



STRATEGIC ANALYSIS REPORT

SAR 94-1

November 21, 1994

I. TOPIC:

**Transbay Area Study and
Caltrain Downtown Terminal Relocation EIS/EIR**

II. INITIATED BY:

Commissioners Bierman and Hsieh - Plans and Programs Committee
Meeting of September 12, 1994

III. INTRODUCTION:

Purpose of the Document

This is a document designed to present the facts and the issues, to inform policy making.

It provides strategic analysis of potential implications for the Authority as Prop. B administrator and as CMA.

The purpose of this *Strategic Analysis Report* is to provide the SFCTA Board with a brief but comprehensive summary of background and issues about two major transportation projects in the City: the relocation of the Transbay Terminal, and the relocation of the Caltrain Terminal. As the name suggests, this Strategic Analysis Report, or SAR for short, is furthermore intended to highlight for the Board the strategic significance of these projects in areas of SFCTA jurisdiction, as well as to identify implications for future policy decisions by the Board in its capacity both as administrator of Proposition B funds and as Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for San Francisco. The analysis of both the Transbay Terminal and the Caltrain Terminal relocation proposals in a single document is intended to highlight the important connections between both studies. Every effort was made to make this into a factual document, avoiding speculation, and leaving judgment to the reader. The document was designed to inform policy-level decision-making. Its abbreviated length (only 6 pages) is, therefore, an attempt to optimize its usefulness to Authority Board members. In pursuit of this goal, technical discussion has been compressed and only those facts are included which were deemed essential to outline the policy-level issues. Additional information is available from Authority staff and from the sources cited.

IV. BACKGROUND:

Context - Previous Studies

Initial impetus for the replacement of the Transbay Terminal came from interest in the development potential of the current site.

a. Transbay Terminal

The Terminal has been the subject of discussions for the past 2 years. During 1993 the MTC conducted the Transit Operator Needs Study, aimed at documenting current use and determining future space needs at the terminal, based on expected growth in service. In November, 1993, at the request of the Mayor's Office, the Department of City Planning (DCP) produced a study of alternatives to determine the feasibility of replacing the facility. The study was motivated by Caltrans interest in looking at options to a costly (\$35 million) seismic retrofit of the existing facility, and by interest at the Mayor's Office in the idea of a downtown arena and possible joint development on some of the land currently taken up by the terminal and its access ramps, which might be freed up if the terminal was relocated and the ramps demolished.

Transbay Terminal studies to-date have not satisfactorily addressed key issues including funding, future growth in operations and bus parking needs, future high speed rail.

DCP's 1993 study recommended a new Transbay Terminal at Beale and Howard. *Estimated cost: \$79 million.*

In August 1993, the Authority Board requested that no changes be made to the current Transbay Terminal until all key issues are addressed.

The DCP study investigated some alternatives and recommended relocation to a site at Beale and Howard Streets. The study was at the sketch planning level and, although it included floor plans and circulation diagrams for the new facility, it did not include a detailed operational analysis to show that it would be possible to quickly put through the terminal the large number of buses that would be using it at rush hour in the future.

The cost of the new terminal was estimated at around \$79 million. A funding strategy was not developed, and the feasibility of private sector participation, though mentioned as an option in the report, was not explored. It is not clear whether any of the Caltrans money currently identified as needed for seismic retrofit would be available if a new facility were to be built. The Terminal's current \$2 million annual operating shortfall is paid for by bridge toll revenues. The proposed facility's design did not address future parking needs for buses that remain inactive during the mid-day, even though this issue figures prominently in the economic viability of commuter bus service. A separate study of transit operator needs was conducted by MTC in parallel with the DCP study.

Concerned about the possibility that the Terminal or its access ramps might be demolished before a viable alternative was put in place, on August 18, 1993, the Authority went on record requesting that Caltrans not modify the existing facility until a detailed operational analysis was completed. This action was intended to safeguard the transbay transit function and avoid potentially significant impacts on San Francisco's congestion management network, which might force the Authority to find the City ineligible for state and federal transportation funds.

The Caltrain Station relocation intends to bring Caltrain commuters closer to the financial district.

The BOS and JPB selected a preferred Caltrain station location under Beale Street, at Market (Alternative 8B)

Estimated cost: \$491 million.

It also required that the current Transbay Terminal be considered.

b. Caltrain Downtown Terminal Relocation

This project has been the subject of several studies. The most recent was completed jointly in March, 1994, by MTC and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB), which operates the Caltrain. The study identified and evaluated nine alternatives for a new terminal that would bring the Caltrain closer to Market Street from its current location at 4th and Townsend Streets. The study identified projected capital and net operating costs, annual ridership based on station location, technologies (e.g.: diesel vs. electrical operation), and provided a preliminary evaluation of the feasibility to operate Caltrain jointly with commuter bus services and with high speed (intercity) rail. Based on the results of this study, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, (BOS) and later the JPB selected Alternative 8B, an underground station at Beale and Market Streets as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The JPB moved to initiate development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/EIR), a necessary step toward eligibility for Federal and state funding. The BOS and the JPB directed that environmental analysis also be conducted for Alternative 3B (the current Transbay Terminal). Both alternatives would require the Caltrain to operate at grade, between 7th and 16th Streets, and Brannan or Townsend Streets and (possibly as far as) 4th Street.

V. STRATEGIC ANALYSIS:

Current Status, Implications For Authority Policy-Making, Key Follow-Up Issues And Recommendations

A. CURRENT STATUS

Scope, Schedule and Funding for New Studies - Participants and Roles

The Authority is represented in the Policy Advisory group for the study.

The Transbay Area Study will compare a new terminal at Beale and Howard with a rebuilt Transbay Terminal at the current site.

a. Transbay Area Study

A new study is now getting underway. A Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), as well as technical advisory and citizens advisory committees have been formed. The PAC includes senior staff representatives from the Governor's Office, the Mayor's Office, Caltrans, AC Transit, Golden Gate Transit, the JPB, MUNI, MTC, the Alameda County CMA, and the San Francisco CMA (i.e, the Authority). The study is to look at land use around the current Transbay Terminal as well as transportation changes involving the relocation of the Terminal. Specifically, the study will compare a new terminal at Beale and Howard Streets with a rebuilt Transbay Terminal at the current site. The first phase of the study, leading to the issuance of a request for proposals to develop the preferred terminal site, is scheduled to take 12 months, at a cost of about \$854,000, of which Caltrans is contributing \$304,000 and the City is contributing \$550,000. Of that amount, \$451,000 will be devoted to a consultant contract. DCP expects to have the consultant on board by mid-January 1995. In a precedent setting move, the Caltrans portion of the funding for the study comes from Bay bridge toll revenues, which are traditionally reserved to pay for transbay transit services.

The Caltrain EIS will compare a Beale and Market Station with the current Transbay Terminal as alternatives for a downtown Caltrain terminal.

The Caltrain EIS will recommend a preferred terminal location, then conclude the detailed analysis.

b. Caltrain Downtown Terminal Relocation EIS

On October 14, 1994, the Peninsula Corridor JPB released a request for proposals (RFP) for the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the relocation of the downtown Caltrain terminal. The focus are three alternatives: the current depot location at 4th and Townsend (the so-called "No Build" alternative), the current Transbay Terminal, and a new terminal under Beale Street, between Mission and Market Streets, designated by the JPB as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The study is in two phases: the first phase, expected to last 15 months, will see the completion of the Draft EIS/EIR including reaffirmation of the Locally Preferred Alternative or selection of a new one. The second phase, scheduled to take 6 months, will finalize the EIS/EIR. The RFP for consultant services covers only the first phase. The total budget for the EIS/EIR is \$5.925 million. At the conclusion of the first phase, the JPB will decide whether to proceed with the second phase. The JPB expects to award the contract in early February 1995.

B. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AUTHORITY

Likely Impacts in Areas of Significance to the Authority's Role: How the Studies Propose to Address them

The Authority Board may have to prioritize requests for pedestrian safety and street improvements associated with these two projects.

a. Impacts on Proposition B Programming

The Proposition B Expenditure Plan, approved by the voters, does not include the Transbay Terminal or the Caltrain Terminal relocation. Therefore, no Proposition B funding can be provided directly to those projects. It is likely, however, that these projects will generate indirect impacts on the Proposition B program.

Potential demand already exceeds projected Prop B funding in those line items.

The impacts of these two projects on the operations of the CMP network must be carefully assessed, because they may cause deficiencies and result in additional costs, and may even jeopardize state and federal transportation dollars.

The Authority can only prioritize funds for the Transbay Terminal project at the expense of other major transit priorities, such as replacing MUNI Metro's LRV fleet or complying with ADA.

The proposed work programs for both study appear to be adequate, but there are areas that need monitoring, to ensure that Authority concerns are addressed

Both Caltrain Alternatives (3B and 8B) require running trains on City streets in the south of Market area. This may result in pressure on the Authority Board to program Prop. B funds for pedestrian safety, and street improvements in that area. The Board could only do this at the expense of projects in other areas of the City, since potential demand already exceeds Prop. B funding projected for those line items. Pedestrian safety and street improvement impacts are also likely from a new Transbay Terminal at Beale and Howard Streets, since in order to accommodate growth in bus service it would require more than 100 new transbay buses to be stored during the mid-day at an off-site parking facility at a location not yet determined, but likely to be in the South of Market area.

b. Impacts on the Congestion Management Program

i. CMP Conformance Issues: Both projects are likely to have direct impacts on the City's congestion management network. The Caltrain alternatives propose running trains at street level adjacent to 7th Street between 16th and Brannan, and on Brannan or Townsend Street between 7th and a possible underground portal at 4th Street. Significant peak hour impacts to surface traffic and some impacts to MUNI bus routes can be expected in this area. If those impacts result in a deterioration of operating conditions below level of service E on the network, there will be a need for the City to prepare potentially costly Deficiency Plans in order to maintain conformance with the Congestion Management Program. Those plans are likely to require significant increases in MUNI service, but the Authority will not be in a position to fund the increase in operating costs. If the level of service is not maintained, the Authority Board may have to find the City in non-conformance with the CMP, and state gas tax subventions and federal dollars for transportation projects will be jeopardized. Regarding the relocation of the Transbay Terminal, it will be important to ascertain through a detailed operational analysis whether the new terminal can handle the future peak hour bus traffic. If, because of internal circulation problems, the terminal becomes the bottleneck for transbay bus service, further congestion impacts can be expected.

ii. CMP Funding Issues: While Track 1 (federal) funds are included in the Regional Transportation Plan for the Caltrain project, the Authority, in its capacity as Congestion Management Agency for San Francisco, will likely be faced with requests to program some, as yet unknown, level of ISTEA (federal) funding for the Transbay Terminal relocation project. Given the current demand for transportation dollars and the likely revenue streams, this project will have to compete in the Authority's prioritization process directly against other significant projects in the City, such as replacement Light Rail Vehicles for the MUNI Metro, replacement trolley coaches, bus route electrification, and transit station accessibility retrofits mandated by ADA.

c. Adequacy of Proposed Studies in Addressing Areas of Interest to the Authority:

i. Caltrain Terminal Relocation Study: The RFP scope of work adequately addresses accommodation of high speed rail and innovative financing. It includes an exhaustive environmental evaluation section. It does not specifically mention the analysis of potential impacts on the CMP network, but it is expected that this will be covered as a by-product of the air quality conformity analysis.

ii. Transbay Area Study: The proposed Work Program (version of October 28, 1994) appears to address major areas of Authority concern, including financial and operational analyses, and consideration of high speed rail. It also addresses traffic and transit impacts, although the analysis of potential impacts on the CMP network is not explicitly mentioned.

The obvious overlap between both studies is the current Transbay Terminal, but the two studies are proceeding separately.

If timing is not coordinated, it is possible that the results of one study may pre-empt the conclusions of the other.

iii. Coordination Between Studies: The above studies are being developed simultaneously. Each study is looking at the current Transbay Terminal as one possible alternative. Although the Caltrain RFP requires that the consultant coordinate with the City for the financial analysis, neither scope of work emphasizes coordination of efforts for the analysis of the Transbay Terminal itself. Integration of these efforts appears essential to ensure that the analysis will adequately address the Transbay Terminal as a potentially viable alternative for both studies. It is also likely that the results of one study may influence or pre-empt the conclusions of the other, specifically: the currently proposed schedule for the JPB study shows a decision on the reaffirmation of the preferred alternative happening at the end of March 1996, and the Transbay Area Study shows the selection of a preferred alternative happening in June 1995.

C. NEXT STEPS	SAR Recommendations
----------------------	----------------------------

The following actions are recommended in order to ensure that the Authority's concerns are adequately addressed.

Request agreement on formal coordination between both studies.

Monitor both studies to ensure that they will produce data needed to inform Authority decisions related to these projects.

1. Request that the policy steering bodies for both studies explicitly discuss the implications of different approaches to coordination of schedules and study products and adopt a joint approach for such coordination.
2. Monitor both studies to ensure that they:
 - a. Include detailed operational analyses of all terminal alternatives.
 - b. Develop a realistic funding strategy with clear assumptions about all funding sources programmed by the Authority, and include Authority input in the development of those assumptions.
 - c. Explicitly address impacts on the congestion management system for San Francisco, including potential deficiencies and assumptions about funding for deficiency plan actions.
 - d. Analyze high speed rail service feasibility as an integral part of any terminal design and operations evaluation.
 - e. Explicitly address the parking needs and street circulation impacts associated with present and future regional bus services at the Transbay Terminal or its replacement; and
 - f. Develop and adhere to a coordinated schedule.

VI. SOURCES:	Reports and Information Used in the Preparation of this SAR
---------------------	--

1. Transbay Area Plan and Implementation Work Program. DCP, October 1994
2. Caltrain Downtown Terminal Relocation RFP for EIS/EIR. JPB, October 1994
3. 1994 Regional Transportation Plan. MTC, June 1994.
4. Draft Strategic Plan for DCP's Prop.B Programs, June 1994
5. Caltrain Downtown Extension/System Upgrades - Final Report. MTC/JPB, March 3, 1994
6. Transit Terminal Study. DCP, November 30, 1993
7. Proposition B Strategic Plan. SFCTA, May 1993.
8. Downtown Caltrain Terminal Relocation Study: The Kiesling Plan - Michael Kiesling, May 1993.

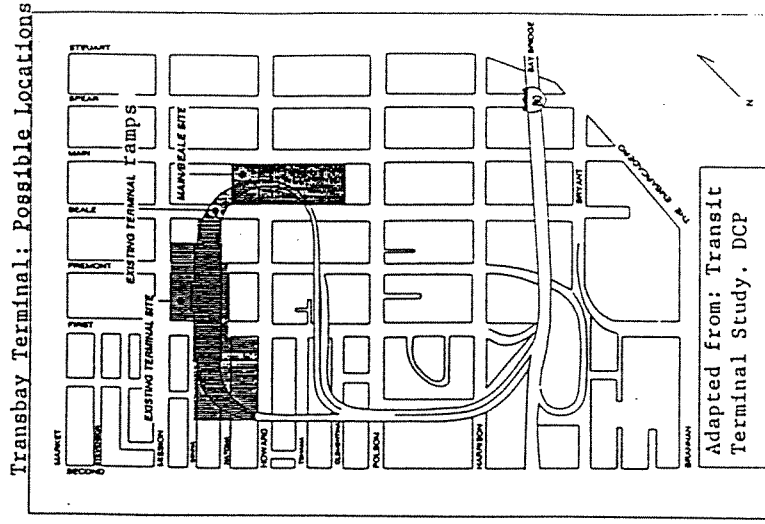
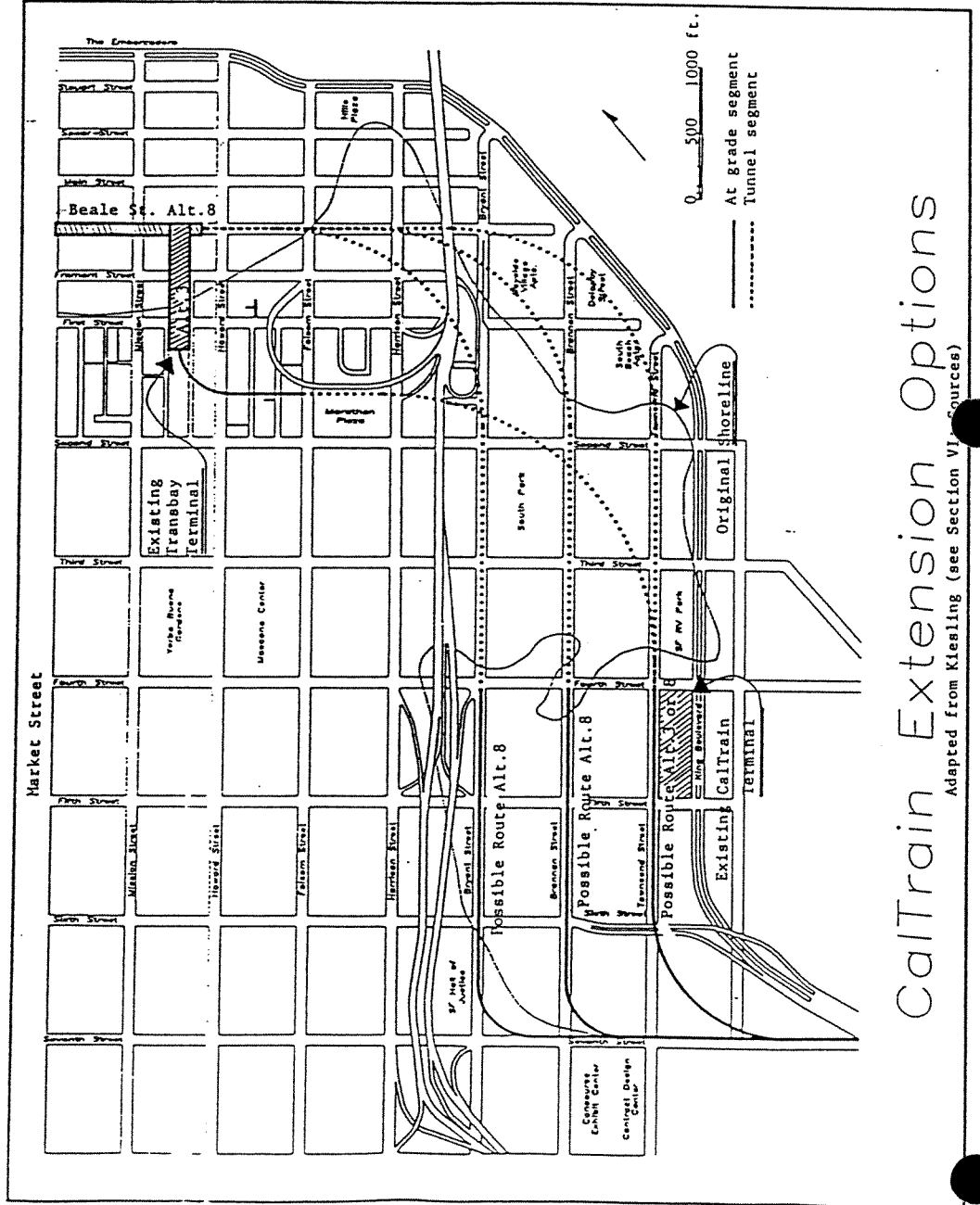


STRATEGIC ANALYSIS REPORT

SAR 94-1
November 21, 1994

VII. GRAPHICS:

Location Maps



CalTrain Extension Options

Adapted from Kiesling (see Section VI, Sources)