

City of Brisbane

Planning Commission

TO: Planning Commission

For the Meeting of May 18, 2016

FROM: John Swiecki, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Brisbane Baylands Deliberation Meeting #6 - Intensity of Development within the Baylands

Background:

In its deliberation meetings to date, the Planning Commission has identified key principles for future development, land uses to be considered in development of the Baylands, and key Baylands features which define the site's open space network and developable areas. The Commission further provided general direction in how land uses should be distributed across the site. As discussed during Commission deliberations, the key features shaping the distribution of land uses within the Baylands include the following:

- Create a large, connected **Open Space Network**. Baylands development is to be designed to fit within an open space network that provides continuity and flow of open space throughout the Baylands,¹ along with restoration of wetland areas. In addition, this open space network is to provide for active and passive recreation, including an extensive trails system
- Restoration of **the Roundhouse**, along with adjacent development, should reinforce the building's historic setting and use, and provide for the Roundhouse area to serve as an important community gathering place, including rail-related and educational uses and maintaining compatible development adjacent to it.
- Maximize **Transit Orientation**, including use of the Baylands to enhance access from Central Brisbane to the Bayshore Caltrain Station and other transit services within the Baylands. The primary area for transit orientation within the Baylands consists of a ½ mile radius from the Caltrain station. The highest intensity uses within the Baylands should be located within walking distance of the Caltrain Bayshore station, and uses within that area should emphasize those uses that can best take advantage of nearby transit opportunities.
- **Recognizing Other Existing Land Uses**, including:
 - **Existing Recology Tunnel Avenue facility**. Recology's existing solid waste facility would be identified as a permitted use in the area north of the Geneva Avenue

¹ Open space" as used in this staff report means (1) lands for the provision of active and passive recreation; (2) lands for the protection of resources (e.g., sensitive habitat areas); and (3) lands for the protection of public health. Site-specific developments will be provided with independent open space areas

extension, east of Caltrain; and the potential for its expansion would not be precluded.

- **Kinder Morgan Tank Farm.** While not a part of the Baylands Specific Plan area, the tank farm is nevertheless a key land use to be considered regarding appropriate adjacent land uses within the Baylands.
- **Machinery and Equipment Building.** While also not specifically part of the Baylands being considered by the Commission, this land use will remain.
- **Geneva Avenue Extension and the Candlestick Interchange².** These are long planned regional transportation improvements and the land use plan for the Baylands should acknowledge and reflect these regional transportation planning efforts.
- **Caltrain Line.** The existing Caltrain line running through the Baylands will remain. It physically divides the site along a north-south axis.
- **Lagoon Road Alignment.** Each of the concept plans and EIR alternatives propose some modification to the existing alignment of Lagoon Road, pushing it to the north. The effect of realigning Lagoon Road to the north would be to provide more direct access to the existing freeway interchange and increase the physical buffer area between the lagoon and Lagoon Road.

As discussed at the Commission's April 28 meeting, when the basic principles and key features discussed above are combined, they yield six potential development areas³ within the Baylands for which the Commission made preliminary land use recommendations (see Attachment 1). In addition, two other potential planning objectives were discussed at previous Planning Commission meetings:

- Create a world-class **Model for Sustainability.** Along with incorporating the Baylands Sustainability Framework into the General Plan, the distribution and intensity of land uses within the Baylands needs to support a healthy vibrant community, including opportunities for sustainable economic development and maintaining a healthy community, provision of recreation areas and trails, and supporting non-vehicular travel and use of transit.
- Provide the potential for **Large-scale Campus** settings, as suggested by Keyser Marston.

Discussion:

Tonight's meeting is focused on the intensity (amount of permitted development) of land uses within the Baylands. As has been made clear throughout the deliberations process, any decisions or

² The ultimate design of the Geneva Avenue extension is dependent on the type and intensity of Baylands development approved by Brisbane, and the location and design of bus rapid transit selected by the San Francisco Transportation Authority. The design of the Candlestick interchange, also depends on the type and intensity of Baylands development approved by Brisbane, as well as the design of roadways, including the Geneva Avenue extension and roads in San Francisco, leading to the interchange.

³ Areas: (1) north of the Geneva Avenue extension west of Caltrain; (2) north of the Geneva Avenue extension east of Caltrain; (3) between the Geneva Avenue extension and Visitacion Creek/daylighted creek west of Caltrain; (4) between the Geneva Avenue extension and Visitacion Creek/daylighted creek east of Caltrain; (5) south of Visitacion Creek/daylighted creek west of Caltrain; and (6) south of Visitacion Creek/daylighted creek east of Caltrain.

determinations reached this evening are subject to reconsideration and modification by the Commission in later discussions and prior to the Commission's final recommendation.

Based on the Commission's deliberations to date, staff and its consultant team prepared development concepts, including a variety of planning tools, to assist the Commission in determining appropriate development intensity and locations of uses within the Baylands. The planning tools, which will be presented at tonight's meeting, consist of maps and computer models demonstrating development patterns with prototypical building massing and heights for Baylands development. The maps and computer models will also provide concepts related to an open space framework for the Baylands into which future development will fit, as well as vehicular and non-vehicular circulation concepts. These maps and computer models can be used by the Commission to review its initial direction for the distribution of land uses from the April 28 meeting, and to refine that initial direction into a recommendation for the distribution and intensity of land uses within the Baylands.

The development concepts and planning tools to be presented reflect the Commission's direction through its April 28 meeting (see Exhibit 1), along with information presented to the Commission by Keyser Marston on April 14.

Development "Intensity" and "Density"

As noted above, the focus of tonight's Commission deliberations will be Development "intensity" and "density." These are quantitative measures used to describe the amount of much development within a given area. For non-residential land uses (e.g., commercial, office, light industrial, or R&D), development "intensity" is used to describe the amount of building square footage within an area. For residential development, "density," measured as the number of dwelling units allowed per acre (du/acre), is used to express the amount of housing development in a given area.

"Intensity" for projects as large as the Baylands is typically described as either total building square footage or "floor-area ratio" (FAR). FAR is the ratio of the total gross floor area of all buildings on a site to the total net area of the site, and is calculated based on the following formula:

$$FAR = \text{total building area (in s.f.)} \div \text{total site area (in s.f.)}$$

As can be seen from the examples below, FAR addresses the relationship between the size of a development site and the amount of building area on that site. The resulting building massing and character of development is based not only on the amount of development within a project site, but also on building height and lot coverage. The planning tools to be presented this evening will assist the Commission to address General Plan level standards for both building area and resulting building massing within the Baylands. Typically, such standards set a maximum allowable development intensity.

FAR: 1



FAR = 1.0: In each of the three examples to the left, a 60,000 s.f. building is located on a 60,000 square foot site, with a resulting FAR of 1.0, meaning that the building area is equal to the site area. Decreasing site coverage increases building heights when the floor area ratio on a site and total building area remain constant.

FAR: 2



FAR = 2.0: In each of the three examples to the left, a 120,000 s.f. building is located on a 60,000 square foot site, with a resulting FAR of 2.0, meaning that the building area is equal to twice the site area. Decreasing site coverage increases building heights when the floor area ratio on a site and total building area remain constant.

Existing Brisbane General Plan Development Intensity Standards for the Baylands

California law requires General Plans to provide specific development intensity/density standards. While defining the maximum allowable development intensity/density for a site such as the Baylands establishes an upper limit on the amount of development that cannot be exceeded, a developer's ability to achieve this maximum allowable development intensity/density is not guaranteed. The actual amount of development that may be approved must also be in compliance with General Plan policies, applicable development standards contained in the zoning ordinance, applicable public works requirements, and other City regulations⁴.

The Brisbane General Plan does not establish a specific maximum amount of development for the Baylands, but states that the maximum overall intensity of Baylands development is to be established in terms of the maximum impacts of development, including water use, wastewater generation, stormwater flow, and particularly traffic impacts, and will be "well below" the maximum allowed for individual sites within the Baylands.

As noted above, the General Plan sets forth the maximum allowable building intensity for individual sites within the Baylands, along with open space requirements for each of the land use designations within the Baylands. Site-specific FAR and open space standards are described in the General Plan as follows:

- ***Baylands Subarea***

- ***Planned Development-Trade Commercial:*** Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.4 south of Visitacion Creek and a maximum FAR of 4.8 north of the creek. A minimum of 25 percent of the area to be retained as open space/open area.
- ***Bayfront and Lagoon:*** 100 percent of the area is to be retained as open space/open area. The maximum floor area ratio is therefore 0.0.

⁴ State planning law also requires consistency between a community's General Plan development intensity/ density standards and its General Plan policies, applicable development standards contained in the zoning ordinance, applicable public works requirements, and other City regulations.

