

Project Description

Balboa Reservoir Development

June 1, 2018

Project Overview

The Balboa Reservoir Development (proposed project) would involve redevelopment of the existing San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) property at the Balboa Reservoir. The Balboa Reservoir site (the “Site”) is an approximately 17-acre rectangular parcel (Assessor’s Block 3180, Lot 190) in the central southern portion of San Francisco, immediately to the west of the City College of San Francisco (“CCSF”) Ocean (main) Campus. Reservoir Community Partners, LLC, a joint venture between BRIDGE Housing Corporation (a non-profit affordable housing developer) and Avalon Bay Communities, is the project sponsor. The project sponsor proposes to develop the Site for a mixed-income multifamily residential development containing approximately 1,100 dwelling units. The build-out of the development would involve additional partner firms, including non-profits Mission Housing and Habitat for Humanity of Greater San Francisco, along with Pacific Union Development Company.

In addition to the housing described above, the proposed project involves development of supporting infrastructure and open spaces, including a vehicular and pedestrian connection between Ocean Avenue and the Site via an extension of Lee Avenue, an east-west vehicular and pedestrian connection from Phelan Avenue to the site via an easement across the northern edge of CCSF property, new on-site streets, approximately 174,240 square feet of public and private open space throughout the Site, pedestrian and bicycle connections through the Site, and on-site utilities to serve the project.

Project Location

The Site, commonly known as Balboa Reservoir, is located less than a quarter mile north of Ocean Avenue, the primary retail corridor in the Ingleside-Westwood Park neighborhood. The Site is bounded by CCSF Ocean Campus to the east, Archbishop Riordan High School to the north, the Westwood Park neighborhood to the west, and multi-family residential development along Ocean Avenue to the south. Major roadways in the vicinity include Ocean Avenue, a major east-west arterial and the north-south running Interstate 280 freeway, located about 0.3 mile to the east. The Site is less than 0.1 mile from a number of Muni stops at Ocean and Lee avenues that include the K Ingleside/T Third Street light-rail line, 8 Bayshore and 8BX Bayshore Express, 29 Sunset, 49 Van Ness-Mission, 91 3rd Street/19th Avenue Owl and K Owl. The Site is also less than 0.5-mile from the Balboa Park BART Station, which also has stops for the above-noted Muni lines, as well as the J and M light-rail lines and bus routes 28R 19th Avenue Rapid, 43 Masonic, 54 Felton, and 88 BART Shuttle.

General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning

Zoning and Height and Bulk District. The Site is currently zoned P, “Public,” and is in a 40-X Height and Bulk District. Because P zoning is intended for land that is owned by a government

agency and used for government purposes, a rezoning would be required to allow for housing and other uses at the Site (such as childcare and potentially a small retail component) and/or to increase the maximum height above 40 feet.

Balboa Park Station Area Plan. The Balboa Park Station Area Plan, adopted in 2009, includes the Balboa Reservoir in its 210-acre Plan area. The adopted Area Plan, consistent with the project analyzed in the Balboa Park Station Area Plan Final EIR, prioritizes affordable housing, quality open spaces, and development that respects surrounding neighborhoods. For the purposes of analysis, the Plan’s EIR estimated at a programmatic level (i.e., not a “project level”) 1,780 new residential units throughout the entire Plan area. As of January 1, 2017, 450 of these units had been built and an additional 58 were in the process of seeking entitlements. The plan envisions housing at the Site and requires that major new developments also provide high-quality public open spaces.

The City of San Francisco established a “Public Land for Housing” program in 2014, wherein the City agencies examined underutilized sites for housing potential. The interagency committee¹ site selection process was informed by the San Francisco General Plan, Planning Code Section 101.1(b), the Surplus City Property Ordinance (Administrative Code Chapter 23A), San Francisco Charter Section 8A.115 (the Transit First Policy), San Francisco Health Care Services Master Plan (HCSMP), SFMTA’s Real Estate & Facilities Vision for the 21st Century, SFPUC Land Use Framework, and the City & County of San Francisco Consolidated Plan. The Balboa Reservoir was the first site identified for housing through this process in coordination with a robust public outreach process.

Site Characteristics

In 1957, the San Francisco Water Department (now the SFPUC) constructed the Balboa Reservoir with water storage in mind, but the Site has never been utilized as a reservoir. The idea of building new housing at the Balboa Reservoir has been discussed for several decades. In 2012, a series of land transfers between various public agencies resulted in the reconfiguration of the SFPUC’s original Balboa Reservoir land holdings. Today, City College owns approximately 10.4 acres immediately to the west of Phelan Avenue and the SFPUC controls the remaining land (the Site) to the west of City College’s property.

The Site resembles a large basin, with sloping western, northern, and eastern edges and a sunken, paved surface at the center. The paved surface is relatively level and currently functions as a 1,007-space parking lot that CCSF utilizes under the terms of a no-fee revocable license with the SFPUC. An approximately 30-foot-tall earthen berm is located at the western edge of the property. There are no permanent structures on the Site.

¹ including Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), Planning Department, Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Mayor’s Office, Mayor’s Office of Housing (MOH) and the Real Estate Division

Project Characteristics

1,100-Unit Base Project. The project sponsor proposes to demolish the 30-foot earthen berm on the western side of the Site and remove all existing surface pavement and construct nine new multifamily residential buildings and approximately 100 townhouses with associated infrastructure. The proposed Site Plan is shown in Figure 2. The project site would be graded (including both excavation and fill) to accommodate the new residential buildings, open space improvements, and pedestrian and vehicle access within the site. The proposed buildings would step down in height from east to west to provide transition in scale approaching the Westwood Park neighborhood. These buildings would range in height from approximately 25 feet to 75 feet (2 to 7 stories). The total amount of residential gross area proposed is approximately 1,033,000 square feet, and the total gross area (including residential circulation and common area) is approximately 1,150,000 square feet.² The total gross area proposed would yield up to 1,100 residential units. In addition, there would be approximately 141,000 gross square feet in the parking podiums below Building C, D, F, H and I and approximately 198,900 gross square in a public garage located below Buildings A and B for a total project square footage of approximately 339,900 square feet.

The proposed project would include studios and one-, two-, and three-bedroom units in flats and townhome configurations. Additional detail regarding the configuration of each building is provided below under “Proposed Building Characteristics.” A total of up to 50 percent of the 1,100 new units would be designated affordable – 33 percent subsidized by the developer, and another 17 percent, pending availability of public subsidies. The proposed project would include units affordable to persons earning between 55 percent and 120 percent of area median income, depending on market surveys, funding source restrictions and other stakeholder input on the affordable housing plan. The proposed project’s affordable housing would be distributed throughout the site.

The proposed project would provide approximately 4.0 acres of publicly accessible open space organized around an approximately 2-acre central open space (See Figure 5: Open Space Plan). Publicly accessible open spaces would include a large open lawn area, recreation areas, public terraces and pedestrian passages. Additional private open space would be provided on each of the individual building sites including landscaped courtyards, gardens, and private rooftop decks.

New pedestrian and bicycle access to the Site would be provided at Brighton Avenue and San Ramon Way. Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access would be provided on Lee Street and the east-west connection at the north property line through the CCSF site to Phelan Avenue. On-site, a fundamental priority in favor of walking and biking. Pedestrian access to Muni’s Phelan

²Note that the use and definition of “total gross area” in this project description is not the same as “gross floor area” in the San Francisco Planning Code, which excludes items such as floor space dedicated to parking, bicycle parking, and other elements.

Loop bus terminal on Ocean Avenue, the Muni K-T light-rail line, and the Balboa BART station would be available.

The proposed buildings and residential lobbies would be accessible from the street, connected directly to the public sidewalk and the publicly accessible central open space and pedestrian walkways.

As described previously, the proposed base project would include construction of residential buildings and townhouses containing up to 1,100 dwelling units, as shown in Table 1. The ultimate mix and number of units may vary per building, although the overall base plan unit count would not exceed 1,100 units.

