

Case File Number – N/A

March 24, 2004

#.	Location:	Estuary Policy Plan Area – Waterfront Pathway
	Proposal:	Review of Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility and Design Guideline Study
	Applicant:	City of Oakland with participation from the Port of Oakland, the Coastal Conservancy and the San Francisco Bay Trail Project
	Contact Person/Phone Number:	Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris – Project Manager, Waterfront Open Space 510-238-1628
	Owner:	Various entities along the Estuary shoreline
	Case File Number:	<u>NONE AT THIS TIME</u> – The Waterfront Trail and Design Guideline Study is available for review at the Planning Department Offices
	Planning Permits Required:	The implementation of the trail may require future discretionary actions along portions of the alignment
	General Plan:	Estuary Policy Plan
	Zoning:	Varied
	Environmental Determination:	Not applicable
	Historic Status:	Segments of the trail may be aligned adjacent to historic structures
	Service Delivery District:	Affects metro, 1,3,4,5 and 6
	City Council District:	2, 3, 5 and 7
	Status:	The Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility and Design Guidelines Study was published in September 2003
	Action to be Taken:	To review and consider the major findings and recommendations in the Study and solicit any public comments pertaining to the Study or the implementation of the Waterfront Trail.
	Finality of Decision:	<i>No final action will be taken at this meeting; it is intended as an opportunity to review and comment about the major findings and recommendations of the study.</i>
	For Further Information:	Contact case planner at Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris at (510) 238-1628 or by email at kjferis@oaklandnet.com

SUMMARY

In September 2003, EDAW, Inc. concluded a one year study undertaken by the City to understand the feasibility of constructing the bay trail along the edge of the Oakland Estuary.

Components of the study include identifying property ownerships, conducting research, property value estimates, performing environmental site assessments, developing preliminary design and engineering standards for pathway segments, completing site specific planning on selected opportunity sites, design and production of design standards for the continuous alignment of the Bay Trail on the waterfront and development of strategies for implementation and maintenance of pathway segments in connection with Estuary Open Space project recommendations from the Estuary Policy Plan.

The objective of this project was to produce a detailed feasibility study, site plan and design standards for development of a Waterfront Promenade/Bay Trail alignment along the Oakland Estuary shoreline wherever possible and connections to an inland route where this alignment is determined not feasible. It is desired that design standards developed under this project will also be applicable to existing sections of the waterfront promenade/Bay Trail alignment through Oakland. Results of the feasibility study and design guidelines completed in September 2003 conclude that it is possible to align the Bay Trail along the waterfront.

On November 5, 2002, a \$198,250,000 general obligation bond measure titled “Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks” (Measure DD) was approved by the voters of Oakland to implement a variety of parks, clean water protection and youth recreation projects. Of the \$198,250,000 available for capital projects identified in the bond measure, \$53,000,000 is set aside for the Oakland Waterfront. Implementation of waterfront projects using Measure DD funds is now being initiated with the first projects beginning the design process.

BACKGROUND

In 2002 the City of Oakland received a \$400,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy and the Bay Trail Project for the purpose of completing a study to understand the feasibility of constructing the bay trail along the edge of the Oakland Estuary.

EDAW, Inc. was selected in May of 2002 to lead an interdisciplinary team in identifying property ownerships, conducting research, property value estimates, performing environmental site assessments, developing preliminary design and engineering standards for pathway segments, completing site specific planning on selected opportunity sites, designing standards for the continuous alignment of the Bay Trail on the waterfront and developing strategies for implementation and maintenance of pathway segments in connection with Estuary Open Space project recommendations from the Estuary Policy Plan. The Oakland Waterfront Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines were completed in September 2003.

On November 5, 2002, Oakland overwhelmingly passed with 80% voter approval the “Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks,” a \$198,250,000 general obligation bond measure. The measure allows the City to sell bonds in order to raise funds for a variety of parks, clean water protection and youth recreation projects. This show of significant local commitment demonstrated by a successful bond measure is integral to the City’s capability to obtain outside funding by ably demonstrating matching funds and community support. The projects were designated in the following five categories:

- I. Lake Merritt restoration and water quality improvements
- II. Estuary waterfront access, parks and clean up
- III. Lake Merritt-to-Oakland Estuary connection (Lake Merritt Channel)
- IV. Youth and public recreation facilities
- V. Creeks and waterways restoration.

