

October 13, 2011

Albany LBNL Task Force  
C/o Fern Tiger, Fern Tiger & Associates  
City of Albany, California

**PDF TRANSMITTAL**  
**10/13/11**

Dear Task Force:

I want to constructively respond to the Stronach development team's October 10<sup>th</sup> unveiling of its modified proposal for Waterfront development. It is not too late to turn in a positive new direction -- but time is growing short.

***Let me reiterate:*** I favor a 2d campus for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) at the Waterfront shared by Albany and Berkeley. LBNL's presence would constitute a significant new center for a newly configured Waterfront whole. Over time that center of science, *conjoined with other centers seen and developed at the Waterfront*, will surely return big dividends (monetary and otherwise) to our extended university community as events of a spiritual nature continue to unfold long term.

***Rebuilding Fleming Point:*** Rebuilding the small Cerrito as a park aside and atop a parking structure seems to me the best new idea unveiled. Reconstructing this landmark as a focal point is a good idea and would not be much more expensive than building a freestanding parking structure.

***Our Waterfront's Centers:*** *I want to make an important point that I hope is worked with rather than ignored.* We human beings are *not* at the center of either this life or our world. As difficult as it is to use the word "God," given that no two of us mean the same thing by it and each of us believes things that simply are not, the mystery known as "God," *not humankind or science discerned by human beings*, is nevertheless at that Center. We no longer live in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Century and this circumstance (i.e., a mystery other than humankind at the center of life and our world) is now conceded intellectually rather universally. What this circumstance means, however,

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<sup>1</sup>Voluntarily inactive as of March 1, 2010

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remains fraught with all-too-human controversies and disagreements, misunderstandings, misconceptions, unjustifiable prejudices and biases, as well as just plain ignorance, stupidity and selfishness.

I know I am not alone in learning that our view of the Golden Gate symbolizes interdisciplinarily a truer Center than anything imputable to off-centered human intelligence. Things would not be here the way they are were I the only one who experiences the positive power of that tensive symbol. So an appropriate ordering of Waterfront development, it seems to me, would ensure the Golden Gate remains the overarching Center while its axis is augmented -- in part and by example -- with a real hard-science center. In turn this 2d LBNL campus -- a powerful new Waterfront presence in its own right -- would presumably develop focal points and sub-centers symbolically significant unto itself, while continuing to augment and be augmented by meanings otherwise revealed to this Berkeley university community.

***Waterfront Development Presents Design Problems Involving Long-desired Human Reorientation.*** If we lived in Chico or Reading or Milpitas or Reno, we might be forgiven our disorientation in city planning brought on by the rigors and dictates of modern economic and social life. Not so easily will this university community be let off the hook because of blindness toward the Center. Why? Because the circumstantial truth of our off-centeredness is constantly staring us in the face. So in figuring out how to cut and polish the central jewel of a bayside Crown that is our front yard (so as to widen the spectrum of light visible to those present and to come later), I must suggest the cutting and polishing be done with much greater sensitivity to the light available through the Center of life and our world.

Our off-centered human circumstances -- made so obvious here through what's brought to mind in a university community sited at the threshold of an ever-present Gate to the Pacific -- illustrates why it was so important to have conducted a Section 106 review (16 U.S.C. § 470f; 36 C.F.R. § 800 et seq.) at the beginning rather than end of the LBNL Waterfront master-planning process. A precipitous Measure C vote in June before that review is completed would seem to me highly prejudicial and misplaced.

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***The Revised Stronach Proposal.*** To my eye the revised master plan simply won't fly. Virtually nobody wants to see a new city built. We don't need the Waterfront converted into a medium-rise Babbleonia. "Plural hotels, housing units in the hundreds, shopping, restaurants, recreating, working, driving, walking, fishing, boating, swimming, hard-science laboratories, tree nurseries, private enterprises, technological innovation, habitat restoration, landscaping, photon acceleration, a conference and public-meeting hall, concert shell, earthquake preparedness, child care -- *anything your hearts' desire*, but please, please just give me permission to build at the scale we propose." Does that voice of rationalization strike the right tone for you? It sure doesn't reassure me.

Unbelievable but true, the fact 70 percent of the privately held Waterfront acreage would be "open space" under the revised proposal is even *less meaningful* than was the original open-space demand, given the increased height and proximity of newly compacted encroachments now envisioned as *next to* a park rather than *in* a park (e.g., a 12-story hotel in Albany with another hotel in Berkeley, buildings ranging from 65 to 110 feet with parking structures and lots, housing and retail shopping adjoining the public and private high-tech "campuses" phased in over decades). In effect the urban-edge freeway would be jumped and a Babbleonian Captivity would engulf the Waterfront. All that's lacking is a Starbucks and a Bed, Bath and Beyond and this community could be in business big time with public and private revenues to roll around in. Oft-heard reputes of pie in the sky pale by comparison. With enough time and given current building height and massing changes proposed by the West Berkeley Project, Babbleonia might work to transform Interstate 80 into a Grand Canyon that streams high-rpm energy through channels flanked on two sides by undulating high rises, rivaling in architectural elegance even the proposed FST Linear Accelerator. By golly wouldn't all that be exciting (but for the fact it won't fly).

***A Different Proposal:*** I propose a different scenario consisting of two parts: Waterfront land-use regulation in Albany and Berkeley would be repealed and replaced with an identical ordinance that provides in essence two things:

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**First Part:** Construction of a 2d campus for LBNL is permitted where Golden Gate Racetrack is located, conditioned on paying Albany and Berkeley lost racetrack revenues pending good-faith solutions to resolving the problem of lost racetrack revenue.

**Second Part:** A special district would be imposed on all Waterfront real estate west of the freeway in Berkeley *and* Albany including Golden Gate Fields,<sup>2</sup> the Berkeley Marina, Cesar Chavez Park, the Bulb, and the East Shore State Park and East Bay Regional Park properties. Objectives for Waterfront development would in due course be adopted and set forth in district governing documents. This district would be governed by representatives from UCB, the Cities of Albany and Berkeley, State and Regional Parks, LBNL/UC, the landowner, and the public. In essence district governance would be charged with long-term responsibility for realizing the aesthetic potentials of the Waterfront through an orderly and unified themes still emerging for this Cultural Landscape.

While this Waterfront District would never be expected to be self-sustaining, appropriate development (e.g., a fittingly themed hotel) could be authorized consistent with long-term aesthetic objectives. (I have in mind the decades-long struggles to preserve the aesthetic intentions underlying the design and purposes for Central Park while it was still developing). Development might well generate some revenues to offset the expense of maintenance and operations. But the long-term objective would be to facilitate the Waterfront unfolding as a public recreational destination to be seen and celebrated before dining, shopping, studying and sleeping elsewhere.

Thank you for your consideration of my criticisms and suggestions.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD C. MOORE

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<sup>2</sup> A land swap/sale between CA/UC and The Stronach Group would make things easier because the entire Waterfront would then be publically owned.