



San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge

West Span Bicycle/Pedestrian/Maintenance Path Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: December 14, 2011

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Who is sponsoring the project?

The Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and with support from the City and County of San Francisco, are sponsors of the project.

2. What is the purpose of preparing a Project Initiation Document (PID)?

The PID is intended to update the feasibility study performed in 2001 and to provide a basis for seeking future funding for the project.

3. How much will the project cost?

The current range of costs is between \$500 and \$550 million (2011 dollars). Future cost escalation can only be developed when a project schedule has been determined, and is likely to be significant.

4. Where will the funding come from?

Funding for future phases of this project has not yet been identified. Funding for the current study comes from bridge toll revenue.

ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

5. What alternatives have been considered, deferred, and why?

A large number of alternatives were developed and considered for the project. Many alternatives have been deferred from further consideration due to issues such as right of way impacts, acquisition/demolition of existing occupied structures, constructability, cost effectiveness, incompatibility with bicycle route network improvements, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) non-compliance, safety and/or security concerns, impacts on US Coast Guard operations, or environmental impacts. Some of these deferred alternatives can be seen at the project presentation posted on the MTC website (www.mtc.ca.gov). The alternatives being presented are deemed to be feasible and have received the concurrence of agency stakeholders, and are compatible with planned future development projects.

6. Has an alternative been selected?

The project team has developed several viable design alternatives for public review and consideration. These are the alternatives that will be further evaluated in the current study. Such alternatives will be brought forth for consideration at the next phase.

7. Is there a preferred alternative?

Not at this time. The selection of preferred alternatives will be made during the environmental documentation/project approval phase.

8. How will the project integrate existing bicycle/pedestrian plans?

All project alternatives provide connections to existing or planned bicycle routes or paths, both in downtown San Francisco and on Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island.

9. Are the alternatives compatible with planned development?

The project team has been coordinating on an ongoing basis with City agencies to update and revise the design alternatives to be compatible with approved and other planned development in both downtown San Francisco and Treasure Island.

DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO PROJECT AREA

10. What are the key challenges and constraints of the project in Downtown San Francisco?

The main constraint in San Francisco is a lack of available space due to existing and planned development (buildings, roads, etc.), which in turn limits the route that the path can take. Each alternative comes with its own specific challenges, as described below:

SFN-1A: This alternative connects directly to the roof garden level of the proposed Transbay Terminal. It traverses the planned Parcel F development (up to 750ft. tall) by passing through a proposed building. The high speed rail tunnel to the Terminal introduces challenges for the path's foundation, and a cable-supported structure may be necessary for this area. In addition, there is no ramp for bicyclists to reach the street level.

SFN 1-CX3: This alternative requires the acquisition and demolition of a number of existing buildings near the Folsom Street touchdown point, including one which houses the Mexican Consulate. It will also have to be designed to be compatible with a proposed neighborhood park.

SFN 1-F: This alternative touches down at the site of a proposed park, which is likely to be in place before the project is built. Coordination is necessary to ensure the park project does not preclude this alternative to be implemented.

SFS-2: This alternative impacts the dog park at Beale Street which is currently under construction. It will require future modification of the dog park.

SFS-2B: This alternative requires the realignment of Beale Street, including the relocation of on-street parking.

11. Will the project connect to the proposed Transbay Terminal?

All alternatives will connect either directly or indirectly to the proposed Transbay Terminal.

12. Will the path be ADA accessible?

Yes.

MAIN SPAN PROJECT AREA

13. What are the key challenges and constraints of constructing the project across the Main Span?

The key challenges on the main span revolve around two factors: width of the existing travel lanes on the bridge and the additional weight added to the structure.

The path must be built outside the existing travelled way, as there is insufficient space to maintain the current vehicle travel lanes and the proposed path within the current bridge deck. Converting an existing vehicle lane for use as the proposed path would create safety issues due to conflicts with on- and off-ramps. It also reduces capacity on the bridge, significantly worsening traffic congestion on the bridge.

The path would be cantilevered off the two sides on the top deck of the bridge, adding additional weight to the overall structure, and reducing vertical clearance for the shipping channel below. The reduction in vertical clearance must be offset in one of two ways: either the weight of the bridge deck must be reduced by replacing it with a lighter weight material, or the suspender cables of the bridge structure must be shortened. It is noted that such shortening had never be performed on a bridge of this type.

The alteration of the bridge structure will also impose additional wind and seismic loads which will require intensive and specialized engineering analysis. Consideration was given to constructing the path only on one side to reduce cost.

However, if the path were to be constructed only on one side of the bridge, its weight would create torsion on the bridge structure which would require costly mitigation thereby reducing any cost benefit.

14. Why does Caltrans need maintenance access?

Caltrans requires continual access to its “traveler” maintenance platforms in order to paint the bridge or perform other maintenance work. Currently, access requires the temporary closure of an eastbound lane every weekday. The path would provide improved bridge access for Caltrans maintenance crews, thereby significantly reducing the number of lane closures on the bridge.

TREASURE ISLAND (TI) /YERBA BUENA ISLAND (YBI) PROJECT AREA

15. What are the key challenges and constraints of the project at Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island?

The main challenge at Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island concerns ADA compliance. The island has very steep grades along the coast and the path will have to be built significantly above existing grades as it approaches the Main (West) Span. Other challenges include impacts on US Coast Guard operations, safety and/or security concerns, and potential environmental impacts.

16. Will the project impact any of the planned developments on Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island?

No, the alternatives that have been developed will work in conjunction with the planned Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island development. This project will also provide an alternate transportation link between Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island and downtown San Francisco.

17. Will the project require Right-of-Way acquisitions?

Yes. The amount of right-of-way required will vary depending on the alternatives and design options selected.

NEXT STEPS

18. What is the timeline for having the path in place?

Funding for the project has not been identified. The path can be in place approximately 10 years after the project is funded.

19. Is there a plan to get bicyclists and pedestrians to San Francisco from TI in the interim while the project completes planning and construction?

Bicyclists and pedestrians may use the following methods of transportation to move between downtown San Francisco, TI/YBI and the East Bay: BART (which prohibits bicycles during peak commute hours), ferries from the planned Treasure Island Ferry



Terminal, AC Transit and MUNI buses (which have limited bike space) and Caltrans bike shuttles (which currently runs during peak commute hours only from MacArthur BART Station).

20. What is the project schedule and next steps?

Once funding for the project is identified, the next steps are as follows:

- a. Preliminary Design/Environmental Approvals (approximately 3 years)
- b. Final Design/Acquisition of Right of Way (approximately 2 years)
- c. Construction (approximately 4.5 years)

21. How can the public provide input on the alternatives and stay involved?

The public can provide input by filling out comment cards at this meeting. They can also correspond with the project contacts at the BATA, Caltrans, and/or the project consultant. There will be another planned meeting in spring/summer 2012.

Announcement of the meeting will be posted on the MTC website: www.mtc.ca.gov.

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