

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2008-022**

**APPROVE ACTIONS RELATIVE TO THE EAST AND WEST SIDEWALKS  
REGARDING CONTRACT NO. 2006-B-1, GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE SEISMIC  
RETROFIT PHASE IIIA, NORTH ANCHORAGE HOUSING/NORTH PYLON**

March 28, 2008

**WHEREAS**, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District's (District) Seismic Retrofit Phase IIIA, North Anchorage Housing/North Pylon Project (Phase IIIA Project) will involve the removal and replacement of the North Anchorage Housing roof, which is an approximately 300-foot long segment of the Golden Gate Bridge Roadway (Roadway), and the adjacent sidewalk areas on the east and west sides of the Roadway; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Phase IIIA Project provides an opportunity to again consider potential changes to the current design of the east and west sidewalks both in a physical and operational sense; and,

**WHEREAS**, the District's last major sidewalk safety initiative was the 2003 addition of the public safety railing that runs the length of both the east and west sidewalks; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks are integral parts of established recreational trails such as the California Coastal Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail; and,

**WHEREAS**, the north end of both sidewalks leads cyclists and pedestrians to unimproved property in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and in the Marin Headlands, and, at the south end, the east and west sidewalks also connect to GGNRA land, including Crissy Field; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Golden Gate Bridge's sidewalks thus provide access to scenic lookout points and recreational activities, such as hiking, biking, and walking and do not generate revenue as neither bicyclists nor pedestrians pay to use them; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks attract a wide variety of users, including pedestrians, hikers, casual tourist riders, as well as more serious cyclists; and,

**WHEREAS**, the current schedule on the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycles is as follows and has been in place for many years:

1. East Sidewalk. From mid-March through November, the east sidewalk of the Golden Gate Bridge is open to pedestrians from 5:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. every day. From November to mid-March, it is open from 5:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. In addition to pedestrians, it is also open to bicyclists on weekdays from 5:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The east sidewalk is available overnight (from 9:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.) to bicyclists who enter through a closed gate after a check-in with Bridge Security. During overnight hours, bicyclists are required to proceed directly across the Golden Gate Bridge.

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2. West Sidewalk. From mid-March through November, the west sidewalk is open to cyclists on weekends and holidays from 5:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. and on weekdays from 3:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. From November through mid-March, it is open from 5:00 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. on weekends and from 3:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. on weekdays. No pedestrians are allowed. On weekdays before 3:30 p.m., the west sidewalk is closed to bicyclists and is used for the staging of most Golden Gate Bridge maintenance activities and other projects.

**WHEREAS**, there currently is signage at both ends of both sidewalks providing information about the times that each sidewalk is open to the public, warning of conditions on the sidewalks and that bicycles should be walked across the Golden Gate Bridge on the sidewalks; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff again has considered the possibility of widening the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, but this option is simply not feasible as it would require a complete redesign of the physical structure of the Golden Gate Bridge, would be prohibitively expensive and time-consuming, and would implicate historical preservation concerns; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff has re-examined the sight lines for bicyclists on both the east and west sidewalks and has found that they are more than adequate: (1) much of the route on either sidewalk is straight; (2) where the sidewalks curve at the north and south ends of the Golden Gate Bridge, the curvature is not sufficient to compromise bicyclists' or pedestrian's sight lines; (3) the routes around the north and south towers are tight, but bicycle speeds at those locations are typically modest and do not undermine safety; and, (4) weather factors such as fog and rain again do not compromise sightlines at the speeds at which bicycles or pedestrians travel on the Golden Gate Bridge; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff again has considered whether the west sidewalk should be only one-way for bicyclists, but this is not feasible as it would require that the east sidewalk accommodate additional bicyclists during times when it is most congested, would undermine the desirable goal of keeping separate pedestrians and bikers when feasible, especially during peak usage times, and would hinder both the recreational and transportation utility of keeping the west sidewalk open for bikes; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff has again considered striping to separate bike lanes on one or both sides of the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, but concluded that striping for two-way traffic is problematic and not advisable, because: (1) the resulting lanes would be significantly less than four feet in width, and closer to three feet in width in some places as the District stages its maintenance operations along portions of the west sidewalk; (2) on the east sidewalk, potential lanes would often be blocked by pedestrians; (3) atop the North Anchorage Housing where there is more room, the positions of the light posts implicate the same concerns as light posts are approximately seven or in some cases eight feet from the public safety rail and striping in this area again would result in riders trying to stay too close to the light posts or the public safety rail, depending on their direction of travel; and, (4) striping on the wider side of the light posts atop the North Anchorage Housing would create confusion as bicyclists would have to alter their direction and might be misdirected to the roadway side of the light posts; and,

