



City of Albany

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September 9, 2011

Dr. Paul Alivisatos, Director
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
One Cyclotron Road
Berkeley, CA 94720

Dear Dr. Alivisatos:

It was a pleasure to meet you Tuesday, and for Mayor Farid Javandel and me to hear about your vision for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Second Campus. It sounds like a very exciting time for the Lab's research and development, and an opportune moment to identify the best location to consolidate and expand the Lab's activities.

I wanted to be sure that we left you with the sense that Albany is proud to have within its borders a site that is being considered for the internationally renowned work of the Lab. Naturally, we recognize that our city and the Golden Gate Fields site offer many attractive features and amenities, and we anticipate the potential for positive benefits for our community should the Lab decide to come to Albany.

As I left our meeting, however, I continued to ponder the fundamental question of whether the needs of the Lab, the needs of the City, the needs of the School District, the needs of the Albany community, and the needs of the owners of Golden Gate Fields can all be accommodated through this site. My concerns focus on:

- designing the appropriate scale, layout, program and format of the Lab, private development, and public amenities and access;
- being certain that the relocation of existing facilities and expansion of future research will result in development and related business "spin-offs" at or near the site that will be good for the Albany community;
- ensuring a project that is financially viable for the property owner/developer and for the City of Albany and the Albany Unified School District;
- creating new public open space on the Albany waterfront that continues the Eastshore State Park;
- developing a plan that reflects the recommended guidelines from the 2008-10 City-sponsored visioning process (Voices to Vision), which relate to the careful balance of new public open space, revenues for the City and School District, development within a designated envelope, building heights, setbacks from the shore, and appropriate land uses.

The City of Albany is dedicated to maintaining its small town ambience, responding to the needs of a diverse community, and providing a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.



The process for arriving at the answer that works for Albany as well as for the Lab is possibly as significant as the solution itself. Albany is a community where residents seek to understand and participate in decisions that affect their block, their neighborhoods, their community, their schools, their city, and perhaps most relevant here – planning the future of the waterfront. They want complete and accurate information. Not unlike scientists, the Albany community is intent on gathering and analyzing empirical evidence before it makes decisions.

Albany is an active, committed, and passionate population whose spirit and energy drive it to achieve in ways surprising for a town of just 18,000. In keeping with this civic spirit, Albany voters passed an initiative (Measure C), in 1990, that essentially requires their approval on changes in uses and development on the Golden Gate Fields property.

To help inform and engage the community about what the land owner is proposing for the Lab, private development, and open space, and their associated impacts and/or benefits, the City Council hired Fern Tiger Associates (FTA) - www.ferntiger.com - in late June – the same firm that conceived and facilitated Voices to Vision in 2008-10. In conducting this new round of community education and engagement, it has become clear that before voting on Measure C, the community wants to better understand the proposal, explore alternatives, and evaluate whether solutions can emerge that appropriately meet the needs of all the involved parties, especially the community itself.

In recognition of this, I would ask the Lab to accommodate within its site selection process sufficient opportunity for the Albany community to come together to ensure an acceptable solution. Specifically, I respectfully request:

- Supporting sufficient time to ensure adequate opportunities for the Albany community to become better informed and engaged about the site layout, designs, financial arrangements, fiscal impacts, and access to the campus and public open space. Albany voters should have a full picture of the implications of their decision -- based on solid facts -- before being put into a position to vote on any changes pursuant to Measure C.
- Helping the community understand the activities intended to take place at the Lab. There is currently a sense of mystery about the Lab's plans beyond the initial 500,000 square feet, about which residents want to have a clearer picture.
- Communication and interaction between the Lab, the property owner/developer, the city, and the community while exploring the potential for a most successful outcome.

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Albany is an engaged community where the residents value working together to develop solutions to both simple and complex problems. Feeling rushed to absorb information, analyze data, and evaluate information and options -- particularly concerning the community's treasured waterfront, has been shown in the past to be disruptive, divisive, and detrimental for the community and the property owner. The city needs the time, opportunity, and flexibility to work with the property owner, the Lab (if possible), and the community to consider and discuss the possibilities, the benefits, and the challenges intelligently and thoughtfully.

There are significant prospects for creating a world-class National Laboratory at the edge of a beautiful shoreline park among other uses compatible with this remarkable setting. I appreciate you taking the time to meet with the Mayor and me, and for your consideration of Albany as a location for your future. I welcome the chance to meet again.

Sincerely,



Beth Pollard
City Manager

cc: Albany City Council
Robert Hatheway, University of California Berkeley
Ari Huber, The Stronach Group