



MEMORANDUM

January 8, 2021

TO: MEMBERS, PORT COMMISSION
Hon. Kimberly Brandon, President
Hon. Willie Adams, Vice President
Hon. John Burton
Hon. Gail Gilman
Hon. Doreen Woo Ho

FROM: Elaine Forbes 
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Presentation and update on the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Embarcadero Enhancement Project and related projects in support of the city's Vision Zero traffic safety goals

DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION: Information Only – No Action Required

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Embarcadero Enhancement Project (EEP) is a San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) transportation and streetscape effort to promote safety, mobility, connectivity, and accessibility improvements for all modes of transport along The Embarcadero between Townsend and North Point Streets. SFMTA and Port staff have provided informational presentations to this Commission regarding the EEP and associated 'quick-build' projects several times in the past three years, with the most recent update on June 9, 2020.¹ At the January 12, 2021 meeting SFMTA staff will provide an update on the upcoming project phases of transportation improvements and show the recently completed Vision Zero 2020 Embarcadero Quick-Build Projects.

The SFMTA, with input from Port staff, conducted planning and public outreach for the EEP between 2014 and 2018 and advanced preliminary engineering for a two-way bicycle path along the water side of two-miles of The Embarcadero corridor. These efforts helped inform the recently completed [Vision Zero 2020 Embarcadero Quick-Build](#)

¹ SFMTA staff provided presentations to the Port Commission on February 11, 2020, November 13, 2018, and August 14, 2018, where the Commission made requests regarding near-term actions that could be implemented to improve safety while the longer-term Embarcadero Enhancement Project advances.

[Projects](#), and have led to a project phasing and investment plan that prioritizes the central segment of The Embarcadero from Mission to Broadway as Phase 1, and initiate design engineering studies for the southern segment between Folsom and Townsend Streets in Phase 2. In 2021 SFMTA will continue public outreach and work to complete environmental review for Phases 1 and 2, and detailed design to implement Phase 1 improvements in the Ferry Building area.

Due to design and current SFMTA funding challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the SFMTA will be reevaluating options for Embarcadero transportation safety improvements between Broadway and North Point Street near Pier 35. SFMTA will combine this work with a Fisherman's Wharf/Pier 39 transportation study, to develop proposals that extend bicycle and transportation safety improvements from Broadway to Fisherman's Wharf. The schedule for this work is not yet known, as SFMTA and Port staff are currently focused on advancing Phases 1 and 2 of the EEP. Staff will return at a future date to provide the Port Commission with more details about transportation improvements north of Broadway.

The January 12 informational presentation will describe the proposed design for Phase 1 in the Ferry Building area for public review and comment. SFMTA and Port staff are meeting with Port tenants to review the design details and will present to the Northern Advisory Committee on January 20, 2021. Port and SFMTA staff anticipate reporting back to the Port Commission in the spring to seek endorsement of the Phase 1 design, as may be further refined, and support of SFMTA to conduct detailed design and engineering study for Phase 2 of the EEP.

PORT'S STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Embarcadero Enhancement Project and related Vision Zero safety improvements support the goals and objectives of the Port's Strategic Plan as follows:

Evolution:

2. Coordinate with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to improve access to the waterfront and transportation service to Port facilities. Work with SFMTA to make The Embarcadero safer through interim and long-term improvements:
 - i. In 2019, install signage and striping in 'hot-spot' locations, expanded passenger loading zones, and Battery and Sansome bicycle connections.
 - ii. Release the Embarcadero Enhancement long-term concept design in 2019, and preliminary engineering in 2020.

Engagement:

1. Strengthen public understanding and support of Port responsibilities and projects through community engagement and participation at many levels.
2. Partner with City departments and government agencies, Port tenants, and stakeholders to educate and promote waterfront projects.

BACKGROUND

Previous Presentations to Port Commission

Previous SFMTA presentations on the EEP and related efforts occurred on June 9, 2020, February 11, 2020, November 13, 2018, and August 14, 2018, where the Port Commission made requests regarding near-term actions that could be implemented to improve safety while the longer-term Embarcadero Enhancement Project advances. In response, SFMTA developed and implemented three “Quick-Build” projects, described below, while continuing engineering and design planning for the EEP.

2020 Vision Zero Quick-Build Projects

The SFMTA presented a full description of the quick-build projects to the Port Commission on June 9, 2020. [The Vision Zero Quick-Build initiative](#) is an SFMTA effort to quickly implement pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements on the Vision Zero High Injury Network (HIN). The HIN is the 13% of city streets where over 75% of injury and fatal collisions occur. Most of The Embarcadero is on the High-Injury-Network, and in the past five years there have been 189 reported traffic injuries and two fatalities.

Between June and December 2020, the SFMTA constructed quick-build projects at three locations to address safety conflicts, or ‘hot spots’, along The Embarcadero:

- 1) The **Pier 35 Quick-Build**, between Bay and North Point streets, establishes a new northbound protected bikeway to reduce conflicts between people bicycling and passenger loading activity at the Pier 35 Cruise Terminal. The flexible design also accommodates the unique loading demands for cruise calls and other large-scale events that are held at Pier 35.



- 2) The **Ferry Terminal Quick-Build**, between Folsom and Mission streets, includes a water-side, two-way protected bikeway to improve safety for all users and enhance connections to the Downtown Ferry Terminal from the South of Market (SOMA) neighborhood. This two-way protected bikeway is a preview of the EEP's safety improvements planned for other segments of the corridor.

- 3) The **Rincon Restaurant Zone Quick-Build**, between Harrison and Folsom streets, establishes a northbound protected bikeway and expands capacity for commercial and passenger loading fronting the two Rincon Park restaurants. The protected bikeway also reduces potential conflicts between all modes of transportation alongside Rincon Park.

These quick-build improvements are currently operational with the recent completion of concrete islands and activation of a bicycle traffic signal for the new two-way bikeway at Howard Street in November 2020. The total budget for these projects was approximately \$750,000.

Embarcadero Enhancement Project (EEP)

In partnership with the Port, the SFMTA has spent several years engaging with stakeholder groups and the broader public to envision a better, safer Embarcadero. In 2018, this process culminated in a concept design that included a new two-way, water-side bikeway physically protected from both the Promenade and vehicular traffic, extending from Pier 35 to Townsend Street. Other preferred elements include shorter pedestrian crossings, expanded vehicle loading, and maintaining two northbound vehicle travel lanes (but re-purposing the third lane for safety).

Since 2019, the project team has continued engineering and feasibility analysis for the approximately two-mile stretch of The Embarcadero. SFMTA found that the design for the two-way cycle track could be accommodated between Broadway and Townsend Street within the existing roadway or with modifications to the center median and curb edge of the Promenade. However, SFMTA found that the section of The Embarcadero north of Broadway presents more significant design challenges that would be substantially more costly. SFMTA's financial and capital resources have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the agency will need to conduct further study and public outreach to reevaluate options for transportation safety improvements north of Broadway.

PROJECT STATUS

EEP Phasing Plan

In light of design and cost challenges for the north of Broadway segment of The Embarcadero, SFMTA and Port staff propose two phases to carry out EEP improvements: Phase One would improve the segment between Broadway and Mission Street; Phase Two would improve Folsom to Townsend Street. These segments would be connected by the Mission to Folsom Quick Build project described above. The EEP phases take into account SFMTA funding constraints, diversity of stakeholders (including in adjacent neighborhoods), and varying design issues along the corridor.

Phase One - Central Segment (Mission Street to Broadway)

The proposed first project phase prioritizes safety improvements in the Ferry Building area where interactions between ferry passengers, tourists, customers, and businesses are high, creating the greatest number of collisions. Key benefits include:

- **Increases the length of the two-way bikeway (from two blocks to six)** along The Embarcadero, extending north from the Mission to Folsom Quick Build project through the Ferry Building area to Broadway;

- **Addresses two of the least safe intersections** — Embarcadero at Washington Street and Broadway — enhancing access between the waterfront and city-side neighborhoods and attractions; and
- **Adds and better distributes parking and loading** near the Ferry Building, including new curbside zones along the city side of The Embarcadero.

The Central Segment phase will be divided into two sub-phases: phases 1A and 1B.

Central Segment Phase 1A aims to deliver low-cost modification within the existing roadway which can be readily adjusted or refined if needed - similar to the quick-build projects - by late 2021 or early 2022. This sub-phase largely avoids curb and promenade changes and utilizes existing signal poles to add new bike signals at intersections. Northbound vehicle travel lanes would be reduced from three to two (to make room for the bikeway), with additional circulation and safety changes focused at Washington Street. The SFMTA estimates that EEP Phase 1A will cost approximately \$1 million and could be funded with local sources in the current capital improvement budget.

Central Segment Phase 1B would be a follow-up capital construction phase that would update intersections and crossings to further improve pedestrian safety, with a focus at the Ferry Building driveway, Clay Street, Washington Street, and Broadway. Phase 1B requires further scoping but is projected to cost \$3 million or more.

Phase 2 - Southern Segment (Townsend Street to Folsom Street)

The Embarcadero between Townsend and Folsom streets has limited roadway width which would require substantial alterations to the Promenade and center medians and is expected to be 3 to 4 times more expensive than the central segment phases. Advancing the design of this segment requires further coordination with Port staff and tenants and sponsors of the proposed Piers 30-32 and 38-40 pier development projects, stakeholders and the Port Commission. SFMTA currently does not have capital funding for Phase 2 but is working to complete the engineering and design of this segment to make it competitive for transportation funding.

Pending additional Port staff coordination and public feedback and to be more competitive for funding, the SFMTA may seek endorsement in spring 2021 to advance the design of Phase 2 improvements concurrent with endorsement of Phase 1.

Fisherman's Wharf / Pier 39 and Broadway to North Point

The overall objective of the EEP is to improve transportation safety for all modes along The Embarcadero to Jefferson Street. As The Embarcadero approaches Fisherman's Wharf it narrows between Pier 35/North Point Street and Jefferson Street. To resolve circulation challenges in the area adjacent to and near Pier 39, SFMTA will conduct further analysis to identify safety and mobility opportunities north of North Point Street along The Embarcadero and surrounding streets. Preliminary concepts include reconfiguration of access to/from the Pier 39 parking garage, traffic signal phasing upgrades, and extension of a waterside protected bikeway to connect to Jefferson Street. The study for this segment is funded by a \$175,000 grant through the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) and will inform further study of

options for bikeway and safety improvements for the Broadway to North Point segment of The Embarcadero.

Public Outreach

The SFMTA developed a public outreach plan for EEP Phase 1 that includes direct (but virtual) stakeholder engagement via one-on-one meetings; presentations to organized groups including the Northern Advisory Committee (NAC) and neighborhood associations; an online survey and open house; and other digital/social media. EEP Phase 1 outreach to directly affected stakeholders and Port tenants began in December 2020, and broader public engagement is planned in winter 2021 to support design refinement and environmental review. Phase 1 outreach efforts will continue into late winter or early spring and are expected to culminate with an SFMTA Board public hearing and subsequent Port Commission presentation seeking approvals. Phase 2 outreach is anticipated to commence in the Fall of 2021.

Environmental Review

Port, SFMTA and Planning Department staff will be coordinating environmental review prior to returning to the Port Commission later this year. SFMTA anticipates applying for a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption for transportation projects.

Next Steps

SFMTA and Port staff will continue to conduct stakeholder outreach and design through winter 2021, including a more detailed presentation of Phase One to the NAC on January 21, 2021. Port and SFMTA staff will also continue to collaborate on the design of Phase 2 and provide consistent public updates and new information via the project website, www.sfmta.com/embarcadero. The SFMTA hopes to return to the Port Commission in spring 2021 with a request to endorse project changes – primarily in the central segment - that affect traffic circulation, curb management, and the promenade. If approved, initial changes could be implemented in late 2021 or early 2022.

Prepared by: Mark Dreger, Senior Transportation Planner,
Sustainable Streets Division, SFMTA
Dan Hodapp, Senior Waterfront Planner
Planning and Environment Division

For: Diane Oshima, Deputy Director
Planning and Environment Division

Attachments

- 1) EEP 'Phase 1 - Central Segment' fact sheet
- 2) Commission meeting slide presentation