

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

May 29, 2014

**900 INNES PARK PLANNING**

Project No. 14-002-01

Project Manager: Deborah Hirst

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization to disburse up to \$500,000 to San Francisco Recreation and Park Department to complete a conceptual park plan for the bay-front properties at 700 and 900 Innes Avenue in India Basin in the City and County of San Francisco.

**LOCATION:** Southeastern shoreline on India Basin in the City and County of San Francisco

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

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**EXHIBITS**

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [900 Innes Avenue Area Photographs](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of an amount not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (“SFRPD”) to complete a conceptual parks plan for the properties at 700 and 900 Innes Avenue in India Basin in the County of San Francisco, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to disbursement of any funds, SFRPD shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program, including a budget and schedule, the names and scopes of work for any contractors to be employed in the project.
  2. Prior to commencement of work plan tasks, SFRPD shall submit written evidence that the 900 Innes Avenue property has been acquired by SFRPD for purposes of public access and recreation.
  3. SFRPD shall develop the Conceptual Park Plan in close consultation with the Port of San Francisco.”
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Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 4.5 (Sections 31160-31165) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public access improvements to and around the San Francisco Bay.
  2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines last updated by the Conservancy on November 10, 2011.”
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### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff is recommending that the Conservancy grant up to \$500,000 to San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD) to complete project planning, including public outreach to the community and stakeholders; site analysis and preparation of environmental studies and documents for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and a conceptual park plan with cost estimates for future park implementation. SFRPD is planning to develop and maintain a park on the properties at 700 and 900 Innes Avenue for public access to open space and parkland as well as recreational opportunity. The site is highly valuable for the completion of the San Francisco Bay Trail in the India Basin area and also as a segment of the 13-mile Blue Greenway Project sponsored by the Port of San Francisco. The site also holds great potential for future small boat access facilities and a connection with the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department is in the process of acquiring the 900 Innes property from a willing seller of the property and anticipates a closing escrow in the summer of 2014. The adjacent private property owner, Build, Inc., is in discussion now with SFRPD on jointly planning open space across 700 Innes and 900 Innes. The proposed project will enable SFRPD to develop a single conceptual plan for open space and Bay Trail connectivity between India Basin Shoreline Park and India Basin Open Space. Working with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), SFRPD will use the proposed Conservancy funds to conduct public outreach activities with community and stakeholders and develop input for the conceptual parks plan. SFRPD will complete analysis of existing conditions, prepare environmental documents and develop conceptual design and cost estimates through the proposed project. In addition, SFRPD will develop an implementation strategy for the future park improvements at 900 Innes as a component of the conceptual plan. The San Francisco Bay Trail alignment, anticipated to connect through the properties, will be a prominent feature of the final conceptual park design produced through the proposed project. The implementation of the conceptual parks plan is anticipated to be similar to SFRPD’s use of San Francisco park bond funds to construct improvements at Glen Canyon following the Conservancy’s support for development of the Glen Park Master Plan by the TPL.

The project was brought to the Conservancy through the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program. As described in the Conservancy’s Priority Conservation Area Grant Program staff recommendation presented at the March 27, 2014 Conservancy meeting, the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program (“PCA Grant Program”) is a pilot program initiated by Metropolitan Transportation Commission (“MTC”) with \$10 million in federal transportation funding (\$5 million for the North Bay and \$5 million for the East Bay, South Bay and Peninsula and \$2.5 million of Conservancy funds for the East Bay, South Bay and Peninsula). Based on the goals of Plan Bay Area and related legislation, Conservancy, MTC, and Association of Bay Area Governments (“ABAG”) staff selected 13 projects for potential funding through the PCA Grant Program in the East Bay, South Bay and Peninsula. Of these, 6 projects are being recommended for Conservancy funding with state funds and 8 projects are being recommended for federal funding through the MTC (1 project is being recommended for partial funding from both the Conservancy and MTC). The projects have been selected to function as a package implementing the goals of the Conservancy, MTC, and ABAG, with a mix of public access and trail improvements, open space and agricultural land protection, and natural resource enhancement.

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, as well as the Port of San Francisco, has secured and managed millions of dollars in funding to complete infrastructure projects benefiting public access and open space in the City and County of San Francisco. The Conservancy has provided funding for a wide range of successful projects working with SFRPD and its partners for planning, habitat enhancement, Bay Trail and other access improvements at locations including Ocean Beach, Glen Canyon Park, India Basin and Islais Creek.

**PROJECT FINANCING**

Coastal Conservancy (for planning)	\$500,000
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (for planning)	\$64,780
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (for acquisition)	\$3,000,000
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$3,564,780</b>

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the FY2012 appropriation of “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). These funds are available for San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program projects under Public Resources Code, Division 21, Chapter 4.5.

MTC required a 3:1 minimum match requirement for PCA funds, with Conservancy funds counting as part of the match. This minimum match requirement has been met.

**Site Description:** The 900 Innes property consists of 1.9 acres over 7 parcels off Innes Avenue in southeast San Francisco in the India Basin area. The site is bordered by the San Francisco Bay to the northeast, industrial facilities to the southeast and northwest, and residences to the southwest. The property is relatively flat with highest elevation at 29 feet. The majority of the site is unpaved. Four structures currently exist on the property including a partially collapsed

pier, two storage buildings and an abandoned single-family home recorded as San Francisco Historical Landmark 260 (designated by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2008). Adjacent to the property, 700 Innes consists of approximately 13.6 acres of bay fill with no structures or previous development (Exhibit 1). Build, Inc., the private firm that owns the 700 Innes property, has expressed interest in an agreement with SFRPD to jointly plan open space connectivity across the property.

The Historical Landmark on 900 Innes is an 1870s-era worker's cottage known as the Hunters Point Shipwright Cottage and, though currently in a dilapidated state, provides potential for historical and cultural interpretation of the shipping industry uses of the southeast shoreline. India Basin was the heart of San Francisco's scow schooner construction and repair community through the 1930s, with yard owners and their families living and working on Innes Street and its neighboring blocks. World War I submarine chasers and World War II mine sweepers were also constructed in the yard, which is less than half a mile from the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Maritime use of the property continued until 1992 when an illegal dredging charge led to the bankruptcy of the last boatyard on the property. Current use for construction equipment storage as well as decades of previous use for shipbuilding and repair operations have resulted in a number of known environmental conditions on the property and surrounding areas. SFRPD has completed Phase I and II assessments for 900 Innes and will be addressing site conditions as the acquisition is finalized and future park planning moves forward. Build, Inc. has completed a Phase I assessment for 700 Innes and will be providing information on the Phase II assessment as it is completed.

The Innes properties are of particular interest for closing the final gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail around India Basin and for connecting two existing shoreline parks, India Basin Shoreline and India Basin Shoreline Open Space (Exhibit 2). The site has scenic views, waterfront access and potential for natural resources and wildlife habitat restoration as well as water trail, recreation and open space opportunity for neighborhood residents and visitors to the Bay Area. Other nearby area parks and open spaces include Heron's Head Park, Hilltop Park and Adam Rogers Park. The area is accessible by public bus route number 19 with a stop at Innes Avenue and Griffith Street and is within a mile of Highways 280 and 101.

**Project History:** Innes Avenue and neighboring areas have been included for planning purposes in the Bayview Hunters Point Area Plan and the India Basin Shoreline SubArea Plan, in addition to the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan and the Port of San Francisco's 13-mile Blue Greenway Plan through the area of SFRPD between AT&T Park and Candlestick Park.

The last boat repair yard at 900 Innes closed in 1995 and blight and homeless encampments became an issue on the property. Local community members formed Friends of India Basin as a parks advocacy group in 1996. Jill Fox and other community members advocated for the City and County of San Francisco to purchase 900 Innes as an addition to the adjacent India Basin Shoreline Park. SFRPD listed 900 Innes on its roster of potential sites for acquisition in the late 1990s. The property changed ownerships a number of times from that time to the present. The site has been used for heavy equipment storage since approximately 2001. The passage of Proposition C created the SFRPD Open Space Acquisition Fund in 2000 and the annual set-aside for open space from this property tax levy began to accumulate through the decade. In 2011,

SFRPD began to work on evaluation of 900 Innes for potential acquisition, including studies of site conditions related to historical uses of the property. The most recent owner, Tenderloin Housing, Inc., listed the property for sale in January 2013. Since that time, SFPRD and San Francisco's Real Estate Division have been developing the potential acquisition. SFRPD anticipates close of escrow in the summer of 2014.