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**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff has considered moving the light posts atop the North Anchorage Housing and along the east and west sidewalks of the Golden Gate Bridge, but these light posts form an unbroken design line that is a part of the Golden Gate Bridge's distinctive aesthetic, and the spacing and location of the light posts is part of the historic fabric of the structure, and moving them would be expensive, especially in light of the many approvals that would be necessary and historical preservation issues; and,

**WHEREAS**, atop the North Anchorage Housing where the sidewalks are approximately 29 feet wide, there is plenty of room and little concern over any channeling effects of the light posts themselves; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the context of the Phase IIIA Project, District staff has considered whether there are any other potential alternatives to staging equipment and conducting Bridge maintenance activities from the west sidewalk, but recommends against this course because: (1) the vast majority of maintenance activities are conducted from the west sidewalk; (2) public safety, employee safety and efficiency of maintenance operations require that maintenance crews retain exclusive use of the west sidewalk during working hours; (3) it is not feasible to move the equipment associated with these maintenance activities to any other location on the Golden Gate Bridge; (4) breaking down maintenance equipment to clear the sidewalk for bicycles on a daily basis would be extraordinarily and prohibitively expensive as the equipment is used every day, is very large and is connected to Golden Gate Bridge air, water and electrical supplies; and, (5) the efficiency of maintenance operations would be compromised severely and staff costs would rise dramatically; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is not feasible to expand further bicycle access to the west sidewalk as this would compromise Golden Gate Bridge maintenance operations during weekday daytime hours, and the current schedule of access to the east sidewalk most appropriately accommodates both pedestrians and bicyclists and keeps them separated especially during peak usage hours for congestion management and safety purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, on several occasions, District staff studied but ultimately rejected the idea of imposing a bicycle speed limit on Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks because: (1) while excessive speed is an issue on occasion, it does not appear to be a dominant factor in the majority of bicycle incidents on either the east or west sidewalks; (2) for the most part, bicyclists respect the inherent conditions of Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks; they are narrow and shared by many different users; (3) the Golden Gate Bridge towers control bicycle speeds as the angles around them are very tight; and, (4) as to enforcement of the Vehicle Code by the California Highway Patrol ("CHP"), it did not appear in the past that bicycle speed enforcement on Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks was something that the CHP was eager to undertake; and,

**WHEREAS**, in the past, District staff has addressed the speed issue by working with the San Francisco and Marin bicycle coalitions in a collaborative process to create a list of "rules of the road" for bicycling on Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, by posting these rules on the District's website and by disseminating these rules to bicycle coalition members and to bicycle rental shops that cater to tourists; and,

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**WHEREAS**, based on the foregoing, the Board of Directors finds and determines that maintaining the current design and operation for both the east and west sidewalks makes the most sense in light of the totality of the circumstances; and,

**WHEREAS**, in keeping with the District's longstanding practice to analyze and consider implementation of measures whose purpose is to further enhance public safety the Board of Directors additionally finds and determines that staff should undertake a renewed study relative to possible implementation of speed limits, other rules governing the use of bicycles on Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, related enforcement issues and to consider new and/or modified signage pertinent to bicycle usage; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, by the Board of Directors of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District that as part of the Board's continuing efforts to make the Golden Gate Bridge as safe as possible for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, while balancing the costs and benefits of any potential improvements, the following four determinations and decisions pertaining to the east and west sidewalks of the Golden Gate Bridge and their continued use by bicyclists are approved and adopted:


1. Maintain the east and west sidewalk's current physical configurations; that is, no physical structures will be moved and no widening of the sidewalk or relocation of light poles or relocations of railings will occur, as part of the Golden Gate Bridge Seismic Retrofit Phase IIIA, North Anchorage Housing/North Pylon;
2. Retain the existing hours and operational aspects of the east and west sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycles;
3. Direct staff to study the issue of a bicycle speed limit, other rules governing the use of bicycles on the sidewalks, and related enforcement issues; and, instruct the Bridge Manager to report back to the Building and Operating Committee with the results of this study and any recommendations; and,
4. Direct staff to inventory and review existing signage at either end of the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, as well as along their length, to determine whether safety might be enhanced with additional signage; and, delegate to the Bridge Manager the authority to add additional signage or change existing signage if the Bridge Manager determines that such a course is advisable, with the understanding that the Bridge Manager is directed to report back to the Building and Operating Committee with the results of this undertaking.

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**ADOPTED** this 28th day of March, 2008, by the following vote of the Board:

**AYES (15):** Directors Brown, Cochran, Eddie, Grosboll, Kerns, McGlashan, McGoldrick, Middlebrook, Newhouse Segal, Reilly, Sandoval and Stroeh; Second Vice President Ammiano; First Vice President Boro; President Moylan  
**NOES (0):** None  
**ABSENT (4):** Director Dufty, Hernández, Pahre and Sanders

  
**John J. Moylan**  
**President, Board of Directors**

**ATTEST:**   
**Janet S. Tarantino**  
**Secretary of the District**