

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

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SUBJECT: Board Discussion for Updating the Design Review Board (DRB) Staff Reports

Item Summary

BCDC Staff and DRB members have expressed the desire to improve the content and format of the DRB staff report. In the recent Mission Based Review of BCDC's permitting process, the California Department of Finance identified that permit staff spend a significant amount of time developing the DRB staff reports due to the length and complexity of the information and that more detail than necessary for board members to sufficiently understand a project is provided. Board members have also acknowledged that certain sections of the report provide more value than others in reviewing a project.

The Board will discuss updating the DRB staff report with the intention of confirming the information and analysis necessary to review projects and improve the content and efficiency of the sections so that thoughtful recommendations can be provided to staff and the project proponent

Three sample staff reports are included with this item to use as reference during the discussion on the presentation of information and for framing the recommended changes to the reports.

- 1) [Exploratorium, January 2008](#)
- 2) [DePave Park, January 2024](#)
- 3) [1301 Shoreway, January 2024](#)

Board Questions

Staff have the following questions for the Board's consideration on the content, level of detail, and formatting of the reports:

- 1) Which sections are essential for a review? Are the reports missing any information or analysis that is critical to reviewing the proposed designs?
- 2) What sections are less helpful or non-essential?
- 3) Do you have recommendations for where framing of project information could be improved?
- 4) Is the current Board Questions section effective in guiding discussion or are more pointed questions helpful to better steer the review?
- 5) Does the report format effectively present the relevant information? Are paragraphs or lists preferred? Does integrating graphics into the report help, hinder, or is a reference to the relevant exhibit document sufficient?



Current Staff Report Outline

1) Project Summary

- a) Project Proponent - applicant
- b) Project Representatives – applicant and design team
- c) Project Location
- d) Project Overview
- e) Prior Review(s) by Design Review Board

2) Project Site

- a) Site History
- b) Existing Conditions and Public Access
- c) Social and Environmental Context

3) Proposed Project

- a) Project Description
- b) Public Access Elements
- c) Special Events
- d) Sea Level Rise
- e) Community Engagement
- f) Approval & Construction Timeline

4) Commission Plans, Policies, and Guidelines

- a) San Francisco Bay Plan Policies
- b) Priority Use Area, Special Area Plan, and Bay Plan Map Notes
- c) Public Access Design Guidelines

5) Board Questions

- a) Request conversation is framed within the context of the seven objectives for public access:
 - 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.
- b) Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed public access project with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.
- c) Project specific questions from staff.

**Sample Report 1:
Exploratorium Relocation Project – Piers 15 - 17, San Francisco, First Review
(For Board consideration on January 7, 2008)**

Project Summary

Project Applicants

Port of San Francisco and The Exploratorium

Project Representatives

Tom Rockwell, Director of Exhibits, The Exploratorium; Marc L'Italien, Principal, EHDD Architects; Janice Thacher, Project Executive, and James Suh, Project Manager, Wilson Meany Sullivan.

Project Site

The proposed project would be located on Piers 15 and 17, along the San Francisco waterfront, near the intersection of Green Street and the Embarcadero, within the City and County of San Francisco. Pier 9 lies to the south and Pier 19 lies to the north of the project site. The site consists of the Pier 15 shed and bulkhead building, the Pier 17 shed, a paved parking area between the two piers known as the "valley", the north, south and east apron areas, a building on the eastern end of the valley that physically connects the two pier sheds known as the "connector building", and an approximately 1,579-square-foot free-standing office shack within the western portion of the valley. Piers 15 and 17 are contributing resources to the San Francisco Embarcadero National Register Historic District. Currently, Baydelta Maritime leases space at Pier 15 and berths its tugboats along the southern apron of Pier 15.

Proposed Project

The proposed project involves the relocation of the Exploratorium from the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco to Piers 15 and 17 in two phases. The project applicants are in discussions with Baydelta Maritime about its future location within the project site. The proposed project assumes the possible relocation of Baydelta Maritime to Pier 17.

Under Phase I, the Exploratorium proposes to lease from the Port of San Francisco, Pier 15, the connector building, the valley, and a portion of the east apron. The project applicants would repair and seismically upgrade the Pier 15 substructure and renovate the Pier 15 shed and bulkhead building to include a mezzanine floor and to house the Exploratorium's exhibits, a restaurant, museum store, classrooms, theatre and administrative offices. The project applicants would remove the office shack within the valley and approximately 40,000 square feet of the 98,350-square-foot valley floor. Within the exposed area of the removed valley floor, the project applicants propose to cut the pilings at mean-high tide to create a lagoon or "water-pile garden". Approximately 35,928 square feet of the remaining valley area would be open for public access; 22,422 square feet would be reserved for an outdoor exhibit area for paying customers. The project applicants also propose to remove the existing 27-foot-tall connector building at the east end of the valley and to construct a new 31-foot-tall transparent "bridge building" that could link the Pier 15 and Pier 17 buildings in the future. The bridge building would house additional exhibits, a cafeteria, and be used for hosting special events.

Along the Pier 15 south apron, the project applicants propose to construct a public boat dock to accommodate excursion and recreational boats, water taxis and science vessels. As part of the seismic upgrade of Pier 15, new piles would be driven adjacent to the pier's south apron that would allow for a wider apron to accommodate public access. Ceremonial berthing and temporary berthing of naval vessels by the Port are contemplated to remain along the east apron of Piers 15 and 17.

In order to accommodate the relocation of Baydelta Maritime's tug and tow operations to Pier 17, the project applicants would build new warehouse/office space within Pier 17, repair the substructure and deck of the Pier 17 north apron, and dredge the Pier 17/Pier 19 water basin to accommodate the berthing of Baydelta Maritime's tugboats along the north apron of Pier 17.

The project applicants are also proposing various curb indents along the Embarcadero sidewalk in front of Piers 15 and 17. The project applicants propose to extend an existing 70-foot curb indent in front of Pier 15, another 130 feet south for a total curb indent of 200 feet to accommodate a bus drop-off zone. Another curb indent of approximately 170 feet in front of Pier 17 would also be constructed to handle bus overflow and passenger car drop-off for the disabled or those needing special curbside assistance. In order to allow catering trucks to access the bridge building at the east end of the pier, the project applicants propose to allow vehicular access along the south side of Pier 17 within the valley area where public access is proposed.

Under Phase II, the Exploratorium would exercise its option to lease Pier 17 in the 17th year of their lease. If this option is exercised, the Exploratorium would conduct a similar rehabilitation and expansion of its museum program into the Pier 17 facility.

Public Access

At this conceptual stage, the project applicants have proposed the following public access improvements for the project:

- 1) An approximately 35,928-square-foot area of the valley between Piers 15 and 17.
- 2) An approximately 3,406-square-foot "open air gallery" within the northwestern corner of the Pier 15 shed.
- 3) Approximately 8,650 square feet along the east apron and 17,018 square feet in area along the south apron.
- 4) A "Bayside History Walk" that showcases the internal structure of the pier shed, either within the museum entrance at the Pier 15 bulkhead or within the main visitor entry to the museum fronting the valley.

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies. The San Francisco Bay Plan's policies on Public Access state that "a proposed fill project should increase public access to the Bay to the maximum extent feasible" and that the public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval "should be consistent with the project and the physical environment..." and "...should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline..." The policies require that the Public Access Design Guidelines be used as a guide to siting and designing public access consistent with a proposed project. The Bay Plan policies on Appearance, Design and Scenic Views further state that "all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay" and that "maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, from the Bay itself, and from the opposite shore."

San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan Policies. According to the San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan (SAP), the deck and pilings that form the "valley" between Piers 15 and 17, as well as the non-historic additions to the Pier 15 and Pier 17 sheds, are to be removed to create an open water area between the two pier sheds. Within these open water areas, new fill is limited to certain uses

including, but not limited to, minor pile-supported or floating fill for water transportation uses, minor, pile-supported fill for Bay-oriented commercial recreation and Bay-oriented public assembly uses so long as the amount of new pile-supported fill is offset by the removal of an equivalent amount elsewhere on the Northeastern Waterfront and is not otherwise designated as a pier for removal, and minor fill for improving shoreline appearance or public access that complies with the Commission's regulations. The project applicants have recognized that an amendment to the SAP may be required to retain a portion of the valley and the non-historic portions of the pier shed as proposed in their project.

With regards to public access, the SAP states that “[f]or a major development project occupying all or most of a pier(s), a project that provides 35% of the project pier area for public access should be deemed to provide maximum feasible public access...” Projects on finger piers where there is no change to the pier shed footprint must provide, to the maximum extent feasible, public access on the entire apron, a “Bayside History Walk”, and an additional public access feature that is consistent with the project, the size of the pier and with the Secretary of Interior’s standards. The Bayside History Walk is required to “provide public access to the Bay’s intimate and quiet spaces behind historic bulkhead and connector buildings, provide views of the inner structure of the pier sheds and the bulkhead buildings, and to provide interpretation of, and make accessible to the public, these unique physical assets of San Francisco’s maritime history.” Interpretive amenities, including historic photographs, explanatory text and maritime artifacts should be included in the Bayside History Walk so that the History Walk functions as a self-guided tour of the waterfront. According to the SAP, public access should be provided free of charge to the public, be generally accessible at any time, and emphasize passive recreation and focus its proximity to the Bay and on the views and unique experiences that nearness to the Bay affords. The SAP also requires that waterfront development minimize the need for automobiles and parking facilities within BCD’s jurisdiction by “...limiting vehicle access on pier aprons to maintenance, service and emergency vehicles...”

Board Questions

At this conceptual stage, the project applicants and staff are seeking the Board’s input and advice on the proposal. Specifically, the Board should focus on the siting and massing of the new bridge building, the amount and quality of the public access proposed, the connections and circulation around the pier sheds, and any potential impacts that the project would have on physical and visual access to the Bay, in light of the Bay Plan and the SAP policies. The staff requests that the Board consider the following design questions during its review of the project:

- 1) Would the proposed siting, massing, and architectural treatments of the bridge building adequately preserve views to the Bay and maximize the public’s enjoyment of the waterfront?
- 2) Would the proposed height of the bridge building adversely affect the Bay’s shoreline appearance?
- 3) Would the proposed public access areas accommodate the number of individuals and variety of uses that would likely occur within the public access areas?
- 4) Are the public access spaces and corridors on and around the valley, the east apron and the south apron designed to provide adequate circulation around the pier? Specifically, are there adequate connections that allow for public access from the Embarcadero promenade to the open water area in the valley and to the east and south aprons?

- 5) Does the site layout provide usable and inviting public spaces that are oriented to the Bay and adequately separate private and public uses? Specifically, is there a smooth transition between the public (free-of-charge) and private (ticketed) outdoor uses within the valley?
- 6) Are there adequate view corridors from the Embarcadero promenade out to the Bay that would lead the public to and along the public access areas?
- 7) Could vehicular access along the south side of Pier 17 be accommodated in a manner that does not adversely affect pedestrian use of this public access area? What methods might be used to reduce any potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles?
- 8) Although an amendment to the SAP may be required for the project, does the proposed removal of a portion of the valley and the creation of a “water-pile garden” adequately meet the Commission’s goal of creating open water at the site?

**Sample Report 2:
City of Alameda De-Pave Park, Alameda; First Pre-Application Review
(For Design Review Board consideration on January 8, 2023)**

Project Summary

Project Proponent

City of Alameda

Project Representatives

Amy Wooldridge (City of Alameda); Justin Long (City of Alameda); Kevin Conger (CMG); Corbett Belcher (CMG)

Project Location (Exhibits 5-9)¹

The approximately 21-acre De-Pave Park project site (Site) is located along San Francisco Bay in the western end of the City of Alameda. It is on property owned by the City of Alameda (City), within the southern and central area of the larger former Naval Air Station Alameda site (now commonly referred to as Alameda Point). It is accessed by Monarch Street from the north. The Site is bounded to the east by Seaplane Lagoon (an inlet of San Francisco Bay); to the south by San Francisco Bay; to the west by wetlands owned by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA wetlands); and to the north and east by Seaplane Lagoon Promenade, a public area running along the northside of Seaplane Lagoon. The VA wetlands are part of a larger 624-acre site owned by VA and located directly west of the Site, which includes a 512-acre conservation management area with both planned and existing wetlands, a future columbarium, a veterans' hospital, and related facilities for veterans.

Project Overview (Exhibits 22-24)

The proposed De-Pave Park Project (Project) was conceived and approved by Alameda City Council in 2014 as part of the [2014 Town Center and Waterfront Precise Plan for Alameda Point](#), which established the development parameters for 150 acres surrounding Seaplane Lagoon. The plan includes a series of waterfront public spaces surrounding the three sides of the lagoon, transitioning from a more urban character on the east side to the more ecologically-focused De-Pave Park on the west side.

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 team 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.

In addition to natural habitat areas, the park would include an accessible pedestrian and bicycle pathway (central promenade) that would provide opportunities for viewing shorebirds, waterfowl, and marine mammals in their natural habitat; additional trails and observation areas; fishing opportunities; a learning lab and other gathering spaces; an enlarged public sandy beach; a discovery play area; parking and restrooms; and related amenities. Additionally, the Project would provide wildlife connectivity and viewing opportunities of the VA wetlands habitat that is not accessible to the public.

¹ Exhibit numbers refer to page numbers in the "Exhibits" document posted along this staff report on the corresponding DRB agenda webpage.

Prior Review by Design Review Board

This is the project's first review by the Design Review Board.

Project Site**Site History (Exhibit 7)**

According to EcoAtlas, the Site is located on artificially filled land that was historically shallow water habitat. It is within the traditional indigenous homelands of the Ohlone people.

The Site includes large areas of concrete and buildings that are a remnant of the 1,400-acre Naval Air Station Alameda, a historic World War II base that was constructed through filling and dredging of shallow water habitats beginning in the 1920s through the 1940s. In 1997, the base was decommissioned and transferred to the City of Alameda. Alameda Point is now being redeveloped by the City to include 1,400 housing units, 5.5 million square feet of commercial space, and over 200 acres of parks and open space.

The Site was used by the Navy for a range of aircraft-related activities, including testing and repairing aircraft engines, aircraft parking, and aircraft corrosion protection. Several former buildings and facilities used by the Navy have since been demolished onsite.

The Site has a history of onsite use of chemicals. Based on soil sampling done by the Navy prior to land transfer to the City, some areas of the Site contain legacy soil contaminants, primarily petroleum hydrocarbons and metals. The Navy released the Site as having acceptable levels for park uses and the City is conducting additional sampling for contaminants to provide a complete evaluation of the constituents. Based on the results, the City's design team will consider the cost of removing/replacing soil not suitable for reuse relative to the project's ecological and public access goals.

Existing Conditions and Public Access (Exhibits 18-19)

The existing 21-acre Site is flat, and most of it (approximately 17.4 acres, or 83%) is covered by concrete and remnant buildings associated with the former Naval Air Station Alameda (this area includes the area of riprap along the shoreline). The shoreline of the Site is a subgrade "seawall" dike, armored with large stone riprap visible from the surface. The remaining approximately 3.6 acres is covered by ruderal upland habitat and a small pocket beach at the northwestern corner of Seaplane Lagoon, which is used by the public for swimming and wading at low tide. According to the City, the beach is difficult to access and is therefore not heavily used.

Adjacent to the Site, a long riprap jetty extends east into Seaplane Lagoon near the Site's southeastern corner. Additional jetties extend west into Seaplane Lagoon from the opposite side, sheltering the lagoon's inner shoreline from wave exposure. Natural habitats surrounding the Site include: muted tidal salina and ruderal uplands to the west on the VA property, and subtidal Bay habitat to the south and east. The VA plans to enhance the muted tidal salina, and create a new fully tidal salt marsh adjacent to the Site on VA property as mitigation for the VA Alameda Point Multi-specialty Outpatient Clinic and Columbarium project (authorized under BCDC Consistency Determination No. C2013.004.01).

