

**TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**FROM: HUNG NGUYEN, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**DATE: JUNE 28, 2016**

**SUBJECT: PARK IMPROVEMENT ORDINANCE COVERING LUCY EVANS BAYLANDS NATURE INTERPRETIVE CENTER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend that the City Council approve a Park Improvement Ordinance (PIO) (Attachment A) for the design of the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center (Center) Capital Improvements Project (CIP).

**BACKGROUND**

The City Charter and Section 22.08.005 of the City's Municipal Code require that before any substantial building, construction, reconstruction or development approval on dedicated parkland, the Council must first approve and adopt a proposed improvement plan.

The Center is located within the City's Baylands Nature Preserve. Built on piles above the salt marsh in 1967, the Center was the first educational center within this unique Bay Area ecosystem. The Center offers various programs and activities such as nature walks, animal and fossil workshops, an ecology laboratory, and displays of tidelands flora and fauna. The City and its partners provide hands-on standards-based curriculum at the Center to more than 3,000 elementary school students from over 30 schools and more than 80,000 visitors to the marsh annually. The scope of this CIP project includes replacement of decking, railing, fascia repair, structure framing members (as needed), exterior wood siding, flooring refinish, cabinetry, doors, exterior lighting replacement, electrical panel upgrade, restroom accessibility upgrade, fire sprinkler heads replacement, piping and conduit repairs.

At the October 27, 2015 Commission meeting, staff discussed the upgrades and maintenance proposals for the Center. The Commission was in general agreement of the following items:

- All exterior colors should match the more earthy color tones of the Baylands
- Desire to include grey water plumbing for future usage
- Desire for a solution to retain the habitat for swallows on-site
- Desire to have gender neutrality for the restroom
- Concerns that glass panes for the interpretive signage may injure birds
- Interpretive signage should include American with Disability Act (ADA) features
- Design should reflect the Baylands Design Guidelines
- Desire to salvage existing siding and other materials for uses elsewhere

The project is currently under minor staff-level Architectural Review.

## **Discussion**

FOG Studio, design consultant, incorporated the Commission, public, and staff's recommendations regarding site features to create a final site design for improvements at the Center (Attachment A). The design includes:

- Refinishing of wood flooring throughout building
- Reconfiguration of restrooms to accommodate current ADA clearance requirements for a multi-occupant restroom
- Installation of new plumbing fixtures to meet ADA and water-conservation requirements
- Installation of new interior lighting fixtures and hand dryers in renovated restrooms to meet Title 24 energy requirements
- Installation of a new interior drinking fountain with filtered bottle filling station
- Installation of new interior wall and floor tile in renovated restrooms to meet health code standards. The original exposed wood wall finish would be retained where possible and augmented with new wood finish where needed.
- Installation of new interior storage closets
- Replacement of all exterior wood and metal decking, guardrails, siding and fascia
- Replacement of water and sewer piping under the deck as required by restroom remodel
- Replacement of exterior lighting fixtures and sprinkler heads
- Improvement of building weatherproofing
- Installation of a new exterior drinking fountain with bottle filling station
- Replacement and upgrade to the building electrical panel
- Installation of swallow nesting boxes in areas favored by swallows, specific to species
- Installation of redwood boards to match new siding, covering crevices created by roof rafters
- Removal of selected sections of decking to allow swallows droppings to fall directly into marsh
- Installation of new guardrails adjacent to the removed sections of decking and new guardrails along the entire deck perimeter
- Identification of interpretive signage locations and installation of glass panels designed to minimize the potential for birds collisions at selected locations within the railings

## **Design features**

The glass panels will be inserted at three select railing locations to act as an interpretive feature and will be using bird deterrence collision glass panels. The bird deterrence glass panels will deter birds while allowing children to view the Baylands through the glass.

Staff recommends removing select sections of decking to allow swallow droppings to fall directly into the marsh. This deck opening to the marsh below would act as an interpretive design feature while reducing the need for on-going cleaning and maintenance. New guardrails adjacent to the removed decking sections would be needed to provide safety. However, if the Commission does not favor this recommendation, this option would be removed from the

project. Swallow nesting boxes would still be installed in areas favored by the birds and the droppings onto the deck would continue. In this case, the Commission will need to recommend that the City Council approve a PIO without the deck openings.

## **Coordination**

The project will require cancelling most of the classes and/or having limited off-site classes due to the need for temporary closure during construction. Temporary closure of the Baylands Boardwalk during construction is also needed. It is anticipated that the railings selected for the Interpretive Center will also be incorporated into the Boardwalk project.

On May 4, 2016, the City released a Request for Proposal for the Baylands Boardwalk Replacement Project. Biggs Cardosa Associates, Inc. (BCA) was selected as the designer for the Boardwalk. The City plans to contract with BCA for design services in September 2016. The goal for the boardwalk construction is to begin September 2018, pending receipt of agency permits. Staff will update the community and Commission throughout the Boardwalk design review process.

With the exception of the etched glass panels at selected railing locations, the new exterior interpretive signage fabrication and installation will follow completion of this project as part of a separate CIP - AC-1400, Baylands Interpretive Center Exhibit Improvements.

## **Project Timeline**

- Council 1<sup>st</sup> reading of PIO – 8/15/2016
- Council 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of PIO – 8/29/2016
- Submit 100% Design documents for Building permit – July 2016
- Obtain Building and San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission (BCDC) administrative permits – August 2016
- Bid opening – August 2016
- Council construction contract approval – September 2016
- Construction start – October 2016
- Complete project – March 2016

To avoid impacts on birds during the nesting season, construction with noise impacts can take place only from September 1 to January 31. To meet this schedule, the City must complete 100% design documents in July 2016 and obtain permits prior to starting construction. A bid addendum may be needed to include modifications to the project scope dependent on comments received during the Commission and Council reviews.

## **Resource Impact**

Funding is available in the Capital Improvement Program project PE-15029, Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center Improvements.

## **Policy Implications**

The proposed park improvements are consistent with Policy C-26 of the Community Services element of the Comprehensive Plan that encourages maintaining park facilities as safe and healthy community assets; and Policy C-22 that encourages new community facilities to have flexible functions to ensure adaptability to the changing needs of the community.

## **Environmental Review**

The Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center Improvements Project falls under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption found in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15301 because it consists of the repair and maintenance of existing facilities, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing prior to the improvements.

The proposed project is limited to the renovation of the existing building. No expansion is proposed and the project will not impact any wetlands. A City Building permit and San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission (BCDC) administrative permit are necessary prior to start of construction.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A: Ordinance Approving and Adopting Plans for Improvements to Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center (PIO)

PREPARED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**HUNG NGUYEN**  
PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING, PROJECT  
ENGINEER

\*NOT YET APPROVED\*

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ordinance of The Council Of The City Of Palo Alto Approving And Adopting Plans For Lucy Evans Nature Baylands Interpretive Center Improvements Project

The Council of the City of Palo Alto does ORDAIN as follows:

SECTION 1. Findings. The City Council finds and declares that:

(a) Article VIII of the Charter of the City of Palo Alto and Section 22.08.005 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code require that, before any substantial building, construction, reconstruction or development is commenced or approved, upon or with respect to any land held by the City for park purposes, the Council shall first cause to be prepared and by ordinance approve and adopt a plan therefor.

(b) Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center is dedicated to park purposes.

(c) The City intends to authorize construction of improvements to the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center, as detailed in Exhibit "A."

SECTION 2. The Council hereby approves the Plan for replacement and construction of improvements in Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center and hereby adopts the Plan attached hereto as Exhibit "A" as part of the official plan for the construction of improvements in Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center.

SECTION 3. The City Council finds that this ordinance falls under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption found in Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15301 because it consists of the repair and maintenance of existing facilities, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing prior to the improvements.

SECTION 4. This ordinance shall be effective on the thirty-first day after the date of its adoption.

INTRODUCED:

PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

\*NOT YET APPROVED\*

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deputy City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

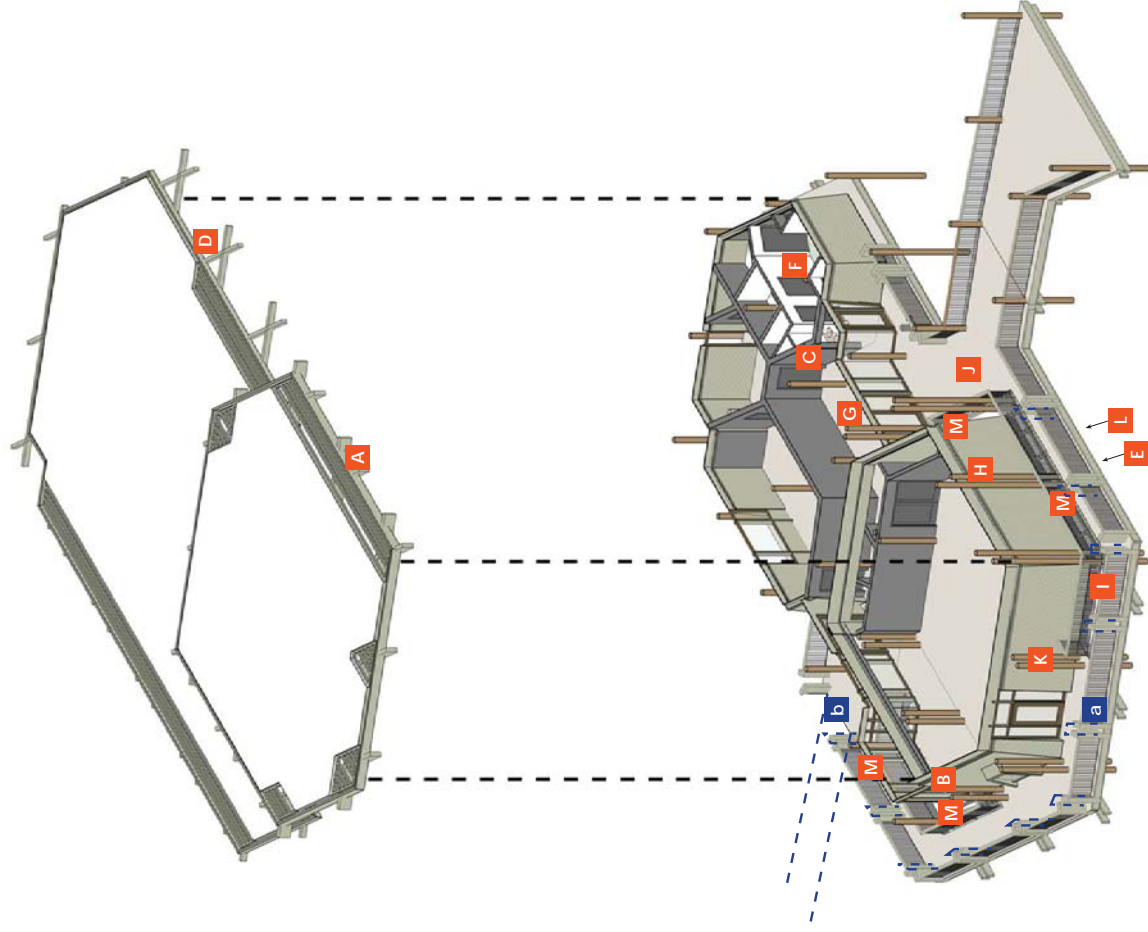
APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

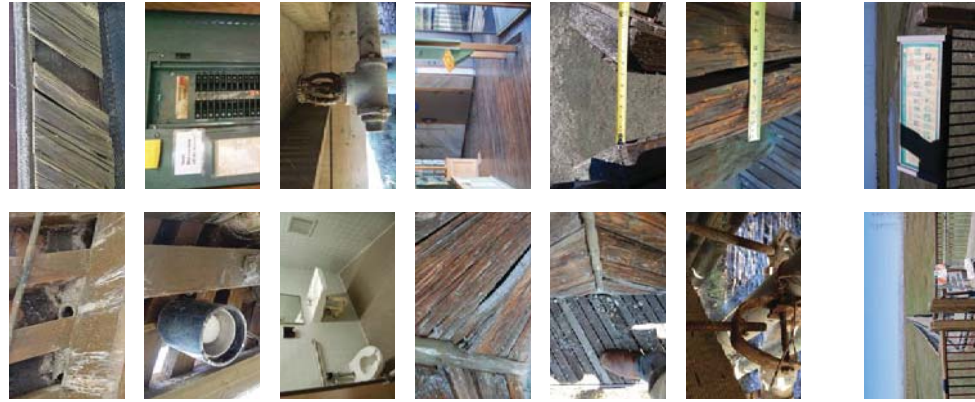
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Community Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Administrative Services

