

The Embarcadero Enhancement Project

Fall 2014 Workshop Series: Summary & Next Steps

August 2015

Partner Agencies:



SFMTA.COM/EMBARCADERO



Amaluna
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

OPENS NOVEMBER
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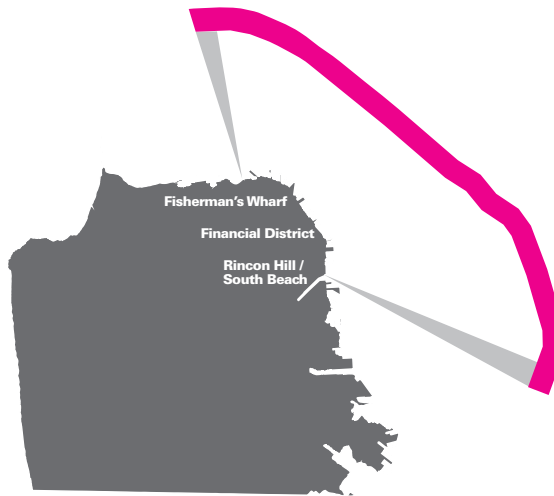
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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Embarcadero Enhancement Project aims to re-imagine The Embarcadero as a “Complete Street” by developing a conceptual design for a protected bikeway along San Francisco’s waterfront, from South Beach to Fisherman’s Wharf. “Complete Streets” are streets that are designed to be safe and comfortable for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and people on transit. A bikeway is a dedicated facility that is physically protected from moving traffic and pedestrians.

One of San Francisco’s most iconic corridors, The Embarcadero serves as a gateway to and symbol of the City. While the corridor continues to serve its traditional role as the primary access route for Port-related and other waterfront businesses, in recent decades it has become a major tourist destination, home to AT&T Park, the Exploratorium, Fisherman’s Wharf and many other well-known and loved destinations. It also serves as a primary thoroughfare for bicycle and car commuters, an exercise route for walkers and runners, and a tour route for visitors on foot, bicycle, bus and pedicab.

Perhaps not surprisingly, public demand for walking and biking along The Embarcadero has grown rapidly, particularly on its east side on The Embarcadero Promenade (Promenade). This trend is expected to continue with the predicted growth in jobs,



The overarching goal of the Embarcadero Enhancement Project, which extends from Powell Street near Pier 39 to AT&T Park at King Street/3rd Street, is to improve safety and comfort for all who travel along the waterfront - including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and users of transit.

residents and numbers of attractions both citywide and along the waterfront. With the success of the waterfront, however, comes concern over public safety as conflicts between people walking, biking, and driving along The Embarcadero have grown - at times compromising the shared public space on the Promenade. Added to this are concerns of a lack of cyclist compliance with road rules which can be exacerbated by limited guidance for people who ride bicycles and pedestrians on the multi-use Promenade.

To address these concerns, the SFMTA, the Port of San Francisco, and San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) are

working together to envision The Embarcadero as a Complete Street, which are streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. While The Embarcadero already provides dedicated space for transit and has bike lanes, conflicts between various modes are common. As such, the project will develop a preliminary design for a “protected bikeway” from AT&T Park to Powell Street while addressing loading and access issues. Provision of a bikeway along this corridor is expected to improve safety and comfort of all users of The Embarcadero by creating clearly defined areas for people walking, cycling, driving, loading/unloading, and taking transit.

As part of the extensive outreach component of this Project, the SFMTA has been seeking feedback from the many stakeholders who use, work and live along The Embarcadero to ensure the design of the bikeway is compatible with their diverse needs while making the corridor safer and more comfortable for all users. The Agency kicked off the public engagement phase of the Project in the summer of 2014. Activities included a public open house, the launch of a website and online survey, and initial conversations with stakeholders about the Project.

In the fall of 2014, the SFMTA, with the support of a Bay Area consulting firm, MIG, Inc. hosted a series of design workshops on November 6th, 13th and 20th at Pier 1. The workshops provided opportunities for the public and stakeholders to discuss and explore potential solutions to address the spatial challenges associated with fitting a protected bikeway along the corridor. Almost 100 people attended the three meetings. Attendees represented a diverse range of perspectives and interests. Participants included residents, pedicab drivers, tour bus drivers, bicycle commuters, employees of businesses on The Embarcadero and representatives from the Port of San Francisco, the Exploratorium, Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf, the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild, the San Francisco Bike Coalition, and the Association of Bay Area Governments, among many others.

