



Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department

NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE BERKELEY WATER TRANSPORTATION PIER FERRY

DATE: April 18, 2025
TO: Responsible and Trustee Agencies and Other Interested Parties
FROM: City of Berkeley
Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department
2180 Milvia Street, 3rd Floor
Berkeley, California 94704
SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report as well as Notice of EIR Scoping Meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025**

PROJECT NAME: Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry

PROJECT SPONSOR: City of Berkeley

Notice is hereby given that the City of Berkeley is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry (“project”) and is requesting public comments on the scope of the Draft EIR. The EIR is being prepared by the City of Berkeley, the lead agency for the project, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to identify, evaluate, and disclose possible environmental impacts and develop strategies to avoid, reduce, or compensate for potentially significant impacts that would arise from the implementation of the proposed project.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) would operate the passenger ferry service associated with this project and is considered a Responsible Agency under CEQA.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being sent to the California State Clearinghouse, Alameda County Clerk, responsible agencies, trustee agencies, adjacent cities, and members of the public including individuals and organizations in order to solicit comments on the scope and content of the analysis in the EIR.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: The proposed project objectives include the following:

- Enhance public access and recreational opportunities at the Berkeley Waterfront that:
 - Develop or enhance public pier facilities at the City of Berkeley Waterfront.
 - Provide sufficient public access and recreational opportunities at the

- Berkeley Waterfront that meet regional needs, consistent with BCDC Bay Plan Policies maximizing access to the Bay.
- Minimize environmental impacts by considering existing infrastructure and sea level rise projections.
- Encourage the use of public transit, bicycle, and other forms of active transportation and sustainable travel to access the site.
- Provide efficient and environmentally friendly zero emission public ferry service between Berkeley and San Francisco that:
 - Improve regional connectivity and resiliency with enhanced public transportation choices for East Bay residents, including for accessing jobs in San Francisco and other locations along the Bay for commerce and recreational purposes, and to address existing deficiencies in the Transbay transportation network.
 - Reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles for Transbay trips, thereby reducing greenhouse gas and air quality emissions and decreasing congestion on the regional roadway system, consistent with regional and Statewide goals.
 - Provide travel times and costs that are competitive with other Transbay modes of travel.
 - Provide public transit facilities that are compatible with operations and recreational activities at the Berkeley Waterfront.
 - Provide navigable conditions for safe and efficient operation of ferry vessels.
 - Provide options for emergency response and transportation services in case of an emergency, such as natural or human-caused event that disables roads, other transit, bridges, and/or tunnels.

PROJECT LOCATION: The project site is located at the Berkeley Waterfront along the San Francisco Bay in the City of Berkeley, Alameda County. As shown in Figure 1, the project site specifically encompasses the closed Berkeley Pier, including the entry area for the Berkeley Pier; the San Francisco Bay waters around the closed Berkeley Pier; the parking lot off Seawall Drive; roadways (University Avenue and Seawall Drive); and vegetated street islands adjacent to University Avenue and Seawall Drive.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Berkeley Pier was closed in July 2015 due to visually observed structural problems on the underside of the concrete decking and pilings. The proposed project aims to revitalize the Berkeley Waterfront by developing a new dual-purpose pier and ancillary uses that support both public recreation and zero-emission public ferry service. Specifically, the project would include the following components:

- Demolish portions of the closed pier;
- Construct a new 1,080-foot-long public pier at the same location as the closed pier with pedestrian access and recreational amenities;
- Construct a new 400-foot-long breakwater perpendicular to and connected to the new pier, providing pedestrian access and recreational amenities;
- Provide recreational amenities on the pier and breakwater that could include interpretive and educational signs, benches, shade canopy, seats, and a fish

cleaning station;

- Provide ferry infrastructure including but not limited to universal charging and boarding float(s), landing(s), gangway(s), and security entrance;
- Dredging along the existing 100-foot wide United States Army Corps of Engineers federal navigation channel that parallels the closed pier.
- Construct a new public plaza with amenities such as a public restroom, benches, and bicycle parking;
- Implement improvements to University Avenue, including repaving and restriping between the round-about intersection with Marina Boulevard and the intersection with Seawall Drive and a new raised bicycle track, passenger drop off zone, and public bus infrastructure;
- Implement improvements to Seawall Drive, including re-alignment, repaving, and restriping;
- Develop a portion of the planned Bay Trail Extension, south of the pier and along Seawall Drive;
- Renovate the parking lot off Seawall Drive with new pavement, surfacing, striping, lighting, and stormwater treatment;
- Provide new landscaping as well as tree removal and replacement;
- Provide new way-finding signage and replacement lighting;
- Install new electric infrastructure to charge ferry vessels;
- Install new water connections for a restroom and hose bibs;
- Install new wastewater connections for a restroom; and
- Operate new zero-emission electric passenger ferry service, connecting the Berkeley ferry terminal to San Francisco and Larkspur ferry terminals.

In addition to the project components listed above, the City is considering the following optional improvements. However, the City may choose not to implement these improvements as part of the proposed project.

- Solar panels in the renovated parking lot;
- Recreational water access to the Bay, including non-motorized watercrafts
- Recreational improvements to Shorebird Park.

EIR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AREAS: The EIR will evaluate the potential physical environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the project. The topical areas that will be addressed in the EIR are: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources; Geology and Soils (including Paleontological Resources); Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Noise (including Hydro-acoustics); Land Use and Planning; Recreation; Transportation; and Utilities and Service Systems.

Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR briefly describe possible environmental effects that are determined not to be significant. The City anticipates that no significant environmental impacts would occur related to the following topical areas: Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, and Wildfire.

EIR PROJECT ALTERNATIVES: The Draft EIR will also examine a reasonable range of

alternatives to the project, including the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative and other alternatives that are potentially feasible and may be capable of reducing or avoiding potential environmental effects while meeting most of the basic objectives of the project. In addition, the EIR will address cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and other issues required by CEQA.

EIR PUBLIC REVIEW SCOPING PERIOD: April 18, 2025, to May 19, 2025

During this public review period, interested agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals are invited to provide comments about the scope of the environmental topics to be included in the EIR.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: EIR scoping comments and any questions or comments should be directed in writing to:

Liza McNulty, PE, Project Manager
City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department
2180 Milvia Street, 3rd Floor
Berkeley, California 94704

or

Email: lmcnulty@berkeleyca.gov.

EIR scoping comments must be received **by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2025**. In addition, comments may be provided at the EIR Public Scoping Meeting (see details below). Comments should focus on the scope of the EIR.

EIR PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City of Berkeley will conduct an EIR public scoping session on **Monday, May 5, 2025**, to receive comments on the scope of the EIR. The meeting will start at **6:00 PM** and will be held via video and teleconference.

To join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device: Use the link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83463444678?pwd=GrxgstlUpC4CX4FaRRbwQ5LgGJQ7IC.1>

To join by phone: Dial +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) or +1 669 444 9171 US and enter Meeting ID 834 6344 4678, Passcode: 903142.



Liza McNulty, PE, Capital Improvement Program Manager

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