

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

In January 2008, the San Francisco Water Transit Authority (WTA) was superseded by the newly created Water Emergency Transit Authority (WETA) as described in Section 1.3.4. As a result, this document differentiates between project-related actions taken by WTA (those taken prior to 2008) and those present and future actions for which WETA has responsibility.

WETA is proposing to implement new ferry service between Berkeley/Albany and the San Francisco Ferry Building (see Figure 1-1 for project location and study area). The ferry service would operate seven days a week, daytime and evenings. The project would include construction of a new ferry terminal, including transit and pedestrian access as well as patron drop-off and parking areas, along the Berkeley/Albany waterfront. Four sites, indicated on Figure 1-1, have been identified for study in the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). They are listed below:

- Berkeley Marina, located at the Berkeley Marina, adjacent to the Hornblower dock;
- Berkeley Fishing Pier, located between the landside end of the Berkeley Fishing Pier and Hs Lordships Restaurant;
- Gilman Street, located immediately north of the foot of Gilman Street, adjacent to the Golden Gate Field stables; and
- Buchanan Street, located on the old pier site at the foot of Buchanan Street adjacent to Golden Gate Fields.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The purpose of studying a ferry terminal site along the Berkeley/Albany Waterfront is to enhance mobility and transportation choices of East Bay residents and to respond to the deficiencies in the Transbay transportation network as described below. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is seeking ways to augment Transbay capacity, which is limited by the throughput constraints of the Bay Bridge and Transbay Tube, and vulnerable to emergency situations that obstruct or close the use of these facilities. In addition, the provision of alternative transportation modes is a regional goal to reduce the use of the private automobile for Transbay trips, thereby diminishing emissions and decreasing congestion on the regional roadway system. Similarly, providing San Francisco residents with alternative modes of travel to access state and regional parklands and other destinations in the East Bay would help meet these regional goals.

1.2 NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

1.2.1 Current and Future Transbay Roadway Congestion

Between now and 2025, the Bay Area is expected to gain 1.4 million residents and 1.2 million jobs. During this time, downtown San Francisco employment will increase to 346,000 jobs, and remain one of the primary employment centers of the region (San Francisco Planning Department, 2001). The MTC estimates that the Bay Bridge corridor will have substantial growth in the number of daily person trips, increasing from 590,000 to 772,000 in 2025, and in

vehicular traffic (from 300,000 vehicles to 425,000 vehicles per day), (MTC, 2002). This increase will aggravate travel delay along Interstate 80 (I-80) in the project area. The California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans') 2002 Bay Area Freeway Congestion Data indicate that the Eastshore Freeway currently has a daily delay of 24,550 vehicle hours and 49.0 directional miles of congestion, and was ranked number one for vehicle delay in the regional roadway network. By 2025, the Bay Bridge is expected to have 73,400 peak-period vehicle hours of delay, extending morning congestion at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza from 4 to nearly 5 hours (MTC, 2002). The delays on the Bay Bridge and I-80 affect goods movement, particularly traveling from the Port of Oakland, as well as auto travel.

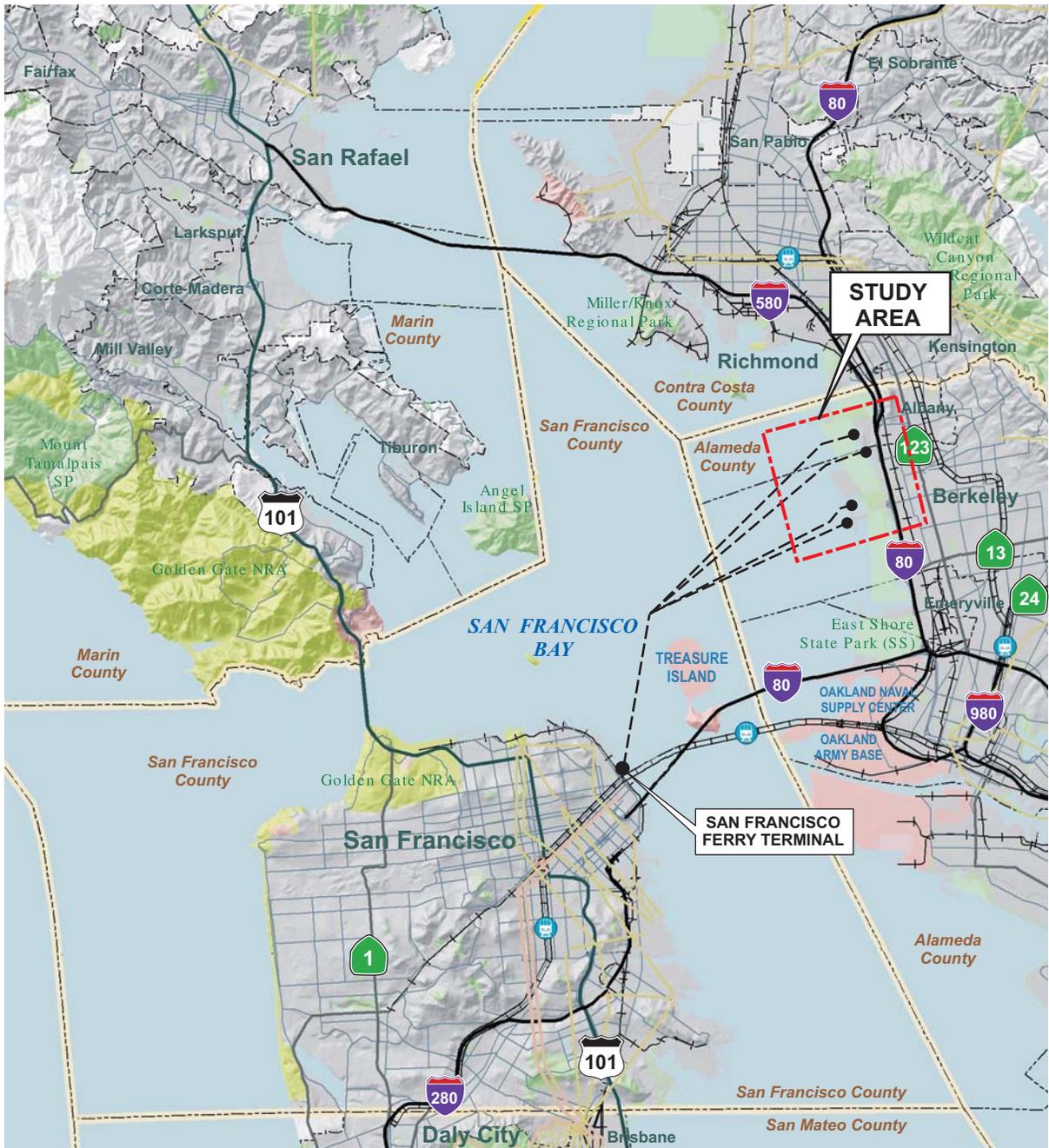
1.2.2 Current and Future Transbay Transit Capacity

The overall mode split for journeys to work into downtown San Francisco was 54 percent transit, 30 percent drive-alone, and 16 percent ride-share (Badiner, 1995). East Bay residents, comprising one-fourth of downtown San Francisco workers, were second only to San Francisco residents in using transit for their downtown commute trips. Fifty-five percent of commute trips to downtown San Francisco were made via transit, which indicates the availability of transit and the willingness of East Bay residents to forego automobiles in favor of transit.

Transit carries approximately 160,700 Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) patrons, 15,200 Alameda–Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) bus passengers, and 4,000 ferry patrons between the East Bay and San Francisco. Ferry patrons use two operating ferry services—Alameda/Oakland and Vallejo—to travel between the East Bay and San Francisco. By 2025, BART will carry 254,000 daily riders, AC Transit's Express Bus service will carry 19,800 passengers, and Ferry services will carry 7,060, or 36 percent of Bay Bridge corridor trips. Carpools, carrying 105,000 people, will capture 14 percent of these trips (MTC, 2002). BART serves crossbay destinations very effectively, carrying substantial numbers of passengers. The BART transbay tube currently has capacity for 30 trains per hour—only eight more than BART currently operates during the peak hour. The BART system is forecast to be able to handle demand between now and 2025 (URS, 2003); however, San Francisco station loading times and slow travel times through the Market Street subway affect the capacity of the transbay tube, and will increasingly do so as BART service increases to meet demand. AC Transit and carpools, the other major alternative means of travel across the Bay into San Francisco, are subject to the traffic delays mentioned in the previous section. Installation of high-occupancy vehicle or bus lanes on the Bay Bridge is not currently planned; therefore, crossbay ferry service can supplement existing transbay transit service with a modal alternative that offers less constrained operations.

1.2.3 Disaster Response

Water transit provides a viable alternative for transporting people around the region when unexpected and long-term disruption renders other components of the regional transportation system inoperable. Disastrous events that have disrupted the transportation system have occurred several times during the past 25 years. After the Loma Prieta earthquake damaged the Bay Bridge, water transit service using excursion vessels was established to supplement BART



LEGEND

- Alternative Berkeley/Albany Terminal Locations
- Potential Berkeley/Albany - San Francisco Ferry Route



0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers

NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

GENERAL LOCATION MAP

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Berkeley/Albany
Ferry Terminal Study



FIGURE 1-1

service between the East Bay and San Francisco, including temporary routes from Berkeley and Richmond. WETA is currently updating the 1996 *MTC Regional Ferry Contingency Plan* (now called the *Regional Maritime Contingency Plan*) to reflect emergency measures for maritime traffic in addition to ferries. The Plan will also assess current emergency-response assets, develop viable contingencies for a variety of possible emergencies and disasters, and create a workable business resumption plan for the local maritime community (EIP Associates, 2005).

1.2.4 Regional Air Quality Issues

The San Francisco Bay Area's air quality has improved in recent years, largely because of technological improvements in motor vehicles and the development of less polluting fuels. The project study area is within the Bay Area Air Basin (BAAB), which is monitored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). According to the BAAQMD, the BAAB is designated nonattainment for ozone (O₃) with respect to federal and California standards, and non-attainment for particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or smaller (PM₁₀) under California standards. The Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) found that a regional ferry system would result in a net decrease in nitrous oxide (an ozone precursor), carbon monoxide (CO), and PM₁₀. In addition, new ferryboats are planned to have low-emission engines, reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

1.2.5 Public Access to Eastshore State Park and the Bay Trail

Shoreline parks and trails are being developed along the Berkeley/Albany Waterfront. Two major efforts are under way: the implementation of the Eastshore State Park, and the completion of the Bay Trail along the Eastshore. The Eastshore State Park will ultimately include 1,817 acres of land and water along the shoreline between Emeryville and Richmond, securing more than 5 miles of public access with spectacular views of San Francisco Bay. Additions to the San Francisco Bay Trail within the Eastshore State Park area are now under construction. The Park and Trail are regional resources that are accessed primarily via the existing roadway network. Ferry service from San Francisco could provide expanded access to Eastshore State Park and the Bay Trail without adding to regional vehicle trips.

1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.3.1 WTA Mission Statement

Senate Bill 428, enacted in October 1999, formed and empowered WTA to plan and operate new and expanded water transit services and related ground transportation access services for the San Francisco Bay Area. WTA's mission was "to build and operate a cost-effective, convenient, and environmentally responsible ferry system that will enhance commuter choices and the Bay Area's public transit system" (URS, 2003). Key service provisions that reinforce the agency's mission include:

- Providing convenient access to and enhanced shuttle/transit connections with the ferry;

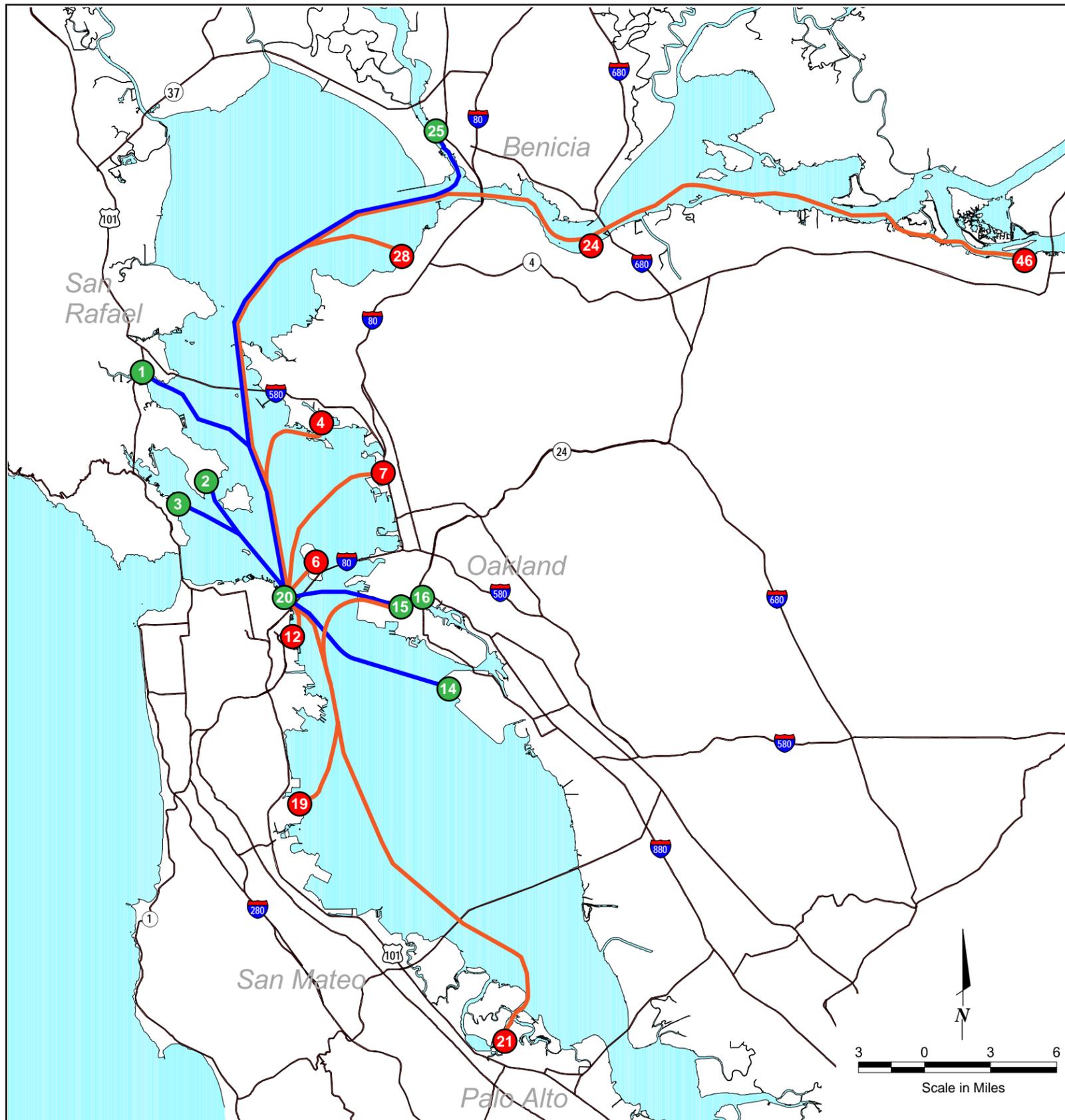
- Providing service frequencies and hours of operation that meet demand, focusing on those periods of peak demand, to maximize use of the service in the most cost-effective manner;
- Providing transbay travel times that compete with automobile travel and encourage single occupant drivers to use alternative modes of transportation, including ferries; and
- Using vessels designed to reduce emissions and that can accommodate bicycle riders.

1.3.2 WTA Implementation and Operations Plan

In July 2003, WTA submitted the Implementation and Operations Plan (IOP) to the State's Governor and Legislature, in accordance with WTA's legislative mandate. The IOP presented a strategy to improve Bay Area transit service with an environmentally friendly ferry system. The IOP proposed nine new regional ferry terminals to supplement existing ferry service, as indicated on Figure 1-2. Existing and proposed ferry service frequencies are presented in Table 1-1. The IOP set priorities for service implementation starting with the South San Francisco to Alameda route, followed by the Berkeley/Albany to San Francisco route. The South San Francisco Ferry Terminal is expected to be operational in late 2009. A Programmatic EIR was prepared for the regional ferry service expansion defined in the IOP (this document is available on the WETA website: www.watertransit.org). The EIR addressed the potential environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures resulting from the expansion of ferry service.

The EIR incorporated results from the regional travel demand modeling conducted by Cambridge Systematics (CSI) for WTA in 2002. The forecasts were updated in 2005. Of multiple scenarios considered, Alternative 17 was selected as the basis for determining ferry rider patronage systemwide. The model output included the mode of access to reach the ferry terminal and the maximum parking demand expected at the new ferry terminal sites. Based on the modeling results, the EIR concluded that the new regional ferries would serve approximately 9.6 million riders annually and reduce regional vehicle miles traveled by 142,000 per day. The model results as applied to the Berkeley/Albany ferry service are described in Section 2.4.1.

