



## MEMORANDUM

October 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:** Update on Port's efforts to address conflicts on the Embarcadero Promenade in support of the City's Vision Zero traffic safety goals

**DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION:** Information Only – No Action Required

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### SUMMARY

On August 10, 2021, the Port Commission approved 'quick-build' traffic and curb management changes in the Central Embarcadero as part of the SFMTA's overall Embarcadero Enhancement Program. The 'quick-build' project adds a two-way bikeway between Broadway and Mission Street that would connect to bikeway improvements completed in January 2021, between Mission and Harrison Streets. This quick-build project is designed to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. Informational presentations on the project were provided to the Port Commission in January, May, June, and July 2021. At those meetings, the Commission expressed concern over safety on the Embarcadero Promenade and requested Port staff to return with suggestions on how conflicts on the Promenade could be further reduced between pedestrians, cyclists, and people riding scooters and other electric wheeled devices.

At the October 12 Port Commission meeting, Port staff will provide an update and proposed process to address conflicts on the Promenade, including the quick-build evaluation, user survey, public messaging tools, and potential new regulations for the Promenade for the Commission's consideration.

## **PORT'S STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES**

The Port's efforts to study Embarcadero Promenade conflicts support the goals and objectives of the Port's Strategic Plan as follows:

### **EVOLUTION**

**Evolve the waterfront to respond to changing public and Port needs.**

**Safer Embarcadero.** Collaborate with SFMTA to create a safer Embarcadero

- **Embarcadero Enhancement Program (EEP)** Work with Port tenants, development partners and public to increase safety along The Embarcadero for all transportation modes, implementing bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements between Mission and Broadway Streets in 2022
- **Promenade Management.** Develop and implement measures on the Embarcadero Promenade that reduce pedestrian and wheeled vehicle conflicts in 2021

### **ENGAGEMENT**

**Engage constituents and public on Port functions and activities**

**Public Awareness.** Strengthen understanding and support

**Involve People.** Engage advisory groups, communities, and stakeholders

- Inform and seek feedback through Port Commission meetings
- Inform and involve communities and constituents

**Agency Coordination.** Partner with City departments and government agencies to align communication, engagement, and activities

SFMTA's addition of Quick-Build improvements to the Central Embarcadero area will begin in late 2021 and will continue in 2022. Port staff will continue to work with SFMTA staff on the quick-build evaluation in 2021 and 2022 to address Embarcadero Promenade safety concerns. Future phases of the Embarcadero Enhancement Program will further the safety and Promenade management Objectives of the Strategic Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

In January 2021, the SFMTA completed quick-build improvements between Harrison and Mission Streets that established a protected northbound bikeway adjacent to the Rincon Restaurants between Harrison and Folsom Streets, and a two-way protected bikeway between Folsom and Mission Streets. On August 10, 2021, the Port Commission approved the Central Embarcadero Quick-Build Project (Project) that extends the two-way bikeway from Mission Street to Broadway. This project is expected to begin in late 2021 and be completed by January 2022. The two completed quick-build projects will provide a protected two-way bikeway for bicyclists, scooters, and other electric wheeled devices for six blocks, between Folsom Street and Broadway.

The Project will provide a safe area for bicyclists and other wheeled users who find the current Embarcadero bike lane at the roadway shoulder unsafe. The Project includes a robust public awareness and education campaign to encourage bicyclists and electric scooters to use the protected bikeway. New wayfinding and regulatory signage will direct wheeled device users into the bikeway and informs users that travel on the

Promenade by electric scooters and e-bicycles is prohibited. SFMTA will also inform user groups (e.g., Bicycle Coalition, Walk SF, scooter companies) of the Project improvements and encourage use of the bikeway, so that these groups post the messages for their constituency. It is intended that the availability of the six-block protected bikeway, coupled with the public awareness and education campaign, signage, and other public outreach efforts, will help steer the majority of bicyclists and electric scooters off of the Promenade and result in fewer conflicts along the Embarcadero in this area. However, it is anticipated that without the completion of a fully protected bikeway along the entire length of the Embarcadero, there will still be bicyclists that prefer using the Promenade for safety reasons.

## **EVALUATION AND OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING CONFLICTS**

The Commission expressed concern over safety on the Embarcadero Promenade and requested Port staff to return with suggestions on how conflicts on the Promenade could be further reduced between pedestrians, cyclists, and people riding scooters and other electric wheeled devices. The following describes how Port staff is working with the SFMTA to collect critical information to provide options to the Commission and to the public. The SFMTA will collect data to evaluate how effective the new two-way bikeway and messaging campaign are in directing cyclists and electric scooters off the Promenade, and if not effective, additional options the Commission could consider to further regulate uses on the Promenade. Port staff proposes to implement the following steps to further analyze conflicts along the Embarcadero and return to the Commission with a recommendation for next steps following the quick-build implementation.

**Data Collection & User Survey.** As included in the August 6, 2021 memo to the Port Commission, the SFMTA conducted a travel mode/directional analysis of Promenade users in September 2019. This included baseline data counts of the number of Promenade users, including bicyclists, scooters, and pedestrians both northbound and southbound and east-west crosswalk users at 17 intersections along the Embarcadero. The SFMTA is currently collecting comparable Promenade user data in September/October 2021 to provide another pre-project baseline. Within two months of substantially completing the quick-build Project, SFMTA will again collect data to compare with 2019 and 2021 pre-quick build numbers. This data, provided by SFMTA to Port staff, will help staff evaluate whether the availability of the six-block bikeway, signage, and public messaging campaign is contributing to the reduction in the number of scooters and bicyclists on the Promenade. The data collected will also help inform additional changes needed on the Promenade. Key evaluation metrics/criteria will include:

- Overall volume and percentage of wheeled device users using bikeway versus promenade and on-street lanes
- Real and perceived changes in safety (to be informed by a user survey)
- Traffic compliance for all modes including at signalized intersections and at uncontrolled bikeway crossings to/from loading zones
- Interface between the two-way bikeway and CUESA farmers' market operations

Following Project implementation, the SFMTA will survey users to obtain a qualitative assessment of changes in safety and comfort on the Promenade. The survey will be developed through a SFMTA consultant and input from the Port. Questions will include those that ask people to rate their perceptions of changes in general travel safety as well as in specific scenarios (e.g., crossing the two-way bikeway). Questions and analysis may also address the proportion of people bicycling and riding scooters on the Promenade versus the roadway and the qualities of users on the Promenade (e.g., travel speeds, passing distance). The survey will be promoted with a mailer to residents and businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods, public postings, email updates to the project stakeholder list, project website updates, and individual updates to key neighborhood and other stakeholder groups. Port staff welcomes Port Commission comment on objectives and questions to be addressed or included in the user survey.

Port staff will return to the Port Commission following quick-build implementation to report on the results of the data collection, evaluation, and user survey. This report will provide insight on whether the quick-build efforts are effective in getting bicyclists and scooter users onto the bikeway and how the public perceives the changes and safety.

### **Regulating Uses on The Promenade**

Depending on Project outcomes, the Port Commission could consider other options for regulating uses on the Promenade that include Code changes to prohibit bicycles on the Promenade and to establish an enforcement program for scooters and other motorized users. The following is information on what steps might need to be taken for such an effort.

**Current Regulations.** The Promenade is regulated by the Port Commission as trustee, on behalf of the State, for the benefit of the people of California. The Port Commission's regulation of the Promenade is primarily codified in the Port Code, which is one element of the San Francisco Municipal Code. Notably, the Promenade is not a City sidewalk, as persons age 13 and above are prohibited from riding a bicycle on such sidewalks. The Port Code identifies Herb Caen Way (Embarcadero Promenade) as a "Park." The Port Code prohibits operation of a vehicle in all Port parks and includes a broad definition of vehicle that covers electric scooters, electric or motorized bicycles, and other motorized conveyances. The definition of vehicle expressly excludes bicycles when under human power, so the Port Code currently prohibits use of the Promenade by motorized vehicles but authorizes use by bicycles, push-scooters, and other wheeled devices when under human power.

In addition to Port regulation, the Promenade is dedicated by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC-ABAG) as a part of the San Francisco Bay Trail, and subject to Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) permits that designate it as "Dedicated Public Access".

**Enforcement of Motorized Devices.** Because motorized devices are already prohibited under the Port Code, the Port Commission could direct greater enforcement of existing regulations. Enforcement of bicycles, scooters and other wheeled devices for

non-moving violations such as improper parking are handled by SFMTA parking control officers. Moving violations to users of wheeled devices are handled by SF police officers. Without a fully protected bikeway along the entire length of the Promenade where these users can retreat to, this could create a safety concern by forcing users onto the roadway. Another option could be concentrating enforcement along the Central Embarcadero segment of the Promenade where a protected bikeway would be available and where user conflicts are the greatest and the Embarcadero is the busiest. Using data gathered from the SFMTA explained above, Port staff could evaluate segments of the Promenade with the greatest user conflicts to consider enforcement of existing regulations in these areas. It could also consider additional public awareness and education campaign, signage, and other public outreach efforts. Port staff will return following data collection with further updates on enforcement options.

**Revise Existing Regulations.** The Port Commission may also revise existing regulations governing use of the Promenade and other Port property. Methods to enact new regulations include amending the Port Code (requiring approval by the Board of Supervisors); instructing the Executive Director to close a park area to bicycles under certain circumstances; or amending the Port Harbor and Traffic Code (which is not codified as part of the San Francisco Municipal Code and does not require approval by the Board of Supervisors). Any new regulations governing the Promenade would require a thorough public outreach process to local, City, and regional users and may require approval of other agencies, including BCDC. Public outreach would be followed by Port Commission consideration of proposed Code changes and could require Board of Supervisors approval if the chosen option is to amend the Port Code.

If directed by the Commission, the public outreach process could explore new regulations such as:

- Prohibiting bicycles and/or other wheeled devices under human power from all or a portion of the Promenade
- Age limits (such as prohibiting persons 13 and over from using wheeled devices, similar to most City sidewalks)
- Limiting speeds
- Designating spaces within the Promenade for different uses

Staff recommends that public outreach for changing regulations on the Promenade be extensive and include neighborhood and civic organizations, Port tenants, agency stakeholders, the public, and nearby and Citywide residents.

Port staff recommends returning to the Port Commission following the quick-build implementation and data collection, evaluation and user survey results to explore whether Port regulations should be changed for bicycles and other human powered wheel devices, and whether to implement an enforcement program.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Implementation of the quick-build changes are scheduled to occur in December 2021 and January 2022. The public outreach and awareness campaign, Project evaluation, and the potential for Project modifications would be ongoing through 2022.

Port staff welcomes public comment on the proposed approach to address conflicts on the Promenade, including the quick-build evaluation, user survey, public messaging tools, and potential new regulations for the Promenade. The SFMTA and Port staff plan to return to the Port Commission in the Spring of 2022 to report on how the quick-build roadway and Promenade improvements are functioning and present post-construction data and survey results. Port staff will also provide options for further actions if the Port Commission deems necessary to further reduce conflicts on the Promenade.

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