

Parks, Recreation and Waterfront

CITY OF BERKELEY MEMORANDUM

To: File

From: Liza McNulty, Capital Improvement Program Manager

Date: February 9, 2026

Subject: Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project – Draft Waterfront Specific Plan Assumptions for Cumulative Impact Analysis

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide context to the Draft Waterfront Specific Plan (WSP) Chapter 5.3 used for analysis in the Pier-Ferry Project for consideration of cumulative impacts.

The City published the most recent draft of the WSP in November 2024. On November 18, 2024, City Council directed staff to (1) complete the Pier-Ferry Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy, (2) prepare a nature and recreation-based conceptual plan for Cesar Chavez Park, (3) proceed with the WSP EIR with the highest development scenario and (4) return to Council with the revised specific plan and certification of the WSP EIR.

In response to City Council direction, the project team prepared the following Draft WSP section 5.3 CEQA Basis of Design to model the highest development scenario when analyzing future conditions, for purposes of studying parking and environmental impacts. Consistent with the direction of Council to use the highest development scenario for environmental impact analyses, the updated section 5.3 was used as the basis for analyzing the cumulative contribution of the WSP in the Pier-Ferry EIR. This section 5.3 is not published as part of the Draft WSP, since an updated Draft WSP has not been prepared. Currently, there is no funding identified to complete the WSP.

5.3 CEQA EIR Basis of Study

A CEQA EIR, or Environmental Impact Report, is a document that informs the public and decision-makers about the potential environmental effects of a proposed project.

According to the California State Lands Commission, which regulates this review process:

“The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) generally requires state and local government agencies, including the Commission, to inform decision-makers and the public about the potentially significant environmental effects of a proposed project, ways to minimize those effects, and to indicate alternatives to the project. If a project subject to CEQA will not result in potentially significant adverse effects to the environment, the Commission may adopt a document known as a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration. If the project may cause adverse environmental effects, the Commission will prepare a more detailed informational document called an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). An EIR contains information on potential effects, measures to mitigate those effects, and an analysis of alternatives to the project. A key feature of the CEQA review process is the opportunity for the public to provide input on Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, and EIRs.”

The Waterfront Specific Plan does not include any actual project redevelopment proposals, and so it is required to develop a Program EIR, not a Project EIR. Although the legally required contents of a Program EIR are the same as those of a Project EIR, Program EIRs are typically more conceptual and may contain a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures than a Project EIR.

How does the WSP inform the basis for the Programmatic EIR Study?

The Waterfront Specific Plan includes Development Standards to guide overall building density and massing of future development projects at the Waterfront. “Maximum heights” reflect appropriate vertical conditions of structures based on

their specific location or subarea within the overall Waterfront, while “minimum setbacks” reflect appropriate relationships of structures to the shoreline edge – distinguished between the Inner Harbor where buildings may be closer to the Marina edge, and the outer San Francisco Bay, where buildings are held back to maintain broad public landscapes and the shared-use perimeter/promenade trail directly on the Bay. “Maximum building coverage” guides total potential future development density in coordination with the heights and setbacks, based on the context of each subarea.

Collectively, these standards in coordination with allowable land uses and design guidelines create a flexible framework for projects to propose creative and innovative development proposals, while establishing context-sensitive limitations consistent with the Waterfront’s identity as a destination for equitable access to nature and recreation.

Illustrative “Test Fit” Purpose

Test fits are a simple method to evaluate potential redevelopment massings - reflecting allowable ground coverage, height, and relationship to existing site conditions of redevelopment at the Waterfront, in order to establish appropriate development standards for the Waterfront and serve as a basis for the programmatic EIR .

These are not design recommendations. The height, form, and character of each project will change in the future based on specific redevelopment proposals, community feedback, city review, market viability, and financial considerations.

Each test-fit aims to:

Match sites with potential uses

- Different types of uses have specific space needs that make them more or less suitable for different building sizes or configurations.

Reflect what's most feasible today, with flexibility for future

- Test fits show a variety of options around building uses, sizes, and open space to illustrate what is most likely based on today's market analysis, while also illustrating what is possible if market conditions change in the future.
- Evaluate maximum potential density at the Waterfront over the next 25-50 years
- Test fits inform Development Standards, which set requirements for building coverage, height, setbacks, open space, and possible uses, among other things.
- Test fits may encourage diverse and creative market-driven redevelopment proposals by illustrating potential opportunities as well as an articulation of community aspirations for the future of the Waterfront.

Waterfront Redevelopment Conceptual "Test Fit" Scenarios

The City and consultant team developed a range of test fits for redevelopment at the Waterfront, in order to establish appropriate Development Standards and basis for programmatic EIR that reflect community input as well as economic needs for Waterfront stewardship. These illustrative scenarios reflect potential for redevelopment of existing structures as well as new uses and structures at the Waterfront. Actual redevelopment projects would evolve based on the market-driven proposals in coordination with City review and community input that has emphasized:

Support Existing & Expanded Uses Redevelopment should support existing users, organizations / businesses, but also create opportunities to encourage or welcome new users to experience the waterfront.

Balance Redevelopment Encourage a more balanced distribution of redevelopment - not all on the north side.

