

From: Virginia Browning <vexxie@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, May 19, 2025 4:58 PM
To: McNulty, Liza
Subject: Scoping Comments for EIR Berkeley Marina Pier/Ferry May 2025
Attachments: Comment re NOP EIR for Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry 2025.doc

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To Liza McNulty, PE, Project Manager

City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department

lmcnulty@berkeleyca.gov

Here are my comments for the EIR for the proposed Ferry/Pier project 2025

RE: PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Enhance public access and recreational opportunities at the Berkeley Waterfront

that:

--Develop or enhance public pier facilities at the City of Berkeley Waterfront.

There has been at least one alternate cost study for repairing the pier by Paul Kamen I believe, a forensic analyst in exactly this field. He actually advocates for a ferry, but has shown that repair of the pier can be done for much less money than currently envisioned. His analysis and others need to be fleshed out in minute detail.

Too much private development – such as of “food courts” “food trucks” and the like need to adequately consider the effects and cost of increased garbage – also in detail. Also, again, the idea of such over next to Cesar Chavez Park for example is taken as almost a death knell by some of us who so value the near-wilderness sense of this open space. **And this Cesar Chavez area SHOULD be part of the scope of this ferry project, as increasing population at the bay will also push more users to the relatively undeveloped Cesar Chavez Park.** Please don't destroy the experience of those of us whose lives rely on quiet peaceful enjoyment here. The wind is such that money could be poured into concrete, mowing, and other destroying forces only to find that those who love and value the place will find it gone, and others won't use it because it's too harsh for their tastes. This must be adequately considered.

If trails in the Marina along the pier-ferry (Seawall Drive) portion are envisioned, they need to respect the simple fishing recreation and others who enjoy walking on the rather wild-kept shore there or parking to enjoy the water's regenerating properties. A concrete plaza as envisioned eliminates that and condemns current users to grief. (And contributes to global warming BTW).

--Provide sufficient public access and recreational opportunities at the

Berkeley Waterfront that meet regional needs, consistent with BCDP Bay

Plan Policies maximizing access to the Bay.

This objective is a big concern for me, and I fear the traffic studies done so far do not adequately address scoping needs. As others have said * the parking studies done so far do not seem to adequately assess either the current parking needs or future ones. I read the critique referenced below in detail, and looked at the weather for the days surveyed. The days and times are not representative, even with added survey days. I do know this, as I use the Marina often. As you know, Berkeley's task is to protect recreational use at the bay. I won't detail here all the legislated requirements for this (see notes at end for reference). But I will emphasize that with and even without the increasing population Berkeley is encouraging, folks need cool fresh air and something like an open horizon and seascape for mental, emotional, and physical regeneration. Even now some find it very difficult – even in the relatively mild climate of Berkeley – to escape the heat at times, which will increase in the future. Socially as well, a community works better together when its members have adequate respite from city life. To repeat: this is established in written policy and agreements* but even were it not, it should be. A community works best as a community with needed recreational relief and open space. This has long been recognized. This is the Parks department so I guess you understand that.

The parking and envisioned-by-some development for bringing money to the city needs to not undo the solid need for maintaining a healthy community with access to this bay.

--Minimize environmental impacts by considering existing infrastructure and sea level rise projections.

Yes, see my comments above as well as report references at the end of this!

--Encourage the use of public transit, bicycle, and other forms of active transportation and sustainable travel to access the site

Yes but this needs to consider that many disabled people used the Marina – I think if you did a survey or simply walked there on many late afternoons you would be astounded to find that this is the case even now with the crumbling trail – because those of us who are disabled need the relief and physical strengthening this place provides, even with needed care where we step. We don't want concrete under human knees and joints (finally repaving with softer asphalt is just fine – but crushed granite is too slippery as well).

If public transit is envisioned, you need to ask disabled people what it would take for them to use it. Right now, hours are irregular; seats are sometimes not supportive. Some type of shared on-demand shuttle is something I think could work for different neighborhoods if planned carefully. This needs to be intricately thought through if you're serious about it in the scoping of this.

Dog walkers? They're going to take their own vehicles. One proposal I've seen asks small businesses to pay a small yearly fee. \$25 a year is too small! Professional dog-walkers are small businesses and perhaps should pay something for their use of the bay –more than \$25 a year.

Bicycles do not belong on pedestrian paths in much of the pedestrian-oriented peace of the Marina, unless those vehicle-users are unable to walk. A place (or specified hours/days) for cyclists should be considered separate from walkers, some of whom do fear being knocked into by some of these vehicles.

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I am including a link to a critique of [part of the] parking study done as part of this scoping. I understand that a few extra days/hours may have been added to the parking survey since Mr. McGrath wrote this. However, as I understand the presentation you made to the Parks Commission May 14, 2025 – no

surveys were done for the hours of 5-7 pm. I often use the Marina during those hours, and note that Marina Drive is often full or almost full during those hours. I hope you received this from Mr. McGrath himself. I really appreciate his careful attention to details, most of which I support completely and can't say it better, so please read his letter. I know he sent it to Scott Ferris. I found it on the internet here:

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Related and separate to the above note: We now hear that the Doubletree Hotel, one of if not the biggest revenue source for the Marina, is close to foreclosure and not paying its agreed amount to Berkeley. Parks Director Scott Ferris made the statement that hotels all over the bay area are suffering, and he even said something to the effect that people aren't wanting to come to the bay area – or so it sounded like to me. I have a recording of that. Yet only recently the same people now proposing this ferry/pier project were asking us to envision more hotel rooms or another hotel! I believe their vision for “food courts” and “food trucks” are equally short-sighted. I understand Berkeley needs money, but it can't be at the expense of the health of its community members! Please consider this honestly and fully.

ALSO, MONEYMAKING IDEA: The Doubletree DOES have the potential for a lovely restaurant with a view of the bay right now. However, at \$30 for parking, I assume many choose to park along Marina Boulevard while the hotel parking lot is mostly empty. Can some jiggling around be done about this? **One reason more people DON'T love the restaurant at this hotel (other than the unnecessarily loud overhead music) is that very large boats are now allowed to park right in front of the restaurant window and block view of the bay. If Berkeley needs money, how about making a different arrangement for docking those large tour boats? I understand Berkeley in fact paid money for the pier at which they're docked! A mistake, unless that pier can be used instead for some sensible-sized boats and the eyesore tour boats moved farther west in the bay.**

That's it and attached!
Virginia Browning
Berkeley

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