



# SIERRA CLUB

## LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

Serving San Mateo, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties

AGENDA ITEM 8.B. (RWC Ferry Financial Feasibility Study and Cost-Benefit & Economic Impact Analyses), RWC City Council meeting January. 11, 2021

January 11, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor Diane Howard and Council Members of the RWC City Council

Via email to: [council@redwoodcity.org](mailto:council@redwoodcity.org)

**RE: Draft Final Report of the Ferry Financial Feasibility Study and Cost-Benefit and Economic Impact Analyses (CDM Smith Inc. October, 2020).**

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter and our thousands of members in the Bay Area are committed to protecting San Francisco Bay and its ecosystems and are greatly concerned with impacts of traffic on the Bay, development in proximity to the Bay, and impacts to habitat and our natural resources.

We have sent a joint letter with Citizen Committee to Complete the Refuge, Redwood City Neighbors United, and Green Foothills raising concerns about possible General Plan changes that would be necessary in order to meet criteria to advance the Redwood City ferry project. This is an extremely important issue.

In addition, we have the following environmental concerns about the above referenced report.

- **Erosion of the shorelines of Bair Island and Greco Island and destruction of habitat in the refuge.** Reduced speed of the ferry as it approaches and passes the Refuge islands, and its turn radius are critical for preservation of shoreline architecture and habitat on the islands in the refuge. In addition to concerns about erosion and disturbance by the ferry wake, we generally oppose dredging in the channel that leads to alteration of inter-tidal mudflats and sedimentation sink as well as to disturbances of endangered species such as the Ridgeway Rail which breeds and has nesting sites on these islands.
- **No private ferries.** Unscheduled smaller fast private ferries and their wakes create erosion of the shorelines of Bair Island and Greco Island and destruction of habitat in the refuge. These wakes have also made it dangerous for recreational kayaks and sailboats, especially in Redwood Creek. Past studies have shown that safe speeds were unable to be enforced. The public has the right to know, up front, if access to the ferry terminal will be for public ferries only or for private ferries as well.
- **No significant relief of traffic congestion and no reduction in emissions.** Present pathways to reduce emissions by 2045 require us to get off of fossil fuels now. These diesel ferries would impact emissions on the east side of RWC that is already under the burden of 101 and adding

diesel infrastructure runs contrary to RWC's Climate Action Plan. The ferries do not contribute to relieving traffic congestion, contrary to the claim in the report. The anticipated daily ferry commuter ridership of 2030/day by the year 2040 (table 7-1, page 95) is minuscule compared to the 70,000 commuters who use employer shuttles today and the 63,000 commuters who use Caltrain. We can anticipate that employer shuttles, cars, buses, and trains will run on electric power in the future and that would markedly reduce emissions.

- **Sea Level Rise:** The ferry terminal and access routes from RWC are all vulnerable to sea level rise in the near future. Costs for these required improvements are not included in the financial analysis.

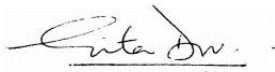
Based on the Report's analyses, the ferry project to/from SF and RWC and to/from Oakland and RWC would not be a cost-effective transportation investment. The environmental concerns that we have will need to be examined and mitigated in the EIR.

We recognize that a major consideration is that the ferry would provide water emergency services if there were a crisis such as a bridge failure. However, the small passenger volumes transportable raise serious questions about the ferry service's viability in a disaster and there are better more resilient options for the funds.

Thank you for your attention,



Gladwyn d'Souza, Co-Chair Conservation Committee



Gita Dev, Co-Chair Sustainable Land Use Committee



Susan Lessin, Environmental Legislative Action Committee

CC: James Eggers, Executive Director, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter