



May 8, 2014

Jennifer Ott
Debra Potter
City of Alameda
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Re: Alameda Ferry Terminal Access Study

Dear Ms Ott and Ms Potter:

The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) has experienced a surge in ridership on its San Francisco Bay Ferry services dating back to summer 2013. This surge has been particularly pronounced on routes serving the Alameda Main Street and Harbor Bay ferry terminals, where ridership has increased 37% and 13% respectively in the past 12 months.

The increase in ridership has meant that access to the terminals has become challenging not just for WETA customers parking private automobiles but also for customers (and Alameda residents) that walk, bicycle, or take a shuttle or bus to each terminal. In response, WETA has initiated an Alameda Ferry Terminal Access Study to better understand how to improve terminal access and ensure that the facilities can continue to support growing demand for ferries. The product of the study will be an Access Plan that identifies priority investments and programs that WETA and the City of Alameda can work in partnership seeking outside funding and participating in implementation activities.

The first stage of the access study was to host workshops in Alameda, allowing riders, neighbors and stakeholders an opportunity to raise their own concerns as well as provide input on preliminary improvement concepts. Over 50 people attended two separate March open house workshops, which were extensively advertised by WETA and covered by local Alameda press. In addition, a study-specific email address was provided to allow stakeholders to submit input in writing. To date, WETA has received over 90 emails, which have been provided as an attachment to this letter.

Many of the terminal access improvements identified by community stakeholders are within the jurisdiction of the City of Alameda. On-site improvements that fall within WETA's jurisdiction, such as bicycle parking and customer waiting areas, are not addressed in this letter but will be included in future stages of this study. As you have suggested, we have summarized the off-site improvements in this letter to enable the City to consider and evaluate their consistency with city plans and policies. It is critical that the City provide this feedback as soon as possible, as WETA plans to host a second series of public workshops in June to present specific access improvement proposals for each terminal.

Main Street Ferry Terminal

The largest number of comments received regarding the Main Street terminal relate to the need for more convenient and better located parking. Providing safe and convenient paths of travel to the terminal from parking areas and for pedestrians and bicyclists are two other improvements that have drawn significant interest. Finally, there is also a strong interest in re-establishing AC Transit bus service at the terminal or some form of shuttle that links west Alameda residential neighborhoods with the Main Street terminal. Specific improvements for City consideration are:

- **Convert Dog Park to Ferry Parking, Relocate Dog Park to another City-owned site**
The dog park is adjacent to the existing ferry parking lot and over time, ferry patrons have co-opted the surrounding areas as informal ferry parking. Would the City support conversion of the property to parking? Conversion would require a Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) permit that would be pursued jointly by the City and WETA. WETA is prepared to assist in the funding, permitting and site selection process to identify a new dog park.
- **Open Officer's Club Parking Lot to Ferry Commuter Parking**
The Officer's Club is located directly across Main Street from the Ferry Terminal parking lot and is currently used to store city vehicles and equipment. This strategic location could be utilized as overflow ferry parking or a combination of City use and commuter parking with minimal capital improvement. WETA is prepared to assist with the cost of providing a new, secure location nearby for City vehicles and equipment.
- **Consider parking meters for Main Street**
One possible method for creating a revenue source to fund access improvements is to charge for parking at the terminal lot. There are many possible approaches to parking fees, ranging from a daily fee to reserve parking to a monthly pass that could be implemented in a variety of ways not only generate new revenue but also manage parking demand. The planning work has not progressed to a point where these options are being analyzed. However, if a fee were to be introduced on the terminal lot but not for parking along Main Street, it is likely that most drivers would select the free option exacerbating the crowding already occurring on Main Street. Would the City consider introducing parking fees on Main Street concurrently with an on-site terminal parking fee introduced by WETA?
- **Close Bike Lane Gap between Ferry Terminal and Singleton Avenue on Main Street**
Bicyclists participating in the Access Study have identified the lack of a safe bike lane on Main Street as a deterrent to encouraging more bike commuting and a safety concern for current bicyclists. The City has long-term plans to add a bike lane by restriping Main Street, reducing the number of traffic lanes from 2 to 1 in each direction. Would the City consider advancing this plan for the segment between the Main Street terminal and Singleton Avenue? WETA is prepared to assist in the development through the pursuit of grants and permits.

- **Add pedestrian crossing to Main Street west of the Terminal entrance**

On an average weekday, up to 100 cars will park on the north side of Main Street, west of the terminal entrance. Once they leave their cars, these residents become pedestrians and most choose to illegally cross Main Street to take the most direct path to the Ferry Terminal. A pedestrian-activated signal, installed near the entrance to the Officer's Club parking (see above) would be ideal. Alternatively, a visible crosswalk and signage would be an improvement over today's conditions. Would the City consider implementing either or both of these pedestrian safety improvements?

- **Reroute Existing AC Transit Local 31 and Transbay buses to serve Main Street terminal**

AC Transit does not provide service to the ferry terminal, a decision that was made when ferry ridership was much lower than it is today and peak departures were hourly rather than every 30 minutes. Many residents have expressed a strong desire to reintroduce bus service linking west side neighborhoods to the terminal. The existing Local 31 stops short of the terminal, laying over at the Alameda Point City Hall. Would the City support rerouting this bus to serve the terminal?

Transbay buses stop on Webster Street where they have become integrated with casual carpool pickup locations. WETA would like to see these two transit modes integrated better, allowing Alameda residents more choice in their commute. Under this concept, the terminal area can serve as a park-and-ride for both ferry and bus riders giving residents a range of choices when commuting to San Francisco. Would the City support a rerouting of Transbay bus lines to the ferry terminal?

Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal

The Harbor Bay terminal currently has a 208-space parking lot that routinely fills up between 7:30 and 8:00 AM on most weekdays. In addition, the City has relaxed parking enforcement along the north side of Adelphian Way, immediately west of the terminal, allowing all-day parking. Even this parking fills up by 8:30 on most weekdays. A significant amount of the feedback received from riders and the Harbor Bay community at-large suggests additional service, specifically departures after 9 AM and more return trips in the popular 5:30-6:00 PM range. While the desire and the demand are there for additional service, the limitation on parking limits ridership potential. Provided the City and WETA can jointly address parking expansion, there is the possibility of additional service.

The Harbor Bay community enjoys excellent bike and walking paths, providing direct and safe conditions to walk or bike to the terminal. In addition, local bus service to the terminal is scheduled to meet every departure after circulating on the major arterials in the community. As a result, the majority of the suggestions coming from Harbor Bay residents and ferry riders revolve around parking.

- **Eliminate or modify parking restrictions on the north side of Adelphian Way**

Parking enforcement on the north side (opposite Shoreline Park) of Adelphian Way – which has a posted 2-hour restriction – was relaxed beginning with the July 2013 BART strike. Since that time, ferry riders have been parking on the street and most days it fills with up to 60 vehicles. To

make all-day parking permanent, the City would have to amend its permit with the BCDC. WETA is fully supportive of amending the permit and is prepared to support and assist the City in the permit amendment process.

- **Eliminate or modify parking restrictions on the south side of Adelpian Way**

The City has not relaxed the 2-hour restriction on Adelpian Way adjacent to Shoreline Park but given that the north side of the street is full today, the only opportunity for growth would be the south side of the street. Provided the City and WETA jointly approach BCDC regarding the north side of Adelpian Way, the south side of the street should also be considered as the only practical option for future parking expansion.

- **Consider parking meters for Adelpian Way**

Many riders at the workshops indicated that fees for parking would be acceptable provided that the revenues were reinvested in the service or in access improvements such as a shuttle serving residential neighborhoods. Like Main Street, WETA has not begun to evaluate parking fees or determine the best program for Harbor Bay. However, if the City is not supportive of parking fees on Adelpian Way, it would likely cause drivers to seek out free parking on the street before choosing the terminal lot. Would the City support installation of parking meters on Adelpian Way to coincide with a potential fee on the terminal lot?

- **Rerouting of AC Transit Transbay buses to serve the Harbor Bay terminal**

For commuters, having the option of taking a ferry in the morning and an express bus back to Harbor Bay in the evening expands their flexibility and choices. Unfortunately, the routing of the transbay buses does not come close enough to the ferry terminal to allow this choice. Would the City support rerouting the transbay buses on Harbor Bay to the ferry terminal?

Please feel free to contact me or Project Manager Michael Gougherty with any questions or concerns regarding the above suggestions.

Thank you in advance for consideration of these suggestions from WETA and San Francisco Bay Ferry riders. We look forward to continuing our positive working relationship with the City of Alameda and continuing to provide a unique and valuable commuter service to Alameda citizens.

Sincerely,



Kevin Connolly
Manager, Planning and Development

STAFF RESPONSE TO WETA LETTER RE: ALAMEDA FERRY TERMINAL ACCESS STUDY

- **Open the Officer's Club Parking Lot to Ferry Commuter Parking**

- The City is willing to work with WETA to open the O'Club parking lot for ferry commuter parking with the conditions below, but **only** if an alternate location at Alameda Point is identified for the Rec and Park Department corporation yard. The referenced parking lot (100% of which can be made available to WETA) is behind the O'Club (along Main Street) and is not the parking lot currently used for special events (across the street from the O'Club).
- WETA conditions include:
 - WETA to use the O'Club parking lot on a temporary basis for up to five years with possible options to renew. Based on existing striping, there are approximately 125 parking spaces that could be available to WETA.
 - The City will work to identify a new parking lot area to the east or west of the O'Club for special events parking and WETA will be responsible for constructing the new parking lot if the City loses access to the special events parking lot during the term of WETA's use of the other parking lot.
 - Shared parking lot arrangement of the leased parking lot with City use on weekends.
 - City requires an access corridor through the parking lot for ACI and a no parking/loading zone behind the O'Club (see attached map). This area is currently not striped so would not take away parking spaces.
 - The City is not requiring WETA to build a temporary Rec and Parks corp yard; however, if the temporary corp yard needs to be fenced for security, WETA would pay for the fencing, and fencing for the O'Club if necessary due to public access from the new WETA parking lot.

- **Consider parking meters for Main Street**

- Staff is okay with WETA implementing paid parking in the Main Street gravel lots it leases from the City on the condition that the lease is amended to provide revenue sharing with the City. If WETA implements paid parking in its lots, the City will post No Parking signs along Main Street. If the City installs No Parking signs, it will enforce those requirements. The City is not interested in installing metered parking along Main Street.
- In the alternative, the City will support continuation of the informal parking arrangement along Main Street.
- Given that there is increased ferry ridership and therefore an increase in traffic and related pedestrian activity, staff will explore re-striping Main Street to reflect the ultimate street configuration to promote traffic calming, etc.

- **Close Bike Lane Gap between Ferry Terminal and Singleton Avenue on Main Street**
 - The City is highly supportive of working with WETA to obtain funds to close the bike lane gap. If the City receives funding, we will advance this segment of the bike lane.
 - The bike lane would be located on the west side of Main Street due to wetlands issues on the east side of the street.
- **Add pedestrian crossing to Main Street west of the Terminal entrance**
 - This proposal has been evaluated in the past and City staff believes it can't be engineered to meet traffic safety standards. A pedestrian crossing is too dangerous because of the blind turn prior to the terminal entrance. If WETA's traffic engineer would like to provide a plan for a crosswalk, with the supporting data, we will evaluate it.
- **Reroute Existing AC Transit Local 31 and Transbay buses to serve Main Street terminal**
 - Staff will work with WETA and AC Transit to explore re-routing line 31.
 - In addition, WETA could create a satellite parking lot and have shuttle service to and from the ferry. The revenue (parking charge) gained from the satellite lot could help fund said shuttle.
 - Staff believes that the Transbay bus is very effective and would not be supportive of re-routing.
- **Convert Dog Park to Ferry Parking, Relocate Dog Park to another City-owned site**
 - The City is open to reconfiguring the dog park to allow a portion to be repaved for parking, if feasible. WETA should prepare a plan for using all, or a portion, of the existing dog park for parking. If WETA can gain additional parking spaces while maintaining a portion of the area for a dog park, there is no requirement to build a new dog park. If WETA wants to convert the existing dog park to a parking lot, the City would look for assistance in constructing a new dog park (fenced, gated dog park area with an access pathway leading to it, not an entire park) elsewhere.
- **Adelphian Way**
 - WETA included a number of suggested changes to Adelphian Way (modify parking, install meters, etc.). If WETA is interested in formalizing longer-term parking on Adelphian Way, the City will work with WETA to secure the necessary

approvals from BCDC. However, this change needs to be part of a larger parking plan for the Harbor Bay terminal. For example, has WETA looked at purchasing or leasing the vacant lots next to the terminal for additional parking. If ferry ridership has increased 30%, do you believe that it will double in the future, and if so, could that increase justify construction of a parking garage? These issues should be addressed as part of working with BCDC on other changes.

- **Reroute the Transbay buses to serve Harbor Bay terminal**
 - Staff believes that the Transbay bus services is one of the most effective and efficient public transit options in the City and does not want to modify service.

Access Corridor & No Parking / Loading Zone behind O'Club

