



September 13, 2012 (By electronic transmission)

Council Members Reid, Brooks, Schaaf, Kaplan, De La Fuente, Kernighan, Nadel, and Brunner,  
Mayor Quan, Administrator Santana, Assistant Administrator Fred Blackwell, Pat Cashman, Scott Miller  
City Hall, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Subject: Billboards at the Bay Bridge / 880 area**

Dear Council Members and staff,

The Oakland Heritage Alliance Board of Directors has voted to urge the city council to reconsider the approval of the six-decade defacement of iconic views of Oakland and the East Bay in exchange for a very modest amount of money. Please do not plant intrusive electronically-lit billboards at the touchdown area of the Bay Bridge, the planned Gateway Park, West Oakland neighborhoods, and along a busy freeway interchange that leads to our federally-designated Scenic Highway 580.

We would particularly note historic resources affected, such as the sawtooth-roofed CalTrans building (to be a transportation museum facility, and a legacy of the IER electric streetcars) the historic 1912 16th and Wood train station (the only Jarvis Hunt building in California, home of the west coast Brotherhood of Railway Porters, an early intermodal facility connecting transcontinental lines with local transit), and the beautiful hills of the East Bay Regional Parks, inherited from visionaries who had the wisdom to make long term decisions for the greater good.

This is not a case of "if one billboard is good, two are better, and adding a bunch more will be just fine." Rather, this is a creeping disaster which will cost the city's image greatly, after an enormous expenditure of public funds to build a more beautiful bridge and a suitable entryway into the east bay.

Let us not reinforce the "no there there" canard about Oakland. As we work to rebound from an iffy reputation, we must not tolerate uglification—there isn't even much money in it. It makes no sense that we should harm our tourism, our attempts to bring in new businesses, our public face to the world, and our environment. Please spare us this indignity. We have a beautiful city, and these views are a great asset.

Please preserve our sense of place, our fantastic panoramas, and the self-respect our city must win with such difficulty.

Sincerely,

Rachel Force,  
President

Naomi Schiff  
Oakland Heritage Alliance Preservation Committee