Access Nature & Recreation Promote density and discourage sprawl so that nature, open space, and waterfront access are reinforced.

Protect Open Space No development in park areas, and limited on shoreline edge to protect shared use trail, recreational boating access, and broad views out across the landscape and water.

Maintain & Enhance Waterfront Establish more sustainable financial support to improve overall conditions for all visitors – including maintenance and operations, capital improvements, programming, communications, and security.

CEQA EIR Basis of Study

The CEQA EIR will study a "High Redevelopment" scenario, in order to assess the broadest possible environmental impacts and mitigation proposals associated with potential changes at the Waterfront in the next 25 to 50 years. This is not a recommendation for that level of development -- but it will allow maximum flexibility for current and future community-based decisions about Waterfront redevelopment.

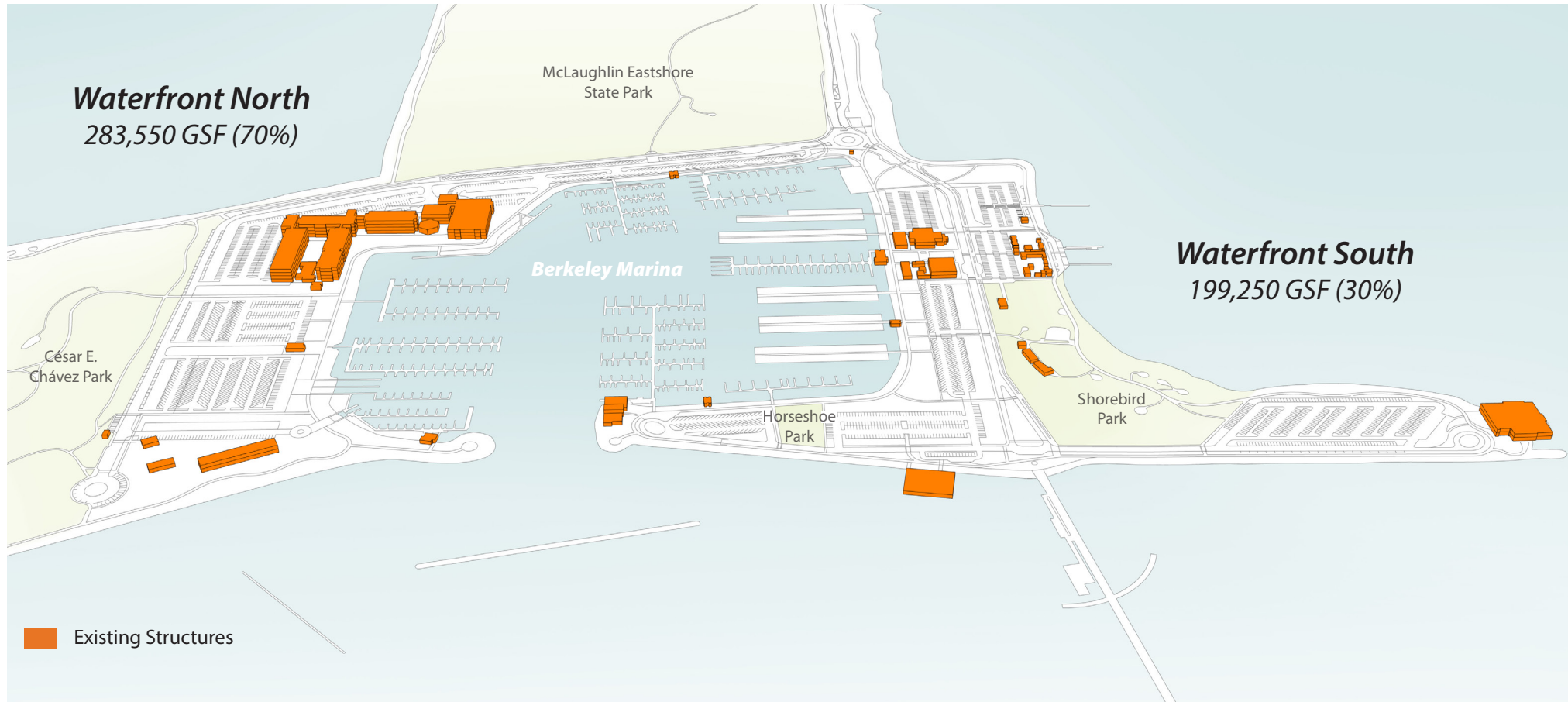
The basis for the Programmatic EIR study includes a future maximum of approximately 1,215,000 GSF of total Waterfront development – roughly 3X what exists today.

Illustrative Test Fit Scenario

Existing Waterfront Development

Illustrative Massing

402,800 GSF



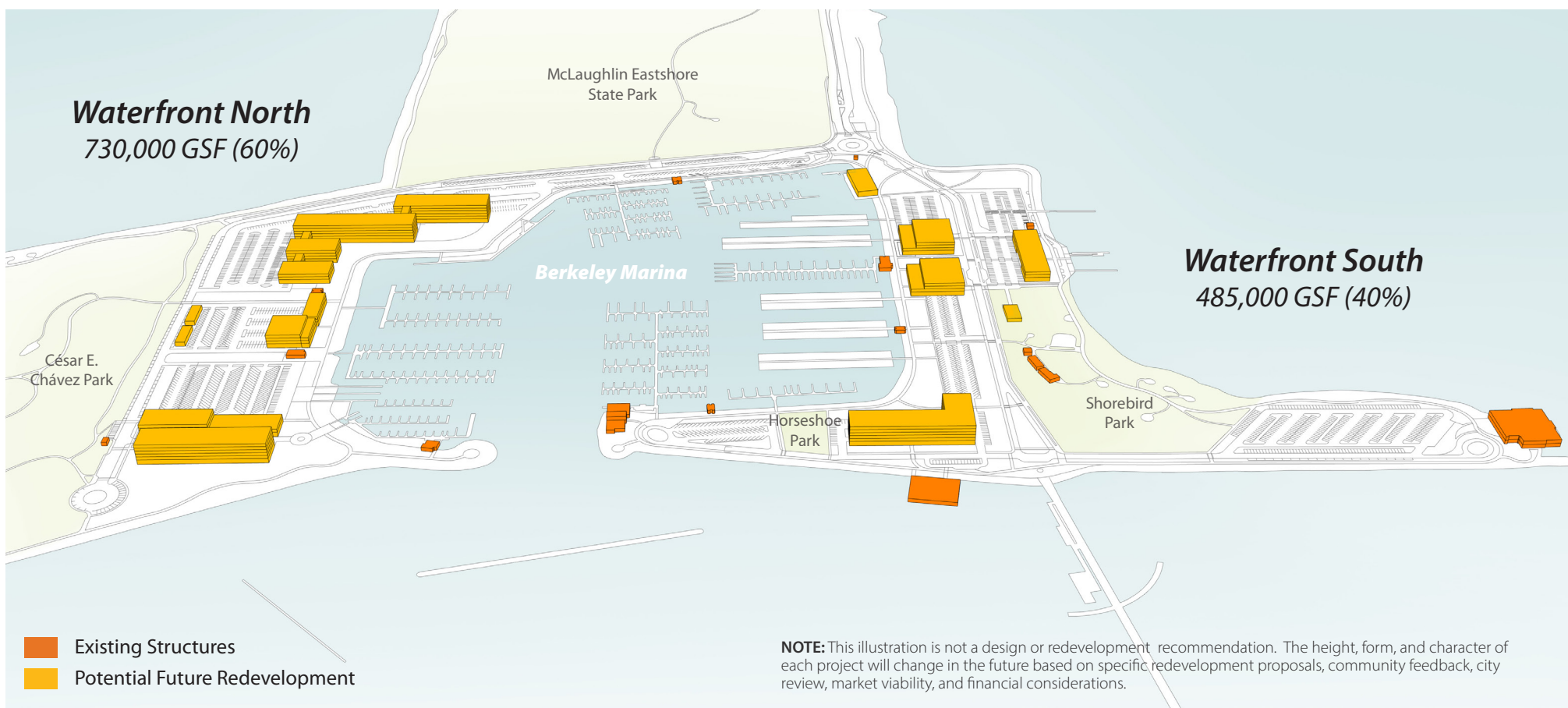
Existing Waterfront Development | The “Existing Development” scenario represents existing land coverage and massing of buildings at the Waterfront. This provides a baseline for assessing potential development changes at the Waterfront. This is important for the Waterfront Specific Plan’s programmatic EIR, to assess environmental impacts and recommend mitigation for potential proposals for future redevelopment projects.

Illustrative Test Fit Scenario

Conceptual Study | Maximum Waterfront Redevelopment

Illustrative Massing

1,215,000 GSF



Potential Maximum Waterfront Redevelopment | The “Potential Maximum” scenario illustrates a theoretical future layout and massing of structures at the Waterfront, based on the criteria outlined in the Development Standards – including maximum heights, shoreline setbacks, and maximum building coverage allowed within each Waterfront subarea. This scenario was created alongside of a range of alternatives with more or less redevelopment, which supported the creation of upper thresholds for redevelopment within each Waterfront subarea and across the entire Waterfront.

Market analysis indicates that the development shown here exceeds likely private market investment in the near future, while allowing for flexible redevelopment over the next 25 to 50 years as conditions evolve. As a basis for the CEQA EIR, this will support a robust analysis of potential environmental impacts and mitigation requirements associated with possible future conditions at the Waterfront.

Conceptual Test Fit Scenarios

Waterfront North Potential Redevelopment Scenarios

The scenarios represented are a theoretical illustration only, to show a range of potential redevelopment opportunities possible at the North Waterfront.

These scenarios are not based on developer input or information related to an actual project at the Waterfront. Key assumptions that guide these conceptual illustrations include the following:

- Future development proposals may or may not conform to the actual locations and outlines shown here – however, they would require comparable compliance with the development standards outlined in the Specific Plan.
- Adaptive re-use of existing structures is encouraged, but not anticipated for the programmatic EIR, in order to provide the most conservative basis for assessing environmental impacts associated with potential future project development.
- Redevelopment of existing buildings could include demolition and reconstruction in the general area of current building footprints; redevelopment projects would also utilize existing utility points of connection.
- Each new development project will require coordination with the holistic Waterfront “parking ecosystem” to ensure appropriate on-going parking management and capacity.



Scenario A
Redevelopment of
Existing Structures /
Uses



Sample Scenario B
Focused Bayfront
Redevelopment



Sample Scenario C
Distributed
Redevelopment

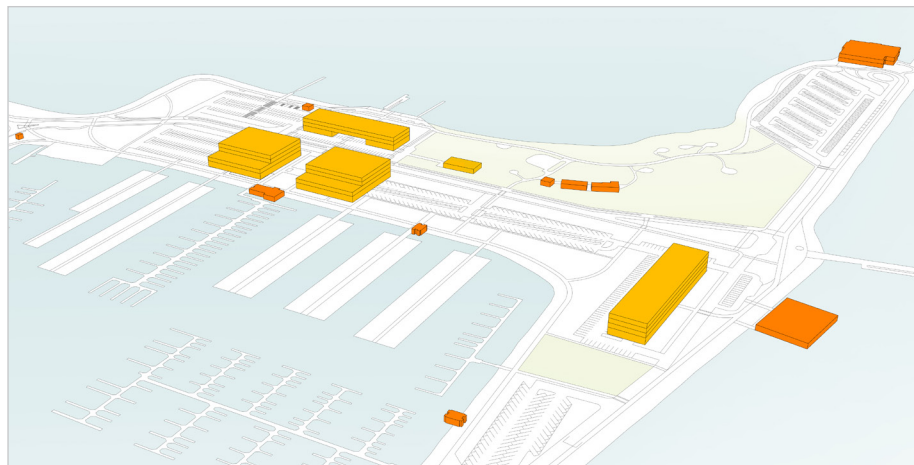
Conceptual Test Fit Scenarios

Waterfront South Potential Redevelopment Scenarios

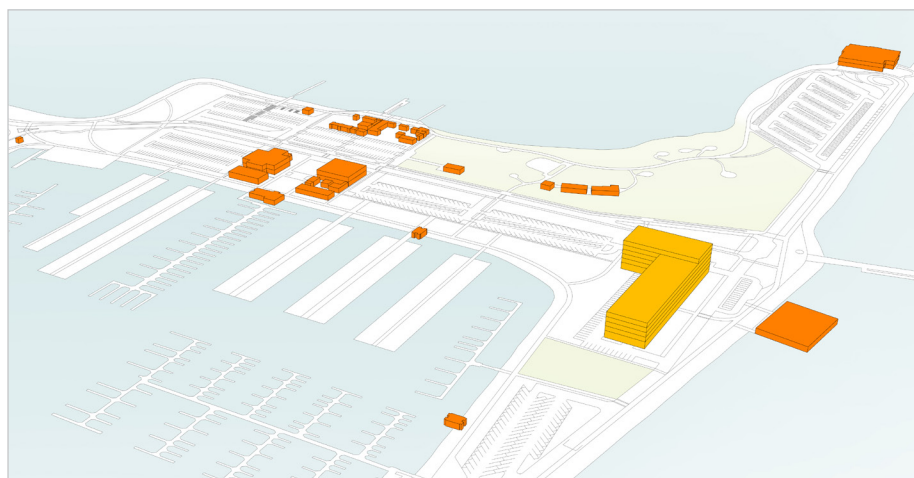
The scenarios represented are a theoretical illustration only, to show a range of potential redevelopment opportunities possible at the South Waterfront.

These scenarios are not based on developer input or information related to an actual project at the Waterfront. Key assumptions that guide these conceptual illustrations include the following:

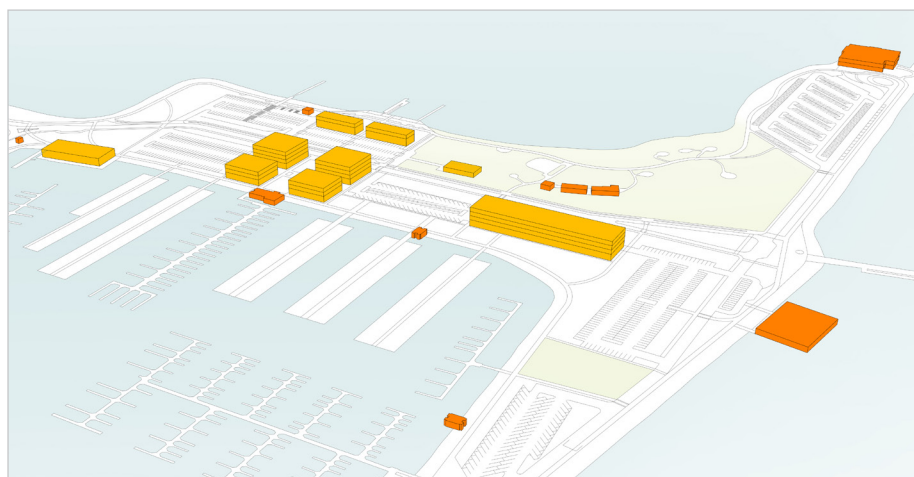
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Scenario A
Redevelopment of
Existing Structures /
Uses



Sample Scenario B
Focused Bayfront
Redevelopment



Sample Scenario C
Distributed
Redevelopment

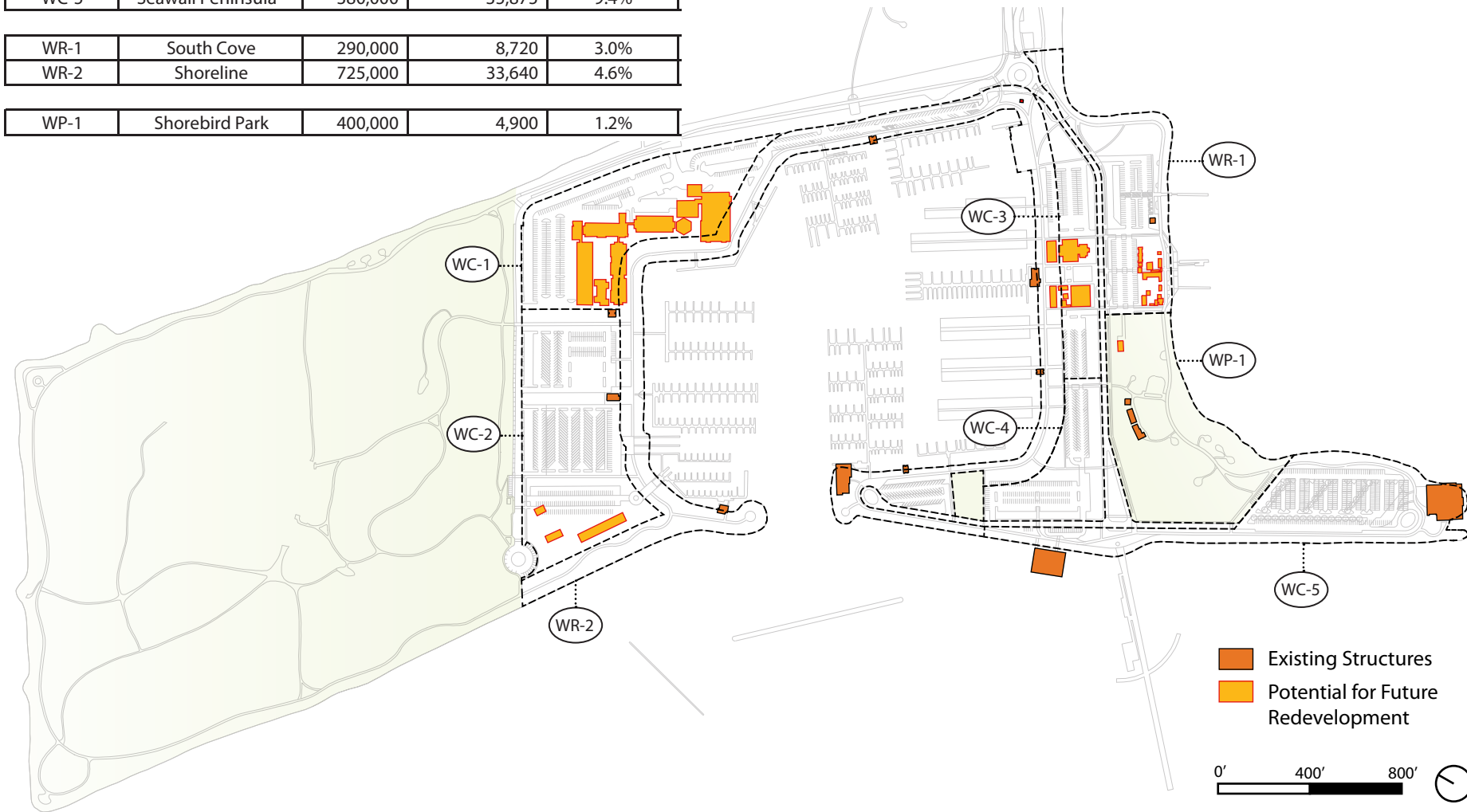
CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Baseline Condition | Existing Waterfront Development

		EXISTING LAND COVERAGE		
SUBAREA		AREA SF	BLDG SF	COVERAGE
WC-1	Doubletree	400,000	92,930	23.2%
WC-2	Marina & Bay North	460,000	14,020	3.0%
WC-3	Marina South	170,000	18,075	10.6%
WC-4	Bay South	170,000	-	0.0%
WC-5	Seawall Peninsula	380,000	35,875	9.4%

WR-1	South Cove	290,000	8,720	3.0%
WR-2	Shoreline	725,000	33,640	4.6%

WP-1	Shorebird Park	400,000	4,900	1.2%
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CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Baseline Condition | Existing Waterfront Development

EXISTING					
NORTH WATERFRONT			GSF	HEIGHT	USE
WC-1	N1	DoubleTree Hotel	256,900	3-4 story	Hotel & Food Establishment
WC-2	N2	Berkeley Marine Center	24,500	2 story	Maritime Visitor Services
	N3	B&C Restroom	1,550	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
	N4	D&E Restroom	600	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
WR-2	N5	Berkeley Marine Center Fuel	1,350	1 story	Boat Fuel Station
Subtotal			283,550	GSF Existing South Waterfront	

