

**THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 12**

**SAN FRANCISCO  
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

**DIVISION:** Streets

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

Approving temporary parking and traffic modifications, including designating nine 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). All such designations and approvals will be in effect only until 120 days after the conclusion of the 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 9 Slow Streets is statutorily 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. Map

**APPROVALS:**

DIRECTOR   
SECRETARY 

**DATE**

March 29, 2021  
March 29, 2021

**ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE:** April 6, 2021

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**PURPOSE**

Approving temporary parking and traffic modifications, including the designation of Slow Streets on nine 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 be in effect only until 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.

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### **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 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 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.

The Slow Streets Program is intended to allow roadways to be safely used as a shared roadway for foot and bicycle traffic with adequate space for travelers to maintain six-foot separation. The shared roadway space is needed for walk and bike travel to connect people to essential services and parks and open space. Vehicle traffic is allowed on these streets but is limited to local (e.g. access for residents, visitors and deliveries) and emergency vehicle access.

Slow Streets also support promoting non-auto travel and is an essential element in the city's Transportation Recovery Plan. With limited Muni service due to the agency's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing adequate alternative modes of travel is vital to ensuring the resiliency of the city's transportation network. Slow Streets create a network of roadways on residential streets that are safer, calmer, and more comfortable for walking and biking. They also connect to other transportation infrastructure like the city's Bike Network, which creates safe and connected routes for non-auto travel. With limited transit capacity, Slow Streets also augment the transit network by offering an alternative and safer way to travel by foot or bike. Slow Streets also support the transit network by connecting people to the Core Muni Service routes.

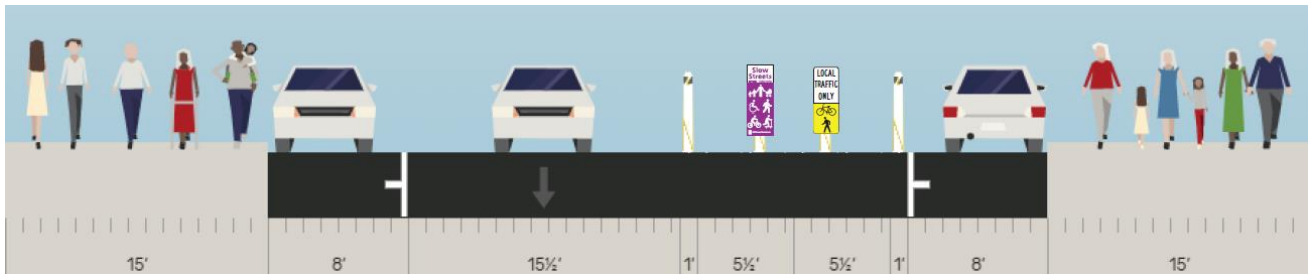
The Slow Street treatment includes placement of materials such as cones, A-frames, plastic traffic diverters and delineators to slow and discourage vehicular through traffic in order to enable people to safely walk, run, or bike and maintain six feet social distancing in the streets. The installation 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 of Directors takes action prior to the expiration.

**Slow Streets Network:**

Beginning in April 2020, the SFMTA began planning for and implementing temporary Slow Streets to provide additional space for social distancing during essential active transportation trips. These Slow Streets 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 26 Slow Streets citywide. In order to manage maintenance costs associated with the program, the barricades are slowly being replaced with temporary delineators and signage as shown.



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

1. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Lincoln Way to Noriega Street,
2. Armstrong Avenue/Kalmanovitz Street/Bitting Avenue from Newhall Street to Newhall Street,
3. Hearst Avenue from Ridgewood Avenue to Baden Street,
4. Hollister Avenue from Third Street to Hawes Street,
5. Lapu Lapu/Rizal/Tandang Sora/Bonifacio/Mabini streets from Folsom Street to Harrison Street,
6. Leland Avenue from Hahn Street to Alpha Street,
7. Lyon Street from Turk Street to Haight Street,
8. Mendell Street from Newcomb Avenue to Evans Avenue, and
9. Scotia/Thornton/Thomas avenues from Silver Avenue to Griffith Street

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 environmental 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 signage, roadway and curb paint, traffic signs, traffic delineators, and/or changes to the configuration of traffic lanes and other safety improvements. Slow Streets Phase 4 corridors will not be implemented with the temporary barricades used in Slow Streets Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 due to the maintenance

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issues associated with these materials. Existing Slow Streets roadway materials will transition to the lower-maintenance and more-durable materials on a rolling basis.

### **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 prior to 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. Preliminary results from these evaluation activities include:

- **Vehicle Volume and Speed:** Vehicle volumes on Slow Streets saw a 50% or more decrease when compared to conditions before Slow Streets were implemented. There was no significant change in vehicle speeds compared to conditions before implementation.
- **Traffic Diversion:** Streets adjacent to Slow Streets saw slight increases in the number of vehicles measured on weekdays and weekends; however, the change was disproportionately small compared to the decrease of volumes seen on Slow Streets. There was no perceived substantial increase to traffic on neighboring streets associated with the installation of new Slow Streets.
- **Resident Feedback:** In mailed surveys to residents, feedback on the program was mostly positive (86%) with at least two thirds of residents along particular corridors interested in their Slow Street becoming permanent after the pandemic.
- **Visitor Feedback:** Over 90% of respondents visiting Slow Streets on particular corridors have a positive experience on the Slow Streets, with the majority of those using the Slow Street living in the neighborhood or on a street adjacent to the Slow Street.

## **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 in April 2020, an online survey tool was developed to gather feedback on the program and suggestions for additional corridors. Most of the Phase 2 and Phase 3 Slow Streets were sourced from the 6,500 responses to this questionnaire. However, the responses were not representative of the city as a whole and left significant gaps in the network of Slow Streets.

For Phase 4, SFMTA staff focused on ensuring that Slow Streets could reach underserved communities to create an accessible citywide network by engaging with San Franciscans at a neighborhood scale. Using sources like the city's Bike Network, Communities of Concern data, and

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outreach information from previous Slow Streets planning efforts, staff identified seven neighborhoods that lacked Slow Streets connections, including:

1. The Bayview, which lacks comfortable low-stress bike routes and access to parks,
2. The Inner Sunset, which lacks north-south bike/pedestrian connections with Golden Gate Park,
3. Oceanview/Parkside, neighborhoods with no existing Slow Streets despite previous efforts,
4. Sunnyside (formerly the Outer Mission neighborhood in the San Francisco Planning Department's neighborhood designations), where geometry constraints have prevented approved Slow Streets from being implemented despite strong community interest in the Slow Streets program,
5. SoMa, where the initial Slow Streets feasibility screening criteria (including traffic signals) previously eliminated many Slow Streets corridor candidates,
6. Visitacion Valley, a neighborhood with no Slow Streets despite community interest, and
7. Western Addition, a neighborhood lacking north-south bike/pedestrian connections with the Panhandle.

Staff began outreach activities in early November 2020 and recorded public comments for each corridor for five weeks. During the outreach process, the team initiated a number of outreach activities to disseminate information about the program and to promote the proposal of corridors in each neighborhood that was recommended to become a Slow Street. Outreach activities included:

- Launched neighborhood-specific surveys to gather community feedback on proposed pre-screened Slow Streets in each neighborhood,
- Held four virtual office hours to talk to members of the community and answer questions about the program,
- Engaged with neighborhood and community group representatives to discuss Slow Streets,
- Mailed postcards to residents with addresses located along a proposed Slow Street,
- Posted posters about the Slow Streets proposals along the proposed corridors and at key community points of interest,
- Worked with District Supervisor's offices to refine and promote the proposals. The Supervisors in the affected Districts (districts 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10) are supportive.

Public comment was collected from 1,278 respondents to online neighborhood surveys, 33 attendees at virtual office hours, and dozens of emails sent to the Slow Streets program email address. For the neighborhood-specific surveys in phase 4, more than 80% of responses on the proposals came from residents of the particular neighborhood.

Half of the pre-screened potential corridors were recommended for further consideration in the following neighborhoods:

1. The Bayview:
  - Mendell Street
  - Hollister Avenue
  - Armstrong Avenue, Kalmanovitz, Bitting Avenue

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- Scotia Avenue, Thornton Avenue, and Thomas Street
- 2. The Inner Sunset:
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 3. Oceanview/Parkside: with only 28% of residents supporting Slow Streets in these neighborhoods, no corridors were recommended for further consideration at this time.
- 4. Sunnyside (formerly known as Outer Mission from the San Francisco Planning Department's neighborhood designations):
  - Hearst Avenue
- 5. SoMa:
  - Lapu Lapu Street, Rizal Street, Tandang Sora Street, Bonifacio Street, and Mabini Street
- 6. Visitacion Valley:
  - Leland Avenue
- 7. Western Addition:
  - Lyon Street

## **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 may be 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 Slow Streets program is funded with Proposition B funds and Proposition K funds allocated from the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA). There is no additional funding impact for these Phase 4 streets within the program as a whole.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The proposed nine 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. On January 26, 2021, the Planning Department determined (Case Number 2021-000804ENV) that the proposed 9 Slow Streets is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269.

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 may be found in the records of the Planning Department at [sfplanning.org](http://sfplanning.org) or 49 South Van Ness

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Avenue, Suite 1400 in San Francisco 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 parking and traffic modifications, including designating nine corridors as Slow Streets to create more space for socially distanced walking and biking, during the COVID-19 Emergency. All such designations and approvals be in effect only until 120 days after the conclusion of the 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 along specified corridors to provide additional space for socially distant essential travel and exercise; and

WHEREAS, The Slow Streets Program, a vital element in the TRP that supports overall recovery and ensures resilience of the city's transportation network, promotes non-automobile travel, and augments the rest of the city's transportation network and infrastructure; and

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

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1. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Lincoln Way to Noriega Street,
2. Armstrong Avenue/Kalmanovitz Street/Bitting Avenue from Newhall Street to Newhall Street,
3. Hearst Avenue from Ridgewood Avenue to Baden Street,
4. Hollister Avenue from Third Street to Hawes Street,
5. Lapu Lapu/Rizal/Tandang Sora/Bonifacio/Mabini streets from Folsom Street to Harrison Street,
6. Leland Avenue from Hahn Street to Alpha Street,
7. Lyon Street from Turk Street to Haight Street,
8. Mendell Street from Newcomb Avenue to Evans Avenue, and
9. Scotia/Thornton/Thomas avenues from Silver Avenue to Griffith Street; 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 nine 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; and

WHEREAS, On January 26, 2021, the Planning Department determined (Case Number 2021-000804ENV) that the proposed 9 Slow Streets corridors project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15269; and

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 [sfplanning.org](http://sfplanning.org) or 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400 in San Francisco, and is incorporated herein by reference; and

WHEREAS, The public has been notified about the proposed improvements and has been given the opportunity to comment on those improvements through the public hearing process; and

RESOLVED, That SFMTA Board of Directors approves the following corridors for closure to through traffic and for inclusion in the Slow Streets Program:

1. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Lincoln Way to Noriega Street,
2. Armstrong Avenue/Kalmanovitz Street/Bitting Avenue from Newhall Street to Newhall Street,

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3. Hearst Avenue from Ridgewood Avenue to Baden Street,
4. Hollister Avenue from Third Street to Hawes Street,
5. Lapu Lapu/Rizal/Tandang Sora/Bonifacio/Mabini streets from Folsom Street to Harrison Street,
6. Leland Avenue from Hahn Street to Alpha Street,
7. Lyon Street from Turk Street to Haight Street,
8. Mendell Street from Newcomb Avenue to Evans Avenue, and
9. Scotia/Thornton/Thomas avenues from Silver Avenue to Griffith Street; 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 make a report to the SFMTA Board of Directors no later than 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 February 16, 2021.

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Secretary to the Board of Directors  
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

# Enclosure 2 Slow Streets Map

