



D E S I G N
R E V I E W
C O M M I T T E E
S T A F F R E P O R T

For Majority Recommendations
OCTOBER 15, 2026

600 BANCROFT WAY

Preliminary Design Review

Design Review #DRCP2025-0003 to demolish buildings and structures on an industrial site of approximately 2.93 acres at 600 Bancroft Way adjacent to Aquatic Park, and to construct a research and development campus containing one building totaling 251,817 square feet of gross floor area and 524 parking spaces.

I. Introduction

The project site is comprised of two parcels and is in the MU-LI district in West Berkeley. The project applicant proposes to construct a four-story research and development facility, parking garage with 524 spaces, and a publicly accessible plaza. The project would also include parking, landscaping and sidewalk improvements on Bolivar Drive.

The project is before the Design Review Committee for Preliminary Design Review.

II. Background

The project applicant proposes the construction of a three- to four-story (69-foot) research and development building with a five-story (53-foot) attached parking structure. The proposed research and development building would front Bolivar Drive and Aquatic Park beyond, and the parking garage would front Bancroft Way. Dreamland Park is located directly south of the project site.

Primary vehicular access to the project site would be via new driveways located along Bancroft Way, providing access to a 524-space parking structure. A raised median along Bancroft Way would stop westbound vehicles from turning directly into the parking structure. The median is required to prevent vehicles waiting to enter the garage from queuing across the railroad tracks. A roundabout at the terminus of Bancroft Way would allow westbound vehicles to reverse direction and access the parking structure by traveling eastbound.

Vehicular access to the rear of the site would be limited to emergency vehicles and

large delivery trucks via Bolivar Drive, through the Dreamland Park parking lot and along the rear of the proposed building. This access would be controlled by a gate at the parcel boundary. Four loading spaces are proposed at the rear of the building. A total of 128 long-term and 25 short-term bicycle parking spaces would also be provided throughout the project site.

A total of approximately 17,302 square feet of open space and landscaped area would be provided on the site, including a plaza located at the center of the site at the main project entry, landscaping along the front and portions of the sides of the building, and exterior balconies located at the second, third and fourth levels of the building. The stormwater planters are designed to absorb roof runoff and protect against street flooding, enhance the building's robustness and mitigate flood risks. A proposed bio-retention basin to the south of the property will shift the existing parking lot south. The bioretention pond is located on City-property and does not count towards the project's open space.

III. Project Setting

A. Neighborhood/Area Description:

The site is located in West Berkeley between the Aquatic Park and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks. The site fronts prominently on Bolivar Drive, the waterfront bicycle/pedestrian path across Bolivar Drive, and Aquatic Park.

Land uses in West Berkeley are characterized by a wider range of activities than in any other section of Berkeley, including manufacturing, wholesale, and industrial type uses along with commercial and residential. Building heights in West Berkeley consist of one- and two-level residential uses, generally east of Fifth Street, and up to six-story apartment buildings adjacent to the University Avenue overpass. The uses in the immediate vicinity of the project site are primarily commercial, office, industrial and research and development buildings. The project site is located south of the Berkeley Commons, a recently constructed three-story research and development campus located at 600 Addison Street. Another recently completed research and development project, The Lab, is located approximately two blocks to the east of the site on Bancroft Way.

The approximately 2.93-acre Project site is bounded by Bancroft Way to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the east, Dreamland for Kids Playground and parking lot to the south (both are part of Dreamland Park), and Bolivar Drive and Aquatic Park to the west. Regional vehicular access to the Project site is provided by Interstate 80 (I-80) and I-580, access to which is provided approximately three blocks north via the University Avenue overpass.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



B. Site Conditions:

There is a relatively dramatic downslope of the Project site from east to west, with the western edge of the site along Bolivar Drive being relatively flat. The Project site elevation ranges from an average elevation of approximately 12 to 15 feet along the eastern edge of the Project site and slopes down to the west to approximately 5 to 7 feet.

Existing development on the Project site includes three single-story buildings constructed in 1972 and 1973 and comprising 47,783 square feet of light industrial and research and development space and an associated surface parking lot.

Figure 2: Existing Site Development





Figure 3: Existing one-story structures. Source: HRE 600 Bancroft, Prepared by Evans & De Shazo, Inc., dated March 26, 2025

Table 1: Land Use Information

Location		Existing Use	Zoning District	General Plan Designation
Subject Property		Research and Development, Light industrial uses	MU-LI	Manufacturing
Surrounding Properties	North	Berkeley Commons – Research and Development campus	MU-LI	Manufacturing
	South	Dreamland Park	U	Open Space
	East	UPRR rail corridor and light industrial/manufacturing/warehouse	MU-LI	Manufacturing
	West	Aquatic Park	U	Open Space

Table 2: Lot Development Standards

Standard BMC Sections 23E.80.070-080 (MU-LI)		Existing	Proposed Total (Building)	Proposed Total (Parking)	Permitted/ Required
Lot Area (sq. ft.)		127,794	127,794		Not regulated
Gross Floor Area (square feet)		47,783	251,817	149,728	255,588
Floor Area Ratio		0.37	2	N/A	2
Lot Coverage		37%	52%	22%	100%
Building Height	Maximum (feet)	16'7"	69'	53	45'
	Stories	1	4	5	Not regulated
Building Setbacks (feet)	Front (Bolivar)	Varies	7'6"	N/A	Not regulated
	Rear (east)	Varies	29'	29'	Not regulated
	Left Side (Bancroft)	Varies	3'5"	4'	Not regulated
	Right Side (south)	Varies	6'	N/A	Not regulated
Parking/Loading	Automobile	144	N/A	524	512 (2:1,000 square feet)
	Bicycles	Not required	N/A	128 Long Term 28 Short Term	128/27 (1:2,000 square feet and 5% of Tenant Vehicle Spaces)
	Loading	Multiple	N/A	4	11 (1:10,000 initial square feet and 1:25,000 square feet for additional)

IV. Project Description

A. Requested Use Permits

- Use Permit pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 23C.08.050, to allow demolition of three non-residential buildings
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23.206.020(A) to construct a Research and Development facility of more than 20,000 square feet in the MU-LI district
- Use permit pursuant to BMC Section 23.206-020 to allow a laboratory space not specifically supporting a research and development use

- Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23.206.030(A) for the creation of new floor area over 20,000 square feet in the MU-LI district
- Modification of Development Standard in the West Berkeley Area Plan pursuant to BMC 23.406.080 to allow building height exceeding the 45 feet maximum limit
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC Section 23.304.050(A), to allow rooftop projections to exceed the height limit
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC 23.302.070 (G)(1) Parking Lot/Structure for a parking structure with 11 spaces or more exclusively for uses in the district
- Administrative Use Permit pursuant to BMC 23.322.100(C)(5) to reduce the number of required loading spaces. (BMC § 23.322.100(C)(5).
- Landmark Preservation Commission demolition referral

B. Development Agreement

The developer is negotiating a Development Agreement with the City of Berkeley to facilitate the use of City property for emergency access and deliveries (Bolivar Drive and provide right-of-way and Dreamland Park improvements.

C. CEQA Determination

An Initial Study (IS) is being prepared to evaluate any environmental impacts of the proposed project, pursuant to CEQA.

V. Design Review Guidelines

The City's Design Guidelines are applicable for this project. Excerpts from the City-wide Design Review Guidelines are included below for your reference.

- **Setbacks:** The street façade of commercial streets should be respected, in order to create or maintain the sense of urban space.
- **Parking and Driveways:** Conflict with pedestrian circulation should be prevented by the proper location and design of auto entrances; whenever possible, parking should be behind buildings, underground, or in a central court.
- **Harmony with Surroundings:** The proposed design should be in harmony with its surroundings through the coordination of such design elements as cornice lines, eaves, and setbacks with those of existing neighborhood buildings.
- **Articulation:** Street facades in general and the ground floor level in particular should include elements of pedestrian scale and three-dimensional interest.
- **Lighting:** Lighting for circulation, security, building/sign identification should be non-obtrusive, except for lighting fixtures which are themselves decorative additions to the streetscape.
- **Walls and Fences:** Large, unarticulated expanses of any particular wall material that deaden the pedestrian environment should be avoided. The use of clear windows for ground floor retail projects is encouraged. Walls designed to allow sitting areas for pedestrian or space for landscaping and artwork are encouraged,

- especially in areas of heavy pedestrian use. Landscaping and/or art work should be maximized if large expanses of wall must be left devoid of openings.
- **Landscape and Open Space:** Sidewalk areas should include landscaping that is coordinated with the neighborhood design.
 - **Public Open Space Areas:** the inclusion of public open spaces is encouraged as a means of providing places for people to come together for community interaction and enlivening the pedestrian environment.
 - **Pedestrian Paths:** Pedestrian paths and arcades interior to the block which joins different parts of buildings as well as different streets are encouraged.
 - **Building Entrances:** Entrance points should be clearly defined and easily identifiable by pedestrians by appropriate locations and by elements such as awnings, signage, artwork or changes in paving material to define the entry point.

VI. Issues and Analysis

A. Design Review Issues:

Neighborhood Context The site is located in West Berkeley between the Aquatic Park and the UPRR tracks south of the Fourth Street commercial area. The 2.93-acre project site is designated as Manufacturing (M) in the General Plan and zoned Mixed Use Light Industrial (MU-LI) pursuant to the City's Zoning Map and West Berkeley Area Plan. Surrounding uses include the Aquatic Park with water sport and recreation uses to the west; research and development uses to the north; warehouse and industrial uses to the east, and the Dreamland Park to the south. Passenger and freight trains run along the UPRR tracks immediately to the east.

Massing The project proposes one, three-to five-story building: the parking garage portion would be five-stories, but lower in height than the research and development portion of the building which would be three- to four- stories and up to 69 feet in height, not including the parapet/screening. The building would step down to the west towards Bolivar and the Aquatic Park to allow for terraced patios overlooking the waterfront and the building height is lower on the north side of the building along Bancroft Way. The proposed building is also stepped in plan at the center and along the waterfront to create landscaped gathering space at the ground floor and opportunities for additional terraces at the second, third and fourth floors. The parking garage would be located in the northeast portion of the building along Bancroft Way and the UPRR tracks to utilize Bancroft Way for access.



Figure 4: Looking northeast from the southwest portion of the site. Taller massing is at the south of the site, reducing in height as the building approaches Bancroft Way.

Height To accommodate increased ground floor setbacks that incorporate pedestrian pathways and landscaping features, the project applicant proposes a diversity in height, with a stepped-up design from the north to the south. The natural slope from east to west across the site, and the need to address sea-level rise, places the building elevation at eight feet above current average sea level. The southern half of the building is proposed at four stories and approximately 69 feet in height. The northern half of the building is proposed at three stories and approximately 58 feet-5 inches in height. Rooftop equipment would be shielded from view by a 13-foot mechanical penthouse that may accommodate art and signage.

The garage is proposed to be approximately 53 feet in height, which is lower in height than the parapets of the research and development building, and the proposed rooftop solar array on the fifth floor of the garage is lower than the research and development building mechanical screens. Additional benefits of the stepped-up height include providing architectural and visual diversity along the existing built environment along Bolivar Drive, which includes Berkeley Commons to the north.

The building heights exceed the 45-foot maximum allowed under the MU-LI zone and will require approval of a Modification of Development Standard in the West Berkeley Area Plan pursuant to BMC 23.406.080.



Figure 5: West (Bolivar Drive) facing elevation demonstrating the change in height.



Figure 6: Reduced height of parking garage as viewed from Bancroft Way looking south.

Ground Floor Design The ground floor is elevated approximately eight feet above Bolivar Drive. This is due to grade changes on the site, but also to account for potential flooding due to rising sea levels. Landscape planters with trees are provided along the front of the building abutting Bolivar Drive. The ground floor is approximately 20 feet in height, with large windows facing the aquatic park. A central entry plaza with seating and landscaping, including two green walls is proposed.



Figure 7: Ground floor entry plaza

Parking A five-story parking garage, accessible from Bancroft Way, would include 524 parking spaces. Four loading spaces are proposed in the rear of the building. A total of 153 bicycle parking spaces would also be provided throughout the project site.

