BERKELEY COMMONS
600 Addison Street
Applicant Statement
April 10, 2020

OVERVIEW

The proposed Berkeley Commons development project aims to position the 600 Addison Street site as a premier employment facility in West Berkeley. The project will establish a campus which will be at the forefront of sustainability and technology and generate jobs for local and regional workers in fulfillment of core West Berkeley Plan principles.

It is our objective to establish a symbiotic relationship with the City of Berkeley, its residents and local businesses. The Berkeley Commons project will bring new life to Aquatic Park, dramatically improve the entryway to the city, strengthen the Fourth Street retail district and provide a thriving work environment in one of the premier campus environments in the Bay Area.

The development team for the proposed Berkeley Commons project has been drawn to this opportunity due to its highly visible and picturesque location coupled with its significant underutilization. In other words, it is truly a diamond in the rough. Located at the confluence of University Avenue and I-80, its Aquatic Park-fronting location is arguably the front door to the City of Berkeley and beckons for a project worthy of its high profile.

Berkeley Commons will have a particularly positive impact on West Berkeley. It is our plan to replace dated and architecturally unappealing buildings, unsightly piles of soil, and cyclone fencing with new Class A buildings coupled with improvements to the public areas, streets and landscape surrounding Aquatic Park. The proposed buildings reflect timeless architecture and will attract industry-leading research and development users. It is our goal to develop a project that complements Aquatic Park and we would like to contribute to the upgrade and maintenance of Aquatic Park to achieve that goal. From an economic perspective, Berkeley Commons will likely bring 1,300 – 1,600 new jobs across a broad socio-economic spectrum to the city and will significantly enhance weekday business for the merchants and businesses in the Fourth Street retail area.
SITE CONTEXT

The site is bounded by Addison Street to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the east, Bancroft Way to the south, and Bolivar Drive and Aquatic Park to the west. Regional vehicular access is provided by I-80 and I-580, with on/off-ramps located one block north from the University Avenue overpass.

The western portion of the project site was part of San Francisco Bay until the 1930s when the Eastshore freeway was constructed. By 1946, the site still contained remnants of the shoreline, with Aquatic Park having been constructed to the west. The western edge of the parcel appears to have been filled in the 1950s.

The 8.4-acre project site is designated as Manufacturing (M) in the General Plan and Mixed Use Light Industrial (MU-LI) in the Zoning Ordinance and the West Berkeley Area Plan. Surrounding uses include water sport and recreation uses to the west; commercial, office, and residential uses to the north; and warehouse and industrial uses to the east and south. Passenger and freight trains run along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks immediately to the east.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Project Description

The project site is comprised of six parcels, with elevations that range 5-30 feet above sea level. The topography of the site slopes upward from west to east with moderate slopes occurring over most of the site and a steeper slope at the southern portion of the site. The majority of the site is elevated approximately 10-15 feet above Bolivar Drive. The site is currently occupied by three buildings to be removed, and an outdoor soil/mulch stockpiling/transfer facility; as well as site infrastructure such as surface parking, utilities, and landscaping.

Under the current MU-LI zoning in Berkeley, the development potential of the site with an FAR of
2.0 is approximately 728,000 SF. Additionally, the City does not count parking against FAR. Sites within the MU-LI zoning districts have neither setbacks nor open space requirements, therefore, there is no reduction of the gross acreage to the developable acreage. MU-LI zoning allows a maximum building height of 45’.

Situated near the junction of I-80/580 and University Avenue, the site may be considered the Gateway to Berkeley. It is an extremely prominent and highly-visible location within a community known for its public engagement and meticulous attention to detail. The enormous potential – of this spectacular 8.4-acre piece of land fronting the Berkeley Aquatic Park; overlooking the San Francisco Bay – has equally high expectations.

