

January 13, 2014

Mr. Jonathan Scharfman
Universal Paragon Corporation
150 Executive Park Blvd, Suite 1180
San Francisco, CA 94134

Re: Proposed Brisbane Baylands Development, Brisbane, CA

Dear Mr. Scharfman,

On behalf of the members of the SPUR Project Review Committee, we would like to thank your team for bringing the proposed development of Brisbane Baylands to our group for consideration and review at our September 17, 2013 meeting and for presenting the project at the November 14, 2013 Lunchtime Forum. We are writing in response to the September meeting of the Project Review Committee and to the Brisbane Baylands Draft Environmental Impact Report.

The mission of the SPUR Project Review Committee is to consider projects that are of citywide importance and to evaluate them according to criteria related to land use, public realm interface, building design and environmental effects. In all cases, we are seeking a combination of excellent planning and design solutions that will ensure the positive contribution of each project to a safe, visually appealing, and vibrant urban setting for the people who live and work in San Francisco.

After our review and discussion, we provide the following specific comments for your information and action:

The Project Review Committee has historically focused its review process on developments located within San Francisco city limits. However, in keeping with SPUR's growing interest and activity in Bay Area regional planning, this committee agreed that it was appropriate to comment on this unique development site. Both the scale of the development and its adjacency to the City's southern border, along major regional transportation routes, may have profound impacts on San Francisco proper, and will most certainly have significant impacts on the Peninsula over the next several generations.

Land Use and Transportation

The 680-acre Brisbane Baylands is one of the largest brownfield sites under majority private ownership in the San Francisco Bay Area. The plan calls for reclamation and remediation of the former Southern Pacific railyard and the municipal landfill, which will

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in part be funded by development proceeds. The 12-million square feet of mixed-use, transit-oriented-development will host a tech-hub, office and retail, mixed-income housing, a charter high-school and recreation fields, solar farms, as well as approximately 200+ acres of public open space, and provide some 20,000 permanent jobs at build-out.

By concentrating the high-density uses in the northernmost districts—housing on the former railyard in the northwest quadrant of the site, office and R&D facilities on the former landfill in the northeast quadrant—the TOD plan will provide some 4,000 housing units within a 10-15 minute walk of 6 million sf of commercial development. Retail will be introduced along Third Street and Geneva Avenue, easily accessible by public transportation. The project sponsor is working closely with the various transportation entities to maximize the potential of a new multi-modal station that will connect CalTrain, the Geneva Avenue BRT, and the T-Third light rail, as well as SamTrans and MUNI buses. Furthermore, the project would construct an extensive biking network, including a missing segment of the Bay Trail and connections to other regional bike routes.

The goals of the Brisbane Baylands project are very much in keeping with SPUR's sustainable design principals, as well as SB 375 goal of reducing vehicle miles travelled and the associated greenhouse gases. We strongly encourage transportation-oriented development throughout the region. On a site already served by several major public transit arteries, such development is imperative.

We understand that the topography and history constrain the allocation of uses throughout the site, concentrating the residential and commercial uses in the north and open space to the south. That being said, however, we are concerned that this assignment of use may introduce a tension between the established community of Brisbane, south of the lagoon, and what will be its new residents and businesses to the north. We encourage the project sponsor to seek out ways to mitigate the bifurcation of the population of Brisbane as it moves forward with development plans.

Open Space and Environmental

The bulk of the open space will be located in the southern half of the site, in close proximity to the Brisbane lagoon. The passive and active, publically accessible open space includes a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bike trails, a community sports field, a regional sports park, a new segment of the Bay Trail, the Lagoon Park with a tidal/freshwater wetland, coastal meadow and upland habitat restoration, and a wildlife refuge. In addition, a network of open space throughout the community will connect residential and commercial development areas to the natural environs surrounding the Brisbane Lagoon.

The project sponsors aspire to transform the existing brownfield into a zero-net waste community. Beyond the site remediation, transportation enhancements, and ecological restoration mentioned above, the project's sustainability plans include a the introduction of a large solar farm and other renewable energy sources, an advanced wastewater and stormwater system, and following best practices in building design.

SPUR agrees that the establishment of easily accessible open space is a valuable and necessary part of any successful community. That over 40% of the Brisbane Baylands project is dedicated to open space in the form of wetlands restoration and the transformation of the industrial landfill into extensive, usable green space, is a notable and laudable component of the plan. We are especially impressed by the thought given to the transition zones, from existing industrial uses (rail right-of-way and tank farm) through renewable energy uses (solar farm) to urban agriculture and finally public open space.

SPUR is very concerned with the effects of global warming and resultant sea-level rise in the Bay area. The Brisbane Baylands shows an exceptional effort to address those issues with its goals of reclamation and enhancement of the natural land-forms, significant reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions, and a zero-net waste community.

Conclusion

We appreciate the trade-offs inherent in redeveloping a site of this size and complexity, and we understand that the ultimate decision, regarding the plans, is solely in the hands of the City of Brisbane and its voters. But while land use decisions remain the province of the local governance, the effects of those decisions impact the entire region. It is with these impacts in mind that the SPUR Project Review committee declares its support of the proposed development of the Brisbane Baylands site. We encourage the project sponsor to use this incredible opportunity to make this a model of sustainability and community.

We thank you for committing your time and resources to the presentation at SPUR, appreciate the fact that you have presented your proposal to us at an early stage in its development so that you may take our recommendations into consideration. We will follow further refinements of this project with great interest and invite you to keep us informed on its progress.

Consideration for Endorsement

Should you intend to request SPUR to consider this project for endorsement, you should contact the Committee co-chairs at the appropriate time. Endorsement by SPUR is reserved for projects of the highest quality and significance to the city. Consideration for endorsement begins with a formal response by projects sponsors to this review letter, including an update on any significant changes to the project program or design since the project was initially presented at SPUR. The project is then taken up for discussion by an endorsement subcommittee of SPUR board members who serve on committees in the areas of project review, urban policy, housing, sustainability, and transportation. We normally require a month's lead-time to schedule a meeting of the endorsement subcommittee.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for questions/clarifications.

Sincerely,

Charmaine Curtis Mary Beth Sanders Reuben Schwartz
SPUR Project Review Committee Co-Chairs

cc: SPUR Board of Directors

cc: John A. Swiecki, City of Brisbane