

PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS



OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared for



THE CITY OF BRISBANE

APRIL 13, 2009

Prepared by



The Dangermond Group
Creative Project Planning & Design

PROCESS

In developing community-based alternatives for the Baylands Specific Plan, it became clear to the City that the Open Space/Public Space component is vital to any successful plan that might be developed. In recognition of this consideration, the City chose to further refine the public space component of the plan before selecting a community preferred alternative. The Dangermond Group (TDG) was retained by the City to develop a Public Space Plan for the Brisbane Baylands.

This Public Space Plan builds upon planning efforts undertaken to date by the City as part of the Baylands process. Along with a review of the information, materials and input generated to date, and ongoing discussions with City staff, TDG engaged in a series of workshops and stakeholder meetings as described below:

- City Council Workshop, Public Space and Recreation Uses at the Baylands, January 26, 2009
- Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission Meeting, Baylands Public Space Planning Workshop, February 4, 2009
- Planning Commission, Baylands Public Space Planning Workshop, February 5, 2009
- Open Space and Ecology Committee, Baylands Public Space Planning Workshop, February 11, 2009
- Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission Meeting, Baylands Public Space Planning Workshop 2, February 18, 2009
- Stakeholder meeting with members of the Brisbane arts community, March 2, 2009
- Staff meeting with Association of Bay Area Governments regarding the Bay Trail, March 3, 2009

The synthesis of key findings, along with new input from meetings with city staff, and commissions, committee, and community members, was combined with TDG staff's professional assessment of the site from a park and open space planning perspective.

In addition, an opportunities and constraints analysis was conducted to identify potential public space alternatives and location recommendations. The analysis considered community preferences for public space in the Baylands in concert with physical site characteristics, governance and funding issues. The opportunities and constraints analysis and the synthesis of existing planning materials were used to guide development of the draft public space plan.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Public Space Plan is built upon the overall vision for the Baylands as “*a hallmark for sustainability and green development with a mix of active uses and extensive open space*” as referenced in the July, 2008 Community Input on Alternatives Report. The following four principles for the Public Space Plan were identified to support and help implement this vision:



PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS - OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a multifaceted connected place;
- Create a distinctive setting;
- Serve Brisbane, the Baylands, and the region; and
- Complement future development.

In developing a public space plan based upon the principles set forth above, the following were taken into account:

Site considerations

- Recognizing key natural and historic features
- Evaluating existing and potential habitat areas
- Studying the inter-relationships between the community and Baylands development
- Recognizing the ability to shape earth to afford screening and noise abatement
- Evaluating potential use areas
- Acknowledging the separation of the site into two distinct areas by the rail lines



Figure 1. Ice House Hill

Use Considerations

- Studying local, Baylands, and regional needs and desires
- Evaluating trail needs and opportunities

Economic considerations

- Focus on revenue generating/self supporting recreational use areas

DRAFT PUBLIC SPACE PLAN

A map identifying recommended public space areas, associated uses and trail locations has been prepared to provide a graphic summary of the draft Public Space Plan.

Based on the proposed concept, a total of 374 acres would be dedicated for public space uses, including approximately 113 acres in the Lagoon and 261 upland acres. An additional 112 acres would be Public/Private Use Areas. Five (5) specific types of public space uses are recommended for inclusion within the Baylands. These uses (and approximate acreages) are:

- Habitat Enhancement/Open Space (205 acres)
- Recreational/Public Space Use Areas (56 acres)
- Public/Private Use Areas (112 acres)
- Trails
- Lagoon (113 acres)



PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS - OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations, opportunities, and recommendations for each specific type of public space use area are as follows:

Habitat Enhancement/Open Space

- Maximize habitat and open space areas in order to promote diversity of habitats and resulting wildlife.
- The habitat areas are envisioned to provide connections to Visitation Creek, Ice House Hill, and the Lagoon within the site and regional natural areas adjacent to the site.
- Habitat types include freshwater, salt water, and brackish marshes and wetland habitats, upland habitats, and enhancing existing habitat on Ice House Hill.
- The habitat areas should create a unifying natural landscape within which the recreational and public space use areas are located.

Recreational/Public Space Use Areas

- The plan recognizes use areas for three distinct user groups: Brisbane residents and employees of existing Brisbane businesses, Baylands workers, and regional users.
- The use areas west of the rail lines, closest to Bayshore Blvd. are targeted towards Brisbane residents and workers.
- The use areas east of the rail lines, closest to the Bay, are targeted towards Baylands workers and regional users, with usability by Brisbane residents as well.
- Use areas west of the rail lines include:
 - Charter High School/Community Use Area (5.5 acres)
 - Charter High School
 - Joint use of community oriented recreation facilities, including gym and soccer field
 - Adult education in art and sustainable related jobs
 - Arts complex, including studios and small gallery
 - Connects people and students with art, nature, and history
 - Interpretive Center (3 acres)
 - At juncture of multiple elements (trails, freshwater wetlands, saltwater/brackish wetlands, existing stable/farm, Ice House Hill)
 - Connects people with nature and history
 - Community Park (14 acres)
 - Supplements Interpretive Center with children's play area, picnic areas, lawn areas, trails, etc.



