Garren, Schuyler Olsson, Katharine Pan, and Shruti Sinha were present in person.

c. **Project Proponents.**

DePave Park: Amy Wooldridge and Justin Long, City of Alameda; Kevin Conger and Corbett Belcher, CMG.

1301 Shoreway: Rene Bihan and Ming Yao, SWA; Craig Bacheller, DGA; Raquel Fones (BKF).

2. **Approval of DRB Meeting Summaries for November 6, 2023 and December 11, 2023.**

a. Jacinta McCann identified edits and updates for both the November and December Meeting Summaries.

3. **Staff Update.** Ashley Tomerlin provided updates on 1) the new 3500 Marina Bay Trail segment and shoreline public access area opening in early spring 2024; 2) BCDC policies related to the roles of Board Members engaging with the Commission or its advisory boards as paid consultants; 3) remote participation of Board Members in DRB hybrid meetings in 2024 and 2025; and 4) 2024 DRB meeting dates with the next DRB Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 11 for a joint review with the Port's DAC of the Ferry Building and Plaza Renovation Project.

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



5. **DePave Park Project (First Review).** The proposed De-Pave Park Project is one in a series of waterfront public spaces surrounding the three sides of the Seaplane Lagoon in Alameda. The Project would involve creating an urban ecological park by removing much of the site's existing World War II-era concrete runway spaces and onsite buildings; repurposing remaining materials for public access areas and amenities; and establishing new tidal wetlands, a pilot eelgrass restoration area, and other native habitats appropriate for San Francisco Bay. The project intends to maximize re-use of on-site materials and design the park as a model for open space and habitat restoration areas that can be adapted to sea level rise over time.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Schuyler Olsson provided a staff introduction to the project site and context.

b. **Board Clarifying Questions following staff presentation.** There were no clarifying questions.

c. **Project Presentation.** Justin Long, City of Alameda, and Kevin Conger, CMG, 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 eight public comments on the project.

(1) Jeff Manker, Alameda resident. Looking forward to the improvements.

Concerned with access for anglers and fishing line frequently left behind - it's a hazard for birds. At Encinal Beach, there's a lot of trash left from anglers which will draw rats and may be a hazard for the birds. Caution against allowing fishing in this park, provide for fishing at another location.

(2) Marjorie Powell, frequent birder at this site. Have seen more than 100 species of birds with only concrete. The site is well used by birds and anticipate with the addition of marsh, there will be nesting. Vitally important that dogs are not allowed in this park. Dogs scare birds off nests even when they're on leashes. There are a number of other places in Alameda Point and Island where dogs are welcome. Echo the fishing issue, stating she picks up fishing line and hooks every time she goes out. Concern about trash, with people having picnics or using the parks in other ways. It's hard to remove trash from marshes. Important to have good trash bins and trash management.

(3) Karen Miller, Alameda resident, Golden Gate Bird Alliance, and active paddle boarder. Excited about this project, wants to make sure that the access for people with disabilities is carefully looked at and the paths will be usable. Crab Cove and other EBRPD places have beach wheelchairs that are easier to use on the paths. Given that the VA is going to be so close, it would be important for everyone to use the park. For people who are in wheelchairs, making sure fences don't have slats or obstructions at eye level for someone in a chair. As a paddle boarder, she is excited for a new landing space. This will be widely used by the community; it's a wonderful park.

(4) Richard Bangert, Alameda resident and longtime advocate for this park. Thrilled about the removal of building 25, it serves as an example of a city prioritizing habitat restoration over a valuable building. The best way to keep dogs from

disturbing habitat areas is to keep dogs from the space in the first place, concerned the proposed fence is not sufficient. Coyote Regional Park has prohibited dogs from the marsh area. The walkway around that marsh area doesn't have fencing, it's just a boardwalk and functions well. If you allow dogs, where do you limit the fencing – it would need to extend around all the habitat areas and how do people engage with the park elements if there's fencing everywhere. It's not practical to allow dogs at this park, it's a marshland. BCDC policies state designs should not impact to wildlife and habitat. Encourage BCDC to exclude dogs from the site.

