

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) plans to accommodate increases in ferry ridership demand with additional daily ferry trips and expanded landside access at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (LFT). Ferry ridership forecasts developed using the Transportation Authority of Marin travel demand model indicate ferry demand more than doubling from pre-COVID-19 levels to 17,600 daily riders by 2050. Key factors in the forecast include projected regional growth and work-from-home levels from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG's) *Plan Bay Area 2050+* (2026), as well as future congestion conditions on the Golden Gate Bridge corridor.

MTC and ABAG housing projections call for nearly 29,000 new homes in Marin and Sonoma Counties by 2031, bringing thousands of additional residents to the North Bay, and these forecasts incorporate regional population and employment forecasts, travel patterns, and transportation network conditions. As these new residents add travel demand between the North Bay and regional employment centers, expanded ferry capacity and service frequency will become increasingly important to provide a reliable, congestion-free alternative to United States Highway 101 (US 101) and support sustainable regional growth.

The proposed Larkspur Ferry Service Expansion and Parking Project (Project) is in the City of Larkspur (Figure 1-1) and is needed to meet increasing demand for ferry service from Larkspur to San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. To accommodate projected demand, the District would incrementally expand ferry service beyond the current average limit of 42 daily ferry crossings, ultimately providing up to 76 daily ferry crossings as warranted by future ridership levels.

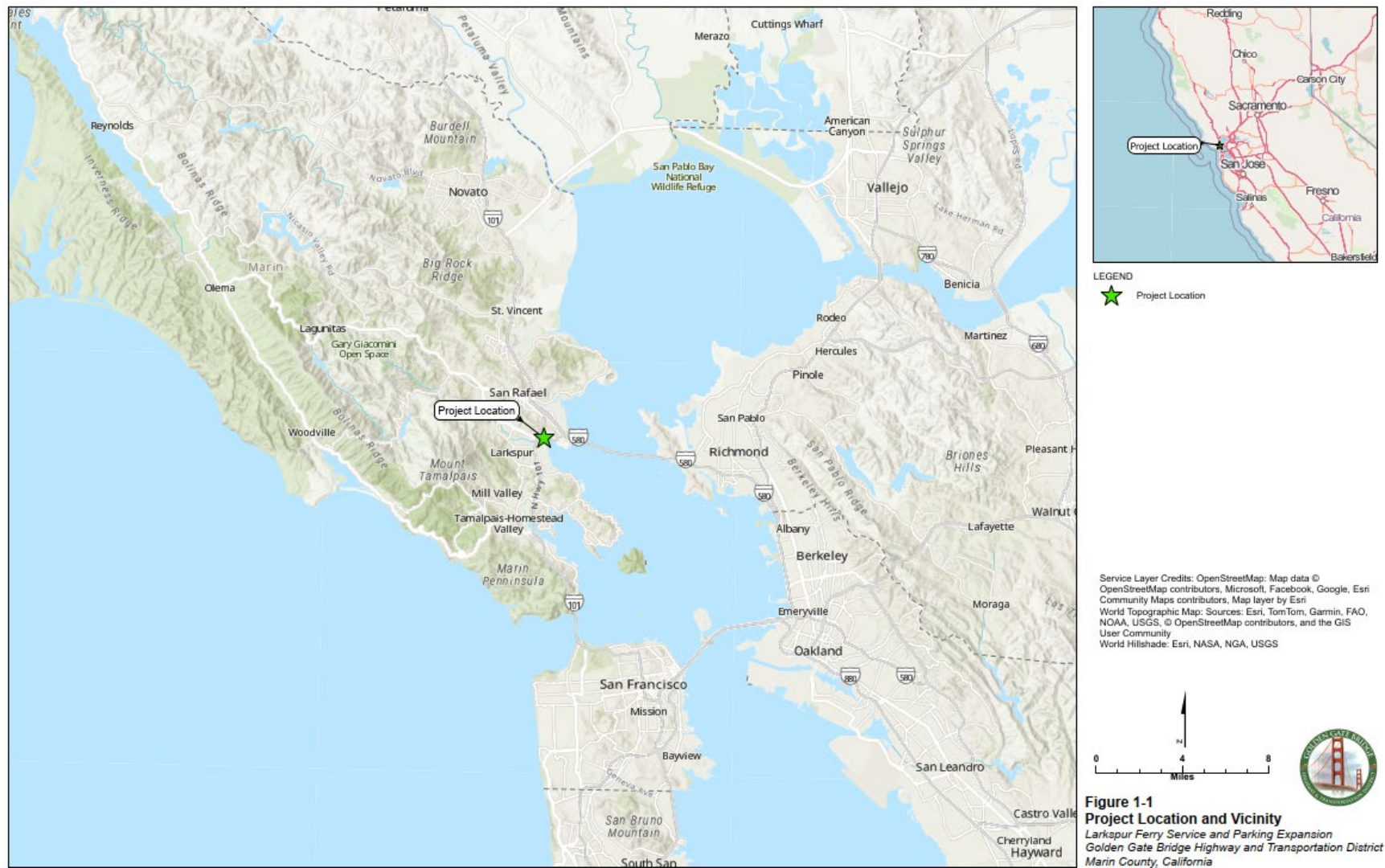
The Project would provide increased ferry service and multi-modal landside access improvements at the ferry terminal, including parking and other improvements, such as adopting transportation demand management strategies, increasing pedestrian and bike access (including e-bikes) to the LFT, increasing bus shuttles to the LFT, and improving connectivity with Sonoma–Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)

These improvements would enable the District to meet the Project objectives and ensure the ferry service remains a reliable and competitive travel option that reduces vehicle miles traveled and air emissions along the US 101 corridor in Marin and Sonoma Counties and for the greater Bay Area through 2050 and beyond.

Project objectives are as follows:

- Meet increasing demand for ferry service between the LFT and San Francisco in 2050 and beyond.
- Accommodate higher levels of ferry service beyond the historic cap of 42 average daily trips.
- Reduce traffic congestion within the US 101 highway corridor by providing an alternative and time competitive mode of travel to San Francisco that will reduce vehicle miles traveled and air emissions.
- Develop facilities at the LFT to accommodate future ferry riders arriving by car, carpool, bus, train, bicycle/scooter, foot and other modes, including building parking garages on the Main Lot and North Lot.

Figure 1-1. Project Location and Vicinity



Two Build Alternatives are being considered in this Draft EIR that would meet these objectives. Both would increase ferry service and construct new parking garages on the Main Lot and North Lot; improve the pickup/drop-off area to provide designated areas for fixed-route transit loading and unloading, transportation network companies, and drop-off activities; upgrade bicycle storage facilities; and improve pedestrian connections. The Build Alternatives occupy the same footprint and are generally similar, with the primary differences being (1) Alternative 2 includes enhanced TDM measures to accommodate forecast ridership demand with one fewer parking level in the Main Lot garage, and (2) the height of the Main Lot parking garage, with Alternative 1 including a five-level garage and Alternative 2 including a four-level garage (Figure ES-2). Table ES-2 summarizes the environmental impacts associated with the Build Alternatives.

A detailed description of the proposed Project is provided in Chapter 2, Project Description.

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The District, as the owner of the LFT, is the CEQA Lead Agency for the Project and has prepared this DEIR to evaluate potential impacts and identify required mitigation to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts.

1.2 Purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act and the Environmental Impact Report

In accordance with California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., CEQA applies to all discretionary activities proposed to be implemented by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The CEQA Guidelines are the primary source of rules and interpretation of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.; 14 California Code of Regulations 15000 et seq.). CEQA requires agencies to analyze the potential environmental impacts of their actions, avoid or reduce significant environmental impacts where feasible, and consider the environmental implications of their actions before making a decision. CEQA also requires agencies to inform the public and other relevant agencies and consider their comments in the evaluation and decision-making process.

This DEIR was prepared in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines (in accordance with 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.) and is intended to provide the environmental information necessary for the District to make final decisions regarding permitting construction and operation of the proposed Project. The District is the lead agency for the Project in accordance with CEQA. This DEIR is also intended to support discretionary reviews and decisions related to the Project by other agencies, as necessary. Implementation of the Project will require other discretionary actions by other government agencies, as described in Section 1.2.2, Permits and Other Approvals Required.

This DEIR has been prepared in compliance with CEQA to achieve the following goals:

- Identify potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with the Project.
- Describe feasible mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- Disclose the environmental analysis, including the potential Project impacts and proposed mitigation measures, for public and agency review and comment.
- Discuss potential alternatives to the Project that can meet the basic Project objectives, are feasible, and would avoid or reduce identified significant Project impacts. This includes impacts of the No-Project

Alternative, which would allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the Project with the impacts of not approving the project.

The District will provide a public review and comment period of 45 days from release of the DEIR. The District will also conduct a public meeting to receive comments during the comment period. Once the public review period is complete, the District will prepare a Final Environmental Impact Report that includes all the comments received on the DEIR, responses to all comments, and any necessary revisions to the DEIR. CEQA requires the District to review and consider the information in the DEIR before making a decision on the Project.

Before taking action on the Project, the District will consider the adequacy of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). If the District decides to approve the Project, it will do the following:

- Certify the Final EIR.
- Make all required environmental findings.
- Adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
- If necessary, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations.

1.2.1 Agencies Expected to Use the Environmental Impact Report

The District is the CEQA lead agency, as defined under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15050 and 15051, and has principal responsibility for approving the Project. As the lead agency, the District also has primary responsibility for complying with CEQA. The District has analyzed the environmental effects of the Project, and the results of that analysis are presented in this DEIR. The District is responsible for certifying the Final EIR and approving the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, if required, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15090–15093, before Project approval.

1.2.2 Permits and Other Approvals Required

The Project would require approvals and permits from the authorities listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Required Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit Type/Action
Bay Conservation and Development Commission	Coordination and amendment to LFT Bay Conservation and Development Commission Permit, as applicable
San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board	Construction General Stormwater Permit
California State Water Resources Control Board	Amendment to Districts Existing Industrial General Permit
City of Larkspur	Encroachment Permit

1.3 Scope and Content of the Environmental Impact Report

This section describes the scoping process for this DEIR, comments received in response to the Notice of Preparation (NOP), agency and public outreach efforts, resource topics included in this DEIR, and environmental resources not considered. Scoping refers to the process used to assist the lead agency (the District) in determining the focus and content of an EIR. Scoping solicits input on the potential topics to be

addressed in an EIR, the range of Project alternatives, and possible mitigation measures. Scoping is also helpful in establishing methods of assessment and in selecting the environmental effects to be considered in detail.

1.3.1.1 Notice of Preparation and Scoping

The scoping process formally began on October 1, 2024, when the NOP was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to federal, state, and local agencies. The purpose of the NOP is to solicit participation from relevant agencies and from the public in determining the scope of an EIR. The scoping period lasted 31 days and ended on October 31, 2024.

The District notified potentially interested agencies, individuals, and organizations regarding the scoping process and public scoping meeting for the Project through signage in the LFT; social media posts; information on the Project website; email outreach to stakeholders, elected officials, community-based organizations, homeowners associations, and neighborhood groups; a newspaper advertisement; and bulk mailings.

The Project team held an Open House Scoping Meeting on October 15, 2024, at the at the Drakes Landing Community Room at 300 Drakes Landing in Greenbrae to provide an opportunity for attendees to comment on environmental issues of concern.

Written and oral comments received during the scoping process are on file with the District and are included in the Scoping Summary Report in Appendix A. This DEIR considers and addresses the comments received during the scoping period, as applicable.

1.3.1.2 Comments Received in Response to the Notice of Preparation

Public input on the NOP was received during the Project's scoping period, which ended on October 31, 2024. Specific environmental issues raised in the comments on the NOP are summarized by resource topic as follows; these topics are addressed in Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, as applicable:

- **Transportation and Traffic**
 - Reduction of traffic congestion in the Project area and along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard
 - Adoption of transportation demand management strategies, including increasing pedestrian and bike access (including e-bikes) to the LFT, increasing bus shuttles to the LFT, and improving transit connectivity with SMART and local bus schedules
- **Aesthetics**
 - Potential for views of the San Francisco Bay and LFT to be blocked by the parking garage on the Main Lot
 - Lighting impacts on the Greenbrae Boardwalk community
- **Hydrology and Water Quality**
 - Wake wash from ferry vessel operations
 - Marsh erosion and shoreline erosion
 - Improved revetments to protect marsh and shoreline erosion near Greenbrae Boardwalk
- **Noise**
 - Potential for increased noise pollution

- Air Quality
 - Potential for air quality impacts
- Biological Resources
 - Impacts on biological features
 - Impacts on marsh habitat

1.3.1.3 Agency and Public Outreach

The District has held various stakeholder interviews, surveys, and community meetings to solicit feedback from residents, transit riders, public agencies, and other stakeholders.

The District has held the following two public meetings during the Project development process:

- Community Open House – May 2024
- Attendance at and presentations to neighboring homeowners associations
- Environmental Scoping Open House – October 2024
- Project information and feedback on the District’s website

Public meetings were held in English and Spanish.

1.3.1.4 Resource Topics

Consistent with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, this DEIR evaluates potential impacts the proposed Project may have on the following resource areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems

- Wildfire

The following topics are also analyzed in this DEIR:

- Alternatives to the proposed Project
- Cumulative impacts
- Growth-inducing impacts
- Significant and unavoidable environmental consequences
- Significant irreversible environmental changes

1.3.1.4.1 Environmental Resources Not Considered in this Draft Environmental Impact Report

CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires an EIR to contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. This DEIR does not include detailed analysis of potential impacts from the proposed Project on agriculture and forestry resources or on mineral resource because there would be no impact, as described as follows:

- **Agriculture and Forestry Resources.** Changes in the status of agricultural lands and forestry resources may constitute significant environmental impacts under CEQA. For example, if a project includes direct conversion of state-designated Important Farmlands to nonagricultural use, conflicts with Williamson Act (California Land Conservation Act) contracts, or results in various other types of environmental changes that have the potential to result indirectly in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use, a significant impact under CEQA may occur. There is no farmland, timberland, or agricultural or forestry resources in the Project area. No impacts on agricultural or forestry resources would result from Project implementation or operation. Therefore, the Project would not have the potential to contribute directly or indirectly to conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or to convert timberland to non-forest use. Agriculture and forestry resources are not discussed further in this document.
- **Mineral Resources.** Under CEQA, a project may cause a significant impact on mineral resources if the project would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource important to the region and state or a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Larkspur is in the North San Francisco Bay Production-Consumption Region, which the California Geological Survey has mapped for regionally significant construction aggregate resources. However, no active aggregate or surface mining operations are present within the City of Larkspur's jurisdiction, and no land designated as containing Portland cement concrete-grade aggregate is present within their jurisdiction (California State Mining and Geology Board 2018). The *City of Larkspur 2040 General Plan* (City of Larkspur 2024) does not include policies relating to mineral resources because the City of Larkspur does not contain any mineral deposits of regional significance. There are no mineral extraction uses in the Project area. There would be no impact on mineral resources during Project construction or operation. Mineral resources are not discussed further in this document.

1.4 Draft Environmental Impact Report Organization

This DEIR is organized into the following chapters and appendices:

- Chapter 1, Introduction, includes an overview of environmental review process; and the scope, content, and organization of the DEIR.

- Chapter 2, Project Description, includes a comprehensive description of the proposed Project.
- Chapter 3, Environmental Analysis, includes an evaluation of the identified environmental resource topics. Each section discusses the environmental setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for each environmental resource.
- Chapter 4, Cumulative Impacts, includes a discussion of the proposed Project's potential impacts related to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable development in the Project area.
- Chapter 5, Alternatives, includes a description of the Project alternatives considered and evaluation of several alternatives to the proposed Project, including those removed from further consideration.
- Chapter 6, Other CEQA-Required Analysis, includes a discussion of growth-inducing impacts, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes.
- Chapter 7, List of Preparers, includes a list of persons who contributed to preparation of this DEIR.
- Chapter 8, References, includes a list of the references cited in the DEIR.
- Appendices A through G provide the following:
 - Appendix A, Scoping Summary Report
 - Appendix B, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Modeling Files
 - Appendix C, Natural Environment Study
 - Appendix D, Cultural Resources Report
 - Appendix E, Larkspur Ferry Terminal Sea Level Rise Impact Assessment
 - Appendix F, Noise Modeling Data
 - Appendix G, Larkspur Ferry Service and Parking Expansion Project Transportation Impact Analysis