RESOLUTION #07-02

A Resolution of the Albany City Council opposing the Inclusion of Buchanan Street or Gilman Street Locations in the Water Transit Authority’s Study for a Proposed Commuter Ferry Location

Whereas, the Water Transit Authority (WTA) has proposed studying various alternatives for an East Bay ferry service, including alternatives are at the Berkeley Marina, the end of Gilman Street, and the end of Buchanan Street; and

Whereas, the WTA prepared a "Site Alternative Analysis" in July 2006 outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative; and

Whereas, the City Council for the City of Albany passed a resolution over a year prior to the publication of the WTA's "Site Alternative Analysis" in which it urged the WTA to study the Berkeley Marina, Gilman Street, and Buchanan Street sites but at that time did not have the benefit of that analysis when it passed that resolution; and

Whereas, the WTA's "Site Alternative Analysis" of July 2006 did not recommend studying the Gilman Street and Buchanan Street sites as alternatives for the reasons summarized in the Executive Summary from the "Site Alternative Analysis," a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and

Whereas, that summary includes the following reasons not to recommend the Gilman Street and Buchanan Street sites:

- The sites have multiple unfavorable conditions, especially waterside, where the sites front on the Eastshore State Park aquatic parkland and areas of eelgrass and rafting birds
- The sites provide the slowest in-vessel travel time and require substantially greater volumes of dredging material to allow ferries to enter the shallow terminal areas
- The resource agencies indicated that the potential impacts to eelgrass beds at Gilman and Buchanan sites, Sites D and E, would be significant, thus requiring a full EIWEIS environmental analysis.
- The Gilman Sheet site is further constrained by the addition of Gilman playing Fields, currently under construction, the Eastshore State Park, and the planned route of the Bay Trail along the waterfront
- The merits of the two University Avenue sites, Sites A and B, are superior to sites C, D, and E; as a result it is recommended that they be carried forward for environmental analysis; and

Whereas, studying both the Gilman and Buchanan Street sites will significantly increase the costs of the environmental assessment and preliminary design activities by approximately $100,000 to $300,000; and
Whereas, neither the Gilman or Buchanan Street sites enjoy strong public support; and

Whereas, a ferry at the Buchanan Street site would be inconsistent with the wishes of many Albany residents and would not enjoy support of large numbers of Albany residents who expressed their opposition to development on the shoreline of Albany and expressed their desire to keep the shoreline open as evidenced by the 25% of Albany voters who signed the Albany Shoreline Protection Initiative; and

Whereas, both the Gilman Street and Buchanan Street sites are not reasonable alternatives because the land for the ferry terminal and parking lots would need to be purchased from a private landowner by eminent domain because there is no willing seller, while the University Avenue sites are publicly owned and would be available for use with an agreement from the city of Berkeley, which has expressed clear support for a ferry terminal at one or the other of the University Avenue sites;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the City Council of the City of Albany opposes the WTA studying the Gilman Street and Buchanan Street sites, Sites D and E in the WTA’s report, and urges the WTA to drop those two sites from its study.

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Robert S. Lieber, Mayor