Project Goal & Objectives

The overarching goal of the Embarcadero Enhancement Project is improved safety and comfort for all travel modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers and freight. The objectives of the Project are to:

- Make The Embarcadero safer and more comfortable for all roadway users, including but not limited to people who walk, ride a bicycle, or drive;
- Support economic development and accommodate growth;
- Increase and improve access for residents, workers and visitors through the provision of a safe, visible bicycle facility;
- Better manage curbside parking and loading to improve the efficiency of The Embarcadero;
- Maintain and enhance the high quality urban design of The Embarcadero; and
- Integrate bicycle improvements with planned public transit, pedestrian and other transportation projects

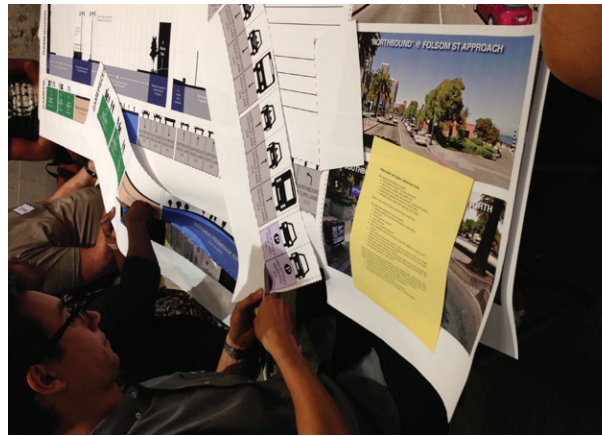


Three design visioning workshops were held in November 2014 at the Port's Pier 1 building to consider possible changes to The Embarcadero. Nearly 100 members of the public participated.

WORKSHOPS DESCRIPTION

The primary goal of the workshops was to provide the project team with an assessment of collective stakeholder values as they relate to The Embarcadero – i.e., what are those elements of travel along the City’s waterfront that are the most valued, and what elements might be more expendable in order to meet the goals of this Complete Streets project. Themes that emerged from the workshop’s group exercises will help guide the project team in their initial efforts to develop conceptual design alternatives, which are high-level designs that would provide broad indications of the location of the proposed bikeway, and a sense of how the roadway might be configured to accommodate the bikeway.

The workshops focused on “pinch-points” along the project corridor, or locations where a bikeway will be the most challenging to accommodate due to space constraints. The charrette-style workshops began with an open house with informational display boards and a brief presentation by SFMTA staff, followed by a small group activity. Each group was assigned a pinch-point location and invited to collaboratively create a streetscape configuration that they believed would best meet the safety, comfort and access needs of Embarcadero’s many users. Each group was also briefed on the Project assumptions, which include no substantial changes to the existing MUNI light rail track way and station platforms.



Workshop participants were given “game pieces” to help define design concepts for The Embarcadero at key pinchpoints, which were later presented by each team along with their top priorities

Using a cross section drawing of the assigned pinch-point, participants sized and placed components of the street to illustrate their recommended configuration. Components included median/landscaping, north and southbound car traffic lanes (including turn lanes), one-way and two-way bikeways, on-street parking and a sidewalk/promenade zone. Staff from MIG facilitated these discussions to ensure that all viewpoints were being considered, while SFMTA staff provided technical support and expertise during the small group activities and responded to participant questions.

Facilitators opened the small group discussions by prompting the participants to think big and suggest out-of-the box ideas for accommodating the bikeway. This portion of



the workshop resulted in lively discussions and creative ideas for The Embarcadero (summarized below under Big Ideas). Participants then moved into the design activity, which encouraged critical thinking about priorities and trade-offs. The workshops concluded with each group reporting out its recommended designs to other workshop participants.

Workshop discussions were summarized in a number of ways. Facilitators recorded the small group discussions during the design activity and took photos of the proposed Embarcadero cross-sections. Participants were also given comment cards and encouraged to provide additional thoughts and ideas before leaving the venue.

WORKSHOPS RESULTS

The results of the workshops are summarized by overarching themes and ‘big ideas’ from the three workshops, by bikeway type(s) selected, and then by individual pinchpoints (summarized visually and in writing).

This valuable input will inform the SFMTA’s approach to conducting more detailed planning and engineering studies to determine how various configurations of the bikeway can be accommodated. Design alternatives generated from these workshops will be presented to the public and stakeholders for feedback later in 2015.

Initial responses/comments on the workshop results are provided in **Section 4**.



Key Themes

Participants expressed a wide array of perspectives on addressing safety enhancements along The Embarcadero. Despite a variety of ideas, there were several themes that emerged across all three workshops.

- **Design a wide, welcoming bikeway that supports all types of cycling and physically separates pedestrians and cyclists.** In order to meet a variety of user needs, and to help keep bicycles off the sidewalks and Promenade, the bikeway must accommodate cyclists of all abilities and confidence levels, including the commercial pedicabs that traverse the length of The Embarcadero.
- **Details matter when separating bicycles from vehicles and pedestrians.** Barriers, planters, landscaping, differentiated grades and street trees between bicycles and other users were frequently emphasized in the groups’ designs. Participants’ comments also frequently underscored the desire to assure that pedestrians feel safe and separated from fast moving bicyclists and skaters.

- **Accommodate cargo and passenger loading and unloading zones/lanes.** Although there was variation from location to location, participants stressed the importance of retaining access for business-related loading and unloading activities, including delivery trucks, tour buses and private vehicles.
- **On-street parking on The Embarcadero is not a high priority.** Given the high demand of uses for the limited right-of-way, many participants questioned the value of on-street parking along The Embarcadero. Many consider there to be more than enough car parking provided by parking lots and garages within a short walk of The Embarcadero, and thus on-street parking should not be made a priority on a corridor such as The Embarcadero with such space constraints.

