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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 1.3: Improve the safety of the transportation system.

Goal 2: Make transit, walking, bicycling, taxi, ridesharing and carsharing the preferred means of travel

Objective 2.3: Increase use of all non-private auto modes

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 approve the current Commuter Shuttle Program. The vote allows the SFMTA to continue regulating operations of commuter shuttles in San Francisco and charging a per-stop fee beyond March 31, 2017.

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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 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 vehicle and display a “how is my driving?” sticker
- The program is enforced by SFMTA Parking Control Officers 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.

16th Street and Market Street Location

The SFMTA is proposing to relocate the existing commuter shuttle only white loading zone at the northwest corner of 16th Street at Sanchez Street to the north side of 16th Street east of Market Street. The existing shuttle stop restricts parking from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and sees 33 shuttle stop events each evening. At least eight of those shuttles arrive after 8:00 p.m., when the zone reverts to Residential Permit Parking spaces, resulting in shuttle vehicles double-parking when those parking spaces are full. The SFMTA has received a number of complaints over the past year from residents living directly next to the stop about shuttle vehicles double parking and blocking access to their driveway, as well complaints about the noise that is generated by these vehicles into the late evening.

The proposed shuttle only white loading zone is located along a blank wall, which is the back side of a number of commercial business that are accessible via Market Street, thus helping to minimize the noise impacts on residents. The hours of the stop would also be extended until 10:00 p.m. to address the issue of vehicles double parking and blocking the travel lane after 8:00 p.m. The removal of the existing shuttle zone would restore parking in three residential permit parking spaces and a driveway from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., while the new zone would restrict parking in six residential permit parking spaces from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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Noe Valley - 24th Street Locations

In April 2016, the SFMTA implemented a new rule restricting shuttles over 35 feet in length to state-designated arterial streets. As a result of this rule, the majority of shuttles accessing Noe Valley now travel on Castro Street north of 24th Street and on 24th Street east of Castro Street as those are the only state designated arterial streets serving the Noe Valley neighborhood.

In the morning commute period the majority of shuttles are travelling in the east-bound direction towards Highway 101. For vehicles over 35 feet in length, travelling westbound on 24th Street the only shuttle stop available is the shared Muni stop at the southwest corner of 24th and Church Streets. Given this, the stop is heavily used with over 80 shuttles stopping there each morning, in addition to the Muni route 48-Quintara-24th Street, which stops there every ten minutes at peak times. The high volume of shuttle vehicles in combination with the 48-Quintara-24th Street bus can result in more than three vehicles arriving at the stop at the same time. However, the current stop is only long enough to accommodate one vehicle at a time. As a result, shuttles and Muni vehicles often stop in the travel lane because another vehicle is already using the stop, blocking through traffic and creating safety concerns as other vehicles veer into oncoming traffic to get around these vehicles.

This stop has been the top location for complaints about commuter shuttles since the beginning of the Commuter Shuttle Pilot program in August 2014. Since that time the SFMTA have received 341 complaints about shuttles at this location, about twenty percent of all complaints received citywide. Over fifty of these complaints have been concerns over shuttles blocking Muni from accessing the stop.

In order to ensure Muni is able to access the stop and to minimize instances of shuttles double parking and blocking the travel lane, the SFMTA is proposing to move shuttles to a separate shuttle only white loading zone on the south side of 24th Street from Church Street to 112 feet easterly. This zone would restrict parking at four regular metered parking spaces and one green metered parking space from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Given the high volume of shuttle vehicles during the morning commute period, this zone is long enough for two shuttles to pull to the curb at a time.

In addition to the proposal to create a shuttle only white zone that can accommodate two vehicles, the SFMTA is also working with shuttle operators to make schedule adjustments to further reduce the number of shuttle vehicles arriving at the same time; helping to minimize the likelihood that shuttle vehicles will stop in the travel lane due to the shuttle stop being occupied.

In the evening, the majority of shuttle vehicles stop at the 48-Quintara-24th Street bus bulb at the northeast corner of 24th and Church Streets. While the volume of complaints regarding this location is much lower than the morning stop, shuttles stopping at this location do cause safety issues as they stop in the travel lane and vehicles often go into the opposing lane of traffic to get around. To address this issue the SFMTA is proposing removing the existing shared stop and creating a new shared stop on the north side of 24th Street from Dolores Street to 75 feet westerly. Since the existing bus stop is not long enough to accommodate two vehicles at one time, the SFMTA is proposing to extend the bus zone to Mersey Street on a part-time basis from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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Items A and B were presented at a duly noticed public hearing on May 19, 2017 and items C and D were presented at a duly noticed public hearing on June 16, 2017.

The following changes require SFMTA Board approval:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 4 PM TO 10 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 16th Street, north side, from 50 feet to 163 feet east of Market Street (restricts parking in six residential permit parking spaces)
- B. RESCIND – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 4 PM TO 8 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 16th Street, north side, from Sanchez Street to 73 feet westerly (restores parking in three residential permit parking spaces and a driveway)
- C. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 24th Street, south side, from Church Street to 112 feet easterly (restricts parking in four regular metered spaces, #3775, #3773, #3771, #3767, in one green metered space #3769Q)
- D. ESTABLISH – PART-TIME BUS ZONE, 5:30 PM TO 8 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 24th Street, north side, from Mersey Street to 40 feet easterly

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

16th Street and Market Street Location

Prior to bringing this proposal to engineering public hearing, the SFMTA meet with representatives from the Castro Merchants business association to get their feedback and input. In early February 2017 staff met with representatives from the Castro Merchants business association to discuss the SFMTA's initial recommendation which proposed relocating the existing stop on 16th Street at Sanchez Street to Market Street between Noe Street and Sanchez Street. Representatives from the Castro Merchants expressed concern over the impacts that having a stop on Market Street would have on adjacent and nearby business and asked staff to identify an alternative location. In early April, SFMTA staff met with Castro Merchants business association again to discuss relocating the stop to what is currently proposed.

Items A and B were discussed at the May 19, 2017 engineering public hearing. Prior to the hearing SFMTA staff emailed information about the proposal to adjacent business for whom they had contact information and also visited adjacent businesses in person to discuss the proposal, hear any concerns and answer any questions. Two businesses expressed support for the proposal, one expressed safety concerns about having large vehicles dropping off passengers near the intersection, and the remaining had no comment.

Prior to the hearing, notices were posted on nearby light poles and 770 postcards were sent to addresses within a one block radius of the proposed stop. Five people testified at the hearing. Two representatives from the Castro Merchants business association spoke against the proposal citing

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concerns over the impact that restricting parking later into the evening would have on nearby restaurants. One resident living across from the stop cited concerns over the increased volume of buses on 16th Street and the impacts of these vehicles on the intersection of 16th Street and Market Street. A resident living adjacent to the stop expressed their support for the proposal and one member of the public expressed general concern over the Commuter Shuttle Program as a whole. One shuttle rider emailed a complaint expressing concerns about how this change might discourage shuttle ridership.

Noe Valley - 24th Street Locations

On April 18, 2017 the SFMTA hosted a community open house in order to gather input from Noe Valley neighbors and stakeholders on where a commuter shuttle only white zone should be located. The meeting was held at the Noe Valley public library from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and at least 50 people attended the meeting. SFMTA staff collected written comments from attendees on the commuter shuttle program in general as well as feedback on preferred locations for a commuter shuttle only zone. Comments touched on a diverse array of issues. Many commenters were in favor of moving the stop, while others expressed concerns. The most common concern was regarding the removal of parking to create a shuttle stop and the impact that could have on businesses and residents. Other issues that neighbors brought up included removing shuttles from 24th Street altogether, reducing the size of the vehicles, opening other streets to large shuttles to reduce the impact on 24th Street, and ensuring shuttles are fully occupied.

After reviewing the comments and feedback received at the community open house, staff evaluated several potential stop locations and developed a recommended alternative. A letter summarizing the feedback received at the community meeting as well as a discussion of the preferred alternative was drafted by SFMTA staff and shared with meeting attendees as well as other Noe Valley neighbors and stakeholders. Staff also reached out to the Noe Valley Association a community benefit district to get their input on the preferred alternative and they expressed their support for the proposal.

Items C and D were discussed at the June 16, 2017 engineering public hearing. Prior to the hearing, staff visited adjacent business to discuss the proposal, hear any concerns and answer any questions. Of the eleven business that were contacted, two expressed concern with the relocation of the morning stop as their businesses open early in the morning and they are concerned about the impacts of restricting parking on their business. For the evening stop, Noe Valley Pediatrics, which is the only business located adjacent to the proposed stop, stated that they were in favor of replacing the current evening stop as shuttles in the current location block traffic while loading. However, they expressed that starting the parking restriction at 5:00 p.m. could be difficult as sometimes employees need to stay past 5:00 p.m. In response to this concern, SFMTA reviewed shuttle data and determined that the shuttle volumes before 5:30 p.m. could be accommodated at the Muni stop without the stop extension and revised the hours of the stop extension.

Flyers were sent to all 1,916 addresses in Public Works' database within the area bounded by 23rd Street, Noe Street, 25th Street, and Guerrero Street and notices were posted on nearby light poles. The SFMTA received 19 emails from Noe Valley residents and stakeholders regarding the proposal.

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Support included riders and other residents in favor of reducing conflicts between shuttles, Muni, and other traffic. Opposition included riders concerned about the stop moving farther from their homes and other neighbors concerned about parking restrictions and safety issues with stops for large buses on 24th Street. Three people testified at the hearing. Two people expressed concern about the commuter shuttle program as a whole and one expressed specific concerns about the environmental impacts of these large vehicles.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The SFMTA carefully considered alternative locations before proposing the creation of these 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 or 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

16th Street and Market Street Location

Specific alternatives considered include the following locations:

- Muni stops at southeast corner of Market and Sanchez Streets: High Muni frequency at F-line island; 37-Corbett stop poses safety concerns for shuttles at near-side of intersection
- Muni stop at northwest corner of Market and Noe Streets: Bus bulb, so shuttles would block bicycle lane while loading. Also would create routing problems leading to more shuttles on neighborhood streets on the way back to the freeway.
- Muni stop at northeast corner of 16th and Church Streets: High Muni 22-Fillmore frequency, safety concerns with shuttles stopping at the near-side of intersection, and directly in front of ground floor residential units.
- Shuttle loading zone on south side of Market Street between Noe and Sanchez Streets: Initial proposal, would restrict six parking spaces. Castro Merchants expressed significant concerns about restriction of parking in the middle of a block with many small businesses. In addition, shuttles would need to cross the busy Market Street bike lane to access the stop.

The SFMTA also considered not creating a new zone to replace the existing zone at 16th and Sanchez Streets. However, taking no action would result in shuttles continuing to block the vehicle travel lanes, which poses a safety hazard.

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Noe Valley - 24th Street Locations

Specific alternatives considered include the following locations:

- Southeast corner of 24th and Sanchez Streets, adjacent to Noe Valley Town Square: Second-most popular suggestion at open house. SFMTA heard significant concerns from neighborhood groups about restricting parking closer to the center of the Noe Valley business district, as many businesses across the street and within a block are open early in the morning.
- Southwest corner of 24th and Vicksburg Streets: Pedestrian safety concerns with shuttles stopping at the near side of the intersection.
- Southeast corner of 24th and Vicksburg Streets: Large tree limbs extend over roadway preventing shuttles from pulling to the curb.
- North side of Market Street between Dolores and Church Streets: Would pose conflicts with Market Street bike lane at peak commute hours, will be unavailable during repeated Twin Peaks tunnel closures over the next few years, and would leave a large area without an evening stop within a half-mile walk.

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 and is incorporated herein by reference.

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 permitted commuter shuttle zone and shared 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 Pilot program as follows:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 4 PM TO 10 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 16th Street, north side, from 50 feet to 163 feet east of Market Street
- B. RESCIND – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE
- C. ONLY, 4 PM TO 8 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 16th Street, north side, from Sanchez Street to 73 feet westerly
- D. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE ZONE ONLY, 6 AM TO 10 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 24th Street, south side, from Church Street to 112 feet easterly
- E. ESTABLISH – PART-TIME BUS ZONE, 5:30 PM TO 8 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - 24th Street, north side, from Mersey Street to 40 feet easterly

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, 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; 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 through C above, and the shared bus zone modification listed as D 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 July 18, 2017.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency