Combined Basic Concept and Schematic Design Plan

April 17, 2009

MISSION BAY
MARIPOSA PARK

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT
spur tracks that once extended out into the rail yard from the turntable—by-
gone holding areas for engines awaiting their repair work (see accompanying
historic map). The gabion walls in this lawn area have a salvaged timber top
surface providing informal seating opportunities. Additional gabions extend
further out, burying themselves into the surrounding landforms of the natural
area west of the plaza. Further out in the landscape, these radial gabion ele-
ments appear and re-appear in the landscape providing a unifying signature
element of the park as well as opportunities for impromptu seating and play.

Radial paths—also inspired by the historic rail spursex—extend south from
the plaza, drawing users into the park from perimeter sidewalks. Key alignments
are marked by additional gabion walls. As these radial paths meet the Mani-
posa Street sidewalk, they pass by smaller gathering spaces furnished with
benches and gabion walls and enclosed by low landscaping, providing a va-
riety of seating opportunities for groups of different sizes—from small family
gatherings to larger outdoor class groups.

Both the upper terrace lawn area and lower terrace plaza area will be
equipped with electrical outlets and hose bibs to allow for special events and
maintenance activities.

Play Zone

The children's play program for the park is designed to be flexible, making use
of interactive landforms for exploration, pathway circuits for games and bik-
ning, and open lawn for active use. A distinct play zone is created with a com-
bination of manufactured play equipment and exploratory landscape features
such as mounds and colored spheres. Features are organized into four areas
that evoke the developmental stages (or metamorphosis) of butterflies—again
reinforcing the “maniposa” theme: Larvae (informal arrangement of colored
spheres), Caterpillar (cruvy balance beam simulating the movement of a cater-
pillar), Cocoon (hanging basket or net), and Butterfly (“flight mounds”).

The play area outer edges are furnished with benches offering opportunities
for caregiver seating and oversight of children at play.

Youth bicycle programming is geared towards learning to ride and building

5 “Flight Mounds” are simple landforms that kids can run and climb to simulate
flying into the air.

Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Schematic Design Narrative

present a complete loop for young riders. Special pavement markings, “stop
signs”, “railroad x-ing” etc. can be added to further enhance this experience
and add a whimsical interpretive element to the ground plane. This can also
be part of interpreting the old railroad heritage of the site.

Signage

Although a specific signage design is not provided as part of this submittal,
a simple identificational signage program is envisioned, consistent with the
design standards of Mission Bay. A design plan will be provided at the design
development level. Interpretive signage will also be an important part of the
signage program. The themes of ecology—including butterfly habitat—and
the industrial heritage elements will be explained and illustrated through this
interpretive signage program. (A concept illustration of this signage is shown
on Site Materials – Furnishings and Lighting – Sheet 1.)

Lighting

The park is lighted from the perimeter by the street lights on Mariposa, Ow-
ens, 4th and Southern Connector Streets. In the interior, pedestrian height
lights consistent with Mission Bay standards will line the main curved path
extending through the park diagonally connecting the plaza area to the mid-
point of the Mariposa Street frontage. Smaller scale accent lighting will be
used to light the path edges on the radial paths extending from the plaza
southward. (These lighting types are illustrated on Site Materials – Furnishings
and Lighting – Sheet 2.)

Planting Design

The overall planting vision is to have a park landscape that conserves water, is
low-maintenance and that has a balance of native, semi-native and ornamental
plants providing visual interest and responding to the different functional
areas of the park. The park will have a variety of sunny and shady areas and
planting will help define the various function spaces. The natives (“native
coastal scrub and prairie”) and semi-natives (“urban-appropriate native /drought-tolerant”) are used in the natural zones on the park's western and
northern edges, creating a natural buffer zone to the freeway. In the lower
plaza and gathering areas, ornamentals (“urban garden”) are used to add
softness to these spaces as well as adding fragrance, flower color and texture.
Fragrant vines, plants that attract butterflies and hummingbirds, plants with
different flowering times and plants with varied 'foliage' colors and textures will
all contribute to the sense of an urban garden in this lower area. Street trees
follow the Mission Bay South Planning Area Streetscape Master Plan and a
strong diagonal planting of Red Maple trees helps define the active and pas-
sive sides of the park and provides a strong north-south connector within the
park, reinforcing one of the historic spur line alignments. The multi-use lawn
turf will be selected for durability, low water use and minimal maintenance
(the use of artificial turf may be explored).

Stormwater Management

The intent of the stormwater design is to capture, detain and filter site run-
off before releasing it to the Mission Bay storm drainage system— in this way
helping to ensure that water flowing back to the Bay is of high quality. This
is accomplished by pitching landscape surfaces to two primary bio-swale
features—one along the northern edge of the multi-use lawn and the other
along the Southern Connector Street sidewalk edge. These features cap-
ture and filter most of the site runoff and are planted with drought-tolerant
ornamental grasses that withstand periodic flooding. In the multi-use lawn
bio-swale, rubber rip-rap “drifts” further assist in the slowing and filtering of
water flows and add to the aesthetic interest of the ornamental grass plant-
ings. Planting will consist of species that withstand both drought and wetness
cycles and require minimum maintenance.

6 Bio-swales are designed to drain completely within a few hours of a storm
event so as not to create areas of standing water for lengthy periods of time.

Relationship to the Hospital

The medical benefits of visual access to a green park by recovering patients,
are well documented. The park forms—a combination of radial lines (indus-
trial) and biomorphic curves (natural)—create a visually interesting scene. At
night, the light patterns reinforce these themes. The park will also serve the
patients by offering their families a place to decompress and play. Parallel
parking spaces along 4th Street and Southern Connector Street have pedes-
trian path access to the park across the planting strips.
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Conceptual Plan
Combined Basic Concept and Schematic Design Plan for Park P 26 / P 27

Mission Bay Mariposa Park

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April, 2009
Design Overview

Mariposa Park (Mission Bay Parcels P26/P27) is designed to provide the green, flexible-use park envisioned in Mission Bay Design Guidelines. Open lawns, seating terraces, plazas, and outdoor classrooms1 promote a balance of active and passive uses. A designated play zone encourages active use by children of all ages. Forms and design themes relate to butterflies (“mariposa” is Spanish for butterfly), as well as the industrial heritage of the waterfront, evoking the character of the Dogpatch and eastern Potrero neighborhoods. Layout of paths and features recall the rail locomotive roundhouse, turntable and track spurs that were once located on the P26 site (see historic map exhibits). An overhead trellis structure assembled from locally salvaged building materials traces the radial track pattern extending from the old turn-table and provides an industrial design aesthetic. Salvaged concrete and brick rubble rip-rap “drifts” and more structured rubble gabions2 recall historic materials and shoreline references while enhancing habitat areas. The historic marsh ecology and shoreline3 is further interpreted through use of linear swales with drought- and flood-tolerant grasses - detaining and filtering stormwater. Lost habitat is recast as an informal interpretation of coastal scrub - an eco-zone appropriate to the new upland site - which will attract butterflies, birds, and other urban wildlife. Butterfly habitat is further enhanced in a butterfly garden zone - taking advantage of an opportunity to provide habitat for the native Mission Blue butterfly and further reinforcing the “mariposa” theme. The resulting park character promotes an honest and straightforward interpretation of history and re-creation of ecological function. It encourages a diversity of community activities within its flexible spaces.

Special Areas & Features

Grading Strategy

The current P26/P27 site sits well below the grade of Mariposa Street where it will intersect with the future Owens Street. A 12-foot grade change will occur between that intersection and the lower corner of the site at the intersection of 4th and Southern Connector Streets. In order to create relatively flat, usable zones within the park, the design seeks to create upper and lower terraces accommodating the different activity zones of the park. The upper terrace - accommodating a large multi-purpose lawn area - sits approximately 5' lower than the Mariposa/Owens intersection and is separated from it by a gentle embankment, allowing for views into the park from the intersection. Likewise, the upper terrace is separated from the lower terrace area - accommodating the lower plaza, play area and seating areas -- by another gentle embankment with an approximately 3' change in level. In this manner, the park can have a relatively permeable and accessible presence from its principal street edges (Mariposa and 4th Streets).

Multi-use Lawn Area

The large multi-use lawn occupies the lion’s share of the park and is set at the upper level of the park - accessible from the Mariposa/Owens Street intersection and also in relation to the level at the 4th and Indiana Street where it meets Mariposa. The Park is visible, inviting and accessible from these surrounding streets. The multi-use lawn has a biomorphic form recalling a butterfly wing shape and allows for a large un-interrupted lawn surface to accommodate a wide variety of formal and informal recreation activities. A perimeter path encircling the lawn provides a means to stroll or for kids to ride their bikes on a paved loop. The lawn is enclosed on the west and north sides by sculptural berms planted with native and semi-native species providing enclosure as well as informal seating on the slopes surrounding the lawn.

