



## **The Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Boulevard Feasibility Study (RAB)**

The Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Boulevard Feasibility Study (RAB) is a multi-agency analysis of transportation and land use alternatives in the most rapidly growing areas of the City: South of Market, Mission Bay, and Showplace Square/Lower Potrero Hill.

San Francisco has committed to significant transit and infrastructure investments in this area. The **Downtown Rail Extension (DTX)**, the **electrification of Caltrain** and **High-Speed Rail** service are planned around existing infrastructure that includes an elevated freeway, a half-mile long railyard, and street-level commuter rail tracks. However, this infrastructure was built in a time when the area was primarily an industrial neighborhood. This presents a number of challenges that potentially divides these densifying neighborhoods, reduces connectivity and exacerbate congestion for public transit, cars, pedestrians and cyclists.

Further, these facilities inhibit the opportunity for transit-oriented jobs and housing in this central city location, an important consideration in an age where climate change, lack of affordable housing, congestion and loss of open space due to regional sprawl are growing concerns.

Rather than simply considering how to build each project independently in the existing circumstances, the City wants to coordinate these projects into a unified vision for the area. The RAB will evaluate whether these challenges can be addressed through a comprehensive, regional approach to building a future that integrates land use with local and regional transportation and builds a high-quality urban environment.

### **The study is divided in two phases:**

- Phase I: Technical Feasibility Assessment; and
- Phase II: Alternatives Development

Phase I of the RAB studies four distinct components. Each component will include a thorough analysis of existing conditions and prepare conceptual design alternatives within three study areas: the 16<sup>th</sup> Street grade separation, the 4<sup>th</sup> and King Railyard, and I-280. In addition, this study will analyze the possibility of new transit-oriented development and public amenities in the overall area of the City to accommodate growth.

### **1. Making I-280 into a Boulevard**

Replace the end of I-280 north of Mariposa or 16th Street with an urban surface boulevard, similar to the Embarcadero or Octavia Boulevard. This boulevard could create new open space, improve circulation and allow connectivity throughout the area that is currently separated by 1.2 miles of I-280.

Creating a boulevard of 280 and a relocated Caltrain/HSR alignment can allow for connecting the street grid, providing more access points between the Mission Bay, Dogpatch, Pier 70 area and the rest of the City.

### **2. Value Engineer the Proposed Downtown Rail Extension (DTX) alignment**

The DTX is a planned 1.3 mile tunnel connecting high-speed rail and Caltrain to the Transbay Transit Center. The Downtown Rail Extension project is currently estimated at \$2.6-3.0 billion. The RAB analysis will review construction methods and rail alignment configurations and seek opportunities to fund and build the project more cost effectively.



**3. Create a Loop Track/Extension to the East Bay to Enhance Operational Capacity**

Currently, the Transbay Transit Center (TTC) is a stub-end station, meaning trains use the same track to go in and out. This can reduce the station’s overall capacity. A loop track or extension to the East Bay will increase the station’s overall capacity.

The feasibility study will update the existing loop track study according to an updated design of the Transit Center, as well as the financial and physical feasibility of such a loop, including constraints posed by existing and planned buildings.

**4. Reconfigure, Relocate, or Substantially Reduce the 4<sup>th</sup> and King Railyard**

Currently, the 4<sup>th</sup> and King Railyard provides train storage, maintenance and operations activities for Caltrain. Modifying or relocating some of these activities would allow Caltrain to continue on a smaller footprint while potentially freeing up land for future development opportunities. The study will analyze potential locations to relocate railyard functions, as well as assess the train storage capacity and train operations associated with a consolidated railyard.

**Create Placemaking, Neighborhood Connectivity, Employment and Transit Oriented Development Opportunities**

Creating a new Boulevard and relocating the railyard at 4<sup>th</sup> and King makes new parcels of land available for a number of development or repurposing possibilities. The RAB will also study the possibility of new transit-oriented development, neighborhood connectivity, open space and public amenities to accommodate growth in this area of the City.

**Phase II** of this study will combine options from each of the components from Phase I and conduct further analysis of up to three refined alternatives before a preferred alternative is determined.

**Schedule**

The study underway is Phase I and II of a five phase project.

Phase I – Options for further analysis	9-12 months (Jan 2015 – Jan 2016)
Phase II – Alternatives Development	12-15 months (Fall 2016 – Winter 2017)
Funding for Phase III, IV, and V have not be secured but are anticipated.	
Phase III – Determination of Preferred Alternative	12-18 months
Phase IV – Environmental Clearance	Undetermined at this time
Phase V – Implementation	As money and priorities allow

At this time, the study is not expected affect the construction schedules of the Transbay Transit Center, Downtown Rail Extension (DTX), and/or Caltrain electrification. As the preferred alternative (Phase III) is determined, there may be modifications to projects depending on the preferred alternative. Potential costs and time impacts will be preliminarily examined under Phase II and in more detail in Phase III.



## **Funding**

The study currently has received approximately \$1.7 million through the following:

- Two MTC Priority Development Area (PDA) competitive planning grants of \$519,940 (Phase I) and \$700,000 (Phase II)
- Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Sustainable Communities Planning grant of \$490,672 (Phase II)
- Planning General Funds \$125,000 for additional rail operations sketch modeling (Phase II)

## **Agency Coordination**

The study has a technically advisory committee (TAC) which includes representation from Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Caltrans, California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), Caltrain, Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and various City and County Departments including: San Francisco Planning, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), San Francisco Port Authority, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW), San Francisco Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII), San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), and San Francisco Mayor's Office.

We are working with the TAC to ensure that all users of the area are accommodated. More technical analysis is being completed through Phase II and in conjunction with each member of the TAC.

San Francisco Planning has also contracted with international engineering firm CH2M Hill to aid the City in this effort.