There are many birds that use Seaplane Lagoon and nearby open spaces at Alameda Point, creating a unique opportunity to expand the wetland habitat. Within the VA property to the west of the Site, there is an abandoned runway area used as a nesting site and loafing area of endangered California

Least Terns (*Sternula antillarum browni*), located approximately 0.3 miles from the Site. A biological opinion authored by the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) limits trees and structures within areas of De-Pave Park to reduce perching opportunities for predator species. In recent project discussion as part of the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) pre-application process, the USFWS have indicated that certain structures, such as the restroom and the barbecue trellis, will be acceptable if equipped with anti-perching devices.

The current elevation of the Site is just above 10 feet North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88)², or roughly 3.6 feet above current mean higher high water (MHHW). With the FEMA Base Flood Elevation at the Site also at 10 feet, the site may be vulnerable to coastal flooding during extreme storms at current sea levels (see “Sea Level Rise” section below for more detailed information).

The Site is currently open to the public but not improved for public access. There is no BCDC-required public access at the site, but BCDC Permit No. M1998.036.01 requires public access immediately adjacent to (east of) the Site along the north side of Seaplane Lagoon. Buildings 25 and 29 at the Site host a range of businesses open to the public (see “Community Engagement” below).

According to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) online Bay Trail Interactive Map, a planned Bay Trail segment would run north to south along the shoreline through the Site before veering west and wrapping around the shoreline of Alameda Point. However, the City’s Master Infrastructure Plan, completed in 2014 and amended in 2020, calls for a flood protection levee (“MIP Levee”) that would run through portions of Seaplane Lagoon and Alameda Point, including a segment running east-west through the north end of De Pave Park. The City is thus proposing an alternate Bay Trail alignment that would follow the MIP Levee alignment running east-west through the north end of the Site, then connect to a planned seasonal trail that would run diagonally along the edge of the VA wetlands located west of the site, before continuing along the shore of Alameda Point (see Exhibit 13). This seasonal trail near the VA wetlands does not yet exist, but is required by BCDC to be built under BCDC Consistency Determination No. C2013.004.01, prior to the occupancy of the associated outpatient clinic (estimated to be approximately mid-2027); the seasonality is due to the nesting and loafing site of the California Least Tern. The City has stated that they plan to engage Bay Trail staff at MTC on this issue starting in January of 2024.

² All elevations in this report are given in NAVD 88



Figure 1. Project Location and Vicinity

Social and Environmental Context

The Commission has developed a Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool to help inform its analysis of how socioeconomic indicators and contamination burdens contribute to a community's vulnerability to climate change. The mapping tool collects information at the level of census blocks and is used by the Commission Staff to help identify certain Equity Priority Communities. These communities include those disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation, and those with higher concentrations of people with socioeconomic characteristics indicative of a higher degree of social vulnerability.

According to the mapping tool, the site is located within a 2020 census block in Alameda that is designated as having a "high" level of social vulnerability, based on high percentiles (70th or above) for the following indicators: Renter, No Vehicle, Disabled, Single Parent, and Very Low Income. The block is also ranked as having "high" contamination vulnerability, with a CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (a statewide pollution burden assessment) score of 77 out of 100. The area is also listed by the UC Berkeley Displacement Typology (2017) as experiencing ongoing gentrification and/or displacement.

Proposed Project

Project Description (Exhibits 22-27)

The Project would involve establishing an approximately 21-acre, ecologically-focused De-Pave Park. A guiding principle for the Project is to create a place for nature and nature-oriented public access in the most sustainable way possible. The Project is designed to reduce its carbon footprint by minimizing new paving and maximizing reuse of existing paving for trails, surfacing, and site furniture elements, and as crushed paving for fill in upland areas that will be elevated for resilience to future sea level rise. The project team is striving for a balanced cut and fill by using all soils excavated through the wetland creation for elevated areas.

The Site is within walking and biking distance for many low-income residents, including an affordable housing development for seniors and Alameda Point Collaborative, which provides permanent supportive housing and services for formerly homeless families.

1. **Natural Areas.** The existing rip rap shoreline would be lowered by approximately six feet along approximately 50% of the shoreline, and would be breached at its central point. This would

allow for the establishment of new natural habitats at the Site, including rocky intertidal habitats along a gravel beach in the central area of shoreline, tide pools at the southern end of the Site that could be explored by the public, a central tidal marsh channel that would connect to new tidal marsh habitats further to the west, and an expanded sandy beach in the northeastern corner of the Site. The Project would also include creating native upland coastal scrub habitat areas that would buffer the tidal marsh areas and provide space for the marsh to migrate inland as sea levels rise.

In addition, a pilot eelgrass bed restoration area would be planted offshore near the tide pools at the southeastern corner of the site. Eelgrass beds are a rare and beneficial habitat in San Francisco Bay that provide a range of important functions, including foraging and shelter for young fish and invertebrates, spawning surfaces for Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), reduction of coastal erosion, carbon sequestration, and other benefits.

2. **Public Access Elements.** The length of the park would be connected with a central 24-foot-wide, shared-use promenade (central promenade), utilizing predominantly existing paving at existing grade, with an inlaid historic steel rail running down the center. Northern portions of the central promenade would be built of decomposed granite. The central promenade would run north to south along the shoreline, and include a timber bridge crossing over the new tidal wetland channel.

The north end of the park would be elevated above existing grade to match the elevation of the abovementioned proposed MIP Levee, and would serve as the park's entry area. This area would include the following amenities:

- A levee-top trail running east to west (proposed Bay Trail alignment) that would connect to the above-referenced seasonal trail;
- Five picnic areas, including three small group areas, one open large group area, and one large sheltered barbecue area;
- A discovery play area, including stone and timber play elements, play mulch, and planted areas;
- An expanded sandy beach that could be used for wading, swimming, and launching of small non-motorized watercraft. The beach area would also include an accessible concrete ramp connecting the beach to the parking area, and large beach terrace steps leading to the beach and constructed from re-purposed concrete slabs;
- An interpretive overlook located east of the central promenade, which would provide views of the wetlands, the rocky shoreline, and Seaplane Lagoon, and would include large interpretive panels about the Site;
- A restroom with an outdoor foot wash and water bottle fill station;
- A parking area for approximately 60 vehicles;
- Three bicycle parking areas (for approximately 42 bicycles);
- Secondary decomposed granite pathways connecting the picnic areas, beach, discovery play areas, and interpretive overlook; and
- Additional interpretive elements near the park entrance.

The central promenade would transition down in grade from the north end of the park to meet the existing grades in the central and southern portions of the park. The southern and central portions of the Site would include:

- A timber bridge along the central promenade, passing over the tidal breach area;
- A learning lab and additional gathering spaces, all of which can be used for outdoor education classes and wildlife viewing areas. Plaza spaces near the south end would retain and utilize the most interesting segments of concrete paving and steel rail features to create gathering spaces and an appreciation of the Site's industrial past and ecological future;
- An elevated interpretive overlook built of decomposed granite, located at the southwestern end of the Site;
- A boulder tide pool area (referenced above), built from relocated natural riprap stones, which would provide an urban location to observe pools and marine life at different water levels;
- A decomposed granite fishing trail that would provide fishing access along the southern edge of the Site;
- Secondary pathways made of existing concrete and asphalt paving;
- Two bicycle parking areas (for approximately 28 bicycles); and
- Additional interpretive elements south of the timber bridge.

Additionally, distributed throughout the Site would be 27 benches and approximately 25 large sculptural seating plinths constructed from repurposed concrete slabs. Finally, low cable and mesh fencing would border the central promenade and the property line with the adjacent VA wetland, to prevent dogs and people from disturbing habitat areas.

