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**August 6, 2026 Meeting — Paid Parking Program, South Cove and J&K Lots, City of Berkeley Marina**

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From Tony Benado <tony.benado@icloud.com>

Date Fri 7/24/2026 1:12 PM

To BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdc.ca.gov>; Martien, Lindsay@BCDC  
<Lindsay.Martien@bcdc.ca.gov>; Ilsley, Olivia@BCDC <Olivia.Ilsley@bcdc.ca.gov>

Cc Tony Benado <tony.benado@icloud.com>

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**San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission**  
**Re: August 6, 2026 Meeting — Paid Parking Program, South Cove and J&K**  
**Lots, Berkeley**

July 24, 2026

Dear Chair and Commissioners,

I'm writing on behalf of the California Sailing Club (CSC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit sailing organization based at the Berkeley Marina, to urge the Commission to reject, or at minimum require substantial revision to, the paid parking program proposed for South Cove and the J&K lots at the Berkeley waterfront. Portions of these lots fall within the 100-foot shoreline band under BCDC's jurisdiction, and the program therefore requires this Commission's approval.

The City of Berkeley moved this program through the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission in May 2026, separately from the broader ferry plan — a sequencing that, in our view, avoided the level of scrutiny this proposal deserves given its impact on public shoreline access.

Beyond visitors, the people who keep this stretch of shoreline functioning day to day — employees of local businesses, nonprofit volunteers, seniors, and other regulars, including many CSC members and volunteers — would be required to pay a \$500 annual pass simply to continue parking near the water they already use.

BCDC's core mission is to protect and expand public access to San Francisco Bay. A paid parking program concentrated in the exact lots that serve the shoreline's lowest-income and oldest visitors runs counter to that mission. As a nonprofit whose

members and volunteers rely on continued, affordable access to these lots to support sailing instruction, safety operations, and public programming on the Bay, CSC has a direct stake in this outcome.

We ask the Commission to:

1. Deny approval of the parking program in its current form, or
2. Require the City to demonstrate — with data — that the program will not reduce shoreline access for lower-income, senior, and regular users before any approval is granted, and
3. Require meaningful low-income and senior fee waivers or reduced-rate options, along with an affordable option for regulars and nonprofit organizations like CSC, as a condition of any approval.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your role in protecting public access to San Francisco Bay.

Tony Benado  
1610 Stuart Street,  
Berkeley, CA 94703

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## Paid parking proposal at Berkeley Marina

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**From** Deirdre <dcollinsrn@hotmail.com>

**Date** Fri 7/24/2026 7:12 PM

**To** BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdc.ca.gov>

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I would like to strongly object to the city's proposal to charge parking at Berkeley Marina. This marina is a central part of our community and has had many improvements from East Bay Recreational funds - paid for by our tax dollars. In recent years parking has become more limited in some areas (related to usage by Berkeley City parking control vehicles) - which has made access to parts of the marina more limited for older residents with limited mobility. Now I hear there is a proposal to further instigate payment for parking to access some of this waterfront. This is a very disturbing trend - making our beautiful bay less accessible to lower income and less mobile residents. The waterfront should remain freely accessible to all users.

The bay area that we live in is already very expensive - and to have our recreation further curtailed and price limited is detrimental not only to individuals but to our community as a whole.

PLEASE KEEP ACCESS to the Bay FREE!!

Thank you,  
Deirdre Collins

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## Proposed Berkeley Marina Parking Fee

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**From** Donald Drummond <ddrummon1@yahoo.com>

**Date** Mon 7/27/2026 12:29 PM

**To** BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdca.gov>

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Dear bcdc,

I am a retired person who has lived in Berkeley for more than fifty years

As I spend many days of the week at the marina boating and windsurfing at the Cal sailing club I know that the proposed parking fee is prohibitive not only for myself but for the majority of my friends and associates.

This is not the time to further stress people with additional costs. The marina is supposed to be accessible to the public. We are dealing with increased costs in all directions.

We don't need more inflation.

Berkeley can get the money it needs by collecting back rent from the hotel that operates here.

Please do not approve this unnecessary parking expense. Thank you

. Donald Drummond

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

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## Berkeley Waterfront Parking Project Application

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From Heidi <hlypps@gmail.com>

Date Tue 7/28/2026 1:27 PM

To BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdcc.ca.gov>

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Dear Chair Zachary Wasserman, BCDC Commissioners, and Staff:

As a local kayaker, sailor, and swimmer, I have significant concerns about the Parking Project Application and ask that the Commission decline to approve it. The application materially understates the true scope and context of the parking plan

for the Berkeley Waterfront and Marina. This plan will undoubtedly diminish public access to public trust land. The application presents a narrow, seemingly modest paid-parking pilot — three lots, 273 spaces, "significant nearby free public parking" — while omitting that it is one early phase of a much larger, already-drafted paid-parking expansion tied to the City's Pier-Ferry Project. That larger plan converts several of the very lots this application calls "free" into paid lots. To be clear this not opposition to a ferry service itself, this is a response to imminent parking implementations.

