

## MEMORANDUM

DATE June 20, 2013  
 TO Vic Randall  
 City of Benicia  
 FROM Isabelle Minn  
 RE **Community Workshop #1 Summary**

This memorandum summarizes the first community workshop for the Benicia Urban Waterfront Enhancement and Master Plan, which took place on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2013. A site walk was held at the Project Site prior to the workshop. Approximately 50 people participated in the walk around the site and a discussion of the opportunities and constraints. Approximately 85 community members attended the community workshop, which was held at the Benicia Community Center. Mayor Elizabeth Patterson began the meeting by introducing the members of the Project Team and giving an introduction to the project. David Early, Principal-in-Charge of The Planning Center | DC&E, then gave a brief overview about the goals and schedule of the project. Isabelle Minn, Project Manager for The Planning Center | DC&E presented a summary of the history of the site, the various planning efforts that will influence the project, and the results of the Opportunities and Constraints analysis that the Project Team has conducted. The presentation concluded with a synopsis of the types of improvements that have been suggested for the site and outlined the types of improvements that would be allowed and appropriate.

Following the presentation, community members were given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the project. The community members were then divided up into nine small groups and asked to participate in a facilitated small group exercise. During the exercise the participants were asked to discuss the types of uses and improvements they would like to see on the site and to identify on the maps where these uses/improvements should be located. Groups then shared their thoughts and recommendations with the larger group.

The small groups all shared many common ideas about the vision for the site and the types of improvements they would like to see. The majority of the groups were supportive of creating an entry to the park at the corner of 1st Street and B Street. As part of the entry, there is a desire for public art to be used to create a gateway to the site and to design a space that takes advantage of the topography and creates steps down into the green area from the street (similar to the promenade). In addition, the majority of the groups supported formalized parking along B Street and expanding the size of the green.



Public art was mentioned by all groups and envisioned as a way to highlight the history and biology of the site. Many groups suggested that art should be kinetic and/or educational and should be integrated into planning for the site. The groups all envisioned walkways/boardwalks and overlook platforms in the marsh areas, with a variety of locations and orientations. The majority of the groups also highlighted their support for the restoration and maintenance of the marsh. A number of groups mentioned maintaining and/or possibly expanding the beach access.

All of the groups were supportive of having a non-motorized watercraft launch at the site, and differed only on the suggested locations. Multiple groups suggested that there should be parking, storage, and bathrooms/showers incorporated into the design of a non-motorized watercraft launch.

Following is a summary of each groups' recommendations.

#### Group # 1

- Make a park entrance at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and B Street, and design it to be inviting
- Continue the Promenade to the east side
- Use the existing topography to create a "stepped entrance" to the green, which could perhaps include a wind wall and create an amphitheater like area on 2 sides
- Continue the Bay Trail through the park along the edge of the marsh
- Create boardwalks with overlooks out into the marsh. Include benches in the overlooks to encourage seating to look out over the water
- Create a boat launch at the existing beach area
- Locate a bathroom at the Depot
- Integrate public art into the landscape
- Lack of consensus: swimming, removing/replacing wetlands

#### Group #2

- Preserve the existing community open space and expand the grassy "green" as much as possible (utilize the parking areas)
- Restore the marsh within the whole area
- Create a trail walk along the historic train right-of-way (straight line)
- Create marsh overlooks in two locations
- Incorporate art that interacts with the site and highlights and reveals the history of the site
- Complement the surrounding environment
- Incorporate history into the education at the site
- Finish the east side of the 1st Street Promenade to mirror what is existing on the west side



- Create steps down to the green from 1st Street similar to the design on the west side of the promenade

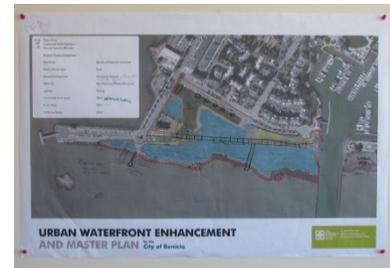
### Group #3

- Remove the invasive plants throughout the site and in the marsh (esp. arundo)
- Keep the beach in the location it is and maintain the Palm Pirate Cove
- Develop a trail/boardwalk that traverses the wetland area and includes overlooks/observation points
- Formalize the parking along B Street
- Extend the grassy "green" to encompass the flat area adjacent to the marina
- Develop a boat launching ramp adjacent to the Marina to mitigate traffic at the promenade and avoid the swift water and piers
- Plant native grasses in the flat area south of the Depot
- Create a formalized entrance to the park at the corner of 1st Street and B Street
- Incorporate environmentally responsive art throughout the site
- Develop a summer art contest for the sculpture in the site
- Extend the bike trail along B Street and encourage bicycle traffic to stay along the roadway
- Create ADA compliant paths/boardwalks
- Maintain and expand the existing beach



### Group #4

- Include Kinetic sculptures to interact with the wind and provide shelter
- Recreate the historic pier that extended from 1st Street (remove the existing pilings)
- Expand the beach area and provide non-motorized boat access
- Maintain the existing dog access at the beach
- Incorporate storage/lockers for kayaks adjacent to the beach
- Develop a trail (boardwalk) along the historic train right-of-way
- Create boardwalks/overlooks that extend into the marsh
- Plant native grasses in the area in south of the Depot
- Incorporate an interpretive nature/history center into the Depot, with photos of the existing site, etc.
- Develop an entrance for the park at the intersection of 1st Street and B Street, incorporating steps that tier down from 1st Street.
- Maintain the grassy green as an area for events and assembly
- Formalize the parking along B Street
- Place shade trees and benches along B Street
- Develop a viewing area at the east end of B Street near the harbor masters office



**Group # 5**

- Maintain the natural habitat along the water's edge
- Create a path/walkway along the top edge of the marsh
- Direct the Bay Trail bike path along B Street
- Create boardwalks/bridges through marsh to viewing points
- Place the non-motorized boat launch at either the end of 1st Street or B Street
- Create an Entryway at the corner of 1st Street and B Street, incorporate art
- Make the whole area ADA accessible
- Integrate art into the plan for the park
- Use artwork along the pathway to highlight the history, geology of the site, consider art tiles to represent the history of the area
- Create quiet areas for people to sit and enjoy
- Incorporate art onto the historic piers
- The group was divided on having dogs off leash and using the beach



**Group #6**

- Create a boardwalk through the marsh to an elevated viewing platform. Integrate educational and artistic features
- Create a non-motorized watercraft launch area adjacent to the marina or south of the Depot
- Explore current Depot conceptual plan for plaza area for adequate launch area for non-motorized boats
- Restore the marsh and remove the invasive plants
- Plant trees for nesting birds (native)
- Create a trail along the railroad right-of-way
- Incorporate benches into the green area
- Create more parking on the flat area south of B Street and east of the green
- Expand the beach access



**Group #7**

- Involve art and artists in the planning process, and incorporate art throughout the site
- Incorporate solar panel technology into the parking areas
- Develop a bike/walking trail along the edge of the marsh
- Create boardwalks and overlooks in the marsh that are only for walking and observing wildlife
- Develop a non-motorized watercraft launch adjacent to the marina
- Incorporate showers into the site bathrooms for kayakers
- Create a formal entry at the 1st Street and B Street entrance that incorporates terraced steps
- Incorporate educational/interpretive signage along the trails



- Integrate art into stormwater management features and habitat restoration
- Create a lookout tower
- Don't make it look commercial; Design should not interfere w/habitat

**Group #8**

- Create an entry plaza at the corner of 1st Street and B street that creates and identify for the park by utilizing public are and creating a sense of place
- Include an information center as part of the entry plaza
- Include trees and picnic tables in the park
- Widen the existing beach access and maintain the dog-friendly environment
- Clean up the beach (especially remove the sharp debris)
- Create a trail that follows the historic train right-of-way (boardwalk in the marsh)
- Create overlooks that jet out into the marsh from the train trail
- Maintain the piers to preserve the history of the site
- Include restrooms adjacent to the Depot and the Marina edge of the park
- Incorporate site specific art
- Include child-friendly activities



**Group #9**

- Develop small boat access via the Marina channel
- Create a new picnic area adjacent to the Marina, and scatter other picnic areas throughout the site
- Create a plaza area near the 1st Street and B Street intersection. Utilize an oval shape so that the area is similar to a stage
- Formalize the B Street Parking
- Utilize art to create attractive and creative wind breaks
- Create overlooks out into the marsh area
- Develop a narrow earthen trail along the beach/waterfront
- Expand the beach area at the end of 1st Street and clean it up
- Create a boat drop off area in the area south of the Depot
- Include lights on jetty
- Create a nature walk interact with wetland
- Remove the pylons/piers
- Improve the parking along B Street