SOUTH WATERFRONT			GSF	HEIGHT	USE
WC-3	S1	Hana Japan & Sportsman's Center	22,000	1-2 story	Food Service Establishment & Commercial Recreation
	S2	125-127 University Ave	19,000	1-2 story	Office
WC-4	No Existing Structures				
WC-5	S3	Skates	13,700	1 story	Food Service Establishment
	S4	His Lordship	37,000	1-2 story	Food Service Establishment
WR-1	S5	Cal Adventure & Cal Sailing	8,200	1 story	Recreational Boating & Water Use
	S6	South Cove Restroom	500	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
WR-2	S7	Waterfront Office	2,700	1-2 story	Maritime Office
	S8	F&G Restroom	950	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
	S9	L&K Restroom	650	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
	S10	N Restroom	650	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services
	S11	Berkeley Yacht Club	9,000	1-2 story	Club / Lodge
WP-1	S12	Shorebird Park Nature Center	3,800	1 story	Museum / Cultural Center
	S13	Shorebird Park Maintenance Shed	1,100	1 story	Maintenance Facility
Subtotal			119,250	GSF Existing South Waterfront	

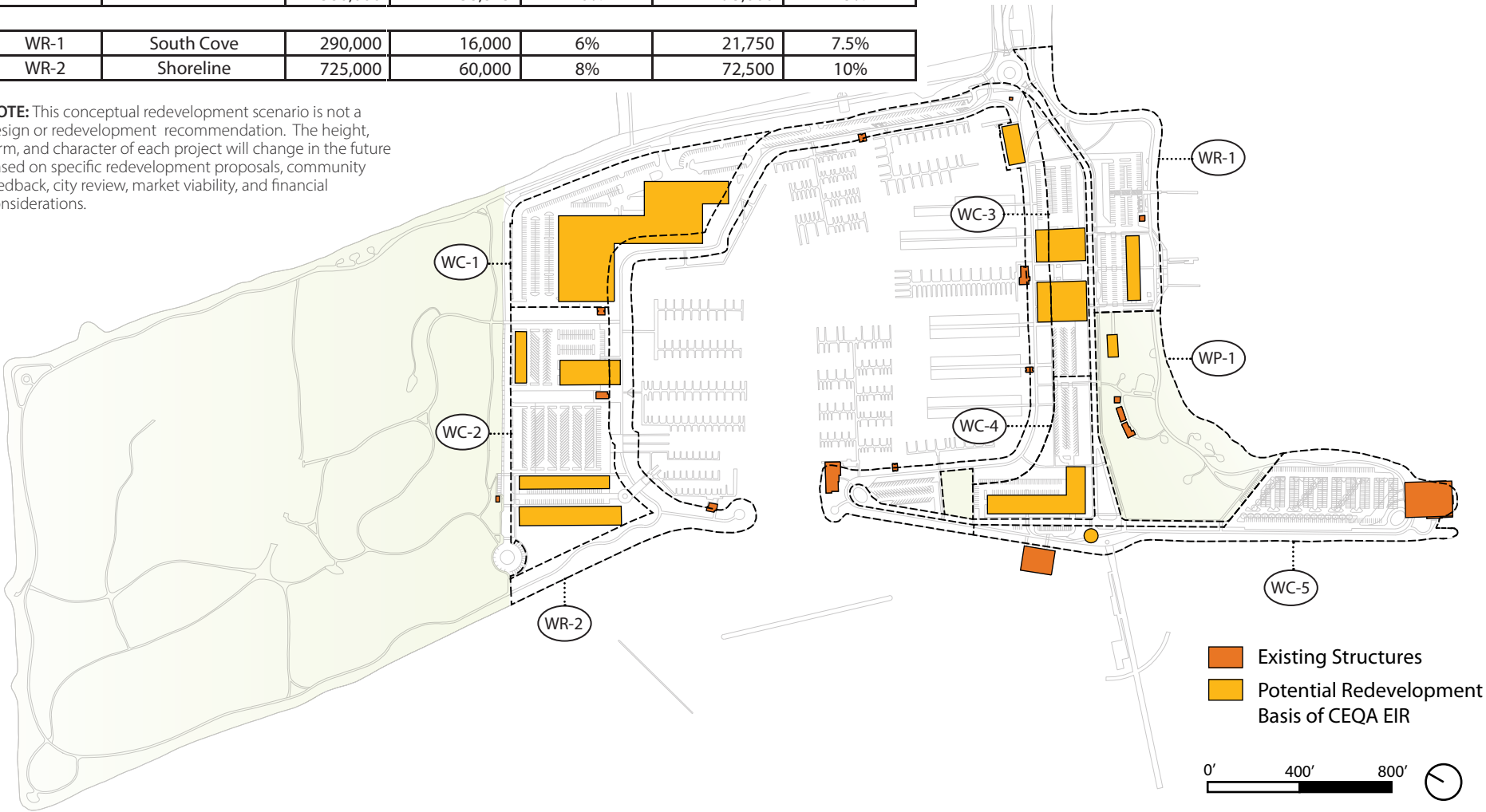
402,800 GSF Existing Condition

CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Potential Future | Maximum Waterfront Redevelopment