- **Northeast Bayshore Subarea**
 - *Trade Commercial*: Maximum floor area ratio of 2.0. Open space/open area to be provided per zoning ordinance requirements.
- **Beatty Subarea**
 - *Heavy Commercial*: Allowable floor area ratio of 0 - 1.0. Open space/open area to be provided per zoning ordinance requirements.
 - *Bayfront*: 100 percent of the area to be retained as open space/open area.

Potential Types of Development Intensity Standards for the Baylands

Development intensity standards for future Baylands development may be established in a variety of ways, including:

- **Maximum allowable amount of building area for the entirety of the Baylands.** A single maximum building square footage figure for buildout of the entirety of the Baylands could be established (e.g., no more than X square feet of building area may be permitted within the Baylands). While it may be helpful for the General Plan to state the maximum total building square footage for buildout for the entirety of the Baylands, determining a maximum building square footage for the entirety of the Baylands should be based on the desired character of uses as expressed by the development yield of each area within the Baylands (e.g. how tall can buildings be, how large can buildings be on a development site?).
 - **Pros:** Establishing a maximum square footage figure for buildout of the entirety of the Baylands will provide a clear limit on the amount of development to be permitted within the Baylands. Any subsequent specific plan, including its detailed building height, setback, and other development requirements and its design guidelines would be required to comply with the maximum square footage figure established for the the overall Baylands area.
 - **Cons:** Establishing a maximum square footage figure **only** for buildout of the entirety of the Baylands would not provide direction for the development intensity and character of development within defined subareas of the Baylands.
- **Maximum amount of building area for each area within the Baylands.** A maximum allowable building square footage or FAR figure for each defined subarea within the Baylands could be established. Such a maximum building square footage or FAR figure for buildout of individual portions of the Baylands should reflect the desired character of uses as expressed by the development yield of each of these areas (e.g. how tall can buildings be, how large can buildings be on a development site?). The planning tools to be presented this evening will assist the Commission express the desired character and resulting development yield for specific areas of the Baylands. If the Commission chooses to establish the maximum allowable square footage figure for each area within the Baylands, the total buildout for the entirety of the Baylands would be the sum of the maximum buildout of each area.
 - **Pros:** Establishing a maximum square footage or FAR figure for each defined subarea within the Baylands would provide clear direction for each area's development intensity and desired character of uses. Any subsequent specific plan, including its detailed building height, setback, and other development requirements and design guidelines would be required to comply with the maximum square

footage or FAR figure for each of the defined subareas of the Baylands. Establishing a maximum square footage or FAR figure for each defined subarea of the Baylands would also set a limit on the total amount of development within the entirety of the Baylands.

- **Cons:** Establishing a maximum square footage or FAR figure for each defined subarea of the Baylands would limit the ability to shift development intensity between subareas within the Baylands, even if the maximum total amount of development within the entirety of the Baylands was not exceeded.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Interim Direction through the April 28 Deliberations Meeting

Attachment 1

Interim Planning Commission Direction for the Baylands as of the April 28, 2016 Deliberations Meeting

1. Basic principles for development of the Baylands

- “The City of Brisbane and its Mountain will remain a place independent and distinct, with a small town quality and a volunteer spirit, where diversity is welcomed and everyone can participate in town meetings, and elected officials carefully consider the desires and needs of the citizens, and govern through circumscribed rules and regulations only as required for the public health and safety and the protection of the environment.” *Brisbane General Plan, Chapter 3, page 1.*
- “Though small town Brisbane cannot be duplicated in the Baylands, the Community’s values will be woven throughout the development. Buildings will be aesthetically creative, enhance open space and public areas, convey the appearance of an organized/independent development process rather than large scale development based on generic standards, and generally enhance the aesthetic and cultural value of Brisbane.” *Sustainability Framework, page 73.*
- Preserve large unbroken blocks of open space that provide for restoration of wetland areas and provide continuity and flow of open space throughout the Baylands.
 - “Open space,” as used in these principles means:
 - Lands for the provision of active and passive recreation;
 - Lands for the protection of resources (e.g., sensitive habitat areas); and
 - Lands for the protection of public health.
 - Site-specific developments will be provided with independent open space areas.
- Protect key habitat areas, including the Brisbane Lagoon and potential habitat areas adjacent to it, Icehouse Hill, and wetlands.
- Restore the Roundhouse, provide for rail-related and educational uses at the Roundhouse, and maintain compatible development adjacent to it.
- Maintain a transit orientation for new development, including use of the Baylands to enhance access from Central Brisbane to the Bayshore Caltrain Station and other transit services within the Baylands.
- Incorporate the principles of the Sustainability Framework for the Baylands into future development.
 - Use the Sustainability Framework as a reference document in the review of the Baylands proposed General Plan Amendment, Concept Plans, Specific Plan(s) and site-specific developments; and
 - Incorporate provisions of the Sustainability Framework into General Plan policy and conditions of approval for Specific Plan(s) and site-specific developments.

- Ensure that the site is safe for the future uses approved for development by the City in relation to:
 - Site remediation and Title 27 landfill closure;
 - Seismic and geologic hazards;
 - Flooding, including hazards related to sea level rise;
 - Traffic safety and emergency response; and
 - Provision of public safety services.
- Provide appropriate infrastructure and site amenities for each increment of development within the Baylands.
 - Each increment of development must be provided with appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities, and site amenities.
 - Adequate water supply must be ensured.
 - Development phasing shall include specific milestones for provision of environmental site mitigation (e.g., remediation and landfill closure, open space dedication, habitat restoration, transit and roadway improvements, and infrastructure) and other development requirements.

2. Preliminary Land Use Recommendations

a. Non-Residential Land Uses

- Recology
 - Recology’s solid waste processing facility should be included in the description of General Plan land uses for the Beatty subarea, and the future expansion of Recology within the Baylands should be retained as a potential option.
- Renewable Energy Generation
 - Renewable energy generation should be included in the description of General Plan land uses for the Baylands, both as a freestanding use (e.g., solar farm) and in combination with other uses (e.g., roof-mounted solar panels on an office building or energy production at the Recology solid waste facility).
- Light Industrial, Warehouse, Research & Development
 - While inclusion of these uses in the General Plan land use description can remain, the General Plan should state a preference for small-scale (rather than large-scale) light industrial and warehouse/distribution uses, such as “craft” uses.
- Retail
 - Retail use should remain in the General Plan land use discussion. The size and scale (e.g., neighborhood, community, or large scale) of retail development will be discussed in subsequent deliberations.
- Office

- Office use should remain in the General Plan land use discussion. The location and development intensity of office development will be discussed in subsequent deliberations.
- Hotels and Conference Facilities
 - Hotel use should be included in the General Plan land use discussion. The location and development intensity of hotel development will be discussed in subsequent deliberations with a preference for locating hotel uses in proximity to the Bayshore Caltrain station, as discussed in the Sustainability Framework.
- Schools
 - While trade schools and educational institutions aimed at adults would be appropriate within the Baylands, the potential for locating K-12 schools within the Baylands is tied to the potential for housing. Schools should not be located within the Baylands in the absence of Baylands housing. Should housing be included in the range of uses for the Baylands, additional discussion of the potential for schools would be undertaken by the Commission.
- Arena/Concert Venue
 - While a large-scale sports arena or concert venue would not be appropriate within the Baylands, a small scale concert venue such as an outdoor space near the Roundhouse that could also be used for community events might be appropriate within the Baylands.
- Commercial Recreation
 - The potential for commercial recreation use should be included in the the General Plan's land use description for the Baylands.

2. Residential Land Use

- Residential use within the Baylands could be incorporated into future Baylands development, subject to addressing the following issues:
 - Impacts on community character
 - Connectivity to the Brisbane community
 - Geotechnical safety
 - Subsurface hydrology
 - Site Remediation
 - Traffic concerns

3. Distribution of Land Uses

- **Area 1: North of the Geneva Avenue Extension, East of Caltrain**
 - **Light Industrial.** This will permit new light industrial uses in the area between the existing Recology facility and the Geneva Avenue Extension should the facility not expand, and would provide for the Recology facility to expand without requiring an amendment to the General Plan should the City approve expansion in the future.

- **Area 2: Between the Geneva Avenue Extension and Visitacion Creek, East of Caltrain**
 - **Renewable Energy Generation.** In addition, development that is compatible with generation of renewable energy may be considered.
- **Area 3: South of Visitacion Creek, East of Caltrain**
 - **Open Space.** Commercial recreation uses may also be considered within this area.
- **Area 4: South of Visitacion Creek, West of Caltrain**
 - **Light Industrial.** Service and light industrial uses within the Industrial Way industrial park would be permitted to continue. However, existing buildings would be replaced with new, well-designed buildings over time.
- **Area 5: Between the Geneva Avenue Extension and Visitacion Creek, West of Caltrain; Adjacent to the Roundhouse**
 - **Research and Development.** A combination of R&D and open space would be appropriate within this area.
- **Area 6: North of the Geneva Avenue Extension, West of Caltrain**
 - **Research and Development.** A combination of R&D and open space would be appropriate within this area.

