



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS FOR PRESIDIO PLANNING

Box 29086, Presidio Station, San Francisco, California 94129

415-990-9059

Cow Hollow Association

October 17, 2013

Golden Gate Valley Neighborhood Association

Via eDelivery Only: commissary@presidiotrust.gov

Lake Street Residents Association

Members of the Board of Directors
The Presidio Trust
103 Montgomery Street
San Francisco, CA 94129

Laurel Heights Improvement Association

Re: Commissary Project – NAPP’s Comments on RFP Proposals

Marina Community Association

Dear Trust Board Members:

Pacific Heights Residents Association

The Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning (“NAPP”) provides the following comments on the three finalists’ proposals submitted in response to the Commissary Site Request For Proposals (“RFP”). Our ten neighborhood associations represent your adjacent neighbors from the Bay to the Pacific. The communities we represent are a significant portion of the Presidio’s repeat visitors.

Planning Association for the Richmond

The Conservancy’s Presidio Exchange (PX) proposal is the only proposal that fully meets all the goals established by the Trust for this project, as shown in the analysis below.

Presidio Heights Association of Neighbors

The PX is also the only proposal that provides a positive response to all five “critical questions” raised in Superintendent Frank Dean’s September 23, 2013 letter to you.

Presidio Terrace Association

The Superintendent’s letter aptly describes the importance of this project and the challenges in selecting the best proposal for the site. Clearly, the Conservancy’s proposal is the right choice. NAPP urges the Trust to move forward with confidence that the PX is the ideal project for this extraordinary site, and the Conservancy is the right project sponsor.

Sea Cliff Properties Association

The Conservancy has an invaluable understanding of the Presidio and the Commissary site. The Conservancy has demonstrated its resourcefulness, creativity and remarkable flexibility in developing a stunning, expansive concept uniquely suited for this site in a limited amount of time. It has done so while simultaneously operating the rest of its complex undertakings, including fund-raising. The PX proposal’s timeline moving forward shows a responsible

and realistic path to its success in creating an internationally acclaimed institution for the Presidio.

Analysis: The following is a summary analysis of how well each finalist meets the Trust's RFP Goals, including the clarifications at pp. 5 & 6 of the RFP:

Goal 1. Enhance the visitor experience of the Presidio.

Presidio Exchange: The PX is strongly focused on its connection with the Presidio, the park and the national parks. The PX is a park-based cultural center providing a cutting-edge, creative, ever-changing visitor experience. It will attract a broad range of visitors to the PX, and will provide visitor services that connect the visitor with the entire the park. (See, PX pp. 2, 5 – 24, 56 & 57)

Bridge: The Bridge's focus on sustainability/climate change, while an important subject, is relatively limited as a park-partner for this site. This proposal is not park-based and could be located anywhere. Over the long term, the subject may lose its visitor appeal. Decades from now, the public is likely to become saturated with this subject.

Lucas: The Lucas proposal lacks a substantive connection to the Presidio, and also could be located anywhere. Nor does it facilitate connectivity between the Main Post and Crissy Field, with a pedestrian flow that ends at the museum's steps. Many of its visitors will arrive by tour buses in front of the Museum or by car via an "underground" parking garage from which they will emerge directly into the museum. It also may lose visitor appeal over the long term.

Goal 2. Provide fresh, vital programming that connects to broader themes, and stimulates imagination and creativity, including effective cross-disciplinary programming that advances knowledge with broad and lasting relevance. "Describe how your program complements other Presidio offerings." (RFP, p. 5, item 1)

Presidio Exchange: The PX meets this goal straight on with its strong focus on programmatic offerings and cross-disciplinary programming that connect with the Presidio, its themes, its history, park values, the GGNRA, the region and national parks. The PX is a fresh, vital programmatic center that will evolve with the times, advancing knowledge that is specific in example, but broad in scope, engaging with the PX's numerous Park partners in enriching the broader Presidio and national park experience.

Bridge: With the nature of its subject matter, the Bridge is seriously limited in meeting this goal and will be even more so over the long term.

Lucas: The programmatic offerings of the Lucas proposal do not complement other Presidio offerings or the park's broader themes. Instead the programming is primarily about Lucas' art collection, his industry and the evolution of digital arts. The proposal lacks synergy with the site and the Presidio as a whole.

