

## **DRAFT**

Re: VA project at Alameda Point

Dear Department of Veterans Affairs,

The City of Alameda values its relationship with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and welcomes that planned facilities that will serve Veterans here in Alameda. We write to express our continued desire to work collaboratively to meet this need and the commitments made at Alameda Point.

In 2012, the city agreed to relinquish 72 acres of open space on the former Naval Air Station-Alameda to serve and honor our local Veterans in the planned VA health facility and national cemetery to be built there. In exchange for giving up city land, the VA agreed to (1) construct a new entrance to Alameda Point at the end of Main Street; (2) install oversized infrastructure under Navy Way and West Redline Avenue leading to the federal property, which the city could tap into during future development on city property; and (3) build a Class 1 roadway to the VA site and continuing to the shoreline of San Francisco Bay, which would provide public access to open space.

In 2014, over 600 acres of land was transferred from the Navy to the VA. In 2016, Congress appropriated and authorized over \$80 million for the first phase of construction. Since then, the only new activity we have witnessed is Urban Shield emergency preparedness exercises, and those exercises were carried out in an area the VA said was to be for the benefit of wildlife. We anxiously await a sign of progress in fulfilling the commitments that you made to the Veterans in the Bay Area, City of Alameda and to the Navy, both of which gave your agency land for the public benefit.

The VA can regain the confidence of the community by responding to this letter within 60 days and taking the following actions within 180 days:

- 1 Provide to the city the plans for infrastructure work on city property and schedule for commencing work on this infrastructure so that Veteran serving facilities can be built as soon as possible.
- 2 Provide to the city "grading" plans for the VA facilities and schedule for beginning work. This will allow the city and the East Bay Regional Park District to make plans for the regional park adjacent to the VA facilities, which is currently under negotiation.
- 3 Provide to the Regional Water Quality Control Board and to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers the final wetland mitigation plans for the project. A year ago, the VA and its consultants drafted a wetland mitigation plan that was ultimately approved in principle by the above agencies. However, the plans have not been finalized.
- 4 Submit to BCDC an application for reinstatement of its consistency determination/permit. The original permit/consistency determination was issued in January 2014, with the stipulation that the permit would expire within three years if no activity occurred. The

deadline passed in January 2017. Seeking reinstatement of the permit would not only comply with the law, it would also re-establish a dialogue with public agencies by appearing before the commission and discussing any concerns that may have arisen in the nearly five years since first appearing there.

The City of Alameda looks forward to the commencement of this important project. It will be of great benefit to our veterans and provide important opportunities for the public to access our shoreline open space and more certainty for our economic development plans.

Signed,  
Mayor and Councilmembers

cc: Representative Barbara Lee, Senators Diane Feinstein and Kamala Harris