

Initiative for Expansion of Open Space at Crab Cove: Measure B

The Question

“Shall the initiative for Expansion of Open Space at Crab Cove [be adopted] to change the land use and zoning designations for a 3.65-acre parcel on McKay Avenue, from Office/Administrative Professional to Open Space, which prohibits the conversion of vacant federal buildings into a senior assisted living facility, medical clinic and supportive services for homeless individuals, and limits the use of the property to parks and related uses?”

The Situation

The Federal Government currently owns a 3.65-acre parcel on McKay Avenue with 11 buildings and security fencing. In April 2017, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determined the Site to be suitable for use as a facility to assist the homeless under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act and selected Alameda Point Collaborative (APC) to develop the property for a Wellness Center. In September 2018 the Federal Government and APC entered a 3-year renewable lease in which the federal government will transfer property ownership to APC as soon as the City and APC complete the required paperwork. In December 2018, the Alameda City Council amended portions of the general plan and the zoning ordinance to allow the federal government to transfer the property. In November 2018, Measure B, an initiative to change the land use designation of the McKay property site to Open Space, qualified for the ballot.

The Proposal

Measure B was placed on the ballot with the required number of signatures to support the designation of the McKay Avenue property to Open Space that would include parks, parkways, playgrounds, golf courses and land reserves. If Measure B passes it would not change the ownership of the property, clear and remediate the property, establish funding, or create a public park: it will change the designation of the land to Open Space eliminating the development of a Wellness Center. If Measure B takes effect, it can be amended or repealed only by a subsequent vote of the people.

Fiscal Effect

If the federal government transfers the property to the City it is estimated that a park will cost \$11 million dollars including \$5.6 million to purchase the property, \$3.2 million to remove asbestos and demolish buildings, and \$2.9 million to build the park. If the federal government continues to own the property, prohibiting any development on the property, the City will incur service costs of \$9,000/year (police, fire, emergency services). Additionally, the cost to taxpayers for a special election is estimated at \$580,000 - \$700,000 rather than \$25,000 if included in the November 2020 election.

What a Yes or No Vote Means

If Measure B receives more **YES** votes than Measure A, the land use designation will change to Open Space but it would not result in a transfer of the land to the City, East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), or any other governmental entity for public use as a park.

If Measure A and B **both fail** the land use designation approved by City Council in December 2018 will remain in effect.

Supporters say

- Taxpayers already voted for and raised \$6.5 million to buy and improve the full 7.5 acres McKay Avenue property through EBRPD Measure WW.
- Alamedans put this measure on the ballot because Alameda is a unique island that has always focused on having open space and parkland to enjoy.
- Alameda needs this additional land for open space to accommodate growing populations and provide options for sea level rise.
- The proposed Wellness Center is a regional facility that will draw more homeless people to Alameda from surrounding cities such as Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco.

Opponents say

- East Bay Regional Park District has clearly stated that Measure WW never included this parcel and that ‘it is not suitable for park expansion.’
- Measure B will not create a public park. Even with zoning changes, vacant buildings and paved parking will remain on the site.
- Measure B will not change the ownership of the site and will not cause the transfer to East Bay Regional Park District or create a park.
- Measure B cuts off debate, locking in an ordinance that can be changed only by a vote of the people.
- It will cost the City \$11 million dollars to develop a park.

Supporters

Marva Lyons, Former President, Alameda NAACP (chapter currently inactive)

Doug deHaan, Former Alameda Vice Mayor/Councilmember

Robert Lagrone, Retired Fire Chief, Alameda

Jiaqi Yang, Executive Director, Save Alameda Parks

Opponents

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor, City of Alameda

John Knox White, Vice Mayor, City of Alameda

Doug Siden, Former Director, East Bay Regional Park District Board

Jim Franz, Director-Retired, American Red Cross Alameda

Website

www.friendsofcrabcove.org