Special Events

The City does not plan to host special events at the Site, due to the limited space and the ecologically-focused nature of the Park. The City has stated that special events would be hosted in other parts of the larger Seaplane Lagoon area.

Sea Level Rise (Exhibits 36-38)

Exhibits 37 and 38 show the Site in plan view along with current and expected future water levels. Current water levels for the Site are the following, according to data provided from the project proponent and obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Moffat & Nichol:

- Mean Higher High Water (MHHW): 6.37 feet
- 1-year Extreme Tide (King Tide): 7.68 feet
- 100-year stillwater level elevation (100-year SWEL): 9.82 feet
- Base Flood Elevation (BFE): 10 feet (AE Zone)

To plan for future sea level rise, the project team relied on the high-emissions, medium-to-high risk aversion scenario from the California Ocean Protection Council's 2018 Sea Level Rise Guidance, which

is a conservative scenario corresponding to a 1-in-200 (0.5%) likelihood of occurrence. Sea level rise projections based on this scenario are: +1.9 feet by 2050, +3.5 feet by 2070, and +6.9 feet by 2100. Under these projections, in 2050, the expected water levels at the Site would be approximately 8.27 feet (MHHW), 9.58 feet (King Tide), and 11.9 feet (BFE). In 2070, the water levels would be approximately 9.87 feet (MHHW), 11.18 feet (King Tide), and 13.5 feet (BFE). Finally, in 2100, they would be approximately 13.27 feet (MHHW), 14.58 feet (King Tide), and 16.9 feet (BFE)³.

Currently proposed site elevations are shown on Exhibits 36 through 38. At the northern end of the Site, key public access features, including the central promenade, the discovery play area, the picnic areas, the interpretive outlook, and the Bay Trail segment would be raised to match the elevation of the proposed MIP Levee (15 feet, or approximately 8.63 feet above current MHHW). At this elevation, these areas would remain above the MHHW level projected for 2100, but would be overtopped during a base flood event with approximately five feet of sea level rise (projected between 2080 and 2090). The City indicated that these areas could be raised along with the MIP Levee to address sea level rise in the future. The parking and restrooms in the northern end of the Site would remain at their current elevations of around 9.1 feet, behind the MIP Levee.

Also in the Site's northern end, beach terrace steps would lead down to the sandy beach, which would be built to an elevation of approximately 9.0 feet at its high point. At this elevation, the high point of the beach would remain above MHHW through approximately 2.63 feet of sea level rise (projected in approximately 2060), though the terrace steps leading to the beach would be at higher elevations and could continue to provide access to the water when the beach is inundated. The project team does not currently have plans to adapt the beach to higher levels of sea level rise.

In the central and southern portions of the park, most of the public access improvements, including the central promenade, the learning lab area, and the decomposed granite fishing trail, would be built at current grade, ranging from approximately 10.5 to 10.8 feet. At these elevations, these areas would be just above the current BFE of 10 feet, so would be vulnerable to flooding during extreme storms not long after project construction, and with greater frequency as sea levels rise over time. The areas would be overtopped at MHHW with approximately 4.13 feet of sea level rise (projected between 2070 and 2080), and would be overtopped during annual king tides with approximately 2.82 feet of sea level rise (projected between 2060 and 2070).

The City is proposing to keep these areas at their existing grade as part of its goal to minimize the park's carbon footprint from construction. To address sea level rise in this area of the park, the City plans to construct an elevated boardwalk on top of the proposed central promenade, using the thick paving as a mat slab foundation, which would continue to provide public access to the southern end of the park at higher sea levels. However, as currently proposed, the remaining public access areas in the southern end of the park, including the learning lab area, the fishing trail, and the trail to the elevated

³ These projected water levels assume a linear increase of given water levels commensurate with the expected amount of sea level rise; actual water level increases will likely be non-linear and vary from these numbers.

bird overlook, would not be raised in the future. Therefore, there would be less publicly accessible area at the park with future sea level rise.

The City has also indicated that the proposed tidal marsh areas would have room to migrate into higher elevations (upland coastal scrub areas) with sea level rise over time, but have not yet provided specifics of the expected pace and nature of the habitat change over time.

Community Engagement (Exhibits 15-17)

According to the City, initial community engagement efforts related to this project began in 2014, when a broad public input process was conducted for the Alameda Point Town Center and Waterfront Precise Plan, which included De-Pave Park. In 2020, the project team worked closely with relevant stakeholders including representatives from local environmental organizations, the kayak/watercraft community, and residents of Alameda Point Collaborative to develop the De-Park Vision Plan, which was discussed publicly at the Recreation and Parks Commission with final approval by City Council.

In 2023, the team has continued community engagement with three rounds of opportunities for public input. The first round, in April 2023, included in-person workshops held at the proposed park site and at Alameda Point Collaborative; an online survey with 693 respondents; marketing on social media; and flyers in multiple languages distributed to a wide variety of relevant local organizations. In September 2023, the team held two in-person community meetings to solicit input on these three design alternatives, including: a tour for Alameda Point Collaborative residents; a second community meeting for the broader community; an online survey which received hundreds of responses; and other community events.

The final round of community input will occur in January/February 2024 and will include targeted outreach to the angler community, Alameda Point Collaborative, Alameda Housing Authority, and the broader community.

The City also conducted targeted outreach to the tenants of Buildings 25 and 29 that will be removed as part of the Project. These tenants include businesses such as St. George's Spirits, Dash Cellars, Brix Beverages and Urban Legends in Building 25; and a number of local makers and artisans in Building 29. The City is working to identify alternate locations for the tenants of these buildings, and stated that tenant improvement credits or other tenant assistance may be negotiated.

The community engagement efforts to date have resulted in, or demonstrated support for, several modifications to the park design, including: the removal of Buildings 25 and 29; increased size of the nature/discovery play program; siting of the trail locations and fence alignments to minimize habitat impacts; refinement and enlargement of nature overlook and learning lab spaces; siting of the parking lot further to the north, away from habitat areas and out of the view corridor of Seaplane Lagoon Promenade; addition of an outdoor foot wash at the restroom; addition of the tide pool area; and other elements.

In addition, after meeting with Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District staff, the City removed proposed salina habitat areas from the project design and replaced it with coastal scrub habitat, due to the salina's potential to provide mosquito breeding opportunities close to a public access area.

Approval & Construction Timeline

The City is currently going through the pre-application review process with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), and received grant funding from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) for project design and planning. The City will be applying for additional grants in 2024 to fund permitting and construction.

Commission Plans, Policies, and Guidelines

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) contains several policy sections relevant to the design of the public access areas for this project, including the sections on Public Access; Recreation, Appearance, Design and Scenic Views; Shoreline Protection; Climate Change; and Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

Public Access Policy No. 2 states, in part, that “...maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline...” These policies also provide specific details on the locations and types of features that should be included in public access areas. Policy No. 10 states, in part, that “access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare” and Policy No. 8 states, in part, that “...improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline, should provide barrier free access for persons with disabilities, for people of all income levels, and for people of all cultures to the maximum feasible extent, should include an ongoing maintenance program, and should be identified with appropriate signs – including using appropriate languages or culturally-relevant icon-based signage.”

In natural areas and where habitat or species may be impacted by public access, Policy No. 4 states, in part, that “public access should be sited, designed and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife...” and that “siting, design and management strategies should be employed to avoid or minimize adverse effects on wildlife, informed by the advisory principles in the Public Access Design Guidelines.” In considering this balance between public access and wildlife, the Board needs to consider the likely human use of the area, the potential for significant adverse effects (such as impacts to species, impacts on breeding and foraging areas, fragmentation of wildlife corridors, etc.), site specific information, and the best available scientific evidence and expert advice. These effects are also to be considered within a regional context.

In considering public access designs and potential future climate change, Public Access Policy No. 6 states, in part, that “public access should be sited, designed, managed, and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding,” and that access should be designed consistent with the physical and natural environment. Public Access Policy No. 7 states, in part, that “Any public access provided as a condition of development should either be required to remain viable in the event of future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby.”

