



MEMO TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

HEARING DATE: October 7, 2021

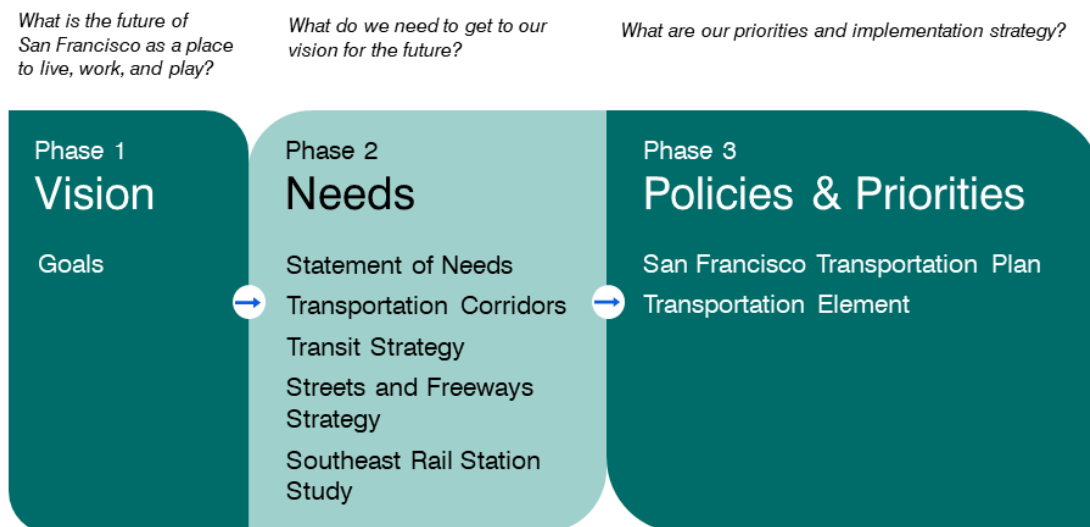
Case Number: 2015-018094CWP
Project Name: ConnectSF Update, including Transit Strategy and Streets and Freeways Strategy
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Recommendation: None (Informational)

Background

ConnectSF integrates the City’s land use and long-range transportation planning work into one coordinated program. The program is a partnership between the Planning Department, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and the Mayor’s Office. As shown in Figure 1, the program is an iterative process, where each phase provides the building blocks for the subsequent phases.

Figure 1: Phases of ConnectSF



In 2017-2018, ConnectSF developed a fifty-year [Vision](#) and goals for San Francisco in collaboration with community members and stakeholders. This part of Phase 1 included outreach activities involving 13 focus groups, two online surveys, one-on-one meetings with over 60 community-based organizations, and workshops with the program's Futures Task Force. The Commission endorsed this Vision in April 2018. The SFCTA Board and SFMTA Board approved the Vision at that time as well. Subsequent phases included identifying major transportation investments, land use changes, and policy strategies that will help the City reach this Vision.

This information item to the Commission will describe investment strategies for transit, streets, and freeways (Phase 2) as well as their land use implications based on the ConnectSF Vision. The transit study is being led by SFMTA, and the streets and freeways study is being led by SFCTA, both in partnership with the Planning Department. Each study's outreach activities included separate online webinars/open houses, story maps, and online surveys to present findings and recommendations. The two studies are anticipated to be finalized by the end of 2021. This information item will describe how the two studies are related to other ConnectSF efforts led by the Planning Department: Southeast Rail Station Study and update of the General Plan's Transportation Element.

The Connect SF project will result in a proposal for a holistic update of the Transportation Element of the General Plan. It is one-part of a series of proposed amendments to the General Plan intended to modernize the City's land use policy document. The other updates underway include updates to the Community Safety Element to add climate resilience, a holistic update of the Housing Element, consistent with state-mandated timing requirements, and an incorporation of Environmental Justice policies into the General Plan, consistent with both state law and the Commission's equity resolution number 20738. An overview of these changes to the General Plan has been tentatively scheduled for November 4, 2021.

ConnectSF Phase 2

Transit Strategy

This strategy consists of short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations to improve transit, as summarized below. Generally, they consist of maintaining and improving physical assets, installing on-street transit-priority improvements, making investments in the Muni Metro subway, and new rail service.

- Critical short-term work includes strategically restoring service, which was reduced in response to the pandemic. It also involves addressing maintenance costs and existing backlogs and keeping all physical assets in a state of good repair so that buses and trains keep moving to provide passengers reliable, timely service. Estimated cost: \$11.6 billion to restore existing capital assets.
- Medium-term strategies include making on-street improvements so that buses and trains travel without delay and only stop for riders to get on or off. This can happen through smart traffic signals that hold green lights for transit and setting aside lanes for transit. With these types of improvements, a network of buses can run reliably every five minutes on a core set of routes. Estimated cost: \$500 million. See Figure 2 for a preliminary concept of what this five-minute network could look like. Also included in the medium-term are improvements to the regional transit system, such as installing transit-priority lanes

and express lanes on freeways. Cost estimates for this work are being prepared.

- Long-term options include building rail where bus service would not be able to serve projected growth, including rail on Geary Boulevard and 19th Avenue, extension of the Central Subway to Fisherman’s Wharf, a new transbay rail crossing (Link21), and a Caltrain station in the Bayview. See Figure 3 for initial concepts for expanded rail concepts. Preliminary cost estimates are being prepared and will be available by the end of this year.

Figure 2: Concept for Five-Minute Transit Network



Figure 3: Concepts for Rail Expansion



Streets and Freeways Strategy

This strategy covers improvements to local streets and regional freeways to support San Francisco’s Transit-First, Vision Zero, climate action, and equity goals. Its components are as follows:

- Maintain the City’s roads to ensure that they are in good overall condition, especially to withstand the effects of flooding and sea-level rise.
- Prioritize transit and carpooling on streets and freeways, which is related to the Transit Strategy (above). For streets, this would involve manage parking and road use through variable pricing and incentives. For freeways, this would include dedicated lanes for buses and carpools paired with discounts and incentives for bus passengers and carpools.
- Build a citywide, comfortable network for walking and biking, which could consist of separated bike lanes; car-free streets or Slow Streets in neighborhoods; corridors that would prioritize mobility hubs;

and recreational routes in/near/along parks, open space areas, and the bay. This would also include installing amenities, such as secure bike parking or bikeshare or scooter-share stalls at intermodal transit stops. See Figure 4.

- Prioritize safety to meet Vision Zero goals by managing vehicle speeds throughout the City and building improvements that address the main causes of collisions, including traffic calming, lowering speed limits, or decreasing roadway capacity. Near freeways, this can include improving conditions at freeway ramps by shortening crossing distances and adding crosswalks.
- Repair harms and reconnect communities that were harmed through transportation infrastructure. This would include working with communities on work involving urban greening, reducing truck impacts, and new, grade-separated pedestrian crossings across freeways. Long-term work could include simplifying overbuilt freeways.

Figure 4: Preferred Conceptual Network for Active Transportation



Southeast Rail Station Study

In late 2018, the Mayor's Office and the Board of Supervisors adopted the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX) as the preferred alternative to grade separate the train tracks from the street network at 16th Street and Mission Bay Drive. The Southeast Rail Station Study (SERSS, formerly 22nd Street Station Study) is evaluating potential alternatives for a redesigned or relocated 22nd Street Station should the PAX tunnel require it. The study is also considering how the Oakdale Station concept can be updated and integrated into these plans for the Caltrain corridor in San Francisco. There will be an informational presentation about SERSS at the Planning Commission hearing on October 21, 2021.

Land Use Implications

There are many land use implications embedded in the above efforts. For the Transit Strategy, if implemented, the outcome would be more reliable transit service (short-term recommendations) as well as more transit service overall (medium- and long-term recommendations). Such changes need to be coordinated with land use, especially housing. Where there is an increase in transportation capacity, it is critical to plan for a corresponding supply of housing to support the transit investments being made. There are several policies in the current Housing Element that provide guidance for this. See Table 1. The ConnectSF team is working with the Housing Element team to prepare similar, if not more rigorous, policies for the update underway.

Table 1: Housing Element Policies

Current Housing Element	2022 Housing Element (update underway)
<p>Policy 1.10: Support new housing projects, especially affordable housing, where households can easily rely on public transportation, walking and bicycling for the majority of daily trips</p> <p>Policy 12.1: Encourage new housing that relies on transit use and environmentally sustainable patterns of movement</p> <p>Policy 13.1: Support “smart” regional growth that locates new housing close to jobs and transit.</p> <p>Policy 13.3: Promote sustainable land use patterns that integrate housing with transportation in order to increase transit, pedestrian, and bicycle mode share.</p>	<p>Draft Policy VI.2: Ensure transportation investments and new housing are planned in parallel to advance well-connected neighborhoods and equitable access to transit.</p> <p>Draft Action: Increase housing choice through changes to height limits, removal of density controls, and other zoning changes to improve feasibility of multi-family buildings along SFMTA’s Rapid Lines and major nodes, such as Geary Blvd., Judah Street, 19th Ave, Lombard Street, Ocean Ave, Taraval Street, West Portal Ave, and Van Ness Ave.</p> <p>Draft Action: Plan for and dedicate funding to transportation infrastructure improvement to support areas slated for increased housing choice.</p> <p>Draft Action: Pursue interagency coordination to plan for improvements to transit, pedestrian, and bike infrastructure and service, and providing those improvements before housing projects are completed.</p>

These types of policies are important to meet the demands of current and future residents, workers, and employers. For example, the medium-term strategy focused on the current Muni Metro system calls for operational systems that can provide longer trains and more reliable service. This will benefit current residents and potentially attract newcomers. Housing will need to be built so that new arrivals to San Francisco are

appropriately housed and/or do not displace current residents. This is also true of new rail projects, such as the concepts depicted in Figure 3. For the Geary/19th rail concept, new rail infrastructure in the western part of San Francisco would need to be accompanied by more housing units. Should this concept be advanced, staff will provide a scope for a land use planning approach to assess development potential and anti-displacement strategies.

ConnectSF Phase 3

Transportation Element of the General Plan

ConnectSF will culminate in an update of the Transportation Element, which was last prepared in 1995. The Transportation Element sets policies for how transportation is planned, designed, and implemented, including the integration of land use and transportation to support the City's growth and development. The element will include prioritization of transportation modes, services, and investments; access to transportation; and congestion management.

Using the ConnectSF Vision as its foundation of how the City should grow and develop, the Transportation Element will pull together all the program's findings and recommendation into this component of the General Plan.

In addition to adhering with guidance from the California Office of Planning and Research, the Transportation Element will center racial and social equity and integrate environmental justice (in compliance with SB 1000) as part of its policy development and implementation. Guidance from the state Office of Planning and Research recommends that a city's Transportation Element include the following topics: active transportation, major thoroughfares, freeways, goods movement, ports/airports, multimodal transportation hubs, and transit. The Transit Strategy and the Streets and Freeways Strategy cover many of these topics, and their recommendations will be included in the Transportation Element.

Draft policies for the Transportation Element update are anticipated to be available in late 2022. Prior to their development, staff will work with community-based organizations to conduct outreach to identify people's transportation challenges. These efforts will inform the development of the policies for the Transportation Element. An informational presentation will be made to the Planning Commission in late 2021 or early 2022 to provide a summary of outreach activities and findings.

San Francisco Transportation Plan 2050

San Francisco Transportation Plan 2050 (SFTP) will outline the City's multimodal transportation investments to position for regional, state, and federal funding. It will include two scenarios: a fiscally constrained scenario based on funding sources the City can reasonably expect to receive and a "vision" scenario which describes how additional funding can be invested in our transportation system. This effort is being led by SFCTA.

The projects in the SFTP will inform Plan Bay Area 2050, which is the regional transportation plan that provides a blueprint for transportation and housing investments to accommodate growth in the region. Plan Bay Area 2050 is being prepared by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The SFTP is anticipated to be completed at the end of 2021. The SFCTA board will adopt SFTP 2050 concurrently with the adoption of Plan Bay Area.

Schedule

Launched in 2016, the ConnectSF program is a comprehensive program to align multiple planning documents from several City agencies to deliver a transportation system that responds to the needs of people in San Francisco. Phase I of the program established the “Vision”. The Vision, which was developed with extensive community collaboration, provides a foundation for the long-term transportation investments and policies that are being developed as a part of the program’s final two phases. Phase 2 and 3 began in 2019 (shown in Figure 3). Not depicted in this schedule is the CEQA environmental review of the Transportation Element. This work is currently unfunded, and staff is exploring potential resources.

Other related upcoming items include the adoption of [Plan Bay Area 2050](#) later this year as well as a potential transportation measure to be placed on the City ballot in 2022. While the content of this measure has not been fully developed, it is anticipated to include funding to implement the Transit Strategy’s recommendations and other transportation improvements (page 2).

Figure 4: Schedule for ConnectSF’s Phases 2 and 3

