

CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO




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ROBERT BECK
TREASURE ISLAND DIRECTOR

TO: San Francisco Board of Supervisors Land Use and Transportation Committee

FROM: Robert P. Beck, Treasure Island Director 

DATE: January 20, 2021

RE: Historical Background for Proposed Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island Street Names

The proposed resolution would approve street names for Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island. In 2015 the Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA) working with Treasure Island Community Development (TICD) and the Treasure Island Museum developed a street naming plan for Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island, which was presented on multiple occasions to the TIDA Citizen's Advisory Board and TIDA Board of Directors for review, input, and public comment. The TIDA Board of Directors reviewed the proposed street names at three noticed public hearings on July 8, 2015, June 13, 2018, and March 13, 2019. These street names were reviewed and revised with the Department of Public Works and the County Surveyor (Public Works) to ensure that the names would not duplicate names found elsewhere in the City or otherwise impair emergency services response. Public Works recommended the names for Board of Supervisors adoption through Public Works Order No. 203273, dated June 10, 2020.

Since that time, several final subdivision maps brought to the Board of Supervisors for approval have incrementally identified placeholder street names in conformance with this vision, but TIDA, in consultation with TICD and Public Works, proposes the adoption of the framework across the island's planned future right-of-ways to remove uncertainty, solidify the framework, facilitate addressing, and simplify project implementation going forward.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Treasure Island–Yerba Buena Island Project is developing the former naval installation on Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island. It is planned to provide:

- approximately 8,000 residential units;
- approximately 140,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of new commercial and retail space, including space in adapted historic buildings on both islands;

- approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of new office space;
- up to 500 hotel rooms;
- approximately 300 acres of parks and open space;
- a Ferry Terminal and intermodal Transit Hub;
- new public services and utilities, including wastewater treatment and recycled water plants.

Because Treasure Island was constructed by filling the Bay, the soils of the island will require extensive geotechnical improvement prior to the construction of new roadways, utilities or structures on the island. Several feet of soil will be imported across much of the island to prepare for future sea level rise. As a result, few existing landmarks on the island will survive the redevelopment process.

This also afforded the opportunity to approach the island as a virtually blank slate when developing the future land use plan and roadway network. In response to the climate conditions on Treasure Island and to promote a walkable environment, the east-west streets on the island were designed at roughly a 70-degree angle to the north-south streets to orient the streets orthogonally to the prevailing wind direction through the Golden Gate. This orientation has the added benefit of maximizing the number of hours the east-west streets received sunlight exposure. Additionally, the development plans dedicated much of the island to parks and recreational open space.

As a result, the future street network on the island bears little resemblance to the existing street network. In the planning documents, the future streets were given alphanumeric designations (Avenue C, Avenue D, 4th Street, 5th Street, etc.), but these names were considered placeholders and were not intended to represent the permanent street names. In one of the few locations where a future street overlaid an existing street, the planning documents used the existing street name – California Avenue – which is not considered to be an appropriate name for the future street because of its similarity to California Street.

On Yerba Buena Island, by contrast, public streets will remain generally in their current configuration. To avoid confusion and reflect the island's history as a Navy and Coast Guard installation, the proposed resolution would keep the historic names for those streets.

Below is further information on the sources of proposed street names for Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island.

TREASURE ISLAND

On Treasure Island all proposed street names come from the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition, held on the island. The proposal uses a general convention for designations: Major

streets will be “avenues,” while smaller connectors will be “streets” on the west side of the island, and “lanes” on the east side. Each side will be arranged in alphabetical order. Shared public ways (narrow right-of-ways intended for pedestrian and bicycle use and emergency-vehicle access) will be “ways” and “walks.”

The names themselves reflect three categories of namesakes: the landscaped promenades of the Exposition, artistic features of the Exposition, and artists, architects, and other personalities associated with the Exposition.

1) Treasure Island streets directly named after promenades in the Exposition:

Avenue of the Palms
Passiflora Way
Garden Walk
Blossom Lane
Portway Passage
Golden Bell Way
Portway Passage
Farallon Street
Indies Place

2) Treasure Island Streets named after artworks or other features of the Exposition:

Clipper Cove Avenue is named after Clipper Cove, the anchorage on the south side of Treasure Island. The Cove in turn is named after the Pan American clipper- an amphibious airplane that was a featured exhibit at the Exposition.

Trade Winds Avenue is named after the “Port of Trade Winds,” the landing on the shore of Clipper Cove during the Exhibition.

Seven Seas Avenue is named for the Court of the Seven Seas, one of the architectural “courts” connecting the Exposition’s buildings. It depicted travel and adventure, with sculptures of the prows of ships and winged figures atop 16 piers along its length.

Pacifica Street is drawn from the Court of Pacifica, a large open area at the north end of the Court of the Seven Seas featuring a central fountain surrounded with 20 sculptures representing different peoples of the Pacific. At the north end was the Exposition’s largest statue, a depiction of Pacifica, symbolizing the entire ocean.

Peacemakers Street is named after the Peacemakers Mural, a very large painted relief in the Court of Pacifica, depicting the peaceful relations among people living around the Pacific Ocean, with a depiction of Buddha at the center

Siesta Way reflects the Siesta Pools, a prominent gathering space within the Exposition.

3) Treasure Island streets named after artists associated with the Exposition:

Zoe Dell Lane is named after Zoe Dell Lantis Nutter, the Official Hostess of the Exposition. The Oregon native was a San Francisco Ballet and nightclub dancer briefly known as the “most photographed women in the world” before coming to Treasure Island to help boost aviation at the Exposition. Following the Exposition, she went on to be a nationwide aviation expert, particularly promoting flying by women. She worked in the aircraft industry, helped develop key engine innovations, and evaluated aircraft. Nutter died in April 2020, just shy of 105 years old.

Wurster Lane is named for William Wurster, a renowned Bay Area architect and Dean of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley (as well as the architecture school at MIT). Wurster designed the Yerba Buena Club at the Exposition. His West Coast work survives throughout the Bay Area, including the reuse plan for Ghirardelli Square and the former Bank of American Building (555 California Street).

Phillips Lane honors Helen Phillips, and abstract printmaker from Fresno who studied the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) and went on to work in New York and Paris. Phillips contributed a sculptural group of blocky semi-abstract figures playing musical instruments in the Exposition’s Court of Pacifica. Her prints are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, SFMOMA, National Gallery, and the Achenbach Foundation of Fine Arts Museums of SF.

Macky Lane is named for Donald Macky, a Bay Area architect who at the age of 26 designed the Elephant Towers, the 12-story abstract animal sculptures framing the main entrance to the Exposition. Some of his buildings may be seen today at the Oxford Tract on the UC Berkeley campus.

Braghetta Lane is named for Lulu Hawkins Braghetta, an artist who created the Cambodian-inspired bas-relief, “Path of Darkness” for the Exposition’s Court of Pacifica. A graduate of UC Berkeley, she taught at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of Art) and created the art department at Vallejo College. One of her works is visible today in a New Deal relief on Berkley High School.

Bruton Street refers to Margaret, Helen, and Esther Bruton. These Alameda-raised sisters collectively created the Peacemakers Mural at the Exposition. They worked separately and together on reliefs, mosaics, other large scale work in art deco style. Their work survives in the muraled Cirque Room at the Fairmont Hotel, mosaics and terrazzo for the Second World War cemetery in Manila, and in Helen’s Byzantine-style mural on the Old Art Gallery at UC Berkeley.

Cravath Street is named for Ruth Cravath, who created three of the sculptures in the Court of Pacifica, working in public as part of the Exposition. She studied at California

School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) and was later an instructor at Mills College. Her best-known Bay Area work is the geometrical statute of St. Francis that stood outside Candlestick Park and will be relocated.

Johnson Street honors Sargent Johnson, considered the first West Coast-based African-American artist to achieve a national reputation. Johnson studied at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) and worked in the City, including for the New Deal Works Progress Administration and the Federal Arts Project. He was known for reliefs and heads influenced by African sculpture and Mexican murals, using modern aesthetics to create positive African-American representations. For the Exposition, Johnson designed two eight-foot-high cast stone figures that were displayed around the fountain in the Court of Pacifica. These figures and several other figures from the fountain are in TIDA's collection. Johnson also designed three figures for the Exposition symbolizing industry, home life, and agriculture for the Alameda-Contra Costa Building. His work is in the collections of SFMOMA and the Huntington Library in San Marcos. In San Francisco, his work also can be seen today at Washington High School and at the entrance to the Maritime Museum in Aquatic Park.

Kelham Street is named for George Kelham, a prominent Bay Area architect who chaired the commission that created the overall plan for the Exposition. He designed the Court of Seven Seas, the Court of the Moon and Stars, and the surviving Administration Building (now Building 1 on Treasure Island) and hangars (Buildings 2 and 3). An east coast native, Kelham came to San Francisco to design the Palace Hotel at Market and New Montgomery and never left. Other work includes the San Francisco Public Library (now the Asian Art Museum), several buildings at UC Berkeley including the Valley Life Sciences Building (whose style and reliefs are similar to the Exposition work), and the site plan and several buildings at the Westwood campus of UCLA.

Maybeck Street is named for renowned Bay Area architect Bernard Maybeck, one of the Exposition's chief planners. Maybeck lived, taught, and worked in Berkeley, where many of his Arts and Crafts-style buildings, and homes, and landscapes still stand. Notable examples include the First Church of Christ, Scientist near UC Berkeley, the Panoramic Hill district above the campus, and Rose Walk near Codornices Park. In San Francisco, Maybeck designed the Palace of Fine Arts and surrounding gardens constructed for the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915, along with several homes in Forest Hill and St. Francis Wood.

Sotomayor Street honors Antonio Sotomayor, a Bolivian-born artist who moved to San Francisco as a young man. For the Exposition, he created the Pacific Basin Fountain, a large-scale fountain that was a topographical representation of the Pacific Ocean, complete with surrounding continents and islands. He worked primarily as a painter, creating works including a mural in the nave of Grace Cathedral and one depicting Emperor Norton in the Palace Hotel (both still accessible today) and paintings in the collections of the New York MOMA and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Sotomayor served on the San Francisco Arts Commission and taught at Mills College and the California School of Fine Art.

YERBA BUENA ISLAND

Yerba Buena Island public streets will remain in the existing configuration. The proposed resolution would officially give them the names they currently have, which were historically used by the Navy and Coast Guard. TIDA does not have clear records on the names' origins, but has developed the following information with help from Treasure Island Museum representatives Walt Bilofsky, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Jim Bitoff, and Jim Sullivan.

Macalla Road may be named (with a misspelling) after Rear Admiral Bowman McCalla, who commanded the Mare Island Naval Shipyard and, just weeks before his retirement, directed aid missions following the 1906 earthquake and fire. It also may be named after his two namesake battleships, one of which saw action in the Second World War's Second Battle of Savo Island (also known as the Battle of Cape Esperance), a key engagement in the defense of Allied positions on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

Yerba Buena Road traces a loop around the upper part of the island.

Treasure Island Road leads to the causeway connecting the two islands.

Signal Road probably refers to signal equipment historically placed at the road's terminus, the high point of the island.

Hillcrest Road traverses the crest of the island and may have been used to access the former lighthouse.

North Gate Road was historically the connection to the lower part of the island on the northern/eastern side, the site of buildings including the lighthouse depot and training center. Today North Gate Road provides access to the Historic Senior Officers Quarters, referred to as the "Great Whites," and the United States Coast Guard Station.