CITY OF BERKELEY

Parks Recreation & Waterfront

Waterfront Specific Plan for the City of Berkeley Public Tidelands Area

Supporting Infrastructure, Revenue, Parking, and Sea Level Rise Studies (as of March 2023)

The following studies were produced as part of *Waterfront Specific Plan* (formerly "Berkeley Marina Area Specific Plan") process, with the exception of the "Berkeley Marina Sea Level Rise AB 691 Assessment Study". These studies are not final and continue to be updated by City staff, Hargreaves Jones, and the consultants associated with each study.

The *Waterfront Specific Plan* process began in the spring of 2020, just as the global pandemic emerged, which extended the anticipated duration of the effort and has required several updates and revisions to data and analysis included in these documents. These studies have informed the development of the *Waterfront Specific Plan* to date, and will continue to be referenced and revised as this process continues.

Final versions will be released in coordination with the final *Waterfront Specific Plan* – following an upcoming environmental review process, further community and stakeholder engagement, and ongoing City Council review.

1. **Infrastructure Assessment *DRAFT*** (May 2021)
   Hargreaves Jones, Moffatt & Nichol, Nelson\Nygaard, Bkf Engineering

2. **Existing Amenities and Operations Assessment *DRAFT*** (March 2021)
   Keyser Marston Associates

3. **Implementation Strategy *DRAFT*** (April 2021)
   Keyser Marston Associates

4. **Hotel Food and Beverage Revenue Potential *DRAFT*** (September 2022)
   Keyser Marston Associates

5. **Dredging Needs Technical Memo *DRAFT*** (April 2021)
   Moffatt & Nichol

6. **Slip Mix Study *DRAFT*** (August 2022)
   Moffatt & Nichol

7. **Parking & Mobility Framework *DRAFT*** (January 2022)
   Nelson Nygaard

8. **Berkeley Marina Sea Level Rise AB 691 Assessment Study *DRAFT*** (August 2019)
   NCE

DRAFT **EXISTING AMENITIES AND OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT**

Written by: **Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.**

BERKELEY MARINA AREA
specific plan

March 26, 2021

Executive Summary

The Existing Amenities and Operations Assessment provides an inventory of existing land uses, amenities, and operations in the Berkeley Marina Area and identifies the potential increase in demand for key revenue-generating land uses over the next 20 years based on market research. The purpose of the assessment is to assist with the development of the Berkeley Marina Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan or BMASP).

The Existing Amenities and Operations Assessment is organized into five sections.

Sections 1 through 4 focus on the primary revenue-generating land uses in the Marina Area and provide quantitative estimates of future development potential based on market trends.

Section 5 reviews public and commercial recreation land uses, as well as other amenities, operations, and programs at the Marina, and provides a preliminary, qualitative assessment of opportunities to enhance these areas.

Key Findings

Primary Revenue-Generating Land Uses

The primary revenue-generating land uses in the Marina Area include the public marina, a hotel, food and beverage facilities, and event venues. Based on estimated market demand over the next 20 years, the Marina Area has the potential to attract a new select-service hotel with 120 to 200 rooms, up to 11,000 square feet of new food and beverage facilities, and up to 8,000 square feet of new event space. Marina market trends do not support an increase in the total slip count at the marina but do suggest an opportunity to reconfigure existing slips to accommodate larger vessels of 35 feet or more in length.

Estimated Net New Development Potential of Primary Revenue-Generating Uses (20 Years)

Land Use	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Marina	Increase share of larger slips (35+ feet) No growth in total slip count	
Hotel	120 rooms	200 rooms
Food and Beverage Facilities	4,000 SF	11,000 SF
Event Space	0 SF	8,000 SF

Source: Keyser Marston Associates (order-of-magnitude estimate)

The estimates of net new development potential indicate the maximum supported demand for each use, rather than a recommended land use program. The preferred land use mix for the Specific Plan will consider a variety of additional factors such as community priorities, financial feasibility, and infrastructure capacity.

Demand estimates assume a gradual recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic and a return to economic normalization by the time the Specific Plan is implemented. A prolonged economic fallout would delay the timing of market opportunities.

Demand estimates also assume significant and sustained improvements to public safety in the Marina Area. It will be very challenging to attract new revenue-generating uses to the

Marina Area if safety and security issues, such as car break-ins, vandalism, and illegal dumping, are not addressed.

Public and Commercial Recreation and Other Amenities, Operations, and Programs

The Marina Area's extensive public recreation uses, including parks, trails, and playgrounds, are valued community amenities, which will be a key focus of the Specific Plan. The Marina Area also supports a variety of commercial and nonprofit recreation uses, as well as other amenities, operations, and programs, including several major recurring outdoor events.

The Specific Plan process will evaluate opportunities to enhance public and commercial recreation uses, as well as other amenities, operations, and programs, based upon community priorities, funding availability, and other factors. These opportunities might include:

- Restoring a recreational fishing pier with new ferry service;
- Improving facilities for recreational clubs and programs, possibly through the development of an aquatic center;
- Encouraging outdoor events to activate the waterfront.

1 MARINA AND RELATED AMENITIES AND COMMERCIAL USES

Existing Uses

The Marina Area's small craft harbor comprises 15 publicly owned docks with more than 1,000 slips and one private dock belonging to the DoubleTree Hotel, which is used for berthing a fleet of dinner cruise vessels. The City of Berkeley operates and maintains all public docks in the small craft harbor except A Dock, which is currently leased to the Berkeley Marine Center and accommodates a fuel dock and OCSC's fleet of sailboats. The Marina Area also includes dry storage for approximately 70 vessels adjacent to the small craft harbor and launch facilities that allow trailered boats to access the water.

To complement the small craft harbor, the Berkeley Marina offers related amenities such as pump out facilities and boater only restrooms, as well as commercial uses catered to the boating community. The Berkeley Marine Center operates a boatyard, chandlery, and fuel dock, while the Berkeley Marina Sportsmans Center operates a bait and tackle shop. Together, these marina-related commercial uses occupy close to 10,000 square feet of building area and lease over five acres of land area. In addition to these uses, the Berkeley Yacht Club functions as a social venue for the local boating community (see Sections 4 and 5).

Market Trends

Marina

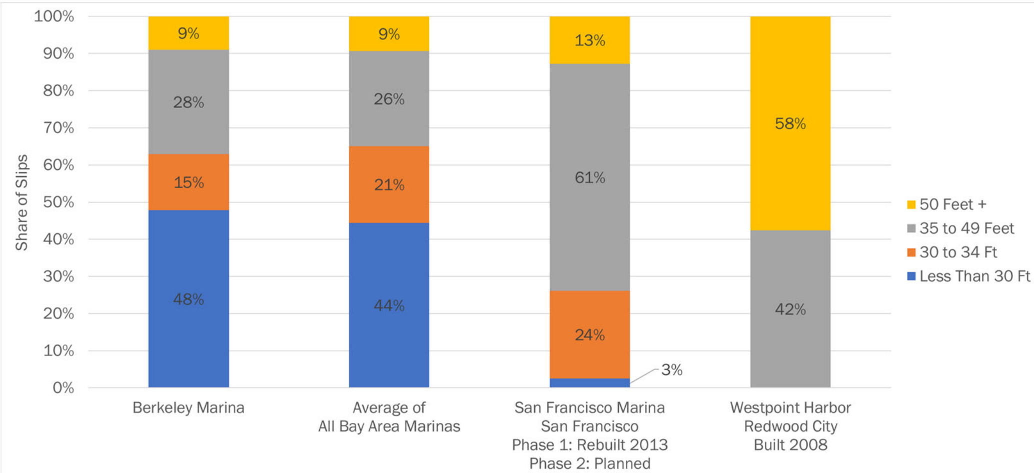
The number of registered recreational vessels in California and Alameda County recorded annual declines for most of the prior decade. The number of registered recreational vessels fell by more than 20% between 2008 and 2018 throughout California, and by nearly 30% in Alameda County. However, demand indicators have improved over the past two years. Statewide vessel registrations grew by 6% in 2019, and national sales of new powerboats reached a 13-year peak in 2020, as interest in outdoor activities has surged during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Alameda County, marina market conditions are weaker than in other areas of the state. The number of registered vessels per thousand households is roughly 60% of the statewide average. Slip fees in Alameda County and throughout the Bay Area are substantially less than what marinas in Southern California achieve.

Local industry experts cite an oversupply of small slips as one of the key challenges facing Bay Area marinas. Slips less than 30 feet in length comprise nearly half of the total inventory at Bay Area marinas, yet demand has shifted to larger slips. The shift in demand is explained in part by boater preferences for larger vessels, and by the more frequent use of dry storage options for smaller vessels.

Newly built or rebuilt marinas have responded to these demand trends by configuring their docks to accommodate larger vessels. At the San Francisco Marina and Westpoint Harbor in Redwood City, two of the Bay Area's most recent marina projects, the slip mix is heavily weighted toward lengths of 35 feet or more. As shown in Figure 1-1, just 3% of slips at the San Francisco Marina and none of the slips at Westpoint Harbor are less than 30 feet in length.

Figure 1-1: Slip Mix of Berkeley Marina, All Bay Area Marinas, and Recently Built Marinas



Sources: City of Berkeley, City of San Francisco, Westpoint Harbor, Anchor QEA

At the Berkeley Marina, larger slips are associated with higher occupancy rates. The difference in occupancy rates by slip size is most pronounced for newer docks that are in good or excellent condition (docks B and C, and F through I), where the occupancy rate is 94% for slips of 35 feet or more in length versus 71% for slips less than 30 feet in length. Only larger slips appear to gain an occupancy premium from their location on docks in better condition. Average occupancy of smaller slips is actually lower on docks in better condition than docks in adequate, fair, or poor condition. If this trend holds, future dock replacement projects are more likely to capture an occupancy premium if the slip mix is weighted toward larger slips.

Table 1-1: Berkeley Marina Occupancy by Slip Length and Dock Condition

Slip Length	Good to Excellent Dock Condition			Poor to Adequate Dock Condition			Total – All Docks		
	Avail.	**Occ.**	**Occ. %**	**Avail.**	**Occ.**	**Occ. %**	**Avail.**	**Occ.**	**Occ. %**
<30’	90	64	71%	368	276	75%	458	340	74%
30 – 34’	58	48	83%	79	71	90%	137	119	87%
35’+	132	124	94%	204	173	85%	336	297	88%
Total	280	236	84%	651	520	80%	931	756	81%
	35’ avg. length 32% of slips <30’			*32’ avg. length 54% of slips <30’*			*33’ avg. length 48% of slips <30’*		

Source: City of Berkeley

Marina-Serving Amenities and Commercial Uses

Amenities available onsite at the Berkeley Marina are more comprehensive than those offered by many competing marinas. Table 1-2 compares amenities at the Berkeley Marina to a selection of nearby competitors. As shown, the Berkeley Marina is one of the few marinas profiled to have an onsite fuel dock and bait shop, and the only marina to have an onsite boatyard.

The fuel dock and bait shop are everyday conveniences that may enhance the market appeal of the Berkeley Marina in the eyes of prospective slip holders. In contrast, the boatyard functions as a regional amenity that benefits the boating community throughout the Bay Area. Boatyards in the Bay Area have come under increasing development pressure as waterfront industrial areas are redeveloped with higher-value residential and commercial uses.

The Berkeley Marina is also one of a few marinas profiled to offer dry boat storage. Demand for dry storage is on the rise among owners of smaller vessels as an affordable alternative to leasing a wet slip. The Marina's existing dry storage area is nearly full, which suggests an opportunity to add more capacity. However, the revenue potential for dry storage is limited, as fees are less than a quarter of comparable rates for wet slips.