ATTACHMENT A



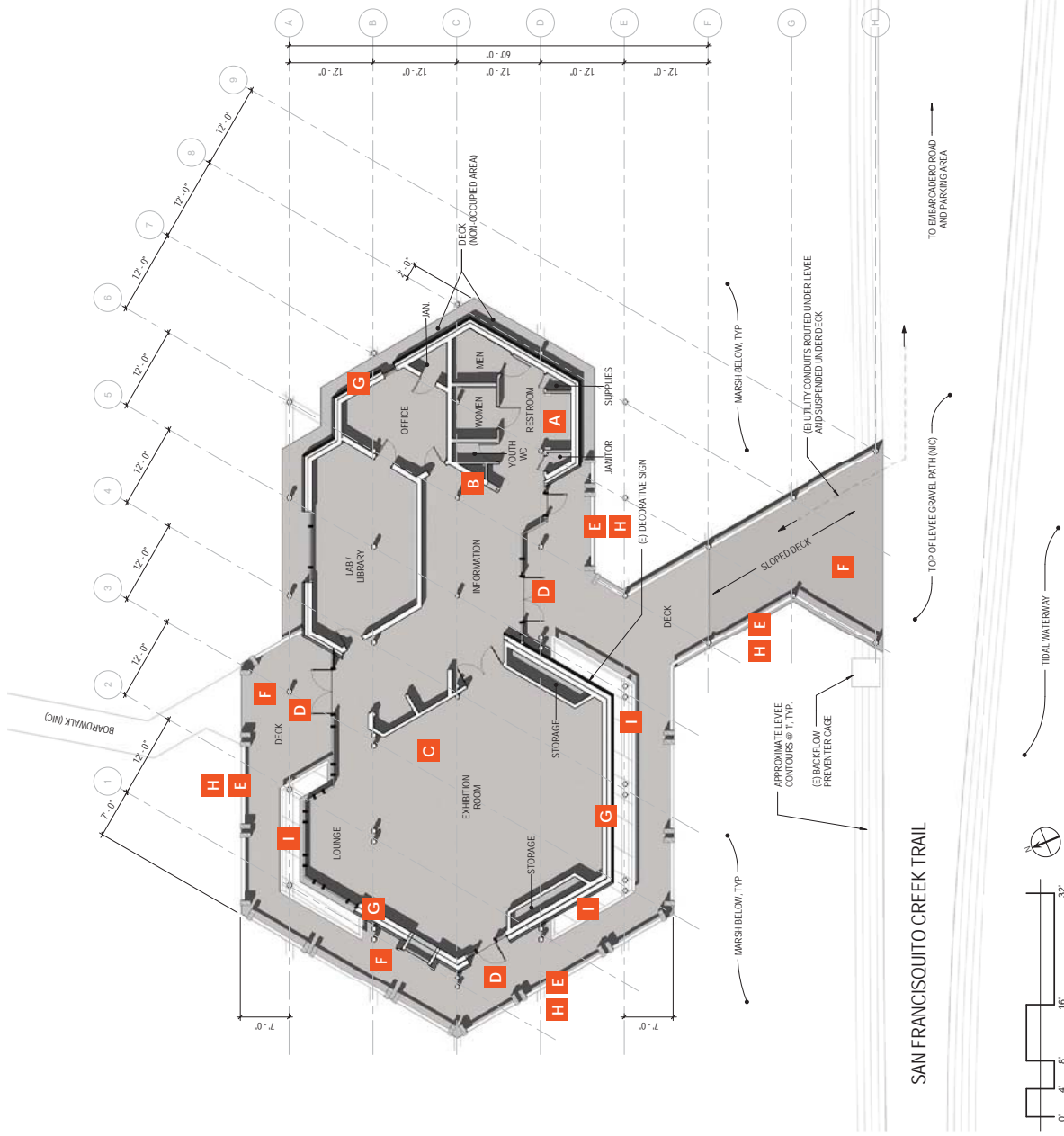
- A** Fascia Repair
- B** Bird Habitat Protection
- C** Electrical Panel Upgrade
- D** Lighting Replacement
- E** Fire Sprinkler Heads Replacement
- F** Restroom Accessibility Upgrades
- G** Interior Floor Refinishing
- H** Wood Siding Replacement
- I** Railing Replacement and Improvements
- J** Deck Replacement
- K** Structural Repairs
- L** Piping and Conduit Repairs
- M** Deck Openings and New Railing
- a** Interpretive Display Accommodations
- b** Boardwalk Connection Accommodations





### Site Plan Notes

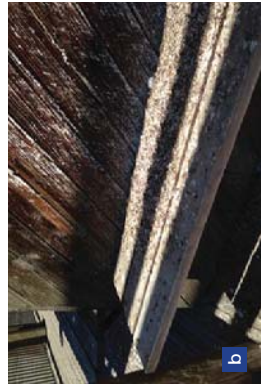
- A** Proposed layout for restroom upgrades to meet current codes and ADA requirements.
- B** Electrical panel to be upgraded.
- C** Interior 2x3 wood floor to be refinished throughout. No other interior work aside from restrooms.
- D** Existing doors and windows to remain unchanged, aside from painting of exterior wood surfaces.
- E** New wood guardrail system to replace deteriorated steel and wood guardrails.
- F** Exterior decking to be replaced in-kind.
- G** Exterior siding to be replaced in-kind.
- H** Exterior wood fascia to be replaced in-kind.
- I** Proposed deck openings to accommodate droppings of nesting swallows, with nest boxes above.





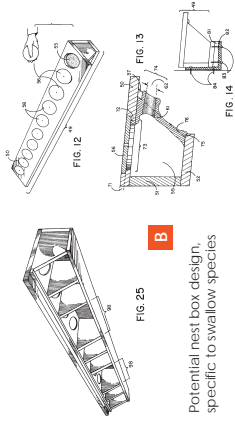
### Nesting Swallow Damage

- a** Mud swallow nests in crevices formed by exposed roof rafters - part of original building design.
- b** Droppings on battered walls and bench, damaging wood with acidity.
- c** Droppings at entrance and exit doors and on decking, creating a slip hazard.

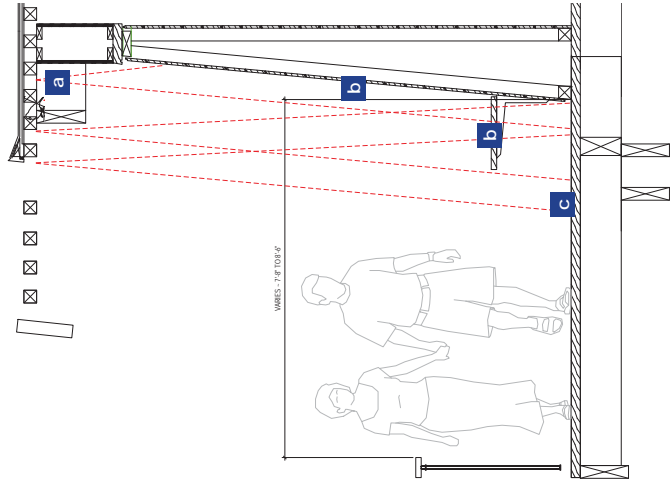


### Swallow Management Proposal

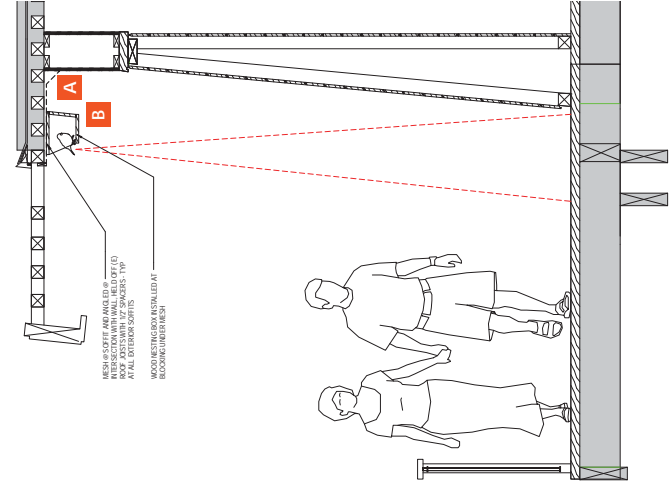
- A** Install steel mesh under existing exposed roof rafters and at angle against wall, covering crevices. Recommended: McNICHOLS Quality Vinylmesh™ Wire Mesh, Black coated 1" Square Mesh, or similar.
- B** Install nesting boxes under mesh in areas favored by swallows, specific to species.
- C** Remove selected sections of decking to allow droppings to fall directly into marsh.



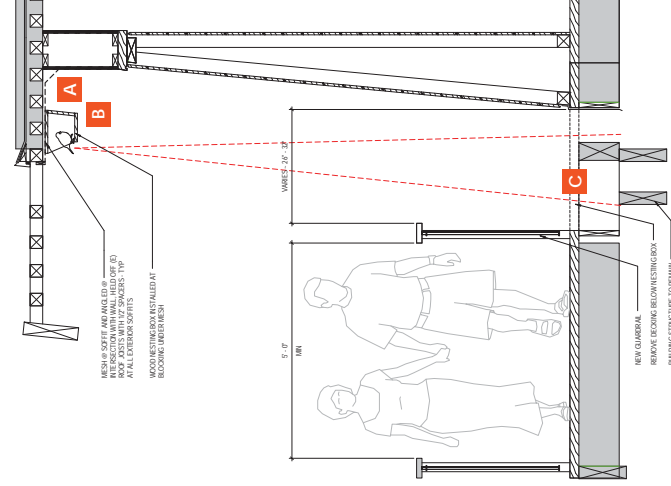
Potential nest box design, specific to swallow species



Section - Existing Conditions - Damage from Soffit Nests & Droppings Trajectory



Section - Proposed Soffit-Mounted Nest Boxes - Without Deck Openings



Section - Proposed Soffit-Mounted Nest Boxes & Deck Openings