



### Geary Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Geary CAC Members	Project Staff
Tom Barton	Liz Brisson (SFMTA)
Dan Calamuci	Amy Fowler (SFMTA)
Nathan Chan	Daniel Mackowski (SFMTA)
Joon Choi	David Sindel (SFMTA)
Paul Epstein	
Lou Grosso	
Sean Kim	
Caroline (Spud) Law	
Caixuan (Annie) Li	
Susannah Raub	
Marian Roth-Cramer	
Kevin Stull	
Andrei Svensson	

### Minutes

**1. Call to Order**

- a. Susannah Raub called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

**2. Remote meeting housekeeping**

**3. Roll call**

**4. Approval of minutes – January 11, 2023**

- a. Tom Barton motioned to approve; Marian Roth-Cramer seconded. Lou Grosso abstained. Minutes approved by voice vote at 6:11 p.m.

**5. Public comment**

- a. No public comments.

**6. Transit-First Policy**

- a. Marian commented that it was impressive, 50 years was a long time.
- b. Kevin Stull asked how the Transit-First policy affects the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project.
  - i. Liz: The Transit-First Policy is essentially a statement of principles. Staff applied the principles in creating the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project design.

## 7. Geary Boulevard Improvement Project – Project update

- a. Liz Brisson presented on this item.
  - i. Tom Barton commented about a recent negative experience with the reliability of the 38 local bus, and that he finds the pavement on Geary to be very bumpy when riding the bus. Even going downtown isn't a smooth ride.
    1. Susannah Raub: Has brought up similar concerns about O'Farrell Street section in the past.
    2. Dan Mackowski replied that after the completion of PUC work in 2027, the whole road from 32nd to Stanyan would be repaved. Details on O'Farrell Street downtown will be provided during the Geary Rapid item later this meeting.
  - ii. Marian Roth-Cramer asked about the orientation of the cross-street parking map.
    1. Liz confirmed the orientation: up is north.
  - iii. Spud Law asked what portions of the project would be delayed in the delayed transit lane options
    1. Liz Brisson: If the SFMTA Board selected the "Delayed Transit Lane" option, the quick-build project to be implemented later in 2023 would include installation of 10 of the total 20 block faces planned for transit lanes, along with bus stop re-location/removal, safety improvements like left-turn restrictions and daylighting, and cross street angled parking. The other 10 block faces of transit lanes and their associated parking conversion would be delayed.
  - iv. Spud asked whether there would be any other office hours than the May 10 hours at Hummus Bodega.
    1. Liz: The time was intended to be convenient for people who may be able to take a break during their lunch hour. While no other office hours are currently planned, the GBIP team is having a number of other individual stakeholder meetings, and can meet with CAC members or other stakeholders upon request.
  - v. Andrei Svensson asked whether the agency has been successful at recruiting additional transit operators to run the planned additional 38R service.
    1. Liz Brisson: The agency is only scheduling service frequencies that match current operator availability, and adding 38R service would not come at the expense of other routes.
      - a. Andrei replied that his thinking has evolved and he now thinks a loss of 2.3 spaces per block is a big impact, and that he would support delayed implementation until utility work.
  - vi. Sean Kim noted that he provided Director Tumlin with 1,200 signatures opposed to losing parking and Supervisor Chan posted an opinion to delay

the Quick-Build until 2026. He is worried construction may be similar to Van Ness so wants all implementation at once rather than Quick-Build then utility work. He said that his revenue was down 16% for the week when Public Works needed to block off four parking spaces for safety while Alexandria Theater's marquee sign was compromised. He thinks a 38X Geary Express bus could save time for people to get downtown.

1. Susannah Raub asked what would happen to the project if the SFMTA Board did not approve either option
  - a. Liz Brisson: The SFMTA Board has to approve the project before implementation. If the board did not approve either option, they would likely give some direction to staff to bring the project back with refinements.
    - i. Susannah: Van Ness Avenue prior to Van Ness BRT was not flourishing the way Geary is – Van Ness had lots of car dealerships and fewer small businesses. Would like to think that businesses on Geary can withstand parallel parking.
      1. Liz: The GBIP team has attempted to mitigate business concerns, but no project in San Francisco will have 100% agreement. The construction is not analogous to Van Ness because it has been designed for less disruption, including only a few blocks at a time being under construction. Part of the reason for pivoting away from a center-running design was also to minimize disruption. The SFPUC plans to implement significant water and sewer upgrades that would contribute to the overall construction disruption and duration, but this type of scope was similar for Geary Rapid which was constructed with much less disruption than Van Ness.
  - vii. Spud Law asked about the change from center-running.
    1. Liz Brisson summarized the reasons for the change from the center-running design to the side-running design. The Geary TETL project and Geary Rapid indicated good transit performance benefits from side-running transit lanes. Because the center-running lanes proposed for the Geary corridor would not include passing lanes, local and Rapid service would be combined, with more stops for Rapid buses and less stops for local buses than current. While center-running

lanes can protect buses from traffic more than side-running lanes, the additional bus stops would result in travel time savings being near equivalent, but for a much greater cost; therefore side-running lanes are much more cost effective. This was before you joined the Geary CAC, I will send you additional information on our website that explains why we recommended the change.

- viii. Susannah: In the delayed transit lane option, what would happen during the time the lanes are delayed?
  - 1. Liz: this would provide additional time for economic recovery.
- ix. Andrei Svensson commented that a delay would give developers time to think about potential investments in adding density, as allowed by State Bill 50.
- x. Lou Grosso asked if delaying the project contradicted the Transit-First Policy.
  - 1. Liz Brisson replied that the Transit-First Policy has broad support among San Franciscans at the policy level, but often generates disagreement when it comes to implications for individual street re-design projects. The policy directs policy-making bodies like the SFMTA Board on what to prioritize when making decisions.
    - a. Lou asked how transit lanes will work with SFPD not enforcing them.
      - i. Liz: Coloring transit lanes red increases compliance – the Geary Rapid evaluation report found a 50% reduction in transit lane violations after they were painted red, similar to previous studies. SFMTA also has enforcement cameras on buses that allow for tickets to be issued to drivers illegally parked in a transit lane.
- xi. Spud Law asked if the SFMTA Board selects the delayed transit lane option, how do we know that implementation won't be indefinitely delayed? I don't support delaying, but am curious.
  - 1. Liz Brisson: Both options would legislate the same changes, so no further Board action would be required for SFMTA to implement the changes.
- xii. Tom Barton commented that his observations while riding the bus were that compliance of transit lanes is generally good, especially near 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- xiii. Marian Roth-Cramer: Would like to start thinking about how the boulevard will look, not just focus on cars and parking. She has done research about possible median and signage treatments to encourage visitors to feel more welcome and has materials to send to the SFMTA team.

- xiv. Nathan Chan asked whether there will be discontinuous transit lanes in either option?
  - 1. Liz Brisson replied that if the SFMTA board chooses the delayed transit lane option, there would be discontinuous transit lanes until the start of SFPUC construction anticipated in 2025. If the Board chooses the staff recommendation, there would be continuous transit lanes after the Quick-Build is implemented later in 2023.
- xv. Marian Roth Cramer commented that since she joined the CAC in 2017, there were fears about the project, but that having a schedule of planned construction was a good practice that would allow business owners to plan around it.
  - 1. Liz Brisson confirmed that a more detailed schedule and construction notifications would be a part of the team's approach to construction outreach and mitigation.
- xvi. During public comment, Victor Collaco asked about the scope of the PUC project, and about the methodology for determining area-wide parking supply and if it properly represented actual available parking.
  - 1. Liz Brisson: The number of parking spaces on Geary Boulevard shown in the table on Slide 13 was recently validated by SFMTA staff and includes current conditions such as Shared Spaces. The estimates for area-wide parking spaces is an estimate of public parking spaces between Anza and Clement. These numbers come from the Geary BRT EIS which was published in 2018. The document includes methodology for how this number was estimated. This column of the table is intended to provide a rough order of magnitude comparison to the scale of parking changes along Geary Boulevard
  - 2. Dan Mackowski replied that sewer and water work are planned to proceed regardless of the GBIP. That infrastructure was built in the late 1800s, and failures are disruptive and costly. Some sewer work is trenchless (new liner installed inside old brick sewer); other sewer work typically involves digging in the travel lane next to median, but not digging up the median. The water lines need to be upgraded as a system. The water work will typically be two blocks at a time, lasting about a month or so at each location.
- xvii. Susannah Raub asked to confirm that the Quick-Build phase does not involve digging.
  - 1. Dan replied that yes, Quick-Build is only signs and paint, less than a day per block.

- xviii. Sean Kim: If transit lanes are installed before construction, how does it benefit the buses when the utility work requires taking a lane? After they are painted they will be dug up and have to be repainted.
1. Liz: Having transit lanes installed beforehand helps protect buses from delays during construction.
  2. Dan: Adding the transit lane (for three total lanes per direction) allows two lanes per direction to be retained during construction without removing all parking on that block generally. While not proposed, if a block didn't have transit lanes, angled parking would have to be temporarily removed during water/sewer construction to maintain two travel lanes. Transit lanes would be present during the construction phase except on the few blocks at a time with active construction.
- xix. During public comment, Sandra Fewer expressed her opposition to the Quick-Build project and urged Geary CAC members to oppose the Quick-Build project at this time due to the need to support Geary merchants' economic recovery. The SFMTA should reconsider the timing of the project.
1. Sean Kim noted that Sandra Fewer was the previous District 1 Supervisor.
- xx. Susannah requested more information about the construction-phase scheduling at the next meeting.

## 8. Geary Rapid update

- a. Dan Mackowski presented on this item.
  - i. Tom Barton noted that this meeting was approaching two hours, and asked whether this was the result of going to quarterly meetings.
    1. Liz Brisson replied that she thinks the quarterly schedule is a good cadence and the committee had preferred it in a past poll, but would be open to changing if the CAC prefers. This meeting likely went longer due to the upcoming approval action.

## 9. Adjourn

- a. Next meeting, July 12, 2023. Amy Fowler noted that SFMTA staff will send out a query about in-person versus remote ahead of that meeting.
- b. Lou Grosso said this may be his last CAC meeting, and he sent his best wishes to the committee members.
  - i. Liz Brisson commented that Lou has asked for his spot to be filled by someone who can speak to accessibility. The SFMTA has reached out to some organizations and is open to further suggestions.
    1. Lou Grosso suggested contacting Lighthouse for the Blind.
- c. Lou Grosso motioned to adjourn. Multiple members seconded. Meeting adjourned by voice vote at 7:52 p.m.