The IOP was given regional political and financial support through the approval of Regional Measure (RM)-2 by voters on March 2, 2004. RM-2 provided earmarked funds generated by a \$1 increase, effective July 1, 2004, in tolls on the region's seven state-owned toll bridges to implement the Regional Traffic Relief Plan, a comprehensive strategy for addressing congestion in the transbay bridge corridors and enhancing the convenience and reliability of the Bay Area's public transit system. To initiate the new regional ferry service, RM-2 allocated \$12 million for the purchase of two vessels, and \$3.2 million per year in operating funds to implement the Berkeley/Albany to San Francisco ferry service. The capital funds could be used for terminal improvements if WTA found alternative funding sources for vessel acquisition. RM-2 stipulated



LEGEND

- Primary Roads
- Proposed Ferry Terminal
- Existing Ferry Terminal
- Existing Ferry Routes
- Potential Ferry Routes

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larkspur
Larkspur - SF Ferry Building Tiburon
Tiburon - SF Ferry Building Sausalito
Sausalito - SF Ferry Building Richmond
Richmond - SF Ferry Building Treasure Island
Treasure Island - SF Ferry Building Berkeley/Albany
Berkeley/Albany - SF Ferry Building Mission Bay
Mission Bay - SF Ferry Building Alameda/Harbor Bay Isle
Harbor Bay Isle - SF Ferry Building Alameda Main St.
Alameda Main St.
- Jack London Square
Alameda Main St.
- SF Ferry Building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jack London Square
Jack London Sq. - SF
- SF Ferry Building
Jack London Sq.
- Alameda Main St. Oyster Point (SSF)
Oyster Point - SF Ferry Building San Francisco Ferry Building Redwood City
Redwood City - SF Ferry Building Martinez
Martinez - SF Ferry Building Vallejo/Mare Island
Vallejo - SF Ferry Building Hercules/Rodeo
Hercules/Rodeo - SF Ferry Building Pittsburg/Antioch
Pittsburg/Antioch - SF Ferry Building |
|---|--|

EXISTING FERRY SERVICE AND PROPOSED IOP ROUTE STRUCTURE

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FIGURE 1-2

**Table 1-1
IOP Routes and Frequencies**

Corridor/Ferry Route		Peak/ Off-Peak Headway (min)
Existing System	Oakland to San Francisco	30/60
	Alameda Point to San Francisco	30/60
	Harbor Bay to San Francisco	60/0
	Vallejo to San Francisco	30/60
	Sausalito to San Francisco	30/60
	Larkspur to San Francisco	20/60
	Tiburon to San Francisco	30/60
IOP Proposed Routes	Berkeley/Albany to San Francisco	30/60
	Richmond to San Francisco	30/60
	San Francisco to Treasure Island	30/30
	Antioch/Pittsburg to Martinez to San Francisco	60/200
	Hercules/Rodeo to San Francisco	60/240
	South San Francisco (Oyster Pt.) to Alameda to San Francisco	30/60
	Redwood City to San Francisco	60/60

for that Measure 2 capital and operating allocations would be transferred to another site in the East Bay if WTA did not have an entitled terminal site within the Berkeley/Albany catchment area by 2010.

1.3.3 Berkeley/Albany Ferry Project Phase 1 Alternatives Analysis

The IOP established the Berkeley/Albany ferry terminal and new service as the second ferry expansion project. The feasibility of operating ferry service between the Berkeley/Albany waterfront and San Francisco was studied in July 2006. WTA prepared an Alternatives Analysis (URS, 2006), which analyzed technical information related to the waterside and landside characteristics surrounding each of five potential ferry terminal sites. In addition, potential issues associated with each site were identified, including existing facilities and new construction, potential impacts to biology and habitat, shoreline erosion, site accessibility and parking, and community and political support. The emphasis for the analysis was placed on

evaluating differences between sites to allow decision makers to determine the feasibility of the sites and to select a preferred alternative or multiple alternatives that will be carried forward for environmental analysis. The participation of public agencies and community stakeholders in the process is described in Chapter 7 and further documented in Appendices B, C, and D.

Based on the results of the analysis, WTA eliminated one site located in the sheltered area immediately to the east of Hs Lordships from further evaluation for the following reasons:

- Waterfowl tend to congregate in the sheltered area;
- Shorebird Park and Nature Center is located near the site and dredging and wake wash could disturb class activities;
- The area is used by beginner windsurfers and sailing classes; and
- The location is located near a patch of eelgrass and the basin has high potential as eelgrass habitat.

On July 27, 2006, WTA approved a motion to carry forward the remaining four sites (see Figure 1-1) for further examination and analysis in the EIS/EIR. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was designated the federal lead agency and WTA was designated the local lead agency for the joint National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document.

1.3.4 Reorganization of WTA

In November 2007, the State Legislature reconstituted WTA and modified its mission. The new organization, called WETA, became responsible for planning the mobilization of ferry service to respond to emergency circumstances that prevent or reduce use of the Bay Bridge or Transbay Tube, and for expansion of regional ferry service as described in the IOP.

1.3.5 Project Objectives

The objectives for the Berkeley/Albany Ferry Project include:

- Providing an alternative transbay public transportation mode between the East Bay and San Francisco that is convenient and reliable for commuters, midday riders, recreation users, and tourists;
- Carrying out the plans established in the regional ferry system IOP and the provisions of RM-2;
- Providing ferry terminal facilities in the East Bay that conform with local and regional plans and policies;
- Minimizing ferry implementation and operation impacts on the Bay shoreline, water quality, water life, and recreational activities;

- Providing convenient access to the terminal site while minimizing traffic and circulation impacts; and
- Developing community and agency support.

1.4 PURPOSE OF EIS/EIR DOCUMENT

The EIS/EIR describes, analyzes, and compares the potential environmental impacts of implementing the alternatives, and provides additional information on the methodologies and assumptions used for the analyses. It also proposes mitigation measures that can minimize the effect of adverse impacts. The information is used by WETA Board to select the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

1.4.1 Agency Participation and Public Outreach for the EIS/EIR

WTA held several stakeholder meetings in 2006 to gather local, state, and federal agency input as well as feedback from local organization and groups that have an interest in the project. The input was used to eliminate one of the five terminal sites under consideration by WTA during the Phase 1 Feasibility Study. The Phase 2 Environmental Process began with the initiation of Scoping, a 45-day public comment period that is used to identify issues to be examined in the EIS/EIR. The Scoping period and public meetings accompanying Scoping were announced by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on February 12, 2007 (Appendix B). To meet CEQA requirements, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) containing the Scoping information was submitted to the State Clearinghouse and distributed to appropriate state and local agencies. In addition, WTA sent out Letters of Participation to state and federal agencies to encourage their participation in the Environmental Process. (The list of invited agencies is presented in Appendix C.) The agencies were also notified of a special daytime Scoping meeting to receive their input regarding issues that need to be addressed in the EIS/EIR. Ongoing consultation with interested agencies has occurred. More information about agency participation and consultation is provided in Chapter 7.

WTA hired Davis & Associates to conduct a public information program that included the following activities:

- Draft a press release announcing project details;
- Produce informational materials for public and agency understanding of the purpose, need, and description of the project;
- Produce boards and slides that convey project location, schedule, and integration with regional ferry service;
- Develop targeted media list and support WTA with the distribution of the press materials;
- Distribute list to non-media outlets, including neighborhood association newsletters, Chamber publications, and other community-based outlets; and
- Arrange and facilitate public meetings as directed by WTA.

A second series of public meetings occurs after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is published. Agencies and the general public have the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIS during a formal comment period, which is required for a minimum of 45 days. The public comment period begins upon publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS in the Federal Register. During this period, public hearings are held and the Draft EIS/EIR is distributed. Summary information of the technical analysis presented in the Draft EIS/EIR is produced to facilitate public understanding of the environmental impacts addressed and the mitigation measures proposed. At the end of the comment period, the WETA Board reviews the information presented in the Draft EIS/EIR, as well as the comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, to select the LPA.

Public comments are recorded and categorized to prepare responses to the comments, which are then incorporated into the Final EIS/EIR. In addition to revisions in the text that correspond to the comments received, the Final EIS/EIR identifies the lead agency's preferred alternative and the reasons for selecting this alternative. The release of the Final EIS/EIR is announced by publishing a NOA in the Federal Register. Once the Final EIS is published, a minimum 30-day waiting period is required before a Record of Decision can be issued. A Record of Decision notifies the public of the alternative that the agency has selected to be carried forward for more detailed engineering and design and the rationale for that decision. The EIS/EIR analysis is considered as part of the decision-making process, which may also include consideration of other decision factors such as costs, technical feasibility, agency statutory mission, project purpose and need, and study goals and objectives.