



To: Members of the Balboa Reservoir Community Advisory Committee

From: Jeremy Shaw and Sue Exline, Planning Department

Date: February 3, 2016

Subject: Urban Design Development Parameters: Version 3

The following revisions to the Urban Design and Neighborhood Character parameters proposed by City staff reflect public comment from the November 5, 2015 and January 11th, 2016 CAC meetings.

Public input to the Urban Design and Neighborhood Character comments largely focused on (1) protecting the character and privacy of Westwood Park and (2) reducing building heights on the Balboa Reservoir site. The revisions below reflect these concerns, understanding that future community design meetings with architects and a developer partner present further opportunities to discuss, propose and revise design solutions.

City staff and the CAC received additional comments from stakeholders via email. The feedback can be found in its entirety within the following files:

- [November 5, 2015 meeting minutes](#)
- [November 5, 2015 meeting recording](#)
- [November 5, 2015 written public comment](#)
- [January 11, 2016 meeting minutes](#)
- [January 11, 2016 written public comment](#)

Links to all of these files are posted online at <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=4224>. Based on this feedback, City staff proposes revising the public realm parameters as follows. At the upcoming CAC meeting scheduled for February 8, 2016, the CAC will discuss the changes and feedback received. Once finalized, City staff will incorporate these revised parameters into a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select a developer partner for the Site.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

You can find additional policy direction and guidance for designing the site by consulting these resources:

1. Community input and background studies to the Balboa Reservoir process to date. At the link below, you can find input from previous public input and existing conditions studies for the site conducted by AECOM. www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3989#materials
2. Balboa Reservoir Site Opportunities and Constraints Map / Existing Conditions report - <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3989#materials>
3. Balboa Park Station Area Plan contains policies regarding open space, pedestrian and transit access, and urban design in the Balboa Park Station Plan area. <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1748>
4. The Urban Design Element and Recreation and Open Space Element of the San Francisco General Plan contain planning policy and design guidance for these two aspects of city design. www.sf-planning.org/ftp/general_plan

In addition, a number of local regulations, codes and design guidelines will ultimately apply to the site design. Only after further community design input in 2016 will detailed designs and codes be applied. The codes which ultimately apply include:

1. SFPUC Utility Standards - <http://sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=574>
2. San Francisco Stormwater Design Guidelines describe the requirements for stormwater management in San Francisco and give developers the tools to achieve compliance. <http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=446>
3. The Better Streets Plan contains city policy and design guidance on making walkable, safe and streets that are designed appropriately to the urban context around them. www.sfbetterstreets.org
4. City and County of San Francisco 2015 Subdivision Regulations
5. [It is the City's legal responsibility to apply the Westwood Park Residential Design Guidelines to the Westwood Park Residential Character District. Balboa Reservoir building design shall respect the intent of the guidelines, as well as the privacy and character of Westwood Park residences. See the Principles below, as well as in the Public Realm section, for further development parameters.](#)

Revised Principles & Parameters: Urban Design & Neighborhood Character

Principle #1: Connect and relate to the surrounding fabric of streets, blocks and open spaces.

Draft parameters:

- a. Create a general block scale that respects [the scale of](#) nearby neighborhoods, provides permeability, and uses a pedestrian network to connect the surrounding [fabric network](#) of streets and open spaces.
- b. Break the scale of blocks by providing [mid-block alleys neighborhood streets](#), pedestrian paths, courtyards, or plazas to better connect networks of public [and or](#) common spaces
- c. Orient the site, blocks, and street and pedestrian connections to maximize pedestrian safety, accessibility and mobility.

Principle #2: Harmonize the relationships between existing buildings, streets and open spaces.

Draft parameters:

- a. Design the Site and buildings to integrate with, respect and reflect local character, scale, design, and uses. [Designs shall harmoniously integrate with the surrounding built environment, stitching together the varied land uses and urban design on all sides of the site. Designs shall consider the scale and design of buildings, quality of open spaces \(such as Unity Plaza and rear yards of Westwood Park\), and pedestrian connections \(such as to Riordan High School, Library Gardens, City College and transit connections\).](#)
- b. Design variation in building [architecture](#), height, scale, massing and materials. Maintain visual interest and limit the extent of uniform, unvaried surfaces [on all building facades. Buildings blocks or prototypes shall be authored by different architects to ensure variation in design on the site.](#)
- c. Locate taller buildings where adjacent buildings are tallest, with heights tapering down on approach to single-family neighborhoods. Buildings on the western side of Site shall [generally](#) be lower in height than buildings on the eastern side and shall respect the scale, privacy and light of adjacent homes to the west of the Site [Buildings shall be separated from Westwood Park rear yards by setbacks or open spaces.](#) Building heights shall fall within a range of 25 feet to 65 feet, ~~allowing for heights of up to 85 feet in the eastern portion of the Site where, due to economic efficiencies, the additional height allows for a substantial set of additional community benefits.~~
- d. Situate and design buildings to enhance public spaces [and the openness provided by contiguous private open spaces \(e.g. rear yard\)](#), while minimizing impacts on existing residential privacy and access to light. [Appropriate landscape design and/or a reasonable distance shall buffer Westwood Park properties in order to protect residents' privacy. As per the San Francisco Residential Design Guidelines, minimize impacts on privacy and light, through site orientation, setbacks, breaking lines of sight between buildings, landscape and topography. \(See Public Realm principles for further development parameters relative to Westwood Park.\)](#)

- e. Shape the height and bulk of buildings to respect views and vantage points; avoid buildings that are top-heavy or bulky appearance.
- f. Design roofs to enhance and not detract views from above.

Principle #3: Design with and complement the site’s natural context.

Draft Parameters:

- a. Maximize exposure to sun and protection from wind, ~~in particular afternoon winds from the West.~~ Utilize wind-appropriate trees to reduce wind impacts of wind.
- b. Design the Site, buildings and public realm to harmoniously integrate into both the surrounding topography and local landscape. The public realm and open spaces accentuate local topography, integrate with local landscape and should shall incorporate natural habitat appropriate for the micro-climate of the neighborhood.

Principle #4: Express neighborhood character, celebrate cultural history and build on neighborhood activities.

Draft Parameters:

- a. Design amenities and the public realm to align with neighborhood activities, desires or needs, including current uses of the Site for families, dog walking and exercise
- b. Express the cultural and historical elements of the community in the Site or public realm design.
- c. Design the Site and public realm to respect and reflect community heritage, the City College campus, and the role of the intersection of Ocean Avenue and Phelan Avenue as a “gateway” to the neighborhood.