			BASIS OF EIR STUDY LAND COVERAGE		DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS MAXIMUM LAND COVERAGE	
SUBAREA		AREA SF	BLDG SF	COVERAGE	BLDG SF	COVERAGE
WC-1	Doubletree	400,000	160,000	40%	160,000	40%
WC-2	Marina & Bay North	460,000	92,000	20%	92,000	20%
WC-3	Marina South	170,000	42,500	25%	42,500	25%
WC-4	Bay South	170,000	42,500	25%	42,500	25%
WC-5	Seawall Peninsula	380,000	38,875	10%	95,000	25%
WR-1	South Cove	290,000	16,000	6%	21,750	7.5%
WR-2	Shoreline	725,000	60,000	8%	72,500	10%

NOTE: This conceptual redevelopment scenario is not a design or redevelopment recommendation. The height, form, and character of each project will change in the future based on specific redevelopment proposals, community feedback, city review, market viability, and financial considerations.



CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Potential Future | Maximum Waterfront Redevelopment

BASIS OF PROGRAMMATIC EIR ANALYSIS						No Change	Redevelopment	New Use	Hotel Rooms	Max. Parking Spaces
NORTH WATERFRONT		GSF	HEIGHT	USE						
WC-1	N1	DoubleTree Hotel	450,000	4-6 story	Hotel & Food Establishment		X		425	383
	N2	Berkeley Marine Center	80,000	3 story	Maritime Visitor Services		X			
WC-2	N3	B&C Restroom	1,550	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
	N4	D&E Restroom	600	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
	X1	Bay North Hotel	180,000	6 story	Hotel & Food Establishment			X	180	90
	X2	Recreation / F&B Complex	55,000	3-4 story	Food Service Establishment & Commercial Recreation			X		
	X3	F&B Café	6,000	1 story	Food Service Establishment			X		
WR-2	N5	Berkeley Marine Center Fuel	1,350	1 story	Boat Fuel Station	X				
Subtotal		774,500	GSF EIR Basis of Study South Waterfront							

SOUTH WATERFRONT		GSF	HEIGHT	USE		No Change	Redevelopment	New Use	Hotel Rooms	Max. Parking Spaces
WC-3	S1	Hana Japan & Sportsman's Center	50,000	3-4 story	Food Service Establishment & Commercial Recreation		X			
	S2	125-127 University Ave	60,000	3-4 story	Office		X			
WC-4	X4	Bay South Hotel	213,000	6 story	Hotel & Food Establishment			X	160	80
WC-5	S3	Skates	13,700	1 story	Food Service Establishment	X				
	S4	His Lordship	37,000	1-2 story	Food Service Establishment		X			
	X5	Ferry Terminal Kiosk	5,000	1 story				X		
WR-1	S5	Aquatic Center / F&B Cal Adventure & Cal Sailing	24,000	3 story	Recreational Boating & Water Use Food Service Establishment		X			
	S6	South Cove Restroom	500	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
WR-2	S7	Waterfront Office	2,700	1-2 story	Maritime Office	X				
	S8	F&G Restroom	950	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
	S9	L&K Restroom	650	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
	S10	N Restroom	650	1 story	Maritime Visitor Services	X				
	S11	Berkeley Yacht Club	9,000	1-2 story	Club / Lodge	X				
WP-1	X6	Old Ferry Dock F&B	16,000	1-2 story	Food Service Establishment			X		
	S12	Shorebird Park Nature Center	3,800	1 story	Museum / Cultural Center	X				
	S13	Shorebird Park Maintenance Shed	3,000	1 story	Maintenance Facility		X			
Subtotal		439,950	GSF EIR Basis of Study North Waterfront							

1,214,450 GSF Max. Redevelopment EIR Basis of Study

Potential Maximum Waterfront Redevelopment

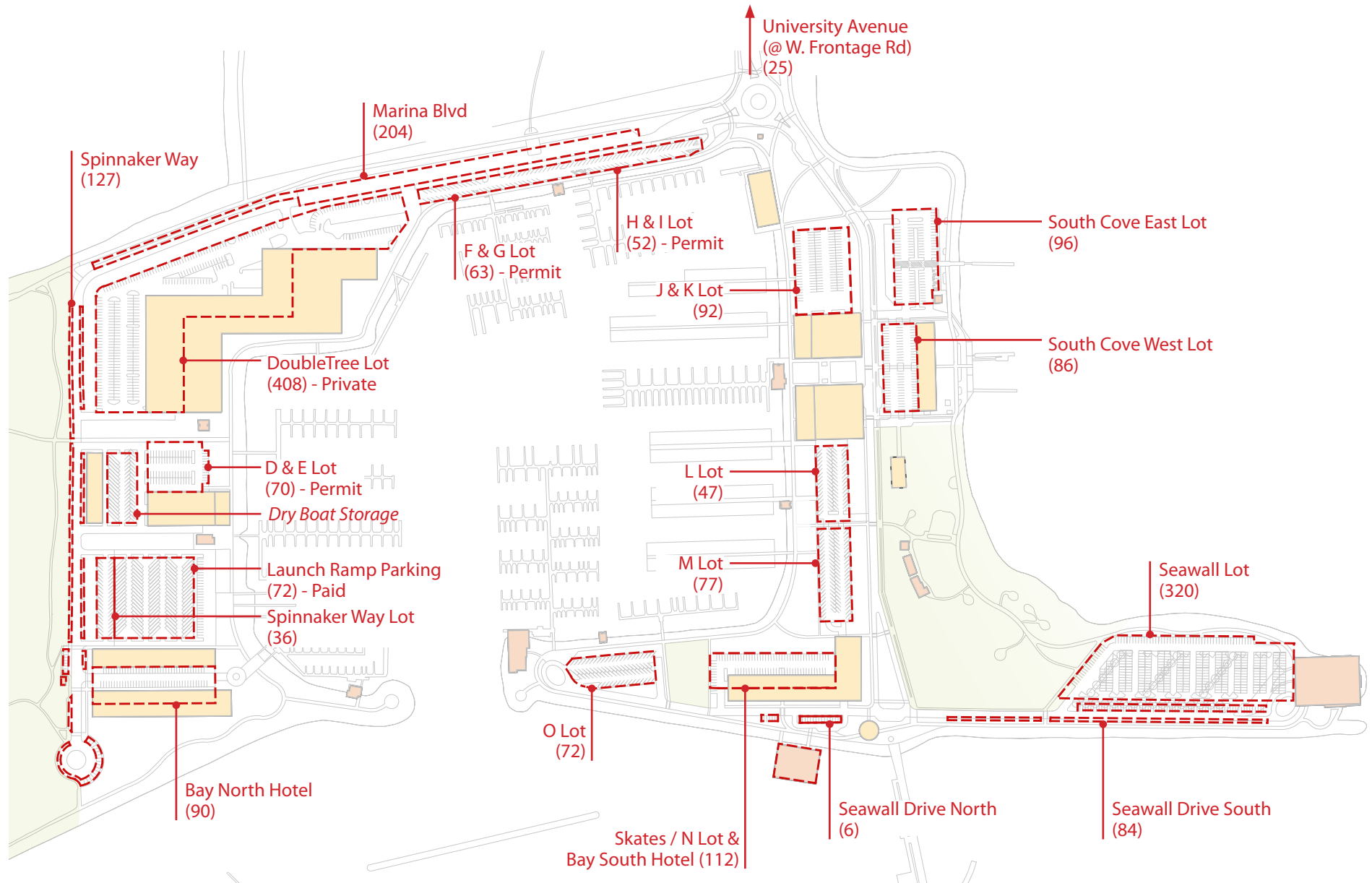
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CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Potential Future | Parking



CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Potential Future | Parking

LOT LOCATION	EXISTING ¹			BASIS OF EIR ANALYSIS		
	PUBLIC	PERMIT	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PERMIT	PRIVATE
North Facilities						
Marina Blvd	150			204		
Spinnaker Way	127			127		
Spinnaker Way Lot	36			36		
D & E Lot		129			70	
F & G Lot		63			63	
H & I Lot		52			52	
Doubletree Lot			408			408
Bay North Hotel	n/a	n/a	n/a			90
Boat Launch Paid Lot	76			76		
Central Facilities						
J & K Lot	92			92		
L Lot	14	47 ²		47		
M Lot	77			77		
South Cove East Lot	96			96		
South Cove West Lot	86			86		
University Avenue	25			25		
South Facilities						
Skates / N Lot & Bay S. Hotel	137			52		60
O Lot	72			72		
Seawall Drive North	6			6		
Seawall Drive South	84			84		
Seawall Lot	320			320		
	1,398	244	408	1,400	185	558
	Existing Total		2,097	EIR Basis of Study Total		2,143

NOTES

Conceptual plans for Marina Blvd realignment & increase parking, See Appendix D

No change

No change

Building redevelopment reduces permit parking by +/-59 spaces

No change

No change

No Net New Parking

Building redevelopment increases parking by +/- 90 spaces (0.5 Ratio per Key)

No change

No change

Building redevelopment reduces parking by +/-14 spaces, eliminate PD Parking

No change

No change

No change

No change

Building redevelopment reduces parking by +/-25 spaces (0.4 Ratio per Key)

No change

No change

No change

No change

NOTES

1. Existing does not include Dry Boat Storage, City Vehicle Parking, or Marine Center Leased Lot.

2. City of Berkeley Police Department gated section of Lot L.

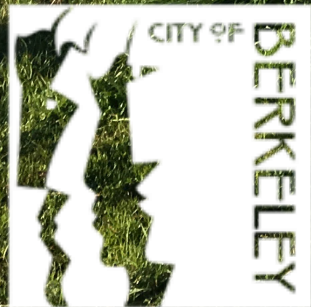
CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study
Baseline Condition | Land Use Allocation



CEQA Programmatic EIR Basis of Study

Potential Future | Land Use Allocation





**Parks
Make
Life
Better!**