

ASHLEY LANGWORTHY DIRECT TESTIMONY

PRESENTATION HEARING

Block D (Land Block 4, Project 1) (KAK 23-037)

Q Please state your name, place of employment, and position.

A Ashley Langworthy, Vice President, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures (BRV).

Q How long have you been in this position?

A I have been with BRV for approximately 8 years, and have been involved in urban planning for approximately 20 years.

Q Please describe your background and experience.

A Please see my resume, which is marked as an exhibit in this proceeding. I am a licensed landscape architect in Hawaii and an AICP Certified Planner. I am also a member of the American Planning Institute, the ULI Sustainable Development Council, and LAI - Land Economics Society. I have a B.A. in economics from Tufts University and a Master of Urban Planning from Harvard University. I am currently based in Seattle as the Vice President of BRV. Prior to serving as Vice President, I served as the Director of BRV's Western Region, which includes my home state, Hawai'i.

Q Please describe your firm's experience.

A Biederman Redevelopment Ventures is a placemaking consulting firm with over twenty-five years of experience in the art and science of creating, redeveloping and operating parks, public spaces, neighborhood streetscapes, and the public realms of mixed-use projects across the United States. We work with real estate developers, foundations, government agencies, and professional sports teams in revitalizing urban space and creating clean, safe, and active places that add value and stimulate economic development.

BRV has extensive experience in park planning and design, as well as park programming, management, operations, governance, and financing strategies. The public spaces we operate are financially self-sustaining and generally do not rely on government funds for operations.

Among the urban parks and public spaces we have worked on or consulted on include Bryant Park in New York City; Salesforce Park in San Francisco; Klyde Warren Park in Dallas; Mission Rock in San Francisco; Ala Moana Park among others.

Q What has BRV been retained to do for this Project, Block D?

A With respect to Block D, BRV is advising on pedestrian activation, streetscape, and sense of place for the Project and related areas, and the modifications requested for the Project. BRV is also a consultant to VWL on activation opportunities throughout Ward Village.

Q Is Block D consistent with and does it advance the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan's vision of providing three significant and connected public spaces?

A Yes. Block D will be located within Land Block 4 in the Auahi neighborhood, which is bounded by Auahi Street to the north (mauka), the future Diamond Head Plaza Park to the west, Block E to the east, and Ala Moana Boulevard to the south (makai). Block D will have convenient access from Auahi Street which, when realigned to connect to Pohukaina Street west of Ward Avenue, will be a direct east-west route through Ward Village and the broader Kaka'ako community.

Block D's location, mauka-makai orientation, and interface with Auahi Street, Kamake'e Street, Ala Moana Boulevard, and Diamond Head Plaza Park were carefully considered to enhance mauka-makai views and to seamlessly integrate Block D with the pattern of a connected, walkable, and active community at Ward Village. This integration is essential to implement the vision of the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan.

Auahi Street will conveniently link Block D and the Diamond Head Plaza Park with additional public spaces, all within walking distance.

At the center of Ward Neighborhood, the Victoria Ward Park (mauka and makai) will integrate cultural narratives, lyric sidewalks, ample shade and lush landscaping, play structures, pergola structures, seating terraces, and native flowers and flowering trees.

Through Auahi Street, Block D will also have convenient access to the 30,000 square foot *Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o* park, which will feature a keiki playground and open space, located on the west (Ewa) end of Ward Village (adjacent to Ulana Ward Village).

Q Are the public spaces planned in connection with Block D consistent with and does it advance the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan's vision of ground level pedestrian activation and providing appropriate placemaking and opportunities for pedestrian experiences?

A Yes. Block D brings together many of the placemaking and pedestrian activation strategies contemplated in the Ward Master Plan, and the designs of the public-facing areas of Block D collectively constitute an effective approach to activating this key gateway to Ward Village.

The Ward Master Plan envisioned various flexible approaches to encourage pedestrian interaction / activation, including the use of aesthetically-pleasing facades, active ground floor uses, commercial and retail spaces, the creation of public spaces, shaded sidewalks, landscaping and sculptural hardscape elements, generous sidewalks, limited curb cuts, public art, aesthetically interesting building materials, and other architectural features.

Block D achieves the envisioned “placemaking” and pedestrian activation using many of the various approaches contemplated by the Ward Master Plan and currently employed in and around the other projects in Ward Village approved by the HCDA, including wide sidewalks, shade trees and landscaping, minimal curb cuts, public art within the plaza, ground-floor commercial space, and aesthetically pleasing facades that screen the podium parking garage.

In addition, to achieve the envisioned “placemaking” of the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan, Block D’s ground-level landscaping is thoughtfully designed to greatly improve the pedestrian experience along Ala Moana Boulevard through an interesting and varied podium façade, wide elevated sidewalks, lush landscaping including native plants, planted berms, pocket parks, and sidewalk seating.

Appendix A of the Application (Exhibit 1 in this proceeding) illustrates inspirational landscaping and public realm programming along Ala Moana Boulevard.

Block D and the Diamond Head Plaza Park will be unified along Ala Moana Boulevard with Block E and the preserved IBM Building. The IBM Building’s Ala Moana Boulevard frontage includes an existing native botanical garden, which will be extended to create a harmonious linear botanical garden pathway with interpretive signage extending the entire length of Land Block 4 along Ala Moana Boulevard to unify the IBM Building, Block E, Block D, and the Diamond Head Plaza Park.

Block D faces the Diamond Head Plaza Park, which will serve as a community gathering place. The Diamond Head Plaza Park will include opportunities for both passive and active uses among lush landscaping including native plants, shade and flowering trees, a keiki play area, water feature, dining terrace, and ample lawn and bench seating. Appendix B of the Application (Exhibit 1 in this proceeding) illustrates inspirational landscaping and public realm programming for the Diamond Head Plaza Park.

The placement of the Diamond Head Plaza Park at the far ‘Ewa end of Land Block 4 (instead of mid-block) enhances the Kamake‘e Street view corridor, as it ensures that the views through this corridor, which include the views from the entrance to Ala Moana Beach Park across Ala Moana Boulevard, will include this expansive, green park space near Honolulu’s waterfront.

Q Is Block D consistent with and does it advance the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan’s vision of redeveloping Auahi Street as a great pedestrian-oriented urban promenade and shopping street?

A Along the curated commercial and retail lined Auahi Street, Block D’s ground floor activates and adds visual interest, drawing in residents and visitors and generating new interest in and demand for Ward Village and Central Kaka’ako businesses alike.

Block D’s podium includes an arched retail colonnade, which will deliver more than 8,000 square feet of ground-level retail, food and beverage, and commercial space along Auahi Street, and also faces a convenient outdoor seating area in the Diamond Head Plaza Park.

The Block D retail colonnade seamlessly connects to the adjacent Block E retail colonnade on the Diamond Head side and transitions into a generous plaza fronted by the residential lobby on the ‘Ewa side, which further leads to the Diamond Head Plaza Park at the corner of Auahi Street and Kamake’e Street.

The retail colonnade is conveniently accessible to pedestrians through a shaded pedestrian promenade with wide walkways, bicyclists through bicycle pathways and bikeshare facilities, and visitors traveling by vehicle through the district parking garage at the Ward Village Shops/South Shore Market, all of which is intentionally designed to generate sufficient footfall needed for success for the retail and recreational activities in the area. Block D is also key to achieving the Auahi Street promenade envisioned in the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan as a great pedestrian-oriented urban promenade and shopping street – a landscaped spine full of activity and character.

The Block D retail colonnade will facilitate and encourage access to the area created by the realignment of Auahi Street into a pedestrian promenade featuring extensive landscaping, tree-lined sidewalks, walking and bicycle paths, ample seating areas, and retail, food and beverage, and other offerings. These elements are intentionally designed to significantly enhance pedestrian engagement, activation and connectivity.

#