



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Preliminary Project Assessment

Date: March 14, 2014
Case No.: **2014.0097U**
Project Address: Third Street Crossing of Islais Creek
Block/Lot: Public Right-of-Way
Zoning: Not Applicable
Area Plan: Not Applicable
Project Sponsor: Raymond Lui
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DISCLAIMERS:

Please be advised that this determination does not constitute an application for development with the Planning Department. It also does not represent a complete review of the proposed project, a project approval of any kind, or in any way supersede any required Planning Department approvals listed below. The Planning Department may provide additional comments regarding the proposed project once the required applications listed below are submitted. While some approvals are granted by the Planning Department, some are at the discretion of other bodies, such as the Planning Commission or Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, it is likely that the project will require approvals from other City agencies such as the Department of Building Inspection, Department of Public Works, Department of Public Health, and others. The information included herein is based on plans and information provided for this assessment and the Planning Code, General Plan, Planning Department policies, and local/state/federal regulations as of the date of this document, all of which are subject to change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposal is to provide seismic upgrades and rehabilitation to the existing Islais Creek Bridge. Project work would include: structural repair and seismic strengthening; bridge machinery repair and upgrade; electrical system repair and upgrade; bridge deck, federal pile and traffic gate replacement; bridge painting; riveted steel girder, steel-grate roadway, and concrete tower damage and corrosion repair; control tower concrete patching; and sidewalk ADA compliance upgrade. Associated work would include utility relocation. No temporary construction easements or new right-of-way acquisition are anticipated, however, a temporary detour along other public routes will be required.

This Islais Creek Bridge is located on the Third Street crossing over Islais Creek Channel between Cargo Way and Marin Street. The bridge was constructed in 1945 and measures approximately 100 feet wide and 210 feet long. The bridge includes four lanes of traffic including the Third Street Muni rail line. The bridge is a double-leaf bascule structure with concrete abutments. The bascule arms, which open to allow boats to pass on Islais Creek, consist of riveted steel girders supporting an open, steel-grate roadway. No change in the alignment or widening of the bridge is proposed.

The project limit is within the public right-of-way and no right-of-way acquisition or temporary or permanent easements would be required. Construction staging areas will conform to the City's existing specifications, including the minimum requirements that staging areas are located on existing asphalt or concrete surfaces, staging areas do not affect access to existing properties or roadways, and are included in the applicable Storm Water Pollution and Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

The construction contractor would be required to submit a Traffic Control Plan to the City's Traffic Engineer for review and approval. The contractor would be required to conduct construction operations to cause the least possible obstruction and inconvenience to the community, and provide traffic lanes and routing for vehicular, pedestrian, and MUNI users, in a manner that will be safe and will minimize traffic congestion and delays.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the environmental review process must be completed before any project approval may be granted. To formally commence the environmental review process, the project sponsor must submit an Environmental Evaluation Application (EEA).¹

Analysis of the issues listed below would be supported by various environmental studies currently under preparation in support of the Caltrans project review and approval process. As documented in the letter from Caltrans dated January 23, 2014, pending project studies will address traffic, noise, air quality, hazardous materials, water quality, biology, visual resources, land use, historic and archeological resources. The following issues will be investigated as part of the environmental review process.

1. **Historic Resources.** Under CEQA, proposed projects are analyzed for their impact upon historic resources. Historic resource analysis is a two-step process: the first is to determine whether the subject property contains historical resource(s) as defined in Section 15064.5(a)(3) of CEQA; and, if it is determined that the property contains historical resource(s), the second is to evaluate whether the proposed project would cause a substantial adverse change to that resource.

Based upon a DPR 523A and 523B form completed by Caltrans in June 2004, the Third Street Bridge over Islais Creek was evaluated and determined to be a historic resource under National Register Criterion C (Design/Construction). Therefore, Third Street Bridge over Islais Creek is considered to a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Since the project requires approval under NEPA, the project is required to complete an Area of Potential Effect (APE) Map and Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR). The HPSR may serve as a basis for a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE), which should be focused upon evaluating the subject property pursuant to CEQA. Prior to undertaking work, please ensure that the selected historic resource consultant receives approval from Planning Department Preservation staff regarding the scope and content of the HRE.

¹ <http://www.sf-planning.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8253>.

2. **Biological Resources.** Project construction activities will occur in an area that is considered jurisdictional under Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act, as administered by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, respectively. A preliminary impact determination regarding biological resources, including aquatic species and habitat, will be based on the forthcoming Caltrans technical studies (e.g., Natural Environment Study and Essential Fish Habitat Evaluation). However, additional biological analysis may be requested to support the CEQA determination and associated documentation.
3. **Hydrology and Water Quality.** Potential impacts related to this topic will be determined based in part on the forthcoming Water Quality Assessment, as required by Caltrans. This analysis may be included as part of the Natural Environment Study referenced above. As also noted above, the project site is subject to the applicable requirements of Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act, which will be addressed as part of the environmental review of this topic.
4. **Archeological Resources.** Project implementation would entail soil-disturbing activities associated with construction, including excavation that could reach a depth of approximately 10 feet below grade. If the project site is located within an area where no previous archeological survey has been prepared, a Preliminary Archeological Review would be conducted in-house by Planning Department Staff. This review requires documentation of potential project soils disturbance and the range of appropriate foundation types for the proposed structure. Such information is typically contained in a geotechnical study prepared for a proposed project. The pending technical studies addressing archeological resources for the Caltrans project review process will provide substantial support for the information and analysis required for the Preliminary Archeological Review. The Preliminary Archeological Review will determine whether or not additional archeological studies will be required as part of the environmental evaluation.
5. **Transportation.** Based on the description of the proposed project, no change to the bridge lane configuration is anticipated, and thus no operational transportation impacts would result. However, the CEQA determination will require supporting documentation regarding potential impacts during construction. Such documentation and analysis should specifically address potential lane and bridge closure, and any resulting traffic impacts and/or interruption of transit service. The pending technical memorandum provided for the Caltrans project review process would likely provide sufficient documentation and analysis to address this topic.
6. **Noise.** The project is not anticipated to result in any operational noise impacts, as no change to operations is expected. However, proposed project construction activities would be subject to the San Francisco Noise Ordinance (Article 29 of the *Police Code*), amended in November 2008, which includes restrictions on noise levels of construction equipment and hours of construction activity. Detailed information related to construction equipment during each phase may be required as part of the environmental evaluation to assess construction noise levels and methods to reduce such noise, as feasible. The pending technical memorandum addressing construction noise as required by the Caltrans project review process would likely provide sufficient documentation to address this topic.

7. **Air Quality.** Project operations would not result in any changes to existing operations; thus no air quality impact is anticipated during construction. However, construction activity is subject to a criteria pollutant analysis, in accordance with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District CEQA Guidelines. The CEQA determination will require supporting analysis and documentation of the anticipated daily emissions of criteria pollutants during construction, which will be compared to the applicable thresholds for such pollutants, to determine the level of significance under CEQA and any mitigation requirements. While the forthcoming technical memorandum supporting the Caltrans project review process will provide useful information, it is likely that additional analysis will be needed to specifically determine criteria pollutant emissions during construction.

In addition, project-related demolition, excavation, grading and other construction activities may cause wind-blown dust that could contribute particulate matter into the local atmosphere. To reduce construction dust impacts, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a series of amendments to the San Francisco Building and Health Codes generally referred hereto as the Construction Dust Control Ordinance (Ordinance 176-08, effective July 30, 2008) with the intent of reducing the quantity of dust generated during site preparation, demolition, and construction work in order to protect the health of the general public and of onsite workers, minimize public nuisance complaints, and to avoid orders to stop work by the Department of Building Inspection (DBI). Pursuant to the Construction Dust Ordinance, the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable dust control requirements outlined in the ordinance.

In addition to construction dust, demolition and construction activities would require the use of heavy-duty diesel equipment which emit diesel particulate matter (DPM). DPM is a designated toxic air contaminant, and construction-related DPM may affect sensitive receptors (e.g., residences) located near the project site. The project site is located in a portion of the City that is more at risk for adverse health effects from substantial air pollutant concentration (“hot spots”) than sensitive receptors located outside these hot spots. Therefore, it is likely that additional measures would be required to reduce DPM emissions, specifically compliance with the Clean Construction Ordinance. Compliance with this ordinance and the dust ordinance would ensure no significant air quality impact would occur.

8. **Greenhouse Gases.** The City and County of San Francisco’s *Strategies to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions*² presents a comprehensive assessment of policies, programs, and ordinances that represents San Francisco’s Qualified Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy. Projects that are consistent with San Francisco’s Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy would result in less-than-significant impacts from GHG emissions. In order to facilitate a determination of compliance with San Francisco’s Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, the Planning Department has prepared a Greenhouse Gas Analysis Compliance Checklist. While the project is not anticipated to result in any operational changes and thus no operational GHG impacts, the project sponsor or consultant will be asked to complete the checklist as it relates to construction activity.
9. **Hazardous Materials.** The project site is located within an area of current and prior industrial land uses, which may have introduced hazardous materials at or near the project site. It is anticipated that

² Available online at: http://sfmea.sfplanning.org/GHG_Reduction_Strategy.pdf.

the CEQA determination and supporting analysis will be sufficiently documented by the forthcoming Phase I and Phase II Site Assessment.

If the additional analysis outlined above indicates that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the project may qualify for a Categorical Exemption, in which case the Planning Department would issue a Certificate of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review. Possible categorical exemption categories provided in the CEQA Guidelines under Section 15300 include Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction).

If the Department's review indicates that there is a potential for the project to have significant environmental impacts, an initial study must be prepared for CEQA review. The initial study may be prepared either by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool or by Department staff.

If the initial study determines that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the Department would issue a preliminary negative declaration (PND). If the initial study finds that the project would have significant impacts that could be reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures agreed to by the project sponsor, then the Department would issue a preliminary mitigated negative declaration (PMND). The PND or PMND would be circulated for public review for a period of 20 calendar days, during which time concerned parties may appeal the determination. If an appeal is filed, the Planning Commission would hold a hearing to decide the appeal. If no appeal is filed, the Planning Department would issue a final negative declaration (FND) or final mitigated negative declaration (FMND), and CEQA review is complete.

If the initial study indicates that the project would result in a significant impact that cannot be mitigated to below a significant level, an EIR must be prepared by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool. The Planning Department would provide more detail to the project sponsor regarding the EIR process should this level of environmental review be required.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPROVALS:

The project requires the following Planning Department approvals. These approvals may be reviewed in conjunction with the required environmental review, but may not be granted until after the required environmental review is completed.

1. A **Building Permit Application** is required for the repair and seismic strengthening of the Islais Creek Bridge.
2. **Section 106 Review and Comment** from the Historic Preservation Commission is required for projects, which may impact historic resources, per Planning Code Section 1002(a)(6).

All applications are available online at www.sfplanning.org. Building Permit applications are available at the Department of Building Inspections at 1660 Mission Street.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Project Sponsors are encouraged to conduct public outreach with the surrounding community and neighborhood groups early in the development process. Additionally, many approvals require a public hearing with an associated neighborhood notification. Differing levels of neighborhood notification are mandatory for some or all of the reviews and approvals listed above.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT COMMENTS:

The following comments address specific Planning Code and other general issues that may significantly impact the proposed project.

1. **General Plan Referral.** This referral is required for project involving the improvement of structures owned by the City and County of San Francisco. Since the project includes repair and seismic strengthening of a bridge owned by City and County of San Francisco, a General Plan Referral will be required to assess the project's conformity with the General Plan. This referral is required prior to any ordinance or resolution approved by the Board of Supervisors.
2. **Section 106 Review and Comment.** For projects requiring review pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Historic Preservation Commission may provide a recommendation or provide concurrence on projects affecting qualified historic resources. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the Historic Preservation Commission functions as the local body responsible for review and comment on federal undertakings authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act, as defined in Planning Code Section 1002(a)(6). Since the project involves work with Caltrans, please provide a coordinated schedule, which anticipates the participation by the Historic Preservation Commission.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN COMMENTS:

The Department does not have any preliminary design comments on the proposed project. However, as the project progresses, the Department does anticipate additional information on the structural repair and seismic strengthen schemes, as well as work involving the accessibility upgrades and bridge painting. In particular, the Department will be focused on the methods and means for the repair or rehabilitation of historic features and materials. Since the project involves a historic resource, the Department expects that the proposed repair and rehabilitation will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT ASSESSMENT EXPIRATION:

This Preliminary Project Assessment is valid for a period of **18 months**. An Environmental Evaluation, Conditional Use Authorization, or Building Permit Application, as listed above, must be submitted no later than **September, 14, 2015**. Otherwise, this determination is considered expired and a new Preliminary Project Assessment is required. Such applications and plans must be generally consistent with those found in this Preliminary Project Assessment.

Enclosure: Neighborhood Group Mailing List

cc: Raymond Lui, DPW, Project Sponsor
Rich Sucre, Current Planning
Steve Smith, Environmental Planning
Lisa Chen, Citywide Planning and Analysis
Jerry Robbins, MTA
Jerry Sanguinetti, DPW