

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO. 10.4

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Taxis and Accessible Services

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modifications associated with the Commuter Shuttle Program.

SUMMARY:


- The SFMTA Board of Directors has authority to adopt changes to parking and traffic regulations.
- In 2016, the SFMTA adopted a Commuter Shuttle Program, which allows the SFMTA to regulate operations of commuter shuttles in San Francisco and charge a per-stop fee.
- The requested change would remove the shuttle-only stop zone on 16th Street between South Van Ness Avenue and Mission Street
- New shuttle-only stop zones would be established on the west side of South Van Ness Avenue between 17th and 18th Streets on weekdays between 6:00-10:00 a.m., and on the east side of South Van Ness Avenue between 16th Street and 17th Street on weekdays between 4:00-10:00 p.m.
- The San Francisco Planning Department has determined that the Commuter Shuttle Program is exempt from environmental review.

ENCLOSURES:


1. SFMTAB Resolution

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR  _____

April 9, 2019

SECRETARY  _____

April 9, 2019

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: April 16, 2019

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PURPOSE

Approve permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modifications to support the Commuter Shuttle Program.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

This action supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goal and Objectives:

Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone.

Objective 1.2: Improve the safety of the transit system.

Goal 2: Make transit and other sustainable modes of transportation the most attractive and preferred means of travel.

Objective 2.2: Enhance and expand use of the city's sustainable modes of transportation.

This action supports the following Transit First Policy Principles:

1. To ensure quality of life and economic health in San Francisco, the primary objective of the transportation system must be the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.
9. The ability of the City and County to reduce traffic congestion depends on the adequacy of regional public transportation. The City and County shall promote the use of regional mass transit and the continued development of an integrated, reliable, regional public transportation system.
10. The City and County shall encourage innovative solutions to meet public transportation needs wherever possible and where the provision of such service will not adversely affect the service provided by the Municipal Railway.

DESCRIPTION

Commuter Shuttle Program Overview

On March 1, 2016, the SFMTA Board approved revisions to the Commuter Shuttle Program based on findings from the evaluation of the Commuter Shuttle Pilot Program which ran from August 2014 to January 2016. The Commuter Shuttle Program permits eligible commuter shuttle operators to use a designated network of stops including both designated Muni stops and a number of permitted commuter shuttle-only loading zones in San Francisco. The Commuter Shuttle Program went into effect on April 1, 2016 with a one-year term limit. On February 21, 2017 the SFMTA Board voted to continue the Commuter Shuttle Program. The vote allows the SFMTA to continue regulating operations of commuter shuttles in San Francisco and charging a per-stop fee.

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The Commuter Shuttle Program includes the following characteristics:

- A network of up to 125 shuttle stop locations, including shared Muni zones and shuttle-only loading zones
- Large shuttles over 35 feet in length may travel and load only on the arterial network as designated by the California Department of Transportation
- Shuttle service providers apply for a permit to use the network, and pay a permit fee based on the number of stops made at authorized locations, with the permit fee covering the SFMTA's costs for administering and enforcing the program
- Permittees are responsible for ensuring that their operators comply with agreed-upon operating guidelines
- Shuttles must display permit placards on four sides of each vehicle and display a “how is my driving?” sticker
- The program is enforced by SFMTA Parking Control Officers, Taxi Investigators and Muni Inspectors, including a dedicated team of Parking Control Officers focused solely on commuter shuttles
- Permittees are required to share data on operations with the SFMTA, following specifications established by the SFMTA
- Permittees must submit a Service Disruption Prevention Plan with their permit application

The Commuter Shuttle Program includes clear and enforceable guidelines for shuttle loading and unloading which lead to increased safety when shuttles interact with other road users, reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated emissions reduction and lessening of congestion, as well as minimal impact on Muni service.

Proposal

The SFMTA is proposing to permanently remove the shuttle only zone on the north side of 16th Street between South Van Ness Avenue and Mission Street, which has already been temporarily relocated due to construction. In advance of the 16th Street Improvement Project, the SFMTA would proactively move the shuttle-only stop from its current location on 16th Street to South Van Ness Avenue. The 16th Street Improvement Project will bring major changes to the streetscape, including the installation of Transit Only Lanes and the elimination of left turns off of 16th Street. The current location of the shuttle-only zone has shuttles facing westbound on 16th Street, and many shuttles turn left onto southbound Valencia Street. With the elimination of the left turn onto Valencia Street, those shuttles would be forced to continue westbound, or they would need to make several turns to be able to head southbound.

Splitting the current stop into a.m. and p.m. stops on South Van Ness Avenue serves several important policy goals:

- Move shuttle activity off of 16th Street, away from the future Transit Only Lanes

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- To improve safety, keep the shuttle routing on a north/south basis, so vehicles can enter and exit the area quickly and expeditiously, while also keeping them off of other neighborhood streets
- To also improve safety, eliminate or limit excess turning by large vehicles, which shuttles would need to do in order to head southbound from the stop's current location
- Moving the stop to South Van Ness Avenue will also simplify routing

The new shuttle-only zone proposed on the west side of South Van Ness Avenue between 17th and 18th Streets would be in effect Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and would restrict five unregulated parking spaces. The new shuttle only zone proposed on the east side of South Van Ness Avenue between 16th Street and 17th Street would be in effect Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and would restrict four time restricted (1-Hour) parking spaces. Splitting the current stop on 16th Street into two stops will simplify routing and minimize extra turns by large vehicles.

