
From: Poling, Jeanie (CPC)
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 10:13 AM
To: Harry Bernstein
Subject: RE: Balboa Reservoir Project, case # 2018 - 007883 ENV

Hello Mr. Bernstein,

Thank you for your comments concerning the scope and focus of the EIR.

Sincerely,

Jeanie Poling

Senior Environmental Planner

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[San Francisco Property Information Map](#)

From: Harry Bernstein <riquerique@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2018 8:21 PM
To: Poling, Jeanie (CPC) <jeanie.poling@sfgov.org>
Subject: Balboa Reservoir Project, case # 2018 - 007883 ENV

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Ms. Jeanie Poling
San Francisco Planning Department

Dear Ms. Poling

I have been working on my scoping letter today and was only lately informed that I may have missed the submission deadline. I am sending it to you nonetheless in case it can still be considered.

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I am taking the opportunity today to write this letter for the CEQA Scoping process on the housing development at the lower Balboa Reservoir site. Please have this letter entered into the record.

) Mitigating existing conditions

City College of San Francisco has used the Balboa Reservoir for parking since this option was first offered by the PUC in 1958 – now 60 years. The portion of land available for parking has changed over the course of these years. For more than 35 years, parking was allowed only in the north reservoir basin. In 1984, the south basin was declared surplus to the needs of the Water Department. There ensued an attempt to sell the land from the south basin to a developer for single family housing, adopted by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor. However, the voters rejected the proposed development in a series of elections lasting until 1988. In the first half of 1991, a land swap gave more than 10 acres of the PUC-owned Reservoir land to CCSF.

That same year, an argument in the November 5, 1991 SF Voters' pamphlet authorized by the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors even stated:

> Fact: The 28 acres of Balboa Reservoir that City College has requested is in the process of being transferred to them by the PUC.

(See Voters' pamphlet, p. 105)

A few years later, parking for the College was extended to the south basin. The College saw the passage of two bond measures (in 2001 and 2005) allowing for the construction of a classroom building (the Multi-Use Building) on the College-owned Upper Balboa Reservoir.

This long-term parking at the Balboa Reservoir is an existing condition. On many days, especially during the first part of the semester, the lower Reservoir lot is nearly full. Without it, students might end up being turned away, with enrollment and even the survival of the College hanging in the balance. If the decision is made that the development should go ahead, it should be up to the developer to provide mitigation through making up for the lost parking. The developer has suggested something along this line, but it's not certain. The need for this mitigation should be studied.

) density, height, infrastructure

During the meetings of the Balboa Reservoir Community Advisory Committee, one of the expressed goals was to consider the project in context of the surrounding communities. Leadership of the adjacent Westwood Park neighborhood testified that the density of housing for the proposed development is roughly 10 times that of Westwood Park. Westwood Park is San Francisco's only Residential Character District. There was evidently no effort by the proposed project to take the density and character of the Westwood Park and Westwood Heights or Sunnyside Districts into account.

The existing height limits in the area of the proposed development range from 40 to 65 feet. This is understood to be 40 feet in the area of the parcel closest to Westwood Park and 65 feet in the area closer to Frida Kahlo Way. According to p. 10 of the Notice of Preparation, the developer seeks to exceed these limits. Their limit would be 45 (?) to 78 feet under the Developer's Proposed Option and up to 88 feet under the Additional Housing Option. These increases in bulk only serve to worsen the disparity of density between the proposed development and the existing neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the proposal to create a Balboa Reservoir Special Use District for this development appears to provide a means to facilitate the modified zoning with additional building height.

The Balboa Park Station Area Plan (2006-2009) estimated the number of housing units that could be constructed within its coverage area, which included the Balboa Reservoir site. This document did not advocate or recommend housing at the Reservoir site as the best use but cited it as one *possible* use. The number of 500 units was suggested for the lower Balboa Reservoir site, but it was an approximation; there was no documentation on how this number was determined. There was no number of units recommended from the Balboa Reservoir CAC or the PUC's RFQ, although many members of the public who attended the CAC meetings had the impression that the number of units being considered would be a maximum of 500. Thus it was somewhat surprising when the proposal selected was for 1100 units. The current EIR proposal cites different configurations for study (NOP, p. 10):

800 units – a reduced density alternative

1100 units – the current proposal

1300 and 1550 units – alternative higher density proposals

It is my understanding that there has not been serious consideration given to the impact of the addition of 2000 to 3000 (or more) people on the existing infrastructure – roads, traffic/congestion, utilities, deliveries, ride-hailing services (Uber, Lyft), etc. It will be necessary to come to an understanding what such a number of additional people would have on the quality of life. Yes, for the EIR, the impact of deliveries and ride-hailing services would have to be understood. The existing TDM plan (Traffic Demand Management) specifically sought to ameliorate traffic by reducing use of single vehicle trips to and from the College; this seems like an attempt to have College students, faculty and staff bear the mitigation for the new arrivals. Instead, the neighborhood traffic and parking needs must be seriously studied.

The access points to the Reservoir site and the College are currently inadequate. The situation would be worse with the presence of both the 1100+ housing units and the proposed CCSF Performing Arts Education Center. I heard a figure that \$25,000 alone would be needed to upgrade the traffic light at Ocean and Frida Kahlo Way. That is one of many adjustments that would need to be made. But as it presently exists, the present usage patterns during the school year result in near gridlock conditions on Ocean Avenue and Frida Kahlo Way at many times of the day. The current two lanes of traffic on Frida Kahlo Way are the result of a summertime adjustment effectuated by the City, down from four lanes,

possibly in order to incorporate bicycle lanes. Long traffic delays are a routine experience, affecting people from the College as well as neighborhood residents and others. Exploring the return to a four-lane road on Frida Kahlo Way could be a good first step to ameliorating traffic conditions.

) Transit

The Balboa Reservoir neighborhood is referred to as a transit-rich environment. This characterization fails to acknowledge that much of the time, but especially at peak times, transit services are at or near capacity; there is little room for expansion in public use. A survey of CCSF students from a year or two ago indicated that some 40% of students currently use public transit—some combination of BART, MUNI and perhaps other regional transit agencies. A shuttle from BART should be evaluated as a partial solution to the so-called last-mile problem, since BART is nearby yet not close to the campus, especially for people with mobility issues.

) The Balboa Reservoir as a Water Resource

Although the future Balboa Reservoir site (42 acres) was purchased from Adolph Sutro by the Spring Valley Water Company in January, 1894, ostensibly for its potential as a reservoir site. This goal the company never pursued. The City of San Francisco purchased the Water Company's holdings in 1930. The PUC allowed the land to be used for a Navy WAVES barracks in 1945-46 and for CCSF as its West Campus between 1946 and 1956. The next year, two reservoir basins were finally built, though with no connections to a water source. In 1978, the PUC determined that the two basins of the Balboa Reservoir (capacity, 150 million gallons) would not be needed as a backup water resource. Several engineering studies continued until at least 2003 to determine whether the Reservoir would indeed be needed. The PUC declared many times that it would retain the north basin and never sell it, mostly due to its potential for a water resource. This changed in 2014 when the idea of a housing development was championed by the Mayor and the voters passed two Proposition K's in support of new and rehabilitated housing in San Francisco.

In San Francisco's Richmond and Sunset districts, plans for expanding water resources in the event of a natural disaster or other calamity. This is happening in 2016-17. I ask that the Balboa Reservoir site be re-evaluated to verify that it is, in fact, no longer needed for a backup water supply. There is also the question of fire safety in the hilly neighborhoods to the north of City College (north of Monterey Boulevard). Some usage on top of an active reservoir have been contemplated in San Francisco for years—such a proposal was approved for the Balboa Reservoir during the 1980's before a downturn in the local economy made it unfeasible. Is this still a valid or necessary proposal for possible fire safety now after the Water Department (PUC) is evidently willing to dispose of the site? This matter should be studied for the EIR.

Thank you for your consideration.

Harry Bernstein