- (5) Sharon Nelson-Embry, Golden Gate Bird Alliance and co-chair of Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Reserve. Applaud City for the planning and visioning for this park. Excited that this is a wetland park. Because of this being a wildlife park, it doesn't make sense for dogs to be allowed to use it. There are osprey nesting in this area. Can see the anticipated impact from anglers and dogs being allowed in the area. If there were no dogs, there would be less need for so much fencing.
- (6) Irene Dieter, Alameda resident. Excited about this project, encourages Board not to underestimate how important and significant this project is. There aren't many places that have been adapted to SLR where people can see the change in process. It's exciting to see "undeveloping" rather than "developing" as an example. The more support that this project has the more the money will follow to make it a reality.
- (7) Aundi Mevoli, SF Bay Keeper. Participated in stakeholder groups since the start and as a science lead, has represented the benefits of the park. Encouraged to see Alameda rewild their shoreline and hopes other cities will follow this lead. Model for using nature-based solutions rather than shoreline hardening. Encourage the DRB to support the project.
- (8) Kame Richards, Alameda resident. Questioned if the loss of Least Terns with the proximity of the existing buildings and whether it's necessary to avoid trees and plantings that could serve as windbreaks. Like the idea of the park, but think we can do better than just walking on a runway.

e. Board Clarifying Questions following project presentation.

- (1) Gary Strang requested additional context for who uses the site today and who do they anticipate in the future in light of the development in the area. The project team stated the community actively uses the site today. The nearby developments, including the ferry terminal, have brought many people here living, eating, and recreation. Alameda Point Phase 1 has attracted people. There are programming and community groups that have activated the Seaplane Lagoon area. The Reshape Project will help take care of older housing units and expand services provided out there with library, training, employment center. The rest of the master plan sees the NAS increasing housing as well.
- (2) Gary Strang asked whether the large inland hangars will flood with the anticipated sea level rise. The project team stated part of the master plan is to

build a raised levee system, mostly near the edge of the shoreline and that would protect the inland buildings.

- (3) Stefan Pellegrini requested further discussion on the stewardship and management of the space: how does it relate to the other public spaces in the vicinity? Are there special needs here the City is seeking to accommodate as it builds out? The project team stated they are working on a stewardship group with Alameda Point Collaborative and getting at Environmental Justice and developing a work program. This is not going to be the normal park maintenance operations, there will a need for special training. Trying to reach out to the community and build local stewardship.
- (4) Cody Anderson asked about longer-term resilience around 2100 for the area outside the levee: have there been any strategies identified that weren't included? The project team stated they are looking at the levee system and the adaptive approaches for access outside the levee. They have preliminary ideas but will continue to develop more as the project moves forward. Working on positive strategies will be part of the project as they move forward.
- (5) Leo Chow requested further discussion on the hydrology and whether the inlets will remain connected, flush out, and remain healthy? The project team state ESA feels comfortable with the tidal prism. They've been modeling the potential scour. The ferry does create some small waves that could create an erosion threat, but the project team feels comfortable with the strategy for addressing that in the near term and the future. Eventually, with sea level rise, the inlet would connect to the VA wetland and that would change the future tidal prism.
- (6) Leo Chow asked for more detail on the spacing interval and specific types of seating. Presumably it's windy, is there opportunity for some sort of wind protection? Is there any accommodations for birding? The project team stated the primary pathway is about 1700 LF, or a 7-minute walk. There are 27 seating plinths. Concrete plinths as well as benches and benches with backs. They have been careful to orient seating to different views and have located some of it behind some of the new topography and planting. The project is constrained by trying to keep everything low and avoiding introducing too many design elements that could potentially start changing the park's purpose. Making this park about nature and being on an old runway is compelling without adding too many bells and whistles.
- (7) Tom Leader asked whether there is anything that can be done to provide sun protection? The project team stated other precedent projects like Herons Head and Chrissy Field don't provide shade and it doesn't feel necessary. The trees would create a raptor perch.
- (8) Tom Leader asked how close the nearest parking is from the far end of the park. The project team stated parking is near the restrooms, 1700 LF, and approximately a 7 minute walk.

- (9) Jacinta McCann requested further discussion on the anticipated ground conditions with removal of surface: is there contamination? The project team state the Navy did testing and remediation and the project is also doing some testing to see if additional remediation is needed. If additional remediation is needed, it would be included in the grant applications and be included as part of the project.
- (10) Jacinta McCann asked if there is a way to adjust circulation to avoid the contaminated areas. The project team stated they are trying to work around contamination and that has informed circulation so far.
- (11) Jacinta McCann requested further discussion on the intended uses of the beach and its resilience to ferry boat waves. The project team stated there is an existing small sandy beach and the project is working with that grade and expanding it slightly. They will add some sand and Moffat Nichol thinks it's in good shape. Long term adaptability of the beach, when the water is 3' higher, the beach will be there only at low tide. It's a small recreational pocket, people will probably go swimming there. The kayak launch is planned in the adjacent site between Alameda Point and DePave Park.
- (12) Jacinta McCann confirmed the yellow color on main walkway was proposed as decomposed granite and recommended ensuring the design is accessible and usable for users with wheelchairs and baby strollers. The project team stated they were comfortable with the level of accessibility.
- (13) Jacinta McCann requested further discussion on current plan that is primarily linear when the Vision Plan showed some looping and secondary paths. The project team described visiting model sites and observing the habitat furthest away from people and pets being used more by wildlife so they thought it was better to have public paths farther away rather than creating a habitat that wouldn't be used.

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. Is the beach appropriately designed to be usable and accessible now and in the future with sea level rise? Will it be expected to erode and require regular nourishment at current or future water levels? Do the terraced beach steps provide an equivalent water access experience when the beach is inundated due to sea level rise?
- ii. Does the adaptation approach adequately address program and use areas at the southern portion of the site, which would be inundated with future sea level rise? Are there programs that have not been included in the long-term adaptation plan that should be included or prioritized?
- iii. What events and event frequency would the Board recommend as triggers (e.g., flooding events, or observed sea level rise amounts), for initiating sea level rise adaptation actions, such as the elevated boardwalk?
- iv. Do the public access uses at the southern portion of the site necessitate weather protection? If so, does the Board have recommendations on how this could be provided while avoiding conflict with the adjacent habitat area?

g. Summary of Key Issues and Board Comments

(1) Overall Site Plan

- i. Gary Strang stated it is refreshing to see a softening approach as opposed to developing undesirable areas.
- ii. Gary Strang expressed support for the beach but questioned what the beach becomes if the maintenance and nourishment is discontinued. Cities are frequently overwhelmed with existing management so not sure how realistic it is to have a beach if extensive maintenance is required. Cody Anderson observed that there are a lot of beaches in the south Alameda shoreline that seem to self-maintain successfully. This site is unique because it is surrounded by hardscape so not sure where the scour and sand would be going.
- iii. Gary Strang supported the reuse of materials on site and embracing the changes as part of the adaptation. The fact that it will improve and add habitat as it adapts, it’s realistic and pragmatic. The idea that the concrete walkway becomes the foundation of a future pathway seems so beautifully logical. He expressed confidence in the presentation and design.
- iv. Stefan Pellegrini observed that the site is being reinterpreted from a runway environment to a new use and questioned what is the historic orientation to that prior use. What is the interpretation and is it readable in the design? There is opportunity at specific places to show the site history and ways to help interpret the site. The morphological interpretation has value: many people don’t realize this portion of the bay was just bay, that it was then filled, and is now being subtracted. That historic layer and who manages the interpretation is important but is beyond what cities typically

do. The fostering of the right stewardship is important. Gary Strang commented that the preservation of the piece of concrete maintains that strong military edge while wilding the site so you're having it both ways.

- v. Tom Leader stated there is a coolness of just cutting back the concrete. The reuse of the materials is telling a story. The design has a clear purpose and is easily adaptable. Advocate for being heavy on the support of nature and give it the best chance of success through management. This project's story is important to the next generation of projects supporting the Bay, the first being not filling, and now we're seeing subtraction and adaptation. There should be someone documenting this next chapter.
- vi. Gary Strang stated there is beauty to a landscape being legible - non didactic learning. At Marina Green, you can see a lot of rubble and there's not a need for overwhelming signage, it's about self-discovery.

(2) Circulation and Parking

- i. Jacinta McCann commented that the distance may be significant for people with disabilities and expressed some concern with the usability and amount of decomposed granite surface. The big moves of surfacing are being identified now in project development so be confident that the spaces will be usable.
- ii. Jacinta McCann observed that the potential for bike/pedestrian conflict on this segment of Bay Trail seems minimal. The pathway is generously dimensioned, and users will self-organize so there's not a strong need to have strips of planting delineations. The park and spaces and they're used will evolve.

(3) Programs and Activation

- i. Leo Chow observed that using the word "park" can prompt user expectations and discussion is warranted on how designers can strike a balance of putting nature out first and creating a space for people. Parks generally seem to put people first and here, the design is putting nature first while allowing people to access and see the site, see the processes of change. If there's ways to manage human activities to ensure nature is succeeding, that will be important.
- ii. Stefan Pellegrini observed this is the second or third project presented to the Board where the project is looking to subtract from the shoreline and create habitat. The partee of public access in the design is strong and the idea to maintain equitable public access for the entire length of the park is appreciated. The idea of creating a public space that can nurture a habitat establishment makes it difficult to prescribe future use of the park and use over time. What seems more important is to have a management structure that can adapt the park use over time to reflect the community. Would caution against predetermining the balance of public access and wildlife compatibility; it's important that use is monitored and that it informs

operations and decisions. There is value to bringing public access and people to places where they can see the functioning of the Bay and understand what's happening with the Bay.

- iii. Gary Strang, responding to the public comment, observed that allowing dogs does seem like a cross mission to the intention of the park; it is ok to have some public places that don't allow dogs.
- iv. Jacinta McCann observed that with the elimination of vehicle access to the shoreline, anglers may opt to use other more convenient locations so the need to instill regulations to address potential conflict between fishing and habitat creation may be moot. She expressed support for maintaining fishing as an allowable use and thought the design will help support that. Like that the design is assisting in the parks objectives.

(4) Resiliency and Adaptation to Sea Level Rise

- i. Cody Anderson observed it is difficult to understand what SLR resilience will look like and how the future levee and the park fits into the bigger adaptation approach, what that levee looks and feels like.
- ii. Cody Anderson commented that the data as we look farther out, is less specific so it's hard to assign prescriptive measures at the present time. He recommended relying on future designers to determine adaptation.
- iii. Jacinta McCann suggested the adaptation triggers could include the evaluation of risks and frequency of inundation related to the anticipated use of the space.
- iv. Leo Chow observed that society has a sense and expectation of the permanence of parks. We're in a world today where SLR happens and adaptability, the changeability of the space is significant. The park can retreat and be adjusted by future generations is appropriate. Rely on future designers. Allow for the soft line at the edges, allow for change and gradual transitions. Even the beach, it's there because it's happened and refreshing to consider it as not necessarily a guaranteed element that will be there forever. We need to take our cues from what nature is telling us, event frequency and triggers, and future leaders need to be sensitive and listen.

(5) Summary

- i. The Board was supportive of the primary objective of the park being nature-focused and having the constructed elements be secondary. Weather protection does not seem necessary, it's not that kind of park and there are nearby spaces that do have that kind of protection. This space is about something else and the design is going in the right direction.
- ii. There seems to be strong community advocacy and dialogue and the Board was pleased to see this level of commitment from the community.
- iii. The Board expressed confidence in the proposal.

The Design Review Board stated the project does not need to return but it would be welcome if the design team desires additional review.

h. **Project Proponent Response.** The project team thanked the Board, there was a lot of great insight and went exactly as they hoped. Thank you to the Community for showing up. There's a lot of work to do, hoping to wrap up 30% design this spring and to move towards fundraising. From the City, they are excited to bring this project forward.

6. **1301 Shoreway Life Sciences Development Project (Second Review).** The project proposes to demolish the existing four-story office building on site and construct two 7- to 8-level office/R&D buildings and a 9-level parking garage. The project proposes both on-site and off-site public access improvements, including constructing a new sidewalk along Sem Lane to provide public access from Shoreway Road to the shoreline, widening the Belmont Creek Trail, and refreshing the landscape with seating areas and trail serving amenities.

