San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail

Site Description for

Petaluma River Turning Basin

Location, Ownership, and Management: The Petaluma River Turning Basin is located on the Petaluma River and is owned and managed by the City of Petaluma. The Turning Basin is located near the heart of downtown Petaluma, near the Trestle Bridge, with many restaurants, shops, and a hotel nearby. The site is currently popular with kayakers and stand-up paddlers.

The Petaluma Small Craft Center (PSCC), a non-profit organization representing boating clubs, river organizations, businesses, and individuals interested in the Petaluma River, is partnering with the City of Petaluma to create a small craft rental center at this location. The plans for the small craft rental center include an additional 120-foot low freeboard dock, a floating office and boat rental center, restrooms and showers, a boat washing station, and parking improvements. The PSCC would build the small craft rental center and manage its operation. The PSCC has submitted a grant application to the Water Trail program for the low freeboard dock portion of the project. They will continue fund-raising for the remaining parts of the project.

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Petaluma River Turning Basin docks

River Plaza gangway

Weller Street gangway

Facility Description: The Petaluma Turning Basin area is located in Downtown Petaluma. There is a large, U-shaped dock called Cavanagh Landing in the Turning Basin. There are two gangways leading to the dock located on opposite sides of the "U": The River Plaza/Gangway #1 and Weller Street/Gangway #2.

River Plaza / Gangway #1

The access from the River Plaza includes wooden steps and a viewing area that lead to a gangway, but this access point does not meet ADA standards because of the stairs and low gangway width. Parking is available in the River Plaza Shopping Center. The Petaluma Small Craft Center is negotiating a parking agreement with the owner of the River Plaza Shopping Center for dedicated parking spots for boaters and a loading/unloading area. There are no public restrooms at this access point.

Weller Street / Gangway #2

The gangway located on Weller Street may meet ADA requirements; however, there is a flagpole located near the entrance to the gangway which may interfere with persons using wheelchairs or canes. The City will move the flagpole to a new location to improve the path of travel. Parking is available in the small lot near Weller Street, which has two hour parking from 8AM - 6PM, except Sundays and holidays. The City and regional bus system is one block away and the proposed SMART station stop will be approximately two blocks from the Weller Street parking lot.

A proposed restroom will be located near the Weller Street parking lot and gangway in Cavanagh Park. The restroom will also provide a shower for boaters to rinse off.

Site Overview Map

Other Identifying or General Information:

Site ID: Sn7 In WT Plan: Yes Existing or Planned: Existing Ownership: Public County: Sonoma Geo-Region: Petaluma River Launch or Destination: Launch	Home of a Club: No Used by a Program that Assists Persons with Disabilities: No Appreciated for Windy Conditions: No Near Food or Drink: Yes Proximity to Other Sites: Petaluma Marina (Sn6) is located 1.5 miles downriver and Papa's Taverna/Lakeville Marina(Sn5) is located 6 miles downriver.

Description of Launch/Landing:

Fixed Dock/Pier Launch/Landing: No Float: Yes Freeboard Level: High (9" and above) Transfer/Launch Assistance System: No Gangway: Yes Gangway #2 Length (feet): 41 Gangway #2 Width (inches): 31 Gangway Slope Description: Gangway #2 is steep at low tide, but meets ADA requirements. Boat/Trailer Ramp: No Mudflats Affect Site Usability: No Beach Wheelchair Available: No Stair Water Entry: No Beach: No Firm-Surface Beach Crossing: No Fee for Launch or Parking: No	Other Launch/Landing Notes: Two Gangways: #1 is near the River Plaza & does not meet ADA standards due to insufficient width and the presence of stairs . Gangway #2 is near Weller Street. The gangway located on Weller Street may meet ADA requirements; however, there is a flagpole located near the entrance to the gangway which may interfere with persons using wheelchairs or canes. The City will move the flagpole to a new location to improve the path of travel. Water Entry Path: No

Site Appears to be Suitable For:

Kayak: Yes	Canoe: Yes
Windsurfer: No	Outrigger Canoe: No
Kiteboard: No	Sculling: No
Whaleboat: No	Rowboat/Dinghy: Yes
Stand Up Paddleboard: Yes	Dragonboat: No
	Other: No

The Turning Basin is a popular destination for both motorized and non-motorized boats for access to restaurants and shops downtown. The Turning Basin is also the location of several festivals, including the Mayor's Boat Parade.

Transportation and Parking:

General Spaces (number): 5 (Weller Street); TBD – River Plaza ADA Parking Spaces (number): 1 ADA Parking Description: There is one ADA spot in the small lot on Weller Street leading to Gangway #2. Duration (hours): 2 hours from 8am – 6pm, except Sundays and holidays (Weller Street lot). Overnight Parking Allowed: Yes Overnight Parking Description: Overnight parking is allowed between 6pm and 8am in the Weller Street lot. Loading/Unloading Area: Yes	Bay Trail: No Parking Details: There are five parking spots in the Weller Street lot, one of which is an accessible parking spot. The Weller Street lot needs a few improvements such as re-surfacing the lot and removing the flagpole in the path of travel. The striping for the accessible spot appears to be recently painted. There is parking in the River Plaza Shopping Center. An agreement with the PSCC is still being negotiated to formalize parking for boaters, including accessible parking, and to create a loading/unloading area. Public Transportation: There is a planned SMART station stop on Lakeville and East Washington Streets (approximately two blocks away). Sonoma County Transit runs Bus Routes 44 and 48 between Santa Rosa and Petaluma and Route 40 between Sonoma and Petaluma, with stops in downtown Petaluma.

Path of Travel:

Distance to Existing High Freeboard Dock from Weller Street Parking Area (feet): Less than 50
Distance to Existing High Freeboard Dock from Weller Street Accessible Parking (feet): Less than 50
Path of Travel Exists: No

Path of Travel Description: Right now the path of travel from the parking lot to Gangway #2 (Weller Street) is obstructed by a flagpole. The City intends to move the flagpole. The proposed PSCC low-float dock would be located on the far side of the Turning Basin, approximately 340 feet from the Weller Street Gangway. The dock is in good condition and this path of travel along the dock is considered broadly accessible.

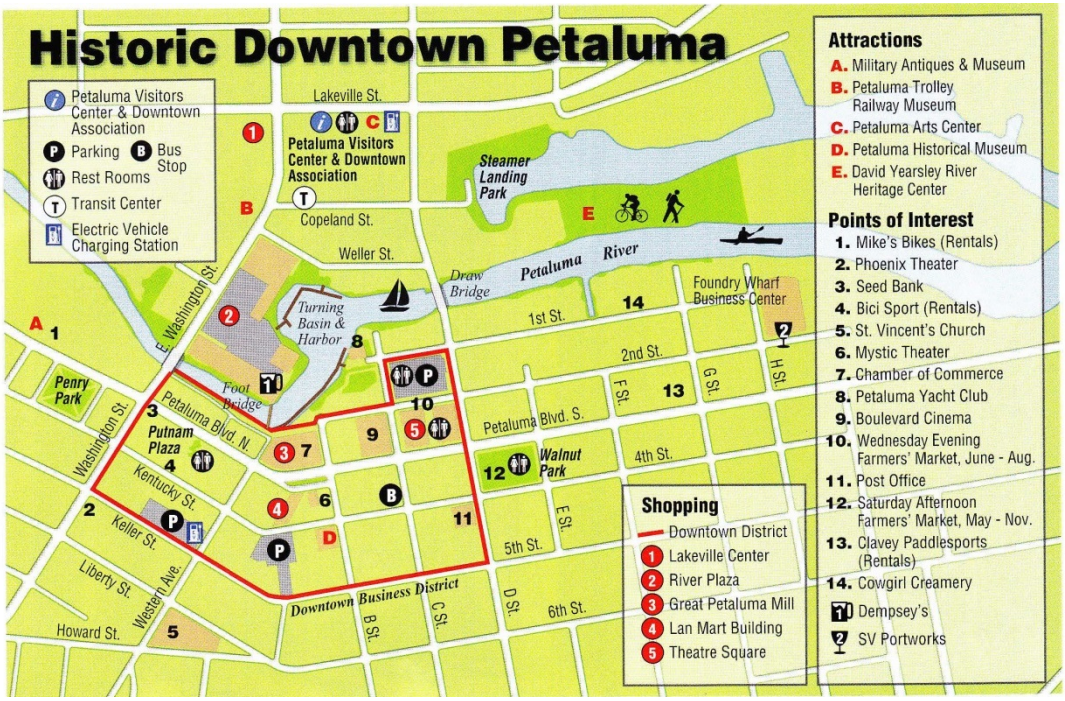
Other Site Amenities:

Total Restrooms: 0 Total ADA Restrooms: 0 Restroom Description: Currently there is no restroom available for public use. The PSCC is proposing to construct an accessible restroom near the Weller Street Gangway (#2) that will also have showers. The City of Petaluma will maintain the restrooms. Boat Washing: No Rigging/Staging Area: No Picnic Tables: No Benches: No	BBQ: No Boat Storage: The PSCC will not have public boat storage, but people will be able to tie up their boats along the dock, provided there is space, while they explore downtown Petaluma. The PSCC will have a variety of NMSBs available for rent during buisness hours.

Overnight Accommodations:

Hotel: Yes	Hostel: No	Ship: No	Camping: No	Other: No

Accommodations Description: Hotel Petaluma is located downtown, less than a half-mile away. There are many points of interest in downtown Petaluma, including restaurants, port tasting, cheese tasting, shopping, theatres, and farmer's markets. See map below from the Petaluma Visitor's Bureau.



Additional Notes Related to Accessibility:

The gangway located on Weller Street may meet ADA requirements; however, there is a flagpole located near the entrance to the gangway which may interfere with persons using wheelchairs or canes. The City will move the flagpole to a new location to improve the route of travel. The gangway near the River Plaza Shopping Center does not meet ADA requirements because it has a set of stairs leading to it and it is too narrow.

Additional Notes on Use of Site (Boating and Non-Boating) and Existing and Planned Management:

The site is very popular and is used by motorized and non-motorized boats. Clavey Sports, a local outfitter, uses the dock for kayak and stand-up paddleboard classes. The PSCC will enter into an agreement with the City of Petaluma to operate and maintain the rental center. They plan to have both staff and volunteers available on-site during daylight hours.

Safety and Security, including Parking:

For emergencies, users may call the Sheriff's Marine Unit at (707) 433-0728 or 911. It is believed that once the rental center is in operation, the presence of the rental center will increase the security of the site, including a reduction in homeless encampments in Cavanagh Park.

There is an Army Corps of Engineers authorized navigation channel that is 100 feet wide and 8 feet deep from the mouth of the Petaluma River to the Turning Basin. Use of this channel by large barges or other commercial vessels is infrequent, but boaters should be aware of how to navigate near other vessels.

Wildlife and Habitat Considerations:

The lower 12 miles of the Petaluma River flow through the Petaluma Marsh, the largest remaining salt marsh in San Pablo Bay. The marsh covers 5,000 acres and is surrounded by approximately 7,000 acres of reclaimed wetlands. Recreation within this area includes bird watching and wildlife viewing, boating, fishing, and hunting.

Nearby there are several active heron and egret roosting sites located near the Petaluma River. Mitigation measures incorporated into the IS/MND for the PSCC were determined to reduce potential impacts to less than significant. Additional outreach and education that would be part of the PSCC would also help to educate the public about avoiding and minimizing potential effects to wildlife while paddling.

Education, Outreach, and Stewardship, Including Signage:

Currently there is little signage and the signage that exists is related to regulations and dogs on leashes. Once the rental center is in operation, there will be more opportunities for education and outreach because there will be someone on-site to interact with the public. There will also be a location for brochures and maps, in addition to Water Trail signage at both gangways.

Other Existing or Anticipated Water Trail-Related Issues and Opportunities:

The Petaluma Small Craft Center is proposing to provide small craft rentals, classes, and camps. Ideally the rental center would be staffed with paid staff and volunteers that would be a resource for people accessing the river. When the PSCC builds the boathouse they intend to expand on the summer camp and youth programs they currently run.

Accessibility of Sites within the Petaluma River Geo-Region:

There are four potential Water Trail sites within this geo-region: Petaluma Turning Basin, Petaluma Marina, Lakeville Marina (Papa's Taverna), and Black Point Boat Launch. There are no beaches, and currently no low-float docks or transfer systems within this group of sites.

The Petaluma Small Craft Center will be adding a low-float dock and boating concession facility to the existing high-freeboard dock. These improvements have been designed to meet or exceed ADA requirements and will provide broadly accessible NMSB access for the public. In addition, this site will have an accessible restroom added as part of the project.

The Petaluma Marina has a boat launch ramp, as does the Lakeville Marina. The future of the Lakeville Marina as a public launch site is unknown. Black Point Boat Launch is currently a broadly accessible boat launch site for those NMSB types and individuals who use high-freeboard docks or boat launch ramps to enter and/or launch their watercraft.

The experiences that are available within the Petaluma Geo-Region include both rural and urban environments, wildlife viewing, river or Bay paddling, and participation in events and festivals in Petaluma, where there are also restaurants and overnight accommodations. To the south of Black Point Boat Launch in the Marin/West San Pablo Geo-Region, there are wetlands and beaches.

Summary of Environmental Review
based on the
San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan Final Environmental Impact Report

Petaluma River Turning Basin
December 9, 2015

Resource Area	Impacts Analysis	Notes
Recreation *References: WT FEIR text. Also, see map for hunting location.*	The proposal to add additional dock space, a rental center, and restroom would increase the facility and expand recreational use. There is a potential for conflicts to occur between motorized and non-motorized users and between non-motorized small boat users. The edge of the hunting area falls just within the four mile buffer from the site. However, to reach the site by navigable waters requires a distance greater than four miles. Therefore a Water Trail sign on-site warning users of hunting locations will not be required.	The Petaluma River Small Craft Center is expected to have on-site staff and volunteers who can observe use patterns. If the WT is presented with information about use conflicts, the WT will consult with staff and volunteers from the Petaluma Small Craft Center and City of Petaluma staff to determine if additional physical or management measures are necessary to alleviate use conflicts. A plan for implementing the appropriate measures shall be developed collaboratively with the City of Petaluma, the Petaluma Small Craft Center, and WT staff.
Navigational Safety *References: WT FEIR text and Figures 3.4.2-1 and 3.4.2-2.*	There is an Army Corps of Engineers authorized navigation channel that is 100 feet wide and 8 feet deep from the mouth of the Petaluma River to the Turning Basin.	Use of this channel by large barges or other commercial vessels is infrequent, but boaters should be aware of how to navigate near other vessels. WT educational materials (website and brochure) include emergency preparedness and response information.
Aesthetics: *References: WT FEIR text*	The launch site is considered an urban boat launch because it is located near Downtown Petaluma.	The City of Petaluma has evaluated potential aesthetic impacts of the rental center, low freeboard docks, and restroom under their CEQA document and found impacts to be less than significant. Mitigation to avoid light intrusion has been incorporated into the project, including use of

		low-intensity lighting. A “sign program” will be developed with the Petaluma Small Craft Center and City of Petaluma to ensure WT signage does not result in sign clutter.
Biology-Vegetation *References: WT FEIR text and Table 3.7.2-1*	There is a potential for boaters to inadvertently spread invasive species.	The rental center will have a boat wash. The WT website explains how WT users can prevent the spread of invasive species by rinsing boats and equipment.
Biology – Birds *References: WT FEIR text and map*	There are currently two active heron or egret rookeries located within four miles of the site. The IS/MND prepared for the Small Craft Center determined impacts to biological resources to be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures.	Signage will emphasize the importance of not landing in an unauthorized location and not disturbing rookeries. Given the width of the Petaluma River in the vicinity, it will not be feasible for non-motorized small boat users to maintain a buffer distance of 200m. The WT sign will emphasize that boaters should keep as wide a distance as possible and ways to avoid disturbing rookeries during the breeding season.
Biology – Aquatic/ Marine *References: WT FEIR text, Figure 3.9.2-1, and Tables 3.9.5-1 and 3.9.5-2*	The IS/MND prepared for the Small Craft Center determined impacts to biological resources to be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation measures. These include, but are not limited to, seasonal construction restrictions to protect migratory fish, use of silt-curtains, requirements that boat wash down water be filtered and a prohibition on the use of soaps or detergents. There are no known harbor seal haul-outs within four miles of the site.	WT educational materials (website and brochure) include information about avoiding disturbance to harbor seal haul-outs.
Cultural Resources *References: WT*	The WT EIR includes mitigations for potential cultural impacts due to construction.	The WT website includes information about avoiding disturbance to cultural artifacts.

FEIR text		No potential cultural impacts due to construction of the low freeboard docks, rental center, and restrooms were identified in the PSCC IS/MND.
Hydrology *References: WT FEIR text*	The IS/MND prepared for the PSCC includes mitigations for potential hydrological impacts due to construction.	The City of Petaluma evaluated potential hydrological impacts due to construction of the low freeboard docks, rental center, and restrooms under their CEQA document. Mitigations were incorporated to reduce impacts to less than significant.
Transportation, Circulation, and Parking *References: WT FEIR text*	Sufficient parking appears to be available for use of the site, particularly once designated parking within the River Plaza parking lot is obtained for the PSCC. The site is also located near several transit options, which will allow future users of the PSCC to access the site without needing parking.	City staff manage high visitor numbers during summer months. Increased use by non-motorized small boat users is not expected to be great enough to overwhelm parking. This site is uniquely located near a variety of transit opportunities and residences near downtown Petaluma. This proximity to transit and the provision of rental equipment onsite is anticipated to promote access by alternative transit – reducing the need for additional parking and associated GHG emissions from personal vehicles.