SFRPD has developed a funding strategy including potential use of City Open Space acquisition funds, Environmental Protection Agency funds, and Department of Toxic Substances Control brownfield funds to acquire the property, address site conditions and leverage the proposed planning grant funds. As mentioned in the previous section, Build, Inc., the private developer that owns 700 Innes, is also in discussions with SFRPD on an agreement to enable trail connectivity, habitat restoration and open space access across 700 Innes in addition to 900 Innes. There is potential for a possible future open space area donation at 700 Innes through this collaborative effort with the project partners.

The project has support from a wide variety of community interests, park constituents, and elected representatives including Mayor Ed Lee, The Trust for Public Land and San Francisco Parks Alliance. Project letters are attached as Exhibit 3.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 (Sections 31160-31165) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code regarding San Francisco Bay Area projects. The project is located in the County of San Francisco, one of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties, consistent with Section 31162.

Under Section 31162(a), the Conservancy may award grants that will "improve public access to, within, and around the bay, coast, ridgetops, and urban open spaces, consistent with the rights of private property owners, and without having a significant adverse impact on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife, including wetlands and other wildlife habitats through completion . . . of regional bay, coast, water, and ridge trail systems . . . which are part of a regional trail system and are consistent with locally and regionally adopted master plans and general plans." Consistent with Section 31162(a), the proposed project will enable a local government to plan for improved public access for recreation and future construction of a regional trail, the San Francisco Bay Trail. The conceptual plan will seek to develop a public access plan that avoids significant adverse effects on environmentally sensitive areas or wildlife. Pursuant to Section 31162(d) of the Public Resources Code, which authorizes projects that promote assist and enhance open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes, the project will provide plans to enhance open space and a natural area, the San Francisco Bay shoreline, which is accessible to the urban population of the San Francisco Bay Area for recreational and education purposes.

The proposed project also satisfies each of the five criteria for determining project priority under Section 31163(c) in the following respects: (1) the project is consistent with the draft San Francisco Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan of the City and County of San Francisco (adoption anticipated March 2014), the India Basin Shoreline Subarea Plan (2009), the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan (1989), and the Port of San Francisco's Blue Greenway Plan; (2) the

project serves a regional constituency because it enhances the San Francisco Bay waterfront and will draw both local residents and visitors from throughout the Bay Area; (3) the project will be implemented in a timely manner; (4) the project provides the opportunity to for SFRPD to obtain funds for the area that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented; (5) the proposed project will use matching funds from the grantee.

The proposed project is also consistent with Section 31111, which authorizes the funding of plans to achieve the purposes of the Conservancy's enabling legislation.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 3, Objective A**, the project will develop a waterfront revitalization plan for a property on waterfront in San Francisco; and,

Consistent with **Goal 12, Objective A**, the project will develop a plan for recreational facilities on a currently inaccessible shoreline property in India Basin; and

Consistent with **Goal 12, Objective D**, the plan will develop a plan for an approximately 792-foot segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail connecting two existing links of the trail on either side of the proposed project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:**

The proposed project is consistent with the applicable Public Access Policies contained in Part IV, Development of the Bay and Shoreline: Findings and Policies, of the San Francisco Bay Plan amended by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) in October 2011.

Public Access Policy No. 9 states:

Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided which would encourage users to remain in the designated access areas to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat.

Consistent with Public Access Policy No. 9, the proposed project will provide a walkway along the San Francisco Bay waterfront, and will provide a diverse and interesting public access experience, a shoreline trail adjacent to existing parks, that will encourage users to remain in designated public access areas in order to minimize adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat. The proposed project is for planning only and poses no potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat. Trail and park plans developed through the proposed project will be designed to minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat.

