

## MEMORANDUM

September 22, 2016

**TO:** MEMBERS, PORT COMMISSION  
Hon. Willie Adams, President  
Hon. Kimberly Brandon, Vice President  
Hon. Leslie Katz  
Hon. Eleni Kounalakis  
Hon. Doreen Woo Ho

**FROM:** Elaine Forbes  
Interim Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Informational presentation on the Water Emergency Transit Authority's (WETA) Strategic Plan

**DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION:** Informational Only; No Action Required

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Water Emergency Transit Authority (WETA) is a regional agency with responsibility to develop and operate a comprehensive water transportation system for the Bay Area. WETA shall also coordinate water transportation services in response to natural disasters and transportation disruptions.

The 2016 WETA Strategic Plan ("Plan") presents a vision for the next 20 years of ferry service in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Plan vision is that WETA develops, operates and manages an expanded and enhanced region-wide ferry system that provides a reliable, state-of-the-art and attractive transportation option for the Bay Area and plays a critical role in coordinating and providing water transportation to serve emergency response and economic recovery needs.

The Plan is going before the WETA Board of Directors in October 2016 after an 18-month public vetting process. The Plan comes at a pivotal period in WETA's history. A strong regional economy with focused job growth in San Francisco has driven rising ridership and has made the ferry more popular than ever. Services consolidated under the Water Transit Authority (later WETA) have transitioned smoothly from city-run services to WETA operations. The new South San Francisco terminal, which is the first new terminal built in the Bay Area in decades, is thriving after an initial ramp up period. Funded projects such as the North Bay and Central Bay maintenance facilities as well

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as expansion of the downtown San Francisco terminal and a new terminal in Richmond are all in the final design or construction phase. Expansion candidate terminals throughout San Francisco Bay are seeking funding to enter project implementation, including the Mission Bay Ferry Landing.

The WETA Strategic Plan is a summary document, structured and formatted to be supported by other resource documents and plans that serve as a foundation for the Plan. The Plan includes the following seven focus areas:

- Expanded Service
- Funding
- Quality
- Partnerships
- Environmental Stewardship
- Emergency Response
- Organizational Capacity and Leadership

Each Focus Area has policy statements that define a 20-year vision for ferry service in the San Francisco Bay. The Plan also includes brief evolutionary view of WETA's past and present activities paired with a look forward to the next 20 years.

### **PORT'S STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE**

This project supports the goals of the Port's Strategic Plan as follows:

#### Livability:

*By working with transportation agency partners to ensure an integrated transportation plan that includes programs to ease traffic congestion along the waterfront and expand public transit, including water taxis and ferries- as well as pedestrian and bicycle access.*

#### Economic Vitality:

*Expand the system of active water berths for visiting commercial, transportation and recreational vessels.*

### **PORT PROJECTS AND COORDINATION**

WETA's Plan aligns with many of the Port's Strategic Plan objectives and, as carried out, will include many projects that support San Francisco and the Port's transportation objective of supporting Ferry Transit and disaster response. Specific projects that the Port and WETA are coordinating on include the Downtown Ferry Terminal and Mission Bay Ferry Landing projects.

In addition, WETA's plans for significant fleet and service increase as well as new terminals within the Bay area will provide alternative modes of transportation for those commuting and visiting the City.

WETA is committed to partnering with the Port in the delivery of the Downtown Ferry Terminal expansion, assisting with securing funding constructing and operating the Mission Bay Ferry Landing.

In addition to coordinating our planning efforts on ferry transportation, the Port and WETA along with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) have been coordinating on strategies to accommodate and integrate water taxi facilities to facilitate additional opportunities for water transportation. Water taxis can assist in building future ridership in locations where ferry terminals may eventually be built, or fill a smaller market niche. The Port has been growing its water taxi landings and must coordinate with WETA, SFMTA and its water taxi operators on how and where to grow the system of water taxi landings.

**NEXT STEPS**

The Port will be working with WETA staff and its Board to bring to the Port Commission a lease agreement for the Downtown Ferry Terminal and a memorandum of understanding for the Mission Bay Ferry Landing. Port and WETA staff will continue to coordinate on project delivery and ferry service increase opportunities.

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