



February 25, 2026

Support for City of Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement

Dear Berkeley advisory committee members,

Seamless Bay Area would like to express support for the City of Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement project.

The proposed project would support regional mobility with a new transit option complementing existing transit modes, improve access to jobs and destinations across the Bay Area, and provide redundancy for emergency response and evacuation.

The project would support safe public access to the waterfront, and support economic activity and revitalization along the waterfront, support local businesses and restaurants with an attractive option for visitors.

It would support the city's environmental goals by providing additional alternatives to driving and providing electric, zero-emission vessels.

In line with the Seamless Transit Principles, we support transit that connects with active transportation and as part of a seamless network with other transit modes.

We appreciate that ferry access integrates with walking and biking networks, including the Bay Trail and nearby paths.

However, we are concerned that the proposed project would offer 35 minute headways during weekdays. To allow for better coordinated transfers to local bus service, we would urge the SF Bay Ferry to reduce headways to 30 minutes.

In addition, we would urge the ferry agency and the city to coordinate with AC Transit to focus on a service vision and investments over time to increase reliability on the 51B to facilitate better timed transfers.

Thank you for your consideration,

Adina
Adina Levin
Executive Director
Seamless Bay Area
<https://seamlessbayarea.org>

650-646-4344



Visit Berkeley

The Official Destination Marketing Organization for the City of Berkeley

Re: Support for ZP2026-0014 (Item 7G) – Berkeley Ferry Terminal and Pier Replacement Project

Dear Chair and Members of the Berkeley Zoning Adjustments Board,

On behalf of Visit Berkeley, I am writing to express our strong support for approval of ZP2026-0014 (Item 7G), the Berkeley Ferry Terminal and Pier Replacement Project. This project is pivotal for transportation in Berkeley and the entire Bay Area, representing a transformative investment in regional mobility, economic vitality, and waterfront revitalization.

Replacing the aging Berkeley Pier infrastructure will restore safe public access to a long-underutilized waterfront asset while positioning Berkeley as a competitive destination alongside Oakland and San Francisco. Direct ferry access will bring new visitors to our shoreline, supporting local restaurants, hotels, retailers, and cultural institutions. Increased visitation strengthens Berkeley's tourism economy, supports jobs, and generates economic activity that benefits the entire community.

The proposed ferry service adds a vital new transit option that complements existing modes and integrates with walking and biking networks, including the Bay Trail. Reliable regional access is essential to workforce participation and economic mobility, helping businesses attract talent and visitors alike. Inclusion in SF Bay Ferry's adopted Strategic Plan underscores the project's importance to long-term regional transportation expansion.

The use of electric, zero-emission vessels aligns with Berkeley's climate leadership and commitment to sustainable growth. Additionally, ferry infrastructure provides critical redundancy for emergency response and evacuation capacity, enhancing regional resilience.

Approval of ZP2026-0014 will advance a pivotal transportation investment that strengthens Berkeley's competitiveness, revitalizes the waterfront, and helps lift the broader Bay Area economy. Visit Berkeley respectfully urges the Board to approve Item 7G.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Church".

Jeffrey Church
President & CEO
Visit Berkeley

Jacob, Melinda

From: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)
Subject: FW: Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement Project – ZAB Use Permit
Attachments: Berkeley Ferry Terminal Project - Zoning Adjustments Board Support Letter Template.docx.pdf

From: Sarah J. Bell <bell.sarah@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 9:30 AM
To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) <Planningzab@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement Project – ZAB Use Permit

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Attached you can find East Bay YIMBY's letter of support for the Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement Project.

Regards,
Sarah Bell, on behalf of East Bay YIMBY



26 Feb 2026

City of Berkeley
Zoning Adjustments Board
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Re: Berkeley Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement Project — Use Permit

Dear Chair and Members of the Zoning Adjustments Board,

On behalf of East Bay YIMBY, we are writing to express our support for the City of Berkeley's Ferry Terminal / Pier Replacement Project at the Berkeley Waterfront. The City of Berkeley is currently finalizing a draft environmental review report for the project.

We recognize the proposed project as an important opportunity to restore public access to the Berkeley waterfront through the reconstruction of the Berkeley public pier, diversification of public transit options and increasing regional access to the Bay. From our perspective, restoring the Berkeley Pier as an active transportation and civic asset supports local businesses, workers, and visitors, while reinforcing Berkeley's role as a regional destination along the shoreline.

The Berkeley Ferry Terminal is included in SF Bay Ferry's adopted Strategic Plan as part of a long-term regional ferry system expansion. The proposed service would be operated with electric, zero-emission vessels, supporting regional mobility while aligning with City of Berkeley's climate, sustainability, and transportation goals. As part of the broader ferry network, Berkeley ferry service would also contribute to emergency response and evacuation capacity, strengthening the city's resilience to respond to an emergency.

We recognize the importance of careful review to ensure the project is consistent with applicable land-use regulations, public access requirements, and community compatibility. We appreciate that the project is being reviewed through the City of Berkeley's established environmental review and permitting processes, with opportunities to refine project details and mitigation measures as appropriate.

We support continued advancement of the project through the Zoning Adjustments Board review process and appreciate the Board's role in evaluating the proposed Use Permit. We encourage consideration of the long-term public benefits associated with

restoring the Berkeley Pier as a transportation, access, and resilience asset for the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your continued work stewarding San Francisco Bay and its shoreline.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bell

Lead, East Bay YIMBY

Jacob, Melinda

From: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)
Subject: FW: ZAB meeting February 26, 2026
Attachments: Statement on WETA-Berkeley Ferry Proposal.pdf

From: kelly hammargren <kellyhammargren@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:56 PM
To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) <Planningzab@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: ZAB meeting February 26, 2026

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Dear Zoning Adjustment Board Members and Staff,

Why is approval of the Pier Ferry Concept being brought to the ZAB before the release of the DEIR.

The ZAB has not been party to the conversations and citizens presentations brought before the Parks Commission.

I expect the ZAB will be presented with a one-sided source of information and request that you consider the attached document.

kelly hammargren



Statement on WETA-Berkeley Ferry Proposal

Berkeley Waterfront Community Coalition (BWCC) is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving the Berkeley Waterfront as it has established itself for 85 years: as low-cost public bluespace access for bikers, birders, walkers, picnickers, fishers, boaters, sailors and windsurfers, and other recreational users. BWCC has grave concerns about the current ferry plan for the Berkeley Pier for the following reasons:

1. *WETA (Water Emergency Transportation Authority), which operates the ferry, and the City of Berkeley (COB) have failed to offer other means to restore the Berkeley Pier. Bureaucrats and planners are shortchanging the public by ignoring options that do not depend on a large-scale ferry.*
2. *The City of Berkeley (COB) will be hobbled by annual operating shortfalls of at least \$5.6 million.*
3. *The ferry, even at full capacity, gets few cars off the road and caters to a small number of higher income commuters, seeking subsidies all the while.*
4. *If built, it would be the ONLY Bay Area ferry terminal sited in a pre-existing park and recreational zone, crowding out low-cost recreational access and posing environmental issues.*
5. *With operating expenses at about \$36 per rider, 70-90% subsidized, the ferry is not financially efficient – there are better, more equitable ways to fund mass transit right now. Also, 60% of city-surveyed Berkeley residents said they would rarely or never use the ferry to commute, making this one of WETA's most inefficient routes.*

Here is a Q&A based on pier/ferry proposals from WETA and the City of Berkeley. BWCC maintains that city presentations have been **misleading**, the plan's cost is **unjustifiable**, and the effect on low-cost recreational access to the Waterfront, **devastating**.

Q: **PROPOSAL.** What is being proposed? A: Replacing Berkeley's now-closed 3000' fishing pier with a 1080' pier and breakwater with a ferry plaza and terminal for a large commuter ferry that would go to the San Francisco Ferry Building, with a transfer ferry to Mission Bay, and possibly to Larkspur in the future on weekends only.

Q: **INCOME.** Will Berkeley earn money from WETA ferry fees? A: No.

Q: **COSTS.** Does Berkeley have to pay anything for WETA operations? A: Yes. The annual operating expense **gap** is estimated to be at least **\$5.6 million** even after 10 years. WETA has suggested Berkeley **subsidize** the ferry via **sales tax revenue**, like Richmond; **property tax assessments** (like Alameda/Bay Farm); **city funds**; an increased waterfront **hotel tax**; and/or **private funding**. ([WETA 3-17-2022 Berkeley Ferry Service Business Plan, pp. 47-48](#)) to recoup capital and operating costs.

Q: **EFFICIENCY.** WETA operating expenses are about \$36/rider compared to Bart's \$21 per rider. Both are being subsidized right now, with Bart from 70-80% and WETA typically higher, from 70-90%.

Q: **EQUITY.** Will the WETA ferry plan crowd out low-cost recreational access to the coast? A: This is inevitable. The waterfront now is a regional recreational resource, with lower income visitors tending to the southern area of the waterfront where the ferry would be located. The WETA and COB concept turns the Marina into a **transportation hub with high-priced services**, rather than enhancing its purpose as a **public park** and boat **harbor**. Damage will also come from diminished and more expensive parking where recreationists often bring equipment, small children and pets, such as for the city's popular **Adventure Playground**, **Shorebird Park**, and two sailing clubs nearby

to the pier entrance. Ironically, those fees will be part of Berkeley's tithing to cover its ferry expenses. Most slots along Seawall Drive used by "sunset viewers" daily will disappear.

Q: **PARKING?** A: Proponents of the plan like to lowball the number needing parking near the Berkeley Pier. City council is already considering a "[Waterfront Parking Benefits Zone](#)" to manage an influx of ferry commuters, before the plan is approved, and support the city's ferry investments. However, even with [policies to encourage non-car travel](#), most will drive, and the city will need **420 or more** ferry patron parking spaces, way more than the 250 allocated in HsL restaurant's lot. With previous smaller (<50 person) ferries (Tidelines and Genentech), many patrons ignored the designated Marina Boulevard slots and parked in spaces meant for recreational visitors. How many will wait for the bus?

Q: **CARS v. FERRY.** Won't this get cars off the road? A: A few. The current projection is **1,053 riders** departing from Berkeley per weekday ([WETA-Berkeley 3-17-2022, Table 1](#)). BART moves about **170,000** riders per weekday. The Bay Bridge sees about **260,000 vehicle crossings** per day.

Q: **ENVIRONMENT.** Is the plan subject to environmental review? A: **Yes. But** WETA is lobbying politicians to categorically **exempt** ferries from the CEQA process and **minimize review** through the primary Bay overseer, BCDC (WETA 2021, p. 13; p. 145 of pdf).

Q: **ZERO-EMISSION.** Q: Will ferries be electric? A: Unclear. While the city has claimed they will be electric from Day 1, WETA leadership reports state that "an all-electric ferry fleet may be cited as a milestone for **incentivizing a community to come out and support** the development of a new ferry terminal." No plans exist to buy an electric ferry that can handle the planned 250-passenger load.

Q: **PIER FUTURE.** Is this the only way to get our pier back? A: **No.** The ferry plan calls for a demo and rebuild for a 1080' pier with a current cost of: \$14 million. A 2100' pier would cost \$26 million. Both sums are less than Berkeley's *current* commitment to land- and waterside WETA ferry-specific investments. To rebuild the pier, Berkeley would have to raise funds--with or without the WETA ferry.

Q: **VALUE.** How will people use it? A: Unclear. In the city's survey, 60% said they would rarely or never use it to commute. For *nonwork* purposes, only 44% chose the highest number of trips annually: 10+. In that case, this is even a greater waste of money, resources, and low-cost bluespace access.

Q: **OPTIONS.** What are alternatives? A: You tell us! An in-marina ferry option to reduce capital and operating costs? No ferry, just a refurbished or rebuilt pier? Privately-owned ferry companies like Tidelines again and available on weekend? None of these have been analyzed as alternatives.

Q: **EMERGENCY.** WETA sees a ferry as an asset in case an earthquake shuts down BART and the Bay Bridge. Is this realistic? A: After the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, the Red and White fleet ferry service only moved 500 passengers a day. If the ferry is electric, as touted, utilities could be knocked out in such a catastrophic event. The terminal is **not being constructed to carry emergency vehicles.** So, its emergency role—and reliability—is uncertain.

[Email comments to camilleantinori@duck.com](mailto:camilleantinori@duck.com)

Jacob, Melinda

From: Phyllis Orrick <poberkeley@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 7:13 AM
To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB); Taplin, Terry
Cc: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)
Subject: Attn ZAB Secretary Waterfront Specific Plan 2/26 Public Comment for

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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 ZAB. Commissioners:

As someone who lives just east of the freeway from the Berkeley waterfront and who has spent much time in and around the waterfront:

- At Cal Sailing
- Taking kids to the adventure playground
- Joining school field trips to the Shorebird Nature Center
- Going out to the westernmost part to watch the waves
- Seeing my then high schooler learn about the marine environment as a sea scout
- Walking my dogs over the past 30 years at and around César Chavez
- Leading bike rides out to the old pier and back on that nicely upgraded bridge west of the Sea breeze and into and around the new paths at Brickyard Cove
- Rides in and around the eastern stretch along Aquatic Park, also wonderfully rejuvenated with protected bike lanes and landscaped picnic areas and the fresh playground near Ashby
- as well as the vibrant nexus of Waterside Workshops and BORP

What I want to emphasize in no particular order is 1) the importance of fiscal health of the waterfront 2) importance of expanding access to people who don't drive their own cars 3) maximizing parking for all kinds of users: commuters, weekend families, recreators all days of the week, school trips 4) expanding connectedness to the Bay Trail to raise visibility among new users by high quality and safe protected bike and pedestrian access 5) the environmental health of a manmade environment imposed on the bay's ecosystem and 6) the undeniable role it plays in the health of the residents in and around the bay, including in times of eco disaster such as earthquakes and fire.

Given all that I write you to fully endorse the Waterfront Specific Plan to the degree that it supports the items listed above, which I believe it does.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Orrick
Near Kains and Virginia
Berkeley
Chair, Caltrans D4 Pedestrian Advisory Committee*
Member, Berkeley Commission on Aging*
Member, Sierra Club*
*For identification purposes only, not speaking for any group

Jacob, Melinda

From: L Salzinger <lezs2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:42 PM
To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)
Subject: Protect the Marina for people

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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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 Zoning Board,
I am a longtime Berkeley resident and home owner, as well as a longtime user of the Berkeley Marina to walk, to meet friends, to enjoy the wildlife, to walk my dog.
All these activities are endangered by the City of Berkeley's insistence on managing the Marina in the interests of I don't know who, but not for humans and wildlife. The latest and worst instance of this is what's going on with the possible ferry line.
I have no objection to the ferry! But the waterfront should remain environmentally protected and free for Berkeley residents as the baseline. Any other uses should follow after that is secured.
Until the environmental impact study is completed, the ZAB should not be approving anything!
And if the impact statement says the terminal can be installed without damaging the area environmentally, then the ZAB should make sure it is installed in a way that protects it socially.
The Marina has always been a space that Berkeley city residents can use for free. It is our park. Why would our city government remove that? In whose interest would the ZAB act to remove a free park for city residents?
Please save the Marina for the city's residents, as a free, beautiful, natural recreation space.
Thanks.

Leslie Salzinger
3021 Fulton Street
Berkeley, CA 94705

Jacob, Melinda

From: Doug Yamamoto <718glazier@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:05 PM
To: Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB)
Subject: Feb 28 meeting, Item 7G, Proposed Ferry Terminal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear ZAB,

I would like to second the comments previously submitted by Jim McGrath on the proposed new ferry terminal.

Despite what the Berkeley staff report claims, ZAB has a responsibility to make a CEQA determination in this matter. This project on its face would have a significant and undetermined impact on the Bay waters and shoreline. Its effects would permanently change the shoreline and the Bay waters, affecting the generations of future shoreline visitors.

How many people go down to view the Larkspur Ferry terminal and enjoy watching all the mud churn up every time a ferry passes? How many fishermen and families do you see enjoying that marina? That would be the future of an unregulated ferry that the current project envisions.

There are other better alternatives than this ill conceived boondoggle to benefit the few at the expense of the many. The ferry would eat up most of the parking, and drive visitors and regular users of the marina away.

Ocean waves and a storm destroyed the Capitola Pier. Less than three years later, they rebuilt it in place, and strong enough to withstand future storms. Berkeley Pier has been closed for 10 years. Apparently no one in Berkeley government seems to care enough. We need to rebuild the Berkeley Pier as it was. That would constitute true stewardship of the marina for future generations.

These are just some thoughts from a longtime and regular visitor to the Berkeley marina, and when it was still open, the Berkeley Pier.

Doug Yamamoto