This report focuses specifically on the second category identified in the Measure DD bond measure text pertaining to estuary waterfront access, parks and cleanup. The bond measure text is included as Attachment B of this staff report.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Key Gaps in the Oakland Waterfront Trail

The most significant barriers to creating a continuous waterfront path along the Oakland Estuary are located between Coast Guard Island Bridge and East Creek, over two miles in length. The design and feasibility study includes preliminary property appraisals to estimate the cost of obtaining property or easements in this area, which is characterized by private ownership of property abutting the Estuary. There are many existing industries, such as Con-Agra, and buildings directly abutting the water’s edge. This area includes the Kennedy Tract and Tidewater districts. The high cost of property acquisition and, in some cases, site clearance and/or cleanup presents a major challenge for completion of the path. The bridge crossings in the area also present additional challenges and create design issues that must be cooperatively agreed to by a multitude of regulatory agencies.

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) owns property between East Creek and High Street that is currently used for container storage. Ultimately, EBRPD anticipates developing a parkway segment and path that would extend the existing regional shoreline from the south.

Oak to Ninth

The Port of Oakland is currently working with a development partner to prepare a development plan for the Oak-to-Ninth area, as called for in the Estuary Policy Plan. The pathway through this area is expected to include a key 1.5-mile segment of the waterfront and related open space projects. Actual completion of this portion of the path depends on the actual components of the development plan being proposed. A preliminary submittal of the proposed Oak to Ninth Plan is expected sometime in 2004.

Acquisition, Development and Permitting Requirements

The primary cost of creating a waterfront path is likely to be property acquisition and site clearance costs, especially within the Kennedy Tract and Tidewater areas between the Coast Guard Island Bridge and East Creek. The design and feasibility study examined and provided recommendations to the following issues:

- Site Planning and Design: Exact location and type of pathway desired for this segment.
- Parcel-by-parcel analysis (ownership, cost, site constraints, etc.)
- Analysis of legal mechanisms available to acquire property, including a determination of whether easements can be obtained to construct pathway segments in some areas, or whether property acquisition or eminent domain would be needed.
- Analysis of legal and financial issues related to toxic cleanup for properties potentially acquired by the City.
- Role of relevant permitting agencies such as the Bay Conservation and Development Corporation (BCDC), the United States Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board and Alameda County Flood Control.
- Estimated costs involved.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The objective of this project was to produce a detailed feasibility study, site plan and design standards for development of a Waterfront Promenade/Bay Trail alignment along the Oakland Estuary shoreline wherever possible and connections to an inland route where this alignment is determined not feasible. It is intended that design standards developed under this project will also be applicable to existing sections of the waterfront promenade/Bay Trail alignment through Oakland. Results of the feasibility study and design guidelines concluded that it is possible to align the Bay Trail along the waterfront. The project is divided into the following topic areas and recommendations:

6.6 Miles of Trail – The Oakland Bay Trail will run parallel to the shoreline where possible and be designed and constructed as a floating walkway system under each of the bridge crossings.

Given the variety of existing and proposed developments and land uses along the waterfront, the trail will vary in width depending on the availability of adjacent lands. At minimum the trail width will be:

1. 20 Feet where separated paths can be accommodated and
2. 15 Feet where the right of way limits the path width to a single multipurpose path
3. 12 Feet where elevated structure is required

10 Opportunity Sites

Ten concept studies for distinct parks proposed along the Estuary were completed to build upon the general recommendations found in the Estuary Policy Plan.

Estuary Park

Estuary Park is at the location that marks the confluence of the Lake Merritt channel and the estuary. It is also an open space proximate to downtown that is large enough to accommodate community gatherings and become the premier waterfront gathering space for Oaklanders.

The plan outlines two alternatives for this park.

In the first alternative, the existing park is redesigned to provide a simple yet elegant space that connects to the water and assumes that the grocery outlet and its associated parking will be replaced by housing.

In the second alternative, the grocery store site is replaced by a large open lawn. Both plans incorporate the following design elements:

- Elevated land forms to highlight views and buffer adjacent residential communities
- Connections between channel and park
- Better access to the waters edge
- Integration of the Jack London Aquatic Center into a “campus” setting
- Integration of elements of Halprin plan implemented in the late 1970’s

Brooklyn Basin / Crowley Site

The Brooklyn Basin site is a vacant parcel that sits between the motels along Brooklyn Basin, and is currently a major gap in the continuity of the trail. The important site provides commuters on I-880, BART riders and the neighborhood beyond with visual connection to the water and the trail. It is on an axis with 12th Street and 12th Avenue. A third of the site is earmarked for future retail/commercial development. The remaining two-thirds of the site will be designed as an open space. The shoreline is modified to provide a gently curving edge along the water. The edge will be restored with wetland plantings, which is mitigation for other sites where the trail must go over the water due to limited width along certain segments. The trail winds through the site connecting to the existing pier of the adjacent building. The area closest to the freeway will include low vegetation or turf. This space is designed as a visual amenity and as an entry point to the waterfront trail.

The connection to the adjacent neighborhood to the north is reinforced by providing unifying landscaping along the Embarcadero, land adjacent to the railroad right-of-way linking to the existing triangular park on East 8th Street.

Superfund Site

The skate park is proposed on a superfund site that is currently capped and unoccupied. The site is adjacent to the Livingston Pier and to the west of Coast Guard Island Bridge and Union Point Park. The space would function as a recreation space for teens and young adults and complement amenities to be offered at Union Point Park. Because of the capping, the site provides an opportunity to visually sculpt it with skateboard ramps. The trail will run along the edge of the water. The slope between the trail and skateboard park will be landscaped.

The adjacent Livingston Pier has buildings that are leased to a commercial diving company. In the long term, the existing building can be reused for commercial retail uses such as a café, providing for appropriate adjacent function to the skate park.

Cryer Site / Union Point Park Phase II

The Cryer site is adjacent to Union Point Park and is designated for future expansion of the park. There is an existing building on this site, which is proposed to be renovated for use as a community center as a part of the project. The remainder of the site will include parking and landscaping. The site contains ramps that connect to the water. The design concept proposes a series of sliding planes and terraces that connect to the water and provide a distinctively interesting edge to the site. Wood piers are proposed to extend out into the water providing viewing decks.

Park Street Triangle

The triangle at Park Street is intended to serve as a trailhead and a visual landmark at one of the gateways to the waterfront. In addition, it provides a sense of direction and focus for bicyclists on the Embarcadero. As Embarcadero veers away for the waterfront and joins Kennedy Street, it becomes a confusing route, especially as traffic from 23rd Avenue and Park Street converge towards the bridge.

The triangle provides visual relief for traffic in all directions. An open space at the triangle can help to simplify and alleviate traffic movements and circulation. It also provides a clear point of access connecting the waterfront trail for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

The triangle is designated to include simple landforms and a screened parking area, which would include bicycle lockers. The site can accommodate a retail use such as a café/coffee shop. The north end of the site will also include a gateway feature to reinforce the sense of entry to the waterfront.

Derby and Lancaster Street Mini Parks

There are two streets between the Park Street Bridge and the Fruitvale Bridge that terminate at the waterfront and provide a great opportunity for introducing pocket parks. These parks become viewing decks along the waterfront. The affected streets have right-of-way of eighty feet. These streets will need to accommodate some off street parking areas for loading, unloading and access to adjacent parcels. The Lancaster Street Park includes parking with specialty paving on either side. Tree lined walkways lead to the street terminus, which is landscaped. Wood piers extend the walkways over the water, again providing a viewing deck. The Derby Street Park is between the Oakland Museum Women's Board building and the proposed Cal Crew facility will be maintained from Derby Street. Parking and access to both buildings are provided from Derby Street. Specialty paving, landscaping and rows of trees define this space as it leads towards the water.

Tidewater Park

This parcel owned by the East Bay Regional Park District provides great views stretching from the San Francisco skyline to the San Leandro Bay and serves as the gateway to the Estuary as it joins the San Leandro Bay. It also marks the beginning of the marshland vegetation that continues to the east.

Although the City does not have ownership of this site, it is the City's hope to guide development by way of integrating design guidelines being recommended for the marshlands section of the waterfront trail. The design concept emphasizes overlooks to and beyond the water to take advantage of the views. The land forms are indicative of the flow of water and wind. A linear land form rises out of the grades to create an extended overlook area. Secondary land forms meander towards the water and imitate the flow of water. There are paths adjacent to the landforms that terminate as wood piers that extend gently over the water. The

length of the wood piers is purposely kept to a minimum to avoid interfering with the wetland vegetation. Drifts of trees are integrated in an informal, non-linear pattern to reflect the natural patterns of wind and water. Parking is provided at the north end of the site.

The access to the park off of Lesser Street and Tidewater will be landscaped to reinforce a sense of entry and provide clear access to the waterfront.

Oakport Park

The Estuary Policy Plan identifies the southern part of the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) parcel as open space. A part of this open space, Oakport Park, is located to the east of the East Creek Slough on the East Bay. Proposed landforms incorporated into the park design reflect those proposed for Tidewater Park and are designed to create an overlook onto the East Creek Slough. A gateway feature is included in part to mark the intersection of the watershed with the Estuary and denote the site as a gateway to the waterfront. The shoreline will include marshland vegetation and native plant material.

There are two existing soccer fields that are heavily used by the community for the youth soccer programs. Two additional fields are proposed adjacent to the existing fields and to the west of the current parking lot. This expanded facility fulfills an active recreational need for adjacent neighborhoods and provided opportunity to interact with the waterfront for those who might never see it if not for the soccer programs. The existing parking lot will be repaved and appropriate landscape screening incorporated.

66th Avenue Gateway

66th Avenue and Damon Slough are important gateways to the waterfront and an important connection between the Oakland neighborhoods and the marshlands along the waterfront. For many trail users, this could be the starting point of the waterway journey. The gateway location is marked with two rows of trees that stretch towards the water. The site is also marked with vertical markers that symbolize the point of entry. A short wood overlook extends over the marshland. The pier could either be a purely visual feature or it could be designed to provide an opportunity to interact closely with the natural environment without intruding into it. The entire shoreline will include marshland vegetation and native plant material. Parking areas are included on either side of the ramp to provide for adequate parking for the trail and park users in addition to accommodating overflow parking for the Coliseum. There is also a proposed road to replace the current entry easement through the EBMUD facility to the soccer fields from 66th Avenue.

Design Guidelines

The trail and its many proposed features were designed with an emphasis towards environmental stewardship. The design guidelines are based on the integration of environmentally sustainable materials, grading techniques, wetland transitions zones and wildlife and landscape buffer zones. Each concept, through its unique design elements begins to capture and interpret Oakland's local history, geography and environment in the form of outdoor interpretive elements, a participatory museum and living laboratory.

Four Distinct Character Districts

Distinct Downtown, Marina, Industrial and Marshlands districts have been identified to emphasize their unique character along the waterfront. Each district was then tied to a palette of materials and finishes for benches, railings, and edge treatments typically found within that district. These finishes and materials will in

turn be applied to site specific design solutions as sections of the trail are developed either publicly or privately.

Signage and Lighting - Unifying Trail Elements

The concept for the waterfront trail lighting and signage element is derived from the existing railroad light towers that parallel I-880 and the City's waterfront. The light towers are composed of steel, featuring a cross bracing open structural pattern with fixtures adorning their tops.

The new Oakland Waterfront Trail light elements are simple triangular towers that employ vertical light pipe fixtures at their center. Individual marine grade steel plates are equally spaced and stacked vertically to create an open glowing light element. Each steel plate is water jet cut from a standard sheet of steel, and each plate is cut into a different pattern to visually create a cross bracing pattern. Caps would be placed on all light to prevent plighting and to comply with the Oakland Dark Skies Initiative.

There are five different fixture types being proposed, each with different finishes and etchings:

- Site Light (15'2" Tall) – Located within public parks along the waterfront, the site light would be of a uniform open plate design with an internal light pipe.
- Trail Light (15'2" Tall) – Located to delineate the edge of the waterfront trail, the trail light would be of a uniform open plate design with the Bay Trail logo cut-out at the base of the fixture.
- Kiosk (18'11") – Located strategically at entry points to the trail, the kiosk would be a steel covered triangular fixture with a water jet etched graphic of the trail and trail destinations.
- Site Marker (23'8") – Located at the beginning of each waterfront district (for a total of four locations), the site marker would be of a uniform open plate design with a district logo (oak tree for the downtown district, fish for the Marina District, circles for the industrial district, and marsh grasses for the marshland district) at the base of the fixture. The markers would be placed to indicate transitions between design character districts and provide historical information about sites within the district.
- Gateway Markers (23'8") - Located at key intersections and roadways leading to the waterfront from neighborhoods, the fixture would be a steel covered triangular fixture with a water jet etched graphic with the Oakland Waterfront Trail name, district name and graphic.

Additional details and proposals for specific district design elements may be found in Attachment B of this document. The document as produced by EDAW is available on line at www.oaklandnet.com/OaklandWaterfront or for purchase at 250 Frank H Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3330.

Capital Expenditure Schedule

Projects were broken into 40 discrete segments that could be accomplished independently of one another with an emphasis of prioritizing first projects that allowed for the creation of a continuous trail and providing parks and trail amenities as secondary priority.

Specific projects to be funded in Series A of Measure DD (July 2003 to July 2006) can be found in Attachment A.

Public Participation and Comment

An extensive community participation process to assist in achieving support and acceptance of the proposed alignment and design standards for the waterfront was implemented as a part of the feasibility study. This process began with a series of stakeholder interviews, a community survey process and general meeting. In addition, an Oaklandnet.com website link for the waterfront was established and designed to inform stakeholders and the general public of the study and how the study will be used as the guide for development of the waterfront. A series of roundtable discussions and presentations to Councilmembers, City staff, key business, organized neighborhood groups, regulatory agencies and philanthropic organizations complete community outreach associated with the implementation of the Oakland waterfront vision. (See Attachment C for summary of meetings and presentations).

The general public was also invited to provide comments and feedback to plan recommendations and alternatives. Responses to the comments received will be integrated into the final plan document to be presented to City Council for formal acceptance.

Other steps undertaken or underway by the City include a public review and comment period for the Oakland Waterfront Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines document from September 1, 2003 to January 5, 2004, exploration of funding mechanisms for maintenance of the improvements, adoption of a new alignment for the Bay Trail through Oakland and the Oakland Waterfront Design Guidelines by way of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), the Planning Commission and the City Council in February and March 2004 and finally, implementation of Oakland Waterfront projects identified for funding from Measure DD Series A.

PRAC is an advisory committee to the Mayor and City Council with a standard role of reviewing project design concepts, community connectivity, maintenance implications, implementation priorities, user groups needs assessments, and public participation. Given that this project is all new development, PRAC would not be required to approve the issuance of Conditional Use or tree removal permits

The Planning Commission is being requested by staff to provide the following actions:

1. Refer the Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines report to a Planning Commission committee designated by the Planning Commission for further consideration and discussion. (Either the Design Review or Special Project committees are options.)
2. Upon completion of review by the Planning Commission committee, staff would return to the full Planning Commission by Spring 2004 to:
 - a. By resolution amend the *Land Use and Transportation, The Estuary Policy Plan and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation* Elements of the General Plan to reflect the new alignment for the Bay Trail through Oakland
 - b. Recommend to the City Council to adopt a resolution to realign the Bay Trail consistent with the recommendations from the Oakland Waterfront Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines study.
 - c. Adopt development standards for the Oakland Waterfront Trail.

Maintenance

Today several entities are involved in operating and maintaining portions of the shoreline and its adjacent parks and public improvements. These include the Port of Oakland, City of Oakland Parks and Recreation; the City's Public Works Agency, East Bay Regional Parks District, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Following acceptance of the feasibility study and development of design guidelines for the waterfront promenade/Bay Trail alignment, staff will make recommendations to the Port, City Council and East Bay Regional Park District for changes and improvements to the issue of governance of public improvements along the Estuary in a way that more effectively addresses future maintenance and operations

of the shoreline trail and park system. Recommendations being discussed include partnerships with other service agencies such as the East Bay Conservation Corps, the adoption of maintenance and performance standards, a special assessment district, a regional park parcel tax, or an increase in assessments for City of Oakland Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD).

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION – The project evaluates land between Clay Street and 66th Avenue adjacent to the Oakland Estuary within the Estuary Policy Plan area.

GENERAL PLAN ANALYSIS – Implementation of recommendations found in the Oakland Waterfront Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines report are consistent with *The Estuary Policy Plan* document adopted by the City of Oakland in June 1998.

ZONING ANALYSIS – Staff is currently working to designate zoning classifications that are consistent with the Estuary Policy Plan land use designations.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Projects identified for implementation as a part of the Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility Study would be considered exempt under CEQA as determined under the previously approved addendum to the *General Plan Land Use and Transportation EIR, the Estuary Policy Plan EIR, the Coliseum Area Redevelopment Plan (CARDP) EIR and the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element Mitigated Negative Declaration* for the Oakland Clean Water, Safe Waterfront Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Ballot Measure (Measure DD). The addendum sets out the physical conditions and potential environmental impacts for the various projects, as well as sets forth the measures that must be completed to decrease or eliminate these impacts as a part of project implementation. These measures were previously identified as part of the other previously adopted environmental documents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Refer the Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines report to a Planning Commission subcommittee designated by the Planning Commission for further consideration and recommendations.
2. Upon completion of review by the Planning Commission subcommittee, staff will return to the full Planning Commission by Spring 2004 to:
 - a. Recommend to the City Council that the *Land Use and Transportation and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Elements* of the General Plan as well as the *Estuary Policy Plan* be amended as required to reflect the new alignment for the Bay Trail through Oakland
 - b. Recommend to the City Council to realign the Bay Trail consistent with the recommendations from the Oakland Waterfront Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines study.
 - c. Adopt development standards for the Oakland Waterfront Trail.

Prepared by:

Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris
Project Manager, Waterfront Open Space

Approved for forwarding to the
City Planning Commission:

GARY PATTON,
Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Measure DD Expenditure Plan
- B. Waterfront Design Guideline Details
- C. Measure DD Bond Text and Community Meeting/Presentation Schedule
- D. Executive Summary – Oakland Waterfront Trail Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines

