



Richard Bangert

View of the Seaplane Lagoon at Alameda Point, looking toward San Francisco, showing the location of proposed De-Pave Park adjacent to a wetland on VA property, with the ferry terminal in the foreground.

De-Pave Park Slated to Receive Planning Grant

Richard Bangert

Alameda's proposed De-Pave Park project has made the short list for this year's grant funding from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. The Restoration Authority Board will hear staff recommendations and provide input at its Feb. 25 meeting, with authorization coming at its April meeting.

Of this year's 18 applicants, six have been selected for funding. The recommended award for De-Pave Park is \$800,000. This amount is expected to cover the cost of developing a master plan, as well as the first level of construction drawings.

"When fully designed and constructed, the project will create approximately 18 acres of habitats, including subtidal areas, tidal wetlands, and uplands," the staff report states. "The park will be designed to evolve with sea level rise to include a growing amount of baylands with continued public access from a raised boardwalk. Staff anticipates proposing to provide partial funding, which would support the City of Alameda in conducting a master plan process and developing 30% design plans over the next two years," the report states.

The De-Pave Park tidal wetland at Alameda Point will inte-

grate with the adjacent wetland on the Veterans Affairs (VA) property that is currently undergoing expansion and restoration.

This is the second attempt by Amy Wooldridge, the city's Recreation and Park Director, to secure a planning grant from the restoration authority. Prior to submitting a grant application in the Fall of 2020, the city enlisted the help of landscape design company CMG to help bolster the application with more details on how the wetland park may look. The vision plan drafted by CMG explores how the existing concrete and shoreline boulders could be repurposed

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Planning Board Considers How to Permit Housing on Park and Webster Streets

Karin Jensen

At its Feb. 14 meeting, the Planning Board held a Housing Element workshop to review and comment on a proposed zoning code amendment to permit and encourage housing development along Park and Webster streets. Housing units along these corridors would help accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA).

Background

The Housing Element is Alameda's Housing Plan which the city is updating for the 2023-2031 period. The city must identify lands to accommodate over 5,353 new units during this period per State of California RHNA requirements.

Despite long-standing policy to encourage residential, mixed-use on Park and Webster streets, no one has built new housing in either area since the adoption of the multi-family prohibition in 1973. City Planning staff estimates that 250 new units could be built if the city adopts zoning amendments to remove constraints to multi-family housing along these corridors.

Staff Recommendation

The draft amendments would encourage and facilitate housing by:

- Permitting multi-family housing
- Permitting shared housing, transitional housing, supportive housing, senior assisted living, and low barrier navigation centers by right
- Eliminating residential density standards to encourage small-

er residential units; and

- Modifying existing height limits to support multi-family housing

The draft amendments proposed adjusting the height limits as follows:

- Park Street: Increase the height limit for side streets from 40 to 60 feet since promising housing opportunities are on the side streets. The current zoning is already 60 feet for properties facing Park Street.
- Webster Street: Maintain a three-story, 45-foot height limit in the historic core area (Central to Lincoln avenues) and allow gradual height increases for each block radiating from the core.

Public Comment

Public comment generally supported concentrating increased housing density along non-historic sections of Park and Websters streets. These areas are walkable and on AC Transit bus lines, and increased foot traffic would add new customers for local businesses.

Linda Asbury of the West Alameda Business Association (WABA) noted that the Planning staff worked with WABA to develop proposed height limits for Webster Street. However, the staff proposal did not precisely match WABA's recommendations. She asked the Board to recommend to City Council that the zoning amendments conform to WABA's proposals and said, "We are trying to avoid a sunless wind tunnel in our district."

Christopher Buckley of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) also

urged a three-story height limit for the historical portions of Park and Webster streets, saying taller buildings in those areas would compromise the areas' sense of time and place.

However, Harvey Rosenthal, the owner of Neptune Plaza shopping center, objected to Neptune Plaza's height being the same as the Webster Street historic core. He said that its 1990s design is not historical, and Central Avenue traffic separates the Plaza from the core. He requested zoning to allow five housing stories over the commercial ground floor.

Andrew Thomas, the City of Alameda's Planning, Building, and Transportation Director, clarified that the staff's proposal compromised between WABA's and Rosenthal's requests.

Board Discussion

Board members debated whether Neptune Plaza should be part of the shopping center zone, which would allow it to build more housing, or the Webster Street zone. They also discussed whether there should be consistent or tailored height limits for Park and Webster streets and the possibility of doing shadow studies.

All generally agreed that the city should allow multi-family housing along Park and Webster streets and that the current standard of 21 units per acre is too low.

Next Steps

Planning staff will continue to work with the downtown business association and WABA and review all comments received to create a second draft zoning proposal.



Facebook

Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan passed away last November after being struck by a car.

City Council Votes in Favor of Renaming Constitution Way to Wilma Chan Way

Karin Jensen

At its Feb. 15 meeting, City Council voted to rename Constitution Way to Wilma Chan Way in honor of the late Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan, who tragically died after being struck by an automobile while crossing Shore Line Drive on Nov. 3 last year.

Wilma Chan's Legacy

Chan was an Alameda resident for 27 years. In their petition letter, Chan's children, Daren Chan and Jennifer Chan, described her as a true Alamedan who championed affordable health care, childcare, housing, immigrant rights, senior services, and lifting people from poverty.

"She loved Alameda for all that it had to offer including a safe neighborhood, great public education system and a true sense of community," wrote Chan's children in the letter sent to Alameda City Manager Eric Levitt ("Wilma Chan's children asks city to rename street after former County Board Supervisor," Feb. 10). "As a public servant, her service representing the people of Alameda on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and in the California State Assembly has left an extraordinary legacy in our community."

— Chan's children to AlamedaCityManager Eric Levitt

Oddie all spoke in glowing support of the renaming proposal. Mayor Ezzy Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Malia Vella, and Councilmembers Tony Daysog and Trish Herrera Spencer felt that the magnitude of Chan's accomplishments warranted making an exception to the City's Naming Policy.

Councilmember John Knox White abstained. He said that while he revered Chan highly, he was concerned that the city had received a petition from more than 1000 Alamedans asking the council to rename a park named after a racist Alameda mayor, yet the council had not acted. He felt that the council should think about how it uses its discretionary power and what happens when it uses it in some places and not in others.

Procedural Requirements

To rename Constitution Way, City Council chose to waive specific procedural requirements of the Council's Street Naming Policy, including that:

1. One or more City residents, business owners, or property owners submit the petition, including at least 500 resident signatories or 50% + 1 signatories of resident and business property owners on the street

2. There is a public process, including outreach, public meetings, and a recommendation by the Planning Board

3. The individual has been deceased for at least three years

City Planning staff determined that changing the name of Constitution Way would otherwise be straightforward. Only one unoccupied property, owned by the East Bay Municipal Utility District, has a Constitution Way address.

Discussion

Six public speakers, including former City Councilmembers Lena Tam and Jim Oddie, former County Supervisor Alice Lai Bitker, County Supervisor Dave Brown, and Sarah

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In the final vote, Ashcraft, Vella, Daysog, and Herrera Spencer voted in favor of the renaming. Knox White abstained.

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Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:48	17:57
Feb. 25	6:47	17:58
Feb. 26	6:45	17:59
Feb. 27	6:44	18:00
Feb. 28	6:43	18:01
March 1	6:41	18:02
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Soli Deo Gloria will perform with Orchestra Gloria under the baton of Allen H Simon in a concert of transcendent music ushering souls into the next world featuring the famous Requiem by Domenico Cimarosa and sacred works by Heinrich Schütz. The concert takes place **Sun, Mar 6** at **St. Joseph Basilica** (1109 Chestnut St.) at 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 (general) and \$25 (student/senior) at the door; discount for advance purchase. Purchase tickets at <https://events.eventgroove.com/event/At-The-Threshold-59528> or call 888/SDG-SONG (888-734-7664).

Soli Deo Gloria is a San Francisco Bay Area auditioned soprano, alto, tenor and bass choir dedicated to the performance of masterworks of the sacred repertoire in a concert setting. The choir's membership is drawn from six Bay Area counties and rehearses in Alameda. Proof of vaccination will be required before entry, and audience members will have to be masked. For more information on the choir, visit <https://sdgloria.org>.

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