

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: Marina Point Housing Development (BCDC Permit Application No. 2024.004.00), Richmond;
First Review**

(For Design Review Board consideration on December 9th, 2024)

Project Summary

Project Proponent

Glen Powles, Guardian Commercial Real Estate, LP

Project Representatives

Marcia Vallier, CSW | ST2 (Senior Project Manager, Landscape Architect), Michael Vidra, CSW | ST2 (Senior Project Manager | Engineer) David Burton, KTG (Associate Principal, Architect), Bahareh Heidarzadeh, PhD, PE, Associate, ENGEO Incorporated (Geotechnical Engineering), Bryan W. Wenter, AICP, Miller Starr Regalia (Attorney) Steve Reilly, Senior Vice President, Land Advisors Organization (Real Estate Planner)

Project Location (Exhibit 1)¹

The proposed project is located at 2100 Marina Way South in the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County. The site is bordered by industrial development to the north and the Bay Trail to the south. On the Bay side of the trail is Ford Channel, which connects both to Richmond's inner harbor and to Marina Bay. To the east, the site is bordered by Marina Way South, where both Benito Juarez Elementary School and Lucretia Edwards Park are located. Immediately to the west is the National Park Service Rosie the Riveter Historical Park, a complex including the historic Ford Assembly Building and Craneway Pavilion events center, and the Assemble Kitchen restaurant.

Project Overview (Exhibit 4)

The proposed project is a 4.92-acre residential development with 70 market-rate, single-family homes and 30 junior additional accessory dwelling units. Within the shoreline band, there are 12 separate single-family units, as well as walkways, utilities, and landscaping. The 12 homes proposed within the

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



shoreline band are separated from the existing Bay Trail segment by a public pathway and coastal landscaping, with a public stairway and plaza leading down to the existing Bay Trail.

Public access improvements are proposed along the frontage of the existing Bay Trail, including interpretive signage, a turf lawn, a fitness and natural play area, seating, and bike racks.

Project Site

Site History

The project site is located along Richmond's south shoreline, which was filled in the 1920s with dredged material from the deepening of the Santa Fe Canal. In January 1941, the Kaiser Richmond Shipyards transformed the south shoreline, including the project site, into one of the West Coast's most vital wartime industrial centers. During World War II, the Kaiser Shipyards constructed more ships for the armed forces than any other American shipyard.² The shipyards closed at the end of World War II, and historic aerial imagery shows that the site has been largely vacant or used for parking or storage purposes since the shipyards were demolished.

Existing Conditions (Exhibits 1-3)

The existing 4.92-acre site is currently a vacant lot with several small remnant structures from its time as a shipyard and has remained undeveloped since the 1980s. Most of the existing site is covered by concrete and ruderal vegetation and fronts directly onto an existing segment of the Bay Trail. The site is separated from the Bay Trail by a chain link fence and does not offer any public access. The site is in a transition area between the water-related industrial and port uses of the Santa Fe Channel and the largely residential Marina Bay. Recent nearby development has included lighter industrial and commercial uses. The shoreline of the site is a subgrade "seawall" dike, armored with large stone riprap visible from the surface. Public access is available adjacent to the site, including the San Francisco Bay Trail to the south and Lucretia Edwards Park to the east; both sites owned and maintained by the City of Richmond. Lucretia Edwards Park features viewing areas with interpretive panels describing Richmond's World War II shipbuilding history, restrooms, bench seating oriented toward the water, a civic plaza with a memorial to Lucretia Edwards, terraced sea steps, and lawn area. The National Park Service owns and maintains the parcel directly west of the site, which houses the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historic Park and Visitor Center.

With nearby ferry and bus transit and the San Francisco Bay Trail, the site is connecting into regional transportation systems. The Richmond Ferry Terminal is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the project site, where a WETA ferry route connects Richmond to downtown San Francisco. Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the south shoreline and the rest of the city has historically been limited, due to barriers such as Interstate 580 (I-580) and rail infrastructure, although a continuous Class I segment of the Bay Trail runs from the Ferry Terminal past the project site around Marina Bay and beyond. North of the Ferry Terminal, the Bay Trail joins the city's bicycle network on Harbour Way South. Only one public transit line serves the project vicinity; AC Transit bus 74 connects the Ferry Terminal and Marina Bay to central Richmond, San Pablo, and El Sobrante.

² Richmond Bay Specific Plan. City of Richmond, 2016.

Planning Context

There are several amenities and services such as ferry transit, parks and trails, the Bay shoreline, and community anchor institutions within the vicinity of the project site that have led it to being identified in several Richmond planning documents as well as in regional planning efforts.

Richmond General Plan

The [Richmond General Plan 2030](#), designates the site area as High-Intensity Mixed-Use (Major Activity Center). The surrounding Marina Bay area is characterized by open space and low- to medium-density residential. The site, as part of a Major Activity Center, is meant to be a pedestrian- and transit-friendly community hub with mixed-use and higher density development in addition to streets with wide sidewalks, and public spaces that are welcoming to pedestrians and transit riders. The general plan details this area further and provides land use and urban form recommendations, including an emphasis on generously landscaped setbacks to enhance visual and physical connections to the waterfront and integration of transit-oriented development principles.

Richmond Bay Specific Plan

The [Richmond Bay Specific Plan](#), finalized in December of 2016, provides a stakeholder-driven framework for development along a 320-acre portion of Richmond Bay. While the specific plan does not include the site itself, it did identify the site and water frontage as an “asset” in the planning process (Figure 1.3, p. 21). The site is also identified as one of several potential complete neighborhoods within the specific plan, in which local nodes of activity and amenities such as transit are located close together. Marina Way South, on the eastern edge of the proposed development, is also identified as a key transit corridor and connection to the waterfront for Richmond residents and visitors.

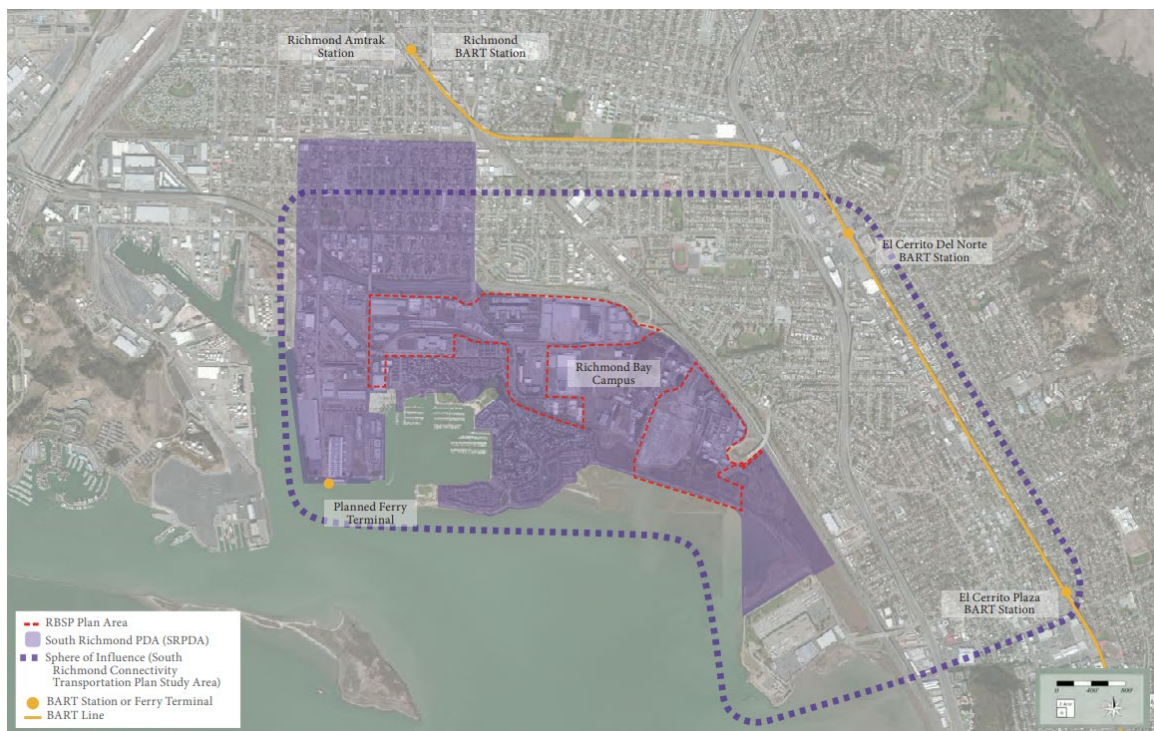


Figure 1: Richmond Bay Specific Plan Area in the context of South Richmond Priority Development Area

Plan Bay Area 2050 – South Richmond Priority Development Area

The [South Richmond Priority Development Area](#) (SRPDA) encompasses 1,350 acres of shoreline stretching from the Port of Richmond and the Ferry Terminal at the historic Ford Building/Craneway Pavilion to the west, and extending north across I-580 into the South Richmond neighborhood between South Ohio Street, 23rd Street, and Harbour Street. The SRPDA is one of more than 100 sites identified by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) for focused growth and development as part of [Plan Bay Area](#). By designating the area as a Priority Development Area, Plan Bay Area aims to promote mixed-use development while improving transportation connections, taking advantage of existing infrastructure and amenities to create a more vibrant, accessible community.

South Richmond Shoreline Special Area Plan

BCDC adopted the [South Richmond Shoreline Special Area Plan](#) (SAP) in 1977, and it was last amended in 1987. The purpose of the SAP was to align local and regional priorities for the Richmond waterfront to balance conservation and development concerns. The SAP identifies the project site as part of the Santa Fe Sub-Area and part of the Richmond Port Priority Use Area, and policies support the continued use of the area for water-related industrial and port uses. Note that subsequent amendments to the San Francisco Bay Plan and the San Francisco Bay Area Seaport Plan removed the Port Priority Use designation from this site in 1988.

Richmond Wellness Trail

The Richmond Wellness Trail project will construct a 4-mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor linking downtown Richmond to the Richmond shoreline, funded through a partnership with the City of Richmond and Trust for Public Land's Parks for People – Bay Area Program. The Richmond Wellness Trail will run along the eastern edge of the site along Marina Way South, providing further public access amenities and is scheduled to begin construction in the first quarter of 2026.

Travel Safe Richmond

Richmond recently adopted [Travel Safe Richmond](#), a Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) in 2022, with the goal of equitably improving safety and experience for all users. The plan evaluates all streets and corridors through safety metrics such as collisions, unsafe speeds, use of traffic signs and signals, and pedestrian and bike injury occurrence. The plan then presents countermeasures to improve networks of roads that have high rates of injury and crashes. Marina Way South leading up to the Site is identified as an area for connection improvement via the Richmond Wellness Trail. It is also part of the bicycle high injury network as well as vehicle collisions for ages 15-24.

Sea Level Rise (Exhibits 6, 10)

For tidally driven coastal flooding conditions, the proponent's analysis considered mean high water (MHW = 5.12), mean higher high water (MHHW = 7.0), mid-century base flood elevation (BFE 2050 = 14.1), and end-of-century base flood elevation (BFE 2100 = 16.0).

The FEMA base flood elevation (BFE) along the San Francisco Bay fronting this property is 13 feet using the NAVD88 datum. The lowest finished floor elevation is at Lot 12 and is set at 17.65 feet. The project proponent's analysis shows that sea level may rise as much as 3 feet by 2100, resulting in a BFE of 16.0

feet. The existing elevations of the San Francisco Bay Trail range from 13 to 15 feet and are not proposed to be raised at this time. For an adaptation strategy, the project proponent proposes to work with the Commission in the future to authorize either raising the grade of the San Francisco Bay Trail, expanding the elevated shoreline path adjacent to the private housing, or other design to be reviewed and approved by the Commission that provides equivalent experience and services. It is noted that currently, all buildings, as well as the public pedestrian path parallel to the Bay Trail, are designed to remain above the projected end-of-century sea levels.

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 communities in which the Bay Plan’s Environmental Justice and Social Equity policies may apply. 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 that is identified as having Low social vulnerability, with only high percentiles (70th or above) for the following indicators: disabled and very low income. The area is also listed by the UC Berkeley Displacement Typology (2017) as experiencing stable and moderate/mixed income. Because this area serves as access to the waterfront and is adjacent to transit coming from the larger Richmond area, it should be noted that surrounding the immediate Census block, there are areas identified as having Highest social vulnerability and Highest contamination vulnerability. The block is also ranked as having lower contamination vulnerability than surrounding census blocks, with a CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (a statewide pollution burden assessment) score of 75 out of 100.

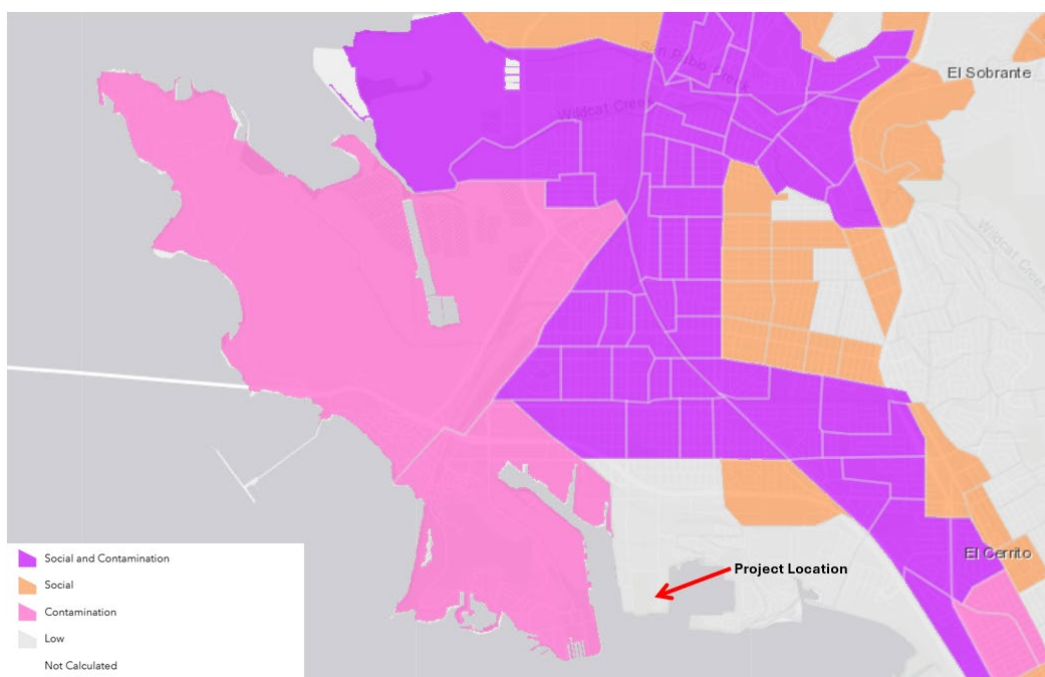


Figure 2: Community Vulnerability Map

Proposed Project

Project Description (Exhibits 3-9 and 11)

The project will construct 70 three-story wood-framed single-family residential buildings with 30 accessory dwelling units on a 4.92-acre site. The site is subdivided into 70 lots with an average lot size of approximately 30 feet wide and 60 feet deep long, four proposed streets, and four alleyways. The development includes a total of 154 in-garage and surface parking spaces. New underground utilities, detention basins, sidewalks, and landscaping within the development are also provided. As currently designed, 12 of the private residences (approximately 5,444 square feet) are located within BCDC's 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction.

The proposed plan seeks to link to the character of the surrounding area, and includes the following public access features:

- A 5-foot-wide, approximately 360-foot-long **public pedestrian path** along the frontage of the homes facing the Bay that connects to a 7-foot-wide, approximately 85-foot-long accessible path that leads to the public sidewalk at the Marina Way South cul-de-sac.
- A centrally located 1,276-square-foot **viewing plaza** featuring 18-foot-wide concrete seating steps and walls that will include public art and interpretive information to be coordinated with the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historic Park.
- Approximately 865 square feet of drought tolerant **turf area** to support informal seating and play.
- A 645-square-foot **shoreline plaza seating area** at the southeastern corner of the site, with picnic tables, a drinking fountain, waste receptacles, and bike racks.
- An approximately 822-square-foot nature inspired **fitness and informal natural play area** adjacent to the shoreline plaza seating area.
- Approximately 8,589 square feet of coastal scrub **landscape areas**, including grasses, perennials, and native no-mow planting along the shoreline.
- Outside of BCDC's jurisdiction, the project features an approximately 900-square-foot **fitness node** and approximately 10,000 square feet of landscaping to support and enhance the future Richmond Wellness Trail along Marina Way South.
- Outside of BCDC's jurisdiction, 14 designated **Public Shore parking** spaces (including two ADA spaces) are proposed near the cul-de-sac at Marina Park South.

Community Engagement

The project proponents held three meetings in the fall of 2023 with three groups, including the National Park Service (NPS), Trust for Public Land, and the residents of the Marina Bay Neighborhood Council (MBNC). As a result of these meetings, changes were made to the frontage to make it more inviting. Project proponents have noted that based on these meetings and their analysis, they know of no environmental justice concerns immediately adjacent to site.

Table: Summary of Engagement and Resulting Changes

Stakeholder	Recommendations and Changes
K. Lynn Berry, the Superintendent of the Rosie the Riveter National Homefront Monument	<p>Importance of public access area along the shoreline could enhance the interpretation and tell the story of the WWII Homefront effort on this important site.</p> <p>Interpretation and art will continue the Homefront story of the Kaiser Shipyards and will also illuminate changes to the San Francisco Bay shoreline from pre-history through wartime to the present. Renowned historian Donna Graves, who has been part of the development of the National Park and the Homefront interpretive story from the beginning, will be involved in the development of the interpretation story.</p> <p>Incorporation of “History and Hope: Interpreting the Roots of Our Climate Crisis,” for the National Park Service to expand strategies for bringing the climate emergency into interpretive programs along shoreline.</p>
Marina Bay Neighborhood Council residents	<p>No clear public access suggestions from meeting but housing density and traffic were discussed.</p> <p>Most residents were supportive of housing in the area and the scale of the homes. Some encouraged the team to develop a <u>more dense</u> project to provide additional housing. However, the traffic increase from a denser project was not supported. The residents noted that traffic from pick-up and drop-off at the adjacent school would need to be studied and addressed.</p>
Trust for Public Land	<p>Discussion of Richmond Wellness Trail, the proposed 4-mile corridor connecting downtown Richmond to Bay Trail and several nearby amenities such as the Kaiser Medical Facility, Richmond BART/AMTRAK Station, schools, parks, the city’s waterfront, and the Richmond Ferry Terminal.</p> <p>Adding a fitness node on Marina Way South to support the Wellness Trail.</p>

Approval & Construction Timeline

The City of Richmond is not a co-permittee for the project. The project is currently going through the pre-application review process for entitlements with the City, including CEQA certification. The project team is scheduling the City of Richmond Design Review Board process concurrently with the BCDC Design Review Board review, aiming to get approvals in early 2025. A BCDC permit application (2024.004.00) has been submitted but has not yet been filed as complete. A construction schedule has yet to be determined.

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; Climate Change; and Environmental Justice and Social Equity.

Public Access Policies (2,6,7,8,10). 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.”

Public Access Policy No. 6 states that “public access should be sited, designed, managed and maintained to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding.” 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.”

Recreation Policies (3, 5). Recreation Policy No. 3 states that 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.” Recreation Policy No. 5 further designates that, “wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged”.

Appearance, Design and Scenic Views Policies (2, 14). These 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 emphasize “shoreline developments should be built in clusters, leaving open area around them to permit more frequent views of the Bay.”

Climate Change (5). Climate Change Policy No. 5 states that that “wherever feasible and appropriate, effective, innovative sea level rise adaptation approaches should be encouraged.”

Environmental Justice and Social Equity (3,4,5). Policy No. 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...” In addition, Policy No. 4 notes 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”.

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”.

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 development considering the public access objectives found in the Commission’s Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed 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. Does the project design enhance the user's access to and experience of the shoreline? What other opportunities are there to build connections or further improve existing public access as part of this project?
2. Does the project as designed provide sufficient capacity for future adaptation strategies? What can be incorporated into the current design to facilitate shoreline change in the future?
3. Do the landscaping and fitness program along the east edge of the development read as a public connection to the shoreline? What design recommendations can you provide to encourage public use for these areas?
4. Does the Board have recommendations on the proposed plant and materials palettes?