### **Conversion of all nearby parking to paid parking is unacceptable**

The application describes the project as covering only "3 of the 11 existing Waterfront lots," representing "approximately 20% of total public Waterfront parking," and assures the Commission that "significant nearby free public parking" will remain — specifically naming the Seawall Lot and the Skates/N Lot as free alternatives.

But the City's own Draft Pier-Ferry Parking Management Implementation Plan presented to the Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront (PRW) Commission on July 8, 2026 shows that:

- The Seawall Lot and the Skates/N Lot are already slated for "New Full-Day Paid Parking" — 200 stalls at Seawall, 65 at Skates/N.
- The same plan document explicitly states its own next step is to "Submit to BCDC as part of Project Permit Application" — confirming that City staff understand these are components of a single, connected parking program, not separate initiatives.
- Long-term, the plan lists further tools explicitly under consideration: "Demand Based Paid Parking," which in practice will result in access being awarded to those willing to pay the highest price, discriminating against low socioeconomic users during the most desirable times to enjoy the shoreline.

In other words, the "free public parking" the application relies on to justify the fairness and limited impact on public access is, by the City's own internal planning documents, on a path to becoming paid parking as well. A BCDC Commissioner evaluating this application without that context would reasonably — but wrongly — conclude that ample free shoreline parking will remain a permanent fixture near these lots.

This is not a fringe interpretation. A former chair of the PRW Commission raised precisely this concern in a formal comment on the plan: PRW staff "repeatedly" said the South Cove lots "are not under the purview" of the Pier-Ferry parking plan, while stakeholders who have followed the multi-year process (BMASP → Waterfront Specific Plan → Pier/Ferry plan) find that separation difficult to credit given that all these areas in question are at the same waterfront within a quarter mile of each other. CEQA exemption claim may well apply and explains why there was no environmental impact report; however, it does not excuse the omission of the very connected Pier-Ferry parking plan from the "detailed Project description" that Box 2 explicitly requires. CEQA exemption is being used to avoid the kind of disclosure this Commission needs.

The "structural deficit" is self-inflicted and avoidable; remediation is already underway. The application justifies the fee program by pointing to the Marina Fund's "significant operating deficit." Again, this omits important context of decades of financial mismanagement and that remediating, voter-approved measures have already been taken to correct it. Detailed evidence of the financial mismanagement was highlighted by the state Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) during an independent financial analysis on the Marina Fund in June 2023. This tells a more detailed story: the deficit is largely a product of how the City chooses to spend the Marina Fund. The report found that 65% on the funds are being spent on park maintenance, the nature center, general recreation, and other non-boating activities which are expenses typically paid for from city municipal funds, not an enterprise fund such as the Marina Fund. When DBW isolated boating-only revenue and expenses, it comfortably clears its lending ratios meaning boaters' own fees already cover boating's own costs. The perceived "deficit" exists because non-boating park and recreation spending is being charged against that same fund. This has resulted in the fund failing the state's lending standards and closing the door on state funding sources.

This matters to the BCDC Commission because the application relies on this same "structural deficit" to justify the fee program generally and to invoke the CEQA fee-setting exemption specifically as revenue "necessary" to meet operating expenses. The perceived deficit is a self-created financial choice and charging new parking fees to shoreline recreational users is not the only, or even the most obviously "necessary," fix. The City could instead follow the state lender's recommendation to reallocate non-boating costs to the General Fund or Parks Tax before converting more public trust shoreline parking into paid parking. As a matter of fact, Berkeley voters have already approved a funding source designed to do exactly this by passing measure Y in November 2024 with 75% voter approval. Revenue generation from measure Y is estimated at \$3.8 million per year specifically to fund parks, trees, landscaping, and waterfront maintenance. City staff's own budget materials identify approximately \$1.5–1.55 million per year of Waterfront park, building, and landscaping costs currently paid out of the Marina Fund as "Parks Tax-eligible". That is, costs that could instead be shifted to Parks Tax revenue. City documents go further: the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission's own recommendation states that a voter-approved Parks Tax increase "could unburden the Marina Fund and eliminate its structural deficit." Consistent with that, the City's own tracked Marina Fund operating gap has already been shrinking as this reallocation and other measures have been phased in — from \$2.1M in FY23 → \$1.5M → \$1.4M → \$968K → \$650K by FY27.

In short: the City already has a voter-approved funding source sized to close most or all of the very deficit this parking-fee application cites as its justification. The Commission should ask why new fees on shoreline recreational parking at South Cove and J/K are necessary now, rather than allowing the Measure Y reallocation — which does not hinder public shoreline access at all — to do the job voters funded it to do.

**No credible enforcement plan**

The application states enforcement will be "conducted by City of Berkeley staff" however recent reports from PRW staff at the meeting on July 8th revealed that the parking lots will not be enforceable by Berkeley Police Department Parking Enforcement Unit. As it currently stands, Marina staff give parking violators an "administrative citation" which bear no meaningful repercussions to ensure the violation fee is paid. Furthermore, this is adding more tasks and responsibilities to an already strained marina staff following layoffs in recent months. Even if the waterfront were hypothetically able to be enforced by the police's parking unit, an audit of Berkeley's parking enforcement operations found that accounting practices "place the parking enforcement operations in a deficit". At the time no action was taken to correct this resulting in "shortfalls in the parking funds are subsidized by the General Fund". Continuing in this hypothetical scenario of police parking enforcement, the City currently has a limited traffic-enforcement staff for the entire city (Berkeley). In summary, there is no credible enforcement plan such as staffing, budget, or citation/towing mechanism to back up its claims that this will generate revenue for the marina.

### **Understatement of the cumulative impact by piecemeal review**

BCDC's mandate under the McAteer-Petris Act is to ensure "maximum feasible public access" to the Bay and shoreline in projects within its jurisdiction, and BCDC's own public-access guidance lists "free shoreline parking" as one of the recognized forms of public access, adding that "in general, public access to the Bay should be available to the visiting public free of charge."

Reviewing this three-lot application in isolation — while a companion plan to convert additional lots to paid parking is already drafted and moving toward its own BCDC submission — risks exactly the kind of piecemeal review that understates cumulative effects on public access. If the Commission approves this narrower filing now, it may be asked later to approve the Seawall and Skates/N paid-parking conversions as a fait accompli, on the theory that "some" free parking already went away without objection. The BCDC Commission is better positioned to weigh the full, cumulative change to free shoreline access if it evaluates this application together with the broader Pier-Ferry parking plan, rather than in a segmented sequence.

Equity — the population most affected is not the population the plan is designed to serve. The application frames the fee program as revenue-driven cost recovery for the Marina Fund, but public comment in the record indicates the lots targeted first (South Cove, J/K) serve predominantly recreational users (anglers, swimmers, sailors, kayakers, and paddlers) that skew lower-income, while the future paid lots (Seawall, Skates/N) intend to predominately serve ferry-commuter parking demand (estimated in city planning materials at roughly 380–410 spaces needed for ferry riders). Framed together, the paid-parking program effectively reallocates waterfront parking away from existing recreational visitors and toward future ferry commuters. That tension goes to the heart of "maximum feasible public access" for the existing public, not a hypothetical future ferry ridership.

Broad, standing authority to change fees, hours, and rules without further BCDC review. Box 2, item 9 of the application asks the BCDC Commission to bless the City's ability to unilaterally adjust "fees, time limits, vehicle types, loading zones, and temporary situations" going forward, citing hypothetical future conditions. Approving a permit on this basis effectively pre-authorizes future changes to a public-access condition (fee levels, hours, enforcement) without a defined process for BCDC or public review of those changes. Given that the City's own draft plan already previews significant subsequent expansions of paid parking, this flexibility clause deserves closer scrutiny rather than blanket approval.

### **Public trust land, not ordinary city property**

The application itself documents (Attachment 1, Box 1) that the site is held under the 1913 state tidelands grant to the City of Berkeley — a public trust conveyance made expressly "for the establishment... of a harbor" and public uses, with the state retaining reversion rights if the

trust purposes aren't fulfilled. Converting recreational parking that serves public trust uses (boating, fishing, swimming, sailing) into a revenue-generating fee system for a general municipal fund deficit sits in some tension with the trust's original public-benefit purpose, and the Commission — as the permitting body for this trust tideland — should weigh that history carefully rather than treat the proposed paid-parking program as a routine municipal rate adjustment.

Considered in its full context, the project raises serious questions under the McAteer-Petris Act's maximum-feasible-public-access standard, and the Commission should not approve it on the limited record presented.