Parking Garage Design The five-story parking garage would be approximately 53 feet in height and includes solar canopies on the top floor roof. The design of the garage is utilitarian and includes metal-panel cladding. Renderings include integrated planters (see Figure 6).

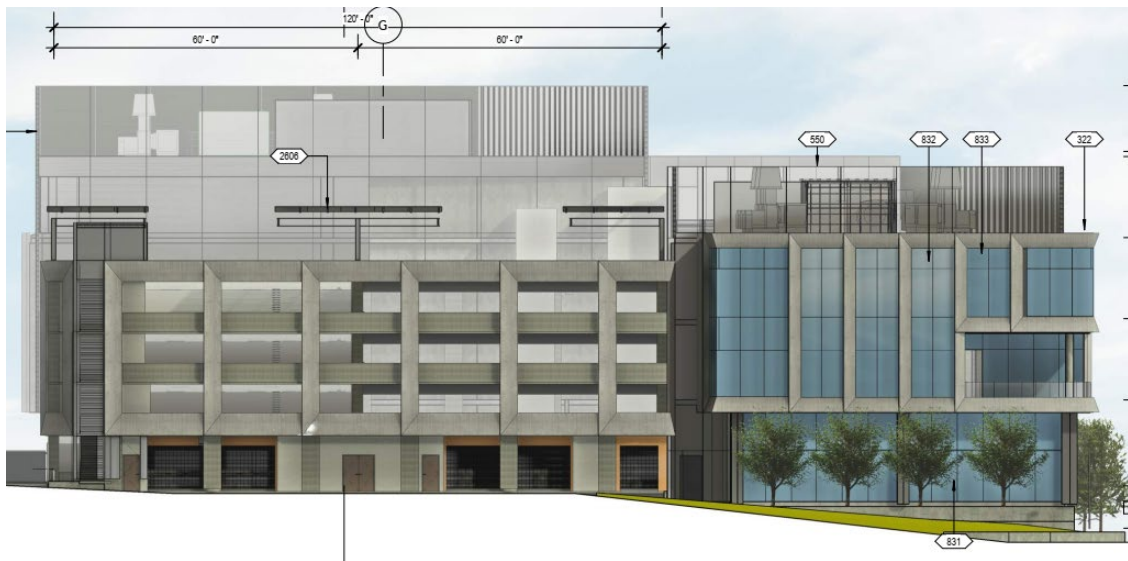


Figure 8: Parking Garage facing Bancroft Way (north elevation). Solar arrays on fifth floor.

Open Space/Landscaping A total of approximately 17,302 square feet of useable open space and landscaped area would be provided on the site, including a plaza located at the center of the site at the main project entry, landscaping along the front and portions of the sides of the building, and exterior terraces located at the second, third and fourth levels of the building. The stormwater planters are designed to absorb roof runoff and protect against street flooding, enhance the building's robustness and mitigate flood risks. A proposed bio-retention basin at the south end of the property will shift the existing parking lot south. The bioretention pond is located on City-property and does not count towards the project's open space.

Landscape The plan proposes a native plant palette to attract wildlife and pollinators. Tree species proposed include Wild Lilac, Western Redbud, Ironwoods, Sycamores and Coast Live Oak. Shrubs include Manzanita, Monkeyflower, Coffeeberry, and Lupine.

Street Trees A total of fifty-five trees within the project site would be removed. Twenty (20) new trees would be planted on the Project site along Bancroft Way and Bolivar Drive. New trees would be a minimum of 24-inch box size.

Colors and Materials The proposed material palette utilizes high-quality, natural materials such as concrete, including “Tabby” concrete which incorporates discarded seashells, glass with bird-safe glazing, metal mesh screens and neutral colors.

An integrated media screen in the metal mesh above the central entry plaza on the second and third-level terraces would serve as an interactive art installation, displaying abstract graphics and messages visible to pedestrians and commuters along the highway.



Figure 9: Metal mesh screen above entry plaza.

B. Issues for Discussion:

- Neighborhood Context
- Massing
- Height
- Building Design
- Parking Garage Design
- Open Space/ Landscape

