



March 8, 2017

TO: Members, Waterfront Plan Working Group Land Use Subcommittee

FROM: Diane Oshima and Kari Kilstrom

RE: Draft Policy Guidance and Recommendations: Activation of Port Open Spaces

At its meeting on February 8, 2017, the Land Use Subcommittee engaged a public discussion about the use and public enjoyment of Port parks and outdoor open spaces, with focus on ideas about desirable activities, including recreational uses, to broaden the appeal and increase use of these spaces across all age groups. State Lands Executive Officer, Jennifer Lucchesi, and her staff attended to provide information about how public trust principles affect the use and improvement of parks and open spaces on public trust lands, which must function as a recreational resource for waterfront enjoyment by locals as well as residents from the Bay Area and state. The public trust doctrine is an evolving body of law based on the changing needs of the public, in current use and into the future. The February 8th meeting enabled direct exchange between citizens and State Lands and Port staff to share ideas, questions and comments about possible trust-consistent improvements for Port open spaces.

This memorandum is intended to distill the ideas and consensus points from the February 8th discussion, to provide policy guidance for future Port staff work to draft amendments to update the Waterfront Plan, including public open space policies. The recommendations below are proposed for Land Use Subcommittee review and endorsement at their next meeting on March 15, 2017.

Activation of Port Public Trust Parks and Open Spaces

1. The public trust is an evolving doctrine that can embrace new ideas that promote trust objectives, including opening up the shoreline for public recreational use and enjoyment. Context is important in determining whether recreational uses are appropriately sited and

designed to serve a balance of local and state public trust needs. In considering opportunities to increase active uses in Port open spaces, proposed improvements should demonstrate how they provide benefits to waterfront visitors from outside San Francisco, not just local residents.

2. Encourage the Port to explore open space design and activities that promote diverse recreational and entertainment opportunities for a full spectrum of users--local residents as well as regional visitors of all ages--without utilizing trust lands for municipal park and recreation facilities (e.g. league sports, city recreation programs), or as a substitute for these municipal services.
3. Strive for design that gives waterfront parks and open spaces unique character and authentic identity, with features that may reflect the “story” of this waterfront place. Avoid generic designs.
4. Where possible, combine open space areas with water-dependent recreation, including swimming. Support active water recreation programs and partners (e.g. Kayaks unlimited, UCSF on Mission Creek), which can promote water-related enjoyment, and increase public interest and activity within the adjacent open space area.
5. Waterfront open spaces should promote connecting the public with nature, particularly children and youth.
6. Recognize that younger generations are tech-savvy and socialize differently. Consider how technology may influence youth engagement with outdoor spaces, or promote interactive exhibits and education that create new interest points in parks and public access areas.
7. Learn from successful programmed events, such as SF Symphony concerts and America’s Cup at Pier 27, which appeal to and attract diverse populations to the waterfront, and enliven public open spaces. Support pilot programs to explore how recreational opportunities can be expanded or diversified.
8. Partnerships and concession opportunities should be considered to broaden resources. Such site stewards could support pick-up recreational games in open spaces by managing sports gear, provide food and refreshment, add “eyes on the park” to increase security and ensure compatibility among diverse park users, and create opportunities for public restroom management.
9. Port should explore ways to draw attention to open space and water recreation areas that are under-utilized, beyond the continuous spine of access along roadways.