

13th Street Safety Project – Construction Phase

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the 13th Street Safety Project?

The 13th Street Safety Project was started because there were too many serious collisions on this street located underneath the Central Freeway (US 101). Between 2015 and 2019, there were 99 collisions on this street—which connects to and runs under the freeway—many involving people walking or biking. The project will make the street safer by:

- Expanding parts of the sidewalk to help people see better and cross the street more safely.
- Updating traffic signals (timing and hardware) to help everyone move more efficiently.
- Creating protected bikeways to keep people biking separated from moving vehicles.
- Changing parking and loading to use space more effectively.

2. How does this project benefit my community?

The project will make it safer and more comfortable for everyone who uses 13th Street from Folsom Street to Valencia Street. Improvements will be constructed in 2025 and 2026 to reduce conflicts between people walking, biking, and driving. It will also help with accessibility and make the city's traffic signal systems better. People who ride bicycles will have better connections to San Francisco's bike network.

3. Where does my input fit into this project?

The project team reached out to residents and businesses to get their opinions. They used website updates, emails, social media, presentations, and flyers. Project staff visited people to discuss the project and collect feedback. They also sent out surveys to get more input, with details shared through various channels. The planning started in 2021, with meetings to discuss ideas and set project goals. The team continued to engage with the community while designing the project.

4. Why are we starting construction now?

Planning started in 2021, and the project was approved in 2022. Since then, the team has completed designs, applied for funding, advertised the construction contract, and finalized agreements with SFPW for construction to begin. They also coordinated the construction schedule with other nearby projects.

5. What is the construction timeline?

Construction is expected start in early 2025 and is expected to conclude in late 2026.

Typically, underground construction work, traffic signal conduits, is expected to be completed first. Installation of above-ground work such as curb ramps, bulbouts, sidewalk widening, and traffic signal poles will be performed concurrently. New pavement and new medians for protected bicycle lanes are anticipated to be installed after the above-ground work is completed. During construction, monthly construction email updates will be sent to residents and stakeholders.

6. Who will lead the construction phase?

San Francisco Public Works will lead the construction phase. Public Works and the SFMTA will collaborate to provide construction updates and address any stakeholder questions and concerns. Prior to construction, the project team will connect with businesses and residents to answer questions and respond to concerns. During construction, monthly construction email updates will be sent to residents and stakeholders.

7. How will the SFMTA deliver this project successfully?

The project team has partnered with SF Public Works' Streetscape Program team to deliver the 13th Street Safety Project. This team has delivered several SFMTA projects such as the Page Street Neighborway Project, Upper Market Corridor Safety Improvements Project, 19th Avenue Combined City Project and Lombard Street Vision Zero Project. To learn more about the SF Public Works Streetscape Program, please watch their [September 2021 webinar](#).

8. Will pedestrian pathways and access to driveways and businesses be maintained during construction?

Generally, yes. Given that this is a complete streets project, you will see a lot of work not only on the roadway but also the sidewalks. For example, we are installing sidewalk extensions as well as conducting signal conduit upgrades and other roadway work. Pedestrian pathways and driveways will generally be maintained, but if there is a need to close a section of the sidewalk or driveway, SF Public Works will provide updates to residents and businesses within the area. Please sign up to receive updates at <https://www.sfpublishworks.org/13thStreetSafety>.

9. How will you allow residents on one-way streets to access their homes?

The SFMTA has a traffic circulation and enforcement section under the Streets Division. The team reviews and approves all circulation measures that the contractor proposes. As a result, all teams will work together to ensure street access is maintained throughout the construction phase.

10. How will you ensure small businesses on 13th Street can still be reached during construction?

Generally, access will be maintained by the contractor. If needed, the contractor will install temporary steel plates or wooden bridges to maintain access.

11. Will this project remove travel lanes for vehicles? How will that affect traffic, especially to and from the freeway?

For most of the project area, there will be one fewer vehicle travel lane in each direction. Roadway space will be reallocated to better serve the complex needs of 13th Street while also providing a better sense of safety for all people. Lane reductions have been shown to reduce the likelihood of vehicle speeding. Access to and from the freeway will be maintained before, during and after construction. Based on the project team's traffic analysis, travel lane reductions will continue to accommodate peak hour traffic. To address concerns around congestion, the project includes traffic signal retiming to improve the flow of traffic. The project team will continue to monitor traffic counts and conditions following the implementation of the project.

12. Will this project implement any turn restrictions?

There will be a restriction for southbound left turns at the intersection of 13th Street and South Van Ness Avenue. This means drivers cannot turn left from southbound South Van Ness Avenue to go east on 13th Street. This will reduce the potential for conflicts between people traveling northbound on South Van Ness Avenue and drivers turning left from southbound South Van Ness Avenue onto eastbound 13th Street. Please follow all other signs posted during construction.

13. What kind of signal upgrades will this project include?

The project will update traffic signal timing and equipment. Old traffic signals near freeway columns will be replaced with larger ones for better visibility. New poles and mast arms will be added to hold traffic signals, bike signals, and accessible pedestrian signals. Traffic signal timing will be customized to accommodate traffic flow at different times of the day, week, and direction.

14. What parking and loading changes will be made?

This project includes parking and loading changes to accommodate existing land uses and business needs. Color curbs will designate areas for commercial and passenger loading. In total, this project will increase the number of commercial loading zones and blue zones for those with disabilities. Of the ten metered parking spots on the south side of 13th Street between South Van Ness Avenue and Folsom Street, approximately ten will be maintained and one additional blue zone will be added. Thirty-three unregulated parking spots will be removed as part of this project.

15. What accessibility upgrades will this project provide?

This project will install features that improve accessibility in the project area, including new accessible pedestrian signals and curb ramps. Accessible pedestrian signals (APS) are push buttons that help people know when it's safe to cross the street through sounds, messages, and vibrations. SFMTA's policy is to install APS at signalized intersections undergoing a major signal upgrade. Also, curb ramps will be built to current standards by adding detectable warning surfaces.

16. What are the pedestrian safety improvements that will be made through this project?

This project is making changes to help keep people walking safe. The project includes a travel lane reduction of generally one lane in each direction, as well as curb extensions. Both of these treatments reduce the likelihood of vehicular speeding and reduce exposure of pedestrians to moving traffic. At some intersections, there will be corner bulbouts to give more space for people waiting to cross the street. Bulbouts make people easier to see and shortens the distance they need to walk across the road, which means they spend less time in traffic. At the same time, bulbouts and curb extensions encourage drivers to complete turns more slowly.

At the intersection of 13th Street and Folsom Street, right turns from eastbound 13th Street onto southbound Folsom Street will be safer because the project will remove a slip lane, which currently allows drivers to turn at high speeds. Instead, there will be a larger traffic island and a new bikeway, creating more space for people walking and biking. Drivers can still turn from eastbound 13th Street onto southbound Folsom Street, but they will need to do so more slowly. Corner bulbouts will also be constructed at the northwest and southeast corners of the intersection.

At the intersection of 13th Street and South Van Ness Avenue, there will be a new traffic signal to help drivers turning right from southbound South Van Ness onto westbound 13th Street. The median islands located between frontage road and 13th Street will feature curb extensions that can accommodate new ADA curb ramps where there currently are none. On the north side of 13th Street immediately west of the intersection, the project will widen the sidewalk to match the rest of the block. A new median island will be built to give extra protection for people crossing the street, and a new signalized crossing will fill a gap for walkers heading toward the US 101 freeway on-ramp.

At the intersection of 13th Street, Mission Street, and Otis Street, there will also be corner bulbouts to make crossing easier. Existing crosswalk thumbnail islands will be expanded to create more space for people crossing 13th Street using the east and west leg crosswalks. The existing median separating vehicle traffic from the US 101 freeway and westbound 13th Street vehicle traffic will be expanded for people walking and will create a channelized bikeway to minimize conflicts between westbound bicyclists and vehicles traveling westbound on 13th Street and from the US-101 off-ramp.

Paint installations like red curbs and advanced limit lines will be also installed at intersections to provide more visibility for all road users. All crosswalks in the project extents will be upgraded with continental markings.

17. What are the bicycle safety and connectivity improvements that will be made through this project?

This project will make it safer for people biking on 13th Street and Duboce Avenue by creating a dedicated bikeway in both directions between Valencia Street and Folsom Street. Additionally, a channelized bikeway will be constructed at the US-101 off ramp at Mission Street to keep bicyclists north of the vehicles traveling westbound from the US-101 off ramp to Duboce Avenue.

A protected bikeway means that bicyclists have a dedicated space that is separated from moving traffic. The bikeway for going east will be on the south side of the street, and the lane for going west will be on the north side. Physical separation from moving vehicular traffic will be reinforced using concrete medians, plastic delineators, or a row of on-street parking. Concrete medians will be prioritized in the buffer space between bicycle and vehicle travel where possible. In locations with utility and large vehicle turn constraints, plastic delineators will be used. Where the buffer space is located between bicycle travel and on-street parking or loading, the buffer space will feature painted hatch mark areas for people to enter and exit their vehicles.

Along with new protected bikeways, the project will add bike signals at major intersections. Bike signals installed with bike-only signal phases clarify when bicyclists may enter an intersection and are usually paired with restricting conflicting vehicle movements. Bike boxes and two-stage turn boxes are also included in the project at intersections where intersecting bike routes are present to facilitate turn movements onto or off those routes.

The new protected bikeways will close an important gap in the city's bicycle network between Folsom Street and Valencia Street. Previous efforts on 13th Street and Division Street improved walking, biking, and driving between Townsend Street and Folsom Street. The 13th Street Safety Project will further expand the bike network by extending protected facilities on 13th Street west to Valencia Street.