Public Access Policy No. 11 states:

Federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions, special districts and the Commission [BCDC] should cooperate to provide appropriately sited, designed and managed public access, especially to link the entire series of shoreline parks, regional trail systems (such

as the San Francisco Bay Trail) and existing public access areas to the extent feasible without additional Bay filling and without significant adverse effects on Bay natural resources. \*\*\*\*

Closing gaps between existing public access areas is a high priority for BCDC and the Conservancy. The proposed project is consistent with this policy because it will design a link of the San Francisco Bay Trail to close a gap in this regional trail and connect two existing parks in the India Basin area of San Francisco Bay.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S  
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

The proposed projects are consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted November 10, 2011 in the following respects:

**Required Criteria**

- 1. Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.
- 2. Consistency with purposes of funding source:** See the "Project Financing" section above.
- 3. Support from the public:** SFRPD has worked closely with the San Francisco Bay Trail Project, the Port of San Francisco and many citizens groups to make improvements to the Bay Trail and the proposed project has strong support. See Exhibit 3 for project letters.
- 4. Location:** The project is located on the southeastern shore of San Francisco Bay in the City and County of San Francisco and is within the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program area.
- 5. Need:** Conservancy funds are needed to allow SFRPD to complete a conceptual plan in a timely fashion with significant community involvement, allowing SFRPD to proceed with implementation using other funding sources.
- 6. Greater-than-local interest:** The proposed project will provide a plan for improved access to the San Francisco Bay by designing the final gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail in a highly urban area at India Basin. The future trail and park will better serve local residents as well as San Francisco area residents and visitors to the Bay Area. The location is highly accessible to the public via major highways, bus routes and pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- 7. Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project will produce a park conceptual plan including studies related to a future shoreline trail. As such, the proposed project will consider sea level rise as a site condition to be addressed in the park conceptual plan and future trail designs. The 900 Innes property has an average elevation of approximately 27 feet above mean sea level and a portion of the property is submerged in San Francisco Bay. At the time the parcels were mapped, filling in the San Francisco Bay to increase buildable land was a common practice. Association of Bay Area Government shoreline vulnerability maps suggest the majority of the property will remain above projected inundation at 16

inches (1.3 feet) and 55 inches (4.6 feet) of sea level rise, however, the lowest area of the property will become increasingly submerged.

**Additional Criteria**

- 8. Resolution of more than one issue:** The conceptual plan developed through the proposed project will address the protection of shoreline natural resources, improve public access in a previously unavailable area on the shoreline, and expand the shoreline trail network.
- 9. Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
- 10. Conflict resolution:** The project will address environmental concerns related to historic use of the property and provide public access to a site previous unavailable to the public. The resulting conceptual plan will eliminate the environmental hazard and close a gap in trail access between existing segments of Bay Trail and two parks to complete access around the Bay at India Basin.
- 11. Readiness:** SFRPD is ready to complete the proposed project, and has identified funding to support completion of the project.
- 12. Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** The Conservancy is a primary funder of the San Francisco Bay Trail and has contributed to a number of San Francisco waterfront enhancement projects for park and regional trails including planning, design and implementation.
- 13. Cooperation:** Numerous San Francisco departments, including SFRPD and the Port of San Francisco, will engage in the conceptual plan development process and involve the participation of Bay Trail and India Basin area park users, interested organizations and neighbors.
- 14. Minimization of Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The proposed project will produce a conceptual plan for shoreline improvements that will close a gap in the Bay Trail at India Basin, improve visitor and local non-vehicular access to existing parks, and provide scenic, walkable connections to area neighborhoods and transit hubs. This type of planning may alleviate the need for local vehicle trips and reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. The conceptual plan will incorporate measures to avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emissions to the extent feasible and consistent with the project objectives.

**COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

The proposed master planning project is statutorily and categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under two sections of 14 Cal. Code of Regulations. The proposed conceptual planning activities are statutorily exempt pursuant to Section 15262 in that they will involve feasibility and planning analysis for possible future action that has not yet been adopted, approved or funded and they will include consideration of environmental factors. The conceptual planning activities are likewise categorically exempt under Section 15306 to the extent that they involve basic data collection and resource evaluation activities. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.