

TASK FORCE MEETING #8 SUMMARY

CITY OF REDWOOD CITY INNER HARBOR SPECIFIC PLAN

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014 | 7:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.
Seaport Conference Center, 459 Seaport Court, Redwood City, CA 94063*

I. Welcome and Introduction

Laura Stetson of MIG (consultant to the City) opened the meeting and welcomed the Task Force members and approximately 30 members of the public attending the meeting. This marked the eighth Task Force meeting to develop a specific plan for the Inner Harbor area of Redwood City. Ms. Stetson reviewed the agenda for the evening and noted that the public comment period would occur only at the beginning of the meeting to allow the Task Force sufficient time to accomplish the evening's objectives. A member of the Task Force noted that it was important to keep this and all meetings to the scheduled two and one-half hour time frame to maintain focus. The meeting agenda was set to include presentations from property owners and operators of uses within the Inner Harbor, the review and approval of draft Guiding Principles (as amended per discussion at Task Force meeting #7), and a discussion on the framework for developing and selecting project alternatives. The outcome of the latter discussion would provide the direction regarding use and mobility components to be included in the two alternatives to be developed. The meeting concluded after an explanation of next steps for the project.

II. Public Comment

Following the introduction, the floor was opened for a public comment period to allow members of the public could share their comments, concerns, and ideas in relation to the Inner Harbor Plan. The comments focused on: 1) a recent letter from the State Lands Commission to the City of Redwood City, 2) incorporating community assets into the plan, and 3) the public input component of Task Force meetings.

State Lands Commission Letter

- Suggested that City staff works with the City Council and Task Force to craft a letter to the State Lands Commission (SLC) in response to the SLC position regarding the legal status of Docktown
- Suggested taking SLC issue to a higher authority and guidance through the process

Community Assets

- Informed attendees that the Peninsula Yacht Club provides regular creek clean-ups and other benefits; members consider themselves stewards of the community and would love for the club to stay in its current location
- Informed attendees that new information learned suggested that a new marina cannot be established in One Marina area across Redwood Creek due to Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations

Public Input

- Requested that the public comment period during Task Force meetings be extended to accommodate for additional public participation; the public should have equal opportunity as the Task Force to provide input during meetings

III. Presentations

Property owners and operators of uses within the Inner Harbor shared information about their land in its relation to the specific plan. Representatives from the Bair Islands Aquatic Center (BIAC), URS Corporation, Innvision Shelter Network, and Redwood City gave presentations to the committee. A brief question and answer session followed each presentation. A summary of these presentations and the Q and A session that followed are included below.

Pat Worthington—BIAC

Ms. Worthington gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the activities that occur at BIAC. A brief discussion followed, and Task Force members commented on public water access, parking, and the possible growth needs of BIAC.

Paul Krupka, Scott Kelsey—URS—101/84 Interchange

Mr. Krupka and Mr. Kelsey gave a presentation on the proposed Highway 101/84 Interchange improvement project. The Task Force was informed that past project alternatives are being enhanced and new alternatives developed. Community outreach will be a component, beginning with a meeting taking place March 31, 2014 at the main Redwood City library.

The Task Force asked about growth the assumptions used in the modeling. Mr. Kelsey responded that the project is being designed for the General Plan build out. He will follow up with the group on the population assumptions that are being used.

Dr. Brian Greenberg—Innvision Shelter Network

Dr. Greenberg presented general information about the Innvision Shelter Network, the services it provides, and statistics about the population it serves. The committee asked what amenities Innvision Network looks for in selecting a shelter location. Dr. Greenberg explained that access to services that participants rely on, such as public transportation, are very important for shelter sites.

The Task Force also asked about challenges the organization would face in finding a new location. Dr. Greenberg outlined the difficulties in finding locations that fit the shelter's needs and added that proposed shelter locations often face opposition from nearby residents. He explained that since the County already owns the land that the shelter is on, it will be easier to improve the existing facility than to find a new location. With the woman's jail and Sheriff work program (now co-housed with the shelter) moving to the new County Jail facility upon its completion, the shelter will be able to be expanded at its current location. Peggy Jensen, Deputy County Manager and a Task Force member, also explained the current status of County funding for making improvements to the existing facility to accommodate the on-site expansion of the shelter use into the existing building area.

Bill Ekern—Community Development Director, Redwood City

Mr. Ekern spoke to the committee about the letter the City received from the State Lands Commission on the use of Redwood Creek per the land grant. The letter stated that the Docktown use is not consistent with the land grant. Mr. Ekern informed the committee that the letter is still being reviewed by the City. The Task Force asked to be informed about next steps the City will pursue.

A Task Force member raised the idea of switching the locations of BIAC and Docktown. Mr. Ekern stated that this proposal is not possible since State Lands has jurisdiction over the waters in which BIAC is located. (Later in the meeting the Task Force member representing BIAC clarified that BIAC had not proposed this.)

IV. Guiding Principles Review

Following the presentations, the Task Force reviewed the modified Guiding Principles. The group agreed that the five Overarching Themes captured prior discussion. One member suggested crafting the themes into a single Vision statement. Following additional discussion, the group agreed to the following Vision:

Vision:

To create a unique and vibrant neighborhood and destination on the Bay, and to connect Redwood City to its water's edge in a manner that values and enhances the natural environment, serves as a regional model for waterfront communities and adaptation to sea level rise, and celebrates and preserves Redwood City's heritage.

Ms. Stetson noted that the supporting Guiding Principles presented at the meeting would be integrated into the Specific Plan and brought back to the Task Force as part of the draft Plan.

V. Framework for Developing and Selecting Alternatives

The Task Force discussed a framework for developing and selecting project alternatives. Some points discussed applied generally to the project, while others focused on four specific topic areas 1) Sea Level Rise, 2) Mobility, 3) Development, and 4) Open Space/ Recreation.

General Criteria

- Build in flexibility
- Take recommendations to the City Council
- Provide Guiding Principles
- Involve the Bay Restoration Authority
- Enforce that edge uses dictate edge condition

Sea Level Rise

- One member strongly encouraged that the plan follow scenario "A" as close as possible (adaptive retreat)
- Provide a soft edge to be "nimble" BIAC and Docktown
- Any scenario involving a hard engineered edge may be too costly and not adhere to the Guiding Principles

- Use property adjacent to Docktown to function as a buffer/ edge
- Make soft edge/trail compatible with adjacent land uses
- Build “fortified” wall around public facilities
- Consider the minimum requirement of building per requirements to guard against the 100-year flood condition
- Address aesthetics, not science, to develop desired appearance
- Create a natural interface

Mobility

- Extend Blomquist to Walnut and convert to a levee
- Connect Docktown at northern end
- Prohibit trucks on Maple (although they may already be prohibited)
- Assume that Blomquist will extend north across Redwood Creek (2 lanes in addition to the center lane)
- Place bike share stations in Inner Harbor
- Build a new pedestrian bridge; consider replacing Maple Street Bridge vs. constructing a new one at Walnut
- Retrofit Maple Street Bridge for improved pedestrian access
- Focus on Granite Rock to Seaport Boulevard (for Blomquist)
- Separate trucks from automobile traffic
- Protect industry through vehicle separation on Blomquist and Seaport Boulevard
- Prioritize multimodal access from train station
- Prioritize the Creek Walk Area
- Complete the Bay Trail
- Consider a connection across Highway 101 near Redwood Creek if the path beneath the freeway is impractical

Development

- Assume BIAC will need to expand
- Consider a Community Benefit Improvement District (Redwood City Council authorized formation of such a district for Downtown on 3/10/14)
- If R&D, does that include light industrial?
- Preserve historically valuable features
- Consider infrastructure uses
- Boathouses/ boat launch is a given

Open Space and Recreation

- Consider a range of open space types, including associated buildings (restrooms, boat docks)

VI. Next Steps

Ms. Stetson directed the Task Force to prepare for the next meeting by thinking about not just the types of uses to be planned for the Inner Harbor but the scale and form of those uses as well. The meeting dates were established as March 25, April 8, and April 16. Ms. Stetson also indicated that at the April 28 City Council meeting, the Council would be considering the preferred Use and Mobility Plan to be crafted by the Task Force. That plan, as directed by the Council, will form the basis of the Specific Plan.

At the close of the meeting, a few members of the public expressed displeasure at not having a second opportunity to comment at the end of the meeting, as had been the case at prior Task Force meetings. Ms. Stetson polled the Task Force regarding the format of subsequent meetings and how best to accommodate public comment. By general assent, the Task Force agreed that comment at the beginning of the meeting provided for the most meaningful input. The Task Force directed that subsequent agendas include only one comment period—at the beginning of each meeting—and that the comment period be longer than the 15 minutes previously allocated and furthermore, that speakers be allotted two minutes each provided that all could be accommodated during the comment period.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.