Goal 3. Be compatible with the natural and cultural setting along the Crissy Marsh and the Bay, and conform to the Mid-Crissy Area Design Guidelines and LEED requirements. "It is essential that the new facility relate well to its surroundings, . . . maintaining the character and integrity of the district . . ."(RFP, p. 5, item 2)

Presidio Exchange: The PX shines in complying with this goal in all respects. It is compatible with the natural and cultural setting not only along the Crissy Marsh but with the entire Presidio. The PX proposal complies with all of the guidelines, reuses a significant portion of the existing building, and should win the LEED's highest award. The Conservancy intimately understands every nuance of the Presidio in its role as a partner in the transition of the Presidio from a military post to a national park. The Conservancy has already contributed to 20 different overlooks, landscapes and visitor facilities in the Presidio, including the Crissy Field Restoration. (See, PX, pp. 36 & 46)

Bridge: The structure is too large for the site; its lagoon ignores a sensitive archeological site; it fails to reuse any of the existing building; and its large elongated box structures abut Mason Street in violation of the set back requirements of the guidelines.

Lucas: The Lucas Museum has nothing in common with the natural and cultural setting along the Crissy Marsh. Its design is incompatible with the area. Its elevated, over-sized building exceeds the height limits, would loom over the Crissy Marsh, block views, and draw heavy car and tour bus traffic to Mason Street. It fails to reuse any of the existing building, and requires massive amounts of concrete and landfill for its enormous garage. The design of the structure creates a physical barrier between the Main Post and Crissy, instead of connecting the two. The elevated Beaux-Arts museum design is not a contemporary design and raises compliance issues with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in a National Historic Landmark District.

Goal 4. Complement current uses and activity in the Presidio, and integrate well with plans for Crissy Field and the Main Post.

Presidio Exchange: The PX excels in complementing current uses and activities in the Presidio. It is fully compatible with the plans for the Crissy Field and the Main Post, and it affirmatively facilitates the connection between the Main Post and

Crissy, especially in attracting Crissy visitors to explore the Main Post and the Presidio beyond.

Bridge: The Bridge's focus on sustainability/climate change is relatively limited, is not park-based, and the subject is likely to lose its visitor appeal over the long term.

Lucas: The Lucas proposal does not complement current uses and activities in the Presidio, nor does it integrate well with the other plans for Crissy and the Main Post.

Goal 5. Welcome a broad cross-section of the community in a manner that reflects and reaffirms the public nature of the Presidio.

Presidio Exchange: The PX proposal presents an inclusive, ever-fresh programming directly tied with the Presidio and park values. There will be no admission fee, and it brings an aggressive outreach experience for youths, adults and diverse communities across San Francisco and beyond to discover this parkland.

Bridge: The Bridge programs are aimed at a modest portion of visitors interested in an important, but limited topic, with admission fees that may exclude many potential park visitors.

Lucas: The Lucas Museum does not reflect or reaffirm the public nature of the Presidio. Its proposal is about Lucas' art collection and his industry, and has nothing to do with the Presidio or park values. Lucas' "competitive fee" for admission (the nearby Disney Museum is \$20/adult, \$12/child) may be prohibitive for many park visitors.

Goal 6. Be economically viable.

Presidio Exchange: The PX has demonstrated its ability to raise the funds and operate in the black.

Bridge: It is not apparent how the Bridge will attract \$180 million at the front-end. Its operating costs may require a subsidy from the Trust in its early years and will become more challenging over the long term if its appeal declines.

Lucas: Lucas complies with this goal.

The Wait-and-See Alternative: Because the PX meets the project goals and is the best proposal, the Trust can proceed with confidence in awarding the project at this time without waiting for the completion of the tunnel top bluff. It can do so, due to two important factors: flexibility and a collaborative working relationship. The PX

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has the unique flexibility to modify both its design and its programming, and there already exists a positive working relationship between the Trust's and the Conservancy's staffs. If you decide after the bluff has been completed that downscaling is preferable, the necessary adjustments can be made.

Conclusion: As shown above, only the Conservancy's PX meets all of the project goals, and it does so very strongly. Only the PX is a positive answer to each of Superintendent Dean's critical questions. Only the PX makes a wait-and-see alternative unnecessary. The PX is, in fact, the ideal project for this important site.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W R Shepard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

William R. Shepard

Chair, Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning