



### Geary Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Union Square Conference Room, 1 South Van Ness Avenue

Geary CAC Members	Project Staff
Tom Barton	Liz Brisson (SFMTA)
Dan Calamuci	Amy Fowler (SFMTA)
Nathan Chan	Jay Lu (SFMTA)
Paul Epstein (phone-in)	Daniel Mackowski (SFMTA)
Lou Grosso (phone-in)	David Sindel (SFMTA)
Sean Kim	
Caroline (Spud) Law	
Caixuan (Annie) Li	
Susannah Raub	
Marian Roth-Cramer	
Eva Schouten (phone-in)	
Andrei Svensson	
Devi Zinzuvadia	

### Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

- a. Susannah Raub called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

**2. In-person meeting housekeeping**

**3. Roll call**

- a. Introduction of new member Nathan Chan

**4. Approval of minutes – July 13, 2022**

- a. Tom Barton motioned to approve; Devi Zinzuvadia seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote at 6:25 p.m.

**5. Public comment**

- a. Alice Kim (Joe’s Ice Cream) asked about parklets affected by the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project (GBIP) – whether there is a \$10,000 cap for support to rebuild, as the parklet originally cost \$25,000.
  - i. Liz Brisson confirmed that the project has committed to cover the costs of parklets that need to be modified for the GBIP up to \$10,000. SFMTA cannot commit to covering additional costs right now, but want the program to work – will schedule a follow-up.

## 6. Geary Rapid – Evaluation and implementation update

- a. David Sindel and Dan Mackowski presented on this item.
  - i. Tom Barton asked when the transit lanes west of Stanyan would be painted red.
    1. Dan Mackowski responded that the section is part of the GBIP, with construction expected in several years
  - ii. Susannah Raub asked whether it was possible to determine whether improved transit travel times were a result of reduced traffic during COVID or from the project.
    1. David Sindel responded that it's difficult to separate the two, but several metrics including the reduction in transit lane violations indicate that much of the change is from the project.
    2. Liz Brisson mentioned that evaluation done during the TETL program indicated that corridors with existing transit lanes showed less travel time change in 2020 when the pandemic started because the transit lanes were already protecting buses from traffic.
      - a. Susannah asked whether there would be continued evaluation of the project after this report.
        - i. Liz responded that there may not be formal evaluation, but that staff regularly check transit performance on all routes.
  - iii. Marian Roth-Cramer asked for clarification about pedestrian collisions.
    1. Liz responded that because there are (thankfully) relatively few collisions on a given street within a year, and because they are somewhat randomized, we won't have conclusive results on collisions until we can look at a few years' worth of data.
  - iv. Tom Barton mentioned illegal usage of the transit lane by private vehicles at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
    1. Liz Brisson responded that Muni buses have cameras to enforce transit-only lanes, and that (as discussed in the presentation) painting lanes red significantly decreases the number of violations.
- b. Public comment:
  - i. Victor Collaco asked how pedestrian volumes were measured, whether parking usage was measured, and about signal optimization west of Park Presidio.
    1. Susannah Raub deferred the signal optimization question to the GBIP update. David Sindel responded that pedestrian and vehicle volumes were 24-hour video counts by a contractor. Parking availability at meters and SFMTA garages will be included in the final report.

## 7. Geary Boulevard Improvement Project – Project update

- a. Liz Brisson presented on this item.
  - i. Tom Barton mentioned that some merchants have been opposed to conversion of angled parking to parallel.
    1. Liz Brisson replied that the project has worked with merchants, including dropping the meter expansion proposal and committing to covering costs of modifying parklets. Putting in transit lanes is an essential portion of the project and cannot be done without converting angled parking to parallel parking. The current proposal removes less parking than the previous center-running plan, particularly with the additional parking being added to side streets.
  - ii. Sean Kim commented that he and other businesses were supportive of some proposed transit improvements such as bus stop changes, but believed the transit lanes and conversion to parallel parking would make it harder for customers to access businesses and make Geary less competitive than other commercial corridors. He noted that angled parking is easier for families with young children exiting the vehicle. He said that he had gathered over a thousand signed petitions requesting SFMTA 1) not to remove angled parking; and 2) not to expand Geary Boulevard meter hours to include evening and Sundays. He acknowledged that the project team had already done the second of the two requests.
    1. Liz Brisson asked if other CAC members had comments about the tradeoff between transit lanes and angled parking.
      - a. Tom Barton mentioned that with angled parking, it is difficult for a bus to fully pull into the bus zone with all doors next to the curb for accessibility
        - i. Sean Kim replied that stops moving to farside will reduce this issue.
      - b. Susannah Raub asked for confirmation that it is not possible to fit both angled parking and bus lanes on Geary Boulevard.
        - i. Liz confirmed that is the case.
        - ii. Susannah commented that there is very little angled parking in most commercial corridors in the city, and that she finds it hard to believe that angled parking is a major factor in the success of Geary businesses. She commented that if you have kids in the city, you are not expecting to have easy parking access everywhere.
      - c. Marian Roth-Cramer asked about where there is angled parking in the city, and how long parklets will be around. She

- noted that parklets have reduced the number of parking spots.
- i. Liz: Parklets were initially approved on a temporary basis; the city is now implementing a permanent program. Parklets must follow rules of the new program by April 1, 2023.
  - ii. Dan Mackowski noted that most traffic collisions on Geary are at intersections, not sideswipes of doors of parked vehicles. Buses do not take up the full width of the bus lane, and vehicles do not take up the full width of the parking lane, to create this separation for safety.
- d. Susannah said she finds parallel parking easier next to a transit lane, compared to areas like the Fillmore where parallel parking is next to busy general traffic lanes.
- i. Dan Mackowski noted that a preschool at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue has voiced support of the transit lane recently installed next to their drop-off area because it is less busy than general traffic; however, that location already had parallel parking.
  - ii. Liz: For those uncomfortable parallel parking on Geary, the project includes new angled parking on side street. There is also some indication that parallel parking is safer because approaching traffic is more visible than when backing out of an angled space.
  - iii. Marian asked if there have been any studies that looked at this.
  - iv. Dan Mackowski: There are studies that confirm this, although no local SF studies.
- e. Dan Calamuci commented that the improvements on Geary are remarkable and should be extended. Given a tradeoff between transit lanes and angled parking, he would support transit lanes.
- f. Tom Barton expressed concern about drivers knowing how to parallel park.
- i. Liz commented that the painted T's make parallel parking easier by ensuring a consistent space length.
- g. Andrei Svensson commented that angled parking creates a perception of safety, as it provides a larger buffer between traffic and the sidewalk. He finds the sidewalks to be too

narrow for a commercial corridor. He noted that street trees take up space, and suggested planting new trees near the curb to increase pedestrian space.

- i. Liz noted that the GBIP does not include full sidewalk widening, but each bus bulb effectively widens about 2/3 of a block.
- ii. Susannah agreed that wider sidewalks would be an improvement.
- iii. Dan Mackowski noted that the right-of-way width is heavily constrained, which limits what improvements can be made.
- iv. Andrei asked if it would be possible to narrow the median strip to free up space.
  1. Dan Mackowski noted that topic came up in feedback, but left turn pockets are a width constraint – without them, left turns would have to be restricted or made from a general traffic lane which can cause traffic to back up.
  2. Sean indicated he previously suggested this idea to the project team as well.
- v. Andrei asked if additional parking on side streets can be added before the main project, as an emergency project like TETLs
  1. Liz: The parking additions have to undergo the same approval process – it will be legislated together with the rest of the project and implemented during the quick-build phase.
  2. Dan Mackowski: SFMTA can look at implementation order, may be able to have the parking addition at the beginning of quick-build.
- vi. Marian Roth-Cramer asked if it would be possible to add new landscaping in the median.
  1. Liz replied that such landscaping is not part of the current project proposal, but staff are considering whether a community element could be added, similar to the decorative panels installed at the Buchanan crosswalk in the first phase of Geary. For example, adding string lighting along the corridor.

- a. Marion indicated new lighting could be a welcome addition.
- b. Public comment
  - i. Victor Collaco asked whether SFMTA could substantiate with data the justification for adding a transit lane and how the decision was made to pursue the proposed project.
    - 1. Liz Brisson replied that the planning process started in 2003, culminating in the environmental impact report being finalized and project approval in 2018. This involved a huge amount of outreach and included multiple decisions by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors acting as the San Francisco County Transportation Authority board, which was clear direction from the highest local elected officials. There was extensive alternatives analysis in the environmental impact report.
  - ii. Alec commented that the existing right-hand travel lane is wide, and asked if there was any possibility to keep both angled parking and the bus lane.
    - 1. Liz Brisson and Dan Mackowski replied that the current lane is barely wide enough for a car to pass a double-parked car, but buses are wider than autos and cannot safely pass with an extremely narrow gap.

## 8. Adjourn

- a. Next meeting, January 11, 2023
- b. Tom Barton motioned to adjourn. Dan Calamuci seconded. Meeting adjourned by voice vote at 7:51 p.m.