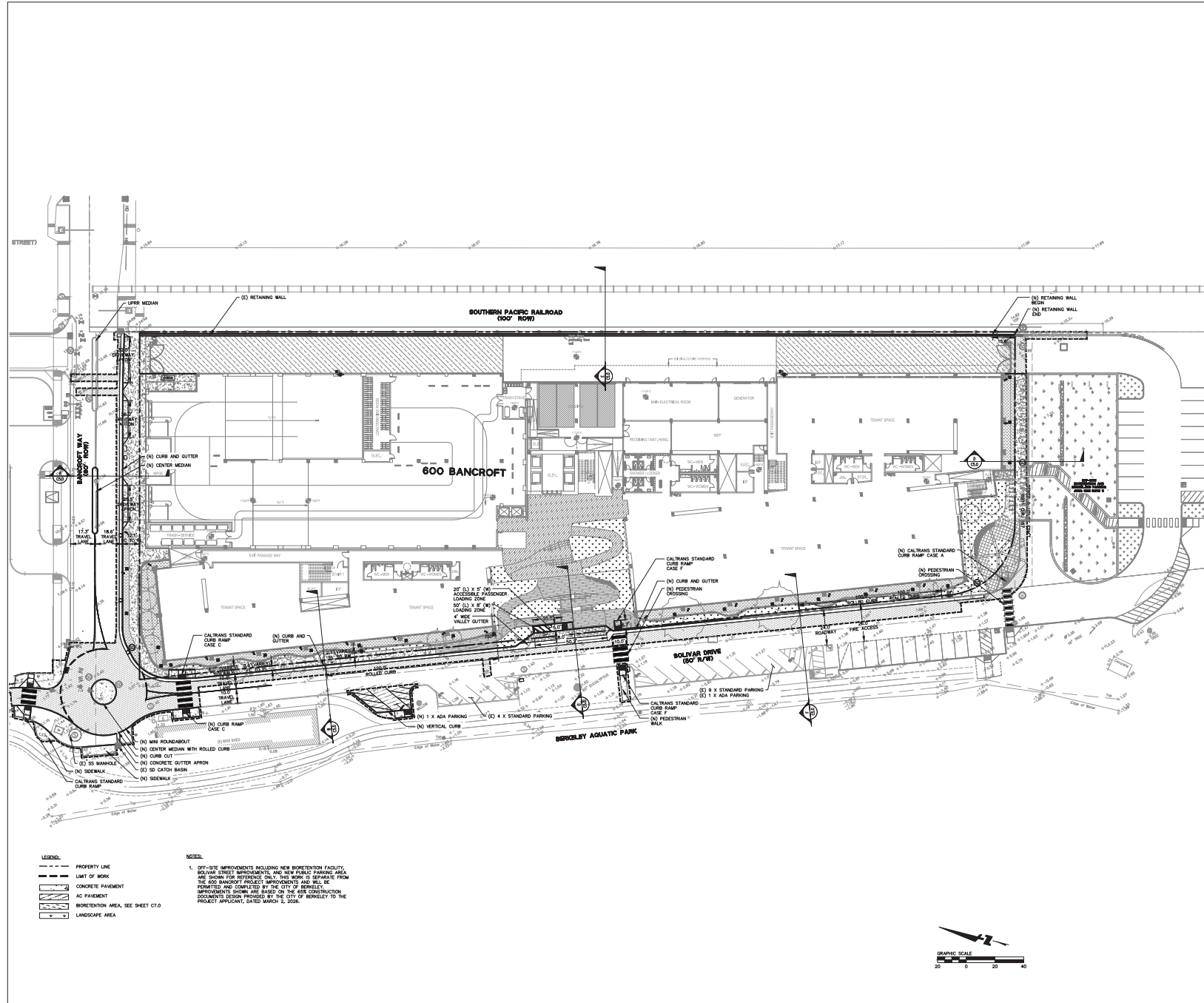
VII. Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee discuss the issues outlined above and give the applicant recommendations on how this development can best fit within its context. Recommendations to ZAB should include direction for Final Design Review.

Attachments:

1. Site Plan, received June 1, 2026
2. Applicant Statement, received January 16, 2025

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PROJECT NUMBER 20250910
DATE 2025.09.10
PROPOSED SITE PLAN

C3.0



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Project Overview

- Address: 600, 614 and 626 Bancroft Way
- APNs: 56-1949-7, 56-1949-6-2
- Size: 2.93 Acres or 127,794 Square Feet
- Zoning: MU-LI (Mixed Use Light Industrial)
- General Plan: Manufacturing
- Area Plan: West Berkeley Plan (Allowable FAR: 2.0)

The proposed project located at 600 Bancroft seeks approval to create a state-of-the-art research and development space in the burgeoning West Berkeley life science market. The proposal includes demolition of approximately 47,783 square feet of existing, dated, research and development space, and the construction of approximately 250,000 square feet of new state-of-the-art, life science facility with research and development space, consistent with the West Berkeley Plan and the site's prescribed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.0. The project site is 127,794 square feet (2.93 acres) and is entirely surfaced parked, with little-to-no permeable surface or landscaped areas. The property is located in the Mixed Use Light Industrial zoning district, is designated Manufacturing in the General Plan, and qualifies as an "employment center" under Public Resources Code section 21099. The proposed project's new components are as follows:

- A new 250,000-sq.-ft. research and development building;
- The southern half of the project is proposed at four stories and is approximately 69'-0" in height at 77'-0" above sea level (City of Berkeley datum). The northern half of the project is proposed at three stories and is approximately 53'-0" in height at 61'-0" above sea level (City of Berkeley datum)
- A 15-foot tall mechanical penthouse;
- A 524-space parking garage on the northeast corner of the property incorporated within the building envelope, which is approximately 45' in height;
- Intentionally designed open space and outdoor plazas, seating areas & introduction of native landscaped areas for a native plant palette intended to attract wildlife and pollinators; and
- As part of this future development, this project provides an opportunity to potentially finance critical off-site improvements to its immediate neighbor at Aquatic Park.

Project Site, Location, and History

600 Bancroft lies in the heart of the burgeoning West Berkeley life science market. For several years, 600 Bancroft has been successfully leased to numerous life science companies engaged in research and development operations. The site's history proves that life science tenants like locating at this location in West Berkeley. As a result, the site has been moderately improved over the years with minor landscaping, paint, signage, and interior building improvements. A black iron-rod fence currently encloses the site and was installed along the perimeter of the property due to safety concerns related to the area's past problems, including a lack of lighting and streetscape, trespassers, and tenant security concerns. There is a relatively dramatic downslope from east to west, with the western edge of the site along Bolivar Drive being relatively flat. To the west of Bolivar Drive is Street Level Cycles as well as the new off-site improvements to the trail, curb cuts, and new parking along Bolivar Drive. The site has limited trees mostly consisting of Pistache and recently planted *Cercis occidentalis*, *Lyonothamnus floribundus*, and *Aesculus californica*.

Factors influencing the exciting new life science corridor in West Berkeley favoring a redevelopment for a new state-of-the-art life science use at 600 Bancroft include:

- **UC Berkeley:** Proximity to the world-renowned Cal Biotech labs at nearby UC Berkeley as well as its thousands of current students and alumni;
- **Clustering with Proximate Uses, Including Bayer Campus, Berkeley Commons, and other Life Sciences Uses:** Development of the project site implements planning strategies that make life science nodes successful by clustering life science-serving facilities. Unlike other industries, life science companies thrive when located in proximity to one another, as it creates an ecosystem in which companies attract and retain talent. It is documented that clustering drives productivity and collaboration among life science operations, resulting in partnerships, advancements in quality control and efficiencies, and economies of scale. The placement of 250,000 square feet of modern, additional space for research and development would continue the City's history of promoting a diversity of life science firms, sharpening the City's competitive edge against places like Boston, North Carolina, the UK, Switzerland, and Germany in attracting talent on an international stage. The large number of employees and companies in similar research fields influences the entire West Berkeley market and has the potential to create a positive ripple effect for new life science companies in nearby locations such as 600 Bancroft.
- **Interstate 80:** Convenient freeway access to Interstate 80 and the potential for a future tenant's visibility to tens of thousands of drivers as well as bikers and pedestrians on a 24/7 daily basis;
- **Aquatic Park:** Steps from numerous active and passive recreational activities at the doorstep to 60 acres of nature at Aquatic Park;
- **4th Street retail and restaurants:** Close walking and biking to the well regarded 4th Street retail and restaurant corridor;
- **BART and Oakland International:** A cycling network to the nearby BART station and Oakland International Airport;
- **Future Ferry service:** an east-to-west pedestrian and bike bridge crossing over Hwy 880 connecting to the Bay Trail as well as a future regional Berkeley Ferry service;

- **Emeryville:** Biking distance to another well established life-sciences market in neighboring Emeryville, which is a short walk or bike ride through Aquatic Park, and
- **Amtrak:** Walking distance to the Berkeley Amtrak Station servicing the entire Northern California region and greater western United States.

The site is constrained by the Union Pacific Railroad to the east. The site has vehicular and pedestrian and bike access along Bancroft Way to the north. A portion of Bancroft Way is included in ACTC's pedestrian rail crossing improvements, which contemplate a new mountable median running down the middle of Bancroft Way. Bolivar Drive is to the west. The southern property line borders Channing Way and Aquatic Park. The site is unobstructed to the west and has views of downtown San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Mount Tamalpais.

The project is situated proximate to a number of new life science projects that the City of Berkeley has approved or has under its review. Immediately adjacent to 600 Bancroft are two other new life science developments including 600 Addison ("Berkeley Commons") and 747 Bancroft ("TheLAB"). One block further to the east is additional new life science space with an associated new parking garage. Further to the north is the Gilman Forge site, which is similarly located adjacent to the freeway and in a heavy industrial zone and is proposed to be redeveloped for life science uses. Further to the south is the Bayer campus.

Project Design

Design Approach

600 Bancroft is designed to establish an iconic landmark along the East Shore Highway. Located between Aquatic Park and the upcoming Berkeley Commons development, the building completes the West Berkeley life sciences corridor, seamlessly connecting the tranquil public open spaces along Aquatic Park with the dynamic urban landscape. The site, constrained by a railroad, lagoon, and park, poses challenges and opportunities in optimizing vehicular and pedestrian access along Bancroft Way and Bolivar Drive, while addressing internal circulation, user access, and maximizing natural daylight and views.

The building is organized into four distinct quadrants. The Northeast quadrant features a five-story parking structure with direct access from Bancroft Way, alleviating traffic on Bolivar Drive and reducing congestion near the public's entrance to Aquatic Park. The remaining three quadrants are designed for flexible research and development (R&D) spaces, accommodating a variety of tenants, from startups and incubators to larger, full-building users. A central entry plaza, integrated with the landscape along the lagoon, has two green walls and connects directly to the lobby, blending indoor and outdoor environments. The loading area is strategically located at the rear of the building, accessed via a private service driveway adjacent to the railroad, ensuring minimal disruption to park visitors.

To ensure climate resilience, the building is elevated 8 feet above current sea levels to account for potential flooding due to rising sea levels, as outlined in the project's Sea Level Rise Summary, which forecasts conditions through 2100. The building's massing is composed of independent volumes that are thoughtfully proportioned and arranged to reduce its scale as it rises from the surrounding landscape. A mechanical screen acts as both an architectural feature and infrastructure element, unifying the volumes while also serving as an opportunity for tenant signage/identity. The screen's delicate metal mesh cloaks a corner stair, encouraging outdoor circulation and offering access to expansive views.

From a distance, the building appears as two horizontal bar-shaped elements, separated by a central break that marks the common entry. The building's height is in alignment with the neighboring Berkeley Commons development to the north. The south wing steps up to a recessed fourth level, featuring tenant spaces with expansive roof decks and greenery. Above the central plaza, indoor/outdoor terraces are shaded and screened, offering tenants a shared amenity space on the fourth floor with panoramic views of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge. An integrated media screen in the metal mesh on the second and third-level terraces serves as an interactive art installation, displaying abstract graphics and messages visible to commuters and pedestrians along the highway.

The building's four facades respond to both its internal programmatic needs and its relationship with the surrounding site. The north, south, and east facades are uniquely composed. From the approach on Bancroft Way, the street frontage is framed by green, sculptural, banded ribbons on the parking garage, inspired by the local Redwood and Eucalyptus groves. The parking garage's metal-panel cladding incorporates integrated planters, softening the edges of the utilitarian structure. The east facade, which

faces the railroad, is more restrained, housing the parking structure, service areas, and fire access points, and is designed to buffer internal users from train activity. On the south side, the building tapers toward the park, which is undergoing bioretention landscape upgrades. This side culminates in a striking architectural form, evoking the prow of a ship, with sweeping views of the peaceful aquatic landscape from the elevated south-facing terrace.

The primary facade design, mainly perceived at the west facade, takes inspiration from the classical trabeated system of columns and lintels, reinterpreted through high-performance glazing set within cellular precast concrete frames. Floating above a ground-level colonnade, this rhythmic composition merges classic architectural principles with modern design. The overall site arrangement of the two wings mimics the form of two decomposed calcite shells, nestled in a marsh, evoking the region's geological history as a former estuary. On a more intimate level, the use of 'Tabby' concrete—a mix incorporating discarded seashells—provides a tactile connection to the coastal environment, blending sustainability with a nod to the organic world. Bird-safe glazing treatment and ceramic fritting will reduce glare and mitigate bird strikes, while adding a subtle micro-textural layer visible from different perspectives.

A large photovoltaic (PV) solar array caps the parking garage, meeting Berkeley's Solar PV System requirements and offsetting electricity consumption for the building, contributing to net-neutral power for base operations. The building's low-carbon concrete structure, optimized floor-to-floor heights, and vibration criteria are optimized for R&D uses, with future adaptability for R&D-supporting office spaces. Floodproofing and sea-level rise resilience are central to the building's longevity. The elevated ground floor and stormwater planters, designed to absorb roof runoff and protect against street flooding, enhance the building's robustness and mitigate flood risks.

As a striking architectural gesture and as a high-performance all-electric building that incorporates state-of-the-art, energy-efficient MEP systems and water-saving fixtures, 600 Bancroft is positioned as a model project for the future, representing a new legacy for West Berkeley and the Bay Area as a whole.

*Please see sheet G5.01 for conceptual context / precedent images & material board

Landscape Approach

The landscape at 600 Bancroft is a unique site within the City of Berkeley. Aquatic Park is to the west and south, the railroad runs along the east edge, and Berkeley Commons is directly to the north. The landscape at 600 Bancroft is intended to respond to these very different conditions in a manner that feels like a natural extension of the pedestrian experience from Berkeley Commons along Bolivar Drive. The curvilinear formal language is a reference to the direct relationship to Aquatic Park, and a transition from harder lines and edges to the park.

The natural slope from east to west across the site, and the need to address sea-level rise, places the building elevation at eight feet above current average sea level. A six-foot differential between the curb and main building entrance sets the stage for an elevated plaza with outdoor seating that overlooks Aquatic Park. Sloping walkways and central staircases extend into the lobby. Interior plantings, greenwalls that extend from the outdoor plaza to the interior lobby, and floor to ceiling glass will create one interconnected space.

A smaller plaza at the southeast corner of the site offers additional outdoor seating and bike parking. This plaza is a transition point and pedestrian connection to Aquatic Park with a signature live oak tree. Raised stormwater treatment planters wrap the north, west and east sides of the building. The planters undulate to respond to the organic forms and nature at Aquatic Park and lower planters are introduced to soften the planter walls and maximize planted area.

Aside from Aquatic Park, the majority of West Berkeley is paved. Planted area is maximized across the site. Permeable joints will allow water to infiltrate at sections of the vehicle lane along the railroad and at the southeast plaza. West Berkeley also has a lower percentage of trees than the rest of Berkeley and so, working with the fire access requirements, street trees are proposed in all possible locations.

A native plant palette is intended to attract wildlife and pollinators. The plants are selected from Coastal Scrub and Woodland communities, both of which are naturally occurring in the area. The plant palette is low water use and meets WELO requirements, and the low water table at the site requires that the selected plants are salt water tolerant. Silva cells are proposed at the street trees and large trees at paved areas to allow adequate room for root growth.

Additional Project Design & Project Features

Increased setbacks on the ground floor: the project proposes increased building setbacks along Bolivar Drive to the west and along Union Pacific RR to the east and two important north-to-south boundaries on the ground floor:

- Bolivar Drive on the western property boundary: allowing for a wide sidewalk and increased greenery and landscape features for the future benefit of all including pedestrians along Bolivar Drive accessing Aquatic Park. It is anticipated that a new additional sidewalk will alleviate congestion along the existing trail along Aquatic Park, and provide a safe harbor for pedestrians from cars and cyclist using Bolivar. The setback is proposed as 8'-4" from property line to face of columns along Bolivar. 11'-0" from property line to face of glass.
- Union Pacific property line on the eastern property boundary: allowing for a 26-foot-wide emergency fire lane and access in the event of a fire or medical emergency. The total setback is 28'-10" from property line to face of building,

Stepped-up height design: In order to accommodate increased ground floor setbacks incorporating pedestrian pathways and landscaping features, the project proposes a diversity in height, with a stepped up design from the north to the south. The entire building is proposed to be constructed and completed in one phase. The building height ensures the building is resilient and protected against floods and sea level rise. The southern half of the project is proposed at four stories and is approximately 69'-0" in height at 77'-0" above sea level (City of Berkeley datum). The northern half of the project is proposed at three stories and is approximately 53'-0" in height at 61'-0" above sea level (City of Berkeley datum). Rooftop equipment will be shielded from view by a 15' mechanical penthouse that, as indicated above, may accommodate art and signage.

The garage is proposed as lower in height than the parapets of the lab building, and the solar array is lower than the lab building mechanical screens. The southern half of the building is proposed to incorporate a stepped-up design from three stories to four stories. Additional benefits of the stepped-up height include providing architectural and visual diversity along the existing built environment along Bolivar Drive, which includes Berkeley Commons to the north.

Clustering: The inclusion of a state-of-the-art and thoughtfully designed life sciences campus at 600 Bancroft Way facilitates completion of the City's life sciences corridor in West Berkeley, cementing its profile as a potential international cradle of research, development, and manufacturing for the life sciences industry. Establishment of the project will enhance the City's scientific ecosystem and help ensure that, in the coming years, the next life-saving therapies for cancer, Parkinson's disease, and other illnesses are developed by Berkeley-based companies and Berkeley workers.

Sustainability: The building is proposed as an all-electric building. The proposed project would be designed to strive to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold equivalence. The proposed project would include photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on the rooftops of the parking garage; 53 EV parking stalls; and secure bicycle parking that includes 27 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 27 long-term bicycle spaces.

. The project offers all native drought-tolerant and low water use planting. Planting will benefit wildlife and pollinators and expand the habitat offered by Aquatic Park and the lagoon. Bioretention planting areas support stormwater management. Well-landscaped roof terraces help insulate the building and mitigate heat island effect.

Bird safe glass: the project proposes nearly 100% bird safe glass for the vast majority of the project. A commitment to the proposed level of bird safety is well above nearly all other new life science development projects in Berkeley and comes after the Applicant met with the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission prior to submission of the application and obtained important public feedback related to this item.

Employment: Based on the proposed size, this project has the potential to generate hundreds of new jobs, at a range of experience and wage levels and with a particular emphasis on ensuring West Berkeley as a hub and cluster for the R&D industry for generations to come along with substantial job growth in this particular sector. Because of its scale and design, this state-of-the-art project has the potential to attract the next life-saving research company which could be developed by Berkeley-based companies and by Berkeley workers.

Public Improvements: Significant public improvements as outlined above are contemplated including significant improvements to the Dreamland Area of Aquatic Park.

Zoning & Permitting

The General Plan

The General Plan finally incorporated the West Berkeley Plan by reference as a part of the City of Berkeley's most recent General Plan updated in 2001. The Property is designated "Manufacturing" under the General Plan, which is characterized as a designation "intended to maintain and preserve areas of Berkeley for manufacturing and industrial uses necessary for a multi-faceted economy and job growth," and correspond with the Manufacturing (M), Mixed Manufacturing (MM), and Mixed Use-Light Industrial (MU-LI) zones, which all "allow a maximum FAR of 2 and a maximum building height of 45 feet." (General Plan, p. LU-24). The General Plan notes that appropriate uses for the Manufacturing designation are identified in the West Berkeley Plan.

The West Berkeley Plan

Adopted in 1993, The West Berkeley Plan aims to preserve and enhance a rich mix of artists, manufacturing, wholesale, warehousing, research and development, residential, and retail uses. The plan was created in part by, and its implementation is monitored by the community. The required zoning was adopted by the City Council as West Berkeley Plan implementation in 1998. The West Berkeley Plan is an amendment to the General Plan, setting forth the long-range land use plan for the West Berkeley Area. Under the West Berkeley Plan, the Property is designated as "Mixed Use/Light Industrial," as reflected in its zoning designation. (West Berkeley Plan, pp. 38-39). The Mixed Use/Light Industrial designation under the West Berkeley Plan permits uses that are "light industrial in character," and also permits "freestanding laboratories," and allows for limited office development on current manufacturing sites and unlimited office development on undeveloped or non-manufacturing sites. (West Berkeley Plan, p. 39). A

2011 amendment to the West Berkeley Plan clarified that research and development uses and parking structures are also permitted under the Mixed Use/Light Industrial designation. (See Berkeley Resolution No. 65210-N.S.).

Zoning Development Standards for the MU-LI Zone

Table 1 identifies required development standards. The proposed project complies with development and performance standards outlined in BMC section 23E.76.070 and listed above except for the height and parking which is discussed below. The project also requests use permits to reduce parking and loading requirements. The Property is zoned Mixed Use – Light Industrial (MU-LI) under the BMC. The purpose of this zone is to implement the Mixed Use/Light Industrial designation of the West Berkeley Plan. (BMC § 23.206.080). Accordingly, the MU-LI zoning district permits: research and development uses of 20,000 square feet or more upon receipt of an AUP; laboratory uses upon receipt of a use permit, though laboratories in the MU-LI district may not include use Class 3 organisms; and office uses upon receipt of an AUP or use permit, depending on size. (BMC § 23.206.080(B)(5).)

The MU-LI District imposes the following development standards on development, which would apply to both the main buildings of the project and the proposed parking structure:

- Maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0;
- Maximum height of 45 feet measured from the lowest point of the project's finished grade, with mechanical penthouses, elevator equipment rooms and cupolas, domed turrets and other architectural elements less than 15% of average building story floor area allowed to exceed this limit subject to an AUP;
- No minimum or maximum lot area or lot coverage;
- No open space requirement;
- No minimum setbacks or building separation standards; and
- Compliance with the provisions of the City's Bird Safe Building requirements for all transparent or reflective materials.

(BMC §§ 23.206.080 at Table 23.206-12; 23.304.150 at Table 23.304-10).

While the BMC does include minimum parking requirements based on building uses, the Property is located within a ½ mile of a major transit stop, and therefore cannot be subject to the BMC's minimum parking requirements under State law. (Government Code § 65853.2). Nevertheless, the project's parking garage will accommodate 524 spaces, ensuring the project does not generate a need for on-street parking.

The project's compliance with applicable development standards is demonstrated in the following Table 1:

ZONING COMPLIANCE

STANDARD:	REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED PARKING	PROPOSED BUILDING	COMPLIANCE (Y/N)
MAX. HEIGHT:	45'	45'	53' & 69'	NA
FRONT SETBACK:	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y
REAR SETBACK:	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y
SIDE SETBACK:	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y
LANDSCAPE COVERAGE:	N/A		N/A	N/A
BUILDING COVERAGE:	N/A		N/A	N/A
MAX. FAR:	2.0		2.0	Y
MAX. ALLOWABLE AREA:	255,588 GSF		247,647 GSF	Y

NOTES:

*1. ELEVATOR PENTHOUSE +9'-0" (80'-11")

Permits & Findings Required

- A use permit to authorize construction of more than 20,000 square feet of new floor area and an accompanying accessory structure (BMC §§ 23.206.030(A) at Table 23.206-2; 23.304.060(D)(1)(a))
- A use permit to authorize demolition of three existing buildings (BMC § 23.326.070(A))
- An AUP to authorize a research and development use over 20,000 square feet (BMC § 23.206.020 at Table 23.206-1); and Design Review approval of all new structures from Design Review Committee (BMC § 23.406.070(C)(1)).
- A use permit to authorize any laboratory space not specifically supporting a research and development use. (BMC § 23.206.020 at Table 23.206-1).
- An AUP to authorize the following: a mechanical penthouse, elevator equipment room and cupola, dome, turret or other architectural element that will cause the building to exceed the 45 foot height limit. (BMC § 23.304.050 at Table 23.304-5).
- An AUP to modify the number of required loading spaces. (BMC § 23.322.100(C)(5).)

BMC 23.326.070 Demolitions of Non-Residential Buildings

D. A Use Permit or an AUP for demolition of a non-residential building or structure may be approved only if the ZAB or Zoning Officer finds that:

1. The demolition will not be materially detrimental to the commercial needs and public interest of any affected neighborhood or the City of Berkeley; and

2. The demolition:

(a) Is required to allow a proposed new building or other proposed new Use;

The proposed project will not be materially detrimental to the commercial needs and public interest of the West Berkeley neighborhood. The removal of the structures will facilitate reuse of the site in a manner

that will allow the site to be economically productive for the City of Berkeley in the future and provide an appropriate transition to the eclectic mix of uses on the block and in the immediate vicinity which include industrial, artist studios, lab, R&D, yoga, co- working, furniture making, and retail/restaurant uses. The existing buildings do not meet industry standards for productive manufacturing or research and development uses, which have greatly evolved in recent years. The upgrades necessary to these buildings would require significant investment and alterations to the buildings and site to accommodate reuse.

23.206.100 Findings for MU-LI District

In order to approve a project in the MU-LI zone, the ZAB must make the following findings. This finding is required for the use permits and AUPs relevant to this project, as listed above. What follows are the required findings and an analysis of whether the City may make the required findings with respect to the project.

A. That the project:

1. Is consistent with the purposes of the district;

There are ten purposes of the district listed in BMC Section 23.206.80.B. Several focus on encouragement of light industrial uses, a mixed use-light industrial area for a range of compatible uses, opportunities for office development when it will not unduly interfere with light manufacturing uses and creation of well-paying jobs which do not require advanced degrees. The project is an R&D campus with options to operate complementary office and laboratory space. The proposed project will support opportunities for office

development encompassing and compatible neighboring light manufacturing uses. Adjacent land uses include R&D, commercial, manufacturing, and light industrial, as well as Aquatic Park open space. The proposed project is compatible in use and has been designed with access, circulation, landscaping, setbacks, etc. to further ensure compatibility. The proposed project is expected to generate an estimated net increase of approximately 750 employees, a percentage of which promise to be well paid jobs which do not required advanced degrees.

Other purposes of the district include to support the development of businesses which contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the West Berkeley environment. The project will contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the West Berkeley environment in that in addition to being designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold equivalence.

The proposal will also upgrade stormwater treatment measures pursuant to C.3 requirements, thereby improving the quality of stormwater runoff that would enter the lagoons at Aquatic Park and the San Francisco Bay.

2. Is compatible with the surrounding uses and buildings.

Though taller than some existing buildings in the vicinity, the height of the proposed project, on average, is consistent with the average approved heights of the project immediately north at 600 Addison Street and northeast at 747 Bancroft Way. The project site has a significant slope, and the insignificant increase in height allowance, which Applicant seeks pursuant to the terms of a Development Agreement, will allow the Applicant to construct the base of the building in a manner that is resilient against floods and sea level rise. Ultimately, the project's height will extend the general building envelope parameters seen further north along Aquatic Park, and enhance architectural interest of the City's frontage that is visible from the Eastshore Freeway. New landscaping is also included as a project component, to complement the parkland areas south of the site and the Berkley Commons project north of the site, and may include undergrounded utilities and pedestrian improvements. The above-referenced development agreement, meanwhile, will allow the City to receive significant community benefits, including for example significant improvements to Aquatic Park.

3. Complies with the adopted West Berkeley Plan;

The project will be consistent with the West Berkeley Plan because the development is of the scale and design that is appropriate for its surroundings and the proposed development will be compatible with the mix of uses in the area. The project will result in substantial investment on an underdeveloped project site, resulting in the potential for net creation of hundreds of new jobs, thereby contributing to the economic vitality of West Berkeley.

The proposed use is also consistent with the West Berkeley Plan because it is a development that will remove existing, outdated R&D facilities, and provide new, enhanced R&D facilities that maintain the mix of uses and economic diversity which gives West Berkeley its unique character. The West Berkeley Plan supports the start-up of new types of economic activity which creates opportunities for land and business development.

Additionally, the proposed project would increase the number of employees on-site. The project could generate hundreds of new jobs. Many of those jobs will potentially be filled by current Berkeley residents who are commuting to research jobs outside of Berkeley. Some portion of those jobs will not require advanced degree thus expanding job opportunities in line with the West Berkeley Plan goals. The proposed design approach outlined above complements the setting across from Aquatic Park and within West Berkeley's eclectic architecture.

4. Meets any applicable performance standards for off-site impacts.

The proposed use will not create substantial dust, glare, noise, odor, vibration, hazardous materials, or any other potential off-site environmental impacts because it will be required to comply with performance standards applicable in West Berkeley and the City's Standard Conditions of Approval. Landscaping, tree planting, and other design features, reduce the possibility for glare.

B. Additional Findings.

1. The project:

(a) Is unlikely, under reasonably foreseeable circumstances, to induce a substantial change of use in buildings from manufacturing, wholesale trade, or warehousing uses.

The development proposes to demolish an outdated R&D facility and replace it with a larger, state of the art R&D facility.

The proposed uses and buildings are compatible with the purposes of the district in that the project will enhance research and development uses in West Berkeley, as well as complementary manufacturing, distribution, warehousing laboratory, and other industrial uses in the area. In doing so, the project will provide a range of job opportunities and wage ranges, including those that do not require advanced degrees. Additionally, the project improves the quality of the West Berkeley environment through improvements to the quality of building materials, bioretention systems to improve stormwater quality into Aquatic Park and the lagoon, where currently none exists, and new sidewalks and landscaping, including street trees, which do not currently exist.

Therefore, the project is consistent with the intent of the zoning district, the project is unlikely to substantially change the overall square footage of protected uses in the vicinity.

(b) Is designed in such a manner to be supportive of the industrial character of the district. Such physical compatibility shall include materials used; facade treatments; landscaping; lighting; type, size and placement of awnings, windows, and signs; and all other externally visible aspects of the design of the building and site.

The project's uses are permitted in the MU-LI District and are deemed to be both compatible with and supportive of the light industrial character of the District. The analyses included above are incorporated here by this reference.

(c) If the building and/or site is split between the MU-LI district and the C-W district, there are clear and appropriate distinctions in all design aspects between the portions of the building and site within the MU-LI district and the portions within the C-W district.

The project site does not have split zoning and, therefore, no further analysis is necessary.

Proposed Development Agreement

Pursuant to Berkeley's recently updated Municipal Code Chapter 22.16, and concurrent with this submission, the Applicant plans to seek a Development Agreement (the "D.A."). Given the current state of economic and market conditions, the D.A. provides the Applicant the necessary flexibility to develop this project while providing the City of Berkeley the potential to complete important improvements in the near term to Aquatic Park. The D.A. would also allow for allowances with respect to certain development standards. The main components of the D.A. are the following. No variances are requested as part of this project. All terms and conditions are proposed to be incorporated into a D.A. process. Additional items included in the D.A. influencing the proposed project's design are outlined above.