The Bay Plan **Recreation** Policy No. 1 states, in part, that “diverse and accessible water-oriented recreational facilities, such as marinas, launch ramps, beaches, and fishing piers, should be provided to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population... and improved to accommodate a broad range of water-oriented recreational activities for people of all races, cultures, ages and income levels...waterfront parks should be provided wherever possible.” And Policy No. 5 requires that within

these parks, the Bay resources should “be described with interpretive signs. Where feasible and appropriate, waterfront parks and wildlife refuges should provide diverse environmental education programs, facilities and community service opportunities, such as classrooms and interpretive and volunteer programs.”

The Bay Plan Recreation Policy No. 3a encourages construction of recreational facilities, such as parks, along the Bay so long as “they are located, improved and managed consistent with the following standards:... (3) Be feasible from an engineering viewpoint.; and (4) Be consistent with the public access policies that address wildlife compatibility and disturbance. In addition:... (7) access to marinas, launch ramps, beaches, fishing piers, and other recreational facilities should be clearly posted with signs and easily available from parking reserved for the public or from public streets or trails... (8) To reduce the human health risk posed by consumption of contaminated fish, projects that create or improve fishing access to the Bay at water-oriented recreational facilities, such as fishing piers, beaches, and marinas, should include signage that informs the public of consumption advisories for the species of Bay fish that have been identified as having potentially unsafe levels of contaminants...”

Regarding water recreation that is proposed onsite, such as the beach, Recreation Policy No. 3d states, in part, that “launching lanes should be placed where wind and water conditions would be most favorable for smaller boats.” The policies state that “(3) Additional launching facilities should be located around the Bay shoreline, especially where there are few existing facilities. These facilities should be available free or at moderate cost. Launching facilities should include adequate car and trailer parking, restrooms, and public access... (6) Fill for ramps into the water, docks, and similar facilities should be permitted.”

The Bay Plan **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state, in part, that “all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay” and that “maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas...” These policies also state, in part, that “shoreline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay.”

The Bay Plan **Shoreline Protection** policies state, in part, that, “all shoreline protection projects should evaluate the use of natural and nature-based features such as marsh vegetation, levees with transitional ecotone habitat, mudflats, beaches, and oyster reefs, and should incorporate these features to the greatest extent practicable. Ecosystem benefits, including habitat and water quality improvement, should be considered in determining the amount of fill necessary for the project purpose. Suitability and sustainability of proposed shoreline protection and restoration strategies at the project site should be determined using the best available science on shoreline adaptation and restoration.” The policies also state, in part, that “adverse impacts to natural resources and public access from new shoreline protection should be avoided. When feasible, shoreline protection projects should include components to retain safe and convenient water access, for activities such as fishing, swimming, and boating, especially in communities lacking such access. Where significant impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation or alternative public access should be provided.” Finally, the policies state “the Commission should encourage pilot and demonstration projects to research and demonstrate the benefits of incorporating natural and nature-based techniques in San Francisco Bay.”

On the subject of **Climate Change**, the Public Access Policy No. 7 states, in part, that, “any public access provided as a condition of development should either be required to remain viable in the event of

future sea level rise or flooding, or equivalent access consistent with the project should be provided nearby.” The Bay Plan’s Climate Change Policy No. 5 states that “wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged.”

Bay Plan policies on **Environmental Justice and Social Equity** state, in part, that “equitable, culturally-relevant community outreach and engagement should be conducted by local governments and project applicants to meaningfully involve potentially impacted communities for major projects and appropriate minor projects in underrepresented and/or identified vulnerable and/or disadvantaged communities...” (Policy No. 3), and that “if a project is proposed within an underrepresented and/or identified vulnerable and/or disadvantaged community, potential disproportionate impacts should be identified in collaboration with the potentially impacted communities. Local governments and the Commission should take measures...to require mitigation for disproportionate adverse project impacts on the identified vulnerable or disadvantaged communities in which the project is proposed” (Policy No. 4).

As it relates to community engagement in the design of shoreline public access, Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that “public access that substantially changes the use or character of the site should be sited, designed, and managed based on meaningful community involvement to create public access that is inclusive and welcoming to all and embraces local multicultural and indigenous history and presence. In particular, vulnerable, disadvantaged, and/or underrepresented communities should be involved. If such previous outreach and engagement did not occur, further outreach and engagement should be conducted prior to Commission action” (Policy No. 5).

Priority Use Area, Special Area Plan, and Bay Plan Map Notes

The Bay Plan Maps designate those areas that should be reserved for priority land uses on the Bay shoreline. As shown on Bay Plan Map No. 5, the project site is not located within a priority use area, nor is it part of a Special Area Plan. Commission Suggestion A on Bay Plan Map No. 5 suggests the possible re-use of dredge material on Naval Air Station Alameda (Alameda Point). Note 4 points out a harbor seal haul-out near the site that should be protected. BCDC staff will work with the City and its BRRIT partner agencies to ensure local wildlife is protected during construction.

Public Access Design Guidelines

The *Public Access Design Guidelines* state that public access should feel public, be designed so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by structures or incompatible uses, and that there should be visual cues that public access is available for the public’s use by using site furnishings, such as benches, trash containers, lighting, and signage. The *Public Access Design Guidelines* further state that public access areas should be designed for a wide range of users, should maximize user comfort by designing for weather and day and night use, and that each site’s historical, cultural, and natural attributes provide opportunities for creating projects with a “sense of place” and a unique identity. The Bay Plan Public Access policies on these Design Guidelines state “the Design Review Board should encourage diverse public access to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population. Public access should be well distributed around the Bay and designed or improved to accommodate a broad range of activities for people of all races, cultures, ages, income levels, and abilities.”

Board Questions

Staff recommends the Board frame its remarks of the proposed park considering the public access objectives found in the Commission's Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed public access park project with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.

The seven objectives for public access are:

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

In addition, Staff has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?

**Sample Report 3:
1301 Shoreway Life Sciences Development Project, City of Belmont; Second Review
(For Design Review Board consideration on January 8, 2024)**

Project Summary

Project Proponents

1 Shoreway Owner, LLC, subsidiary of Four Corners Properties.

Project Representatives

Rich Ying, 1 Shoreway Owner, LLC. c/o Four Corners Properties (Four Corner, Project Manager for Property Owner); Karen Kuklin, DGA Architects (Project Manager, Principal Architect); Rene Bihan, SWA Group (Landscape Architect), Raquel Fones, BKF Engineers Inc (Civil Engineer); Blake Dilsworth, KPFF Consulting Engineers (Structural); Genaro Morales, Watry Design Inc. (Structural Engineer, Parking); Mario Perez, EXP Inc. (MEP / Lighting / T24).

Project Location (Exhibits 3-12)

The proposed life sciences redevelopment project would be developed on a 6.91-acre (301,130-square-foot) site at 1301 Shoreway Road in the City of Belmont, San Mateo County, just outside of the Redwood Shores waterfront community. The project site is bounded by Sem Lane to the northwest, Shoreway Road to the southwest, a PG&E substation to the south, and the Belmont Creek to the east. The site shares the Belmont Creek shoreline with 10 Twin Dolphin and 200 Twin Dolphin, both recently reviewed by the DRB in 2022. Shoreway Road is adjacent to, and runs parallel with, Highway 101, and is the first cross street by drivers taking the northbound Ralston/Marine Pkwy exit.

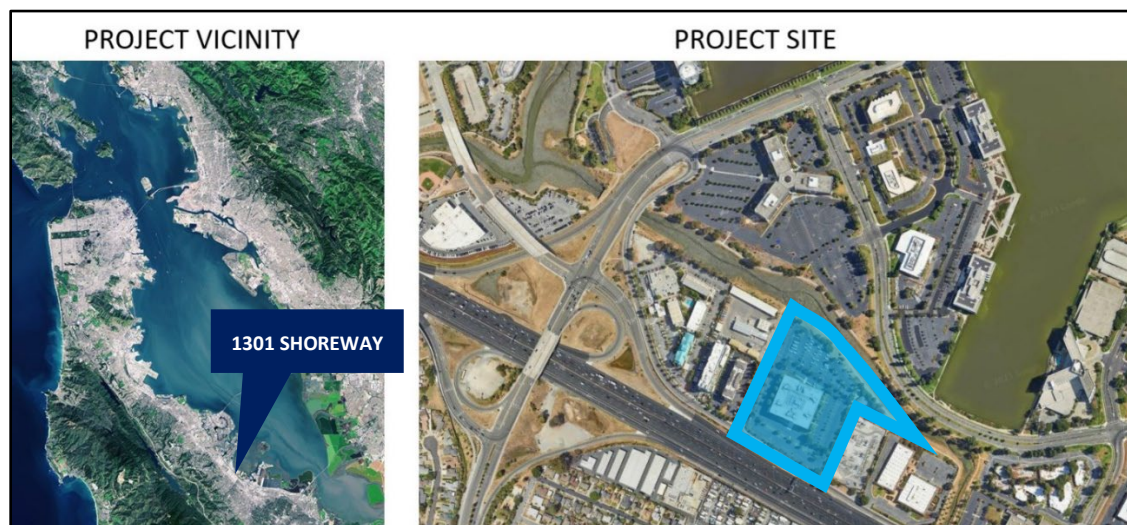


Figure 2. Project location

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to redevelop the 6.91-acre site with a life sciences campus. 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 widening the Belmont Creek Trail, constructing a new sidewalk along Sem Lane to provide public access from Shoreway Road to the shoreline, adding five new bicycle racks and three new Public Shore parking spaces at the trailhead, and enhancing the existing public access areas with refreshed seating amenities.

Project Site

Site History

The 6.91-acre site is currently occupied by the Redwood Shores Health Center, a four-story, approximately 142,496-square-foot building constructed in 1984 along with a surface parking lot with 571 parking spaces. The majority of the public access area within the project site is situated atop a berm on land owned by the Redwood Shores Business Center Association (SBCA).

Permit History (Exhibit 6)

The existing permit for the project site, BCDC Permit No. M1981.064.02, was originally issued on May 18, 1982 in association with the construction of the aforementioned 48,000-square-foot building, then called the "Belmont Shores Office Building." The permit required the area shown on Sheet 2 of the planting plans submitted with the original application to be dedicated for public access (see Figure 2 below). Within this area, the original authorization required for public access: "appropriate" landscaping, a 10-foot path, and no fewer than three benches and two public access signs.

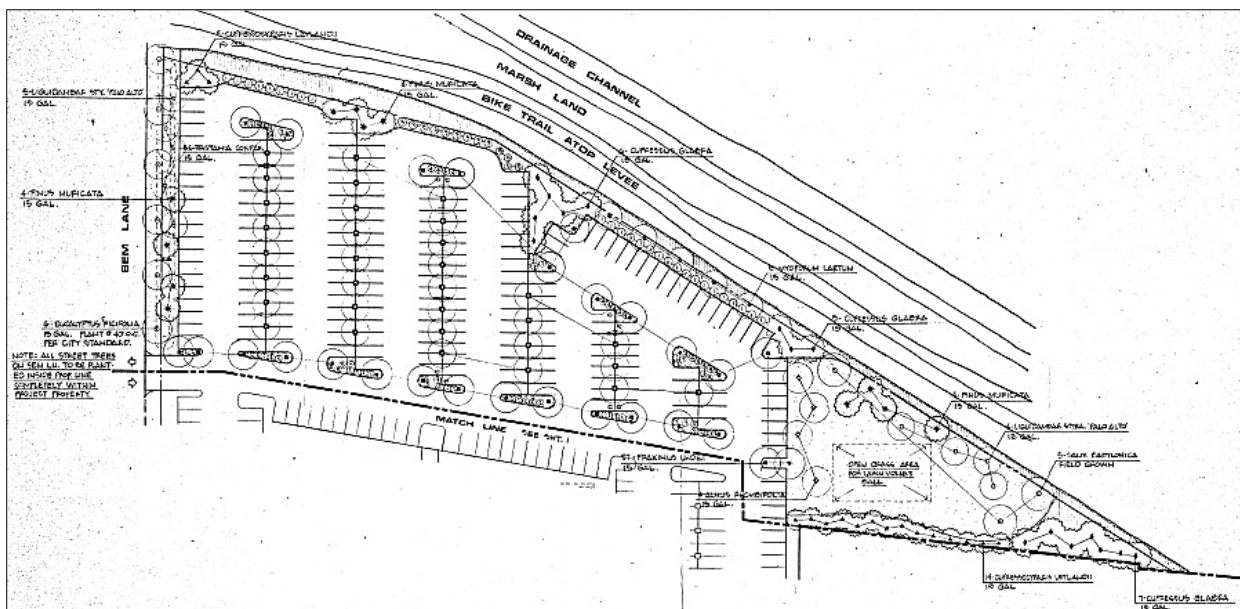


Figure 3 Sheet 2 of Planting Plan showing public access area along the levee.

Since the original authorization, the permit has since been amended twice. On July 15, 1982, Amendment No. One authorized the installation of an 18-inch pipe through the Belmont Creek for drainage purposes. On July 10, 1985, Amendment No. Two authorized the construction of a 2,048-square-foot tennis court, 1,000-square-foot of which would be in the shoreline band. As the tennis court was proposed for private use, the amended permit required additional public access in the form of an 8-foot-wide path on the north side of the tennis court from the 6-foot-wide pathway from the parking lot to the levee.

Existing Conditions (Exhibits 2-14, 22)

The project site is flat and fully paved for the surface parking lot surrounding the Redwood Shores Health Center building. The existing 57,659-square-foot total public access area is located mostly outside of Four Corners Properties' northeastern property line, atop an 860-foot-long berm on land owned by SBCA and excludes the existing parking lot and sports court. The existing public access is comprised of

the minimum improvements required by Special Condition II-B-3, including: a path, landscaping, two decomposed granite paths, three benches, and two “Public Shore” signs. The permit requires the path to be 10 feet wide; however, the project team reports that the existing trail is 5 feet wide.

The existing 5-foot-wide pedestrian trail, the Belmont Creek Trail, runs along the top of the Belmont Creek berm. Note that the Belmont Creek Trail is not part of the San Francisco Bay Trail system. The nearest alignment of the San Francisco Bay Trail is approximately 200 feet away, along the northbound side of Twin Dolphin Drive on the other side of the creek.

Currently, the public can access the Belmont Creek Trail at the project site from three locations: the trailhead at the terminus of Sem Lane, the site’s driveway at Shoreway Road, and the entrance to the trail where it meets Shoreway south of the site. Sem Lane is a short, dead-end road used for city vehicle access and has no continuous sidewalk for pedestrian access and the vehicle entrance from Shoreway Road does not provide pedestrian facilities into the site.

Of the three public benches along the Belmont Creek Trail, two are derelict and unusable due to overgrown vegetation. The sports court, which is currently used as a basketball court, is not part of the total public access area described in the permit and is not available for public use. Along the north side of the sports court, however, there is a seating node with four picnic tables for public use and narrow paths connecting the tennis court to the parking lot, the parking lot to the seating node, and the seating node to the Belmont Creek Trail. The access paths are not ADA-compliant and there are currently no dedicated Public Shore parking spaces.

With respect to views, the berm obstructs views to the creek from anywhere but the upper edge of the berm itself. The shoreline public access area atop the berm, including the Belmont Creek Trail, can be seen from entrance of Sem Lane. It can also be seen from the Shoreway Road entrance when there are no cars parked along the viewer’s line of sight.

Social and Environmental Context

The Commission has developed a Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool to help inform its analysis of how socioeconomic indicators and contamination burdens contribute to a community’s vulnerability to climate change. The mapping tool collects information at the level of Census blocks using 2020 data and at the level of the Census tract using CalEnviroScreen 3.0. Commission staff use the tool to help identify certain Equity Priority Communities. These communities include those disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation, and those with higher concentrations of people with socioeconomic characteristics indicative of a higher degree of social vulnerability.

BCDC’s Vulnerability Mapping Tool shows this project area as having “moderate” social vulnerability and “lower” contamination vulnerability based upon Census data. Demographics for this area include children under five years of age, single parents, and people who are not U.S. citizens, people who are severely housing cost burdened. There are also some areas to the west of the project site that have “high” social vulnerability. Demographics for these areas include renters, children under five years of age, people over 65 years of age and living alone, people without a vehicle, people with limited English proficiency, and people who are not U.S. Citizens.

Second DRB Review

First DRB Review

The project was first reviewed by the DRB on August 7, 2023. Overall, the project was received as positive addition to the recent redevelopment of other properties surrounding Belmont Creek, with many Board members commending the trail nodes proposed for various types of passive and active recreation. The Board noted that the site's location placed it at a disadvantage in terms of legibility and connectivity to nearby public access areas. The following is a brief summary of the Board's recommendations for project improvement:

1. **Site Design.** The Board wished to see more details about the condition and quality of the public-private interface, more information on site planning, building impacts to public access areas (climate, perceptible), and clarity regarding the areas between the private development and shoreline public access improvements. The Board also wished for more details on the visual connections to and from the public access area from the right-of-way and within the development.
2. **Circulation and Orientation.** The Board recommended use of clear signage or a trail map to orient people to the site, connections to public access spaces and improvements, and how to access them. The Board observed that the public access area is sited "behind the building" and felt the project needed clear and inviting signage/wayfinding so that members of the public would not feel they had landed in a space in which they were not supposed to be.
3. **Public Access.** The Board strongly encouraged making the sports court publicly accessible. It felt that the court was a draw which could serve as an "anchor" of public access use and would complement the proposed fitness courts. The Board also encouraged using the "power of small moves" for wayfinding and public serving amenities, e.g., a drinking fountain. The Board also recommended pursuing connectivity to the larger district, perhaps with a district trail map to orient people and create awareness.
4. **Shoreline Protection.** The cross-sections of the berm seems to show adequate flood protection, but when seen in plain view, there appear to be weaknesses. The Board wished to understand the extent of the berm, whether the berm continues beyond the project site, and how it conforms to adjacent properties. It also wished to know if the berm would be effective without improvement on adjacent properties.

Project Updates for 2nd DRB Review (Exhibits 13-21)

In response to the Board's comments at the project's first DRB review, the project proposal has been revised as follows:

1. **Sports Court and Auxiliary Nodes.** The sports court is now proposed as a publicly accessible facility, with auxiliary fitness and seating nodes added along its north and southeastern sides. The sports court is intended to serve as a multi-use facility, with lines painted for basketball, volleyball, and pickleball, and would be available to all members of the public during daylight hours. The conversion of the sports court and auxiliary area from private to public would add another 10,539 square feet to the overall area proposed for dedicated public access at the project site. This would increase the existing total public access area from 57,659 square feet to 83,594 square feet.

2. **Shoreline Protection.** Having established that the shoreline edge at the site is a berm rather than a FEMA-certified levee, the project proposes to raise the shoreline edge to 12.5 feet (NAVD88) which would keep the site resilient to flooding through mid-century.
3. **Signage.** The project proposes to place wayfinding and educational signs at the trailhead on Sem Lane and along the Belmont Creek Trail. The project also proposes to install two BCDC wayfinding signs on Shoreway Road along the property frontage to indicate the location of the trail.

Proposed Project

Infill Development (Exhibits 15-35)

The purpose of the project is to redevelop the site with a new office/R&D building and a detached parking garage. The project proposes to improve the existing Belmont Creek Trail by widening the trail from 5 to 8 feet, adding a 6-foot-wide publicly accessible sidewalk along Sem Lane from Shoreway Road to the shoreline, adding 5 bicycle racks (each with parking capacity for 2 bicycles) and 3 public access parking spaces at the Belmont Creek trailhead, enhance existing seating and sport court amenities, and provide Public Shore and wayfinding signage.

1. **New Structures.** The project proposes to replace the existing building with two new office/R&D buildings (Buildings 1 and 2) and a detached parking garage totaling 542,035 square feet of building area. As proposed, Building 1 would be eight stories and Building 2 would be seven stories. The parking garage would have 9 levels and accommodate approximately 1,626 parking spaces. The floor area ratio (FAR) of the site would increase to 1.8 SF. All three buildings would be constructed outside of the shoreline band. The project also proposes to construct a surface parking lot with 105 parking spaces within the shoreline band, three of which would be dedicated for shoreline public access parking.
2. **Total Public Access Area.** The new development will increase the total public access area from 57,659 square feet of dedicated public access to 83,594 square feet. The public access improvements at the project site will occur both within and outside of the Commission's jurisdiction.
3. **Belmont Creek Trail.** The public open space improvements at the project site would include the refurbishment of the Belmont Creek Trail and trailhead along Belmont Creek. The project would raise the shoreline upon which the trail lies, widen the trail to eight feet, and renovate the trail's existing permeable surface to allow for ADA compliance. Bollards, connective sidewalks, bike parking with a bike tool station, and vehicular parking would be placed adjacent to the trailhead and marked with public access signage.
4. **Sports Court.** The sports court is now proposed to be publicly accessible facility, with auxiliary fitness and seating nodes added along its north and southeastern sides. The sports court is intended to serve as a multi-use facility, with lines painted for basketball, volleyball, and pickleball, and would be available to all members of the public during daylight hours.
5. **Trail Nodes.** The project would renovate the existing seating areas and add three new "nodes" that would pop out from along the northern part of the Belmont Creek Trail. From north to south, these trail nodes would include an "Entry Node" at the trailhead, a "Birding Nook" across the proposed office building, and a "Botanica Node" across the campus courtyard. These nodes

are intended to offer different types of quiet enjoyment to the public and would be supplemented with interpretive signage on the ecology and wildlife at the site.

6. **Fitness Nodes.** The fitness nodes earlier proposed for points along the Belmont Creek Trail are now proposed as auxiliary facilities to the sports court to be located along the north and southeast of the court. The fitness nodes would include seating in addition to fitness equipment, such as sit-up benches, dip bars, calisthenics bars, and hanging bars.
7. **Signage and Wayfinding.** The primary public access entrance to the trail is located at the trailhead, at the base off Sem Lane. Wayfinding and educational signs would also be placed at the trailhead and along the trail. The project also proposes to install two BCDC wayfinding signs on Shoreway Road along the property frontage to indicate the location of the Belmont Creek Trail.
8. **Circulation and Parking.** The project proposes to add 3 dedicated “Public Shore” parking spaces and bike parking for 10 bicycles. Bike and vehicular parking would be placed adjacent to the trailhead and marked with public access signage. Pedestrian access to the trail would be available through a six-foot-wide continuous sidewalk along Sem Lane connecting the existing sidewalk along Shoreway Road to the trailhead at the end of Sem Lane and from the southeast where the trail would connect to the existing trail on the adjacent properties. Concrete paths connect parking to the Belmont Creek trail and its amenities, as well as the interior courtyard, buildings, and parking garages.
9. **Landscape.** The project proposes an update to the tree and understory planting palette on site to include native/adaptive plants to improve biodiversity, reduce water consumption and provide seasonal interest. Stormwater treatment zones would be integrated within the interior of the site to capture all stormwater on site and reduce runoff to the creek.
10. **Views.** The existing views from Sem Lane and Shoreway Drive to the Belmont Creek Trail are currently blocked by the large parking lot and dense, overgrown planting at the creek edge. The streetscape that would be created by the proposed buildings is intended to draw focus to the view corridor along Sem Lane. Within the shoreline public access area, seating nooks will be provided at points that take advantage of “near-creek” views. At the sports court, dense planting and a large screening tarp would be removed from the fence to enhance visibility to and from the trail, creek, and surrounding public access spaces.

