



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 15, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Scott Ferris, Director, Parks Recreation & Waterfront

Subject: Grant Application: Safe Routes to Transit and Bay Trail Program (SR2TBT)

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager or his designee to submit a grant application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Measure 3 Safe Routes to Transit and Bay Trail Program (SR2TBT) for up to \$25,000,000 for construction of portions of the landside elements of the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

If awarded, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Regional Measure 3 (RM3) Safe Routes to Transit and Bay Trail Program (SR2TBT) grant will provide up to \$25,000,000 for the construction of portions of the landside elements of the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry (BWTPF) Project ("Project"). The grant program does not require matching funds.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Pier has been closed since 2015 due to observed structural defects. In 2018, WETA staff initiated discussions with City staff about the possibility of a new ferry terminal at the Berkeley Waterfront. In March 2019, WETA and the City Council authorized an MOU Agreement to jointly fund a planning study on the feasibility of rebuilding the Berkeley Pier for ferry service and recreational access (Resolution No. 68,782, adopted on March 12, 2019). The findings of the Feasibility Study, including the preferred alternative, were presented during a City Council Work Session on December 7, 2021.

The current design and environmental review phase is funded by three sources: a) the project received \$2,960,000 as part of a one-time allocation from the state of \$15 million for Waterfront improvement projects, administered by the State Coastal Conservancy (Resolution No. 70,629, adopted on December 13, 2022); b) in May 2023, the project received a \$5,139,000 grant from Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) for the environmental analyses and permitting for the Project (Resolution No. 70,950, adopted on July 11, 2023); and c) in May 2024, the City and WETA amended the MOU

to use up to \$3 million in RM3 funds to cover the current Design / Environmental Phase (Resolution No. 71,325, adopted on May 14, 2024).

The total Project involves the construction of in-water elements (a new public pier and new ferry landing dock with electric vehicle charger), and landside elements (new plaza, new Bay Trail segments, rebuilt sections of University Ave and Seawall Drive with a Class IV cycle track, sidewalks, crossings, and bioretention, and a rebuilt Seawall Parking Lot), along with numerous public amenities (picnic areas, restroom, benches, drinking fountains, washdown area, etc). To-date, construction funding for the project has not been identified. The current construction cost estimate for the entire Project is \$105.8M (based on the 60% level of design).

On June 5, 2018, Bay Area voters approved Regional Measure 3 (RM3), and on December 19, 2018, the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) adopted a toll schedule to phase in the resulting toll increases. BATA implemented the first and second dollars of the toll increase on January 1, 2019, and January 1, 2022, respectively. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is listed as the project sponsor and is responsible for administering a competitive process for the Safe Routes to Transit & Bay Trail (SR2TBT) program. The program aims to fund projects to increase the carrying capacity and travel options on Bay Area bridges and along bridge corridors, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase active transportation, reduce congestion, and improve real and perceived safety. The Bay Trail project's mission is to complete the vision of the 500-mile walking and bicycling shoreline trail that serves Bay Area residents' recreation and active transportation needs. Applications for the current cycle SR2TBT program funds (cycle 2) are due on October 5, 2026 and the City will submit a grant proposal for up to \$25M to construct portions of the landside elements of the Project.

This resolution authorizes the preparation and submittal of a grant application for the construction of portions of landside elements of the Project. The review of any potential environmental impacts per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is required prior to City approval of the Project or commencement of construction on the Project improvements. Further, construction cannot begin until acquisition of all applicable local, state and federal permits.

BACKGROUND

In July 2015, the Pier was closed to the public indefinitely due to structural safety issues. On June 21, 2017, after conducting a competitive RFP process, the City contracted with GHD, Inc. to perform a structural engineering assessment to identify options and costs for repairing the Pier (Contract No. 10632, Resolution No. 67,856). The final study identified 11 conceptual options ranging in cost from \$22 million to \$65 million in 2023 dollars. Since completion of that assessment in 2021, the Pier has continued to structurally degrade. Structural engineers currently working on the Pier

Ferry Project have concluded that the Pier has reached the end of its useful life and repair of the Pier is no longer feasible.

In 2023, the City initiated the design and environmental phase of the Project to complete detailed design, environmental analyses and permitting for the preferred concept. In summary, this phase of work includes:

- Detailed engineering analyses including coastal, geotechnical, parking, transportation demand management and sea level rise studies;
- Environmental studies, including existing conditions and project impact analyses;
- Development of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- Analyses and documentation for compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA);
- Public outreach and engagement;
- Project permitting, including City, state and federal permitting agencies with jurisdiction over the Project; and
- Development of bid-ready Project plans and specifications.

The Project involves several state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over portions of the Project. These include California State Lands Commission, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). City staff have initiated early consultation with these agencies and will continue to work closely with them to coordinate permit applications, reviews, compliance and issuance. Project construction would not begin until applicable permits for the work were issued by all agencies with jurisdiction.

The Draft EIR was published in February 2026 for a 60-day public review period. The Final EIR is anticipated to be considered by Council in Fall, 2026. The Project is currently at 60% design development, with 90% design documents anticipated to be completed in Fall, 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The total project would install a new public pier for recreation and a new, zero-emission electric public ferry service between Berkeley and San Francisco. The City's Climate Action Plan identifies public transit as a more sustainable form of transportation (Chapter 3) and sets a goal to expand under-used modes of transportation, such as ferry service at the Berkeley Marina to connect to San Francisco and other locations. The Project also includes multiple active transportation / multi-modal zero-emission improvements such as a new bike lane on University Avenue and installation of a section of Bay Trail.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Project will help the City advance the following long-term strategic goals:

Goal #1 - Provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities; Goal #3 - Create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared City;

Goal #5 - Foster a dynamic, sustainable and locally-based economy; and

Goal # 7 - Be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Scott Ferris, Director, Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront, 981-6700

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

GRANT APPLICATION: SAFE ROUTES TO TRANSIT AND BAY TRAIL PROGRAM
(SR2TBT)

WHEREAS, Bay Area voters approved Regional Measure 3 (RM3) on June 5, 2018, and on December 19, 2018, the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) adopted a toll schedule to phase in the resulting toll increases; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is listed as the project sponsor and is responsible for administering a competitive grant program for the Safe Routes to Transit & Bay Trail (SR2TBT) program; and

WHEREAS, the SR2TBT program aims to fund projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase active transportation, reduce congestion, and complete the vision of the 500-mile walking and bicycling Bay Trail; and

WHEREAS, applications for the current cycle of SR2TBT program funds (cycle 2) are due on October 5, 2026 and the City will submit a grant proposal for up to \$25M to construct portions of the landside elements of the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project; and

WHEREAS, the Project must undergo environmental impact review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the City cannot approve the Project or initiate construction until the necessary review has been completed; and

WHEREAS, the Project must obtain permits from local, state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over portions of the Project and the City cannot initiate construction until the necessary permits have been issued.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager or his designee is authorized to submit a grant application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Measure 3 Safe Routes to Transit and Bay Trail Program (SR2TBT) for up to \$25,000,000 for construction of portions of the landside elements of the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project.

