

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 12

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Sustainable Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving temporary traffic modifications to restrict through-traffic, including designating additional corridors as Slow Streets to create more space for socially distanced walking and biking during the COVID-19 pandemic as referenced in the Proclamation of the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020 (COVID-19 Emergency).

SUMMARY:



- In response to the COVID-19 Emergency, the SFMTA is implementing the Slow Streets program to create additional space in the roadway for socially distanced essential travel and exercise.
- Slow Streets will be in effect until 120 days after the termination or expiration of the COVID-19 Emergency and will be removed unless the SFMTA Board takes further action.
- The Planning Department has determined that the proposed additional 17 Slow Streets are statutorily and categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. Slow Streets Phase 1 & 2 (Existing) and Phase 3 (Proposed)

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR	 _____	July 15, 2020 _____
SECRETARY	 _____	July 14, 2020 _____

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: July 21, 2020

PAGE 2.

PURPOSE

Approving temporary traffic modifications to restrict through-traffic, including the designation of Slow Streets on 17 corridors to provide adequate space for socially distanced walking and biking during the COVID-19 pandemic as referenced in the Proclamation of the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020 (COVID-19 Emergency). All such designations and approvals will sunset 120 days after the conclusion of the COVID-19 Emergency

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

The proposed project will support the following goals and objectives of the SFMTA Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Achieve Vision Zero by eliminating all traffic deaths.

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.

Goal 3: Improve the quality of life and environment in San Francisco and the region.

Objective 3.1: Use agency programs and policies to advance San Francisco's commitment to equity.

Objective 3.2: Advance policies and decisions in support of sustainable transportation and land use principles.

Objective 3.4: Provide environmental stewardship to improve air quality, enhance resource efficiency, and address climate change.

The proposed project will support the following Transit First policies:

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.
2. Public transit, including taxis and vanpools, is an economically and environmentally sound alternative to transportation by individual automobiles. Within San Francisco, travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot must be an attractive alternative to travel by private automobile.
3. Decisions regarding the use of limited public street and sidewalk space shall encourage the use of public rights of way by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, and shall strive to reduce traffic and improve public health and safety.
5. Pedestrian areas shall be enhanced wherever possible to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians and to encourage travel by foot.
6. Bicycling shall be promoted by encouraging safe streets for riding, convenient access to transit, bicycle lanes, and secure bicycle parking.

PAGE 3.

DESCRIPTION

On March 16, 2020, San Francisco's Health Officer issued a Public Health Order in response to the COVID-19 Emergency, requiring that residents shelter in place, with the only exception being for essential needs. This significantly impacted San Francisco's transit system and required the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to reduce transit service.

With Muni service reduced, many San Francisco residents need to walk, bike, or take other travel modes to make essential trips. However, they cannot safely and practically maintain the six feet of social distance required by the city's Public Health Order C19-07b on many sidewalks, park paths, and bikeways, especially when passing queues that may exist outside grocery stores and other essential services. Due to these issues, pedestrians were choosing to walk in the street, putting them at a higher risk of being in a collision with a vehicle in the roadway. There is data showing drivers are operating at higher and unsafe speeds during the public health emergency, which increases the risk for severe injuries to pedestrians in a collision.

Since the adoption of the health order, the SFMTA has developed the Transportation Recovery Plan (TRP), and the Slow Streets Program, which is a component of that plan, is intended to allow roadways to be safely used as a shared space for foot and bicycle traffic with adequate space for travelers to maintain six-foot separation. This space is needed for essential walk and bike travel while transit service levels are temporarily reduced. Vehicle traffic is allowed on these streets but is limited to local (e.g. access for residents and visitors of residents), mail, delivery services, and emergency vehicle access. Vehicle Code Section 21101(e) authorizes local jurisdictions to temporarily close a portion of the street when, as here, the temporary closure is necessary for the safety and protection of persons who are using the street during the temporary closing.

The Slow Street treatment includes placement of materials such as cones, A-frames, plastic traffic diverters and delineators to slow and discourage vehicular through-traffic in order to enable people to safely walk, run, or bike and maintain six feet social distancing in the streets. The installation of a Slow Street does not include any changes to the existing number of travel lanes, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, loading zones, or parking.

Slow Streets does not legally change the designation of the public right-of-way; people walking or running in the street are allowed to be in the street as the California Vehicle Code currently permits, but do not have the right-of-way over motor vehicles. People walking or running would be required to yield to vehicular traffic.

All of the above approvals and actions would be limited in duration and expire 120 days following the expiration or termination of the COVID-19 Emergency, unless the SFMTA Board takes action prior to the expiration. SFMTA staff will return to the board prior to the 120-day expiration period and present findings from ongoing program evaluation and outreach, so that the board can make an informed decision on the permanency of the Slow Streets Program.

PAGE 4.

Slow Streets Network:

Beginning in April 2020, the SFMTA began planning for and implementing temporary emergency Slow Streets to provide additional space for social distancing during essential active transportation trips. These Slow Streets were approved through the emergency operation command system, including the COVID-19 TASC group and under an emergency statutory exemption under CEQA. They were implemented with temporary barricades and signage at designated intersections to identify the street as a shared space for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The Slow Streets Program has already planned and implemented these barricades on the following corridors:

- 20th Avenue from Lincoln Boulevard to Ortega Street
- 20th Street from Valencia Street to Potrero Avenue
- 23rd Avenue from Lake to Cabrillo streets
- 41st Avenue from Lincoln Way to Vicente Street
- Chenery Street from Burnside Avenue to Lippard Avenue
- Excelsior Avenue from London to Munich streets
- Golden Gate Avenue from Masonic Avenue to Broderick Street
- Kirkham Street from Great Highway to Seventh Avenue
- Lake Street from 28th to Second avenues
- Lane Street from Oakdale Avenue to Third Street
- Mariposa Street from Kansas to Texas streets
- Ortega Street from 47th to 15th avenues
- Page Street from Stanyan to Gough streets
- Sanchez Street from 23rd to 30th streets
- Shotwell Street from Cesar Chavez to 14th Street
- Somerset Street from Silver Avenue to Woolsey Street

The proposed Slow Streets project would approve the installation of temporary barricades and signage at designated intersections along the following additional corridors:

- 20th Street from San Bruno to Pennsylvania
- Arkansas from 23rd to 17th streets
- Arlington from Roanoke to Randall
- Broderick from O'Farrell to Page
- Cabrillo Street from 45th to 23rd avenues
- Cayuga from Naglee to Rousseau
- Clay Street from Arguello to Steiner
- Duncan from Diamond Heights to Tiffany
- Farallones from Orizaba to San Jose
- Hearst from Ridgewood to Baden
- Holly Park Circle
- Mariposa from Texas to Mississippi
- Minnesota from Mariposa to 22nd Street

PAGE 5.

- Noe from 23rd Street to Duboce
- Pacific from Steiner to Gough
- Pierce from Hayes to Duboce
- Tompkins from Andover to Peralta

All of the proposed changes would be made with temporary signage and materials that are easily reversible should permanent legislation not be adopted. In order for these proposed Slow Streets to become permanent, additional CEQA review, public outreach, and SFMTA Board approval would be required.

Materials:

The Slow Streets Program uses reversible and adjustable traffic calming devices and restrictions to restrict through traffic along Slow Streets. Materials may include temporary barricades and signage, roadway and curb paint, traffic signs, traffic delineators, and/or changes to the configuration of traffic lanes and other safety improvements.

Construction and Evaluation:

For the proposed Slow Streets corridors, construction and evaluation will occur on a rolling basis throughout the period of the COVID-19 Emergency and for a period up to 120 days after the conclusion of the emergency. During this time, SFMTA staff will conduct thorough and transparent evaluations, including soliciting stakeholder feedback, measuring health and safety benefits, economic health, equity, neighborhood impacts, traffic safety, and impacts to other road users. Results from the Slow Streets corridor evaluations will be publicized on the program website and SFMTA will report to the SFMTA Board of Directors 120 days after the conclusion of the COVID-19 Emergency, including evaluation findings and recommendations regarding Slow Streets.

Initial evaluation of previously installed Slow Streets corridors has occurred throughout May and June 2020. This phase of evaluation has included traffic counts to measure vehicle diversions, counts of bicycles and pedestrians prior to implementation and after implementation, and two types of public perception surveys: one survey sent to residents along selected corridors, and one survey available for anyone using a Slow Street corridor. Results of this initial evaluation are under analysis and can be presented to the SFMTA Board when complete.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Given the COVID-19 Emergency, SFMTA staff have had to rethink and develop a new way to engage with people. Immediately following the Slow Streets program announcement on April 21, an online survey tool was developed to gather feedback on the program and suggestions for additional corridors. As of June 25, the survey has received over 3,600 responses. Most feedback on the program has been positive, with positive comments at 80% of those received, negative comments at 11%, and neutral comments at 9%. Many of those responding appreciate the freedom that Slow Streets have provided during the Shelter in Place order by providing additional outdoor space for essential trips and exercise. Many parents have used Slow Streets as a safe place to teach young children to ride a bicycle, and neighbors have commented on a newfound sense of community on Slow Streets during otherwise isolating times. Of the comments received that were not in support of

PAGE 6.

the program, the most frequent concerns related to the safe and intended use of Slow Streets, such as the fear that Slow Streets might encourage neighbors to congregate (and potentially spread COVID-19), traffic diversion concerns to adjacent corridors, the potential for increased in conflict between vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists sharing the roadway. The survey tool has been a useful tool for additional Slow Streets corridors; to date 28 of the 35 planned or implemented Slow Streets corridors have originated from survey suggestions.

The program has utilized several other tools for public outreach and engagement, including a program-specific email address (slowstreets@sfmta.com) that is monitored daily to provide timely and responsive feedback to residents with questions or concerns about the program. Program outreach has also included multi-lingual communications such as notices on Slow Streets corridors, a dedicated program website, blog posts, social media posts, and weekly email updates to stakeholders.

SFMTA staff has also utilized direct mail, coordination with Board of Supervisor districts, and resident and district email distribution lists to notify residents along proposed Slow Streets blocks prior to implementing a corridor, alerting them to upcoming changes and providing contact information for additional feedback.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative to the Slow Streets program is to not designate corridors as Slow Streets with temporary materials. If the proposed changes are not implemented, residents are at a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 since many need to walk, bike, or take other travel modes to make essential trips. They cannot practically maintain the six feet of social distancing required by Public Health Orders on many sidewalks, park paths, and bikeways. Pedestrians thus either face the choice of not being able to socially distance and put themselves at risk of COVID-19 or are choosing to walk in the street, putting them at a higher risk of being in a collision with a vehicle in the roadway.

FUNDING IMPACT

The initial phase components of the Slow Streets program would cost approximately \$250,000. \$150,000 accounts for SFMTA staff labor to plan and implement the program, and \$100,000 accounts for materials or supplies such as signage, barricades, and semi-permanent materials for the traffic restrictions.

Staff will be seeking Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State reimbursement as it responds and facilitates the City's COVID-19 response during the pandemic. The maximum reimbursable amount by FEMA is 75% of the program cost and currently the State has not promised any share of the nonfederal amount yet. In the scenario that FEMA or the State does not reimburse the SFMTA for costs associated with the Slow Streets program, Capital funds through the Prop B General Fund money programmed to bicycle improvements in the Streets Capital Improvement Plan, will be used.

PAGE 7.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Slow Streets, Phase 3 is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA provides a statutory exemption from environmental review for emergency projects pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269. CEQA provides a categorical exemption for operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301.

On July 1, 2020, the Planning Department determined (Case Number 2020-006251ENV) that the proposed additional 19 Slow Streets is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269 and categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301. A copy of the CEQA determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors and may be found in the records of the Planning Department at 1650 Mission Street in San Francisco and is incorporated herein by reference.

The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

A copy of the CEQA 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 item. No additional approvals are required.

SFMTA staff have determined that the designation of the additional corridors as Slow Streets are final SFMTA decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors approve temporary traffic modifications, including designating additional corridors as Slow Streets to create more space for socially distanced walking and biking, during the COVID-19 pandemic as referenced in the Proclamation of the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020 (COVID-19 Emergency).

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern; on January 31, 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a Public Health Emergency for the United States; and, on February 25, 2020, San Francisco Mayor London Breed, issued a Proclamation Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency within the City in response to the pandemic (COVID-19 Emergency), and,

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance to local and state jurisdictions and determined that the virus presents a serious public health threat, requiring coordination among state and local departments to ensure readiness for potential health threats associated with the virus; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Emergency Management, and other City partners have been working successfully to implement CDC guidelines, but now require additional tools and resources to protect the public health given the current state of the epidemic and the need for a sustained response; and

WHEREAS, On March 16, 2020, San Francisco's Health Officer issued a Public Health Order requiring that residents remain in place, with the only exception being for essential needs which significantly impacted San Francisco's multimodal transportation system, and required the SFMTA to reduce transit service per the COVID-19 Muni Core Service Plan, and on May 28, 2020, the Mayor released a plan and timeline, informed by the Economic Recovery Task Force, to safely reopen San Francisco; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, in response to the COVID-19 Emergency and the City's reopening timeline, developed a Transportation Recovery Plan (TRP) that serves as a framework for temporary improvements to the multimodal transportation system; and,

WHEREAS, The Slow Streets Program, a component of the TRP, would install temporary barricades and signage at designated intersections on the additional corridors to provide more space for socially distant essential travel by bicycling or walking, and exercise; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency has proposed temporary road closures to through traffic as part of the Slow Streets Program and, under Vehicle Code Section 21101(e) finds that such temporary road closures to through traffic are necessary for the safety and protection of persons who are using the street under the Program during the COVID-19 Emergency; and,

PAGE 9.

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency is committed to making San Francisco a Transit First city that prioritizes non-private automobile transportation; and,

WHEREAS, The following corridors are proposed for closure to through traffic and for inclusion in the Slow Streets Program:

1. 20th Street from San Bruno to Pennsylvania,
2. Arkansas from 23rd to 17th streets,
3. Arlington from Roanoke to Randall,
4. Broderick from O'Farrell to Page,
5. Cabrillo Street from 23rd to 45th avenues,
6. Cayuga from Naglee to Rousseau,
7. Clay from Arguello to Steiner,
8. Duncan from Diamond Heights to Tiffany,
9. Farallones from Orizaba to San Jose,
10. Heart from Ridgewood to Baden,
11. Holly Park Circle,
12. Mariposa from Texas to Mississippi,
13. Minnesota from Mariposa to 22nd Street,
14. Noe from 23rd Street to Duboce,
15. Pacific from Steiner to Gough,
16. Pierce from Hayes to Duboce, and
17. Tompkins from Andover to Peralta; and,

WHEREAS, The temporary improvements of the Slow Streets program shall include a thorough and transparent evaluation process to determine the effectiveness of the changes, including soliciting stakeholder feedback, collecting and analyzing safety and performance data, and posting evaluation results on the SFMTA website; and,

WHEREAS, The proposed traffic modifications will be temporary in nature and will expire 120 days after the termination or expiration of the COVID-19 Emergency; and,

WHEREAS, The proposed additional Slow Streets is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); CEQA provides a statutory exemption from environmental review for emergency projects pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269; CEQA provides a categorical exemption for operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301; and,

WHEREAS, On July 1, 2020, the Planning Department determined (Case Number 2020-0006251ENV) that the proposed additional Slow Streets project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269 and categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301; and,

PAGE 10.

WHEREAS, The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31; and,

WHEREAS, A copy of the CEQA determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors and may be found in the records of the Planning Department at 1650 Mission Street in San Francisco, and is incorporated herein by reference; and,

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board approves the temporary traffic modifications listed above to restrict through-traffic, including designating additional corridors as Slow Streets to create more space for socially distanced walking and biking during the COVID-19 pandemic as referenced in the Proclamation of the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020 (COVID-19 Emergency); and be it further

RESOLVED, That all actions approved herein, are to be in effect temporarily during the COVID-19 emergency referenced in the Proclamation of the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency dated February 25, 2020 and shall expire 120 days after the termination or expiration of such proclamation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That SFMTA staff shall report to the SFMTA Board of Directors prior to the 120 days after the conclusion of the COVID-19 Emergency, including evaluation findings and recommendations regarding the approved traffic modifications.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of July 21, 2020.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Enclosure 2

Map Legend

- Slow Streets
- - - Implemented Slow Street (*dashed = managed by the Presidio Trust*)
- Phase 3 Slow Streets
- Other COVID-19 Street Changes
- Tenderloin Neighborhood Safety Assessment Plan for COVID-19
- Streets Temporarily Closed to Vehicles
- San Francisco Bike Network
- Bike Paths, Lanes & Routes
- Separated Bikeways

SFMTA will consider additional modifications to the Slow Streets program based on stakeholder feedback.

*As of July 08, 2020