The proposed development is comprised of two Class A three-story steel-framed Research & Development buildings to accommodate research, innovation, lab, and/or office uses depending on the needs of the occupant(s). Each building has its own separate on-site concrete parking structure, accommodating 1,044 parking spaces. The total gross area of approximately 521,810 square feet may accommodate one or more companies. The project includes significant open areas, new trees and landscaping along the setbacks; and upgraded sidewalks, including where none currently exist on Bolivar Drive. The buildings incorporate advanced sustainability and performance measures including fully electric building systems and on-site renewable energy generation, thereby achieving a net-zero energy core and shell and a LEED Gold rating by the USGBC.

**Project Benefits**

The project includes the following benefits to the West Berkeley community and the City of Berkeley:

- **Public Art**: Approximately $1,500,000 to the City of Berkeley Public Art Program to meet the Public Art Program requirement.

- **Water Quality and Stormwater**: Bioretention systems to slow and clean stormwater before it enters Aquatic Park and San Francisco Bay. Native and drought-tolerant landscape plan reduces water use and helps to sequester carbon.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction**: LEED Gold Equivalent buildings, green demolition practices and construction materials, all electric systems, and alternative transportation measures help to reduce potential greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Job Opportunities**: Approximately, 1,300 – 1,600 long-term job opportunities at a range of qualification levels as part of the research & development campus, and short-term jobs during construction.

- **Affordable Housing, Childcare, and City Revenues**: Based on the City of Berkeley Economic Development Department, the project would contribute approximately $7 million to the City of Berkeley in the first year, including $2.4 million to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and $428,000 in Child Care Mitigation Fees, and $1.3 million in taxes annually.
Open Space

There are a broad set of ideas within the long-term planning of Aquatic Park to create a healthier lagoon with good ecological and hydrological performance. Within the project site, we would like to honor those goals by working with the native ecology and plant community of the Bay shoreline and creek deltas. Although we cannot recover the shoreline itself, we can recover some of its material character.

The landscape plan draws from Northern California coastal and creek environments, using the landscape character of The Sea Ranch and Strawberry Creek as references. The idea is to move as far away from typical office project hardscape and softscape as possible. The plan proposes a native wild plant palette drawing on species such as native willows, Red Alders, California Buckeyes, Coastal Bush Lupine, Calif. Buckwheat, Redwoods and its companions like Western Sword Ferns, and Wild Ginger.

Stormwater filtration will be generously handled in swales of Juncus patens, Muhly grass and Cape Rush. Circulation and gathering will be on floating wood decks within the west-facing Commons garden and at the northwest corner, a small park with Redwoods, ferns, and decomposed granite and wood furniture.

One of the central considerations for this project is the way it is perceived from I-80 as one arrives to University Avenue, a key entrance to the city. Approaching the building, landscaping will complement the building’s architectural recesses and projections. Each recess will be lushly planted with groves of trees and grasses adapted to coastal winds and western exposure – thereby creating a series of distinct architectural pavilions facing Aquatic Park and I-80. Together with rest of the landscape palette and potential future City improvements to Aquatic Park and the Boat House, this proposed plan would help establish a strong environmental sensibility to this key entrance.

Consistent with City requirements, open space and landscaping will be provided throughout the Project site. Open space will be provided at the ground level, including a plaza located at the center of the site between the two buildings, and within exterior balconies located at the second and third levels the buildings. A total of sixty-one (61) trees within the project site will be removed and a total of nineteen (19) trees located off-site across Bolivar Drive will be retained. One (1) Coast Live Oak (classified as a protected tree by the City of Berkeley) is in “fair condition with codominant trunks, a slight lean and a thinning crown” based on the Arborist Report; this tree will be relocated within the project site, as shown on the landscape plan. Eighty-four (84) new trees will be planted on the Project site in compliance with City requirements. Tree locations include: Addison Street, Bancroft Way, and Bolivar Drive frontages as well as throughout the project site interior. New trees will be a minimum of 24-inch
box size. All landscaping will be planted and irrigated compliant with Bay-friendly landscaping requirements.

**Project Design and Architectural Approach**

The proposed design carefully considers the scale and context of the West Berkeley neighborhood; the massing of the proposed campus is articulated as a series of perched boxes interspersed within a grove of trees, thereby creating an environment which is scaled-to and attuned-with a park-like pedestrian setting.

