

Updated City Council, Planning Board and Other Community Comments

January 20th City Council Workshop - Discussion of Development Concept for Site A.

At the January 20th meeting, the City Council raised a number of issues and questions regarding the Site A development. A summary of those comments and staff's initial responses is provided below. In many cases, additional review or analysis will be required by APP or staff before a definitive response can be provided.

- Opportunities for creating unexpected and surprising public pathways and streets (e.g., non-linear curving features or paths) consistent with the “look and feel” of military towns should be explored as part of the site planning process.

Response: *Staff agrees. In fact, one of the aspects of the current site plan proposed by APP that staff appreciates the most is the curvilinear street around portions of the ellipse south of Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway (RAMP) and the pathways proposed through the “urban park” area that follows the non-linear remnants of the former railroad alignment. APP and its planning team incorporated additional opportunities for unexpected non-linear pathways consistent with former military towns.*

- The proposed concept offers a significant amount of connectivity between the adjacent Alameda neighborhoods and Site A, which invites the rest of the Alameda community into the proposed new development.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The plan proposes an exciting mix of job, open space and housing uses.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The reuse of existing buildings within the plan is a positive feature of the plan.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Historic resources and existing features, including the existing jet should be preserved.

Response: *Staff agrees. In fact, one of the major components of the current site plan proposed by APP that greatly improves upon the City's Town Center Plan is the preservation of the majority of the ellipse south of RAMP, remnants of the former railroad alignment, and a significant amount of existing buildings. These elements help to preserve the historic character of the site.*

- The elliptical entry along the extension of RAMP within Site A should be maintained.

Response: *The City's Master Infrastructure Plan (MIP) and Town Center Plan propose that the extension of RAMP within Site A be a straight grid connection between the existing RAMP corridor outside of Alameda Point and the Seaplane Lagoon because it is planned as the primary transit entry corridor into the entire Alameda Point property and includes exclusive, traffic mitigating, transit lanes. It is important to maintain a fast and direct transit route along RAMP connecting Alameda Point and Webster Street. One of the major improvements of the APP plan over the Town Center Plan is the preservation of the majority of the ellipse, including the existing tree and plane in their current locations, without impacting the straight exclusive transit lanes along RAMP.*

- The proposed development should promote sustainable development and reuse of existing materials.

Response: *Staff agrees. The MIP and Town Center Plan mandate sustainable practices including significant water quality improvements and the reuse of existing materials from the demolition of existing streets and buildings. APP's infrastructure and planning teams are incorporating these and other sustainable measures into the Site A project.*

- Concerns were expressed about the high ratio of rental-to-ownership housing (75/25) being proposed for Site A.

Response: *The appropriate mix of rental-to-for-sale housing is highly dependent upon market conditions and can only be determined at a future date closer to construction. Also, staff believes there are important reasons to maintain a high level of rental housing, including the following: (1) major commercial users and employers are more likely to locate at Alameda Point if a significant amount of high-quality nearby rental housing is provided for their workforce; (2) rental housing has a greater potential to attract residents who do not drive and use alternative modes of transit; (3) current market prices for condominiums in the local Alameda market do not support the high cost of the land and infrastructure at Alameda Point; and (4) very little market rate rental housing has been constructed in Alameda over the last several decades.*

- A greater percentage of affordable housing should be considered.

Response: *The Site A project is building 25 percent of its units as affordable housing. This is 66.7 percent more than the City's existing inclusionary requirement. In general, affordable housing requires significant financial subsidies from private and public sources. Increasing the number of affordable housing units even further will have a significant impact on the financial feasibility of the project and will force trade-offs that will diminish the provision of other amenities (e.g., parks and infrastructure) without additional public funding or a greater total number of housing units.*

- Cost estimates of a Seaplane Lagoon ferry terminal should adequately address the need and cost of dredging of the Seaplane Lagoon.

Response: *Staff agrees and has already engaged a marine engineer in assessing the need to dredge the Seaplane Lagoon for a ferry terminal and any associated dredging costs now and into the future.*

- Contamination within certain storm drain lines within Site A should be disclosed to the developer.

Response: *Staff agrees and has disclosed this information to APP.*

- The City's long-term interests should be protected regarding environmental liability, especially as development occurs.

Response: *Staff agrees and will include appropriate insurance and indemnity clauses within conveyance documents with the Navy and the DDA with APP.*

- The Planning Board should be made aware of concerns expressed about the housing development being planned for the West End and the Northern Waterfront and its impact to the local transportation system.

Response: *Staff conveyed this concern to the Planning Board at its meeting on January 26, 2015.*

- The long-term fiscal impacts of new development should be analyzed, including an analysis of the sensitivity of the impacts to changes in the mix of rental and ownership housing.

Response: *While such an analysis has already been done for Alameda Point, changing market conditions make it prudent to revisit this issue now. In short, staff agrees and has tasked its economic consultant with updating the previous fiscal impact analysis that was prepared for Alameda Point to evaluate the fiscal impacts of the Site A development on the City's General Fund. Additionally, staff has asked its consultant to assess the sensitivity of the fiscal impacts to changes in the mix of rental and ownership housing. The draft results of this analysis will be presented to the City Council as part of the Site A status report planned for the April 21st City Council meeting.*

January 26th Planning Board Workshop - Discussion of Development Concept for Site A

Major comments raised by the Planning Board and community and staff's initial responses are as follows:

- The linear park needs additional thought to make sure it is a useable, attractive public space and not a wide median circled by roads and cars. Consideration should be given to a one-way couplet around the park.

Response: *The APP Team revised the design consistent with this suggestion.*

- Project phasing should carefully consider and describe the timing and relationship between Phase 0, new commercial development, and the reuse of existing buildings for commercial uses.

Response: *The APP Team revised the Development Plan to explain that the reuse of existing buildings, while shown as “Phase 3,” will be marketed and potentially occupied as early as Phase 1 depending on market demand.*

- Town Center “Site A” needs a better name.

Response: *The APP Team is working on a better name than “Site A” for the project.*

- Consideration should be given to shifting the location of the stand-alone multi-family affordable housing site farther west away from Main Street.

Response: *The APP Team revised the Development Plan consistent with this comment and moved the affordable housing project closer to the center of the project.*

- Civic and public uses in and around Site A need to be better articulated and defined and public/private partnerships for these types of uses should be explored.

Response: *The APP Team created a graphic to depict both existing and proposed civic and public uses in and around Site A.*

- Block sizes need to be carefully considered to ensure that blocks are not too big per the Town Center Plan.

Response: *The APP Team revised the design consistent with this comment.*

- The south side of RAMP and a small section of the north side needs to be improved to create a better “street wall,” per the Town Center Plan.

Response: *The APP Team revised and improved the design to create a better “street wall.”*

- The relationships and relative massing of buildings at key locations, such as within the Urban Park District, should be carefully considered and articulated.

Response: *The APP Team is creating graphics and models to better illustrate these relationships.*

- The Seaplane Lagoon should be easily accessible by the public, not just to view, but to access with personal watercraft and sailboats.

Response: *The APP Team is working on ways to achieve this as part of Phase 0 and as part of the long term physical improvements to the waterfront.*

- The re-configuration of the streets and spaces in and around the central plaza with shared spaces for pedestrians, bicycles, and cars is a positive change.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The reuse of existing buildings in a number of locations is a positive improvement to the Town Center Plan.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- While opportunities for non-linear pedestrian pathways should be explored further, rectilinear streets are important for continuation of the City's existing street grid and maximizing the potential for convenient and fast transit.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Images of proposed housing types should be provided and the current images of Granville Island provided as inspiration for the commercial uses are positive.