Table 1-2: Amenities Offered by Berkeley Marina versus Nearby Competitors

	Berkeley Marina	**Emery Cove Yacht Harbor**	**Emeryville Marina**	**Marina Bay Yacht Harbor**	**Brickyard Cove Marina**	**Marina Village Yacht Harbor**	**Ballena Isle Marina**
City	Berkeley	Emeryville	Emeryville	Richmond	Richmond	Alameda	Alameda
Slips	956	430	382	850	250	738	515
Owner	Public	Private	Public	Public	Private	Private	Private
Operator	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private
Boatyard	●			○	○	○	○
Chandlery	●			○	○	○	○
Bait Shop	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Fuel Dock	●	○	●	○	○	○	●
Dry Storage	●			●	●		●
● Available onsite ○ Available nearby							

Source: City of Berkeley, Keyser Marston Associates

Marina Area Market Demand

Market trends do not appear to support an increase in total slips at the marina or the expansion of marina-related commercial uses and amenities. However, there are opportunities to optimize existing uses to ensure the Berkeley Marina remains competitive over the next 20 years.

Marina

The Marina Area 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan evaluated the condition of existing docks, and concluded that two public docks, D and E, are in poor condition and due for immediate replacement. Three more docks, J, L, M, are in poor condition and will likely require replacement in subsequent years.

The slip mix of D and E docks is largely consistent with market trends. Over 70 percent of slips at D and E docks are 35 feet or more in length. In contrast, only one-third of slips at docks J, L, and M can accommodate vessels of this length.

As docks J, L, and M reach the end of their useful life, there will be an opportunity to reconfigure the existing slips to better align with market trends. Benchmarks from other recently built or rebuilt Bay Area marinas would suggest targeting at least 70% of slips for vessels over 35 feet. The optimal slip mix for the Berkeley Marina will depend on a variety of additional factors such as the physical layout of the docks and stakeholder priorities.

Table 1-3: Current Slip Mix of Docks at Berkeley Marina versus Market Benchmark

	Market Benchmark[1]	Berkeley Docks D&E	Berkeley Docks J, L, M	All Berkeley Docks
Dock Condition		Poor	Fair	Varies
Total Slips		88	343	959
30 ft or longer % of slips	90%+	100%	18%	52%
35 ft or longer % of slips	70%+	73%	12%	37%

[1] Based on recently built, rebuilt, and proposed marinas in the Bay Area.
Source: City of Berkeley, Keyser Marston Associates

Marina-Serving Amenities and Commercial Uses

The Marina Center and the Sportsmans Center operate many of the key amenities available to slip holders at the Berkeley Marina, including the fuel dock, bait shop, and boatyard. Both entities have leases set to expire over the next 10 years.

Onsite boater conveniences such as the fuel dock and bait shop enhance the marina's market appeal. The onsite boatyard functions as a regional amenity and is likely less important to the marina's competitive position. However, this facility provides an important regional benefit to the boating community, particularly as boatyards elsewhere in the Bay Area have come under increasing development pressure.

Demand for dry storage is on the rise, but fees collected from dry storage are very modest. Dry storage could function as an interim use to be later replaced by longer-term development opportunities with greater revenue potential.

2 HOTEL

Existing Uses

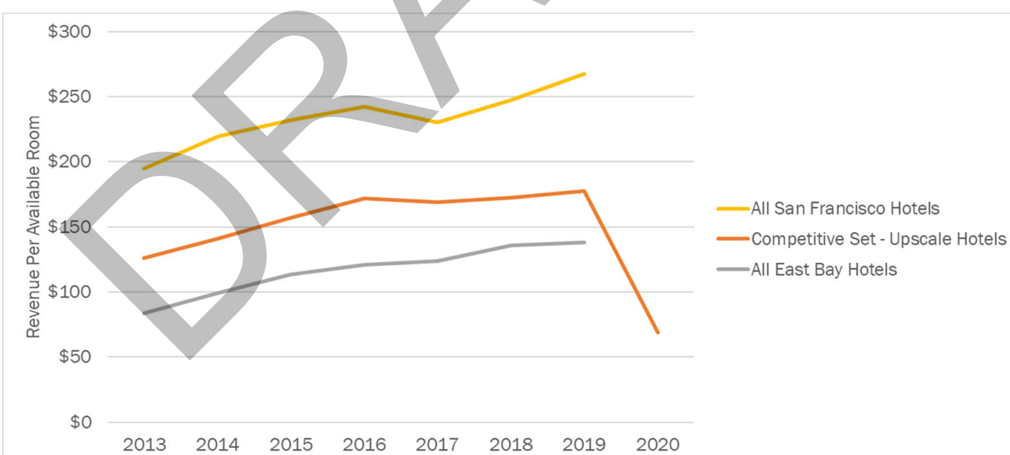
Built in 1972, the Berkeley Marina DoubleTree by Hilton is the largest hotel in the City of Berkeley, with 378 guestrooms on 14 acres of land leased from the City until 2080. The DoubleTree is an upscale, full-service hotel, with abundant event space, a restaurant, and a variety of amenities for guests. Demand segmentation is estimated to be 55% leisure, 22% corporate, 21% meetings and groups, and 2% government, according to financial filings.

Market Trends

Alameda County's hotel inventory totals approximately 18,500 rooms. Another 1,500 hotel rooms are currently under construction, exceeding the 1,400 rooms built in the prior decade. Upscale hotels in downtowns and along the I-880 corridor represent most of the county's recent hotel development activity. The only recent hotel project in Berkeley is Residence Inn Berkeley, a 331-room extended stay hotel now under construction in Downtown Berkeley.

The room rates of upscale hotels in the East Bay, including the DoubleTree and most recently built hotels, are approximately 15% greater than the average of all East Bay hotels, but are well below average room rates of San Francisco hotels. Upscale hotels in the East Bay that compete with the DoubleTree averaged nearly 6% annual growth in revenue per available room from 2013 to 2019. Based on data reported to the City and investors, the DoubleTree's revenue growth has generally kept pace with the competitive set of nearby upscale hotels.

Figure 2-1: Trends in Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)



2020 data only available for competitive set of upscale hotels. Sources: STR, CBRE, City of Berkeley

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the global hotel industry. In the Bay Area, hotel occupancy rates remain well below 50%, one year since the pandemic began. Financing for new hotel projects has evaporated due to increased economic uncertainty. Forecasts prepared by the San Francisco Airport and Visit California predict that travel and tourism to the Bay Area might not fully recover until 2024-2026.

Prior to the pandemic, Alameda County had a substantial pipeline of nearly 3,000 proposed hotel rooms, in addition to projects already under construction. Some developers might delay or reconsider their proposals if occupancy remains weak in the coming years. Other developers might move forward based on the expectation that market conditions will improve by the time their project is completed.

Marina Area Market Demand

Despite near-term challenges, the Marina Area is a strong and proven location for hotel development, with the potential to attract an additional hotel within the 20-year planning horizon.

An upscale, select-service hotel is the most likely development opportunity, based on recent market trends. Select-service hotels typically range from 120 to 200 rooms and provide more limited meeting space and dining options than a full-service hotel like the DoubleTree. Most select-service hotels are affiliated with a large, national hotel chain. The design of select-service hotels varies by brand. Classic brands (such as Courtyard by Marriott) follow more uniform design standards. Lifestyle and soft brands (such as Hotel Indigo by IHG) tend to have more flexible design standards that allow for a stronger connection to the local context. Lifestyle and soft brands are a growing segment of select-service hotels and might be more compatible with the Marina Area than a classic brand.

Table 2-1: Estimated Net New Hotel Development Potential in Marina Area (20 Years)

Type	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Upscale, Select-service	120 rooms	200 rooms

Source: Keyser Marston Associates (order-of-magnitude estimate)

While a smaller boutique hotel would complement the Marina Area's natural setting, boutique hotels represent a fraction of the local market and none of the hotel projects completed in the county over the last 10 years. Boutique hotels are typically less than 150 rooms and are either operated independently or affiliated with a small chain. The design of boutique hotels is unique and often connects to the local context, even more so than a lifestyle or soft brand hotel. Bay Area examples include the Graduate in Downtown Berkeley and Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito. Newer boutique hotels tend to be priced at the top of the market in order to support the cost of personalized service. Identifying a developer for a boutique hotel would likely be more challenging than for a conventional hotel affiliated with a large franchise.

3 FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Existing Uses

The Marina Area contains three active restaurants—Skates on the Bay, Hana Japan, and the Berkeley Boathouse at the DoubleTree—that occupy more than 20,000 square feet of total building area. All are upscale, fine dining restaurants with table service. In addition to full-service restaurants, the bait shop offers light food and coffee, as does a small market/snack stand inside of the DoubleTree Hotel.

Two vacant commercial spaces in the Marina Area could accommodate additional food and beverage uses. The first vacant space is the 25,000-square foot, two-story building at 199 Seawall Drive, which was occupied by a full-service restaurant until 2018. The City is seeking a new tenant for the building and has generated interest from restaurants as well as other tenant types. The second vacant space is the 3,400 square foot ground floor of 235 University Avenue. While this space is included in Hana Japan's lease, the restaurant does not ordinarily occupy the ground floor, except for temporary outdoor dining introduced during the pandemic. The lease agreement with the City requires Hana Japan to make improvements to the ground floor and identify a subtenant.

Market Trends

The Marina trade area benefits from strong food and beverage spending potential. Residents and visitors within a 20-minute drive of the Berkeley Marina are estimated to support nearly $870 million in annual spending at restaurants and other food and beverage facilities. Marina Area restaurants currently capture a 1% share of total demand in the trade area, based on existing, pre-pandemic sales of approximately $11 million per year.

Local spending in Berkeley and nearby commercial districts has increasingly focused on experiences, benefitting food and beverage sales, which outpaced other retail categories in Berkeley from 2015 to 2019. At the same time, rising operating costs have put pressure on restaurant margins, a challenge now compounded by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which cut local restaurant sales by more than half in 2020.

National restaurant trends suggest a shift toward less formal dining as well as alternative, lower cost formats. Sales at fast casual restaurants, which do not provide table service, grew at nearly three times the rate of fine dining sales during the five years preceding the Covid-19 pandemic, based on data for larger chains. Another growing trend is experimentation with alternative formats such as outdoor dining and food trucks, which allow food and beverage businesses to limit their real estate costs and create a unique experience for customers.

Marina Area Market Demand

The Marina Area's waterfront setting makes it an attractive location for food and beverage uses. Over the next 20 years, the Marina Area has the potential to capture an additional $3 million to $8 million in local food and beverage spending, based on future growth in the Marina's trade area. This level of sales would support an additional 4,000 to 11,000 square feet of new food and beverage uses, focused primarily on quick and casual options not currently available in the Marina Area. The upper-end estimate of development potential is conditioned on growth of complementary uses, including a new hotel to support a fine dining restaurant and large-scale ferry service to support demand for less formal food and beverage options.

Net new development potential does not include the potential to activate vacant food and beverage spaces at 199 Seawall Drive and 235 University Avenue. These existing spaces represent another opportunity to increase food and beverage sales in the Marina Area.

Table 3-1: Estimated Net New Food & Beverage Development Potential in Marina Area (20 Years)

Type	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Fine Dining (in Hotel)	0 SF	3,000 SF
Casual Dining	3,000 SF	5,000 SF
Café/ Market	1,000 SF	3,000 SF
Total Square Feet	**4,000 SF**	**11,000 SF**
Net New Sales	$3 million	$8 million

Source: Keyser Marston Associates (order-of-magnitude estimate)

4 MEETING AND EVENT VENUES

Existing Uses

Privately operated buildings in the Marina Area contain more than 20,000 square feet of indoor space and over 10,000 square feet of outdoor space available for meetings, events, and private dining. The DoubleTree Hotel offers the largest meeting and event venue, with capacity for 850 guests. Berkeley Yacht Club and OCSC both rent their facilities for smaller events (less than 150 guests), while Skates on the Bay features a private dining room for up to 80 guests. Charter boats berthed at the small craft harbor also host social and corporate events. The largest vessel of Hornblower Cruises' Berkeley fleet can accommodate 250 guests.

The vacant, two story building at 199 Seawall Drive contains an additional 10,000 square feet of indoor space designed for private events, including a large ballroom with capacity for 500 guests and three smaller reception rooms. The City is currently seeking a tenant for the building and has generated interest from a variety of tenant types. While some prospective tenants would retain or enhance the event space, others would repurpose the space for alternative uses.

Market Trends

There are approximately 70 venues for meetings and events in Berkeley (including private dining), half of which can accommodate more than 200 guests. UC Berkeley represents an important source of local demand for meeting and event space. University-affiliated demand is likely to increase over the next 20 years, based on the university's draft Long-Range Development Plan, although a significant share of demand is likely to be met through on-campus facilities or private venues closer to campus.

There are few venues in Berkeley dedicated exclusively to meetings and events and most of these are affiliated with an academic institution or a hotel. Remaining venues include restaurants, performance halls, museums, and galleries, which utilize events as a secondary source of revenue.

Dedicated, standalone event venues are rare throughout the East Bay. One of the largest and most prominent examples is the Craneway Pavilion on State tidelands in the City of Richmond. The Craneway offers 45,000 square feet of indoor meeting space as well as a 20,000 square foot outdoor patio for corporate meetings, product launches, concerts, speaking engagements, and social events. The Craneway's operating model benefits from favorable ground lease terms that require a nominal payment to the City of Richmond (as successor to the former Redevelopment Agency). A precedent for smaller standalone event venues in the East Bay is the collection of indoor rental facilities operated by the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) at several locations, including the Brazilian Room at Tilden Regional Park. The EBRPD facilities range from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet and are typically rented for weddings and receptions.

Marina Area Market Demand

The Marina Area already includes a significant amount of event space. Additional event space in the area is likely to be integrated with new food and beverage and hotel uses and treated as a secondary revenue stream. Net new development potential is estimated to be up to 8,000 square feet based upon the amount of meeting space supported by a new 120-200 room hotel, as well as the possibility that a new restaurant would choose to add a second-floor banquet facility to serve private events. Market support for a banquet /

reception venue would be less if the future tenant of 199 Seawall Drive renovates the building's reception rooms for private events.

Table 4-1: Estimated Net New Event Venue Development Potential in Marina Area (20 Years)

Type	Lower Estimate	Upper Estimate
Meeting/ Conference Venue	0 SF	5,000 SF
Banquet / Reception Venue	0 SF	3,000 SF
Total	**0 SF**	**8,000 SF**

Source: Keyser Marson Associates (order-of-magnitude estimate)

5 RECREATION AND OTHER AMENITIES, PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

Public Recreation Areas

The Marina Area contains seven miles of trails and over 100 acres of parks and playgrounds, including Cesar Chavez Park (90 acres), Horseshoe Park (3.5 acres acres), Shorebird Park (6 acres), and the Adventure Playground (1 acre). At Shorebird Park, the Shorebird Nature Center operates environmental education programs in a 900 square foot straw bale building and a covered outdoor patio classroom. The 2.5-mile fishing pier is a cherished amenity that was closed to the public in 2015 due to structural issues.

Parks, playgrounds, and trails are the Marina Area's most popular destinations among community members who responded to the first BMASP questionnaire. Community members expressed strong support for restoring the fishing pier, enhancing nature viewing areas, protecting ecological features, and beach improvements. The Specific Plan will consider potential enhancements to public recreation areas based on community priorities and funding availability.

Figure 5-1: Public Recreation Areas

Source: Hargreaves

Boating and Water Sports Organizations

Most recreational clubs and concessions at the waterfront focus on boating and water sports. Boating and water sports organizations provide training, rent boats and equipment, and host races and social events. Four organizations—the Berkeley Yacht Club, OCSC Sailing, Cal Adventures, and Cal Sailing—occupy landside facilities that total nearly 10,000 square feet of building area. Others, such as Berkeley Racing Canoe Center and Pegasus Project, have vessels berthed at the small craft harbor but do not occupy any landside facilities. Many of the boating and water sports organizations at the waterfront have a social mission and offer free or low-cost programs to the community.

The Specific Plan process will explore opportunities to enhance or augment facilities for boating and water sports organizations in the Marina Area. One potential development concept raised in initial focus groups is to establish an aquatic center that would serve the needs of multiple organizations. The Jack London Aquatic Center in Oakland is a local example. The 16,000-square foot facility, adjacent to a waterfront park and small-craft docks, provides space to seven recreational clubs and programs, and includes a small venue for private events as an additional source of revenue.

Ferries and Charter Boats

Ferry and charter boat companies based at the marina's small craft harbor include Tideline Marine Group and Hornblower Cruises. Tideline Marine Group operates a small-scale ferry service that runs between K Dock and San Francisco (suspended during the pandemic), while Hornblower Cruises operates a fleet of dinner cruise vessels berthed at the DoubleTree's private dock. In addition, a number of smaller charter boat companies offer frequent sportfishing and exploratory trips around the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean.

The City has engaged a consulting team to evaluate the feasibility of large-scale ferry service in the Marina Area. A prior ridership projection estimated the potential for up to 260,000 annual passengers. By comparison, Tideline's small-scale service carries 13,000 passengers per year. A large-scale ferry service would support demand for revenue-generating land uses in the Marina Area, particularly for cafes and grab-and-go food services. The ferry would also enhance the DoubleTree's market appeal and the potential to attract a second hotel.

Landside Commercial Recreation Concessions

Currently, the only landside commercial recreation use in the Marina Area is a mobile kite rental kiosk operated by Highline Kites. Other recreation areas in California have attracted commercial concessions engaged in an array of activities, from rock climbing to ropes courses. The land and facilities requirements of commercial recreation uses are tenant-specific and cannot be predicted based solely on market trends.

The first BMASP community questionnaire indicates sixty percent of respondents support adding more commercial recreation uses to the waterfront, while fifteen percent oppose adding more commercial recreation uses, possibly due to concerns that new uses would conflict with public recreation areas. The Specific Plan will determine whether any sites in the Marina Area are suited to commercial recreation and recommend criteria for approving new uses to ensure public recreation areas are protected.

Outdoor Special Events

The City of Berkeley and external groups organize outdoor special events that draw thousands of visitors to the waterfront each year. The City organizes the annual Bay Festival (April), Shoreline Cleanup (September), and Winter on the Waterfront (December). External groups organize the annual Fourth of July festival, Kite Festival (July), and Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk (September), as well as one-time events.

Special events help generate activity at the waterfront without requiring a significant investment in real estate or infrastructure. While in past years, the City has helped fund some of the external events held at the waterfront, a recently adopted fee schedule will allow the City to recover the cost of providing public services to future external events. The fee schedule also requires sponsors to pay a percentage of ticket and concession sales to the Marina Fund, creating an opportunity for special events to improve the fund's financial position.

Public Facilities

The City of Berkeley occupies nearly 13,000 square feet of floor area in several Marina Area buildings for administrative offices and equipment storage. Public facilities in the planning area include the waterfront office, corporation yard, and the ground floor of 125-127 University Avenue, which will soon be occupied by the Berkeley Police Department's Traffic Bureau. At present, the City has not identified a need for additional public facilities, except for a kiosk at the entry to the Marina Area that is pending capital funding.

Office Space

The second floor of the two-story, City-owned building at 125-127 University Avenue contains 6,000 square feet of rentable floor area leased to several office tenants, including two small financial services firms and a nonprofit advocacy organization. The office building, like the rest of the Berkeley Marina Area, is located on State tidelands granted in public trust to the City of Berkeley for water-dependent uses that support statewide interests. As the City has been unable to identify office tenants that meet the public trust use standards, the State Lands Commission has allowed office leases to non-trust uses on a temporary basis for terms of five years or less.

As evidenced by the challenge filling existing office space, the Marina Area is unlikely to capture future demand for office that would satisfy public trust use standards, barring a concerted, long-term effort to attract a cluster of marine-related businesses to the waterfront. Such an effort has not surfaced as a priority among participants in the BMASP community engagement process. Given the challenges with office uses on State tidelands, the Specific Plan could explore options to replace existing office space with active, trust-compliant uses that align with community priorities.