



Central Embarcadero Safety Project

Frequently Asked Questions (Spring 2025)

The SFMTA, in collaboration with Public Works and the Port of San Francisco, is advancing the design of roadway and promenade safety fixes, multimodal transit access upgrades, and streetscape changes to The Embarcadero, from Broadway to Brannan streets.

Based on the success of prior quick-build efforts between Broadway to Folsom Street, the Central Embarcadero Safety Project will:

- Extend the separated bikeway, from Folsom south to Brannan Street, with improved connectivity to/from the SOMA and Mission Rock neighborhoods;
- Enhance pedestrian comfort, accessibility, and wayfinding measures along the promenade and at key crossings of the bikeway/Embarcadero roadway;
- Improve rail network safety and operations, especially at the Folsom Portal;
- Add to the corridor's existing real-time wayfinding and messaging system with a new sign near Washington Street.

This document responds to questions the project team has heard during preliminary outreach and will be updated as the team conducts further outreach.

Q: Why does the project propose a two-way bikeway on the water side, rather than one-way bikeways on both sides of the Embarcadero?

A: The SFMTA's Embarcadero Enhancement Program included many years of engagement with the public reviewing the [pros and cons of different separated bikeway designs](#). Outreach showed preference for the two-way, waterside layout. Building a fully separated bikeway on each side of The Embarcadero would result in much more parking loss, cost, and construction impact than focusing on one side of the street. The two-way design also makes it easier to shift people biking and rolling off the waterfront promenade, where many users naturally want to be.

Q: Will it replace the southbound bike lane?

A: The existing southbound bike lane is still widely used and helpful for those that do not prefer, for whatever reason, to travel in the waterside bikeway. Several safety fixes have already been made in the last few years and the southbound bike lane will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Q: Will the project address pavement quality issues?

A: Much of the northbound roadway, from Brannan to Folsom streets, will be repaved as part of the project. Additional repaving is expected at some limited locations on the southbound roadway south of Folsom Street.

Q: Will faster users and electric bikes/scooters have to use the bikeway rather than the promenade?

A: Where the separated bikeway is adjacent to the promenade, informational signs emphasizing use of the bikeway by electric bicycles, scooters, and other faster uses will be added and the “shared path” stencils on the promenade will be removed. Bollards or flexible posts may be added at key promenade areas to further direct people biking and rolling into the bikeway, and to slow them down with physical treatments that are 'self-enforcing.

Q: How does the project improve pedestrian safety crossing The Embarcadero?

A: The project team will seek additional feedback on pedestrian crossing treatments in upcoming outreach. The project design may include bike signals similar to those near the Ferry Building, whereas other intersections may include signage, traffic calming, and clear delineation of pedestrian priority for the bikeway crossings instead of signalization.

At Clay Street, the project is considering the removal of the existing northbound U-turn lane in order to straighten and consolidate the existing four-leg crossing to complement the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department's [Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park Renovation Project](#).

Q: Why is the project proposing to remove existing palm trees in the median of The Embarcadero?

A: The project team looked at multiple ways to add a two-way bikeway to The Embarcadero south of Folsom Street, where it currently ends, while also maintaining a wide, welcoming promenade and access to the curb for adjacent piers. The only design alternative that leaves space for vehicle lanes, the bikeway, and transit is to narrow the wide raised medians next to the Muni tracks. These medians include the canary palms where there is not a left-turn lane. These trees suffer from a deadly fungal disease that often spreads by tools and contaminated soils, so the feasibility and value of replanting them is very low.

The project is committed to planting as many new palm trees as possible within the new bikeway buffer islands. These will be a different variety of palm which is hardier but look similar. Other tree planting and landscape options were considered but dropped. Overall, 15 existing palm trees will be removed and approximately 12 new palm trees will be replanted nearby within the project limits.

Q: Why is the project proposing to remove the northbound left-turn lanes at Folsom Street and Brannan Street?

A: The project team looked at multiple ways to add a two-way bikeway to The Embarcadero south of Folsom Street, where it currently ends, while also maintaining a wide, welcoming promenade and access to the curb for adjacent piers. The only design alternative that leaves space for vehicle lanes, the bikeway, and transit is to remove the existing left-turn lanes at Folsom Street and Brannan Street. At Folsom Street, this change has the added benefit of eliminating conflicts between turning vehicles and Muni light-rail vehicles entering and exiting the Market Street Subway at the Folsom Portal.

Left-turns and U-turns will continue to be permitted at Howard Street, Bryant Street, and Townsend Street.

Q: Will the project remove on-street parking spaces?

A: Up to 30 metered parking spaces will be removed from the water side of the Embarcadero. Some of these spaces will be added back as commercial and passenger loading zones, and the project team will work with tenants at the Rincon Restaurant and Pier 26/28 loading zones to develop curb management plans. Between Bryant Street and Brannan Street, the project proposes to remove existing on-street parking, but on-street loading/parking would be reintroduced back with the future development of Pier 30/32 and Seawall Lot 330.

Q: What is the purpose of the variable message sign that is included in the project?

A: The variable message sign is intended to complement existing dynamic signs northbound at South Beacon Park and southbound at Howard Street and is part of the larger “SFGov” system. These signs not only display parking garage availability but also emergency messaging and info on construction and/or traffic impacts. The project is proposing one new sign near the Washington/Broadway area based on requests from Port tenants and other users in the northern Embarcadero area.

Q: Will the project address vehicle speeding along The Embarcadero?

A: The project will consider additional speed limit signage and a potential reduction in the speed limit as part of the construction phase for the bikeway extension. As part of the city's pilot Speed Enforcement Camera Program, there will be a camera installed along The Embarcadero near the Exploratorium, but this program could expand to other corridors (e.g. Southern Embarcadero) if the State allows expansion of the Program.

Q: Will the project improve the timing of the traffic lights to help reduce congestion?

A: The SFMTA, separately as part of a highway safety grant award, updated the signal timing along The Embarcadero in early 2025. These changes helped improve access to the waterfront by increasing walk times and adding pedestrian ‘head starts’ across Embarcadero’s wide, busy intersections. **The new timing is not likely to change average vehicle travel times.**

The Central Embarcadero Safety Project includes traffic signal upgrades and shorter pedestrian crossings at several intersections. Together with new turn restrictions that will simplify the signal phases, these changes could add slightly more ‘green time’ and help maintain traffic flow for northbound vehicles.

Q: Why not make more transformational changes, such as grade separation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Embarcadero?

A: Longer-term resilience and flood protection projects may consider more substantial revisions and investments to the Embarcadero, such as new grade-separation treatments, but such measures are prohibitively expensive, would take decades to be built, and are not included as part of the Embarcadero Enhancement Program or Central Embarcadero Safety Project.