



March 10, 2020

Ms. Lucia Panica  
Manager of Development Services  
City of Sarasota  
1565 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Sarasota, FL 34236

Dear Ms. Panica,

In the Implementation Plan (IP) submitted to the City Commission on August 30, 2019, and subsequently discussed at the September 16 City Commission meeting (at which the Implementation Plan was approved unanimously by the Commission), there is a discussion of the process for proposing an Implementation Agreement (IA) governing how The Bay Park Conservancy (BPC) will manage, operate and maintain Phase 1 of the park after the Site Plan (SP) is approved.

It is difficult to propose activation, management or maintenance of the site unless and until we know the final approved design and Site Plan details.

This “one step at a time” approach...IP, SP, IA... is provided for in the 15-year long-term Partnership Agreement between the City of Sarasota and the BPC approved unanimously by the City Commission in April 2019.

In our discussion on September 16 with the City Commission, and on pages 31 and 32 of the IP, the BPC expressed its overall intention to follow the existing principles, policies, practices and regulations of the City of Sarasota governing special events, and also to follow existing city Parks and Recreation policies, procedures and regulations.

Ultimately, the Implementation Agreement will be submitted to the City Commission for their approval. The current timetable calls for submission in mid-2021 while we are still developing and building out the first phase of The Bay Park and well in advance of the planned opening of the first phase in 2022.



We will continue to follow the overall aspirational vision and guiding principles proposed by Bayfront 2020 and approved by the City Commission. These principles have guided our planning from the beginning.

Overall, we have designed, planned and will continue to plan for a public park on Sarasota Bay that is open and accessible, free and welcoming to the full and rich diversity of Sarasota.

We are at the very early and very preliminary steps in the process of planning activation and programming for the first park phase.

As a starting point, we have begun to put together a calendar of all the activities, events and programs that currently take place or will take place on The Bay Park site in calendar 2020. This calendar work is underway. We are working closely with all of the current site incumbents, the Sarasota Garden Club, the Art Center Sarasota, the Sarasota Orchestra, the Van Wezel, the Municipal Auditorium, along with the neighboring Hyatt Sarasota. This baseline calendar of current activities and events has been completed through April 2020 and will continue to be updated throughout 2020. By the end of 2020 we will have a much better understanding of what a full calendar year of events looks like.

After the Site Plan is approved (hopefully by mid-year), we plan to survey the community to gain a better understanding of the kinds of accessible and free activities and events they would like to see in their park. We know from prior master planning stage and implementation stage surveys that there is a general interest in accessible arts, cultural and educational activities that are suited to an open-air park, and an interest in passive recreational activities appropriate to a public park.

These surveys at each step of the planning process are very important for better and deeper understanding of community needs and wants, and habits and practices regarding public park usage. We expect to conduct this survey in the fall of 2020 among 1,000 or more respondents so that we get a broad and representative sample of interests and preferences.

(The city parks and recreation team has shared results from the survey they conducted to inform the city's Parks and Recreation programming. While this survey is generally of interest and some help, the findings of course do not address the specific site design and plan for the first phase of The Bay Park.)

To be clear, the first 10 acres of The Bay Park are intended to be for passive recreational use. As can be seen in the proposed site plan, there are no sports buildings or facilities. There are no



provisions for high impact activities or team sports or for sports playing fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball, football, softball or soccer playing fields, etc.

(There are two activities on the larger 53-acre site to the north and not included in the first park phase...the public boat launch and the lawn bowling club...that would qualify as active recreational use. It is our understanding that lawn bowling will move to the Bobby Jones complex. The boat launch will be totally redesigned in a future park phase and moved further north on the site.)

We have received a generous grant from one of the local foundations that would provide for the services of an Activities and Event Coordinator for The Bay Park Conservancy to be hired in 2021 to begin planning, and then to ultimately manage programming in 2022. We have also received grants for cultural and educational activities that would be accessible, open and free to park goers when the first phase opens in 2022.

We have begun very preliminary conversations with the Arts and Cultural Alliance and with EdExplore to see whether together we could create, design and plan free arts, cultural and educational activities for park goers of all ages in the first phase of the park.

Since we have only had a single meeting with each party, it is obviously premature to talk about any specific plans or activities.

However, a common practice in other successful public parks like The Bay Park is to host free outdoor performances of local arts organizations...for example, free pops or symphony concerts, ballet or opera performances, popular music of all genres performances...a wide range of visual arts exhibitions...and a wide range of educational activities for all ages.

It will take significant resources and time to begin to identify and explore the feasibility of some of these kinds of programs for the first phase of The Bay Park.

**Below are specific examples of how we are beginning to think about different aspects of park implementation and operations:**

- Hours of operation would be set within existing parameters for other city parks. The most comparable, similar park is Bayfront Park which is open from 5:00 am to 12:00 midnight every day. Most city parks are open from 5:00 am to 11:00 pm every day. For the record,



Centennial Park at the northern most end of the bay park site is open 24 hours a day for boating and fishing.

- Dogs will be permitted in The Bay Park on a leash. However, we do not have any plans in the first phase for a dog park that would allow off leash exercise with its owner. Dog owners will be responsible for cleaning up after their dogs to keep the park clean for all users.
- Smoking will not be allowed in The Bay Park.
- Applications and approvals for special events would be handled by the BPC for The Bay Park according to the same principles, policies and procedures and in the same way as they are currently handled by either the City or the Van Wezel. We will honor/respect any/all current agreements with the City/Van Wezel for events that have been previously scheduled on the site or planned for the site.
- We will continue to allow/support the same/similar food and beverage offerings for these special events and other similar events. Food and beverages may be provided by a range of caterers, food trucks, vendors, etc. A wide range of food offerings will be permissible. Beverages will include a full range including but not limited to waters, fruit juices, soft drinks, beer and wine, all provided in environmentally responsible recyclable containers.
- We have just begun to think through the options for limited pre-prepared food, snacks and beverage services from the pavilion in the first phase. Again, we are studying the options/menus/services provided at similar park convenience food purveyors in the area. Right now, all preliminary thinking is to start slow and small with a very limited offering targeted to daytime park fare needs through sunset every evening. Clearly, one of the attractions for the community will be the 300+ sunsets Sarasota enjoys every year.
- There are currently no plans at this Phase 1 facility to do any “restaurant type” cooking onsite (as is done at some local parks such as Siesta Beach Park, Lido Beach Park, etc.), and therefore are not planning to provide a grease trap or other kinds of required restaurant infrastructure.
- While we expect to be able to provide for certain, permitted small private events...a neighborhood picnic, a family reunion, a graduation celebration, a wedding/wedding



reception, a company/organization get together, etc., we will ensure that portions of the park remain open to the general public every day of the year.

- We have already begun to meet with both City Parks and Recreation and the Deputy Police Chief and his team to discuss principles, policies and best practices regarding park/public place safety and security. We have held several meetings together and are working our way up the learning curve. Over the next year, we will continue to evaluate best practices such as a park ambassadors program, enhanced police patrols, and additional security for events, for deployment when the Phase 1 park opens in 2022.
- In addition, we have connected with successful public parks in other cities to begin to learn about their best practices.

Today, the BPC staff consists of three full-time and one part-time employees. We have to be selective and focused to work effectively and efficiently.

The focus right now and for the foreseeable future is on the Site Plan approval process through the DRC, Planning Board, and City Commission. Our focus is also on fundraising, because we are committed to raising about 80% of the total capital required to develop and build out the first phase of The Bay Park from private sources. We are committed to having 80% of cash/pledges in hand when we begin development.

Once we have the Site Plan agreed, and can begin development and build out, we can shift existing resources and judiciously add resources to begin work on the community survey and the preliminary planning for an Implementation Agreement that governs activation, management, operations and maintenance of the first phase of The Bay Park.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A.G. Lafley", written in a cursive style.

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A.G. Lafley,  
Founding CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Waddill", written in a cursive style.

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Bill Waddill,  
Chief Implementation Officer