The majority of workshop participants acknowledged the need to accommodate curbside loading and unloading with a new protected bikeway. Regular on-street parking (e.g., 2-hour parking) was deemed a much lower priority given the proximity to numerous garages and surface lots adjacent to The Embarcadero.

Big Ideas

Workshop participants were invited to suggest, without the constraint of budget or feasibility, out-of-the box ideas for accommodating the bikeway. This activity helped to catalyze creative conversations about The Embarcadero and opened up the discussion about the design directions participants' believed The Embarcadero should take.

A common thread ran through these conversations: The Embarcadero is a special and significant place in San Francisco. It is important that people are safe, can get where they need to go, and can access and enjoy The Embarcadero's destinations and views. Ensuring that business needs are also maintained is also of critical importance. Participants encouraged the SFMTA to think big in their designs, promoting a flexible approach that also meets placemaking and aesthetic goals.

Big ideas included:

- **Underground roadway at Ferry Building with local road at grade**
- **Pedestrian bridge from Market Street to Ferry Building**
- **Elevated bikeway**
- **Cantilevered bikeway: over water / underwater at piers, glass / picturesque!**
- **Move Muni tracks to enlarge Ferry Building plaza**
- **Full-time 'Sunday Streets' treatment (i.e. shifting all traffic to city-side of MUNI tracks)**
- **Dutch-style (raised from roadway) cycle-track, with traffic control**
- **Flexible, managed travel lanes that change direction with time of day**
- **Sculptural / architectural elements for a bikeway, possibly thematic / geographic**



Participants were encouraged to generate 'out-of-the-box' ideas for achieving the goal of a Complete Street and protected bikeway along the Embarcadero. Ideas included a pedestrian bridge and underground roadway at the Ferry Building (which were actually part of the historic waterfront design, top right image); permanent diversion of most traffic away from the waterfront (similar to Sunday Streets, middle image); and elevated / cantilevered bikeways that engage waterfront views and avoid traffic impacts (example from Copenhagen, bottom image).

Proposed Street Cross-Sections / Bikeway Types

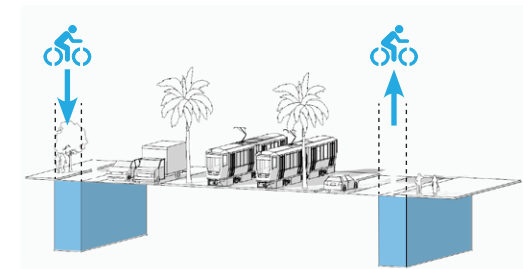
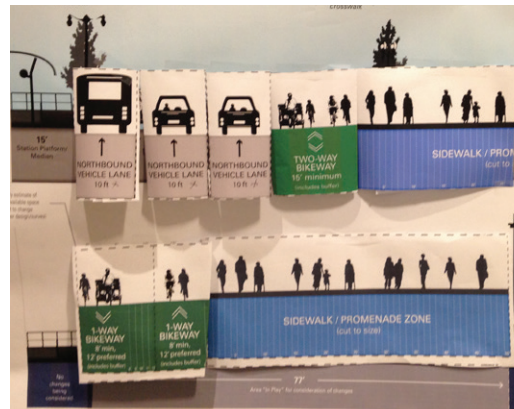
In addition to discussion of key trade-offs, priorities, and 'out-of-the-box' ideas for a Complete Street on The Embarcadero, the workshop resulted in approximately 13 street cross-section concept designs for various pinchpoints along the corridor.

Each of these concepts included some variation of a protected bikeway, which were generally classified into three categories: one-way curbside, one-way center-running (adjacent to the MUNI tracks), and a two-way waterside bikeway. (Participants were notified in advance that a two-way, cityside bikeway has been ruled out due to space constraints.)

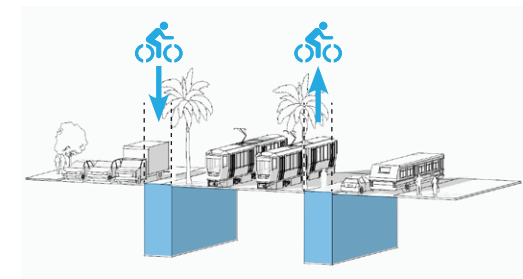
Individual summaries for each workshop team/pinchpoint are provided in the next subsection. Initial SFMTA comments regarding the feasibility and potential impacts of these concepts, and an outline of next steps for 2015, are provided in **Section 4**.

Summary of design workshop concepts:

- **Seven (7) teams / designs included a one-way, curbside bikeway in their preferred street section**
- **One (1) team included a one-way, center-running bikeway in their preferred street section**
- **Ten (10) teams / designs included a two-way, waterside bikeway in their preferred street section**
- **Six (6) teams / designs included, or left open the possibility, of multiple bikeway design configurations in their preferred street section**



One-way curbside bikeway



One-way center-running bikeway



Two-way waterside bikeway

Several workshop teams suggested that multiple bikeway types may be necessary to accommodate access through pinchpoints, and/or to serve different types of users.