



Notice of Preparation

To: State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Mike Gougherty
WETA Project Manager
Pier 9, Suite 111, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94111

**Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and
Notice of Public Scoping Meeting**

The San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), as the lead state agency, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the lead federal agency, are planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal Expansion Project, under the California Environmental Policy Act. In addition, WETA will hold both a public and agency scoping meeting on April 26, 2011. WETA is requesting your agency's comments on the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities regarding the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are described in the attached materials.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 45 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Mike Gougherty at the address shown above, along with the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal Expansion Project
Project Applicant, if any: San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority

Date: 3/24/2011 Signature: 
Title: Project Manager
Telephone: (415) 364-3189

COMMENTS AND SCOPING MEETING

A public scoping meeting to accept comments on the scope of the Environment Impact Report (EIR) will be held on the following date:

- April 26, 2011, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at Pier 1, Bayside Conference Room, San Francisco, California.

An interagency scoping meeting for agencies with interest in the project will be held on the following date:

- April 26, 2011 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Pier 1, Bayside Conference Room, San Francisco, California.

The meeting will be accessible to persons with disabilities. If special translation or signing services or other special accommodations are needed, please contact Mike Gougherty at (415) 364-3189 at least 48 hours before the meeting. A scoping information packet is available on the WETA website at <http://www.watertransit.org>, or by calling Mike Gougherty at (415) 364-3189. Copies will also be available at the scoping meeting.

Comments on the scope of the EIS will be accepted at the public scoping meeting, or written comments should be sent to Mike Gougherty, WETA Project Manager, San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority, Pier 9, Suite 111, The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA, 94111. Comments will be accepted until May 16, 2011.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Location

The project is located in the northeastern section of San Francisco, California, at the San Francisco Ferry Building, situated at the foot of Market Street. The study area encompasses Port of San Francisco property between Pier 1 on the north and Pier 14 on the south, and includes the Ferry Building, ferry gates, and the Ferry Plaza.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal Expansion Project is to support and expand ferry service on San Francisco Bay, as established by WETA in its Implementation and Operations Plan, and in accordance with city and regional policies to encourage transit use. Furthermore, the project will address deficiencies in the transportation network that impede ferry

operation and ferry patron access and circulation at the Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal. The project objectives include:

- Accommodate WETA's projected increase in ferry ridership and related ferry arrivals and departures from the Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal;
- Provide a viable alternative mode of transportation that accommodates projected increases in transbay trips, and helps alleviate congestion over the Bay Bridge and through the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Transbay Tube;
- Address WETA's and the Port of San Francisco's (Port) emergency response needs;
- Establish a circulation plan and improved signage that provides clear pedestrian routes for ferry to bus and ferry to rail transfers, as well as safe routes for bikes, emergency vehicles, and delivery trucks to enter, park and exit the area;
- Provide necessary landside improvements, such as designated weather-protected areas for waiting and queuing, ticket machines and fare collection equipment, improved lighting, and improved boarding and arrival/departure information to serve ferry patrons and to enhance the Ferry Building as the central point of embarkation for ferries on San Francisco Bay; and
- Enhance the area's public access and open space with design features that create attractive, safe daytime and nighttime public spaces for both ferry patrons and other users of the Ferry Building area.

WETA recognizes and supports the Port's land use planning and development proposals in and around the Ferry Building, including the historic renovation of the Agricultural Building and other improvements in the Ferry Building area. These Port initiatives are being planned and funded independent of the WETA project and, as a result, are not included as project elements. WETA will stage construction, and manage and operate ferry services so they do not preclude, conflict with, or inhibit the Port's proposed development plans in the project vicinity.

Proposed Project Components

The proposed project incorporates modifications and improvements to the Ferry Terminal gates and ferry boarding areas to accommodate future WETA service and increased ferry patronage. The current estimate for 2025 projected daily ridership at the Ferry Terminal is approximately 35,000 passengers. The ridership projections account for existing service, plus new ferry services from downtown San Francisco to Berkeley, Treasure Island, Hercules, Richmond, Redwood City, Martinez, and Antioch to be initiated between 2014 and 2030. Service frequencies during the day and evenings would reflect the travel demand for commute and non-

commute periods. Existing ferry services operated by others (i.e., ferry service to Sausalito, Larkspur, and Tiburon), and existing services operated by WETA (i.e., ferry service to Vallejo, Alameda/Oakland, and Alameda Harbor Bay) would continue to operate, but the access and boarding environments for these services would be improved by the project.

In addition, landside improvements to allow staging and circulation for possible emergency evacuation at the Ferry Building are included in the proposed project. The modifications and improvements are the responsibility of WETA in cooperation with the Port of San Francisco, with funding coming from Regional Measure 2, State Proposition 1B, and FTA.

The WETA-sponsored improvements represent sequential construction phases (Phase 2 and Phase 3). The Phase 2 and Phase 3 improvements build on those elements already completed by the Port in 2003 during Phase 1. Phase 2, which is expected to be completed by 2017, will include:

- Demolition and removal of Pier ½ and Pier 2;
- Construction of Gate A in the north basin, and Gates F and G in the south basin;
- Installation of boarding area amenities such as weather-protected areas for queuing, ticket machines and fare collection equipment, improved lighting, and ferry boarding and arrival/departure information signs;
- Widening of ferry access pathways along existing pedestrian promenades, and separation of ferry patron queuing from other pedestrian and vehicular movements where possible;
- Improved wayfinding signage in the vicinity of the Ferry Building, which will indicate ferry boarding areas and transit connections; and
- Filling in the lagoon to prepare for and accommodate staging and circulation of evacuees following a catastrophic event.

As new ferry gates are constructed, existing ferry services would relocate to the new gates. Pier demolition and construction activities would be staged and sequenced to allow for the continuity of existing ferry services during construction. Demolition of Pier ½ would precede construction of Gate A. Similarly, demolition of Pier 2 would precede construction of Gate F. Gate G, which is designated for ferry services not expected to operate until 2020 or later, would serve as a vessel layover location, temporary storage area, and emergency boarding location in the interim. WETA's capital improvement plan synchronizes the purchase or leasing of vessels to meet future service and emergency response requirements.

Phase 3 is contingent on the implementation of the Treasure Island Redevelopment Plan. At full build-out, expected to occur sometime between 2020 and 2030, new commercial, recreational, and residential facilities on Treasure Island would require additional ferry capacity to serve substantial numbers of visitors and residents. The additional capacity would be provided by larger, bow-loading vessels purchased by the Treasure Island developer, and operated by WETA. The bow-loading vessels would necessitate the redesign of Gate E to accommodate the larger ferries.

Possible Impacts

The purpose of this EIR process is to study, in a public setting, the potentially significant effects of the proposed project on the environment. Primary areas of investigation for this project include, but are not limited to: land use, development potential, displacements, historic resources, visual and aesthetic qualities, air quality, noise and vibration, dredging and bay fill requirements, hazardous materials resulting from demolition and construction activities, traffic circulation and transportation linkages, pedestrian circulation, safety, security, and emergency response, bay habitat, and cumulative impacts. The environmental analysis may reveal that the proposed project will not impact or have significant impacts to many of those areas. However, if any environmental impacts are identified, measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts will be proposed.