Sea Level Rise (Exhibits 15-35)

The Belmont Creek runs along the east and northeast of the project site and is protected by an existing berm that is not an engineered levee, but appears similar to the FEMA-certified levee on the opposite side of the creek at 10 Twin Dolphin and 200 Twin Dolphin. The project site is located within FEMA designation Zone X (area with reduced flood risk due to levee). The current shoreline elevation ranges from 10.5 feet (NAVD88) to 11.5 feet. The project proposes to raise the shoreline elevation to a minimum of 12.5 feet, and up to 15 feet in certain areas to screen the existing transformer site and provide added protection for some seating areas. This elevation would make the site resilient to flooding through mid-century but not end-of-century. The project team proposes to further raise the shoreline as necessary to adapt to end-of-century flood risks.

Community Engagement

The project team began its community outreach efforts after approaching BCDC. In preparation for their DRB review, BCDC staff advised the project proponents to engage with underserved communities in the area.

The project team, with the approval of the City of Belmont Planning Department, has engaged in a Public Outreach Meeting Schedule by which nearby residents received notifications for public meetings. The first Public Outreach meeting was a Design Team presentation of the project design on May 3, 2023. The second Public Outreach Meeting was an opportunity for the general public to provide feedback on the presented design to the Applicant on May 31, 2023. The third and final Public Outreach, held on June 28, 2023, was intended to provide an opportunity for the project team to respond to the community comments received during the second Public Outreach Meeting. Notice was given 30 days in prior to the meeting, with both a zoom link and in-person option to view exhibits based on the proposed development. There was no meeting attendance from those invited. The project was subject to the public notice and comment requirements for DRB meetings at its first DRB review on August 7, 2023, but the only public comment received at that meeting was a letter of support from the SBCA, which is the owner of the shoreline parcel within the project site. The project team reports no further community engagement since its first DRB review.

Approval & Construction Timeline

The project proponent is currently involved in the process to obtain local entitlements. The project was submitted to the City of Belmont on July 22, 2022 and revised and submitted twice, October 5, 2022, and most recently on May 8, 2023. The City's review of the May 8th submission is still pending. The project proponent plans to formally submit a permit application to BCDC following its final DRB review.

Commission Plans , Policies, and Guidelines

San Francisco Bay Plan Policies

The *San Francisco Bay Plan* (Bay Plan) contains a number of policy sections relevant to the design of the public access areas for this project, including the sections on Priority Use Areas; Public Access; Recreation; Appearance, Design and Scenic Views; Environmental Justice and Social Equity; and Climate Change.

As shown on **Bay Plan Map No. 6**, the site does not carry a Priority Use designation.

The Bay Plan's **Environmental Justice and Social Equity** Policy 3 states that "equitable, culturally-relevant community outreach and engagement should be conducted by local governments and project applicants to meaningfully involve potentially impacted communities for major projects and appropriate minor projects in underrepresented and/or identified vulnerable and/or disadvantaged communities," and "evidence of how community concerns were addressed should be provided." For its first DRB review, the project team reported a community outreach campaign that was largely unsuccessful in engaging members of the local community. Except for a letter of support from the owner of the shoreline parcel within the project site, the project did not receive any public comment at its first DRB meeting and has not reported any further community outreach since that meeting.

Pursuant to the Bay Plan's **Climate Change** policies, projects "should be designed to be resilient to a mid-century sea level rise projection. If it is likely the project will remain in place longer than mid-century, an adaptive management plan should be developed to address the long-term impacts that will arise based on a risk assessment using the best available science-based projection for sea level rise at

the end of the century” (Policy 3), and that “wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged” (Policy 5). The project proposes to raise the shoreline edge upon which most of the public access area lies to a minimum of 12.5 feet (NAVD88), which would make the site resilient to flooding from the Belmont Creek through 2050 but not through the end of the century. For end-of-century resiliency, the project team proposes to raise the shoreline even higher as needed after mid-century.

The Bay Plan’s **Public Access** policies state that “maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront and on any permitted fills should be provided in and through every new development in the Bay or on the shoreline” (Policy 2); that “public access improvements provided as a condition of any approval should be consistent with the project, the culture(s) of the local community, and the physical environment, including protection of Bay natural resources” (Policy 8); and that “access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means” (Policy 10). The public access proposed for this project primarily involves enhancing the existing public access along the shoreline of the project site. This includes widening and paving the existing Belmont Creek Trail, adding programmed nodes along the trail for small fitness courts, seating, birding, and other quiet enjoyment.

Public Access Policy 5 states that “public access that substantially changes the use or character of the site should be sited, designed, and managed based on meaningful community involvement to create public access that is inclusive and welcoming to all.” The project proposes to convert an existing private sports court along the trail into a publicly accessible space. Additionally, the proposed improvements to the existing Belmont Creek Trail include nooks for different types of activities (e.g., birding, exercise with fitness equipment) and would make the trail ADA-compliant.

Public Access Policy 6 states that “public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding.”

The Bay Plan’s **Appearance, Design and Scenic Views** policies state that “all bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay” (Policy 2), and that “views of the Bay from vista points and from roads should be maintained by appropriate arrangements and heights of all developments and landscaping between the view areas and the water” (Policy 14). The project proposes to create a new pedestrian sidewalk at Sem Lane that leads to a significantly improved trailhead entrance marked with public access wayfinding signage intended to invite the public into the public access areas located behind the buildings. The project would also replace and relocate the existing trash enclosure near the entrance of the Belmont Creek Trail to outside of Building 2 and deep into the site between Building 1 and the parking garage. Delivery and loading areas would be located adjacent to the trash enclosures.

Public Access Design Guidelines

The *Public Access Design Guidelines* state that public access should feel public, be designed so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation diminished by structures or incompatible uses, and that there should be visual cues that public access is available for the public’s use by using site furnishings, such as benches, trash containers, lighting, and signage. The *Public Access Design Guidelines* further state that public access areas should be designed for a wide range of users, should maximize user comfort by designing for weather and day and night use, and that each site’s historical, cultural, and natural attributes provide opportunities for creating projects with a “sense of place” and a unique identity. The Bay Plan Public Access policies on these Design Guidelines state “The Design Review Board should encourage diverse public access to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying

population. Public access should be well distributed around the Bay and designed or improved to accommodate a broad range of activities for people of all races, cultures, ages, income levels, and abilities.”

With respect to views, Objective No. 3 of the *Public Access Design Guidelines* is to “provide, maintain, and enhance visual access to the Bay and shoreline”; for example, by “locating buildings, structures, parking lots, and landscaping of new shoreline projects such that they enhance and dramatize views of the Bay and the shoreline from public thoroughfares and other public spaces. Objective No. 4 of the Guidelines is to “maintain and enhance the visual quality of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent spaces”; for example, by “providing visual interest and architectural variety in massing and height to new buildings along the shoreline,” “using building footprints to create a diversity of public spaces along the Bay,” “locating service facilities away from the shoreline,” and “utilizing the shoreline for Bay-related land uses as much as possible.”

Board Questions

Staff recommends the Board frame its remarks of the proposed park considering the public access objectives found in the Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed public access park project with respect to the Commission’s policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.

The seven objectives for public access are:

1. Make public access PUBLIC.
2. Make public access USABLE.
3. Provide, maintain, and enhance VISUAL ACCESS to the Bay and shoreline.
4. Maintain and enhance the 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.

In addition, staff would like the Board’s advice on the following issues:

- a. 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?
- b. What additional improvements could enhance the public access experience to and along the shoreline?
- c. 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?
- d. 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?
- e. What type of events and what frequency of flooding events affecting public access spaces should trigger adaptive actions at the project site?