



PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

Frances Albrier Community Center
2800 Park St, Berkeley, CA 94702

Agenda

- The Commissions may discuss any items listed on the agenda, but may take action only on items identified as Action.
- Public Comment on agenda items shall be heard at each item (2 minutes per speaker).

1. Call to Order (chair).

2. Roll Call (Secretary).

3. Land Acknowledgement:

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this uncanceled stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

4. Action: Approval of Agenda. (chair)

5. Action: Approval of Minutes for Wednesday, July 8, 2026 (chair).*

6. Public Comment (2 min each).

7. Chair's Report. Introduction of new PRWC Commissioners Allison Granzella (Mayor) and Dana Yeo (Blackaby, District 6) The Commission Chair may make announcements or provide information to the Commission in the form of an oral report. The Commission will not take action on such items but may request the items be placed on a future agenda for discussion.

8. Director's Report: Update on special events, community engagement, capital and maintenance projects, forestry, recreation, budget, fees (Ferris).

9. Presentation – Update on Marina Fund and potential revenue losses from Doubletree and Waterfront Parking Lot Fees (Ferris/Erickson).*

10. Presentation/Action – EBRPD Update on Acquisition and Planning Process for Golden Gate Fields (EBRPD/PRWC GGF Subcommittee).*

11. Action: Naming South Berkeley public plaza as Delores Cooper Plaza (Ferris).

12. Action: Naming Gymnasium at Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center (Young Adult Project (YAP) in honor of Philip Harper-Cotton (Ferris). **

13. Action: Naming former Cesar Chavez Park per Council referral to PRW Commission (Ferris).*

14. Action: Create a subcommittee to develop a process for Naming Santa Fe Railroad Track Park (Abshez).**

15. Information Reports.

16. Recent PRW Council Reports.*

17. Future Agenda Items: These items are not scheduled for discussion or action at this meeting. The Commission may schedule these items to the Action Calendar of a future Commission meeting: New PRW fees (PRW Comm, Oct 14 for Council, Dec 1, 2026); Pier-Ferry Project; PRW Commission Workplan; Nexus Study; Fitness Courts Project.

18. Communications.* Jim McGrath, 06-23-2026; Allison Granzella, 06-27-2026; Camille Antinori, 07-09-2026; Brennan Cox, 8-17-2026; Eleanor Hollander, 9/24/2026; Claudia Kawczynska, 09-02-2026.

19. Next PRW Commission meeting: Wed, Oct 14, 2026 (Regular).

20. Adjournment.

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.

** document will be provided at the meeting.

Agenda

ADA Disclaimer: This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request disability-related accommodations to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

SB343 Disclaimer: Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department Office at 2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA.

Communications Disclaimer: Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record. All communications to the Commission should be received at least 10 days before the meeting date. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the commission or committee for further information.

Commission Information: The agenda packets for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Waterfront Commission are available for review at www.cityofberkeley.info/commissions; the Berkeley Main Library and the Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department Office at 2180 Milvia Street –3rd Floor, during their normal business hours. If you have questions, call Commission Secretary, Roger Miller at 981-6704 at 2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA 94704 or by email at rmiller@berkeleyca.gov

MISSION STATEMENT – PARKS AND WATERFRONT: Reviews and advises the City Council on issues related to all City/public parks, open space, greenery, pools, programs, recreation centers, the Waterfront, and resident camps: their physical conditions, policies, projects, programs, planning efforts, activities, and funding; early childhood education programs; and animal care issues in parks.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mayor	Allison Granzella	District 3	Ben Nash	District 6	Dana Yeo
District 1	Carrie Rybczynski	District 4	Mary Muszynski	District 7	Ysabela Philip
District 2	Leigh Stewart	District 5	Allen Samelson	District 8	Allan Abshez

Current assignments

- Subcomm on dogs and parks (07-09-2025) (Nash; Stewart)
- Subcomm on parks impact fee (07-09-2025) (Abshez; Rybczynski)
- Subcomm on Waterfront Fees (10-08-2025) (Abshez; Philip)
- Subcomm on City bond measure 2026 (10-08-25) (Muszynski; Nash; Samelson; Stewart)
- Liaison - Civic Arts in Parks (Carrie Rybczynski)
- Subcomm on State of the Parks (2/11/26) (Abshez; Rybczynski; Samelson)
- Subcomm on underserved SE quadrant (03-11-2026) (Abshez; Nash; Philip).
- Subcomm on Golden Gate Fields potential (4/8/26) (Nash, Muszynski, and Stewart)

2026 Commission Meeting Dates

Name of Commission: Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission

Commission Secretary: Roger Miller

Location: Frances Albrier Community Center, 2800 Park St

Month	Meeting Day and Date (2 nd Wednesday per month)	Time	Notes
2026			
January	Tuesday, January 13	7:00 p.m.	Special Mtg
February	Wednesday, February 11	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
March	Wednesday, March 11	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
April	Wednesday, April 8	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg, Willard Ctr
May	Wednesday, May 13	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
June	Wednesday, June 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
July	Wednesday, July 8	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
August	No meeting		
September	Wednesday, September 9	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
October	Wednesday, October 14	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
November	Tuesday, November 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
December	No Meeting		
2027			
January	Wednesday, January 13	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg



PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

Frances Albrier Community Center - auditorium

2800 Park Street, Berkeley, CA 94702

Minutes- Draft

1. **Call to Order** (chair): 7:10pm.
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary). Present: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski ; Samelson; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN);
3. **City of Berkeley Land Acknowledgement**
4. **Action: Approval of Agenda.** (chair) (M/S/C: Rybczynski/Samelson/U) Ayes: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).
5. **Action: Approval of Minutes** for Wednesday, June 10, 2026 (chair).* (M/S/C: Abshez/Muszynski/U) Ayes: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).
6. **Public Comment** (2 min each). a) Jim McGrath, trees in Skates Lot; b) Erin Diehm, tree at Skates Lot; c) Claudia Kawczynska, the agenda.
7. **Chair's Report/Discussion.** (Abshez). Thank you to PRW staff for clean up at Oak Park.
8. **Director's Report:** Update on special events, community engagement, capital and maintenance projects, forestry, recreation, budget, fees (Miller). Update was provided.
9. **Discussion/Action:** Draft Pier-Ferry Parking Management Implementation Plan (McNulty).* Public Comment: a) Erin Diehm; b) Edward Kaczynski; c) Allison Granzella; d) Camille Antinoria; e) Claudia Kawczynska. The PRW Commission M/S/C (Samelson/Nash/U) to provide feedback to staff on the following: a) change time limits at South Cove and J/K lots from 4hrs to 5 hrs / day; b) ask that a periodic review and report on the parking plan be made to the commission in first six months and then annually; c) for every ten parking stalls there should be a tree. Ayes: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).
10. **Discussion/Action:** Golden Gate Fields Subcommittee – upcoming presentation from EBRPD at September 9, 2026 PRW Commission Meeting (Abshez). Miller indicated that an upcoming presentation has been scheduled for September 9, 2026.
11. **Public Hearings with actions at subsequent meetings:***
 - A. Naming former Cesar Chavez Park per Council referral to PRW Commission (Ferris).* A public hearing was opened (Abshez); Public Comment: a) Natasha Beery; b) Beatrice Leyva-Cutler. The PRW Commission M/S/C (Samelson/Nash/U) to close the public hearing. Ayes: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).
 - B. Naming South Berkeley public plaza as Delores Cooper Plaza (See April 14, 2026 Council referral. <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/2026-04-14%20Item%2016%20Recommendation%20to%20Parks%20and%20Waterfront%20Commission.pdf>). A public hearing was opened (Abshez); Public Comment: none. The PRW Commission M/S/C (Nash/Muszynski/U) to close the public hearing. Ayes:

Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).

- C. Naming Gymnasium at Martin Luther King, Jr. (Young Adult Project (YAP) Community Center in honor of Philip Harper-Cotton (Ferris). ** A public hearing was opened (Abshez); Public Comment: none. The PRW Commission M/S/C (Rybczynski/Nash/U) to close the public hearing. Ayes: Abshez; Muszynski; Nash; Rybczynski; Samelson; Noes: none; Absent: Philip (LOA); Stewart (UN).

- D. Naming Santa Fe Railroad Track Park – initial process (Ferris).** The commission held a discussion to begin a process for naming the new park parcels.

12. Information Reports.

13. Recent PRW Council Reports.*

- 14. Future Agenda Items:** Pier-Ferry Project; Workplan; Nexus Study; Fitness Courts Project.

- 15. Communications.*** Latinos Unidos de Berkeley, 5-25-2026; Jeff Malmuth, 6-19-2026.

- 16. Next PRW Commission meeting:** Wed, September 9, 2026 (Regular).

- 17. Adjournment.** 10:00pm.

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.

** document will be provided at the meeting.

- Commissioners in attendance: 5 of 7 appointed
- Public in attendance: 12
- Public speakers: 10

***Note:** For any handouts distributed at the meeting, please see the Agenda for June 10, 2026, on the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission webpage at the following link online:

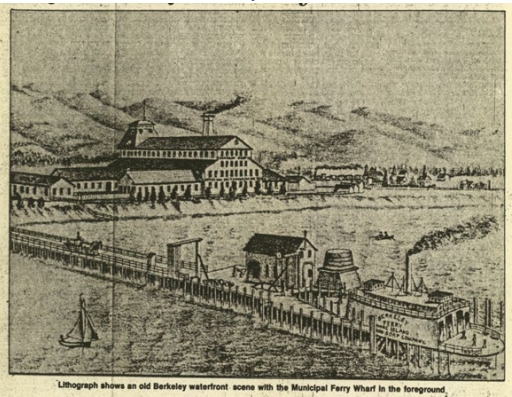
<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/boards-commissions/parks-recreation-and-waterfront-commission>

Berkeley Waterfront Overview

September 2026

Summary

1. Waterfront overview
2. Marina Fund history and background
3. Current factors affecting Marina Fund:
 - Structural deficit
 - Unfunded infrastructure
 - Occupancy
 - Leases / Doubletree
 - Budget reductions in FY27-28
 - Revenue increases: slips, leases, parking, recreation programs
4. Additional balancing measures needed



Ferry Wharf



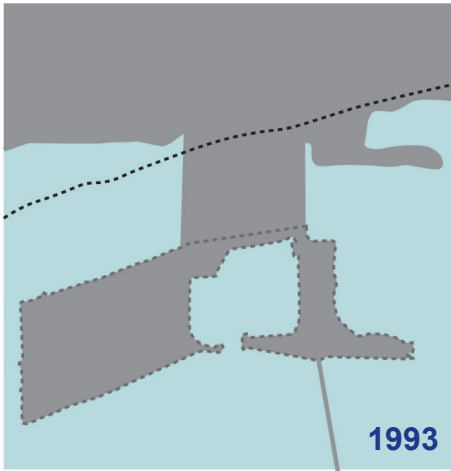
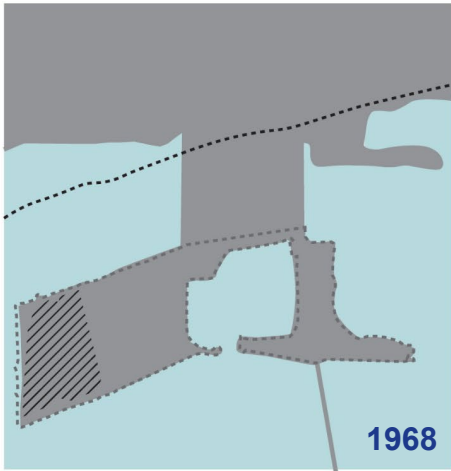
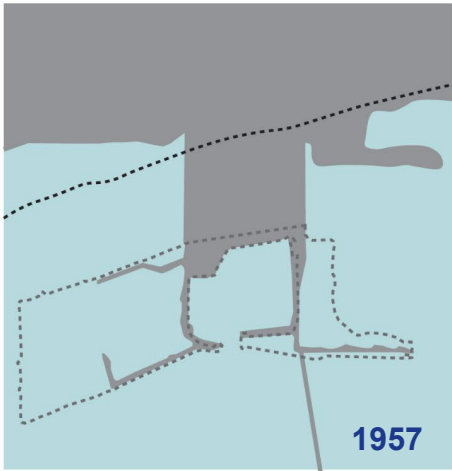
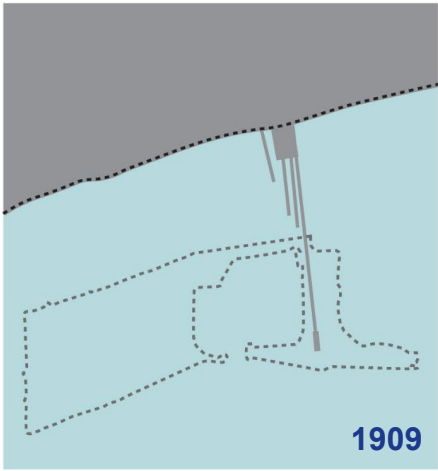
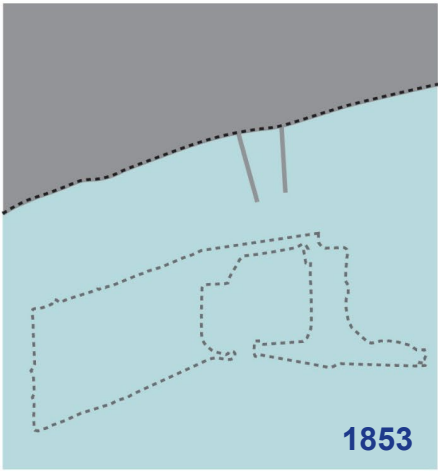
Pier & Docks



Pier, Marina & Landfill



Pier, Marina, Parks & Recreation, Commercial Uses



Historic Overview | Constructed Land & Evolving Uses

Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission

Wednesday, September 9, 2026
Regular Meeting

Berkeley Waterfront



OPERATING
REVENUES

- Berth Rental Fees
- Commercial Leases



OPERATING
EXPENSES

- Marina Operations
- Lease Administration
- Recreation Programs
- Maintenance
- Utilities
- Security
- Capital

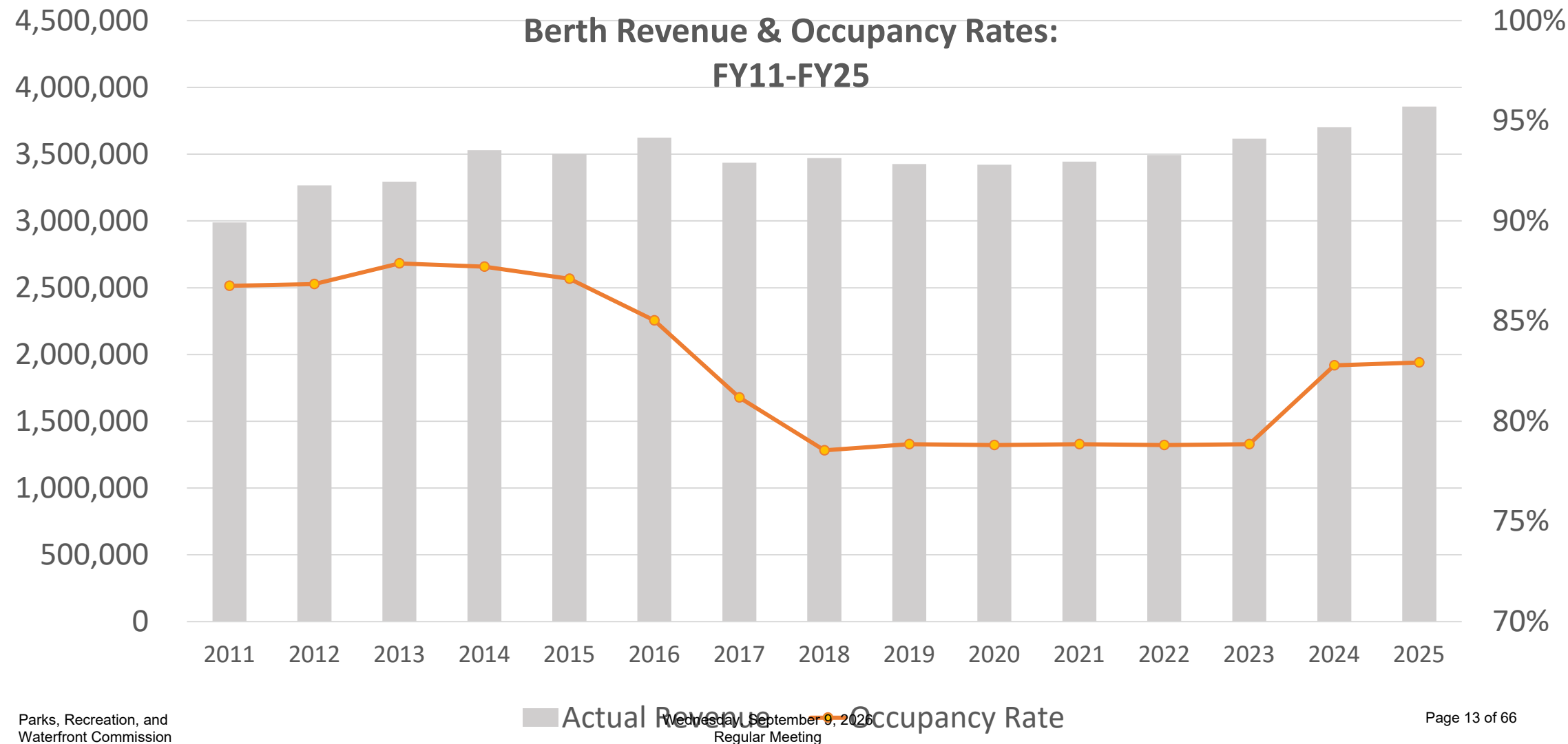
- Marina Fund established in 1964 to receive a \$1.8M State loan to build the Waterfront.
- Revenue from slips and hotel/restaurant leases was expected to cover the costs of debt service, maintenance and operations of the entire Waterfront.

Structural deficit for last 25+ years, driven by:

- Post-2000 and 2008 economic downturns:
 - Users pull boats out of the water.
 - Restaurant and hotel revenue decrease.
- Safety issues 2015-2019 led to berther exodus / Hs Lordships closing
- Aging infrastructure + no capital reserves => \$163M in unfunded needs
- COVID-19: major hit to hotel/restaurant revenue

Marina Revenue | Safety Impacts on Berth Occupancy

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund



Aging Infrastructure | Unfunded Capital Needs

Unfunded Infrastructure Costs

\$33,385,000	Inner Harbor / Docks
\$17,290,000	Parking Lots
\$15,700,000	Streets
\$55,432,500	Shorelines/Pathways/Pier
\$20,230,000	Dredging and Seawall
<u>\$10,810,500</u>	<u>City buildings</u>
\$163,344,000	Total unfunded needs



General Fund support to the Marina Fund since 2021

- FY22: \$1.4M in ARPA funds
- FY23: \$1.15M in ARPA funds
- FY24: \$800k in cost shifts to other funds / \$5.5M from Workers Comp fund for capital projects
- FY25: \$850k in reduced indirect costs and Workers Comp holiday; cost shifts to other funds; capital projects funded by GF
- FY26: \$1.4M in GF transfer, \$360k in reduced indirect costs and Workers Comp holiday; capital projects funded by GF

Parks Tax Fund: cost shifts off the Marina Fund since 2025

- FY26: Parks Tax Measure Y goes into effect.
 - Shifts \$1.579M in Waterfront park and landscape costs off Marina Fund to Parks Tax.

- DoubleTree is the largest single contributor to the Marina Fund, expected to cover 15% of waterfront expenses (~\$1.2M/year in revenue)
- Hotel financial trouble:
 - Hotel has been losing money every year since 2020.
 - Loan went into special servicing in 2025, with lender controlling expenditures.
 - Hotel stopped paying regular rent in March 2025.
 - Hotel paid their full balance in Sept 2025: \$964,680.
 - Stopped paying regular rent, again, in Jan 2026.
 - Currently owe approx. \$890k (9 months of base rent, 3 quarters % rent).
- Future payments uncertain.

Doubletree | Bay Area Hotel Market Conditions

- Bay Area hotel market continues to be slowest in country to recover from COVID.
- Some improvement since last year (Bay Area was at 70% of 2019 levels last year; is now at 80%)

Local Hotel Market	RevPAR*		
	2025	2026	2027
Oakland	+0.6%	+3.9%	+1.8%
San Francisco	+8.2%	+7.9%	+1.9%

*Revenue per Available Room for mid-priced hotels.
 Calculated as occupancy x average daily room rate.
Perkins Research Group
 Waterfront Commission

TOP 25 MARKETS	Twelve Months Ending 2/28/2020			Agenda Item 9: Update on Marina Fund	
	RevPAR	RevPAR % of 2019		12 Mo RevPAR	Full Year 12/31/2019
Atlanta - GA USA	\$ 78.46	100.4%		\$ 78.15	
Boston - MA USA	\$ 167.41	114.5%		\$ 146.20	
Chicago - IL USA	\$ 114.17	114.7%		\$ 99.56	
Dallas - TX USA	\$ 82.82	113.1%		\$ 73.25	
Denver - CO USA	\$ 99.20	100.5%		\$ 98.68	
Detroit - MI USA	\$ 73.50	106.3%		\$ 69.12	
Houston - TX USA	\$ 71.38	112.4%		\$ 63.50	
Las Vegas - NV USA	\$ 148.32	129.7%		\$ 114.33	
Los Angeles - CA USA	\$ 141.01	103.5%		\$ 136.23	
Miami - FL USA	\$ 169.40	123.0%		\$ 137.69	
Minneapolis - MN USA	\$ 80.95	98.9%		\$ 81.86	
Nashville - TN USA	\$ 115.28	106.3%		\$ 108.43	
New Orleans - LA USA	\$ 96.22	94.6%		\$ 101.69	
New York - NY USA	\$ 282.50	132.2%		\$ 213.62	
Oahu Island - HI USA	\$ 222.22	110.6%		\$ 200.89	
Orange County - CA USA	\$ 153.53	119.8%		\$ 128.11	
Orlando - FL USA	\$ 146.73	115.7%		\$ 126.82	
Philadelphia - PA USA	\$ 98.14	103.1%		\$ 95.19	
Phoenix - AZ USA	\$ 117.33	126.1%		\$ 93.07	
Saint Louis - MO USA	\$ 79.73	117.5%		\$ 67.87	
San Diego - CA USA	\$ 155.04	121.9%		\$ 127.22	
San Francisco/San Mateo - CA U	\$ 162.95	80.2%		\$ 203.10	
Seattle - WA USA	\$ 124.50	105.6%		\$ 117.86	
Tampa Bay - FL USA	\$ 119.11	127.7%		\$ 93.28	
Washington - DC USA	\$ 120.33	105.6%		\$ 113.91	

Internal

Marina Fund | Adopted Reductions in FY27-28

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund

- Existing structural deficit + Doubletree revenue loss → balancing measures needed in FY27-28 to continue to operate the Waterfront.
- No General Fund available to bail out MF, as City had to close a \$30M budget deficit.
- Resulted in significant Waterfront reductions.
 - Personnel reductions
 - Non-personnel reductions

Marina Fund Adjustments	FY 27	FY 28
Assistant Civil Engineer 60%	(140,574.00)	(143,442.00)
Waterfront Manager 85%	(246,066.00)	(253,361.00)
Senior Marina Assistant	150,729.00	154,584.00
Cost shift 5% Deputy Director to Parks Tax	(16,687.00)	(17,020.74)
Reduce Minor Maintenance	(100,000.00)	(100,000.00)
Reduce Security, Marketing, Supplies	(81,000.00)	(81,000.00)
Total	(433,598.00)	(440,239.74)

Marina Fund | New Fee Revenue in FY27-28

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund

Council has authorized multiple fee increases and new fees to cover costs to operate the Waterfront:

- New Marina fees (\$250k): in Jan 2026, Council adopted fee increases for slip rentals, liveaboard/houseboats, electricity surcharge, slipholder parking passes, and launch ramp.
- New Recreation fees (\$100k): in Jan 2026, Council adopted fee increases for recreation programs. New revenue from afterschool programs, summer and school break camps, and birthday packages.
- New parking fees (\$185k): in Jun 2025, Council adopted fees for hourly parking in 3 Waterfront lots.
- New Adventure Playground fees (\$100k): in Jun 2025, Council adopted fees for entry to Adventure Playground.

Marina Fund | New Lease Revenue in FY27-28

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund

Of the 13 leases and licenses at the Waterfront, staff are updating 9. These changes are estimated to raise \$90k/year.

Tenant	Lease Status / Notes
BPD / Traffic Bureau	Expires in 2027
Patpatia & Associates	Expired in 2026
International Child Rescue Institute	In holdover, no increase since 2015
Leventhal Kline/Third Plateau	In holdover, no increase since 2015
Cal Sailing Club	In holdover, no increase since 2019
Cal Adventures	In holdover, no increase since 2015
BRCC (Dragonboat club)	Needs agreement
Roaming Bean Coffee	Expires in 2026
Bait Shop	Expired at end of 2025, will go into holdover

Marina Fund | Forecast through this budget cycle

Updated to reflect projected loss of parking and Doubletree revenue.

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund

Marina Fund	2026 Actual	2027 Projected	2028 Projected
Starting balance	1,246,371	1,523,963	500,008
Revenue	8,673,012	6,364,360	6,534,799
<i>Leases</i>	<i>2,164,222</i>	<i>1,047,260</i>	<i>994,745</i>
<i>Berthers</i>	<i>3,971,848</i>	<i>4,166,475</i>	<i>4,333,134</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>2,536,941*</i>	<i>1,150,626</i>	<i>1,206,920</i>
Expenditures	8,395,420	7,388,315	7,580,393
Operating Surplus/(Loss)	277,592	(1,023,955)	(1,045,594)
Ending balance	1,523,963	500,008	(545,586)
Reserve Rate	18%	8%	(8%)

Marina Fund | More Balancing Measures Needed

Agenda Item 9. Update on Marina Fund

- With revenue coming in lower than projected, we will not be able to make it through FY28 without additional balancing measures.
- Target: **\$1.045M** needed in reductions or new revenue
 Amount = \$545k projected fund deficit + \$500k prudent reserve
- How to close this gap?
- Measures being considered:
 - General Fund reductions, to create space to shift all Recreation costs off Marina Fund.
 - Further maintenance and capital reductions
 - Further reductions of Waterfront staff
 - Further reductions of monitors and security
 - Fee increases
 - Increase rent from existing tenants (Cal Sailing and Cal Adventures in lease negotiations now)

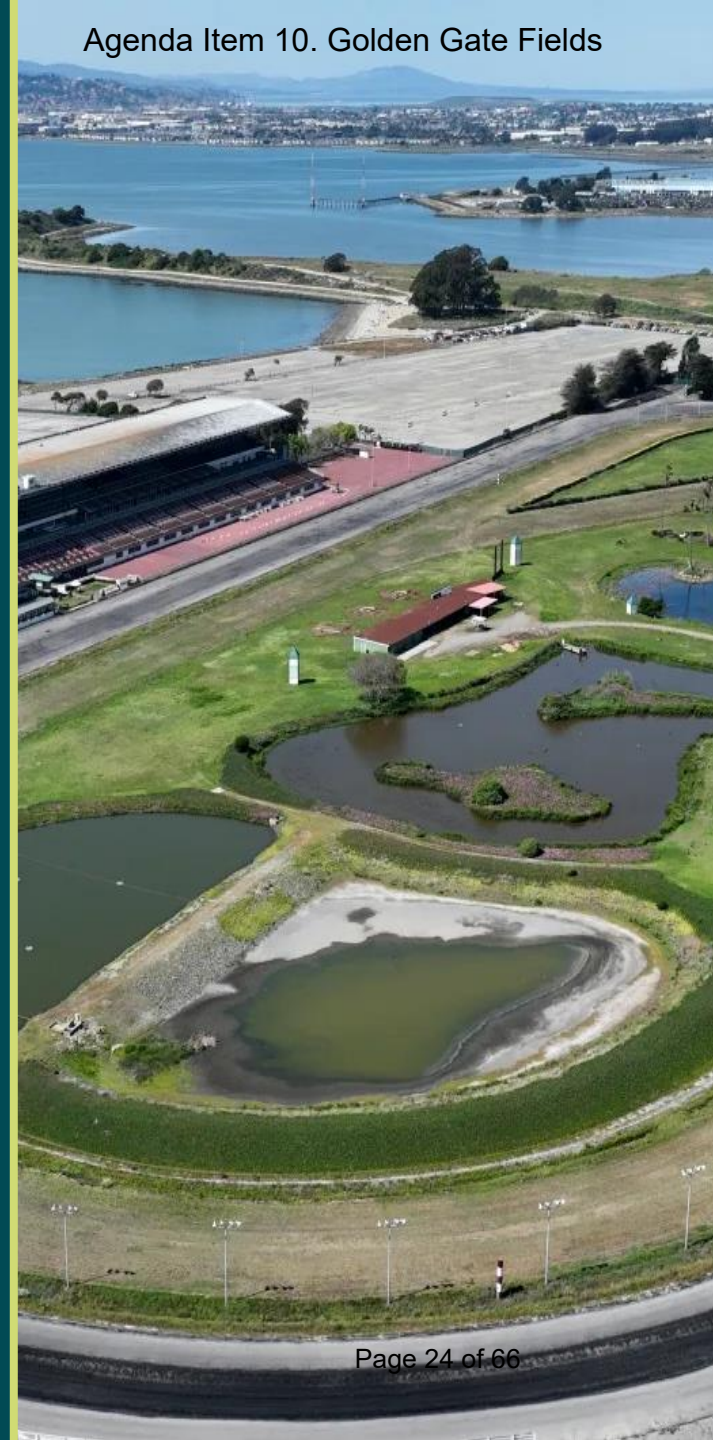


Golden Gate Fields Acquisition

Update to City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and
Waterfront Commission

Max Korten, General Manager

Becky Bremser, Division Lead for Acquisition

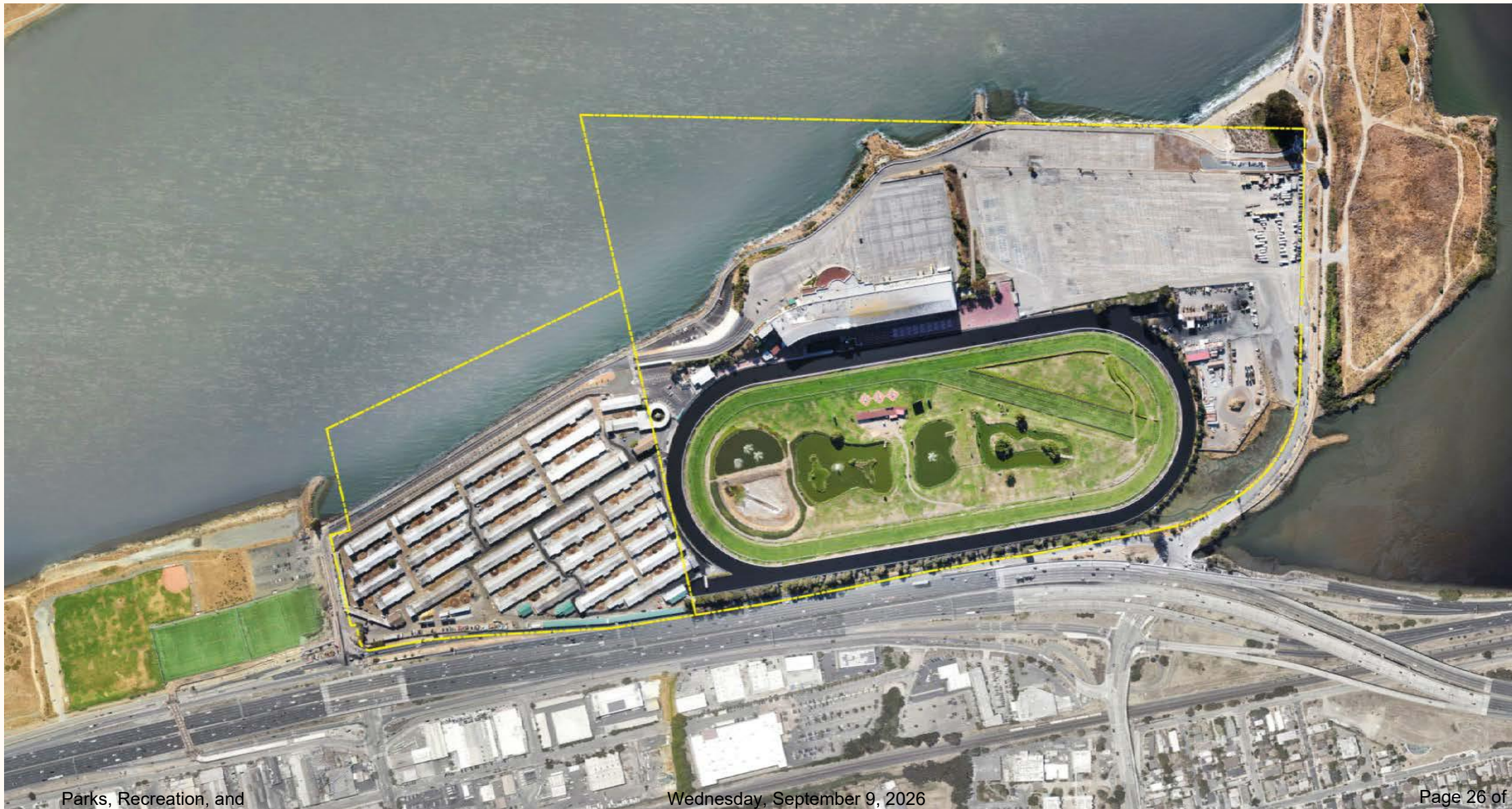


Property Details

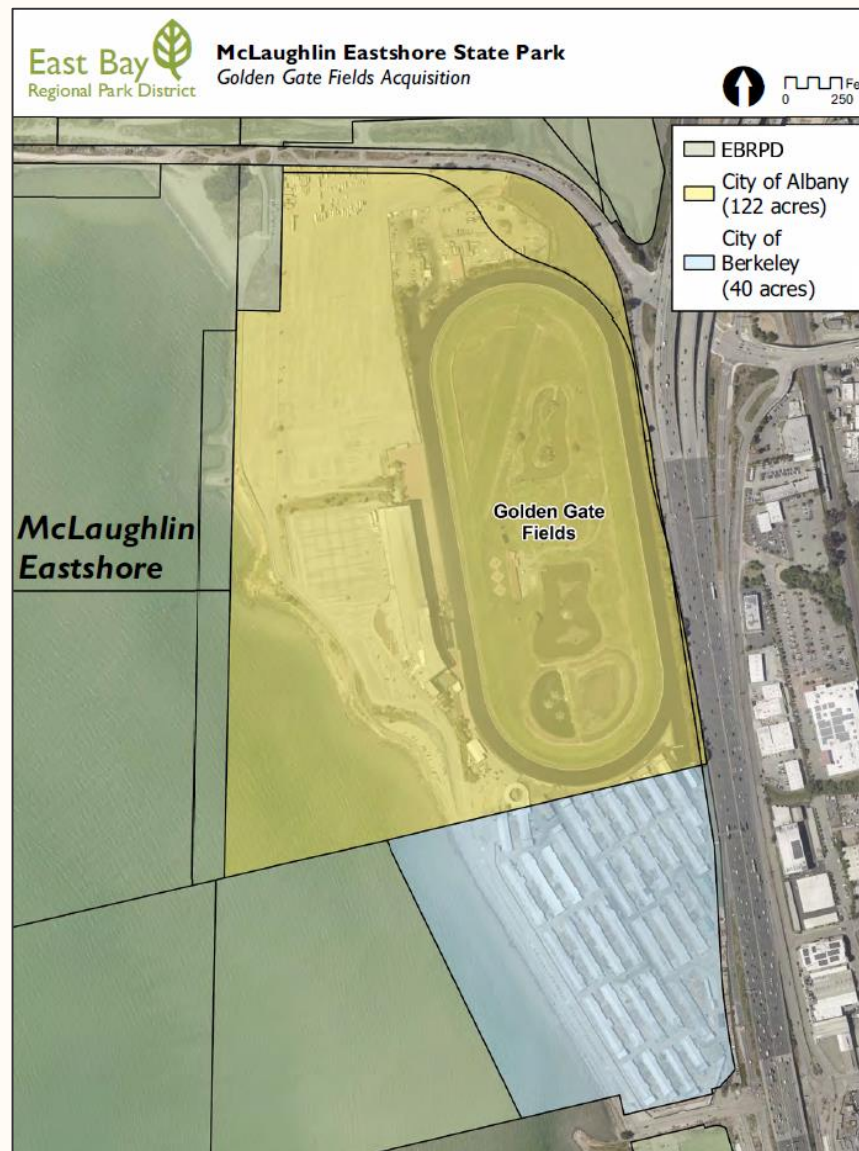


- 162+/- acres property, 5 parcels in Albany and Berkeley
- Functioned as racetrack from 1941-2024
- Key link to and between existing shoreline parks:
 - ❖ Albany Beach
 - ❖ Albany Bulb
 - ❖ McLaughlin Eastshore State Park
 - ❖ Point Isabel Regional Shoreline
 - ❖ Tom Bates Soccer Fields
 - ❖ Linked by the San Francisco Bay Trail

BACKGROUND



Complexities of Acquisition



\$175 million purchase price

State Prop 4 (approved):

- \$12m CA Natural Resources Agency
- \$53m Wildlife Conservation Board
- \$60m State Coastal Conservancy

Park District (to be approved):

- \$20m WW Bond Funding

\$30m left for Trust for Public Land to raise by end of 2026

Environmental Agreement



Environmental agreement being finalized to:

- Cover cost of environmental testing after acquisition
- Pollution liability insurance
- Post-closing remediation and site work

Envisioning a New Public Park



A public process occurring after acquisition, informed by:

- Partnership w/ cities of Berkeley and Albany
- Transparency & public engagement
- Interim opportunities to activate the site
- Acknowledgement of constraints of the funding and deed restrictions



Thank you!

Agenda Item 16. Recent Council Reports

PARKS, RECREATION AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION

RECENT COUNCIL REPORTS

The following recent PRW council reports can be accessed from the City Council Website by using the following URL's:

July 14, 2026 (Regular – 6pm)

21.-Lease Agreement: International Child Resource Institute (ICRI) for 125-127 University Avenue Office Space

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07/2026-07-14%20Item%2021%20Lease%20Agreement%20International%20Child.pdf>

July 28, 2026 (Regular – 6pm)

14.-Contract: CivicPlus, LLC for Recreation Management Software and Related Services

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07-28%20Item%2014%20Contract%20CivicPlus%2C%20LLC%20for%20Recreation.pdf>

15.-Purchase Order: One Workplace Inc. for furniture and equipment for the MLK Jr. Youth Services Center and other Community Centers

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07-28%20Item%2015%20Purchase%20Order%20One%20Workplace.pdf>

16.-Contract: QLM-Inc. for the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion New Community Gardens, Dog Park, and Playground Project

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07-28%20Item%2016%20Contract%20%20QLM-Inc.%20for%20the%20Santa%20Fe.pdf>

17.-Contract No. 32500050 Amendment: The Dutra Group for Berkeley Marina Docks D&E Replacement Project

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07-28%20Item%2017%20Contract%20No.%2032500020%20Amendment.pdf>

Jim McGrath
2301 Russell Street
Berkeley, CA
June 23, 2026

Larry Goldzband
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
375 Beale Street, Suite 510
San Francisco, CA 94105

Submitted via email

Subject: May 11, 2026 DRB Meeting on Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project — Stakeholder Comments and Documented Concerns

Dear Mr. Goldzband:

Berkeley proposes to accommodate 1060 departing passengers with 200 secure parking spaces. What could possibly go wrong?

This letter documents conflicts between the City of Berkeley's current proposal for the ferry terminal project and the San Francisco Bay Plan. While Berkeley contends that it will protect recreational use and parking, it fails to do so in both its draft EIR and in the recent "Draft Parking Management Implementation Plan" dated 5/8/2026. Even the inadequate parking plan that the city now proposes is flawed because the city is simultaneously planning to redevelop one of the proposed parking lots. It is not appropriate for this matter to be before BCDC at this time; it is part of a much larger redevelopment plan for the entire waterfront that the Berkeley City Council intends to take up on July 7, 2026. Before the Berkeley City Council can approve this project and submit a permit application to BCDC, they must comply with a citizen initiative, Measure L, which passed in 1986. Finally, there is no financial plan for funding or maintaining the public access elements of the project. We further document below that the city's own current budget records establish a documented fiscal inability to maintain existing waterfront public access, which is material to the Commission's analysis under Public Access Policy 6. Berkeley has a 40-year history of deferring maintenance of public access facilities while it diverts revenues from the marina fund to other purposes. I will provide details on each of these issues. Since the DRB has determined that no further review by that Board is required, these issues must be addressed by BCDC staff and Commission.

We note as a procedural matter that the city made a presentation to the DRB on May 11 without making its updated parking plan (completed May 8, 2026) available to stakeholders or the Board in advance. The discussion that followed reflected limited Board familiarity with both the updated plan and the geography of the marina area. Stakeholders who have testified at three prior meetings were unable to comment meaningfully on the most current proposal. The Board's deliberations did not address several material changes to public access elements that the city has introduced.

THE CITY HAS NOT GUARANTEED THE PARKING THE FERRY DEPENDS ON

The city's representations to BCDC regarding parking for the proposed ferry project cannot be reconciled with the city's concurrent planning for the same parcels.

The city has proposed to dedicate 65 spaces in the Skates/N lot to paid full-day parking for ferry commuters. At the same time, the City's draft Waterfront Specific Plan, dated November 18, 2024, designates the Skates/N parking lot as part of a new WC-4 zoning designation that would allow redevelopment of that parcel for buildings up to 65 feet in height, with hotel and other commercial uses permitted at a parking ratio of only 0.5 spaces per room. The Berkeley Yacht Club has stated in writing, based on its review of the draft Plan, that the Plan provides for a new hotel in the Skates parking lot. The same parcel cannot serve as a hotel and as ferry commuter parking—or support the existing restaurant.

This contradiction is not academic. On July 7, 2026, the Berkeley City Council is scheduled to consider authorization of an Environmental Impact Report for the draft Waterfront Specific Plan, with Scenario 1 (the highest buildout, approximately 1,215,000 gross square feet) as the maximum development alternative for the EIR's environmental analysis. Whatever the city's eventual buildout decision, the parcels the city is asking BCDC to rely on for ferry parking are concurrently designated for redevelopment under the city's own planning framework.

Under CEQA, BCDC must consider the whole of the project. The whole of the project here comprises at least four city actions affecting the same parcels of public trust land: the pier-ferry project, the proposed initiation of paid parking at the marina, the proposed designation of 150 public parking spaces for the exclusive use of a newly leased and remodeled restaurant on land filled under a prior BCDC permit, and the draft Waterfront Specific Plan that would allow tripling of commercial space at the marina. The city's draft EIR for the ferry project did not consider these actions together. BCDC must.

BCDC cannot rely on the city's parking representations for the ferry project when the City itself, in a planning document released seven months before the ferry's draft EIR, proposed to eliminate that parking for hotel redevelopment. Until the city reconciles these contradictory positions, the burden of proof under Recreation Policies 3(b)(4) and 9 — that the project will not usurp existing recreational use — cannot be met.

PROTECTING PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATIONAL PARKING

Bay Plan policies allow consideration of a ferry in a waterfront park, but only if it does not interfere with existing and future recreational uses and the parking that supports those uses. While there are several policies that protect parking, recreation Policy 9 establishes the standard:

Recreation Policy 9: Ferry terminals may be allowed in waterfront park priority use areas and marinas and near fishing piers and launching lanes, **provided the development and operations of the ferry facilities do not interfere with current or future park and recreational uses**, and navigational safety can be assured. Terminal configuration and operation should not disrupt continuous shoreline access. Facilities provided for park and marina patrons, such as **parking, should not be usurped by ferry patrons**. Shared parking arrangements should be provided to minimize the amount of shoreline area needed for parking

Berkeley staff acknowledge this policy. In an e-mail dated March 20, 2024, Liza McNulty stated that:

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies for the Pier-Ferry Project must ensure that Ferry riders do not park outside of designated ferry spaces...

To accomplish this, Berkeley must identify the spaces that are used for recreation that must be protected and develop enforceable TDM strategies that can be funded. Neither has occurred. In fact, Berkeley has presented its latest parking plan without a budget and in a manner that is completely unenforceable.

While Berkeley's parking inventory is weak and has been presented in a manner that destroys much of its statistical value, it is sufficient to show that South Cove lots are full on weekdays and weekends, and the O and J & K lots are nearly full on Saturdays. The data is sufficient to show that those lots must be protected from ferry riders. I will turn to recreational parking along Seawall Drive and at the Skates/N lot.

BAY VIEW PARKING ALONG SEAWALL DRIVE

BCDC has long considered parking near the Bay a recreational use, and has established a Bay Plan policy that applies directly to the city's proposed alteration of public parking along Seawall Drive:

Recreation Policy 3(b)(4): In addition, marinas should include public amenities, such as **viewing areas**, restrooms, public mooring docks or floats and moorages for transient recreational boaters, nonmotorized small boat launching facilities, **public parking**; substantial physical and visual access; **and maintenance for all facilities.**

This policy establishes that existing recreational facilities, including viewing areas, are recreational facilities protected from usurpation. There are different recreational activities that rely on the parking along Seawall Drive. They include direct access to the water by swimmers and water sports—activities encouraged by the Water Trail legislation and Berkeley's own marina plan. Other activities include fishing from the shore now that the pier is closed and viewing. Those activities occur at different times—Sunday swims are in the morning, water sports occur when the wind comes up after 1:00 pm, and fishing can occur at any time. The busiest viewing times follow the sunsets. The city's latest parking plan — not available to the public before the May 11 meeting — reduces public Bay view spaces from the current 84–90 spaces (City documentation shows 84 spaces south of University Avenue and another 6 spaces north of University) to 33 spaces with unobstructed water view. This is a significant reduction of view parking. The city presents no substantial evidence that 33 spaces will accommodate documented existing recreational uses.

The city's own data does not support the proposed reduction. While the city's collection of parking counts along this corridor is sparse both in the number of days and time of day, many of those data points show more than 33 cars parked. Kittelson's May 7, 2025, report "Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project Parking and TDM Plan" acknowledges even more spaces, 77,

occupied at peak (page 3). While the city staff inventoried parking between July 8, 2024, and August 23, 2024, each site was not inventoried on each day, and none of the inventories were taken at 1 pm, which is the peak daytime recreational period. The evening data establishes a clear practice of people coming to the marina in the evening to watch the sunset—exactly the recreational use protected by Recreation Policy 3(b)(4) and Recreation Policy 9. The burden is on the project applicant to demonstrate that the proposal does not usurp existing recreational use. The city has not met that burden.

The accompanying photograph taken by Andrew Sullivan on Friday, April 4, 2025, documents heavy recreational use of Seawall Drive parking for shoreline water access on a typical recreational-season day. Other photos showing recreational use during the weekend are also enclosed. I have also enclosed a photograph I took of intensive use of the south end of Seawall Drive on May 23, 2024. Every parking space along Seawall Drive was occupied, about 60 cars were parked in 199 Seawall lot, every parking space was occupied at the two South Cove lots, and cars were parked in virtually all aisle spaces. People were circling looking for a space—and city staff had left the east gate for the lots closed. BCDC must insist that the city retain at least 80 public viewing spaces along Seawall Drive to accommodate existing demand and protect those spaces from ferry riders.

OTHER RECREATIONAL PARKING AREAS ARE PROTECTED BY THE BAY PLAN

BCDC was copied with my letter to Liza McNulty dated June 10, 2026. In that letter I discussed the existing recreational parking lots that I believe are protected by Bay Plan policies. In addition to the Seawall Drive spaces, they include the two South Cove lots, the Skates/N lot, the O lot, and the J & K lot. All these lots now support recreational use. Even the limited data collected by the city shows these lots full or nearly full on summer weekdays when ferry riders might usurp recreational parking. More specifically, even with the data averaged, an approach which tends to hide peak use, Table 1 shows peak use at the South Cove West lot between 1 pm and 3 pm, with the lot nearly full. Nothing in the May 8, 2026, draft parking plan provides a monitoring approach that would distinguish ferry commuters from recreational users. Nor does that report establish any enforceable way to remove ferry commuters who are usurping recreational spaces.

Protecting the spaces at the Skates/N lot is a particular concern, as that is a change in the project description that was not discussed in the draft EIR. The brief discussion of Proposed Vehicle Parking on page 2-18 of the draft EIR makes no mention of using this lot for ferry riders. Nor was this new proposal discussed with Skates management before the draft plan was released. Now the city proposes to make 65 of the spaces in this lot paid parking for ferry riders. (Source: “Draft Parking Management Implementation Plan”, 5/8/2026, page 8). That lot is closest to the proposed ferry terminal and is largely empty in the morning but busy from noon on. The city does not have enough data to establish what the peak use of that lot is, or when the paid spaces that they propose to provide to commuters would be vacated. More specifically, the city collected only five days of hourly parking use, done by Quality Counts. In an \$11 million dollar study of a new ferry terminal, the city only allocated \$22,100 for parking data collection! (Source: March 20, 2024, Scope of Work proposed by Amanda Leahy, Kittelson and Associates.) Of those five days, two were weekend days when the city acknowledges that the

recreational spaces are often completely occupied. On weekdays, Quality Counts collected data on Thursday April 11, 2024, Thursday August 1, 2024, and Thursday August 22, 2024. Three days of data collection to describe the annual cycle of parking, or even the three-month recreational season has almost no statistical power. The city has not released the hourly counts for those five days; the May 7, 2025, Kittelson report presents the data only in tables that combine data from different days. For the Skates/N Lot, the inclusion of April 11, 2024, hourly counts dilutes the data in a manner that is misleading even if not intended to hide peak use. That data is shown in Table 1 of the Kittelson report.

It is possible that the Skates/N lot could accommodate some paid parking for commuters without disrupting recreational use. It is also possible that the adjacent lot, now used for the Berkeley Parking Bureau—a non recreational, non public trust use, could accommodate paid parking for commuters at a reasonable distance from the proposed terminal. But two weekday data points, and assumptions on mode split, don't meet the burden of proof to meet the Bay Plan requirements.

FISHING FROM THE PIER AND SHORELINE

As prior testimony has documented, the Berkeley Pier was once the most heavily used public fishing pier on San Francisco Bay, and anglers continue to fish from the shoreline. Berkeley is recognized as a halibut fishery of regional significance. The city's Draft EIR did not analyze the utility of the shorter pier configuration that has been proposed, and the city has not directly engaged the angler community regarding impacts of ferry terminal construction and operations on shoreline and pier fishing access. There is information that the city has ignored. A report titled "Fishing at the Berkeley Waterfront: What is it Worth?", prepared by Camille Antinori, Melisa Moises Banal, Philip King, and Matt Peterson and dated September 12, 2022, relied on direct interviews with anglers. Of the 168 anglers interviewed, 54% stated that they thought the shorter pier and frequent disturbances would seriously impair the utility of the pier for fishing.

The DRB's May 11 deliberations did not address recreational fishing as a use of this site, despite the city's obligation under Recreation Policy 9 to protect current recreational uses. We recommend that you require the city to convene a documented stakeholder process with representative angler organizations — including but not limited to the United Pier and Shore Anglers of California — to analyze ferry construction and operational impacts on fishing access and to identify avoidance and mitigation measures. See attached photo, and also:

<https://seawall-point.com/fishing-at-berkeley-marina/#:~:text=Marina%20Lagoon%3A%20If%20you%20prefer,a%20relaxing%20day%20of%20angling.>

ACCESS TO AND ALONG THE WATER

The city proposes to construct a two-way cycle track on University Avenue, at substantial expense, but does not propose completion of the Bay Trail along the east side of the 199 Seawall Peninsula. I served on the Bay Trail Board for more than a decade and worked directly with Berkeley to identify funding for extension of the Bay Trail to 199 Seawall Drive. Spur Bay Trails are intended to provide recreational access along the water — not commuter access to a transit terminal. Labeling a commuter facility as a recreational trail does not satisfy the Bay Trail's purpose or BCDC's public access requirements.

The two-way cycle track configuration proposed on University Avenue also raises safety issues. Since 2019, construction of two-way cycle tracks has been hotly debated, following a study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety that showed a higher rate of injuries. That study is summarized by Angie Schmitt thusly:

And a surprising number of injuries are happening in two-way, street-level, protected bike lanes.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study recently analyzed 350 bike-injury cases in New York, Washington and Portland in order to determine which street designs were safest for those on two wheels. The study surveyed injured riders who were treated in hospitals.

<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2019/08/16/study-two-way-bike-lanes-produce-more-injuries>

While most injuries were not severe, the increased use of heavier, faster electric cycles has increased the severity of injuries since that 2019 study.

Many design guides recommend one-way configurations where feasible. The Bay Trail alignment along the east side of 199 Seawall provides recreational access along the water, far from cars, sheltered viewing of recreational activities in the South Basin, and a safer path to the water's edge. Berkeley previously improved a trail along the east side of this area as an element of the project approved by BCDC to fill this area for restaurant and park parking. That access trail has not been maintained. The May 11 deliberations did not address the absence of this trail or the City's prior commitment to maintain it.

The draft EIR included only a vague description of the redevelopment of 199 Seawall Lot:

The proposed project would replace all of the existing parking spaces with 400 to 450 new parking spaces (pending final design), including ADA-accessible and EV parking spaces.

It did not evaluate the impact of that construction on the wind speeds or turbulence in the South Basin. The South Basin is home to Cal Sailing Club, Cal Adventures, and is used by Bay Area Sea Kayakers for skill clinics. Since the Bay offshore of Berkeley marina can be very windy much of the year, the sheltered water in the basin provides safer conditions for teaching sailing and other water sports. All have commented in public meetings that removing the vegetation and grading away the berms on 199 Seawall Drive will increase wind in the south basin. This is clearly a physical effect on the environment that will affect recreational use—but it was not discussed in the draft EIR.

PICNIC BENCHES ALONG SEAWALL DRIVE

The city's May 11 plans introduced west-facing picnic benches in areas where view parking would be removed. These benches were not discussed with stakeholders prior to presentation to the DRB. The Berkeley waterfront experiences sustained westerly winds nearly every day from March through mid-October — documented at the Berkeley Marina weather station maintained by iwindsurf.com— with daytime temperatures in the recreational season typically in the mid-50s Fahrenheit and afternoon wind speeds of 15–25 mph, increased by compression flow over the seawall. These conditions are why local water-sport participants wear wet suits. They are not conditions conducive to picnic use. The existing, well-used picnic facilities are located east of the parking area, sheltered by the berm and vegetation that the city's proposal would remove. Replacing functional sheltered facilities with exposed west-facing benches will not animate this part of the waterfront.

The picnic table proposed on the south side of the property is sited in the path used for decades by people carrying boards, sails, and wings between the small rigging area and the water access point. It would directly interfere with established water access and should be removed from plans.

DOCUMENTED PATTERN OF UNDERFUNDED WATERFRONT MAINTENANCE

Even if Berkeley revises its parking management plan with enforceable strategies that identify protected recreational parking and includes enforceable measures to ensure that such parking is protected, implementation of those strategies depends on legal enforceability and funding. Plan Public Access Policy 6 requires that public access be permanently guaranteed and adequately maintained. The city's own current budget records establish that this requirement cannot be met by the present applicant under existing conditions, and that the city has acknowledged this in writing. Construction of a ferry terminal is not expected to result in increased revenue to the marina fund that would improve maintenance. No information about the costs of construction or maintenance was presented to the DRB, included in the draft EIR or in the May 8th plan.

The City of Berkeley's FY 2025–2026 Adopted Biennial Budget describes a “structural deficit” in the Marina Fund (p. 166) and projects the Marina Fund balance falling from approximately \$3.6 million in FY 2023 to negative \$993,000 by FY 2028, with insolvency reached in FY 2027. The City's FY 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report documents Marina Fund operating deficits of \$758,000 (FY 2023) and \$827,000 (FY 2024). The Marina Fund's unrestricted net position stands at negative \$2.05 million.

In November 2024, the voters in Berkeley approved a 16.7% increase in the city's parks tax, which was promised to provide about \$1.5 million annually for maintaining the waterfront parks. But the same FY 2025–2026 Adopted Budget does not assign those funds to the waterfront. Instead, on page 165, it states

FY 2025 beyond personnel shifts 2 Landscape Gardener positions previously charged to the Parks Tax fund back to the Marina Fund.

In the budget the City Manager is now proposing, despite the availability of more parks tax revenue, and the promise to use the money to maintain waterfront parks, only 0.17 personnel

years for the waterfront would be funded through the parks tax. The city continues to rely on the marina fund to pay for park maintenance rather than marina maintenance. The historical effect on the marina-adjacent recreational infrastructure that this letter addresses — including the unmaintained Bay Trail spur — is precisely what such cost shifting produces. This area was given at least two permits by BCDC—Permit No. 1966.028.00 and No. M1982.088.01. Both of those permits required maintenance of the facilities—as did most of the grants used to fund improvements. Yet the facilities were not maintained, the lots used by the public were closed, and the facilities permitted in 1982 are long gone.

It is not only the permitting agencies and grant conditions that have directed the city to maintain its recreational facilities. Measure L, a citizen initiative to protect Berkeley's parks, was approved by the voters in 1986. It included this mandate that Berkeley's parks and open space areas should be funded: **"at least to allow the maintenance of the present condition and services."**

The city's documented failure to maintain the existing Bay Trail spur and other waterfront recreational infrastructure, while simultaneously transferring waterfront maintenance costs onto the Marina Fund rather than the Parks Tax Fund, is the conduct Measure L was enacted to prevent. BCDC cannot rely on the city's representations of future maintenance under Public Access Policy 6 when the city has been violating an existing voter mandate to maintain existing parks for nearly four decades.

The current condition of the waterfront, with \$131,436,359 in deferred maintenance, (Source: "Memorandum to Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council", July 17, 2024, from LaTanya Bellow, Interim City Manager) is a direct result of the city's intentional practice of shifting costs for city parks, recreational programs and streets to the marina fund. It dates to about 2003, when Berkeley first shifted the costs for maintaining the waterfront parks, including the old landfill, the largest park in Berkeley, from the parks tax to the marina fund. I have submitted Public Records Act Requests to try to determine how much money has been shifted, without success. Berkeley does not provide budget details for expenditures or maintain records for more than two years. But clearly this has resulted in millions of dollars that could have been used to maintain boating related facilities—the *raison d'être* for the fill that BCDC allowed—instead shifted to other purposes.

Two consequences for the area still under BCDC jurisdiction warrant attention. First, the sheet pile seawall that supports the fill along the edge of the basin is badly deteriorated and was identified as subject to failure more than twenty years ago. According to the March 28, 2025, memo, that project would cost \$5.78 million. Second, siltation in the basin makes it impossible to use most of the days during spring. Tide charts for Berkeley show that water depth is less than 3 feet during the hours between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm 19 of 28 days in February, 22 of 31 days in March, 20 of 30 days in April, 16 of 31 days in May, and 10 of 30 days in June. The current estimate for dredging is \$15.2 million. These projects are essential to sustain the largest recreational programs at the marina—Cal Sailing Club and Cal Adventures—which cannot teach sailing at these low tides. A copy of those tide charts is enclosed.

Under Public Access Policy 6, BCDC cannot find that required public access associated with the ferry project will be "permanently guaranteed" when the applicant has documented in its own current budget the fiscal inability to maintain *existing* access facilities approved by BCDC, when the applicant projects its responsible enterprise fund will be insolvent within the timeframe over

which the project's maintenance obligations would accrue, and when the applicant has documented an active practice of reassigning maintenance obligations between funds.

MODE SPLIT

Berkeley continues to make unrealistically low assumptions of the number of ferry riders that will seek a parking place and thus represent a threat to recreational users. In doing so they have relied on assumptions and dated information rather than substantial evidence and have only looked at short term projections of passengers. This is relevant to Bay Plan Recreational Policy 9, and must be examined critically by BCDC.

WETA projects an initial passenger departure of 960 passengers, 2035 departures of 1018, and 1055 departures in 2040. The initial feasibility study work by Nelson\Nygaard estimated that 54% of passengers would drive alone and park and another 9% would carpool. Under that estimate, 58.5% of riders would seek a parking place. Applied to the initial, 2035, and 2040 projections, that is 559, 595, and 617 cars seeking a parking space. Since Berkeley is considering a land use plan that would redevelop the Skates/N lot, and are negotiating to designate 150 parking spaces on 199 Seawall for restaurant use, they only have 200 parking spaces available in the long term near the proposed terminal.

Berkeley's reasoning is neither well described nor supported by substantial evidence. On page 8 of the May 8, 2026, parking plan, Berkeley asserts that initial service of 915 (rather than the WETA estimate of 955) will only demand 314 stalls and the 20-year service of 1060 passengers will only demand 347 stalls. That is a 34% mode split for initial service and a 29% mode split for the twenty-year service. The plan includes an incomplete citation to Kittelson work. The most recent document on mode split and ridership is a January 16, 2026, memorandum that provides mode split **assumptions**. That table is repeated in Appendix F of the draft EIR. It apparently relies on 2022 WETA on-board surveys rather than the more recent, 2025 on-board surveys. But even at that, it estimates that 40% would drive alone and another 12% carpool—46% of 955 is 440 riders looking for a parking stall when only 200 are available. Nothing in that table, Appendix F of the EIR, or the recent parking plan bridge the analytical gap between existing similar terminals where 55-60% of riders drive and park and the 29% figure in the new report. That is certainly not persuasive or supported by substantial evidence and reasoning.

Berkeley had an opportunity to use readily available information to support a calculation of mode split rather than rely on assumptions. Berkeley supports Visit Berkeley with funding from the overnight stay tax generated in the marina. Visit Berkeley in turn has a contract with Placer AI, which uses cell-phone data to estimate visitors to the marina. It is straightforward to draw a polygon that captures the Bay Trail spur to the marina and extract 7 years of bicycle travel to the marina. It may be more difficult to separate those who used bicycles to access the small ferry operations—but ignoring the Placer AI information allows the city's consultants to simply assume that 16% of riders will arrive by bicycle. Berkeley worked with Bike Link and used grant funds to install ten bicycle lockers outside the bait shop—on the path between the recreational parking areas where riders of the Genentech ferry left their cars. Berkeley has expressed no interest in collecting the cell phone data generated because a cell phone app is

required to use the lockers. (personal conversation with Farid Javandel, Berkeley Transportation Manager, on monitoring the outcome)

JURISDICTION

At the DRB meeting, BCDC staff announced that they had agreed with Berkeley's proposal for jurisdiction, which excluded major parts of the area that may have been filled under the 1967 BCDC permit No. 1966.028.00; while a map showed a line representing that claim was shown, there was no underlying analysis. I have subsequently obtained more details from BCDC staff that show that this area was not completely diked off from the Bay or filled in 1965. I have sought any documentation that would show the Berkeley received a determination of vested rights, the process set up in the McAteer-Petris Act that would support limiting BCDC's jurisdiction.

The fact that this permit was granted pursuant to Berkeley's stated commitment at the hearing to create a permanent recreational area must be considered. Berkeley is proposing to initiate paid parking in this area and is seeking to avoid BCDC jurisdiction to avoid being required to obtain BCDC permits for that project. I believe that BCDC has a responsibility under CEQA to consider the whole of the project. There are four separate elements proposed by the city that constitute the whole of the project: the pier-ferry project that was considered by the DRB, the proposal to institute parking charges at the marina, the proposal to designate 150 public parking spaces for exclusive use of a newly leased and remodeled restaurant on the land filled under the prior BCDC permit, and a draft Waterfront Specific Plan that could allow tripling of commercial space at the marina. We believe that the city in their EIR improperly excluded the whole of the project, but that BCDC must consider the whole of the project and its impact on continued and equitable recreational access protected by the Bay Plan. Berkeley has scheduled a meeting on July 7, 2026, to consider initiating an EIR for the draft Waterfront Specific Plan. This is obviously part of the whole of the project. That draft WSP, dated November 18, 2024, designates the Skates/N parking lot as part of a new WC-4 designation. That would allow redevelopment of the parking spaces now proposed for ferry parking, allowing buildings up to 65 feet in height and providing only 0.5 parking spaces per room. Clearly these two projects are not compatible.

CEQA RESPONSIBILITIES OF A RESPONSIBLE AGENCY

Multiple comments on the draft EIR, including BCDC's staff letter, identified critical inadequacies in the draft EIR on consistency with the Bay Plan Policies, impacts of dredging and filling, mitigation for dredging and filling, and consideration of alternatives. It seems clear that the document is not adequate for responsible agencies such as BCDC. This leaves BCDC in a position of having to augment the EIR to cover your responsibilities as a responsible agency.

FILING REQUIREMENTS

Berkeley staff have stated in public meetings that they intend to file for BCDC permits as soon as early July. It is not clear that a final EIR will have been certified by the City Council by then.

But normally, BCDC requires that permit applicants have obtained all local approvals before they can file for a BCDC permit. In Berkeley, the electorate passed the “Berkeley Public Parks and Open Space Preservation Ordinance” in 1986. It remains in effect and provides that a popular vote is required before the Council can approve a loss of parkland or open space. Section 1 of that ordinance states:

That no public parks (hereinafter defined) or public open space (hereinafter defined) owned or controlled or leased by the City of Berkeley or agency thereof, shall be used for any other purpose than public parks and open space, without The Berkeley City Council first having submitted such use to the citizens for approval by a majority of registered Berkeley voters voting at the next general election.

It appears that the city must schedule the required election under this ordinance since it would devote recreational parking to commuter use and would remove the existing open space vegetation at 199 Seawall Drive. I also believe that BCDC should require WETA to be a co-applicant for any permits as many project elements will be subject to their design, control, and maintenance responsibilities.

NOTES ON DATA SOURCES

The city has relied on three different sources for inventorying parking at the marina. None of these sources of data have been published in a straightforward form so the data can be read. At one time, Berkeley staff claimed that “18,226 data points [had been] analyzed by Kittelson” (confirmed in an e-mail from Liza McNulty to Dhawal Kataria, May 7, 2025.) It is misleading to characterize the data analyzed by Kittelson at that point as representing recreational use. I obtained two of the data sources by submitting public records act requests to the city.

The initial data apparently used by Kittelson consists of a series of sheets filled out by contracted security personnel. The first sheet I have is dated 5/28/21, and is noted as provided by Dario. The blank sheets only have entry points for 10AM and 8PM, and have a column to record the presence of RV’s. They were collected to determine whether cars were parked in the marina overnight, and were collected by contract employees because marina staff had gone home. Of the dozens of sheets that were provided to me, only one page shows a new form that includes space for noting cars present at 2pm. It is dated 5/7/23, and simply marks the 2 pm slot as full for Spinnaker Circle, Spinnaker Way, and most of the lots south of University. Almost none of the data collected before 2024 was actually intended to survey recreational parking, and it has never been presented in a readable form accompanied by an explanation of how it was used to determine recreational use. At the time, Nelson\Nygard had informed city staff that the South Cove West lots were largely full because of ferry rider parking.

The city next asserted that they had 554 days of data. I received a 13-page PDF in response to another PRA that is titled “Waterfront Parking Data-collected by City staff Dates: 7/8/2-24-8/23/2024”. This is the first systematic collection of data collected during the recreational season—but is very sparse during daylight recreational hours. It was not available for the preparation of the first Kittelson report on parking—but was mentioned in that report. There are

only 12 weekdays when data for the South Cove lots was collected, and only at 4 pm. There are only 5 weekday counts along Seawall Drive, again only at 4 pm. The data appears to have been entered into a data base for use by the consultants from collection sheets like the 2021 RV data but includes numerous blank entries. While not collected between 1 and 3 pm, which were identified as the peak period, the data does have value. On August 1, 2024, the two South Cove lots were 96% full/ and two other of the 12 data points were more than 90% full. This effectively documents what we have told the city—the South Cove lots are full during recreational season weekday afternoons.

The third data source is 5 days of hourly monitoring collected by Quality Counts apparently as a subcontractor to Kittelson. Only three of those days were on weekdays, and one of those days was not during the recreational season. The data has not been released in an unmodified form; it is only available on the May 7, 2025, Kittleson report “Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project Parking and TDM Plan” where it is presented by lumping different days together. As noted above, the inclusion of non-recreational season data, and averaging, both obscure the peak parking demand.

Even through the treatment by Kittelson diminishes the statistical power of the data, which is already limited by the sparse data, the results are useful. If the city’s approach is to protect recreational parking from use by ferry riders, the data is sufficient to identify the South Cove lots, the O lot, Seawall Drive (see detailed discussion above) and J & K lots as lots that support recreational use that are heavily used on both weekdays and weekends. There is not enough data to reach a conclusion about potential use of the Skates/N lot—but then the city apparently plans to allow development of that lot so it will not be available for ferry parking.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

With the Design Review Board having indicated that their review of this project is complete, and further work will be carried out by the staff, we think the following work must be completed before BCDC can accept a permit application:

- (1) Require the City of Berkeley to prepare a parking plan that includes an enforceable plan to protect recreational parking on the South Cove Lots, Seawall Drive, O lot, and J & K lots. If the city proposes to BCDC that it can use the Skates/N lot, require the city to perform additional hourly monitoring of parking, during the recreational season, to demonstrate that devoting parking to ferry terminals will not interfere with business at the restaurant and overflow from the Yacht; **AND**, explain how such parking will be protected in the renewed planning effort for the Waterfront Specific Plan.
- (2) Require the city to publish all parking data in an appendix. All data collected by the city must be provided in spreadsheets that allow review by BCDC staff and the public. Data cannot be averaged to obscure content.
- (3) Require the City to use supportable mode split data and the departure projections used by WETA in their business plan to estimate parking demand. Any deviation from the mode split now observed at Richmond must be supported by substantial evidence and data, not

assumptions, Demonstrate compliance with Bay Plan Recreation Policies 3(b)(4) and 9, and Public Access Policy 6, with documented evidence rather than narrative assertion, including peak-period parking occupancy data, documented stakeholder engagement with the angler and water-sport communities, and identification of specific funding sources and responsible funds for the ongoing maintenance of all required public access facilities;

- (4) Require the city to provide a range of mode splits that consider existing terminals as shown in the 2025 WETA On Board survey and the Nelson\Nygaard report which establish a general pattern of 55-60% of passengers parking to ride the ferry.
- (5) Require the City to commit to completion of the Bay Trail water-edge alignment along the east side of 199 Seawall Drive consistent with the City's prior commitment under existing BCDC approvals; and
- (6) Require the City of Berkeley to present a budget with *secure funding* for maintenance of all previous facilities allowed by Permit Nos. 1966.028.00 and M1982.088.01 and any new facilities.
- (7) Require the city to consider use of the lot currently occupied by city parking bureau for ferry parking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Jim McGrath

Former member, San Francisco Bay Trail Board (over 10 years)

Enclosures:

1. Photograph by Andrew Sullivan, April 4, 2025, documenting recreational parking use along Seawall Drive
2. Photograph by Jim McGrath, May 23, 2025
3. Photograph of halibut caught on Berkeley Pier
4. Tide charts showing tides too low for winging or teaching on sailboats



Kenneth Jones's Post

 Halibut caught at Berkeley, CA Pier

Summarized by AI from the post below

 Pier Fishing In California · [Join](#)

Kenneth Jones · [Admin](#) · April 12 · 

...

Two halibut from the Berkeley Pier (when it was open) — top and bottom — Songslinger and Calrat. Old pics.



Berkeley

These are the times when the tide at Berkeley, Station id = 9414816 is over 3.0 feet. For folks using a 100cm long mast this seem fairly reasonable. I use these levels for my nice new foil, but always exercise caution at edge times!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10:00-15:30	2 10:30-16:15	3 11:20-17:10	4 12:10-18:05
5 13:05-19:15	6 14:00-19:55	7 15:05-19:55	8 16:15-19:55	9 17:15-19:55	10 18:00-19:55	11 10:00-10:20 18:35-19:55
12 10:00-11:15 19:00-19:55	13 10:00-12:15 19:20-19:55	14 10:00-13:10 19:45-19:55	15 10:00-14:05	16 10:00-15:05	17 10:10-16:05	18 11:05-17:10
19 12:10-18:20	20 13:10-19:45	21 14:20-19:55	22 15:25-19:55	23 16:25-19:55	24 17:15-19:55	25 10:00-10:20 17:55-19:55
26 10:00-11:25 18:25-19:55	27 10:00-12:30 18:50-19:55	28 10:00-13:30 19:10-19:55	29 10:00-14:30 19:30-19:55	30 10:00-15:30 19:40-19:55		

May (Berkeley > 3 feet)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 10:45-16:30 19:50-19:55	2 11:30-17:35 19:50-19:55
3 12:10-19:55	4 13:00-19:55	5 13:45-19:55	6 14:35-19:55	7 15:25-19:55	8 16:10-19:55	9 16:40-19:55
10 17:10-19:55	11 10:00-10:20 17:30-19:55	12 10:00-11:30 17:55-19:55	13 10:00-12:40 18:15-19:55	14 10:00-13:55 18:35-19:55	15 10:00-15:05 18:55-19:55	16 10:20-16:20 19:20-19:55
17 11:15-17:35 19:45-19:55	18 12:10-18:55	19 13:10-19:55	20 14:00-19:55	21 14:50-19:55	22 15:35-19:55	23 16:15-19:55
24 16:40-19:55	25 10:00-10:55 17:05-19:55	26 10:00-12:10 17:25-19:55	27 10:00-13:30 17:35-19:55	28 10:00-14:50 17:45-19:55	29 10:05-16:20 17:35-19:55	30 10:45-19:55

Berkeley

These are the times when the tide at Berkeley, Station id = 9414816 is over 3.0 feet. For folks using a 100cm long mast this seem fairly reasonable. I use these levels for my nice new foil, but always exercise caution at edge times!

February (Berkeley > 3 feet)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00-14:10	2 10:00-14:55	3 10:00-15:40	4 10:00-16:20	5 10:50-17:05	6 12:05-17:50	7 13:30-18:50
8 15:10-19:55	9 16:45-19:55	10 18:00-19:55	11 10:00-10:30 18:50-19:55	12 10:00-11:15 19:30-19:55	13 10:00-12:00	14 10:00-12:40
15 10:00-13:20	16 10:00-13:55	17 10:00-14:35	18 10:00-15:15	19 10:00-16:00	20 10:20-16:45	21 11:35-17:40
22 13:00-18:50	23 14:30-19:55	24 16:10-19:55	25 17:30-19:55	26 10:00-10:20 18:30-19:55	27 10:00-11:30 19:15-19:55	28 10:00-12:15 19:50-19:55

March (Berkeley > 3 feet)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00-13:05	2 10:00-13:55	3 10:00-14:40	4 10:00-15:25	5 10:05-16:10	6 11:05-16:55	7 12:05-17:50
8 14:15-19:55	9 15:35-19:55	10 17:00-19:55	11 18:10-19:55	12 10:00-10:30 19:05-19:55	13 10:00-11:25 19:40-19:55	14 10:00-12:15
15 10:00-13:00	16 10:00-13:45	17 10:00-14:30	18 10:00-15:15	19 10:00-16:05	20 10:45-16:55	21 11:50-17:55
22 13:00-19:05	23 14:15-19:55	24 15:35-19:55	25 16:55-19:55	26 18:00-19:55	27 10:00-10:50 18:50-19:55	28 10:00-11:55 19:30-19:55
29 10:00-12:55	30 10:00-13:50	31 10:00-14:40				

Upholding the Mission & Vision for Berkeley Waterfront and Marina

Honorable Mayor Adena Ishii
Berkeley City Council
Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department
Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission

June 27, 2026

Dear Councilmembers, PRW Commissioners, and Mayor Ishii,

I am a District 1 resident, a dog walker at Cesar Chavez Park, a sailor and paddleboarder in the South Sailing Basin, a rollerblader on the SF Bay Trail, a patron of Skates happy hour, and a sun bather at Shorebird Park. I am writing to express my concern that the current parking plan will be a detriment to the Berkeley Waterfront and undermines Berkeley's own stated values and goals for the area.

My concern is not the prospect of ferry service itself. Ferry service may ultimately provide benefits to Berkeley. The core of the issue is the current plans reliance on large surface parking lots located on some of our most precious public shoreline. The parking lot plan eliminates the opportunity for the expansion of recreational activities and restoration of wildlife habitats. It is also adversarial to our climate goals and to the fostering community gathering all of which the city of Berkeley and PRW themselves claim to value. These values have been stated and restated over the years in the *Waterfront Master Plan* (1986), *Berkeley Marina Master Plan* (2003), and most recently the *Waterfront Specific Plan* (2024). These official city documents evidence decades of civil deliberation and mission statements that have consistently proclaimed the Berkeley waterfront and marina “as an area primarily for recreational, open space, and environmental uses, with preservation and enhancement of beaches, marshes, and other natural habitats.” The proposed parking plan is also in conflict with the initiatives of other city commissions, including Environment and Climate Commission (ECC), who in 2026 reaffirmed the intent to prioritize “decarbonizing buildings and transportation...addressing the impacts and welfare of all species, including animals, insects, and plants; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; reducing toxics and preventing pollution; and supporting environmental justice”. A plan needs to be devised that honors decades worth of advocacy, establishes Berkeley as a global leader in climate change action, and is in alignment with fellow commissions and city initiatives.

The areas with the most potential for reimagining are the western lots facing the bay (Seawall lot and lots N, and O in front of the old HS Lordships, Skates, and the Berkeley Yacht Club). These sites represent some of the most spectacular waterfront land in the East Bay. Although these areas are currently parking lots, that does not mean they should remain parking lots. We need to use our imaginations and ask ourselves: is Berkeley's most coveted waterfront best used as a car

park for commuters? Or would it be better used as the foundation for expanding green and blue space where people can gather, learn, recreate, and connect with the Bay.

To be clear, I am not advocating for eliminating all parking. Waterfront users often transport sailing gear, kayaks, paddleboards, fishing equipment, dogs, and families or leave dripping wet after a swim. For these kinds of activities, automobile access is essential. Furthermore, the beloved Seawall drive parking spaces provide a spectacular view of the SF skyline and the Golden Gate Bridge often enjoyed during lunch breaks, after work wind downs, and during the whipping summer winds when the protective shield of a car is ideal. The distinction between these visitors and commuters is that recreational users are coming to experience the waterfront itself. They are exercising, learning new skills, relaxing, enjoying nature, supporting local businesses, and building community. Knowing that some amount of parking at the waterfront will always be necessary, the PRW and city council should aim to consolidate the parking footprint with multistory, solar powered parking structures with EV charging located in central, but less prime locations such as lots J, K, L, M and next to the Double Tree hotel.

Rather than use prime waterfront land as vehicle storage, Berkeley should prioritize uses which generate human-nature connection, public benefit, and meaningful revenue without allowing it to be overtaken as a transportation hub or by commercial enterprises. A list of alternative ideas, many of which have already been discussed by the Commission, included in the Waterfront Specific Plan, or proposed by members of the public, is presented below to illustrate the many opportunities available beyond expanding surface parking. Also included are some new suggestions with sample images at the end of this letter:

- **Community fishing club** near the renovated pier, modeled after organizations such as Cal Sailing Club or Bluewater Foundation. A volunteer-supported fishing club could promote waterfront recreation, education, and stewardship while creating a pathway to future boat ownership and berth leases.
- **Small-scale, casual food and beverage district** featuring food trucks, kiosks, or micro-storefronts. This could serve as a business incubator for East Bay food/bev entrepreneurs while generating marina revenue and activating the waterfront. Fast-casual food so as not to compete directly with Skates or future HS Lordships businesses
- **Bay Trail revamp**
- **TREES, TREES, TREES and landscaping** - provide wind protection, improve aesthetics, support migratory birds, and create more peaceful and comfortable gathering spaces.
- **Historical exhibits and interpretive displays** highlighting Berkeley's maritime history, ecology, and relationship to the Bay, Berkeley Waterfront Community Coalition has already done tremendous work gathering this material.

- **Multi-purpose public plaza** designed for multiple uses, including roller skating, outdoor concerts, dance events, food truck gatherings, and private venue rental. With electrical hookups and waterfront views, such a space could become one of Berkeley's most unique public venues.
- **Public art** – local mosaic artists, kinetic wind sculptures, murals
- **Seating terraces/lounges:** seating areas with fixed lounge chairs, Adirondack-style seating designed specifically for enjoying the waterfront landscape
- **Repairing/renovating the launch ramp next to Lordships** – open water launch for more advanced windsurfers, foilers, and kayakers
- **Kite shop** – buy kites, learn to repair kites
- **Rental shop** – bike, scooter, roller blade/skate, skate board, kites, adaptive mobility equipment (BORP extension)

The Berkeley Waterfront has the potential to become one of the East Bay's premier destinations for recreation and respite while also strengthening the Marina Fund. As the largest marina in the San Francisco Bay, we have the unique opportunity to create a regional destination. With the right amenities, inviting public spaces, convenient and affordable access, and food and beverage options we can attract more visitors from all over the region to come by sailboat, ferry, bus, bike, foot and, yes, even car. But it's imperative that we think bold and push ourselves to decrease our reliance on cars especially when it is going to cost precious waterfront land with so much potential.

The principle is simple: people use what we build.

If we build parking lots, we will attract more cars. If we build safe bicycle infrastructure, secure bike parking, convenient transit connections, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and welcoming public spaces, people will use those instead. If we build places for communities to gather, communities will grow.

The Berkeley Waterfront is one of the city's greatest public assets. Decisions made today will shape how residents experience this shoreline for generations. My hope is that Berkeley chooses a future that prioritizes recreation, ecology, and community over additional parking.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

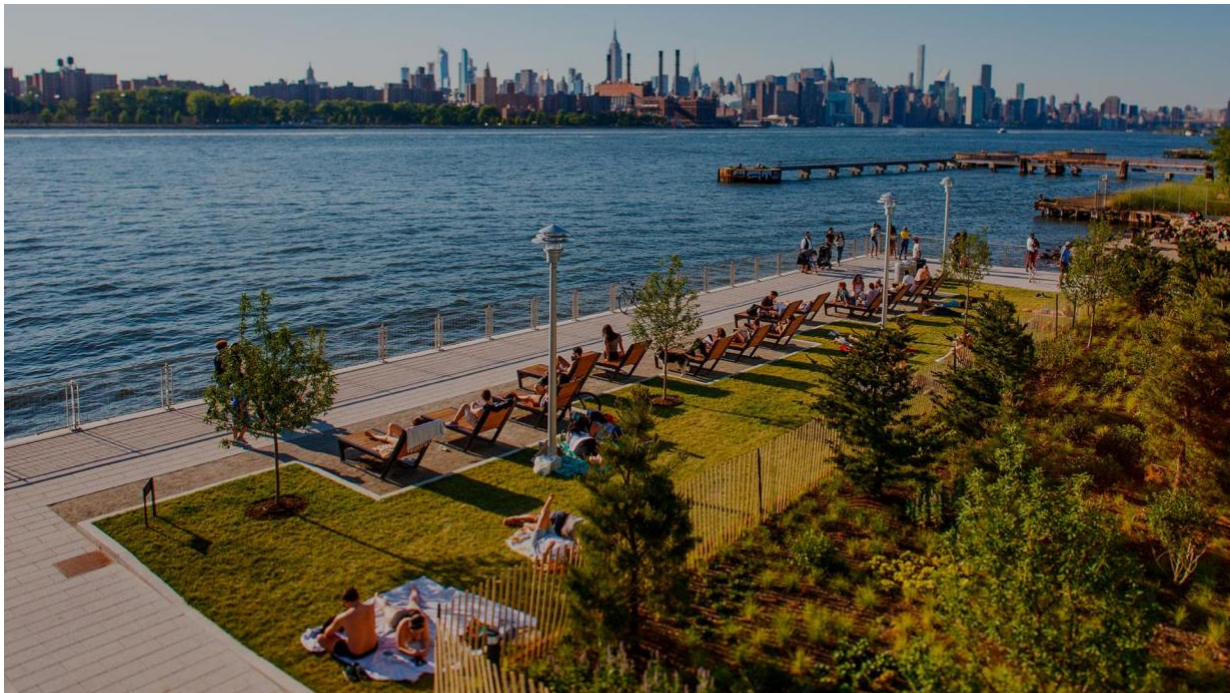
Sincerely,

Allison Granzella
District 1 Resident
Cal Sailing Club Volunteer

A quote used in Berkeley Vision 2050 Task Force's report *Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure: Creating a Better Future for Berkeley* published in 2020:

“Infrastructure investment will be crucial. The world should adopt a simple rule: if big infrastructure projects are not green, they should not be given the green light. Otherwise, we will be locked into bad choices for decades to come.”

- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, 2017



Figures 1 and 2: Waterside Lounge Chairs



Figure 3: multipurpose plaza, quiet regular day



Figure 4: Multipurpose plaza with food trucks (AI generated)



Figure 5: Multipurpose plaza with roller skating (AI generated)

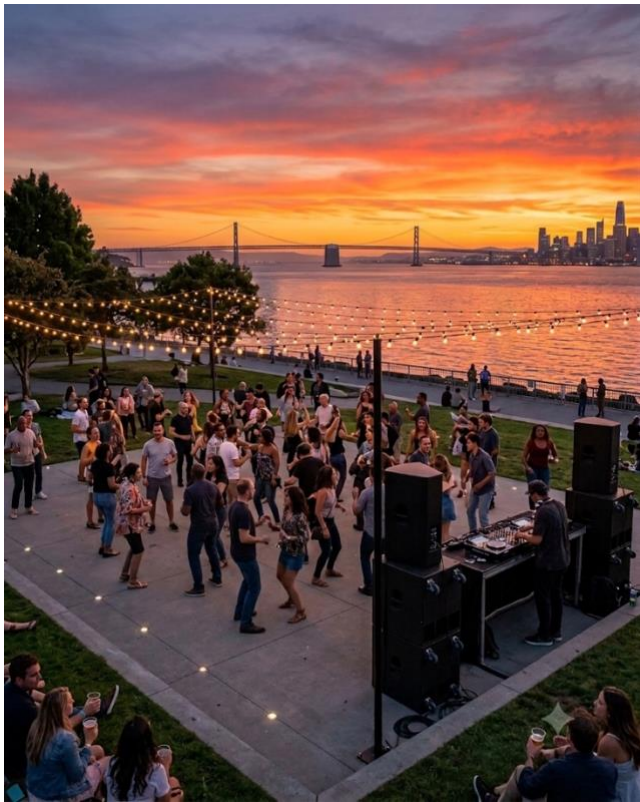


Figure 6: Multipurpose plaza with dancing (AI generated)



Figure 7: Lake Merritt "Days Like This" Dance Party every Friday night 5-9pm



Figure 8: Bay trail perimeter with dense coastal trees and shrubs for wind protection, bird habitat, and green enjoyment



Figure 9: Community Fishing Center (AI generated)

Miller, Roger

From: Camille Antinori <camilleantinori@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 9, 2026 11:01 AM
To: McNulty, Liza; Allan Abshez; Ben Nash; Miller, Roger; Bartlett, Ben; BMASP
Cc: Claudia Kawczynska; E Diehm; Jim McGrath; John Steere
Subject: Comments on the draft ferry parking management implementation plan
Attachments: Extracted-pages-from-PRW-Agenda-2023-07-12.pdf; 2024-05-14 Item 07 Amendment 1 to the WETA Memorandum of Understanding for the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project.pdf

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. McNulty, PRW Commission and BMASP/WSP planners,

Please add the comment below to the public comment record for the draft pier-ferry parking management implementation plan and BMASP/WSP comments. Please also circulate to the PRW Commissioners. I include references, attachments and links to support statements I gave at the PRW meeting last night.

Thank you, Camille Antinori

Dear Ms. McNulty,

We find it ironic that folks claiming to support this plan because they are pro-transit are going through these enormous gyrations to create a big parking lot for ferry commuters and their cars.

Another irony: the MOU between WETA and the City said the City was responsible for finding convenient, i.e. nearby, low-cost parking for ferry customers.^[1] Yet, the PRW Commission (in its 2023 comments on the Waterfront Specific Plan) derided current recreationists as trying to protect a “personal right” to low-cost parking within a reasonable distance of the shoreline,^[2] even though many are carrying gear or children.

We also remind you that at all the other WETA terminals with routes to SF begin from big parking lots, built on areas where there was virtually *nothing* before.^[3]

There has been no study of the impacts of time limits and paid parking on recreation at the waterfront. The analysis focuses only on ferry commuters.

This area, including South Cove, was intended for recreation and access to the docks and shoreline. Many of these activities depend on the tides, and suggesting “early bird specials” beginning at 6:00 am or 7:00 a.m. every day is not a realistic solution.

So, in the interests of being proactive, we ask that planners:

1. Conduct a study of the recreational impacts of restricted and higher-cost parking, inclusive of reliable baseline data and demand modeling.

2. Locate ferry commuter parking along Marina Boulevard, University Avenue, and Spinnaker Way, with shuttle and valet service beginning on day one of ferry service.
3. Continue investing in projects like the artificial turf at South Cove East and the repaired east dock. These are beautiful. People are using them *now*. They bring more people to the waterfront and benefit us *all*.

There are many better ways to support the waterfront than this proposal.

Finally, [I link here photos of CSC's Pride Day Open House](#) which attracted a record number of attendees - 430! Some of our skippers speak Mandarin or Spanish and were able to converse with many of our guests in their own language. Photos include some of our boats berthed at J-dock. This effort is hosted entirely by volunteers at CSC.

Thank you,

Camille Antinori

Director, [BWCC](#)

Berkeley resident D3 (Bartlett)

^[1] 2024-05-14 Item 07 Amendment 1 to the WETA Memorandum of Understanding for the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project, p. 14 (highlighting mine) attached.

^[2] See Extracted-pages-from-PRW-Agenda-2023-07-12, p. 12, (highlighting mine) attached.

^[3] See [BWCCDEIRCOMMENTSFINAL.pdf](#), pp. 46-50 starting last paragraph on p. 46 for aerial photos of other WETA terminals in comparison to the Berkeley south waterfront project area, and pp. 34-41 starting with section 7 on p. 34 for images and discussion of Seawall Drive as recreational amenity through time.

Trending: Chef's financial troubles | Oakland housing | Filipino Americans | Hurricane Lala | Hayden Panettiere | Newsom Influence | Tartli

OPINION // OPEN FORUM

The park at Golden Gate Fields could be the next Crissy Field — if we dare to dream

By Brennan Cox, Contributor
July 30, 2026

 Gift Article





Fans gather to take a look as horses are paraded around the paddock before a race at Golden Gate Fields in Berkeley, Calif., on Sunday May 26, 2024. The racetrack, which opened in during World War II, will be closing on June 9th as owners are focusing on their Southern California tracks.

Carlos Avila Gonzalez/The Chronicle



Listen Now:

The park at Golden Gate Fields could be the next Crissy Field — if we dare to dream
About 6 Minutes

1x

Everlit

At a recent public presentation in Albany on the nascent plans to replace the shuttered Golden Gate Fields horse racing track with a waterfront park, much of the discussion centered on taxes, acquisition and ownership of the site.

While concerns over financial matters are understandable — the buyers have until 2027 to secure \$175 million to purchase the site from the Stronach Group — questions about what the park will look like and how it will best serve the community were left unanswered.

In fact, since the plan to turn the racetrack into a “world-class” park was announced in late March, only one conceptual image has been presented to the public — and that vision has left a lot to be desired.

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The ho-hum rendering produced by Citizens of Eastshore Park shows a familiar mix of open grassland, habitat restoration, trails and a handful of buildings. Those are worthwhile elements — but they also look remarkably similar to the passive shoreline landscapes that already define much of the narrow strip of land squeezed between San Francisco Bay and Interstate 80.

The new park is being billed as the “missing link” that will unite McLaughlin Eastshore State Park, which spans 8½ miles along the East Bay shoreline. While the existing green spaces have plenty of remarkable views and places to walk or ride bikes, they don’t really add up to a remarkable waterfront. Instead, they often feel assembled through circumstance rather than shaped by a shared vision — an afterthought that lacks identity, programming and civic energy.

If we’re going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars acquiring and ultimately building this new park, we should aim higher than what currently surrounds it. Sure, the Albany Bulb is a striking oddity, but its ragged, overgrown landscape grew out of a Berkeley garbage dump, construction debris and landfill that today would be prohibitively expensive to remove. César E. Chávez Park at the Berkeley waterfront is a pleasant place to fly a kite or admire the Golden Gate Bridge, but it’s not a place that regularly draws people from across the region.

The East Bay has an opportunity to build a waterfront that will be more than just a nice place to walk a dog.

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For instance, San Francisco has demonstrated what ambitious waterfront parks can become. Crissy Field is a former military airfield transformed into one of the nation's great public spaces. Crane Cove Park and Bayfront Park have embraced their industrial history rather than erase it. India Basin is combining ecological restoration with recreation, community investment and a strong sense of place.

The San Francisco parks succeed because they combine ecology with recreation, programming, history and identity. They give people reasons to visit, gather and return. Each had opportunities and constraints, and it was that mix — combined with creative thinking — that produced memorable and enduring public places.

They also attract investment. Philanthropy and public funding don't follow ordinary ideas. They follow compelling visions. Great parks aren't simply built — they inspire people to help build them.

That is why I'm concerned about beginning Golden Gate Fields with a blank slate. Currently, the terms of the sale require the owner to tear down all existing structures, including the racetrack and grandstand.

Yes, the grandstand is undeniably large, aging and visually imposing. It may not be worth saving, but before the current owner spends an estimated \$50 million demolishing the site's buildings, shouldn't we first ask how they might be adapted?



An aerial view of the track and grandstands at Golden Gate Fields in Berkeley on May 26, 2024. The racetrack, which opened in during World War II, closed on June 9 and the focus of attention is on what happens next to the prime property.

Carlos Avila Gonzalez/The Chronicle

What if the existing racetrack became a walking, running and cycling loop? What if parts of the grandstand became a recreation hub with pickleball, a climbing gym, community gathering spaces, restaurants or a public marketplace to help transform an underutilized waterfront and generate long-term revenue?

Preserving flexibility isn't just about buildings — it's about options. Before deciding that every acre must become parkland, we should ask whether a small, carefully planned ground lease for a recreation-serving use could make the remaining 150-plus acres even better. If a hotel, sports facility or other compatible use could help fund the park for decades while strengthening public access and recreation, shouldn't that possibility be explored before irreversible decisions are made?

These aren't answers. They're examples of the kinds of possibilities we should explore before irreversible decisions make them impossible.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity at Golden Gate Fields is to rethink the relationship between ecology and recreation. For too long, we've treated them as competing ideas. They don't have to be. For many people, recreation is how they experience nature.

The way people experience parks has changed dramatically in recent decades. More of us spend our free time walking, running, cycling, climbing, paddling, mountain biking, playing soccer or pickleball, and looking for places that encourage movement and community. Recreation has become one of the primary ways people connect with the outdoors.

Golden Gate Fields has the rare size and location to embrace that reality. It could become a place where restored wetlands exist alongside trails, recreation, community gathering and year-round programming. A place that serves neighborhood families on a Tuesday afternoon and hosts regional events on the weekend. A place where ecology and recreation strengthen one another instead of competing for space.

Acquiring the land for the new park isn't the only challenge. It's also creating a park that can be built, programmed, funded and sustained for generations. That requires more than money. It requires imagination, long-term thinking and the willingness to preserve options until we understand which ones offer the greatest public value.

About Opinion

Guest opinions in **Open Forum and Insight** are produced by writers with expertise, personal experience or original insights on a subject of interest to our readers. **Their views do not necessarily reflect** the opinion of The Chronicle editorial board, which is committed to providing a diversity of ideas to our readership.

[Read more about our transparency and ethics policies](#)

We inherited an East Bay waterfront shaped by circumstance. Golden Gate Fields gives us the rare opportunity to shape its next chapter through vision. Before we make irreversible decisions, let's preserve the flexibility to imagine everything this place could become.

Yes, the East Bay deserves a “world-class” waterfront park, and making that goal a reality will require something bolder than a more-of-the-same approach to design.

Brennan Cox is a founding partner of Groundworks, a landscape architecture and urban design firm in Berkeley.

July 30, 2026

Brennan Cox

Around the Web

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By Healthy Living Tips

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By Vetob

9 Years Ago - Most Beautiful Twins. Their Appearance Today Will Shock You

By novelodge

Miller, Roger

From: Hollander, Eleanor
Sent: Tuesday, September 1, 2026 2:10 PM
To: Helmbrecht, Mark; Miller, Roger; Arredondo, Carianna; Riemer, Allison; Gregory, Thomas
Cc: Mehrfar, Pejman; Parks, Jamie
Subject: Berkeley's Civic Center | Upcoming Meeting, 9/24/26 | Sub Committee of your Commission (11am Zoom)

Greetings to the Secretaries of Berkeley's Commissions on Landmarks, Disability, Parks Recreation & Waterfront, Civic Arts, and Transportation & Infrastructure Commissions!

I hope this finds you all well. Back in 2020, your commission participated in developing the now adopted vision for Berkeley's Civic Center. Then your commission participated in the development of a preferred design concept for Civic Center which was adopted in 2023. **Now we need your commissioners to help with advancing Phase III** of the project which has been about securing project funding and furthering the basis of design for both buildings surrounding the park. We are continuing to use a "super sub-committee commissions" structure to meet and share information on this large Civic Center effort.

Please encourage your commissioners to attend the upcoming online meeting on 9/24 at 11am (details below) where we'll discuss new grant opportunities for Civic Center and share the latest on the Veterans Memorial Building and the Maudelle Shirek Building ("Old City Hall") designs. **Everyone is welcome (even if they are not a commissioner)** and we are **looking forward to your participation!**

Thursday, September 24th | 11 AM (PST) | Civic Center Phase III (Super Sub-Cmte)

Zoom :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88901671838?pwd=Yj4FvxLDhYUHdQF4RE4WUntSOk5UL5.1>

Meeting ID: 889 0167 1838

Passcode: 427238

One tap mobile

+16694449171,,88901671838# US

+16699009128,,88901671838# US (San Jose)

If your commissioners or members of the public have questions and/or **would like to be added to the project mailing list**, reach out to the project managers: [Eleanor](#) Hollander, (510) 981-7536 and Pejman Mehrfar. Project information can be found on the city's website here: <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/civic-center-vision-plan-project>

Thanks!

To: PRW Commission
Fr: Claudia Kawczynska
Re: BCDC Minutes, August 6, 2026
Date: September 2, 2026

Please see the following link: <https://www.bcdc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/354/2025/12/Draft-Commission-Meeting-Minutes-from-August-6-2026.pdf>