



Richard Bangert

These wetlands at Alameda Point will be restored and enhanced under a new service contract.

Wetlands Project Moves Forward

Richard Bangert

On Aug. 7, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a service contract to Adanta, Inc. of Napa to expand and enhance an existing wetlands on the Veterans Affairs (VA) property at Alameda Point. The wetlands project is being implemented to offset impacts to wetlands areas elsewhere on the VA property where a health clinic, offices and a columbarium cemetery will be built.

"The four-year contract, valued at up to \$2,373,044, includes development, seed collection, propagation, restoration and enhancement to ensure the wetlands is completely established as a self-sustaining tidal marsh at the VA Alameda Point site," states the Corps of Engineers August 14 news release.

"In total, 8 acres of new tidal marsh will be installed and established, as will 3.3 acres of tidal transitional habitat; and 14.8 acres of existing tidal wetlands will be enhanced." Seed collection and preparation is scheduled to start this summer. The work is expected to be completed in 2025.

One-third of the wetlands impacts of the VA project will not be offset at Alameda Point. The Corps of Engineers will purchase credits in the San Francisco Bay Wetland Mitigation Bank for 3.6 acres of impacts. The mitigation bank manages a wetlands restoration project in Redwood City funded by Bay Area projects that impact wetlands. The credit purchase detail is not mentioned in the news release.

The Corps of Engineers and VA websites have not posted their 355-page "Final Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan." Details of the plan, including the mitigation credit purchase, were learned by obtaining a copy from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, the state agency that approved the plan. No explanation was given for the credit purchase.

A key feature of the self-sustaining design is a tidal inlet in the adjacent rock seawall to allow Bay water to continually maintain a healthy marsh ecosystem. The tides flowing through the new inlet will enter a network of channels.

"The pilot channel system is designed to emulate the structure and function of a well-developed slough channel system in a natural, mature tidal salt marsh of similar size," according to the VA's wetlands plan prepared by H. T.

Harvey & Associates, in collaboration with HDR Engineering, Inc.

Another key feature of the plan is a transition zone. "The created transition zone will provide the created tidal marsh with resilience to climate change by providing space for the tidal marsh to spread vertically upslope when sea level rises," states the plan.

The sea level rise zone will feature a complex mixture of vegetation that will include flowering and seeding plants that benefit birds and insects, as well as dense grasses, herbs, and shrubs to provide long-term weed resistance.

Due to the poor amount of organic matter currently in the transition zone, the top 12 inches of soil will receive composted green waste to bring the soil to the optimal 2 percent of organic matter at the beginning.

As the new vegetation matures, it will provide a self-sustaining amount of decaying plant matter. The soil for construction of the runway area was dredged from the Bay, and lack of organic matter in the sandy soil is the main reason the vegetation in the old runway area is sketchy.

As part of the project, the existing wetlands, comprising nearly 15 acres will see the removal of the invasive non-native ice plant and Algerian sea lavender. "In the restored condition, species such as gumplant, seaside arrow grass, alkali heath, and salt marsh sand spurry (Spergularia marina) will be established in patches within the marsh," the plan states.

Plants for the tidal marsh will be grown by a native plant nursery using parts, such as stems, gathered from existing Bay Area plants. But native plants in the historic sandy transition zones around the Bay's tidal marshes are rare today.

Therefore, the contractor will be seeking to acquire plants and seeds for the sea level rise transition zone from other parts of California from the northwest to the Central Valley.

Work was originally scheduled to begin last September but was delayed for unknown reasons. The wetlands contract is the first construction contract to be awarded for the VA Alameda Point Project.

On the other hand, no contracts for construction of the clinic and columbarium have been awarded yet, even though Congress has appropriated \$113 million for the facilities. The 2021 budget request for another \$152.8 million, if

Plants for the tidal marsh will be grown by a native plant nursery using parts, such as stems, gathered from existing Bay Area plants.

approved, will cover all of the funding necessary for the clinic, first phase of the cemetery and associated infrastructure.

The property is located in the former Navy aircraft runway area. The Corps of Engineers is responsible for managing large VA construction projects. Meanwhile, the City of Alameda is in the early planning stages for a shoreline wetlands park, dubbed DePave Park, that will connect to the VA wetlands.

Richard Bangert post stories and photos about Alameda Point environmental issues on his blog [Alameda Point Environmental Report](https://alamedapointenviro.com) <https://alamedapointenviro.com>

Distance Learning off to Rocky Start

Rafael Arredondo

Last week, classrooms were silent as schools across the island opened with distance learning. Although students weren't physically on their respective campuses, they faced a variety of issues during the first two days of the school year.

Zoom-bombings were one of several problems that occurred last week. A Zoom-bombing is when one or more individuals, who are not assigned to the class in progress, show up to a Zoom call with intent to sabotage and disrupt. Over 30 instances were documented on the first day alone, several of which occurred at Encinal High School (EHS).

Classes such as biology, computer science, art and english were disrupted. The disturbances included profanity, hate speech and inappropriate images. Student response ranged from shock to laughter. One teacher, having already had a serious conversation about Zoom-bombings with her class, immediately kicked out the culprit while students watched

New Housing Measure on Upcoming Ballot

Ekene Ikeme

Alameda voters will decide whether to allow construction of multi-family housing units in Alameda in the upcoming November election.

The ordinance will be on the ballot as Measure Z. Passing Measure Z would repeal Article 26 of the City Charter, which prohibits multiple dwelling units from being built.

The Measure Z question states, "Shall the measure amending the City Charter to repeal the prohibition against the building of multi-family housing in Alameda and amending the City Charter and the General Plan to repeal the citywide density limitation of one housing unit per 2,000 square feet of land be adopted?"

Alameda voters passed Measure A, which became Article 26, in 1973. The initial measure had two parts. First, the prohibition of multiple dwelling units. Second, was an exception to the first part to allow Alameda Housing Authority to replace existing low-cost housing units and to create a proposed Senior Citizens low cost housing complex pursuant to Article XXV of the City Charter.

A second Measure A in 1991 adopted the rule that permitted one housing unit per 2,000 square feet of land. The three parts were voted into the City Charter as Sections 26.1, 26.2 and 26.3.

In December 2018, Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft appointed a subcommittee to recommend potential revisions to the City Charter. The subcommittee decided to investigate Article 26. City staff released a report that determined Article 26 does not comply with state law.

"California Government Code Section 65583(c)(1) states that the city's General Plan and Zoning must 'facilitate and encourage the development of a variety of types of housing for all income levels, including multifamily rental housing,'" stated the report, authored by Andrew Thomas, the city's planning director.

The report also states that Article 26 undermines the City's ability to implement adopted General Plan policies including expanding the City's supply of affordable housing for extremely low- to moderate-income households and ensuring equal housing

opportunities to prevent housing discrimination in the local market.

The Planning Board agreed. At its Jan. 13 meeting, boardmembers said, "Measure A's 'one size fits all' standard does not make sense for Alameda," according to a City Council memorandum.

City staff gave the Council five recommendations to move forward ("Council Subcommittee Exploring Housing Rules," May 14). First, keep Article 26 in its current form. Second, remove Article 26 entirely from the City Charter. Third, eliminate Section 26.1, but leave section 26.3. Fourth, modify Section 26.1 and 26.3 to recognize state mandates. Fifth, which was labeled option 4B in the staff report, was to eliminate Section 26.1, but modify Section 26.3.

The Council voted 4-1 to remove Article 26 from the City Charter at its June 2 meeting ("Charter Amendment Headed for Ballot" June 11). Councilmember Tong Daysog had the lone dissenting vote. He said it was an abuse of power to remove Measure A without signature gathering. A signature gathering effort put Measure A on the ballot in 1973.

Measure A has also faced allegations of being racially biased against Black people.

"Exclusionary zoning reduces housing stock, which excludes multifamily housing, and raises the proportion of single-family detached dwellings. This all reduces affordability and indirectly excludes low-income families and people of color, particularly Black people," wrote Rasheed Shabazz in an article in the *Alameda Sun* ("Another History of Measure A" Jan. 7).

At the June 2 meeting, Daysog said Measure A has not stopped Blacks from living in Alameda. He cited Alameda Black population growing from 2 percent in 1970, before Measure A was passed, to 7.1 percent today. Councilmember Jim Oddie said more racial diversity is not the only goal of eliminating Article 26.1.

"What we're missing a lot of is economic diversity and I think we lost that," said Oddie.

The election takes place Tuesday, Nov. 3. A ballot will be mailed to every registered voter. Ballots can be returned via mail or in drop boxes, which will open Oct. 5, 2020.



Maurice Ramirez

The New Normal

Diners on Park Street enjoy take-out from the Town Tavern menu while pedestrians in their masks stroll by, some carrying coffee. Both Park and Webster street have adjusted to the new normal with sidewalk dining. Many stores are open and new regulations from Sacramento now allow barbers and beauticians to cut and style hair as long as that's done outdoors with the proper social distancing

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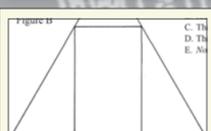
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Visit the three towns that pre-date the City of Alameda. One had this borax plant pictured on the city seal



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Kiwanis club ensures program delivers success to kids.

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