### **Likelihood of ship strikes to whales and other wildlife in the Bay**

Ferry and other ship strikes are a leading cause of injury and death for seagoing wildlife, as described by NOAA Fisheries here: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-vessel-strikes>

Our local migratory population of Gray whales, in particular, have been undergoing a major mortality event in and around the Bay in the last 2 years. At least 35 gray whales have died in and near the Bay in 2025-2026, with an estimated 40% due to vessel strikes (Source

here: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/whale-deaths-on-track-to-make-2026-among-deadliest-years-on-west-coast-2026-05-28/>). Adding more to this number with planned ferry service may severely impact whale, other cetacean, and pinniped populations in the Bay, and should be considered.

### **Recommendation**

The Commission should either (a) deny the application without prejudice pending submission of the full Pier-Ferry Parking Management Implementation Plan for consolidated review, or (b) require the applicant to supplement the record with: a completed (not draft) waterfront Parking Implementation Plan; a defined enforcement budget and staffing commitment; and a disclosed, bounded process for any future fee/hours changes that would otherwise not require public and BCDC Commission review.

Thank you  
Heidi Lypps

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**Public Comment OPPOSING BCDC Permit Application No. M2026.018.00 (Berkeley Marina Parking Plan)**

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**From** Simone Ferraro <sferraro@lbl.gov>

**Date** Tue 7/28/2026 7:27 PM

**To** BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdc.ca.gov>; Martien, Lindsay@BCDC <Lindsay.Martien@bcdc.ca.gov>; Ilsley, Olivia@BCDC <Olivia.Ilsley@bcdc.ca.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge the Commission to **decline** approval of the **BCDC Permit Application No. M2026.018.00 from the City of Berkeley** because it materially understates the true scope, context, and negative impact of the proposed parking plan for the Berkeley Waterfront and Marina. In its current form, this plan will undoubtedly diminish public access to public trust land.

As a volunteer instructor at the Cal Sailing Club (CSC), I see the direct harm this proposal will cause. CSC operates entirely on volunteer labor to keep watersports accessible to the community. I personally rely on **free and unrestricted** parking at South Cove to volunteer, teach lessons, and assist with our community open houses. The city's proposed maximum time limits will make it virtually impossible for me and many other volunteers to spend the hours necessary to run these public programs. Furthermore, I require close, accessible parking to carry heavy sailing equipment that is essential for water safety. Depriving volunteers of viable parking directly hampers our ability to operate and serve the public.

Framed together, the paid-parking program effectively reallocates waterfront parking away from existing recreational visitors and community volunteers, redirecting it toward future ferry commuters. This directly undermines the requirement for "maximum feasible public access" for the existing public in favor of a hypothetical future ferry ridership.

For these reasons, I ask that you reject this application until a plan is created that protects free, accessible, and long-term parking for the recreational users and volunteers who keep the Berkeley Waterfront vibrant and inclusive.

Sincerely,

Simone Ferraro  
Volunteer Instructor & Berkeley Resident

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**Fw: Comment Regarding the permit application by the City of Berkeley to implement paid parking in South Cove and J/K parking lots**

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**From** Martien, Lindsay@BCDC <Lindsay.Martien@bccdc.ca.gov>

**Date** Thu 7/30/2026 9:29 AM

**To** BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bccdc.ca.gov>

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**From:** Edward Schlesinger <edwardschlesinger@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026 1:03 PM

**To:** Ilsley, Olivia@BCDC <Olivia.Ilsley@bccdc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** Comment Regarding the permit application by the City of Berkeley to implement paid parking in South Cove and J/K parking lots

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Dear Ms. Ilsley,

Regarding the permit application by the City of Berkeley to implement paid parking in South Cove and J/K parking lots:

### 1: Public Comment Against Fees

I urge the Commission to consider the attached statements of the many individuals and groups who wrote to the City of Berkeley about paid parking at the Berkeley Waterfront. Recognizing that a small number of letters were in support of paid parking, the majority of respondents wrote in opposition.

Some highlights:

"Imposing additional fees would hinder our mission." - Berkeley Racing Canoe Center

"The fee would be a major obstacle for low income citizens, and would most certainly make me think twice to go for a walk." - Thomas Eusterbrock

"As a long time Berkeley resident and former BUSD employee I am frankly shocked that you would consider charging a fee to use a popular public park." - Josie Gerst

### 2: Statements by Councilmembers

I bring to your attention statements by City Council members who informed the public that other lots in the marina would remain free of charge:

"Aside from the three lots proposed for a parking fee, there are numerous other parking lots in the marina that would remain available free of charge"

Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani, email to PJ Podesta, June 17 2025

As you are likely aware, the City of Berkeley has presented a Draft Parking Plan for implementation of the ferry terminal which removes the remaining free parking at the Waterfront cited by Councilmember Kesarwani.

