

## **TASK FORCE MEETING #2 SUMMARY**

### **CITY OF REDWOOD CITY INNER HARBOR SPECIFIC PLAN**

*Tuesday, July 9, 2013 | 7:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.  
Seaport Conference Center, 459 Seaport Court, Redwood City, CA 94063*

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#### **TASK FORCE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Jeff Birdwell, Bair Island Aquatic Center  
Sean Brooks, City of Redwood City, Economic Development  
Mike Brown, Docketown Representative  
Orlene Chartain, Docketown Resident  
Rich Ferrari, Ferrari Property Representative  
Mike Giari, Port of Redwood City  
Greg Greenway, Seaport Industrial Association  
Melissa Hippard, Greenbelt Alliance  
Dave Holland, San Mateo County Manager's Office  
Chris Mann, Granite Rock  
Gail Raabe, Redwood City Resident and Bayfront Advocate  
Carole Wong, Redwood City Resident

#### **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Laura Stetson of MIG (consultant to the City) welcomed Task Force members and the approximately 35 members of the public attending the meeting. This meeting was the second in a series of meetings to develop a specific plan for the Inner Harbor area of Redwood City. She responded to Task Force protocol questions regarding ex parte requirements and confirmed the Task Force's quorum is eight members. Ms. Stetson noted that additional detail about the Task Force's decision making procedures will be addressed at a future meeting. She reminded the group that this meeting would center on the theme "Visioning Great Waterfront Communities." Ms. Stetson outlined the agenda, which included presentations by Task Force members of desirable waterfront communities, a presentation by MIG's Rick Barrett on various waterfront communities and their urban design features, a public comment period, and discussion of next steps.

#### **II. TASK FORCE MEMBER PRESENTATIONS<sup>1</sup>**

Redwood City resident Carole Wong opened the Task Force member presentations with a slide show illustrating her experience in Ijburg, Netherlands (a waterfront neighborhood in Amsterdam). She commented on the unique characteristics of the waterfront community, namely the prevalence of residential watercraft and the piers that function as neighborhood streets. In Ijburg, unsightly infrastructure and power lines are hidden from view, allowing for an organic and natural feel to the environment; she urged the group to explore how the city achieved this effect. Overall, she encouraged Redwood City to think boldly about the future and development of the Inner Harbor. Ms. Wong advised better connections with nature while still maintaining a sense of place within the city context (Ijburg is accessible by train). Adaptive and diverse architecture is also key, not only from the aesthetic standpoint but in preparing for sea level rise.

Jeff Birdwell followed with a presentation sharing ideas formed with colleagues at the Bair Island Aquatic Center. Mr. Birdwell noted three distinct examples of waterfronts worth considering: Granville Island,

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<sup>1</sup> This summary reflects the presentations, opinions of, and comments made by Task Force or community members. Task Force and community members are responsible for the accuracy of their presentations and statements.

Vancouver, B.C.; Cannery Row, Monterey; and Balboa Island, Newport Beach. He pointed out the similarities between Granville Island and Redwood City, noting its distinct character and complementary fit with surroundings. Cannery Row includes a strong mix of uses and celebrates its history, a point in which many participants were in agreement as being particularly important. With respect to Balboa Island, Mr. Birdwell lauded its immediate connection to the tidal plain and provisions for recreational opportunities, including “human-powered” watersports. He also noted that Balboa Island does well in connecting people to the water. Also of note is the public promenade that circles the island.

Mike Brown, a representative of a major Inner Harbor property owner, gave a presentation on “Great Waterfronts Elsewhere.” Among the notable waterfronts from around the world, Mr. Brown touched on the Buffalo, New York inner harbor; New Jersey waterfronts; Yaletown, Vancouver, B.C. (excellent sense of scale in relation to the water); Shelter Bay, Mill Valley (structures sit atop pylons to adapt to rising sea level); and Amsterdam’s view of the water as a front yard (promenades here are a major design feature, facilitating a wide variety of uses and more flowing circulation).

### **III. CONSULTANT PRESENTATION: GREAT PLACES THROUGH THE EYES OF AN URBAN DESIGNER**

Rick Barrett delivered a presentation based on his experience as an urban designer/landscape architect. He offered a number of different examples of public spaces near or fronting bodies of water that are seen as successful in terms of character, functionality, aesthetic quality, connectivity, and mix of uses. Granville Island in Vancouver, B.C. is a peninsula and shopping district popular with both residents and visitors who appreciate its “funky” character. Similarly, South Waterfront in Portland, Oregon offers retail opportunities in addition to parks and trails and connections to alternative transportation. Mr. Barrett acknowledged that the trade-off for having ample open spaces along the Columbia River is the waterfront’s tall apartment buildings. (During subsequent public comment, someone commented that the development has not been successful financially.)

Oakland’s Jack London Square attracts locals and visitors with many different forms of waterfront entertainment and dining opportunities. It also features a popular farmers’ market and is accessible by boat and train. Members of the public noted that Jack London Square lacked both sufficient green space and good access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Adjacent to Jack London Square, Mr. Barrett pointed out the Brooklyn Basin mixed-use waterfront development that will feature 30 acres of parks and open space.

Other notable examples include:

- The planned Chula Vista Bayfront development in San Diego, which will integrate nature extensively in its design
- Napa’s popular promenade along the Napa River, complete with stylish terraces, stairways, and bridges
- The Waterfront District in Bellingham, Washington, which is planned for 50% open space
- Petaluma, which has a very manageable scale but could benefit from better public access and open space, especially along the Petaluma River

### **IV. TASK FORCE SESSION**

A Task Force discussion session followed the presentations, centered on design ideas and challenges in Redwood City. Comments included the following:

- Preserving adjacent industry is a unique challenge for Redwood City.
- Consider water taxis like those used in popular waterfronts such as Baltimore’s Inner Harbor.
- Look for grant opportunities based on healthy community goals.
- How do you get people safely across Highway 101 to enjoy the waterfront? This issue was raised by multiple members.

- It would be helpful if anecdotal information about sea level rise was supplemented with case studies and other scientific evidence to bring members up to speed.
- Do not lose planned open space.
- Make Redwood City's Inner Harbor a place to emulate.
- Be sure to understand physical limitations. With regard to dredging, how far into the water is being planned? The Task Force needs hard engineering data.
- Coordinate with the Marine Science Institute in the Inner Harbor planning efforts.
- Better water exchanges = better water quality. Provide for better flow to and from Redwood Creek into the Bay.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

During the public comment period, members of the public shared additional thoughts on a variety of themes related to the vision for the Inner Harbor. Many of these comments and ideas were also captured on the wallgraphic that appears on page 5.

### *Enhancements*

- Improve Redwood Creek.
- Focus first on needs of residents.
- Increase trails and kayak routes (importance of kayaking was raised by multiple members of the public).
- Avoid solutions that attract people only once. The Inner Harbor needs to be a place people will come to again and again.
- Preserve open space.

### *Access and Circulation*

- Consider using floating walkways/bikeways.
- Public access is critical.
- Accommodate small boats and outrigger canoes.
- Main Street Specific Plan calls for a pathway along Redwood Creek from downtown to Marina One with a pedestrian bridge and pathway connecting to the Inner Harbor area.
- Bay Trail is adjacent to the Inner Harbor area.

### *Sense of Community*

- Make it a "complete" community.
- Work with what you have and be organic.
- We need education to understand the environmental constraints.
- The Marine Science Institute would like a facility for the whole community. They also like boater partners (kayakers).
- Maintain housing affordability (echoed by multiple members of the public).
- The plan should be focused for the benefit of Redwood City and its residents, not for tourists. Tourists will come anyway if this is done well.
- Perfect waterfront destination for residents, downtown visitors, and Bay Trail cyclists.

### *Sea Level Rise*

- Address sea level rise (echoed by multiple members of the public).
- Look to the east coast for ideas on how to accommodate sea level rise and also consider work already prepared by the City including a summary responding to community concerns about sea

level rise and the Saltworks project. (Point of Clarification Note: the Saltworks application has been withdrawn).

- Unleash creativity for future sea level rise solutions.

#### *Other Issues*

- The new jail will still flood despite its planned construction approach.
- Granville Island is too commercial and too urban.
- The State Lands Commission has missed both Task Force meetings.
- It's inconvenient to have the public comment period occur at the end of the meeting. Consider other alternatives.
- It may be useful to videotape Task Force meetings.
- A Redwood City Planning Commission representative should be present at meetings.
- Task Force members should review the Redwood City's Scoping Report for the Saltworks project. (Point of Clarification Note: The Saltworks project's development application has been withdrawn.)
- Structures in the Bay should not be part of the plan.

## **VI. NEXT STEPS**

Ms. Stetson closed by thanking the Task Force and community members for attending, and noting that one other meeting would be held this month on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The fourth Task Force meeting is tentatively scheduled for October. The City and consultant team will be spending the intervening time preparing technical reports that will inform the decision-making process.

**REDWOOD CITY  
Inner Harbor Specific Plan**

**TASK FORCE MTG #2  
July 9, 2013**

**"Visioning Great  
Waterfront Communities"**

**BIAC IDEAS**

- Granville Island, BC.
  - ✓ Lots of similarities to RWC
  - ✓ Distinct and complementary to surrounds
  - ✓ Adjacent to industry
- Cannery Row, Monterey
  - ✓ Celebrates connections to the past
  - ✓ Mix of uses (including a pub!)

**Adventures in  
Ijburg (Amsterdam)**

- All floating structures
- Piers as neighborhood streets
- Infrastructure is well hidden

**TAXI-ANALYSIS**

- RWC can be bold!
- Important to connect to surrounds
- Connections to nature, but City close
- Adaptive architecture

**Balboa Island**

- ✓ Immediate connection to tidal plain
- ✓ Great human-powered sports; connects people to the water

**GREAT WATERFRONTS ELSEWHERE**

- Buffalo, NY Inner Harbor
- Amsterdam → The water as a front yard
  - Promenades, trees, flow of uses
- Shelter Bay, Mill Valley
  - Structures on pylons
- Yaletown, Vancouver, BC
  - Blend of scale to the water
- New York & New Jersey waterfronts

- Education of the kids to understand constraints
- Focus first on residents' needs
- Floating walkways/bikeways
- Improve Redwood Creek
- Kayak routes
- Make it a place to visit again & again
- Make it a complete community
- Public access critical
- Involve BCDC
- Work with that you have: be organic

**IDEAS / CHALLENGES**

- Unique Challenge for RWC → Preserving adjacent industry
- Water taxis in Baltimore Inner Harbor
- Partnerships? → Lack for grant opportunities based on healthy communities goals
- How do you get people across Hwy 101?
- Dealing with sea level rise. Provide case studies, including "catch up". Don't lose planned open space.
- Make RWC IH a place to emulate
- Understand physical limitations
- "Drainage?" → How far into the water are we planning?
- Need hard engineering data
- Reach out to Marine Science Institute
- Better water exchange = Better quality

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*Public comment → Here if anyone  
Asks at the end of meeting  
Also ideate meetings*

**GREAT PLACES THROUGH THE EYES OF AN URBAN DESIGNER**

- Granville Island has stayed "funky"
- South Waterfront, Portland OR maintains open space (trade-off is higher buildings)
- Jack London Square attracts locals & visitors. Entertainment
- Brooklyn Basin, Oakland → mixed use community
- Chula Vista Bayfront integrates natural areas (40%)
- Waterfront District, Bellingham, WA planned for 50% open space
- Napa along river → Great promenade
- Petaluma has nice scale but lacks good water access
- MSI would like facility for all community → They also like boat partners (kayak)
- Maintain housing affordability
- Unleash creativity for future SLR solutions