

Balboa Reservoir CPC Hearing Question and Answer Sheet

CEQA Process

Question: The area plan EIR evaluated 500 dwelling units. How can more units be cleared under CEQA now? (Jeanie)

- Because the currently proposed project is a revision to the project analyzed in the area plan EIR, we prepared a subsequent EIR that tiers off the analysis that was done for the area plan EIR. A subsequent EIR is defined in the CEQA guidelines and is appropriate for this project. We analyzed and identified new or substantially more severe impacts than examined in the area plan EIR and included new mitigation measures.

Question: How does the project qualify as an Environmental Leadership Development Project? (Jeanie)

- The project sponsor filed an application with the State to qualify as an ELDP, the purpose of which is to shorten timeline for legal challenge. The Governor made the determination that the project is eligible. Our role is prepare the administrative record, not to determine compliance with AB 900.

Project Description

<<Project description questions should be responded to by Citywide or project sponsor, unless the question is whether the SEIR analyzed some aspect of the project. Jeanie will be prepared to cite the SEIR project description>>

Land Use

Question: The area plan didn't rezone the project site. Why is this being allowed now, and why isn't this a land use impact? (Jeanie)

- GPA allows Planning Code amendments, and that's what is proposed as part of this project. The SEIR analyzed the physical changes that would result from the proposed GPAs.

Transportation and Circulation

TDM

<<All questions about the plan itself go to SFMTA or Citywide>>>

Questions about how TDM relates to environmental analysis to be addressed by EP. (Liz, Wade)

Transit

Question: What is your response of COVID-19 in relation to travel behavior? (Liz, Wade)

- Planning acknowledges that the conditions of COVID-19 present a different set of variables/conditions than existed when the Balboa Reservoir environmental analysis began in 2018.
- It is speculative to guess how COVID-19 will affect conditions in the future. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15145, if a lead agency finds that a particular impact is too speculative for evaluation, the agency should note its conclusion and terminate discussion of the impact.
- The analysis in the EIR is based on substantial evidence consisting of recent research on how people in developments travel. This recent research trends are consistent with decades of how people travel in cities.
- This project won't be operational for a few years and it would be unreasonable to speculate if and how people will travel differently in the future.

Back-up:

Planning acknowledges that the Balboa Reservoir would contribute additional people onto Muni trains and buses, however, the project would not exacerbate conditions on Muni. <<Be ready to show the capacity utilization rates from the Travel Demand>>

Question: Explain the transit threshold of significance. (Liz, Wade)

- We use a threshold of significance based on adopted city policy. That is, if a project would result in transit delay greater than or equal to four minutes.
- The department applies this transit delay threshold of significance to each transit route within the study area.
- If the project adds four additional minutes of total additional delay from the existing condition along an individual transit route, then the project's impact to that transit route could be significant. This application accounts for sources of delay along the transit route within the study area.

Back-up:

-For cumulative conditions, this threshold is two minutes of contribution to transit delay for an individual project, an even more stringent threshold.

-half a headway is the point at which Muni needs to run another bus

-delay by itself is not a physical environmental impact – secondary effects are

-IF QUESTIONS ON WHERE SIGNIFICANCE COMES FROM: As described in the RTC, the transit significance criterion is based on substantial evidence provided in Appendix I of the 2019 TIA Guidelines (p. I-26) and is explained in a July 20, 2018, SFMTA memorandum included as RTC Attachment 5. We responded to this fully after several commenters sought more information.

-If there is still confusion, explain the confusion, then walk through the example:

Several commenters state that the department's threshold of significance is four minutes in between individual transit line stops; these comments are incorrect. The threshold is four

minutes of additional delay to an individual transit line within the study area boundaries, which is a more stringent threshold than only between individual transit line stops.

Example:

For example, there are nine stops within the transit delay study area boundary for the 29 Sunset outbound route (i.e., between Plymouth Avenue/Ocean Avenue and Mission Street/Persia Avenue). Under existing conditions, the 29 Sunset (outbound) takes 12:09 minutes to travel from Plymouth/Ocean Avenue to Mission Street/Persia Avenue. The transportation analysis adjusts travel times to account for the Developer's Proposed Option trips; it is anticipated that the 29 Sunset (outbound) would take 13:07 minutes to travel from Plymouth/Ocean Avenue to Mission Street/Persia Avenue. The difference between 12:09 minutes under existing conditions and 13:07 minutes with the Developer's Proposed Option is 58 seconds. The 58 seconds difference in transit travel time between these nine stops is the total additional delay attributable to the Developer's Proposed Option; this difference is then compared to the four-minute threshold of significance. In the case of the 29 Sunset (outbound), the 58 seconds delay is not above the four-minute threshold of significance and the Developer's Proposed Option would not result in a significant delay to the 29 Sunset under existing plus project conditions

Question: You have a revised mitigation measure in the RTC. (Liz, Wade)

- During the preparation of the RTC, we, in consultation with the SFMTA, identified specific capital improvements that would reduce transit travel time to the cumulative impacted routes.
- These capital improvements would reduce the project's contribution to cumulative transit delay below the two-minute threshold, and as such, the project's contribution would no longer be considerable.
- The project sponsor agreed to implement these measures to reduce their considerable contribution to transit delay and there is no need for monitoring.
- In essence, the project team worked through the process outlined in the Draft EIR's mitigation measure to identify improvements that would reduce the project's considerable contribution. As a result, the department was able to further refine Mitigation Measure M-C-TR-4 in the responses to comments document.

IF NEEDED:

The methods, data collection, and results of this analysis, including discussion of secondary construction and operational effects of implementing the capital improvements, are included in RTC Chapter 5 and SEIR Appendix C4, Transit Delay Analysis and Capital Improvement Memorandum.

Back-up:

To mitigate the project's considerable contribution to transit delay under cumulative conditions, the draft EIR identified Mitigation Measure M-C-TR-4. This mitigation measure requires that the project sponsor monitor and report cumulative transit travel times for the impacted route segments. The mitigation measure identifies transit travel performance standards for the impacted routes and further states that if the performance standard is not met, the project sponsor shall implement feasible measures to reduce the transit delay and meet the performance standard. The mitigation measure

identifies potential measures to reduce transit delay including off-site capital improvements such as turn pockets, bus bulbs, queue jumps, turn restrictions, boarding islands, and/or transit signal priority projects.

The text of the mitigation measure as released in the Draft EIR was structured in a manner such that the project sponsor would be required to start monitoring cumulative conditions, upon both conditions occurring:

- 1) occupancy of one new major building at City College (defined as a net addition of more than 50,000 square feet to an existing building or new building or a new or expanded parking facility of more than 50,000 square feet) **AND**
- 2) At least 750 units are occupied at the Balboa Reservoir project site.

Question: The mitigation measures are not adequate. Why did you pick the improvements you picked? Why didn't you pick the other ones like undergrounding the K-Ingleside or improving the signal at the Junipero Serra Circle? (Liz, Wade)

As background, these capital improvements measures are anticipated to reduce the project's considerable contribution to transit delay, and were developed in coordination with the SFMTA.

Various commenters suggested mitigation measures in the Draft EIR to reduce transit delay; three things that we want to note regarding the development of mitigation measures:

- The first is that CEQA requires that mitigation measures proposed for a project to have a nexus to the physical environmental effect that occurs as a result of the project.
 - If NEEDED: For instance, giving Muni lines higher priority at St. Francis Circle and West Portal to improve speed and reliability of the K/T line are outside of the study area and reflect existing conditions. There is no substantial evidence demonstrating a nexus between the Balboa Reservoir Project and measures proposed at the St. Francis Circle and West Portal.
- Second, mitigation needs to be roughly proportional to the project's considerable contribution to a significant cumulative transit delay impact.
 - IF NEEDED: For instance, the Balboa Reservoir Project sponsor paying to underground the K-Ingleside is not proportional to the project's contribution to transit delay.
- Finally, the draft SEIR identified capital improvement measures that would reduce the project's considerable contribution to transit delay under cumulative conditions; no additional measures are necessary. As described above in Mitigation Measure M-C-TR-4, should the SFMTA adopt a strategy to reduce transit travel times to the impacted routes that does not involve the proposed signal timing modifications or bus boarding islands identified, the project's fair share contribution shall remain the same, and may be used for other transit travel time saving strategies on these routes, as deemed by the SFMTA.

Loading

Question: Why doesn't the planning department make Whole Foods adhere to the conditions of their approval? (Liz, Wade)

Commented [W(1): I'm going to extract figure 3.B-8 from the Draft EIR in case we need to share it on our screens at the hearing.

In recognition that the Balboa Reservoir would change the conditions of Lee Avenue, the 1150 Ocean Avenue property owner is working with Whole Foods to internalize loading demand to the extent possible. The planning department has the authority to enforce the 1150 Ocean Avenue conditions of approval.

Back-up:

As discussed in the Draft EIR under Impact TR-6b, under existing conditions, Lee Avenue is a dead-end street with no through traffic. In its current condition, Lee Avenue functions as a loading zone that provides convenient on-street loading to meet Whole Foods' loading demand and accommodate deliveries and passenger loading activity related to other nearby businesses along Ocean Avenue. The proposed project would extend Lee Avenue into the project site, altering Lee Avenue's current status as a dead-end street and de facto loading area. The proposed project would thereby reduce the supply of on-street loading available to Whole Foods and nearby land uses, creating a loading deficit, which is determined to result in secondary effects on people bicycling and public transit delay. For these reasons, the draft SEIR identifies a significant and unavoidable impact related to freight loading that is attributable to the project.

<<<Be ready to show loading configuration from document.>>> Separate from internalizing Whole food loading operations, the project sponsor team and City agencies recognize the need to provide Whole Foods with on-street loading space to offset the decrease in on-street loading space on Lee Avenue with the implementation of the proposed project options. As a result the project proposes to convert five metered parking spaces to commercial loading along Ocean Avenue between Lee Avenue and Brighton Avenue. There are currently three metered commercial spaces on Ocean Avenue immediately east of Brighton Avenue and one accessible parking space on Ocean Avenue immediately west of Lee Avenue.

Question: The Balboa Reservoir Area Plan EIR evaluated City College access via Lee Avenue and MTA opposed it. How is this not an environmental impact now? (Jeanie)

We no longer consider intersection level of service when analyzing transportation and circulation impacts, and we conducted new transportation analysis for the Balboa Reservoir project. But here is some background information from the 2008 area plan EIR. In response to a comment from City College, the area plan EIR analyzed a "Lee Avenue Connection to CCSF Variant" that would extend Lee Avenue into the reservoir site to provide access to City College. ... This roadway extension would have **one traffic lane in each direction**; however, no on-street parking would be provided. The Lee Avenue Connection to CCSF Variant would be initiated as a separate project by CCSF if the college decides to pursue this option. ... The provision of City College-bound westbound right- turn ingress at the Ocean/Lee intersection would result in substantial adverse transportation impacts, and this access option was rejected from further consideration as part of the Area Plan. [see pdf pp. 54-58 in https://default.sfplanning.org/MEA/2004.1059E_Balboa_FEIR_Pt2.pdf]

Emergency Access

Question: How will the Fire Department on Ocean Avenue get out of the station? (Liz, Wade)

Commented [W(2)]: If this comes up at the hearing, who gets this question? Should we get a statement from Corey?

The question regarding emergency access that needs to be addressed under CEQA is whether the proposed result in adequate emergency access. The nearest fire department station (station 15) is located approximately 350 feet east of the Ocean Avenue/Lee Avenue intersection.

Under existing conditions, vehicle queues were observed to occasionally partially block the fire station driveway. With the addition of vehicle trips, the proposed project would not be expected to increase the frequency or duration of vehicles blocking the fire department station 15 entrance or result in inadequate emergency access.

Question: How will San Ramon Way maintain adequate emergency access with the influx of project vehicles that will be on the streets? (Liz, Wade)

- The addition of project-generated vehicle traffic would increase instances of oncoming traffic and locations where there is not space for vehicles to pass side-by-side. The Draft EIR analyzed the number of vehicle trips on San Ramon Way, and then the number of vehicles from the project that are anticipated to use San Ramon Way under the San Ramon Way vehicle alternative.
- The results of this analysis indicated that the frequent curb cuts and low vehicular volumes would continue to provide opportunities for drivers to pull over and let oncoming traffic pass without resulting in potentially hazardous conditions or inadequate emergency access.

Back-up:

Regarding elimination of parking on Plymouth: However, as identified in the RTC, the SFMTA could eliminate on-street parking on one side of Plymouth Avenue, instead of its current configuration of parking on both sides. This would result in the removal of approximately 60 spaces between Ocean and Greenwood avenues. With parking confined to one side of Plymouth Avenue, the street would provide additional clearance for two-way operation of vehicles without the need for drivers to pull over to let oncoming traffic pass.

If pressed further: It is possible that the project's new connection to Plymouth Avenue via San Ramon Way could encourage some existing drivers to use this new connection to avoid traveling on portions of Ocean Avenue. However, it is unlikely that this new connection would provide meaningful travel time savings, even under congested conditions, and thus not a substantial increase in existing drivers using this new connection. For existing eastbound Ocean Avenue drivers that continue north on Frida Kahlo Way, the new connection route would include a left-turn onto Plymouth Avenue, a right-turn on San Ramon Way, traveling through the proposed project's roadway network, and a left turn onto Frida Kahlo Way. For southbound vehicles on Frida Kahlo Way that continue west on Ocean Avenue, the new connection route would include traveling through the proposed project's roadway network and turning left onto Plymouth Avenue from San Ramon Way. Furthermore, even if some drivers chose to utilize this new connections route, a low number of trips would not change impact conclusions.

<<Non-CEQA Transportation Analysis (SPONSOR TEAM ADDRESSES ALL TOPICS)>>

Question: Why was the shuttle to BART found infeasible? (project sponsor)

Given that multiple Muni lines serve stops near Balboa Reservoir and CCSF operating on 8-10 minute headways during weekday a.m. and p.m. periods and typical waiting times are under five minutes, the shuttle would have to operate at high frequencies throughout the day to effectively compete with the existing transit service and walking trips. With three shuttle buses in operation, vehicle headways and average waiting time would match that of existing peak hour service. This level of shuttle service is forecast to have an estimated cost of \$762,500 to over \$1 million per year without considering factors, such as regulatory requirements and operator staffing and scheduling, which would increase costs and may present substantial hurdles to implementation. If a lower frequency and less costly service were provided as an alternative, it would not be competitive with the existing transit and walking alternatives and would see less use.

Overall, the shuttle system route would be duplicative with existing transit connection to the Balboa Park BART/Muni station for passengers able to walk to nearby bus and light rail stops. The costs and convenience associated with providing shuttle service should be weighed against alternatives, such as subsidized first mile/last mile taxi or transportation network company rides for those with mobility needs.

Noise

Question: won't construction noise impact adjacent neighbors and students at Riordan High School? Why doesn't the EIR identify measures that will fully mitigate these impacts? (Jeanie)

Construction noise impacts on Riordan and neighbors were analyzed in the SEIR, which concluded that even with noise reduction mitigation measures, impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Question: Why didn't you analyze noise impacts on childcare facilities near the project site? (Jeanie)

Mighty Bambinis Childcare and Preschool and the future City College daycare planned near Judson Avenue and Frida Kahlo Way are substantially more distant than the receptor sites analyzed in the draft SEIR; thus, impacts would be less than those used to identify noise impacts.

Air Quality

Question: The project site is in the air pollutant exposure zone. Won't that affect existing and proposed childcare uses? (Jeanie)

The City changed its air pollutant exposure zone recently, and a portion of the project site is now in this zone. The college's Multi-Use Building is now in the zone and has some childcare uses, so we analyzed this and determined health risk impacts to be less than significant.

We determined that background cancer risk values are well below health risk impact criteria, and the project would not substantially increase impacts to this receptor even under the worst-case three-year construction phasing scenario.

Question: Why is a six-year construction schedule an alternative that would result in lesser air quality impacts? (Jeanie)

More air emissions and noise would occur over a shorter construction schedule, and the project sponsor identified a three-year compressed schedule as the shortest feasible schedule, so that's what we

analyzed for the proposed project. The six-year schedule was selected as an alternative to avoid the significant and unavoidable impacts related to air quality.

Three-year schedule: Phase 0 = 1 year, Phase 1 and Phase 2 together = 2 years

Six year schedule: Phase 0 = 1 year, Phase 1 = 2.5 years, Phase 2 = 2.5 years

<<Josh Pollak will answer any more technical air quality questions>>

Water Supply

Question: Does the City have enough water to supply the new residents? (Jeanie)

A water supply assessment was conducted for the project. Sufficient water supplies would be available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development in normal, dry, and multiple dry years unless the Bay-Delta Plan Amendment is implemented, in which case some level of rationing would be required, and new or expanded dry-year water supplies would be needed regardless of whether the proposed project is constructed. The proposed project would not contribute considerably as it would represent 0.17 percent of the total water demand in San Francisco in 2040.

Public Services/Emergency Services

Question: Is the emergency water supply adequate for new residents? (Jeanie)

The water supply assessment covers emergency service needs. SFPUC's approval of the water supply assessment for the proposed project indicates that the project would not make a considerable contribution to impacts on water supply.

Question: Will emergency vehicle access be impacted? (Jeanie)

Police, fire protection, and emergency medical services are regularly assessed to maintain acceptable service ratios and response times. While demand might increase as a result of the implementation of the proposed project, the increased demand would not be substantial, nor would it require expansion of existing police or fire stations or construction of new facilities.

Emergency access to the project site would be similar to existing conditions, and project implementation would not adversely affect fire apparatus responding from nearby San Francisco Fire Department station 15, despite the increase in traffic generated by the project. The fire department conducted a preliminary review of the development plans and streetscape changes as currently proposed. Prior to finalizing the design and dimensions of the internal street network, the fire department and police department would review and approve the internal roadway configurations and dimensions to ensure emergency access to the site is acceptable.

Access to Riordan High School

Question: How will the project affect access to Riordan High School? (Jeanie)

There would be no change to access to the front entrance of Riordan High on Frida Kahlo Way, to vehicular access into the Riordan campus from Judson Avenue, or via the existing 'exit only' driveway for

Archbishop Riordan High School. The street connecting the 'exit only' driveway to Lee Avenue would be 20 feet wide and one-way eastbound

Public Services/City College

Question. How will the project affect City College enrollment? (Jeanie)

This question is not a CEQA issue by itself. Social and economic impacts, such as potential impacts on college enrolment are outside the scope of CEQA; however, secondary impacts of the proposed project on City College students and enrollment were addressed in the public services section of the initial study. We did that.

It's a complicated series of three questions. We analyzed if (1) the loss of parking conflict with the college's performance objective, (2) if yes, would that require new college facilities such as replacement parking, and (3) would the construction or operation of any such new facilities result in adverse physical effects, such as increased air pollutants or noise. The EIR determined the answer to all three of these questions is no.

For informational purposes, neither California Community Colleges nor City College use parking availability as a variable for projecting future enrollment or as an enrollment strategy. The commenters do not present evidence supporting the claim that loss of parking would result in secondary impacts on college enrollment.

Question: Why didn't the City coordinate more with City College? Why don't you wait until new College administration gets settled in before approving this project?

<<Leigh or the project sponsor should answer>>