Table 1 Proposed Building Details

Block	Stories of Housing Above Garage	Residential Area (GSF)	Total Gross Area (GSF)	Avg. Unit Size (GSF)	Total Units	Parking Spaces
TH1	2-3	67,000	77,000		40	
TH2	2-3	101,000	116,000		60	
A	5-7	146,000	181,000	850	171	
B	5-7	80,000	103,000	875	94	
C	5-7	137,000	171,000	850	156	
D	4-6	88,000	110,000	875	100	
E	5	17,000	23,000	850	20	
F	6-7	145,000	179,000	850	171	
G	4-6	76,000	91,000	850	88	
H	5-6	95,000	124,000	875	108	
I	4-6	81,000	108,000	875	92	
Total		1,033,000	1,283,000		1,100	550
Public Parking						up to 750

Project Characteristics -Variant

You will find below the project matrix and descriptions of the variants:

VARIANT MATRIX				
Aspect of Project to be Changed:	Base Project Value:	Potential Variants Studied:		Notes:
Unit Density:	1,100 units	800 units	1,300 units	The 1300 unit variant will require an increase in height, which would be part of this variant.
Site Access:	Ped/Bike access, but not Auto access, at San Ramon Way	No Ped/Bike/Auto access at San Ramon Way		
Street Configuration:	North and South street "pulled in" from the property lines.	North Street moved north to Riordan property line.	South Street moved south to SFPUC retained property.	
Location of Public Garage:	Under Blocks A + B Below Grade	Moved somewhere farther north on the site, below grade.	In Block A (or A+B), above-grade and wrapped.	Above-grade wrap may require increases in height, which would be part of this variant.
Capacity of Public Garage:	0-750 spaces			
More Townhouses:	Approximately 100 townhouses			
Small Amount of retail along Lee	0 - 7,500 sq ft of neighborhood and CCSF-serving retail along Lee Ave			

1,300-Unit Project Variant

A City-sponsored higher density project variant is also under consideration. This variant would include building heights up to 75 feet (7 stories) with up to 1,300 units.

Open Space and Landscaping Improvements

The proposed project would provide approximately 4 acres of publicly accessible open space organized around an approximately 2-acre central open space with direct connections to the surrounding neighborhoods, CCSF and commercial district. (See Fig 5 Open Space Plan)

Central Open Space: Located at the heart of the project is an approximately 2-acre central Open Space which has an approximately 200-foot-wide wide opening onto Lee Ave providing connections to CCSF, Sunnyside and Ingleside neighborhoods. Potential programming could include a multi-use lawn and terraces, playgrounds, community garden, picnic area, stormwater gardens and a terrace overlooking the park from the community room.

SFPUC Open Space: Along the south side of the project Site behind the Whole Foods Market on Ocean Avenue is an approximately 1-acre SFPUC retained property. Large underground water mains are located in this 80-foot-wide wide zone. Since no buildings or permanent constructions are allowed in this space, the proposed base project proposes that the SFPUC owned land serve as an active flexible urban recreation space that has a distinctively different character than the Central Park open space. It would provide a direct pedestrian connection

from Unity Plaza to the Ingleside Library on Ocean Avenue and could accommodate temporary programs such as farmers market, sports court, child care overflow play area and multiuse lawn. This space would be designed in collaboration with the SFPUC.

Pedestrian Passages: The Central Park and SFPUC open spaces would be linked by landscaped pedestrian and slow bike passages through the site. The passages would run north/-south as an extension of Brighton Avenue, aligned to views of Mount Davidson, and east-west as an extension of the City College, which connects to San Ramon Avenue. A variant with no pedestrian or bicycle access at San Ramon Way will also be studied. The crossing at North, South and West Streets would be raised slightly to emphasize the pedestrian priority of the open space network.

Gateway Open Space: Located at the Lee Avenue entry just north of Ocean Avenue, the Gateway Open Space would serve as the threshold between Ocean Avenue and the proposed Balboa Reservoir project. The open space would include tree and shrub plantings, signage, and subtle lighting in combination with neighborhood serving uses such as a dog park.

Infrastructure Improvements

Streetscape Improvements. Streets within the project boundary would be designed according to the principles of the Better Streets Plan. The design would provide for street trees on regular intervals to encourage walking and the use of bicycles to access adjacent public transit. Streets would be accessible to all modes of transportation via Lee Avenue, North Street, South Street and West Street. In addition to passenger vehicles and bikes, the street network would also provide access for service and emergency vehicles, on-street parking, bike parking and passenger loading. (See Fig. 7 Street Type Plan and Fig. 8 Dedicated and Shared Bicycle Circulation Plan).

Lee Avenue

The extension of Lee Avenue is a tree-lined bicycle boulevard that would provide a gateway to the Central Open Space and a complementary edge to CCSF. As the primary neighborhood residential street that connects the project site to adjacent neighborhoods, Lee Avenue would have a conventional two-lane cross section with parallel parking, designated bike lanes and a 12-foot-wide sidewalk on both sides. Pedestrians would be served by a 6-foot-wide pedestrian throughway on both sides of the street buffered from vehicular traffic by a 4-foot-wide planting strip and 2-foot-wide courtesy strip. There would be a raised crossing at the entry to the PUC open space at the intersection crossing to emphasize the pedestrian priority and traffic calming. Street stormwater would be treated with bioswales in bulb-outs or pervious vehicular paving. (See Fig. 15)

North Street and South Street

North Street and South Street are the interior neighborhood residential streets and would provide pedestrian, vehicular, and bike access to the individual buildings. They would have two-way cross sections with parallel parking on both sides. Pedestrians would be served by 6-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides of the street buffered from vehicular traffic by a 4-foot-wide wide planting strip and 2' wide courtesy strip. There would be a raised crossing at the entry to the PUC open space and bulb-outs at the intersections to emphasize the pedestrian priority. Street stormwater would be treated by bioswales in the bulb-outs or pervious vehicular paving. Two configuration options for North and South Streets are under consideration. North Street could be located at the northern property line or just south of Buildings H and I. South Street could be located along the SFPUC retained property or just north of Buildings A and C. (See Fig. 16)

West Street

West Street is an interior neighborhood residential street providing pedestrian, vehicular and bike access to the building blocks and townhouses. It would have an asymmetrical cross section with two lanes and parallel parking on the east side of the street. There would be a 3.5-foot-wide continuous planting strip and a 5.5-foot-wide pedestrian throughway on the townhome side of the street. The eastern sidewalk would have a 6-foot-wide pedestrian throughway, a 4-foot-wide tree planting strip and a 2' courtesy strip paved area located behind the curb line. There would be a raised crossing at the Central Open Space entry points and bulb-out crosswalks at the intersections to preserve the emphasis on pedestrian priority. Street stormwater would be treated by bioswales in the bulb-outs or pervious vehicular paving. (See Fig. 17)

Transportation Demand Management. The proposed project would include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. Towards the goal of achieving a sustainable land use development, the TDM program would prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access and implement measures to encourage alternative modes of transportation. Onsite childcare and affordable housing would be among the features of the TDM program. Alternative modes of transportation would be encouraged through building a dense, walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented development, encouraging bicycling and walking and reduced parking ratios for residential uses. Sidewalk and streetscapes would be designed to prioritize safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In addition to building design, the project would offer programmatic TDM strategies and could include bike sharing stations and other means to encourage bicycle use, unbundled parking, car-sharing services, delivery supportive amenities, car seat storage, and other approaches to discourage use of single-occupant private vehicles. The proposed project could implement amenities and education strategies regarding transportation choices, including wayfinding, real time transit information, production of brochures and newsletters and transportation counseling for residents.

Potable Water: The proposed project would include construction of potable water distribution piping located under the planned streets and open spaces. These water distribution pipelines would connect to the existing water lines in Ocean Avenue and Phelan Avenue adjacent to the project site. To reduce potable water demand, high-efficiency fixtures and appliances would be installed in new buildings.

Stormwater. The proposed project would include a stormwater management system that would meet the PUC's stormwater management ordinance. The system would be designed with low-impact design concepts and stormwater management systems, designed to retain and reuse some of the stormwater captured on site.

Building Foundations

The buildings are planned as Type III or V wood framed construction over a ground floor or Type I reinforced concrete construction that would accommodate parking, amenity spaces and in some cases residential units. The foundations for the townhouses, multifamily structures and parking structures is anticipated to be of conventional spread footings

Proposed Land Use Controls

Special Use District. The proposed project would include amendments to the General Plan and Planning Code, creating a new Balboa Reservoir Special Use District (SUD). The SUD would establish land use controls for the project Site and incorporate design standards and guidelines in a new Balboa Reservoir Design Standards and Guidelines document ("DSG"). The Zoning Maps would be amended to show changes from the current zoning to the proposed SUD zoning. The Zoning Map amendments would also modify the existing height from 40 feet stepping up to 75 feet, to accommodate the proposed 2 to 7 story buildings. See Figure 4: Height District Plan. The proposed DSG would require street trees to be planted in appropriate locations, with understory plantings to create a new landscape compatible with the Proposed Project.

The project sponsor proposes primarily residential uses with supporting shared amenity spaces, childcare, parking, and open space. Ground floor uses would serve the residential buildings and include lobbies, shared amenity spaces, and some ground-floor residential units, as well as utility and parking access. The ground floor would also include at least two publicly accessible community amenities: a childcare facility and a community room available for public use. The project may also include a small café or other small retail space that would serve the goal of helping to activate the central open space. Parking would primarily be subgrade or within at-grade podium levels wrapped with residential units. See Figure 3: Ground Floor Use Plan. Above the first level, the project sponsor proposes entirely residential uses. During development of the project, surface parking would be permitted on a portion of the site as an interim use in order to maintain a portion of the existing parking until construction of the planned parking structure is completed.

Building Design Standards and Guidelines. The DSG would be adopted as part of the proposed SUD. The DSG articulates both Standards and Guidelines for building design, open space character, and the public realm. Standards in the DSG would be mandatory, measurable and quantitative design specifications. The design guidelines would be more qualitative and flexible. The proposed Planning Code amendments (included in the SUD) and the DSG would, together, guide and control all development within the SUD after project entitlements are obtained. Subsequent submittals of proposed building designs would be evaluated for consistency with both the SUD and the DSG.

The DSG would establish controls for bulk restriction, articulation and modulation, building materials and treatment, building frontage utilization, design parameters for open space, streets, and parking and loading standards.

Parking. All development blocks would be allowed, but not required, to provide on-site parking for residents. If parking is provided above-grade, it would be primarily wrapped with residential or other active uses. See Figure 6: Parking Facilities & Street Parking Plan. The proposed project would include a minimum of 7 car-share parking spaces, meeting or exceeding Planning Code requirements, located in a limited number of on-street parking spaces, as well as buildings with podium/underground parking and the public parking facility. With exception of the townhouse homes, all residential parking would be unbundled. The proposed residential parking ratio for the entire site is 0.5 parking spaces per unit, though the parking ratios would vary from building to building. The residential parking for the project would be located in parking garages below grade at Buildings C, D, F, H and I. In addition, the proposed project would include 2 off-street loading parking spaces.

In addition to the residential parking, the base project would consider a public garage with a range of 0 to 750 spaces located at the southern portion of the site under buildings A and B.

Variants could include locating the garage at the northern portion of the site the parking garage under buildings E, F and G or above grade wrapped with residential units at Buildings A and B.

Seven proposed on-street parking would include approximately 8 truck-loading parking spaces, 8 accessible parking spaces, passenger loading areas, and 109 vehicle parking spaces within the project site.

At least 936 Class 1 bicycle parking spaces would be located either on the ground floor of each building or in the first sub-grade level of each building, and in the locations compliant with the Planning Code. The Proposed Project would include 75 Class 2 bicycle parking spaces, all of which would be located in the right-of-way adjacent to each building or in the publicly accessible open space. See Figure 6: Parking Facilities & Street Parking Plan.

Sustainability. The proposed project would establish a Sustainability Plan that outlines performance and monitoring criteria for its operation.

Project Approvals

The following is a list of the main approvals anticipated for the project, in addition to other city, state, and federal agency approvals as required.

LOCAL AGENCIES

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

- Approval of General Plan amendments.
- Approval of Planning Code Amendments (SUD) and associated Zoning Map and Height Map Amendments.
- Approval of a Development Agreement.
- Approval of Final Subdivision Map.
- Approval of street vacations, dedications and easements for public improvements, and acceptance (or delegation to Public Works Director to accept) of public improvements, as necessary

San Francisco Planning Commission

- Certification of the Final EIR.
- Approval of SUD Design Standards and Guidelines.
- Initiation and recommendation to Board of Supervisors to approve amendments to the General Plan.
- Initiation and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve Planning Code amendments adopting a Special Use District and associated Zoning Map amendments.
- Recommendation to Board of Supervisors to approve a Development Agreement.

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

- Consent to Development Agreement

San Francisco Department of Public Works

- Consent to Development Agreement
- Recommendation of street dedication
- Approval of subdivision map
- Recommendation of encroachment permits

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

- Approval of transit improvements, public improvements and infrastructure, including certain roadway improvements, bicycle infrastructure and loading zones, to the extent included in the project
- Consent to Development Agreement.

San Francisco Fire Department

- Consent to Development Agreement.

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection

- Issuance of demolition, excavation, and site/building permits