### 3: Experience of Balboa Park, San Diego

Finally, I urge the Commission to consider what happened when parking fees were imposed in Balboa Park, San Diego:

"In April, the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership announced that attendance at Balboa Park's museums was down 34% on average since paid parking went into effect, with some institutions dropping by 60%."

"Judy Gradwohl..the CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum...says attendance has dropped since paid parking was implemented in January of this year and she's not alone.

"It was a huge hit on our budget, and combined with the total cut of arts and culture funding. It made it very, very difficult for us to meet budget next year," Gradwohl said.

- NBC San Diego, May 20, 2026 *"City agrees to repeal paid Balboa Park parking, lower trash fees to end lawsuit"*

Parking fees in Balboa Park were eventually removed by the San Diego City Council as part of a legal settlement with a group that organized a ballot initiate against fees for trash collection and parking in Balboa Park.

If you have any questions about this communication, please contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward Schlesinger  
Berkeley Marina User

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## Berkeley Marina Parking Fees? Please Say No

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From Robert <robert@alamolighting.com>

Date Thu 7/30/2026 8:26 PM

To BCDC Public Comment <publiccomment@bcdc.ca.gov>; Martien, Lindsay@BCDC <Lindsay.Martien@bcdc.ca.gov>; Ilsley, Olivia@BCDC <Olivia.Ilsley@bcdc.ca.gov>

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To BCDC Commissioners and Staff,

I am writing to ask you to reject the application from the City of Berkeley to charge for parking in the Berkeley Marina. Allowing their claim would be a severe blow to accessible open space for all, particularly lower income Bay Area residents. Rather, please stand firm in your role as vigilant stewards, preserving our sacred, waterfront park, where all are presently welcome.

Shared, non-commercial, accessible, open spaces are our most valuable community properties; once they are eliminated, or limited access to, the situation is almost never reversed.

Let's avoid a sad predictable future, looking back at this planned opening chapter of an over-commercialized Berkeley waterfront, wondering, "What were they thinking? How did this come to pass?"

Charging for parking at the Berkeley Marina, make no mistake, is an integral part of long term planning to commercialize the waterfront, including turning it into—in planner's words—a *transportation hub*, with an outsized ferry operation, plus other inappropriate commercial development. All of this, step by step, relegates non-commercial use of open park space—including, strolling, sketching, daydreaming, swimming, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing and more, to a second-class status of lesser importance.

Please don't allow this to happen! As our society produces ever greater financial and emotional stress for us all, shared community open spaces, insistently non-commercial and *accessible* to all, are vital for citizens' well being—*now more than ever*.

I will share, I am a proud thirty-year volunteer member of the Cal Sailing Club, located in the south sailing basin of the Berkeley Marina. We provide the top accessible program in the United States, among the very best in the world (Yes, I'll stand by that claim until someone shows me evidence to the contrary). Among other community benefits, we offer numerous monthly free open house events; volunteering, I have given thousands of people rides over the decades.

I can attest, there is nothing like the expression of a kid, first time on the water, hands on the helm, starting out quite nervous, now smiling broadly, steering the boat with confidence. This beats seeing kids with developing "phone-neck" at an early age (where children are already hunched over, incessantly staring at their phone screens). At the Cal Sailing Club, we plant seeds.

So many new members, from the Bay Area and beyond, start out, not knowing how to sail or windsurf, but with great relief, find the Club a safe, accessible space to challenge themselves for growth. All of our teaching and boat repairs, are done by volunteers. Many of our most active volunteers, the foundation of our organization, drive long distances to selflessly offer their time, energy and experience, teaching and fixing boats. We often pack a lot of gear. The free parking adjacent to the Cal Sailing Club facilitates what we do. Charging for parking will only discourage our most active volunteers and degrade this singular community organization. Most importantly, If parking fees are allowed to go into effect, residents from around the region, far more than just CSC members, will be negatively impacted.

To sum up, I respectfully suggest it is your responsibility, the last firewall, as stewards of our waterfront park, to not upset the delicate, successful, equilibrium now in place. Please reject the City of Berkeley's request to charge for parking and let's keep our waterside park, open and accessible to all for generations to come.

One more note: Please come visit this Sunday, Aug. 2, 1-4 pm, at the next CSC Open House event, and see for yourselves the dozens volunteering, and all the children's smiling faces.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robert Ofsevit