Balboa Reservoir - Response to Community Comments
AvalonBay and BRIDGE, with Mission, PUDC, and Habitat
We have carefully reviewed all of the comments submitted by community members. To help organize this document, we summarized the comments in paraphrased questions, below, and provided our initial response to each one. As the selected development team, we look forward to engaging with neighboring communities to work through these issues in much more depth.

1. How will the team successfully integrate 1,000 or more new units into this lower density neighborhood without significant impacts? What is the right number of units for this site?
We are aware that there is wide range of opinion about how many units can be accommodated on the reservoir site without adversely impacting the adjacent neighborhoods. As indicated in our proposal and the interview, we are flexible on the unit count and we will work with community to get to the right number and mix of new housing units. We will lead a community conversation focused less on overall numbers and more on the specifics of housing for seniors, families, teachers, first time home buyers and students, and the impacts and benefits associated with each. We will explore concerns related to traffic, scale of buildings, neighborhood open space, management, and security using site specific solutions and real world examples. Our outreach efforts will be designed to engage the full range of community members who will be affected by this development. While we know we may not be able to satisfy everyone, we are confident that we can work together to find a combination of open space, housing units, traffic solutions and other community benefits that most of the community can support.

2. Will this neighborhood be all AvalonBay? Will it feel like Mission Bay?
No. We intend to build a neighborhood that has the variety and architectural character of the best San Francisco neighborhoods. Our plan proposes small, irregularly shaped blocks that will be built by at least five developers (BRIDGE Housing, Mission Housing, Habitat for Humanity, Pacific Union Development Co, and a potential townhouse partner, in addition to AvalonBay). Each separate developer will work with a different design team. Moreover, each separate element of the market-rate housing will have a distinct identity and architectural character. We will also work with the community to prepare design guidelines that ensure variation in building height, ground floor entries and all the other elements that give a neighborhood human scale and real variety.

3. Can this team provide a higher number of ownership units?
Our initial proposal includes a larger number of rental units, but we have made a point to ensure flexibility. We may be able to increase the number of townhouses on the site. In addition, many of the multifamily buildings we have proposed would also work well as for-sale condominiums.

4. Can the plan accommodate more community-serving retail space?
This area of Ocean Avenue is still evolving as a successful and vibrant commercial district and our first priority is to support that progress. We are glad to explore the potential for additional retail on the Reservoir site, but we want to be careful that it does not detract from the success of other small and medium-sized Ocean Avenue merchants. Successful retail is a great source of activity and life in a neighborhood, but vacant or under-utilized retail is just the opposite. So finding the right balance, and ensuring that any proposed use is truly viable, will be critical. One way to find this balance is to provide an opportunity for a pop-up venue at Brighton Plaza that can take advantage of foot traffic from Ocean Avenue merchants on weekends or at other key times. We have had success with this model in other emerging retail areas, such as the Pleasant Hill BART plaza. We are also interested in working with CCSF to determine whether there is a need for ground-floor space that would serve the CCSF community.
5. **How will you make sure that this project will not worsen traffic congestion in the neighborhood?**

The first step towards reducing traffic impacts is to ensure that new residents at Balboa Reservoir are less reliant on automobiles for commuting and daily tasks. There has been a huge amount of good work done on the subject of TDM and we embrace the TDM measures in the SFCTA / Nelson Nygaard TDM study, as well as the target of 60% maximum auto mode share set forth in the Principles and Parameters. Our plan includes key features that will reduce auto-reliance, such as a pedestrian priority zone at the heart of the site, reducing parking to reasonable minimum, and planning for a major shared parking facility.

But simply addressing the automobile usage of our new residents will not satisfy concerns about traffic congestion because this congestion is the result of many factors, many of which already exist today. So we must widen our focus to include not just the Reservoir site, but also the broader community. For example, we must improve the pedestrian and bike experience on the Ocean-Geneva corridor. Given our extensive development experience in the community we are uniquely suited to collaborate with MTA, DPW, MUNI, BART, CCSF and all other stakeholders to help implement these key improvements. We have proposed a $2M commitment toward whatever solution is selected, with the goal of easing automobile traffic flow at Phelan and Ocean, and providing safer and more inviting paths for pedestrians and cyclists between the Reservoir, CCSF, MUNI, and BART. We must also widen the scope of our TDM activities to include our neighbors. To make a significant dent in automobile traffic at the most congested times of day, we need to find ways to partner with CCSF and collaborate on a shared strategy to promote alternative modes of transportation. As part of this work, we will explore establishing a single TDM coordinator between the Reservoir and City College, possibly also including the Ocean Avenue Business District as a Transportation Management Association (TMA).

6. **How will your team ensure that we get the parking right?**

A number of comments cautioned that we should not provide too little parking for the new residents, and other comments cautioned that we should not provide too much. We believe that both points of view are correct: if we provide too little parking, we impede CCSF’s activities and could potentially, in a worst case, push parkers into the adjacent Sunnyside and Westwood Park neighborhoods; if we provide too much parking, we encourage more people to drive, undermine our TDM efforts and end up with too many cars on the road and continued congestion. Our task is to thread that needle. We believe that a shared garage is the best way to ensure that parking at the reservoir is efficient and “right-sized.” Our proposal includes either 500 or 750 spaces in a shared garage. In the first phase we will retain the northern portion of the surface parking area as a shared use parking facility. The shared underground garage will be built as part of the second phase. This approach gives us time to implement our full TDM program, monitor results and work collaboratively with City College and the neighborhood to determine the right size for this garage.

7. **Does on-site vehicle circulation accommodate emergency vehicles and the range of resident needs?**

In our initial design we carefully considered queuing distances at Lee Avenue, access to garages, passenger drop off zones, turn-around points, access to childcare, waste collection and access for emergency vehicles. We will continue to evolve these elements, but our guiding principle will always be to create the best possible environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and then integrate slow moving vehicle circulation as part of the supporting infrastructure.

8. **Does the storm sewer system have the capacity for more development?**

Our team will work closely with City and SFPUC officials to determine capacity in the existing system, and design our new development accordingly. We are planning to develop a system that will control the rate and volume of stormwater flows from the project, reducing the inflows to the City system during
storm events. At other sites in San Francisco, we’ve installed flow-through stormwater planters, cisterns, and rain gardens, and we’re pioneering the re-use of stormwater for irrigation and toilet-flushing. Because the majority of the site is currently a paved parking lot, we expect that development of new open space areas, combined with the storm water management measures outlined above, will result in a significant reduction in stormwater flows.

9. How will you limit the impact on Westwood Park and the Plymouth Avenue neighbors?
Our team understands that it is critically important for us to work closely with our neighbors in Westwood Park to find solutions to a number of issues. We have proposed opening up San Ramon Way to pedestrians and bicycles, with no motor vehicle access. We believe this will encourage walking and biking in the area, and will also improve neighborhood safety. Also, in developing our initial design, we studied a number of ways to provide the desired “buffer” between the Plymouth Ave backyards and the Reservoir site. The notion of a shared public space bordering the existing rear yards is attractive, but placing active public uses next to private rear yards could also result in a loss of privacy for neighbors and a potential security concern during nighttime hours when the public space is not well supervised. After giving this some thought, we decided to propose the same relationship that all other single-family Westwood Park homes enjoy – back-to-back rear yards. New owner-occupied townhouses along the western edge would have a private backyard, which would share a back fence with the Plymouth Ave neighbors. This arrangement ensures privacy and security for the Plymouth Ave backyards, and places public open space where it is well-supervised and readily accessible from all sides. Again, these are only preliminary design concepts. We are eager to work closely with our neighbors to develop an arrangement that works for them.

10. Will your plan preserve walking paths for neighbors?
Yes, our proposal is to provide multiple walking routes into and through the reservoir neighborhood for residents and neighbors. Our suggestion is to focus these walking routes on the main pedestrian greenways where they are well utilized and well supervised. We will need community input to help us develop this aspect of the plan, and ensure that we retain the most desirable aspects of these paths.

11. How will you ensure outdoor spaces are comfortable in this often windy setting?
Our design is carefully composed to screen the prevailing summer winds from the west, while maintaining the westward ocean view which is a distinguishing feature of the site. At the central open space, we proposed a hedgerow strategy using horizontal layers of plantings of varying heights and a semi-open pavilion to slow and filter the wind. Edges of the open space are protected by buildings and layers of native wind and fog tolerant plantings such as Monterey cypress, myrica, and coast live oak. Our initial design also creates a number of outdoor spaces, such as the triangular play area, which are sheltered from the wind by proposed buildings. In the master planning phase, we will build a detailed wind model of the site to predict wind tunnels and eddies. We will also work closely with neighbors, whose specific local knowledge will be critical in helping us create a balance between wind protection, access to views, and the connection between public spaces.

12. Are you willing to incorporate additional elements in the Open Space Program?
Absolutely. We received comments suggesting additional programming in our open spaces – including more activity spaces, playgrounds, sport courts, etc. Our preliminary design identified some of these spaces, and it was intentionally very flexible. We have space to provide multiple “outdoor rooms,” each of which can have a different program or purpose. We know the best way to design these spaces is through public input and engagement, and we’re eager to work with neighbors to make these spaces responsive to real community desires.