



Cable Car Barn Electrification Project

Preserving a San Francisco Icon

The iconic cable cars running on San Francisco's hilly and scenic streets draw millions of people from all over the world for a once-in-a-life-time ride. However, this national historic landmark is powered by electrical infrastructure that is over 40 years old and beyond its useful life. A loss of electricity could cause cable cars to stop running throughout the city, negatively impacting San Francisco's tourism industry, its economic recovery and local residents' transit needs.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) is seeking \$25 million in funding for the Cable Car Barn Electrical Upgrade Project from the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program. The Project will construct a new electrical room in the Cable Car Barn with new 12 kilovolt (kV) switchgear equipment and associated infrastructure. This electrical infrastructure is the heart of the Cable Car Barn, supplying power to the lines that keep the cable cars moving and delivering power to the facility functions.

Project Location

The Cable Car Barn is designated as a National Historic Landmark and is located at 1201 Mason Street. The facility is blocks away from Chinatown's vibrant commercial and retail corridor. The area is a must-see destination for millions of tourists, and an historic hub for the city's large Asian community. Chinatown is among the most densely populated neighborhoods in San Francisco.

Why do we need a Cable Car Barn Electrical Upgrade?

The cable cars are iconic to San Francisco and play a significant role in the city's tourism industry and local travel needs. A failure of the electrical systems would completely disrupt operations. The electrical infrastructure is beyond its useful life and replacement parts are no longer available.

Upgrading the aging electrical infrastructure keeps our cable cars running and ensures the Cable Car Barn remains safe, reliable and resilient. Modernized electrical systems will help preserve uninterrupted service for those who depend on cable cars to travel San Francisco's steep hills and sustain an iconic element of San Francisco's transportation network.

The replacement of obsolete 12kV switchgear equipment is critical to ensure the safety and reliability of cable car operations, as well as the work environment for SFMTA employees. This project also improves efficiency by reducing the need to dispatch employee crews to perform manual switching during outages.



Questions?

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Need for BUILD Grant Funding

The SFMTA is requesting \$25 million from the BUILD Grant Program. This will be matched with \$6.25 million in non-federal funds. The BUILD Grant will fund construction of a new electrical room in the Cable Car Barn with new 12 kilovolt switchgear equipment and associated electric infrastructure. A contingency amount equal to 22% of all construction components is included in the budget as well.

| Cost Component | FY 26 BUILD Funds | Non-Federal Funds | Total Project Cost |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Construction | \$19,500,000 | \$4,875,000 | \$24,375,000 |
| Contingency | \$5,500,000 | \$1,375,000 | \$6,875,000 |
| Total Funding | \$25,000,000 | \$6,250,000 | \$31,250,000 |

Project Milestones



Project Background

The Cable Car Barn was originally built in 1888 and was damaged in the 1906 earthquake. It was rehabilitated in 1984. The facility stores and powers the fleet of San Francisco’s historic cable cars and houses staff to support and maintain the fleet’s operations. The facility needs critical upgrades to efficiently and safely maintain continued operations of the cable car service. The Cable Car Barn Electrification Project is a necessary first step to prepare for future upgrades to the overall facility.

Building Progress Program

This project is part of the SFMTA’s Building Progress Program, a \$2+ billion multi-year effort to repair, renovate and modernize the SFMTA’s aging facilities to keep the city moving.

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