The site is laid-out in such a way as the loading, service/fire access road, and parking are located on the East side of the site, adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Circumscribing the parking structures on three sides minimizes their visibility while creating large, flexible, contiguous floorplates which are highly sought-after in today's creative-office and research & development markets.

The proposed material palette utilizes high-quality, natural, authentic materials such as concrete and wood - to give a durable and timeless expression - with accents of metal panel framing at projecting balconies and trellises. Floor-to-ceiling, high-performance insulated glazing grants occupants extraordinary views to the West overlooking San Francisco Bay while allowing in ample daylight, which simultaneously improves occupant well-being and reduces energy consumption.

Generous floor-to-floor heights accommodate complex mechanical systems utilized for various research & development activities. Expressed balconies, terraces, and trellises on and around the exterior of the buildings not only create a wonderful indoor-outdoor working environment; they also passively cool and shade the building and modulate glare as a means to enhance user comfort and minimize the time that internal blinds are deployed.

Expansive photovoltaic arrays cover the top level of the parking garages, screening and protecting occupant’s vehicles, while generating on-site renewable energy. This on-site power production offsets the energy used for the buildings’ core functions thereby achieving a zero net-energy balance.

Being located on the waterfront, the safety of the avian population has been a very high priority. Design measures such as projecting terraces, balconies, and trellises; outboard cable railings; and vegetative screening ensure a very bird-safe environment.

The design of the proposed project - when considered holistically through the layered lenses of site design, massing and façade articulation, material palette, advanced building systems, and environmental strategies - expresses a sensitivity and commitment to environmental stewardship and progressive thinking that clearly aligns with the ideals and aspirations of the City of Berkeley and surrounding community.
**SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES**

Sustainable building design is a key priority that has been integrated into the project to reduce its environmental impact as well as improve human benefits for occupants and community. The project will be designed to achieve LEED Gold equivalence, addressing a broad range of green building design topics ranging from site sustainability and water efficiency, to energy performance, building materials, alternative transportation, and indoor environmental quality.

**Building Design and Orientation**

The building massing, envelope, and exterior shading system has been optimized not only to reduce building energy use but also to improve access to daylight, views, and exterior terraces. Indoor environmental quality, which will provide human health and productivity benefits for occupants, is a focus of the project design. Exterior shading is tailored to respond to solar exposure, providing protection that will improve occupant thermal comfort and minimize hours when interior shades are needed to maintain visual comfort. Additional measures such as enhanced ventilation, CO2 sensors, and exterior pollutant control will ensure high indoor air quality for occupants.
**Water Efficiency and Advanced Systems**

The landscape, hardscape, and roovescape material palette will mitigate the urban heat island effect of development, while native, drought-tolerant plantings will provide restorative, ecologically sensitive landscape areas. Bioretention zones integrated in the landscape will provide stormwater management benefits for the site. Potable water efficiency will be achieved through low-water use plant selections, ultra-low flow indoor water fixtures, and an all-electric mechanical conditioning system that eliminates the need for water-intensive cooling towers. Advanced water and energy metering systems will be provided to allow tenants to monitor, diagnose, and reduce use of these resources.

**Demolition and Construction Materials**

Minimizing the environmental and health impacts resulting from construction and building materials will be prioritized. Analysis will be conducted during the design phases to chart a path to reducing embodied greenhouse gas emissions associated with the manufacturing and construction of building materials by up to 20%. Environmental product disclosures that provide information about building material supply chain impacts will be requested for certain products. Preference for use of regionally sourced materials, recycled materials, and FSC-certified wood will be included in the project documents. Field-applied adhesives, sealants, paints, coatings, flooring systems, and wood products will have to meet stringent VOC emissions criteria to reduce worker and occupant exposure to these harmful compounds.

**Electrification**

This project has taken the initiatives described in the 2019 Berkeley Electrification Ordinance and applied them to a large-scale commercial development with the intent to push forward decarbonization in Berkeley. The transition to an all-electric solution with no combustion on site will have dramatic emissions savings over the life of the building when compared to a traditional gas solution and help to make a more livable city of Berkeley.

In 2018, the California Senate passed the landmark SB-100 legislation that has committed California to generate all electricity from carbon free sources by 2045. The innovative all-electric heat pump design considers the context of the changing electricity grid and is designed to displace natural gas emissions.
over the lifetime of the building. The all-electric building design will result in decreasing emissions as California’s grid becomes cleaner, and once the grid consists of 100% renewable generation sources, the building will have zero operational emissions associated with electricity usage. As a result, the proposed all-electric design is projected to save between 60-80% of cumulative operational emissions over a 50-year term, depending on the requirements of the tenant.

In addition to the all-electric design solution, the project will rely heavily on creative heat recovery sources within the building as an energy reduction strategy, extremely efficient lighting and incorporation of daylighting strategies, as well as shading protection and high-performance glazing / envelope systems.

While utilizing an all-electric building design will result in significant emissions savings, the project design also incorporates photovoltaic systems to provide clean, renewable electricity directly on-site. The base design incorporates these panels such that the core building operation will be net zero site energy at the onset of the building’s operation. Additional space for photovoltaics to be optionally purchased by the tenant will be made available for their zero energy endeavors.

The net effect of the sustainable design strategy is a low-emissions building today that gets even cleaner over time.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Savings**

The savings annually for the first 25 years will be equivalent to:

- Removing 467 cars from the road; or driving 5,378,973 less miles per year!

- Burning 2,405,097 less pounds of coal (12 railcars) per year!

- Providing energy for 263 homes per year!

- Providing electricity for 384 homes per year!
Once the grid becomes supplied through renewable energy sources, starting in 2045, the all-electric solution will have zero carbon emissions, while the traditional building will continue using gas and causing annual carbon emissions. The **annual saving after the first 25 years** will be equivalent to:

- Removing 594 cars from the road; or driving 6,845,966 less miles per year!
- Burning 3,061,033 less pounds of coal (15.3 railcars) per year!
- Providing energy for 335 homes per year!
- Providing electricity for 488 homes per year

**Alternative Transportation**

The project will provide adequate protected bicycle storage facilities and electric vehicle charging infrastructure to encourage use of alternative, low-carbon modes of transportation. It is also well-located for access to local and regional transit.

AC Transit buses provide local service to Downtown Berkeley and the Downtown Berkeley BART Station on the 51 line, within 2 blocks at University Avenue and Fourth Street, and to the Ashby and El Cerrito Plaza BART stations via the 80 line, which stops 3 blocks to the east on Sixth Street. The West Berkeley Shuttle also provides free service from the Ashby BART station to Dwight Way and Seventh Street during commute hours.
Additionally, the Transbay Z line provides critical service from San Francisco to Sixth Street during morning commute hours and back to San Francisco during afternoon commute hours. The project site is also located one block from the Berkeley Amtrak station, providing service to Sacramento and points further east.

The project includes 261 secure bicycle parking spaces, with lockers and showers. A bicycle boulevard is located on Addison Street and the pedestrian/bicycle bridge on Addison Street provides access to the Frontage Road and Bay Trail to the west.

**Neighborhood Outreach**

On January 29, 2020, the project team held a neighborhood meeting at Truitt & White (1817 2nd Street) at 6pm to present the project, answer questions, and receive preliminary feedback from the community. Presentation topics included: a project overview, project benefits, architectural context and design, transportation, infrastructure, sustainability strategies, and landscape features. Six (6) community members attended. Participants were generally excited about the project and the potential improvements to Aquatic Park and the streetscape along Bolivar Drive. They expressed concerns about potential displacement of existing businesses at the site and effects on residents nearby during construction and operation of the project. Additionally, the project team has met with the Audubon Society and an advocate for Aquatic Park and will continue to engage with neighborhood stakeholders over the course of the project.

**Existing Parcel Conditions**

The site has operated as one parcel—with one parcel’s assessor number, and with buildings crossing parcel lines—for several decades. However, as shown on the survey and title report, the project site is actually composed of six separate parcels. As part of the conditions of project approval, the project team anticipates a lot line adjustment and parcel merger to reconfigure the six parcels into two parcels.
The site is developed with three buildings totaling approximately 59,000 square feet. The site is currently occupied by commercial buildings used by a bio-pharmaceutical company (Plexxikon), R&D/laboratory in a warehouse building (Berkeley Research Company and Fathom Engineering), and another R&D/laboratory in a building constructed for manufacturing use (OpenROV). Additionally, a soil supply company (American Soils Company) occupies the southern portion of the site, with paved parking and access areas, along with trees and shrubs around the site perimeter.

**Table 1: Existing Uses and Use Permit History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Use Permit History/Year Built</th>
<th>Current Approved Use (Existing Business)</th>
<th>Building Footprints (Approximation for Floor Area)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>600 Addison St.</td>
<td>Warehouse/1993 (1)</td>
<td>Research &amp; Development (Fathom Engineering and Berkeley Research Company)</td>
<td>20,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 Bolivar Dr.</td>
<td>Office/Lab/1968 (2)</td>
<td>Research &amp; Development (Plexxikon)</td>
<td>35,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2222 Third St.</td>
<td>Warehouse/est. 1915 (1,2)</td>
<td>Research &amp; Development (OpenROV)</td>
<td>3,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2222 Third St.</td>
<td>Outdoor Storage/1985</td>
<td>Construction Products Manufacturing and Outdoor Storage (American Soils)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Sources: (1) Cornerstone Earth Group, Phase I Report; (2) City of Berkeley, Zoning Cards, received February 11, 2020 and February 20, 2020._

**Zoning Standards**

The tables below report development standards for the two proposed lots and buildings.

**Table 2: Zoning Standards for Parcel A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard (BMC Section 23E.80.070)</th>
<th>Existing (combined site)</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Permitted/Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Area (acres)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)</td>
<td>59,000</td>
<td>293,790</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Area Ratio</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Height</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (ft.)</td>
<td>Approx. 30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Building = 3; Garage = 4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Building Setbacks (ft.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side (Bolivar Dr.)</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>5’-7”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front (Addison St.)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17’-2”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear (interior)</td>
<td>380+</td>
<td>12’-2”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side (UPRR)</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>27’-6”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking/Loading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle (R&amp;D)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>588 (2/1,000 sq. ft.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>12 (4 covered bays +8 spaces in eastern service drive)</td>
<td>12 (1@10KSF +1/25KSF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Parking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>147 (Long Term) 32 (Short Term)</td>
<td>1/2,000 sq. ft. (147 spaces)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Zoning Standards for Parcel B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard (BMC Section 23E.80.070)</th>
<th>Existing (combined site)</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Permitted/Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot Area (acres)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Floor Area (sq. ft.)</td>
<td>59,000</td>
<td>228,020</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Area Ratio</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Height</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (ft.)</td>
<td>Approx. 30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Building = 3; Garage = 5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Building Setbacks (ft.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left (Bolivar Dr.)</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>2’-2”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear (interior)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22’-3”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front (Bancroft Wy.)</td>
<td>380+</td>
<td>3’-1”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side (UPRR)</td>
<td>9+</td>
<td>27’-6”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking/Loading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle (R&amp;D)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>456 (2/1,000 sq. ft.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>10 (4 covered bays + 6 spaces in eastern service drive)</td>
<td>10 (1@10KSF + 1/25KSF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Parking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>114 (Long Term)</td>
<td>1/2,000 sq. ft. (114 spaces)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Permits Requested

The application includes the following permits, including a request for 56% of the gross floor area (approximately 293,800 sq. ft.) for Research & Development use and 44% (approximately 228,000 sq. ft.) co-entitled for Research & Development or Office use, to be determined at the time of initial lease-up:

1. **BMC 23C.08.050**: Use Permit to demolish existing non-residential buildings;
2. **BMC 23E.04.020**: Administrative Use Permit to allow rooftop equipment projections;
3. **BMC 23E.80.030**: Administrative Use Permit to establish more than 30,000 SF R&D use;
4. **BMC 23E.80.030**: Use permit to establish more than 30,000 SF of Office Use;
5. **BMC 23E.80.045.A**: Use permit to convert more than 33% of Warehouse to R&D;
6. **BMC 23E.80.050.C**: Use Permit to construct 20,000 or more gross square feet of new floor area;
FINDINGS

23B.32.040 Findings for Issuance and Denial and Conditions

A. The Board may approve an application for a Use Permit, either as submitted or as modified, only upon finding that the establishment, maintenance or operation of the use, or the construction of a building, structure or addition thereto, under the circumstances of the particular case existing at the time at which the application is granted, will not be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort or general welfare of persons residing or working in the area or neighborhood of such proposed use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements of the adjacent properties, the surrounding area or neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City.

B. Prior to approving any Use Permit the Board must also make any other findings required by either the general or District regulations applicable to that particular Use Permit.

C. The Board shall deny an application for a Use Permit if it determines that it is unable to make any of the required findings, in which case it shall state the reasons for that determination.

D. The Board may attach such conditions to any Use Permit as it deems reasonable or necessary to achieve the purposes of this Ordinance, and which otherwise promote the municipal health, safety and welfare.

Response: The proposed project will neither be a detriment to the neighborhood nor to the City of Berkeley in general. The proposed project represents a significant improvement on a severely underutilized lot, which includes dated buildings and infrastructure, lack of site security, truck traffic, opportunities for illegal dumping, and which is currently adding sediment to Aquatic Park during storm events.

The project will provide top-of-the-line employment space, in a LEED Gold equivalent building, with sustainability features that include all electric systems and alternative transportation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, noise, traffic, and air quality impacts for both its neighbors and for the region.

The new uses will generate between 1,300 – 1,600 job opportunities at a range of qualification levels.

The project will also rebuild the curb, sidewalk, and gutter along Bolivar Drive, where none currently exist and add bioretention systems to slow and clean stormwater before it enters Aquatic Park and San Francisco Bay.

The project, therefore, aligns with Berkeley’s General Plan, West Berkeley Plan, and Climate Action Plan goals which seek to increase employment opportunities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

23C.08.050 Demolitions of Buildings Used for Commercial, Manufacturing or Community, Institutional or Other Non-residential Uses

D. A Use Permit or an AUP for demolition of a non-residential building or structure may be approved only if the Board or Zoning Officer finds that the demolition will not be materially detrimental to the commercial needs and public interest of any affected neighborhood or the City, and one of the following findings that the demolition:

1. Is required to allow a proposed new building or other proposed new Use;

2. Will remove a building which is unusable for activities which are compatible with the purposes of the District in which it is located or which is infeasible to modify for such uses;
3. Will remove a structure which represents an unabatable attractive nuisance to the public; or

4. Is required for the furtherance of specific plans or projects sponsored by the City or other local district or authority. In such cases, it shall be demonstrated that it is infeasible to obtain prior or concurrent approval for the new construction or new use which is contemplated by such specific plans or projects and that adhering to such a requirement would threaten the viability of the plan or project.

Response: In response to finding 23C.08.050.D and 23C.08.050.D.1, the proposed project will not be materially detrimental to the commercial needs and public interest of the West Berkeley neighborhood.

The demolition will not remove buildings of historical or architectural significance. The demolition will remove three underutilized buildings (considering the site size of 8.4 acres), including one deteriorated building. Additionally, the demolition will remove piles of soil, fertilizer, and other outdoor storage material which contribute to the historically poor water quality of Aquatic Park and air quality impacts, including to the park and neighborhood. The removal of the structures will facilitate the removal of any necessary contaminated soil and groundwater at the site and the ultimate 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 help to improve Aquatic Park.

All three buildings, especially 2222 Third Street and 600 Addison Street, do not meet industry standards for productive research and development uses, which have evolved in recent years. The buildings do not comply with modern fire or building standards and reflect construction techniques from the early and mid to late 1900s. The upgrades necessary to these buildings would require significant investment and alterations to the buildings and site to accommodate reuse.

Moreover, the 2222 Third St. building does not abut a public street; employee access to the buildings is only possible today by driving around or behind other buildings on the site and the use of the adjacent rail right-of-way to transport products is no longer an option as the directly adjacent rail line that served the site in the past no longer exists.

23E.80.090 Findings for MU-LI District (New Uses/Structures)

A. In order to approve any Use Permit under this chapter the Zoning Officer or Board must make the finding required by Section 23B.32.040. The Zoning Officer or Board must also make the findings required by the following paragraphs of this section to the extent applicable:

B. A proposed use or structure must:

1. Be consistent with the purposes of the District;
2. Be compatible with the surrounding uses and buildings;
3. Be consistent with the adopted West Berkeley Plan;
4. Be unlikely, under reasonably foreseeable circumstances, to either induce a substantial change of use in buildings in the District from manufacturing, wholesale trade or warehousing uses;
5. Be designed in such a manner to be supportive of the light 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. If the building and/or site is split between the MU-LI District and the West Berkeley Commercial District that 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 West Berkeley Commercial District;

6. Be able to meet any applicable performance standards as described in Section 23E.80.070.D.

Response: The proposed uses and buildings are compatible with the purposes of the district in that the project will: develop research & development and office uses that meet the West Berkeley Plan’s designation of a Light Manufacturing District; create compatible uses within the MU-LI district, but at the interface with C-W uses; provide a range of job opportunities, including those that do not require advanced degrees; provide large floor plates and tall ceiling heights that would allow for medium- and large-sized companies and needs; provide opportunity for R&D space in an appropriate location and structure; and maintain and improve the quality of the West Berkeley environment through improvements to the quality of building materials, bioretention systems to improve stormwater quality, new site landscaping and infrastructure, and improvements to the public realm along Bolivar Drive, including new sidewalks and landscaping.

The proposed uses are compatible with the surrounding uses, which include warehousing, manufacturing, office, research and development, and laboratories. Additionally, the combination of office and research & development uses within the subject site are inherently consistent with the district purpose to provide opportunities for office that will not interfere with light manufacturing uses or building stock. Notably, the project site is bordered by multifamily residential building and commercial uses—including a chiropractor office, retail, and a dance studio—to the north; commercial recreation to the west; and office, laboratory and biotechnology uses to the south. The project would further contribute to the economic and land use diversity described in the district purposes. Furthermore, research and development and office are allowed uses in the MU-LI district; therefore, they will not induce substantial change of use in buildings in the district.

The proposed use is consistent with the West Berkeley Plan because it is a development that could accommodate office and research & development uses that maintain the mix of uses and economic diversity which gives West Berkeley its unique character. The plan was in part initiated to prevent the conversion of manufacturing uses to office and residential uses. Over the last 30 years, such conversions have occurred only rarely. The proposed project would help to fulfill the district purposes which allow selected office uses in a location—adjacent to Aquatic Park, residential uses and close to the Fourth Street Retail District—which is not conducive to manufacturing uses. 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 from approximately 90 currently to 1,300 to 1,600, vastly expanding job opportunities, in line with the plan goals. The proposed use of glass, steel, concrete, and metal panels expresses the industrial nature of the building. Although these materials are used in a more contemporary way than surrounding industrial structures, which are generally older and lack fenestration, they complement the metal, steel, and concrete found on neighboring industrial buildings. At the same time, the design provides a visual transition as an entry statement to the City, while acknowledging the commercial and residential mixed-use buildings in the C-W district. The abutting C-W-zoned site across Addison Street also utilizes metal, concrete, glass, and masonry materials.

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. Moreover, during operation of the project, the all-
electric design and state-of-the-art mechanical systems propose to reduce dust, noise, odors, and hazardous materials compared to existing conditions which include open storage of soil materials that generate air quality and water quality impacts.

Policy Consistency
The proposed project fulfills key land use goals and policies of the West Berkeley Plan, including that the project:

- Provides for continued economic use of industrial, office, and laboratory uses that will benefit potential workers who reside in the City of Berkeley, existing retail and restaurant businesses in West Berkeley through incidental shopping, and the industrial character of the area with a new state-of-the-art building. (Goal 1, Policy D)
- Expands employment opportunities at a range of education and qualification levels. (Goal 1, Policy A)
- Develops a sustainable building, site, and landscape plan with low-impact air quality, GHG, and noise impacts that is appropriate for the interface between the MU-LI and abutting C-W district to the north (Goal 3)
- Expands the overall amount of light industrial space, office space, and potentially biotech industries in the MU-LI district by redeveloping an underutilized 8.4-acre site, increasing the amount of floor area from 59,000 square feet and 521,810 gross square feet. (Goal 2, Policy B)
- Allows development that is consistent with all development standards requirements and therefore of a scale that is appropriate for the MU-LI district and its surroundings, which include 1 to 5 story buildings to the north of the project site and 1 story buildings to the east, south, and west. (Goal 4)

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS
An environmental impact report (EIR) is anticipated to meet CEQA requirements. Key topics will include the following.

Protected Tree: There is a 19-inch circumference Coast Live Oak tree on the southwest corner of the property. As described in the 11/13/2019 Arborist Report: Tree #63 “Is in fair condition with codominant trunks, a slight lean and a thinning crown.” This tree will be relocated within the project site, as shown on the landscape plan. Eighty-four (84) new trees will be planted on the Project site in compliance with City requirements. Tree locations include: Addison Street, Bancroft Way, and Bolivar Drive frontages as well as throughout the project site interior. New trees will be a minimum of 24-inch box size. All landscaping will be planted and irrigated compliant with Bay-friendly landscaping requirements.

Cultural Resources: Despite the close proximity of the project parcel to previously recorded and very significant cultural resources (namely the West Berkeley Shellmound/CA-ALA-307), archaeological testing completed in October 2019 identified no potentially significant historic or prehistoric features or artifacts.

Geotechnical/Soils: Today, most of the project site is underlain by a deep stratum of historic and modern fill. This deposit is full of gravels, angular cobbles and construction debris, with variable
consistency. The entire southern half of the site, where American Soil is currently located, is covered by approximately nine inches of solid concrete foundation. Groundwater depths are shallow and range from 5 to 18 feet below current grades.

**State General Construction Permit:** The Notice of Intent for the State General Construction Permit will be submitted following the project approval and prior to building permit issuance.

**Seismic Hazards:** The site is located within a liquefaction hazard zone. Potential impacts associated with liquefaction will be addressed in the design-level geotechnical report.

**Tsunamis and Flooding:** The majority of the site is above 10 feet in elevation and is located in Zone X, where minimal flooding would be expected. However, an eastern portion of the site has elevations less than 10 feet and is located in Zone AE, an area of special flood hazard with base flood elevation requirements. The western portion of the site also has “high” potential for inundation due to tsunami or seiche according to the California Geological Survey.

**Hazardous Materials:** Extensive sampling and analysis of soil, groundwater, and soil vapor was conducted under a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement with the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Based on samples collected in 2007 associated with a PEA and 2012 associated with the cleanup agreement, the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Water Board granted case closure in 2013. Still, due to the long history of chemical use at the site, residual concentrations of contaminants may be present. Two sumps are known to exist within the warehouse structure formerly used by Triangle Paint Company. If the sumps have leaked, soil in the immediate vicinity of the sumps might be locally impacted. Soil samples collected from outside the warehouse in 2007 did not indicate a significant plume of soil contaminants. These sumps will require appropriate removal and disposal in accordance with regulatory requirements.

**Traffic:** A traffic impact analysis has been completed and was submitted on 02/25/2020.