



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

REGION IX
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JUL 30 2013

Edward D. Reiskin
Director of Transportation
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
One South Van Ness Avenue, Seventh Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Environmental Assessment and Finding of No
Significant Impact for the Mission Bay Transit Loop
Project

Dear Mr. ^{ED}Reiskin:


Based on our review of the Environmental Assessment, dated May 2013, for the proposed Mission Bay Transit Loop Project, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A copy of the FONSI is enclosed.

The FONSI and supporting documentation should be made available to affected government agencies and the public and should be posted on the project website. A Notice of Availability for the FONSI should be published in local newspapers and should also be provided directly to affected government agencies, including the State intergovernmental review contacts established under Executive Order 12372.

Please note that the terms and conditions of the grant contract will require the San Francisco Transportation Agency to undertake the mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Assessment and FONSI.

If you have questions about our review, please call Alexander Smith, Community Planner, at (415) 744-2599.

Sincerely,


Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

Finding of No Significant Impact

Grant Applicant: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)

Project Sponsor: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Proposed Project: Mission Bay Transit Loop Project

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was prepared in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] §4332); Federal Transit Law (49 USC Chapter 53); 49 USC §303 (formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4[f]); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106 (16 USC §470f); and Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations).

Description: The Mission Bay Transit Loop Project would provide turn-around capabilities for the T-Third Street light rail line via a connection of trackway from Third Street to 18th, Illinois, and 19th Streets to facilitate an increase in frequency of transit service in the Chinatown, Mission Bay, and South of Market neighborhoods. The increase in service would be achieved by allowing up to half of the trains traveling on Third Street via the Central Subway to turn around during peak hours at the Mission Bay Transit Loop and proceed back toward downtown San Francisco to Stockton and Washington Streets. Key elements of the project include:

- *Trackway:* New trackway would be installed on one full block of Illinois Street (between 18th and 19th Streets). A maximum of 900 feet of single-track trackway would be installed in the street right-of-way on 18th, 19th, and Illinois Streets to connect to existing track on these streets. In order to install new trackway along Illinois Street, a 534-foot portion of the abandoned freight rail tracks would be removed. The streets will be resurfaced after the tracks are installed.
- *Overhead Contact (Power) System:* To provide electric power to the trains, 17 trolley poles would be installed. Streetlights would be affixed to eight of these poles.
- *Signalization:* Traffic, pedestrian, and train signals would be installed at the intersections of 18th and Illinois Streets and 19th and Illinois Streets.
- *Curb Ramps/Sidewalk:* A curb ramp compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) would be installed at the northwest corner of intersection of 19th and Illinois Streets. Approximately 228 feet of concrete sidewalk would be installed: 128 feet on the west side of Illinois Street and 100 feet on the north side of 19th Street.
- *Utility Relocation:* Sewer manholes serviced by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission currently located at the intersections of 18th and Illinois Streets and 19th and Illinois Streets would be relocated to outside of the proposed trackway right-of-way.

Additional trains will be added along the Third Street corridor to augment levels of transit service on the T-Third Street light rail line after the opening of the Central Subway anticipated in 2019. Turning of trains back toward downtown at the Loop would allow for a decrease from nine minute to four minute weekday peak headways indicated in the Central Subway Service Plan.

To avoid reduction in roadway capacity while trains are making their way onto Illinois Street from 18th Street or onto Third Street from 19th Street, the SFMTA evaluated the three design options listed below, and on July 23, 2013, selected Design Option 2:

- *Design Option 1:* Vehicular access would be controlled by signalization at the four intersections surrounding the Loop: Third and 18th Streets; Illinois and 18th Streets; Illinois and 19th Streets; and Third and 19th Streets. Flashing light signals would be installed by the exit from each driveway and on the street to warn vehicles to wait until the train clears before entering the street.
- *Design Option 2:* Vehicles and trains would be allowed to travel in the same direction in mixed traffic. To provide sufficient width for vehicle and train traffic, parking would be limited to the south side of 18th Street and the north side of 19th Street. “No Parking” and “No Stopping, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.” signs would be installed along the north side of 18th and the south side of 19th Streets.
- *Design Option 3:* 18th and 19th Streets would be converted into one-way couplets. Vehicles access would be controlled until trains have left 18th or 19th Streets, with vehicles traveling on 18th Street in the eastbound direction only, and vehicle travel on 19th Street in the westbound direction only. Installation of flashing light signals by the exit from each driveway and on the street would warn vehicles to wait before entering the street until the train clears.

Alternatives: One alternative to the proposed project, a No Action Alternative, was examined. This alternative assumed that the proposed action project would not be constructed and existing service level along the T-Third Street light rail line would remain unchanged. The No Action Alternative would not increase the frequency of transit service in the Chinatown, Mission Bay, and South of Market neighborhoods.

Environmental Effects: SFMTA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in May 2013 to evaluate the environmental effects of the project pursuant to the requirements of NEPA, as codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.119. The FTA was the lead agency under NEPA. The EA concluded that implementation and operation of the project would not result in significant adverse effects that would not be mitigated.

The EA found that the project’s implementation would cause no significant adverse environmental effects that would not be mitigated. This would apply to all applicable environmental elements including Air Quality, Land Use and Zoning, Environmental Justice, Social Impacts, Transportation, Noise, Hazardous Materials, Water Resources, Biological Resources, Visual Quality, Cultural Resources, Recreation and Section 4(f) Resources, Safety and Security, and Public Services and Utilities.

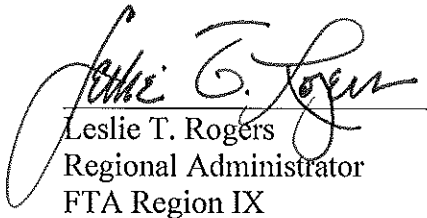
The project occurs within the boundaries of the Potrero Point Historic District and is adjacent to the Pier 70 Historic District. At this time, based on consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Potrero Point Historic District and the Pier 70 Historic District, which has a pending National Register nomination, were assumed eligible for the National Register for the purposes of the project only. The FTA determined that the project would have no adverse effect on historic properties, and the SHPO concurred with this determination on June 27, 2013. The implementation of the project would not adversely affect any historic resource or result in a

use of any Section 4(f) resource, thereby satisfying the requirements of 36 CFR 800 and 49 USC §303.

Public meetings were held on February 11, 2013 and June 4, 2013. The EA was released for public review on May 10, 2013. The Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the San Francisco Chronicle on May 11 and May 12, 2013, and sent to governmental agencies and interested parties. Copies of the EA were circulated for public review between May 10, 2013 and June 10, 2013. The document was made available at the San Francisco Public Library (100 Larkin Street; San Francisco, CA 94102) and at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (1 South Van Ness Ave, 7th Floor; San Francisco, CA 94103). The EA was posted on SFMTA's website (<http://www.sfmta.com/projects-planning/projects/mission-bay>). Copies of the document were sent by U.S. mail to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to state and local agencies.

Two written comments were received at the public hearing attended by approximately thirteen individuals. Eleven comment letters were received via mail and email. A petition from the Dogpatch residents and businesses was received. Comments and responses are attached hereto in Attachment A.

Environmental Findings: In accordance with 23 CFR Part 771, the FTA finds, on the basis of the analysis, reviews, and mitigation measures identified in the EA, that there are no significant impacts on the environment associated with the implementation of the project. The SFMTA has incorporated mitigation measures into the project to reduce or eliminate potentially adverse environmental impacts on traffic, air quality, noise and construction.


Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator
FTA Region IX

JUL 30 2013

Date

Attachments:

Attachment A: Comments on the EA and Responses

Attachment B: Relevant Correspondence