Response: *The APP Team is revising the Development Plan to include images of proposed housing types.*

- The proposed development concept respects view corridors.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The proposed development concept does a good job connecting parks and open spaces with both the living spaces and the waterfront.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

January 29th Community Open House at Building 14 at Alameda Point

Key feedback received by the community includes:

General Design / Questions

- “Need a legend on the drawings;”
- Several people were confused about axial view from RAMP to San Francisco because the current entry road angle throws them off. A couple thought it might be helpful to dot in the existing entry drive and "green" w/ jet to help them orient themselves;
- A couple of people did not like the town center name but liked Seaplane Station or Seaplane Plaza (almost anything that referenced seaplanes) with an associated desire to have a seaplane on display somewhere;
- People like retaining the jet at the entry green;
- One request to continue the railroad tracks over to the entry green/jet area;
- “Are you going to keep the train tracks?”
- “I really like the thoughtfulness of the plan;”
- “What kind of tenants will be in the commercial spaces?”
- “Will you keep the plane?”
- Would like to see the illustrative plan inserted into a Google Earth aerial of the entire Alameda Point. Also would like a "you are here" identification on plan for future public meetings to help them orient themselves; and
- Label all streets and identify existing landmarks or tenants, building numbers and various product types.

Open/Public Space

- Several questions about the nature of the plaza but all seemed to support the anticipated approach and a couple of people liked that the buildings and road got closer to the water than the precise plan;
- “I’d like a 300’ public park around the entire seaplane lagoon;”
- RAMP design should conform with already approved Cross Alameda Bike Trail designs;

- Two people liked the idea of a major attraction like London's big wheel (London Eye);
- Need to put more thought into dog parks. The existing ones on Alameda are tiny;
- I wish there were more trees;
- Put a public park on the east side of Seaplane Lagoon in between the street/buildings and the waterfront; and
- Request for a better and more detailed understanding of the size and functionality of the linear park.

Affordable Housing

- “Where will the affordable housing be?”
- Density/Heights/Housing
- “What are the heights of the proposed buildings?”
- “Density at the water makes sense;”
- Several questions about building height and number of stories. One person was disappointed that the tallest buildings might be taller than the existing hangers;
- A couple of members of the Planning Board liked the idea of shifting the townhomes south of RAMP directly adjacent to the entry green/jet and thought those units would be highly desirable; and
- “Density should be closer to Main Street so views of the water are not blocked.”

Transit/Parking

- “Where will the buses run?”
- “Where will the ferry terminal be?” Ferry Terminal should be close to office and retail uses;
- “Will the new ferry terminal replace the old one? Or, will there be two?”
- A couple of questions on where parking would be for retail, commercial buildings and larger events.

Other

- A few wanted to know who to contact regarding how to put down a deposit.

February 5th Historical Advisory Board to Discuss Development Concept for Site A.

The Historical Advisory Board provided the following general comments:

- The integration of existing buildings, railroad tracks and other features and structures from the former Naval Air Station Alameda (NAS Alameda) into the plan is a very good feature of the plan and will provide a good transition from Main Street through Site A to the NAS Alameda Historic District.

Response: Staff agrees.

- The design of new buildings and public open spaces on the taxiways in-front of Building 77 will require careful consideration to ensure compatibility with the NAS Alameda Historic District and create successful public open space. In general, building heights should step down from Building 77 to the water's edge at the Seaplane Lagoon.

Response: Staff agrees.

- Courtesy docks are essential to the success of the plan.

Response: Staff agrees.

- The straightening of RAMP will provide good views of the water and San Francisco.

Response: Staff agrees.

- Future drawings should include better legends and show the boundary of the Historic District.

Response: Staff agrees and the APP Team is updating its Development Plan with this information.

- It would be nice, but probably cost prohibitive to move the AMP Transfer Station at Main Street.

Response: Staff agrees.

- Future drawings should provide more information regarding the height of new buildings in relation to existing buildings.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP Team is updating its Development Plan with this information.*

February 12th Recreation and Park Commission to Discuss Development Concept for Site A

- Very receptive to the adaptive reuse concept for the overall plan for the project and open space component.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Really liked the three park districts idea and that each district will have its own character associated with it.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Would like to understand more clearly the distinguishing characteristics of how that translates visually and programmatically in next round of plan.

Response: *Staff agrees and APP is updating its Development Plan to address this comment.*

- Wanted to see playgrounds in neighborhood parks but also excited if there were more discovery/playful areas for kids in addition to traditional models in the neighborhood park area and in small pockets throughout project.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Liked cross fit station concept.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Liked idea of a small community garden in one of the neighborhood parks – agreed that perhaps there might be a connection with Alameda Collaborative youth programs and nursery.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Receptive to potential for craft and local manufacturing-oriented uses, jobs and place for local products and stores in urban park.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Liked APP's walkable community concepts.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Access to water is very important- liked boat access concept.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Accessibility for people and bikes is great, but also expressed concerned about car traffic in and out of the area.

Response: *The Alameda Point TDM Plan and Site A TDM Compliance Strategy helps to address these concerns.*

- Want to make sure the parks within the Development Plan are accessible for elderly and people with cars who want to drive to the parks.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The idea of engaging the community through the parks/open spaces was well received.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Liked APP's connectivity concepts.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Concern about future water shortage and continuing drought and want the new parks to address this issue through appropriate sustainable design and planting materials.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP Team will address this as part of the design of the parks and open spaces.*

- Very receptive to the possibility of developing a "youth conservation corps" that engages the entire youth community of Alameda similar to Presidio Trust model for youth stewardship and leadership development.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP Team is exploring this concept.*

- It is important to give attention to people with disabilities when designing the parks and open spaces.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- Idea to have Phase 1 develop all of the waterfront park not just piecemeal.

Response: *Staff and the APP Team agree that it is important to construct a portion of the waterfront park in Phase 1. In fact, the Term Sheet in the ENA states that APP will construct a \$5 million portion of the waterfront park in Phase 1. The waterfront park and associated flood protection improvements are some of the most expensive aspects of the Site A project. As a result, it is infeasible to construct additional waterfront park acreage in Phase 1 without reducing other infrastructure or park amenities in Phase 1 or obtaining outside public funding.*

- Supportive of the connection with bike trails on RAMP and Pan Am.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- There was a question on how the Bay Trail will fit into the trail system at Site A.

Response: *Yes, the Bay Trail is planned along the entire waterfront of Site A. In fact, the City received a letter from the San Francisco Bay Trail Project as part of the EIR supporting the City's Bay Trail plans.*

February 17th City Council Meeting to Discuss Update on Site A Development Plan

- Support for senior housing within the Eden Housing affordable project was expressed.

Response: *Staff agrees and one of Eden Housing's proposals includes a project consisting of both senior and family housing.*

- Support for family housing within the Eden Housing affordable project was expressed.

Response: *Staff agrees and one of Eden Housing's proposals includes a project consisting of both senior and family housing.*

- Provide an image in the Development Plan that shows the location of the Ferry Terminal relative to Site A.

Response: *Staff agrees and the Development Plan will be updated.*

- A concern was expressed that there will be too much open space that may not be used.

Response: Staff and the APP Team believe that the amount of open space currently being planned in the Site A Development Plan can be designed and programmed in a way to maximize use.

- Design of affordable and market rate rental housing needs to be high quality.

Response: Staff agrees.

- Provide more detail on the commercial aspects of the Development Plan.

Response: Staff agrees and tonight's staff report addresses this issue.

- Truck routes should be shown on the Development Plan.

Response: Staff agrees and the Development Plan will be updated with an image showing the truck routes per the Master Infrastructure Plan.

- Provide more information on Infrastructure Financing Districts.

Response: The State Legislature passed two bills [Infrastructure and Revitalization Financing Districts (Assembly Bill 229) and Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (Senate Bill 628)] which allow local governments, including the City of Alameda, if it so elects, to create Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFD) to finance infrastructure costs and affordable housing related to military base and redevelopment projects. IFDs allow for the creation of a property tax increment financing district that re-directs the City's General Fund share of property tax from properties within the IFD (above a base amount) towards financing specific infrastructure improvements related to an eligible project, including utilities, streets, parks, affordable housing, etc. IFDs are similar to former redevelopment areas and related redevelopment tax increment financing.

The legislation details an extensive public process that has to be followed in order to implement an IFD. Additionally, other property tax entities (i.e., counties and special districts) can provide additional property tax to the IFD at those entities' discretion unlike the former redevelopment structure that automatically re-directed growth in property tax from these entities to local governments for redevelopment purposes. As a result, the property tax increment amount automatically accruing to a local government through an IFD is significantly less than under the former redevelopment program. For instance, the City of Alameda used to obtain approximately 80 cents on the dollar from the former redevelopment program for both infrastructure and affordable housing and through the current IFDs could at the most obtain approximately 26 cents on the dollar (the City's General Fund share of every property tax dollar).

IFDs are a potential source of funds for the financing of infrastructure improvements at Alameda Point. Given the City's fiscal neutrality policy, any impacts to the General Fund due to re-directing property tax revenue from properties at the base away from the General Fund towards the financing of infrastructure would have to be mitigated. It is not clear whether the amount of funds generated from an IFD would be sufficient to offset these potential impacts. Further analysis would need to be conducted before IFDs would be recommended for Alameda Point.

- Provide density bonus waiver letter for Site A from APP and legal justification for waiver of Charter provision.

Response: *The density bonus letter for Site A from APP is attached to this staff report and the legal justification will be provided under separate cover by the City's Attorney's Office.*

- The proximity of the buildings to water on Block 5 should be reviewed.

Response: *The APP Team will review the distances between the buildings and the water on Block 5.*

- The APP Team should consider different architects for different buildings on Blocks 7 and 8 to promote architectural diversity.

Response: *Staff agrees that architectural diversity is very important to the success of the Site A project. The Term Sheet of the ENA highlights this issue and staff is negotiating appropriate language regarding this issue in the DDA with APP.*

- Provide a 3-D model or side view of existing buildings and new buildings.

Response: *The APP Team is creating graphics and models to better illustrate the relationship of the buildings at key locations within Site A.*

- Provide articulated rooflines for the buildings so that they are not all at the same height.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- How are rents on rental housing controlled?

Response: *All of the rental and for-sale affordable housing units at Alameda Point will be required through enforceable contracts to ensure rents and home prices remain affordable in perpetuity. The market rate housing planned for*

Alameda Point will be regulated in the same fashion as the rest of the market rate housing in the City.

- Demarcate the NAS Alameda Historic District on the Development Plan.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP Team is updating its Development Plan to address this comment.*

- New features and construction should be harmonious with existing buildings.

Response: *Staff agrees.0.*

- It is important to understand the transportation and TDM strategy for Site A at Alameda Point.

Response: *Staff agrees and tonight's staff report provides significant information regarding the Alameda Point TDM Plan and how Site A is required to comply with that TDM Plan. Additional information will be provided at subsequent public hearings as well.*

February 23rd Planning Board Meeting to Discuss Update on Site A Development Plan

- The Site A development project should address universal design issues for people with disabilities.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The interface of development along the frontage of Main Street should be addressed, including at the corners of RAMP and Main Street.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP design is being updated.*

- There are still questions about the utility and configuration of the greenway within Site A.

Response: *The APP team is analyzing the greenway and will be updating its plans to respond to these issues.*

- The APP team should provide unique and high-quality architecture and possibly require different architects for different blocks.

Response: *Staff agrees and the DDA will address this issue.*

- More detail should be provided about what is occurring around the shared space at the corner of RAMP and Ferry Point Road.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The look and feel of development along the southern boundary of Site A should be explained and discussed in greater detail.

Response: *Staff agrees and the APP design is being updated to help explain the interface.*

February 25th Joint Transportation Commission and Planning Board Meeting to Discuss Update on Site A Development Plan and Site TDM Compliance Strategy

- The Alameda Point TDM Plan is a good plan that both the Planning Board and Transportation Commission reviewed and worked hard on last year.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- The initial presentation by APP on its Site A TDM Compliance Strategy looks like a good start and the Planning Board and Transportation Commission look forward to seeing more detail.

Response: *Staff agrees.*

- There is an interest in understanding how the Site A TDM Compliance Strategy will evolve over time and how APP will commit to future improvements and changes to the Plan if it isn't successful.

Response: *Staff agrees.*