



Why Does Construction Take So Darn Long?

By Amy Fowler

Tired of construction on Geary? It can feel like an eternity, but the good news is that the Geary Rapid Project is on track to be completed on-schedule in summer 2021 and the most intensive work to replace aging utilities will soon be in the rear-view mirror.

There are many factors that can turn a seemingly simple project into an extraordinarily complex undertaking. Considerations like maintaining traffic flow, maneuvering around existing utilities, accommodating private construction and maintaining access to properties all take a considerable amount of coordination. Support from PG&E may be required while working around electrical wires, or additional SFMTA staff to isolate the overhead contact system that powers our zero-emissions trolley buses. Every element of a project must be sequenced properly so that all the parts can move in sync. It's like tipping over a stack of dominoes: if one of those dominoes gets moved due to a conflict, schedules or crews may need to be reshuffled to keep the overall work from being delayed.

The Geary Rapid Project is no exception when it comes to complexity. While the SFMTA leads the project, construction has been split into multiple contracts to improve quality and reduce costs and durations. West of Van Ness Avenue, the contract led by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to replace sewer and water mains has just wrapped up, with only the surface improvements remaining. And over on the eastern side of Geary in the Tenderloin and Union Square, Public Works' crews are seeing a light at the end of the water tunnel. By early next year, the lion's share of water main replacement will be complete, everything except for connecting properties' water service to the newly installed mains.



A worker puts the final touches on an improved pedestrian median at Geary and Divisadero. As utility work wraps up, crews are installing new sidewalk extensions (bulbs), curb ramps and medians that will improve safety, accessibility and bus performance along Geary.

HOW DO MULTI-AGENCY PROJECTS WORK?

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TEMPORARY TRANSIT LANES

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PROJECT SCHEDULE

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Capital Projects Combine Many Agencies, Improvements into One Package

By Mariana Maguire



Have you ever passed by a project under construction—like the Geary Rapid Project or the Van Ness Improvement Project—and wondered, “What is all that work they’re doing? Why is it taking so long? And why are so many different agencies involved?” Maybe you’ve heard that part of the project is finished, but SFMTA hasn’t started its work yet. How can that be?

The answer is in our Excavation Code, which regulates construction and paving on our streets. Public Works’ Committee for Utility Liaison on Construction and Other Projects utilizes this code with public and private excavators to coordinate work via five-year plans, which helps minimize disruption and save money by reducing the amount of excavation required to install infrastructure. In other words, get more work done at once rather than tearing up roads and sidewalks repeatedly for separate jobs.

That is why many of SFMTA’s large construction projects are multidiscipline, multiagency efforts. We work closely with our City partners in the Planning Department, Public Utilities Commission, and Public Works to combine utility, transit and safety improvements, and sometimes streetscaping. This joint effort is known as OneSF, the City’s cross-agency branding for all major capital improvement projects.

Now, when you see those OneSF signs posted at construction sites, you will know that they signal a coordinated project that is maximizing your tax dollars to provide multiple improvements, below ground and above, to make our city sustainable and resilient for years to come.

The Geary Rapid Project, on Geary and O’Farrell between Stanyan and Market streets, aims to improve one of San Francisco’s busiest corridors with much-needed safety improvements and more reliable bus service.

NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY

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You Asked!

Why are trenches sometimes dug and then re-dug?

Underground work like replacing aging water or sewer mains is time-consuming and often requires trenches to be opened, covered and opened again. First, smaller holes are dug to determine the location of any existing utilities, including electric or gas lines. Then the work trench is carefully excavated and any old or abandoned utilities in conflict are removed before installing the new pipes. Water pipes are disinfected and tested before connecting a property’s water service to the newly installed main. Finally, crews restore the concrete roadway base above the trenches and repave the lane. On a busy arterial like Geary, trenches must be covered the at the end of each shift to restore the lane for vehicle traffic and for safety.

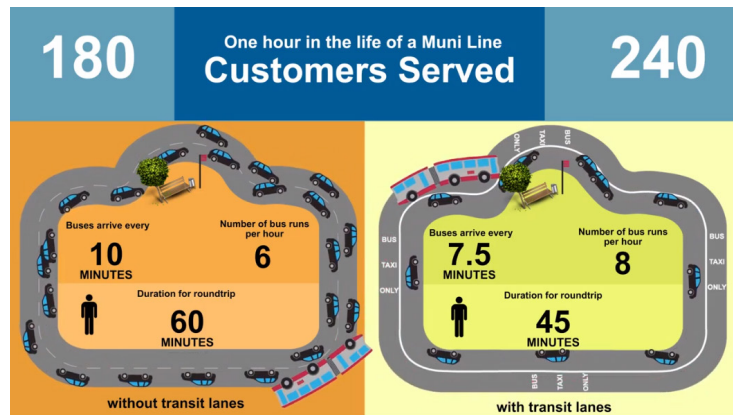
Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes are Coming to the Richmond

As a part of our Transportation Recovery Plan, the SFMTA is installing temporary emergency transit lanes on select corridors throughout the city to keep buses out of traffic and reduce crowding and travel times. Dedicated transit lanes allow buses to complete trips in less time, increasing vehicle frequency and moving more people with more space to physically distance. As traffic congestion increases, it's critical that transit-dependent San Franciscans don't experience an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 on slower, more crowded buses.

A public hearing was held in September to hear community feedback about temporary emergency transit lanes proposed on segments of Geary Boulevard west of Stanyan Street. Over 70% of comments were in support, and the project was approved by the City Traffic Engineer. Work has just started and installation is expected to be completed this winter.

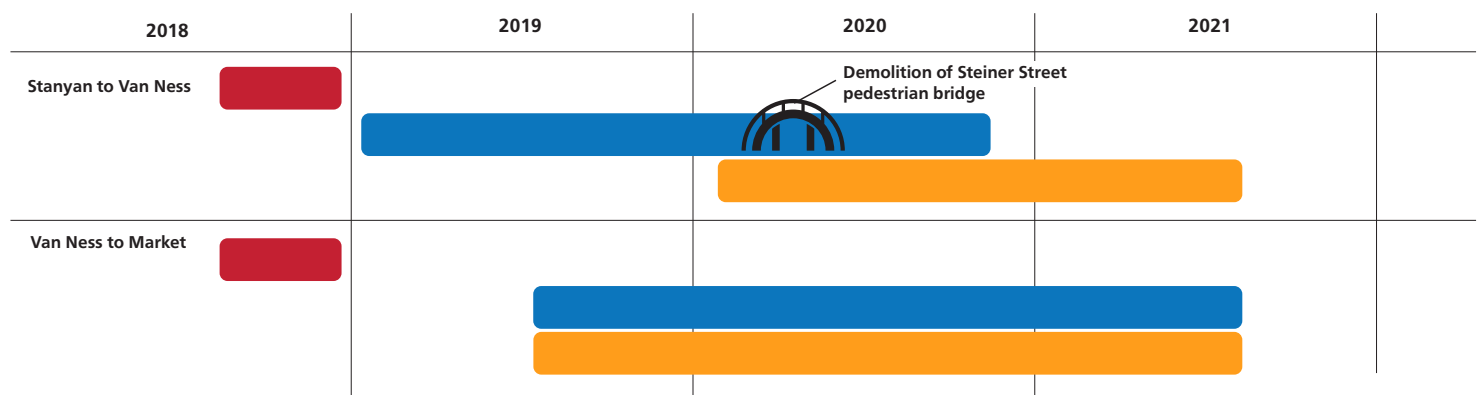
Temporary emergency transit lanes will be in effect at all times of day and will extend the existing Geary transit lanes into the Richmond, benefitting the entire 38 and 38R routes. However, unlike the Geary Rapid Project lanes which will be painted red next fall, these will be striped only with white paint. Temporary lanes will be removed within 120 days after the emergency order is lifted, unless there is a public process to make them permanent. Work on the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project is paused during evaluation of these temporary lanes.

Learn more at [SFMTA.com/TempLanes38](https://www.sfmta.com/TempLanes38).



A side-by-side comparison of a street with and without transit lanes. Watch an animation and learn more at [SFMTA.com/TempLanes](https://www.sfmta.com/TempLanes).

GEARY RAPID PROJECT SCHEDULE



Transit and safety treatments

- Bus-only lanes
- Pedestrian safety treatments
- Bus stop changes
- Roadway striping changes

Utility upgrades

- Water main replacement on Geary (Masonic to Market)
- Fiber-optic cable conduits (Stanyan to Gough)
- Sewer main replacement (primarily Masonic to Van Ness)

Major transit and safety improvements

- Bus bulbs
- Upgraded traffic signals
- Pedestrian bulbs
- Roadway repaving (Masonic to Van Ness)

Stay Informed

To find out more and sign up for Geary Rapid Project construction updates, go to [SFMTA.com/Geary](https://www.sfmta.com/Geary).

For questions or comments, please contact us at GearyRapid@SFMTA.com or **415.646.2300**.

如有疑問或需要免費語言協助, 請發電子郵件至 GearyRapid@SFMTA.com 或致電**415.646.2300**。

Si tiene preguntas o para servicio gratis para el idioma, póngase en contacto con GearyRapid@SFMTA.com o **415.646.2300**.



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