

REPORT OF BALBOA RESERVOIR COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To: Mayor London Breed
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Date: December , 2019

1. Background

Ordinance No. 4515, as amended March 19, 2015, formed the Balboa Reservoir Community Advisory Committee (“BRCAC”). The BRCAC was formed to function as a clearinghouse for community input as the City considers possible development on 17 acres owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) known as the Balboa Reservoir, located adjacent to the City College of San Francisco (“CCSF”). The Ordinance provided “The general purpose of the Advisory Committee shall be to provide a regular venue for interested community stakeholders and the general public to discuss any proposed development on the Site, and to ask questions of and give input to City officers and staff and to developers, once selected.” The Ordinance concludes by requiring the BRCAC to provide annual reports to the Board of Supervisors.

The BRCAC is comprised of nine seats, each filled by representatives of the Balboa Reservoir’s constituencies in the adjacent areas and at large. The first meeting of the BRCAC took place in August, 2015, and this report is the first Annual Report to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors of the BRCAC.

Discussion on the Draft Environmental Impact Report is not included in this report.

2. Discussion of the Development Principles and Parameters

During its first year the BRCAC met 18 times and developed a set of guidelines called The Proposed Development Principles and Parameters for the Balboa Reservoir to guide the selection of a developer team. Those Principles and Parameters were adopted in September 2016 after the BRCAC heard from many stakeholders including

residents in adjacent neighborhoods, representatives of City College, representatives of the Ocean Avenue businesses, and other interested members of the public. Supervisor Norman Yee has attended many of these meetings.

The resulting seven Principles and Parameters concerned housing, transportation and Parking, the project's relationship with City College, the public realm, urban design and neighborhood character, sustainability, and additional public benefits.

Additionally, a letter dated September 9, 2016, was sent by the BRCAC to the developers interested in submitting a proposal. That letter stressed that the BRCAC looked forward to the Principles and Parameters guiding the project. The letter also stated that to be successful, no project would garner community support if it would worsen traffic congestion or adversely impact the availability of street parking in the local community. The letter also stressed that since the project displaces parking for CCSF "it will be critical for the Balboa Reservoir developer to work with City College to address parking needs by identifying alternative parking and transportation solutions that do not compromise student's ability to access their education."

A developer team was selected in August 2017 composed of AvalonBay Communities who propose to build the market-rate housing along with Bridge Housing, Mission Housing, and Habitat for Humanity who propose to develop the affordable homes, and Pacific Union Development Company who specializes in parking solutions.

Since then the BRCAC and the public have met quarterly to discuss and comment on the project as it took shape. Hundreds of public comments were recorded in the meeting minutes over this time. They covered a wide gamut of opinion for and against the project, its relationship with City College, its effect on transportation and neighborhood character, as well and its role in the City's ongoing housing crisis.

During the development review process, in addition to regular meetings the Committee and the Developer Team hosted ongoing community engagement with events such as a park day, tours, and workshops.

3. Comments on Proposals

In the following three sections of this Report, The BRCAC will comment on the proposal's level of compliance with the Principles and Parameters developed by the BRCAC.

4. Comment on the Developer Team's Proposal

HOUSING

The Developer Team's Proposal includes 1100 units of housing of all types. As per the CAC Principles and Parameters, 50% percent of the housing will be affordable to low and moderate-income households (18% for households with an income under 55% of AMI). By cross-subsidizing the affordable housing with the market-rate housing the project will need a minimum of public funding. The Developer Team proposal is in compliance with the housing parameters.

TRANSPORTATION

The Developer Team's proposal is in keeping with the principle that parking should be unbundled and that the ratio should be 0.5:1 overall. At this time the call for a transportation demand management plan is undetermined and there has been no input from the SFMTA.

Plans to incentivize the use of transportation choices other than driving are still unclear. Despite the publication of a Transportation Demand Management Plan in October 2016 performance targets are largely undetermined.

The BRCAC also has yet to hear how SFMTA plans to proactively accommodate the influx of new residents and actively promote transit use. Similarly, SFMTA has not yet proposed changes to the surrounding streets, especially along the pedestrian and bike route to the Balboa Park BART Station that would enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. Also unclear is how the SFMTA will respond to congestion impacts, especially at the two vehicular entrances to the site on Ocean Avenue and Frida Kahlo Way.

The pedestrian and bicycle circulation plans within the confines of the site are largely in keeping with the BRCAC's Principles and Parameters.

PROJECT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CITY COLLEGE

It is imperative that the Balboa Reservoir project not adversely impact CCSF's mission to provide a quality education at an affordable price for a large number of the city's residents. CCSF has produced a transportation demand management plan (March, 2019) that, if implemented, intends to reduce the need for a large portion of its staff and student body to drive, producing a smaller shortfall in parking needs than the one thousand parking spots that will be replaced by housing. The developer team plans to

accommodate the shortfall with public parking in the Reservoir. The amount of this public parking is undetermined at this time as CCSF finalizes decisions on their Facilities Master Plan and which version of their TDM they will settle on. The developers have promised that provided public parking will be scaled according to the need once these variables are resolved. As of this date, both CCSF and the City have informed the BRCAC that the problem caused by loss of appropriate parking on the reservoir has not been resolved yet. The BRCAC intends to closely monitor any purported resolution of this matter.

There has been a discussion that student or faculty housing be built by the Developer Team on CCSF property.

There is a danger that the CCSF Facilities Master Plan and the Reservoir project will evolve separately. There is a need for ongoing monitoring to ensure that discussions are taking place. The BRCAC will be a forum for updating progress or issues as they come up.

PUBLIC REALM

The Developer Team's Proposal has been very thoughtful in regards to creating walking routes, open space, and amenities such as childcare for residents and students. At the urging of BRCAC meeting participants, the proposed orientation of the park has been changed to shelter public space from the ocean wind.

The landscape architects have also formulated innovative ways of activating the PUC easement along the southern edge of the Reservoir with exercise areas, farmers markets, and children's play areas near the proposed childcare center.

URBAN DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

For the most part, there has been considerable input and good continuing fine-tuning revisions. The Developer Team's Proposal strives to fit into the existing neighborhood design by scaling from twenty foot heights near the western side of the site to taller buildings on the eastern side. Public comment has been mixed. Some neighbors are wary of higher density in the neighborhood while others constituencies feel the urgent need for housing necessitates it. The project has deviated from the sixty-five foot height limit proscribed in the Principles and Parameters with a proposal that some buildings on the east side of the site reach a maximum height of seventy-seven feet, i.e. twelve feet taller.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project is compliant with the Principles and Parameters which follow City standards.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC BENEFITS

The BRCAC will need ongoing updates on progress in this area.

5. Other Items

The Balboa Park Station Area CAC was disbanded at the end of 2018 leaving many unresolved issues regarding transit, safety, and general livability in the area.

6. BRCAC Activities Moving Forward

- The Committee will continue to serve as a forum for community feedback.
- The committee will continue to monitor the discussions between CCSF and the Developer relating to their collaboration, especially the requirement in the Parameters that CCSF and the Developer “address parking needs by identifying appropriate parking and transportation solutions that do not compromise student’s ability to access their education.” [Parameters letter of September 9, 2016].
- The BRCAC may submit a further report or reports in advance of consideration of these matters by the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the SFPUC, and possibly other City Agencies.