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

b. **Board Clarifying Questions following staff presentation.** There were no clarifying questions.

c. **Project Presentation.** Rene Bihan of SWA 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 was one public comments on the project.

(1) Dara Sanders, Good City on behalf of City of Belmont submitted a letter in support of the project.

e. **Board Clarifying Questions following project presentation.**

(1) Leo Chow asked for confirmation of a maintenance agreement between the project and the owner of the parcel where the public access is being constructed so to avoid the proposed public access falling into disrepair. The permit analyst stated there will be a maintenance condition included in the permit requiring ongoing maintenance of the public access area and improvements.

(2) Jacinta McCann asked whether it is anticipated that there will be a booking and reservation system for the sports court. The project team stated they are currently in discussion with the City about managing availability. The goal will be to balance the programs available for the local communities between something that is going to draw a lot of use without relying on a single use program.

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:

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- 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 could enhance the public access experience to and along the shoreline?
- iii. Given the increase in scale and size of the buildings onsite, does the proposed design provide legible connections from the adjacent roadways and bike/pedestrian networks to draw users into and through the site to the Belmont Creek Trail and shoreline?
- iv. Does the revised signage plan provide sufficient notice of and invitation to people travelling along Shoreway Road and Sem Lane to the public access area along the back of the site?
- v. What type of events and what frequency of flooding events affecting public access spaces should trigger adaptive actions at the project site?

g. Summary of Key Issues and Board Comments**(1) Overall Site Plan**

- i. The Board appreciates the responses to the concerns raised in the last review. The Board stated the court being public is a huge benefit, they appreciated the addition of the traffic table between the shoreline and the courtyard, and the development of the trailhead at Sem Lane.
- ii. Leo Chow suggested exploring ways of making the three public shore parking spaces more legible as public access. Maybe there needs to be another sign at the street or push back the curb cut at the public spaces to locate them in the public realm. The project team stated additional signage would help identify and some minimal treatments/details would help provide those cues to the public that they are invited into the spaces. It would be more intuitive to just drive down Sem Lane and park; there is parallel parking available on Sem Lane but the Board felt those would not be desirable.

- iii. Gary Strang commented on the relationship of the parking to the shoreline trail: the planting gets constricted at the program nodes and suggested considering the screening that could support active use of those nodes.
- iv. Gary Strang stated the amount of detail and materiality has provided additional comfort.

(2) Circulation and Parking

- i. Jacinta McCann commented on the number of structured parking spaces at this project and others in the area that the Board has recently reviewed and at what point do we stop building structured parking. It is hard to imagine that in 25 years people will be arriving at this site as currently designed. It's a lot of parking and cost to build it and it seems to be building in redundancy down the line.
- ii. Stefan Pellegrini observed that providing less parking could provide an avenue for long term adaptability by allowing more area and flexibility for the public space on site.

(3) Resiliency and Adaptation to Sea Level Rise

- i. Cody Anderson commented that if the berm is foreseen as a potential FEMA levee, there are specific geometries that need to be met and recommends overlaying that geometry to identify the potential impacts to the public programs.
- ii. Stefan Pellegrini stated it is difficult to address the staff question on adaptation given the progress and improvements that have been made since the last submittal. That answer is a future challenge that the Board needs more guidance from staff. Staff should work with Board on how to answer that question before asking it again.
- iii. Gary Strang observed that the berm at the courtyard is up to +15, and the Bay Trail remains at +12. It's interesting that the private space is more protected than the public space which makes sense in the near term. The project team responded with a correction to the assumed elevation. The berm goes to +15 at the PGE station behind the ball court and fluctuates between 12.5 to 14 along the trail. The elevation is a minimum of 12.5 and up to 14 where it could be easily achieved.

The Design Review Board stated the project does not need to return.

h. **Project Proponent Response.** The project team appreciates the feedback and note that this is a client the cares about the site and the ecology.

7. **Meeting Adjournment.** Board Member Chow moved to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Leader seconded the motion. The meeting concluded at 8:08 p.m.