Sculptural Landforms

The sculptural landforms on the west edge of the lawn in P26 are complemented by similar landforms on the other side of Owens in P27 - together these forms create a distinctive landscape character for people entering Mission Bay on Owens and they also serve to help screen the park from highway view, noise, and pollution as well as screening strong western winds (see accompanying east-west cross-section).

The steepness of the landform slopes on the railroad frontage of P27 will discourage unwanted use in this area of the park and establish it as an inaccessible natural buffer zone. On the north edge of P27 the landscape design complements a small entry plaza at the corner of the proposed future development of Block 40 on Owens Street. Here, unique elements of the park design, such as gabion wall and natural plantings, will help make this a pleasant gathering and entry area for this neighboring use.

Lower Plaza Zone

The eastern area of the Park is stepped down from the multi-use lawn and relates to 4th Street and to the UCSF Hospital. Here a series of gathering spaces is furnished with a variety of benches, picnic tables and informal table and chair groupings, accommodate functions of various sizes and types. The main plaza, recalling the old railroad roundable, is the central gathering space and can accommodate large groups and events where a tent may need to be set up. A semi-circular trellis recalls the radial tracks connecting the old roundable to the engine roundhouse. The trellis is made of salvaged industrial materials, such as steel I-beams for the columns and laminated wood beams for the cross members, and is covered with vines to provide softness and human scale to the landscape and shade to a portion of the plaza area. The vines are a combination of two species, both fragrant - an evergreen and a deciduous with two different flower colors, flowering spring and foliage textures in order to provide seasonal variation and interest to the plaza.

The main paved portion of the plaza is also an opportunity for a potential future public art installation. This could be a sculptural element or it could be a mosaic pavement installation by a local artist. The view from the upper floor of the hospital, or the entire plaza area with its distinctive geometry, planting textures and, potentially, public art element, will be striking and at the same time inviting to viewers and users of the park.

The western portion of the plaza area is proposed as a lawn adding a more relaxed counterpoint to the hard-paved inner portion. Projecting into this lawn area, short, stout gabion walls are arranged radially, reminiscent of the old...
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Location Map & District Circulation
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Ecological and Cultural History

Ecological History

Maps from 1850 locate Mariposa Park in historical tidal marsh area.

"Bingo! former Mission bay tidal marshes with meandering sloughs spread as far north as Mission Street near Seventh and Eighth Streets, and extended to the foot of Potrero Hill. In 1853, Mission Street crossed this marsh as a wooden plank road, and continued southwest in this fashion across the sand hills to Mission Dolores. The 1860 toll road project on Mission Street began the filling of the marsh area." (Mission Bay Historical Maps: Creek & Watershed Map of San Francisco, SFUC)

Cultural History

The site's prominent historical character is railroad tracks. Historical maps show that the site used to be a roundhouse. Also, the workers grew flowers at Mission Bay Garden.

"Squeezed into a small bit of real estate between a hill, a curve and a steel company, Mission Bay Roundhouse was constructed in 1906 as a place to perform inspections and light repairs on locomotives that arrived/departed/b洀ched the China Basin area of San Francisco. Passenger power constituted the majority of its customers. After steam bowed out in January, 1957, such extensive facilities were not required. The roundhouse closed on February 12, 1960.

Mission Bay Roundhouse possessed two gardens; the traditional outside, locomotive servicing tracks led by the turntable, and an actual flower garden, which was located behind the roundhouse up against the bank below Mariposa Street.....but there has been no actual garden since Mission Bay Roundhouse was demolished."

Map Reference:
Creek & Watershed Map of San Francisco, SFUC

Map and Photo Reference:
Mission Bay Roundhouse (http://ww4.org/tofoam/spatio_frontmissionv1/bay.html#achot)
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Site History Overlay
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Industrial Waterfront Character Images
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | View from 4th St. and Southern Connector St.
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Youth Bike Circuit Diagram
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Site Materials, Furnishings and Lighting - 1
Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Site Materials, Furnishings and Lighting - 2
A set of signs for Mission Bay Mariposa Park is shown, highlighting its ecological and cultural history, and a butterfly garden. An interpretive signage system is proposed for the park, which will include narrative descriptions and interpretive elements like photos, diagrams, and maps to explain the ecological and cultural features of the park and its rich heritage.

Mission Bay Mariposa Park | Interpretive Signage Concept Design