

Gerald M. Serventi  
1549 Fifth St  
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October 2, 2017

Dear Honorable Mayor, Vice - Mayor and Members of the City Council

**RE: 6-C 2017-4766 Receive an Update on Recent Water Quality Issue at Alameda Point. (Base Reuse 819099) - Utility System Infrastructure at Alameda Point**

The recent water quality problem at Alameda Point is the latest example of the failing utility systems that were left to the City of Alameda by the Navy. One cannot blame the Navy for the situation as it is just a symptom of systems that were put in place in the 40's that have out lived their lives. I had the same situation when I was with the Port of Oakland. We had infrastructure failures at both the Fleet Industrial Supply Center Oakland and the Oakland Army base as we took over those facilities. The Navy even barricaded off areas so that vehicles would not drive over the sewer lines from Alameda and break them. We discovered at both base locations that the respective branches of the military reduced maintenance of the facilities as the years went on. It became more cost effective for them to pay for wasted water, work arounds or for emergency repairs than to fix or rebuild systems as the budgets became tighter and the long term futures of the bases became less clear.

What we found at the Port ultimately was it was necessary to eliminate and replace systems as soon as possible as the cost of maintenance and wasted water or energy became too high even as we tried to baby the systems along until we could build all new facilities.

I think Alameda Point has reached that same point. Unfortunately the City is not able to cut off large areas as there is a goal to sell or lease areas and those areas need utilities. If we want the 60 businesses and 268 homes we have there to continue to exist we need to do something different than has been done since the Base was closed and reuse started. The plan to have the developers install the utilities originally made sense. Now with the first developer in a delay mode it is time to move forward with a new plan. If not the existing operations and new opportunities will be put at risk.

Unlike when the Base reuse process started the City now has an approved adaptive reuse plan, a Master Infrastructure Plan for Alameda Point (MIP) and a water infrastructure agreement with EBMUD. These will allow utility lines to be placed in the correct location for future use. I believe that the City needs to seriously explore the option of taking on having the utility backbone designed and installed.

Having utilities in place is a game changer for future development at the base. Developers or potential tenants will not have to guess at the unknowns and costs for getting the work done themselves. This alone makes it easier to plan as those costs become fixed. It gives them a sense of confidence that their business will function normally and they will not have to have contingency plans to deal with old failing

infrastructure. It opens the door for new businesses whom do not have the wherewithal to do utility work to look at Alameda Point as a place for business. Alameda will not be breaking new ground by doing this as it has been done elsewhere.

There are many creative ways to fund the infrastructure installation. Staff has a number of them listed in the agenda item and they will find others if given the opportunity to move forward.

As an example of creativity in the late 1990's the sewer line that went from the Naval Air station to the sewage treatment plant in Oakland was replaced in a deal between the Port of Oakland, the City of Alameda, and EBMUD as part of the Port's 50 foot deepening project. So now the sewer main that runs along the north boundary has been replaced and it was done in a creative cooperative manner between agencies.

In closing I recommend that you approve the staff recommendation and move forward with a way to replace the utilities at Alameda Point.

Sincerely

Gerald M Serventi,  
Director of Engineering  
Port of Oakland (Retired)

cc: Jill Keimach, City Manager