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### **How Golden Gate Fields Can Support a Greener and Healthier Community**

A racetrack is a fun place to visit and watch horses run, but what about people?—driving everywhere, eating too much, not exercising. Obesity and poor health have reached epic proportions, traffic is out of control on highways, and main arteries like University, Gilman, Powell, Solano and Ashby are bloated daily with no relief in sight.

For many years I have attended meetings, made suggestions, and observed improvements being made on University, including median strip planting, resurfacing, and construction of new apartments that are on transit routes. But, there are still problems like litter, little or no parking, and many great businesses and restaurants without enough business. We need to think about solutions instead of adding to area problems.

However, the problems of congestion and poor air quality are becoming apparent and frustrating to citizens who live and work in each community—Solano, University, Ashby, San Pablo, Gilman, Hollis, and Powell St. among others. Traffic on these streets during commuter hours brings a heavy price—waste of fuel, short tempers, late arrival at work or school, bypassing businesses and restaurants and wear and tear on drivers—plus the pollution that permeates the air despite upgrades in fuel emission standard cause havoc on peoples bronchioles. I always seem to be in line behind the car with the faulty exhaust system and its nasty fumes.

Golden Gate Fields, an historic piece of land, is now available. Previous plans have not worked as no one wants yet another hotel, high-rise condo, or restaurant. There are plenty of properties that are now unoccupied. What might work? The land can solve many problems, if my concept is viewed by the entire area as a potential solution to these many problems. I will outline the concept. Hopefully those with more expertise in these areas will think “outside the box” and come together to solve a major, area-wide problem. Groups like the Waterfront Committee might take on this challenge. Golden Gate Fields could be transformed into a major hub for transportation, sports, exercise, recreation, dining, and a park that ties together the entire Bay region with greater access and improved usage that benefits the entire area. Here is what might happen...

Drivers, instead of turning off I-80 on University, Gilman, Ashby, or Powell would drive in to GGF and park in an assigned space (paid for annually like Fast Trak). The parking fees would help defray costs. They would then have an option to:

- A. Hop on small mini vans like the ones Emeryville is using. Free Emery Go Round Shuttle now carries riders from MacArthur BART throughout Emeryville. This is similar to Denver’s approach in its downtown.
- B. Walk a mile or two before boarding a mini van.
- C. Get on and get off along the route to stop for breakfast, or shop or walk along University Ave. with its newly improved area with planting, new (Go Green!) trash cans on every corner, plus plenty of seating for those who might like to rest, read a paper, and watch street activity with no congestion.

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- D. Return at the end of the day of work and participate in a wide variety of recreational activities that are offered (before and) after work at the new multiplex Recreation Center. (Memberships open to all at sliding scales would help defray costs.)
- E. Eat meals served at the Golden Gate Center Restaurant would be healthy and appropriate for many hours of the day. The vista would be spectacular anytime.
- F. Stroll down the street, shop along the way, and catch a mini bus home, and much more. It would work for residents, workers, and visitors anytime of the day or year.
- G. Attend special events held for the community on weekends that would draw from the entire area and there would be incentives to leave the cars at home and walk, bike, or take Mini busses to all of them.

The Mini bus service would become more efficient, its ridership would increase, and its services could be expanded to cover all corridors, BART, ACT transit hubs, AMTRAK, entertainment, shopping and business destinations.

The Golden Gate Fields Recreation Center with parking and a restaurant might be just the right building to replace the current structure. Architects and planners could offer their views on how this panacea might be developed—combined usage reduces traffic, improves bodies and minds, and brings in new jobs and funds.

Here are some of the many benefits:

- Everyone would get to work or school or errands on time.
- People who live along the congested corridors would have less problems commuting and could reach destinations in less time.
- More businesses along the routes would benefit with more customers at least twice a day (drop off laundry or dry cleaning) on the way to work and pick it up on the way home without struggling to find parking--just hop on, hop off and on again.
- Those who live along the main arteries would be able to do errands without hassles and improve local business.
- Affected communities would be cooperating on common problems and finding sensible solutions.
- Wetlands could be restored and wildlife protected.
- And more.

The Golden Gate Fields Waterfront is transformed. Then perhaps shortly thereafter a new Ferry service would be installed from the GGF terminal to SF and Jack London Square and other locations. The ferries would pick up and drop off passengers, which not only would reduce traffic on the Bay Bridge, but also provide another form of “Green” transportation. (See sample from report: Berkeley/Albany Ferry Terminal Study Draft EIS/EI.)

Everyone would have access to improved recreation, including a “Par Course” similar to the one in SF Crissy Field. It could offer measured points between parking and

destination with some simple exercises and stretches along the way to build the body before and/or after work. Plus, there could be bike paths, storage for bikes, a roller and ice skating rink, and other recreational facilities.

I feel certain that if David Brower were still alive, he would rally the troops to make these improvements. Now, with the commitment of Mayor Tom Bates, who recently spoke to attentive capacity audiences at the "Sustainable Conference" at the new David Brower Center, the meeting of the Mayors of Albany and Emeryville, the staffs of the University of California, and leading businesses, I hope that he and these others can find a workable design, which enhances the area, brings appropriate use, and transforms this space into common land that can be operated jointly and benefit each jurisdiction and the entire area.

The elements are already in place. This is the most ideal recreation area, which already has bikes, boats, skates, kites, and many other festivals. This area is the transportation hub, sitting at the crossroads of Highways I-80, I-580, and I-880. Within a short distance there is BART, Amtrak (among the top 10 busiest in the nation, serving both intercontinental and intra-city (commuter) rail-lines), free Emery Go-Round shuttle, plus several Flex-Car (car share) pods, bike pathways, and more.

So instead of dreading reduced business due to congestion, or the installation of Trader Joes on MLK and University, new apartments, conflicts between bikes and cars, how can we develop a wonderful new place that allows for easy access, increased well being, reduction of use of fossil fuels and improvements in health and fitness? Are you ready for a big increase in community well being and brighter and greener living?

In response to the GGF concept, here are a few additional comments/suggestions that have come in from local friends:

- Velodrome, for cyclists, where the track is now\_ [www.thevelodrome.com](http://www.thevelodrome.com).
- Like your concept paper! I have a special fondness for Golden Gate Fields as I spend a LOT of time at Albany Waterfront Park aka "the bulb," which borders it to the north. A beautiful rough and tumble park that is perfect for dog walking, beachcombing, hiking and viewing the various spontaneous art projects. We who frequent the place rattle in our boots about what might happen to GGF. The talk about high rises and shopping malls is a horror.
- Plenty to like about the concept. Makes area accessible and appropriate for all.
- Report Smoking Vehicles: If you spot a vehicle emitting excess smoke, call: 1-800-EXHAUST, or email: [exhaust@baaqmd.gov](mailto:exhaust@baaqmd.gov) and give the license number and the date, time and place the vehicle was spotted. The Air District sends letters to vehicle owners notifying them of the air quality consequences of smoking vehicles, warns them of the possibility of being cited, and encourages them to have their vehicle checked and repaired.

Your thoughts? Can we do it?

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## Ferry Terminal

### 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

In January 2008, the San Francisco Water Transit Authority (WTA) was superseded by the newly created Water Emergency Transit Authority (WETA) as described in Section 1.3.4. As a result, this document differentiates between project-related actions taken by WTA (those taken prior to 2008) and those present and future actions for which WETA has responsibility. WETA is proposing to implement new ferry service between Berkeley/Albany and the San Francisco Ferry Building (see Figure 1-1 for project location and study area). **The ferry service would operate seven days a week, daytime and evenings. The project would include construction of a new ferry terminal, including transit and pedestrian access as well as patron drop-off and parking areas, along the Berkeley/Albany waterfront.** Four sites, indicated on Figure 1-1, have been identified for study in the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). They are listed below:

- Berkeley Marina, located at the Berkeley Marina, adjacent to the Hornblower dock;
- Berkeley Fishing Pier, located between the landside end of the Berkeley Fishing Pier and Hs Lordships Restaurant;
- **Gilman Street, located immediately north of the foot of Gilman Street, adjacent to the Golden Gate Fields stables; and**
- Buchanan Street, located on the old pier site at the foot of Buchanan Street adjacent to Golden Gate Fields.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The purpose of studying a ferry terminal site along the Berkeley/Albany Waterfront is to enhance mobility and transportation choices of East Bay residents and to respond to the deficiencies in the Transbay transportation network as described below. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is seeking ways to augment Transbay capacity, which is limited by the throughput constraints of the Bay Bridge and Transbay Tube, and vulnerable to emergency situations that obstruct or close the use of these facilities. In addition, the provision of alternative transportation modes is a regional goal to reduce the use of the private automobile for Transbay trips, thereby diminishing emissions and decreasing congestion on the regional roadway system. Similarly, providing San Francisco residents with alternative modes of travel to access state and regional parklands and other destinations in the East Bay would help meet these regional goals.

### 1.2 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

1.2.1 Current and Future Transbay Roadway Congestion Between now and 2025, the Bay Area is expected to gain 1.4 million residents and 1.2 million jobs. During this time, downtown San Francisco employment will increase to 346,000 jobs, and remain one of the primary employment centers of the region (San Francisco Planning Department, 2001). The MTC estimates that the Bay Bridge corridor will have substantial growth in the number of daily person trips, increasing from 590,000 to 772,000 in 2025, and in R:\08 WTA3\1\_0.doc 1-2 vehicular traffic (from 300,000 vehicles to 425,000 vehicles per day), (MTC, 2002). This increase will aggravate travel delay along Interstate 80 (I-

80) in the project area. The California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans') 2002 Bay Area Freeway Congestion Data indicate that the Eastshore Freeway currently has a daily delay of 24,550 vehicle hours and 49.0 directional miles of congestion, and was ranked number one for vehicle delay in the regional roadway network. By 2025, the Bay Bridge is expected to have 73,400 peak-period vehicle hours of delay, extending morning congestion at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza from 4 to nearly 5 hours (MTC, 2002). The delays on the Bay Bridge and I-80 affect goods movement, particularly traveling from the Port of Oakland, as well as auto travel.

#### 1.2.2 Current and Future Transbay Transit Capacity

The overall mode split for journeys to work into downtown San Francisco was 54 percent transit, 30 percent drive-alone, and 16 percent ride-share (Badiner, 1995). East Bay residents, comprising one-fourth of downtown San Francisco workers, were second only to San Francisco residents in using transit for their downtown commute trips. Fifty-five percent of commute trips to downtown San Francisco were made via transit, which indicates the availability of transit and the willingness of East Bay residents to forego automobiles in favor of transit. Transit carries approximately 160,700 Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) patrons, 15,200 Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) bus passengers, and 4,000 ferry patrons between the East Bay and San Francisco. Ferry patrons use two operating ferry services—Alameda/Oakland and Vallejo—to travel between the East Bay and San Francisco. By 2025, BART will carry 254,000 daily riders, AC Transit's Express Bus service will carry 19,800 passengers, and Ferry services will carry 7,060, or 36 percent of Bay Bridge corridor trips. Carpools, carrying 105,000 people, will capture 14 percent of these trips (MTC, 2002). BART serves crossbay destinations very effectively, carrying substantial numbers of passengers. The BART transbay tube currently has capacity for 30 trains per hour—only eight more than BART currently operates during the peak hour. The BART system is forecast to be able to handle demand between now and 2025 (URS, 2003); however, San Francisco station loading times and slow travel times through the Market Street subway affect the capacity of the transbay tube, and will increasingly do so as BART service increases to meet demand. AC Transit and carpools, the other major alternative means of travel across the Bay into San Francisco, are subject to the traffic delays mentioned in the previous section. Installation of high-occupancy vehicle or bus lanes on the Bay Bridge is not currently planned; therefore, crossbay ferry service can supplement existing transbay transit service with a modal alternative that offers less constrained operations.