Figure 2. Recreational / public space use area



PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS - OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Group Area (7.5 acres)
 - Revenue generating picnic/event facilities focused on Brisbane community and Baylands user groups
- Use areas east of the rail lines include:
 - Regional Use Area (26 acres)
 - Located on area where earth can be shaped, can house revenue generating regional facilities, such as BMX track, bicycle training areas, road race course, or golf training facility

Public/Private Use Areas

- These areas, Public Space Oriented Development, are intended to be transitional areas between the public space areas and the development and should incorporate native landscaping and public access, with entries and windows onto the public space.
- Parkways and Plazas are landscaped public space or trail areas that help connect the development to the larger public areas.
- Specific Use Areas recommended are:
 - Park Concession (6.5 acres)
 - Small warming hut or restaurant/shop that can be used as a trail head, stop along Bay Trail, start of Boardwalk around Lagoon, community gathering place, wildlife viewing area, and that has views of the City, Bay, and Lagoon.
 - Civic-Cultural Envelope (11.5 acres)
 - Complements the roundhouse and serves as connecting feature between Visitacion Creek parkway and development, also serves to connect people to the site history.
 - Green Development Center (Sustainability Focus Development) (13 acres)
 - Symbolically knits the development and public space together and anchors the Visitacion Creek parkway. Highly visible from the freeway, it is envisioned as space for research/offices/retail/education facilities.



Figure 3. Specific use area near lagoon

Trails

- Develop a network of interconnected trails that link to regional trails, transit, points of interest and local community. The Trail system would connect:



PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS - OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Brisbane and neighbors
- Parks
- Transit hubs
- Natural areas
- Baylands development
- User groups are anticipated to include:
 - Commuters
 - Recreational users
 - Long distance bicyclists, including Bay Trail users
 - Local bicyclists and pedestrians
- Recommended trail types are consistent with definitions for Class I, Class II and Class III Bikeways as described in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

Lagoon

- Primarily a visual and wildlife resource.
- Due to sensitive habitat, limitations on filling, and contamination, modification of the shoreline or body contact uses of the Lagoon are not recommended.
- There is potential for a boardwalk bike and pedestrian trail along the eastern edge, which would allow for wildlife viewing and interpretation.

Additional elements which further unify and connect the overall Plan include:

- Visitation Creek Corridor Parkway
 - Features within the Parkway include an interpretive center, a community park, a group area and preservation of the historic roundhouse in a civic/cultural use area. The entire Parkway would be tied together with trails and a variety of water features.
- Enhanced entry drive to city
 - Slows traffic as it enters the City, providing views of the City and open space, and a sense of arriving home.
- Themes of environmental art and sustainability
 - Forming connections with nature through thoughtful siting of environmental art and/or renewable energy generation throughout the Baylands public space network.



Figure 4. Environmental art

The following recommendations are made in regard to governance, economics, and operations and maintenance:

- Options for governance of public space include public, private, or public/private partnerships. A partnership should be pursued for the Baylands, which could be a non-profit entity, formed out of a joint venture between the city and the



PUBLIC SPACE AT THE BAYLANDS - OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

developer. This organization could lease to concessionaires to operate specific areas. This model is anticipated to be the most effective at meeting the funding requirements for public space operations and maintenance.

- Revenue generating elements and events should be the major consideration for Recreational/Public Space Use Areas oriented towards Baylands employees and regional users.
- A non-profit model, such as “Friends of” organizations, could be used to assist with staffing and maintenance, such as for the interpretive center, adopting trail or habitat areas, or hosting revenue generating events.
- Direct community or non-profit leases for use areas would be suitable for specific conditions such as the Civic-Cultural uses (roundhouse, historic building near Ice House Hill, etc.) or Recreational/Public Space Use areas (group picnic areas, etc.)
- An assessment district overlay on the Baylands development, or an earmarked portion of Transit Occupancy tax from proposed Baylands hotels, could generate funds for operations and maintenance
- Approximately 75% of the public space is recommended to be in a natural upland habitat condition, providing lower operation and maintenance costs after the initial period of habitat establishment (typically 5 years). An MOU with the County Parks Department may be possible for management of these lands.

NEXT STEPS

The City Council’s feedback on the recommendations/observations and other principles and concepts presented in this report are encouraged. TDG will incorporate these comments into the draft Public Space Plan.

The Plan will be integrated into the City’s ongoing process of developing a community-based alternative plan for study in the forthcoming draft EIR. It is anticipated that the EIR process will more specifically outline and define existing habitat, biological and toxics issues, and mitigation requirements that may impact recommendations made in this Public Space Plan. After the EIR is completed, this Plan may have to be reevaluated to take into account those conclusions. In addition, a more detailed, site-specific design process should be conducted which includes:

- Specific preliminary designs for elements within each identified use area;
- Specific trail plans;
- Biological and technical studies identified in the Plan as necessary in selected areas and for specific uses; and
- Feasibility studies for revenue generating public space uses recommended in the Plan. These studies should begin with identified uses and activities and then be expanded to include others identified by the city or developer during future stages of the process.





The Dangermond Group

Creative Project Planning & Design