Items A, B and C were presented at a duly noticed Engineering Public Hearing on March 8, 2019. These changes require SFMTA Board approval:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 4 PM TO 10 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
South Van Ness Avenue, east side, from 146 feet to 231 feet north of 17th Street (restricts four 1-Hour regulated parking spaces)
- B. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
South Van Ness Avenue, west side, from 17th Street to 100 feet southerly (restricts five unregulated parking spaces)
- C. RESCIND – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
16th Street, north side, from South Van Ness Avenue to 130 feet westerly (restores parking at six metered spaces)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Items A, B and C were discussed at the March 8, 2019 Engineering Public Hearing. Before the March 8, 2019 hearing, notices were sent to 2,239 addresses within a one to two-block radius of the proposed stops.

Prior to bringing these items to the Engineering Public Hearing, SFMTA staff reached out to businesses adjacent to the proposed stop locations, and to the manager of the building fronting the stop. One business expressed concerns about the potential effect of the stop on her business. No other businesses expressed concerns. Prior to the hearing, staff received one email from a resident expressing opposition to the shuttle zone relocation due to concerns over increased traffic and congestion on South Van Ness Avenue. In addition, staff has been working with other neighborhood stakeholders, including tenants of the Redstone Building, the tenants fronting the new locations and Supervisor Ronen's office.

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ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The SFMTA carefully considered alternative locations before proposing the creation of the new commuter shuttle zones. Alternatives were evaluated based on a number of criteria, with the highest priority being the safety of people walking, biking and driving in the area. Specific factors include, among others:

- Adjacency to an intersection – shuttle zones located at the “near-side” of an intersection can obstruct right-turning drivers’ view of pedestrians in a crosswalk
- Curb access – tree limbs extending over the roadway or zones located in the middle of a block can prevent shuttles from pulling all the way to the curb, leading to blocked travel lanes
- Driveways and parking – the SFMTA works to minimize shuttle zones’ impact on driveways and on parking supply
- Reduction of conflicts between Muni buses and commuter shuttle vehicles
- Minimizing impacts to street trees

Specific alternatives considered include the following locations:

Southbound

- South Van Ness, west side, extending south from 15th Street
 - Drawbacks: No access from 16th Street, poor stop-spacing (about 1/3 mile from South Van Ness & Mission, 1.35 miles from Valencia & 25th)
- South Van Ness, west side, extending south from 14th Street
 - Drawbacks: Would require relocating blue zone, no access from 16th Street, far from activity centers, poor stop spacing (less than ¼ mile from South Van Ness & Mission, 1.5 miles from Valencia & 25th)

Northbound

- East side of South Van Ness, extending south from 18th
 - Drawbacks: Would limit existing church loading zone
- East side of South Van Ness, extending north of 16th
 - Drawbacks: No access to 16th Street, potential back-ups may block 16th
- East side of South Van Ness, mid-block between 15th and 16th
 - Drawbacks: Frontage on small businesses, small older residential buildings
- East side of South Van Ness, extending north from 15th
 - Drawbacks: Frontage on small older residential buildings

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FUNDING IMPACT

All costs associated with the Commuter Shuttle Program are recovered through the Designated Stop Use and Permit Fee.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On October 22, 2015, the San Francisco Planning Department determined (Case Number 2015-007975ENV) that the Commuter Shuttle Program is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301 and Section 15308.

The Planning Department's determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this calendar item.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors approve the proposed bus zone modifications, to remain in effect for the duration of Commuter Shuttle Program.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has identified a need for parking modifications in support of the Commuter Shuttle Program as follows:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 4 PM TO 10 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - South Van Ness Avenue, east side, from 146 feet to 231 feet north of 17th Street
- B. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - South Van Ness Avenue, west side, from 17th Street to 100 feet southerly
- C. RESCIND – TOW AWAY, NO STOPPING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY -16th Street, north side, from South Van Ness Avenue to 130 feet westerly; and,

WHEREAS, On October 22, 2015, the San Francisco Planning Department determined (Case Number 2015- 007975ENV) that these traffic and parking modifications are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301 and Section 15308; and,

WHEREAS, The Planning Department’s determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors; and,

WHEREAS, The Commuter Shuttle Program established by the SFMTA Board of Directors calls for the creation of a network of designated stops, composed of shared existing Muni zones, and to include extensions of existing Muni zones and permitted commuter shuttle-only loading zones as needed; and,

WHEREAS, The public has been notified about the proposed parking modifications and has been given the opportunity to comment on those modifications through the public hearing process; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves the permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modification listed as A, B and C above, to remain in effect for the duration of Commuter Shuttle Program.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of April 16, 2019.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency