SFMTA

Mid-Valencia Bikeway Pilot Project Update

SFMTA Board of Directors

June 18, 2024

Agenda

1. Project background – A quick refresher
2. Center-running bikeway pilot adjustments
3. Center-running pilot preliminary 6-month evaluation results
4. Side-running protected bikeway
5. Side-running protected bikeway tradeoffs and considerations
6. Next steps and vote on endorsing side-running bikeway
7. Valencia economic context

Project Background

Project Background

Why Valencia?

- Identified as a major north-south bike route in various city plans
- Flatter than other neighboring streets
- Provides a direction connection between Downtown, the Mission, and Outer Mission
- Provides a direction connection to the Valencia commercial corridor

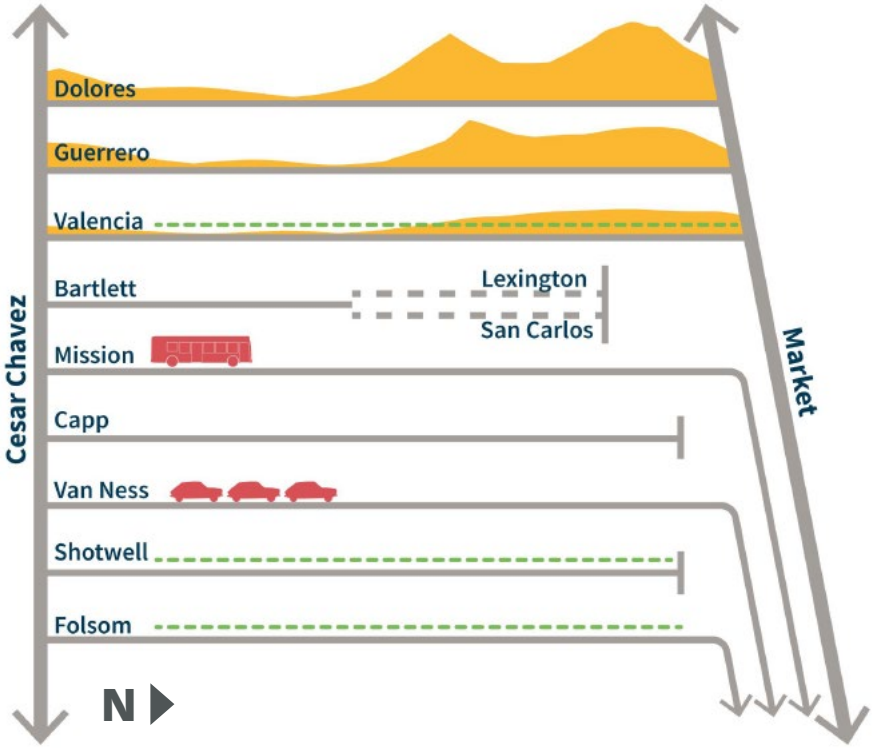


Image source: Gehl

Project Background

- The street regularly experiences a high usage of people on bikes due to its topography and connections
- The street is also a major commercial corridor
- High bicycle usage coupled with other competing uses along the corridor and a previously outdated bikeway and curb plan, the street experienced numerous conflicts that led to high traffic collision rates
- Prior to the pilot, mid-Valencia (15th to 23rd streets) experienced about 2 collisions a month, and almost half the time someone bicycling was involved

Project Background

- Project Goals:
    1. Improve safety for all who travel on Valencia Street
    2. Preserve economic vitality of Valencia Street
    3. Ensure movement and access of goods and people
- Most recently completed efforts:
    - Near-term: 2019 Northern Valencia
    - Near-term: 2023 Mid-Valencia (pilot)

Mid-Valencia Pilot Design Constraints

- **Space constraints:** Limited roadway space for half of the pilot area
- **Emergency response:** Clear width requested for access and operations
- **Shared Spaces:** Parklets are vital to many businesses
- **Merchant feedback:** Expressed the importance of the curb lane to support commercial activities (i.e., Shared Space parklets and commercial loading)
- **Competing loading needs:** Land use along either side of Valencia is densely packed with small businesses that have competing parking and loading needs.
    - Exemplified by the rampant double parking

Center-Running Bikeway Pilot Adjustments

Major Themes of What We Heard Since Pilot Implementation

- Mixed reviews of the center-running protected bike lane in terms of safety – some feel it's significantly more comfortable and safer than before, others feel less safe (e.g., emergency responders speeding in the bike lane)
- Businesses are struggling to recover from COVID-19 impacts
- Motorists are confused about turn restrictions and generally how to navigate the street
- Customers are confused about where and when they can park
- Additional loading spaces means fewer customer parking spaces
- Many businesses use personal vehicles and can’t access the commercial loading zones
- The ability to double-park has been significantly reduced
- Interest from some businesses to revert to pre-Covid bikeway configuration while the SFMTA works on another design

Pilot Adjustments

- Shortened times loading zones were in effect
- Decreased the number of loading zones and increased general metered parking
- Allowed more commercial loading rather than only 6-wheel trucks

Pilot Adjustments

- Updated existing & installed new garage wayfinding signs for 16th & Hoff and Mission-Bartlett SFMTA parking garages
- Distributed posters to businesses that promote and direct customers to SFMTA parking garages

Pilot Adjustments

- Converted multi-space meters back to single-space meters with decals to provide clear parking regulation information, minimize confusion, and return more bicycle parking.

Pilot Adjustments

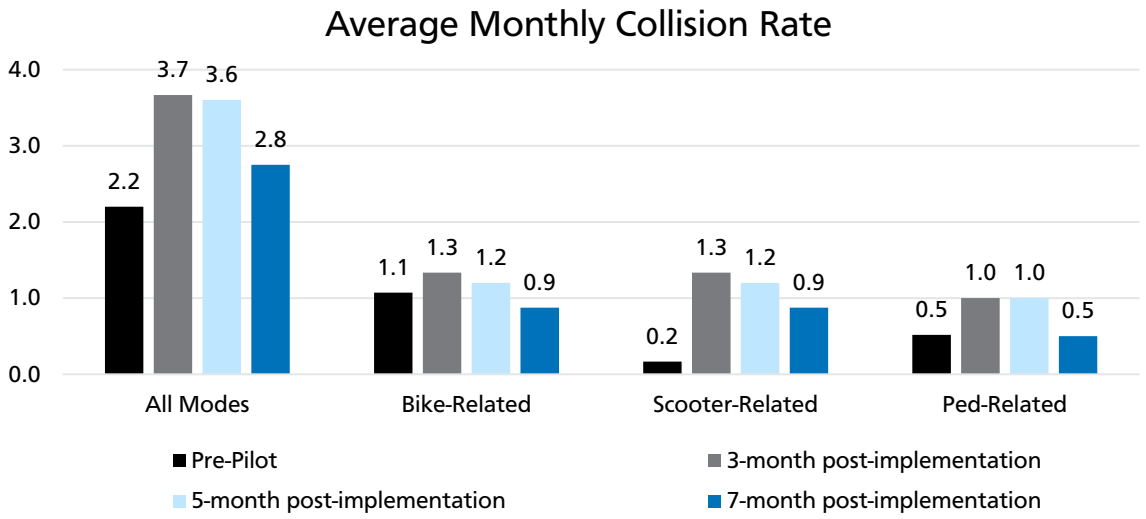
- Adjusted signal timing at the Valencia at 23rd Street and Valencia at 15th Street intersections to reduce traffic congestion
- Put up new signs for vehicle left/U-turn restrictions and worked with SFPD on enforcing them

Center-Running Pilot 6-month Evaluation Results

6-Month Evaluation Findings

Traffic collision data has shown an improvement from the 3-month findings:

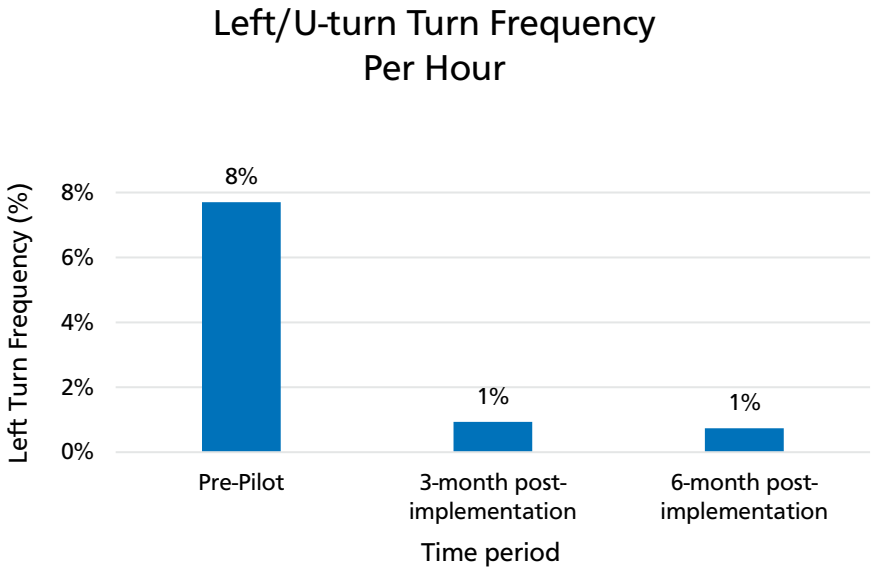
- Average monthly collision rates are trending down, and even lower than pre-pilot for some modes:

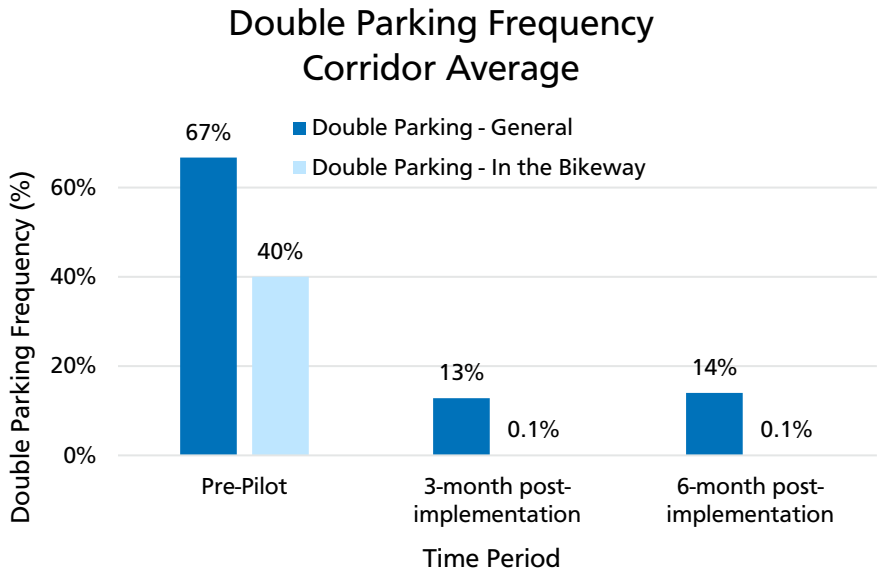


- Vehicle-bicycle mid-block collisions are still significantly lower than pre-pilot conditions
- Recent collision data (January to March 2024) shows no increase in bike-related collisions from illegal left/U-Turns, previously identified as the primary cause for bike collisions after pilot-implementation

6-Month Evaluation Findings

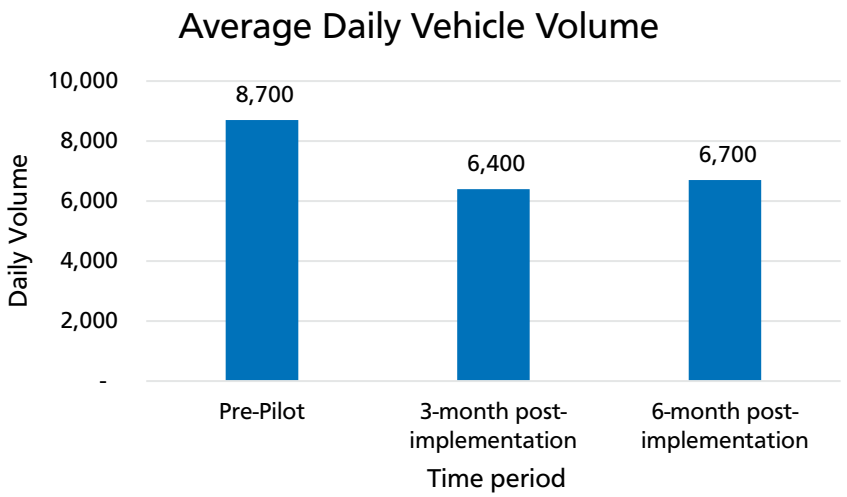
- Vehicle left and U-turns at the intersection continue to be at a very low level
- Vehicle double-parking is still lower than pre-pilot conditions
- Vehicle double-parking, specifically in the bikeway, is still at a low 0.1%

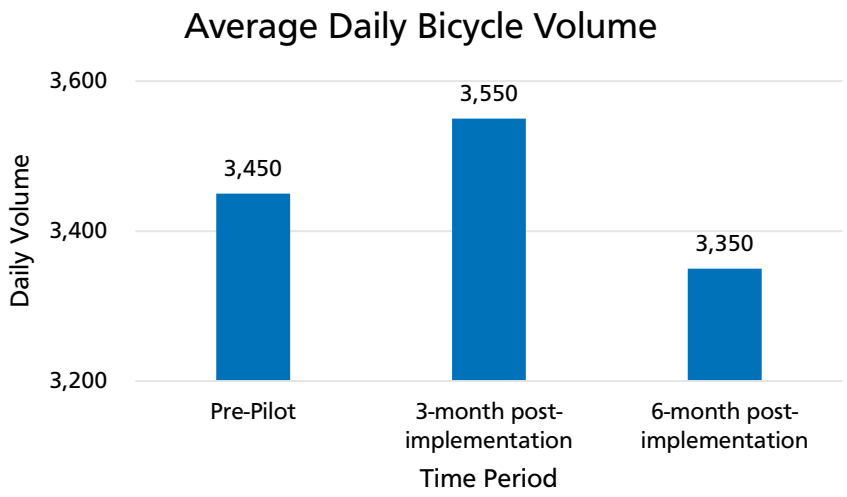




6-Month Evaluation Findings

- Average daily vehicle volume is down 23% from pre-pilot conditions
- Average bicycle volume is down 2% from pre-pilot conditions





6-Month Evaluation Findings

An intercept survey was conducted as part of the 6-month evaluation. Key findings include:

- People on bikes feel much safer due to street changes, mainly because of the separation from cars and fewer instances of double-parking/blocked bike lanes
- Of respondents who drove to Valencia, they typically parked two blocks from their destination and took five minutes to find parking
- 56.2% of respondents live or work near Valencia Street, and 28.1% patronize local establishments (shopping and dining)

Side-Running Protected Bikeway

Outreach Completed So Far

Meetings with Shared Spaces outdoor dining parklet owners to explore feasibility of floating parklet configuration

Outreach Completed So Far

Door-to-door merchant meetings (100+) to understand parking and loading needs and inform the development of a new curb management plan

Outreach Completed So Far

Tabling at Bike to Wherever Day

Outreach Completed So Far

Block by block merchant meetings to discuss more complex curb space needs and issues and connect merchants on the same block

Outreach Completed So Far

- Beyond outreach with merchants and merchant associations, the project team engaged with other stakeholder groups to discuss possible switch from center-running to a side-running design
- More community outreach and engagement with these groups and others planned for the coming months including continued merchant outreach, project open house, stakeholder meetings and presentations, tabling at public events like Sunday Streets

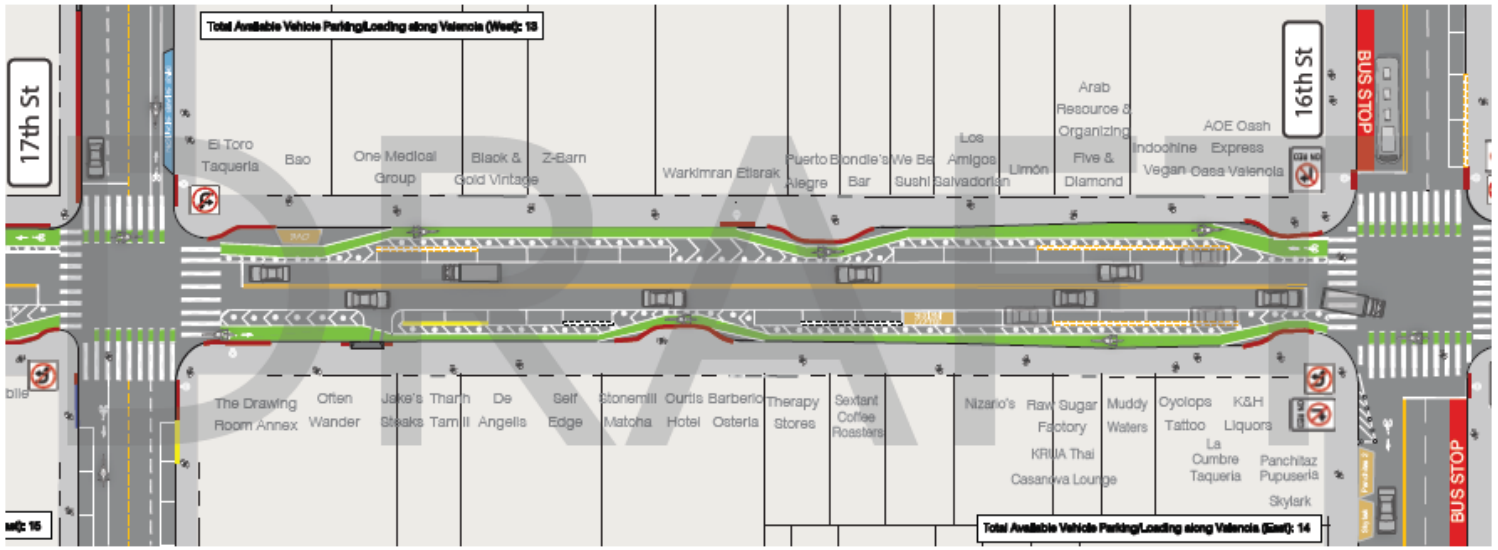
What We Heard From Side-Running Outreach

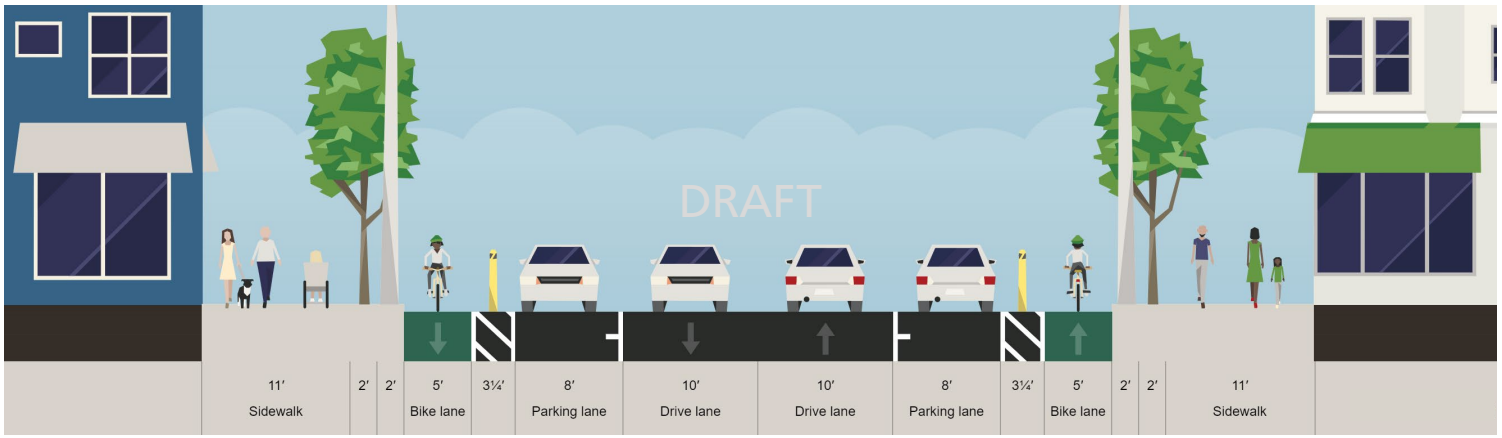
What we heard:

- Parklets are critical for some businesses, less so for others. Some businesses want parklets removed from the corridor entirely.
- Loading (time, location) is more flexible for some businesses than others.
- People biking and driving find the center-running lane unfamiliar and confusing.
- People driving feel trapped when someone in front of them needs to park.
- People biking feel trapped in the center lane and have trouble visiting mid-block destinations.
- Businesses have concerns about switching to floating parklets.
- People biking like the separation of vehicle and bicycle traffic.
- People walking like safety improvements at intersections that make it easier to cross the street.

Design Completed So Far

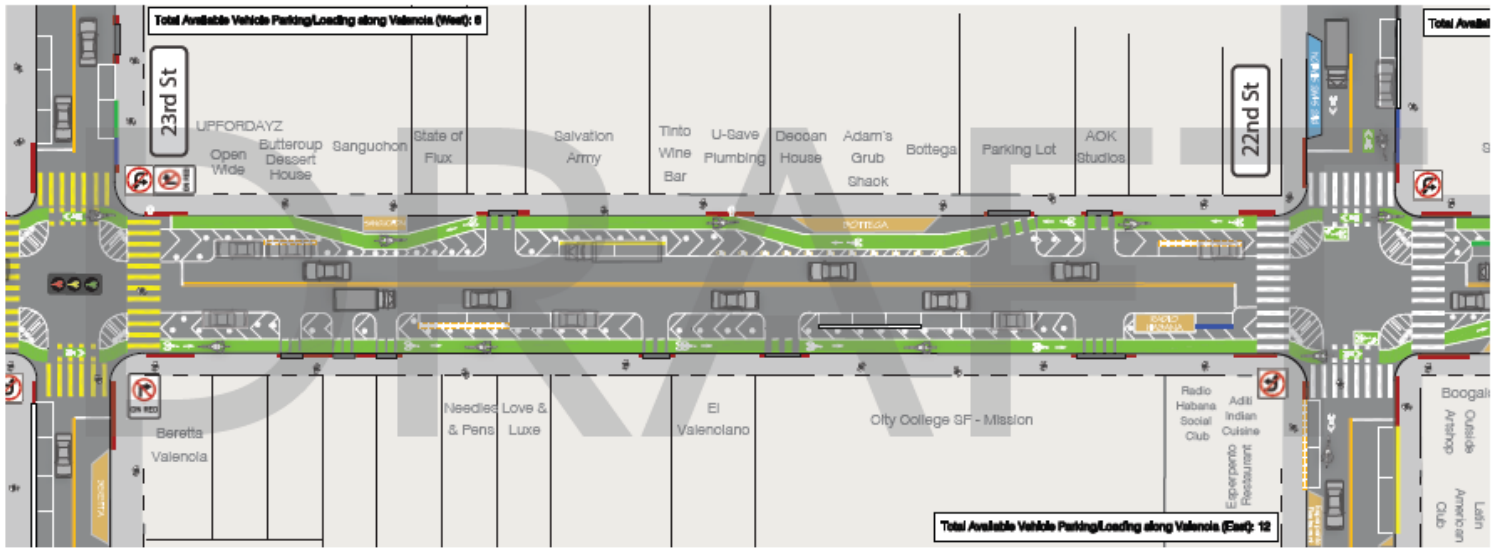
Valencia Street – Typical block between 15th and 19th streets

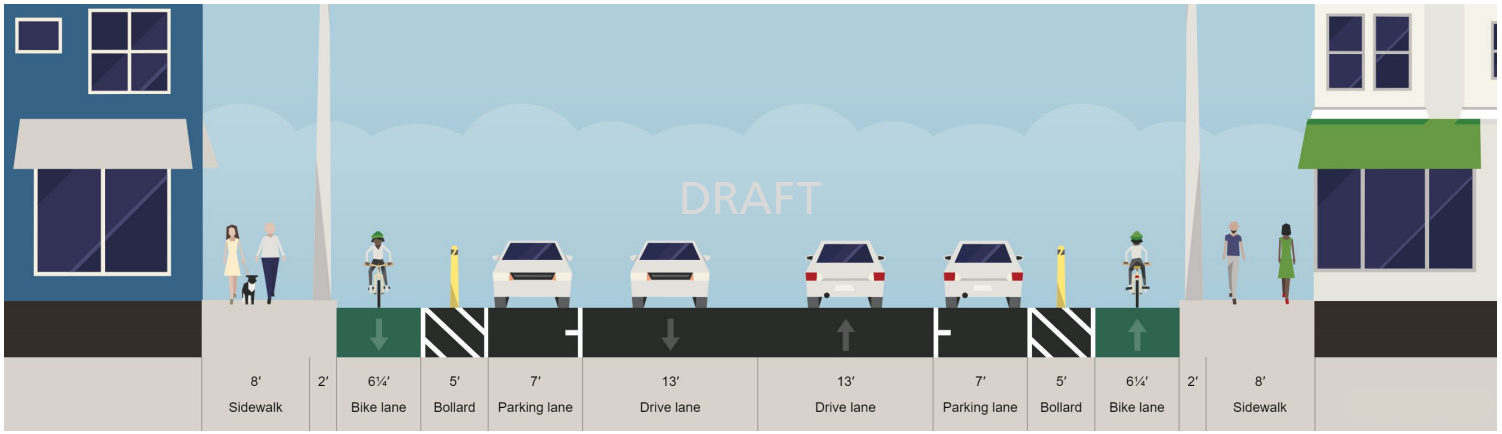




Design Completed So Far

Valencia Street – Typical block between 19th and 23rd streets





Side-running Alternative – Considerations and Tradeoffs

We Can Pivot and There are Trade-Offs

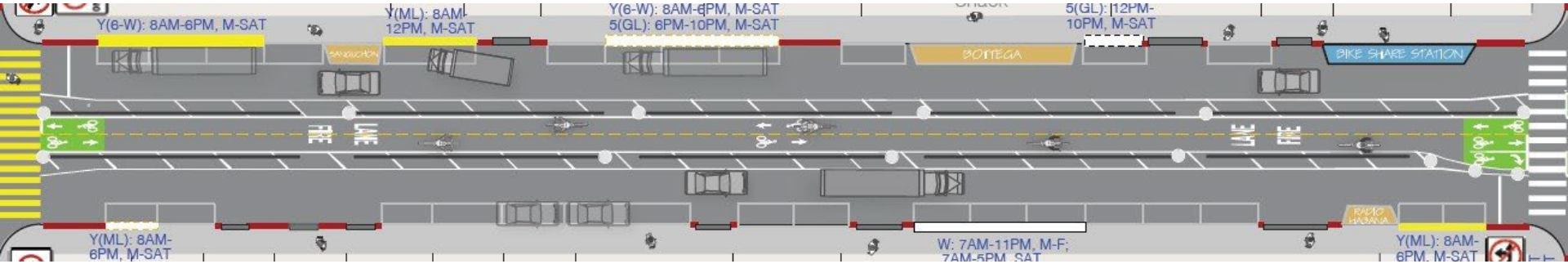
It is important to understand and consider the design tradeoffs. Side-running design means:

- Less curb space for parking and loading than center-running design
    - We anticipate reduction of approximately 50%
- Narrower bikeway width on constrained portions of the corridor
- Potential loss of bicycle green wave on Valencia street to phase separate vehicle and bicycle/pedestrian conflicts at the intersection
- Shared Spaces Parklet impacts
    - People on bikes will need to navigate around or through parklets
    - People walking and accessing or exiting a parklet may need to interact with people on bikes passing through
    - Implementation of new curbside parklets is not possible; new floating parklets will require case-by-case review

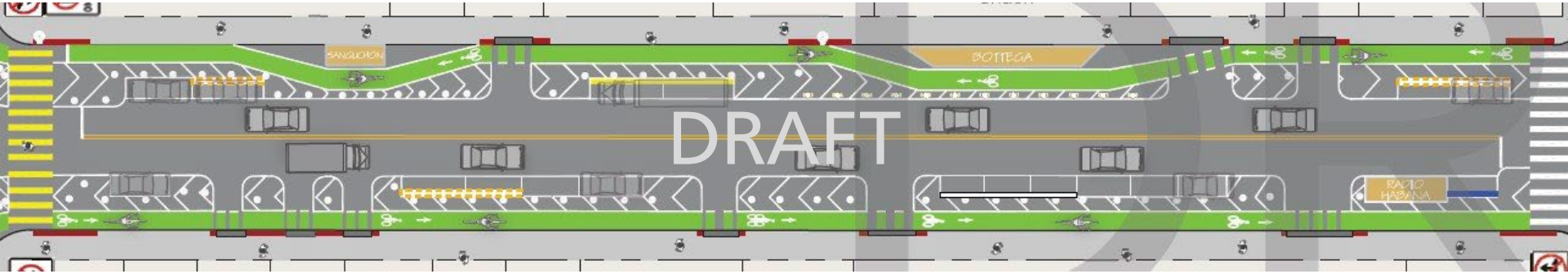
Side-running design also means:

- Side-Running design is more intuitive for drivers, pedestrians and people on bikes
- Side-Running design allows more flexibility for vehicle maneuvering and passing

We Can Pivot



Typical Center-Running Bikeway Design



Typical Side-Running Bikeway Design

Next Steps and Actions Today

Next Steps and Schedule

1. What additional outreach are we going to do and why
2. What additional design details do we need to fine tune/solve?
3. When do we anticipate coming back to the board for full approval?
4. What would be the construction schedule/what considerations are there for when we would construct and how fast?
5. What is the status of the other three studies that we are doing?

Side-Running Future Outreach and Design

Outreach:

- Open House planned for Summer 2024
- Continued outreach and engagement with stakeholders, pivoting to more direct outreach to people who bike on the corridor and residents

Design:

- Finalize detailed design for approval
  - Color curb hours of operation
  - Intersection design
- Shared Spaces floating parklet design and permitting coordination
- Finalize emergency response access and accessibility requirements
- Remove Muni overhead wires
- Develop construction logistics
- Exploring Quick-Build placemaking opportunities

Approvals:

- Late 2024

Long-Term Studies

1. Traffic and Circulation Study – Kicked-off end of 2023, and the study is almost complete
2. Public Life Public Space Study – Kicked-off late Spring 2024, but the study will pause until the completion of the side-running bikeway alternative
3. Parking and Loading Study – Kicked-off late Spring 2024, and the study is expected to run for half a year

Today we're asking the Board to

1. Review the information presented and provide feedback on the side-running bikeway alternative
2. Provide direction on whether to continue the pursuit of the side-running bikeway

Valencia Economic Context

Valencia Economic Context

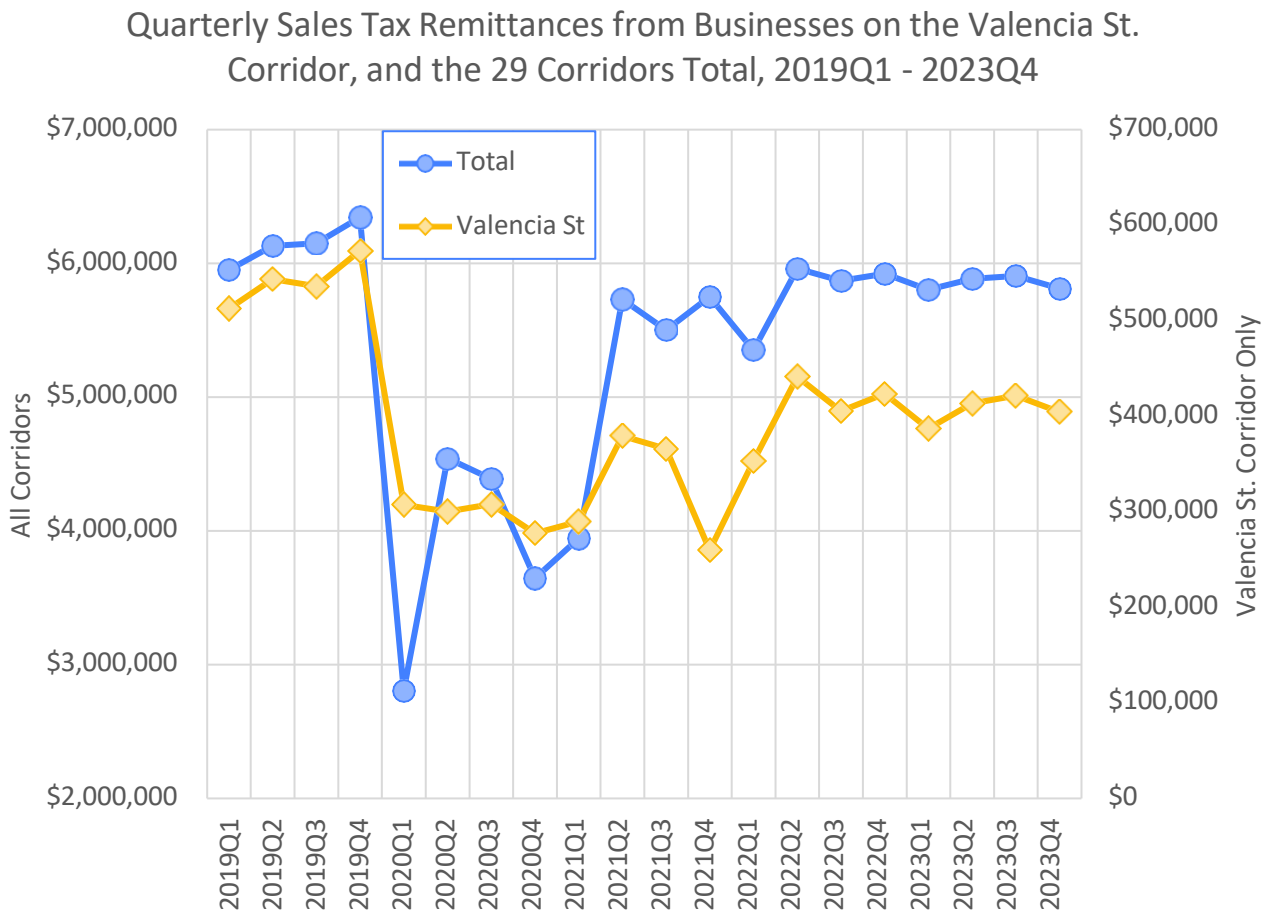
CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Office of the Controller

Office of Economic Analysis

June 18, 2024

Context: Sales Tax Trend: Valencia and Total



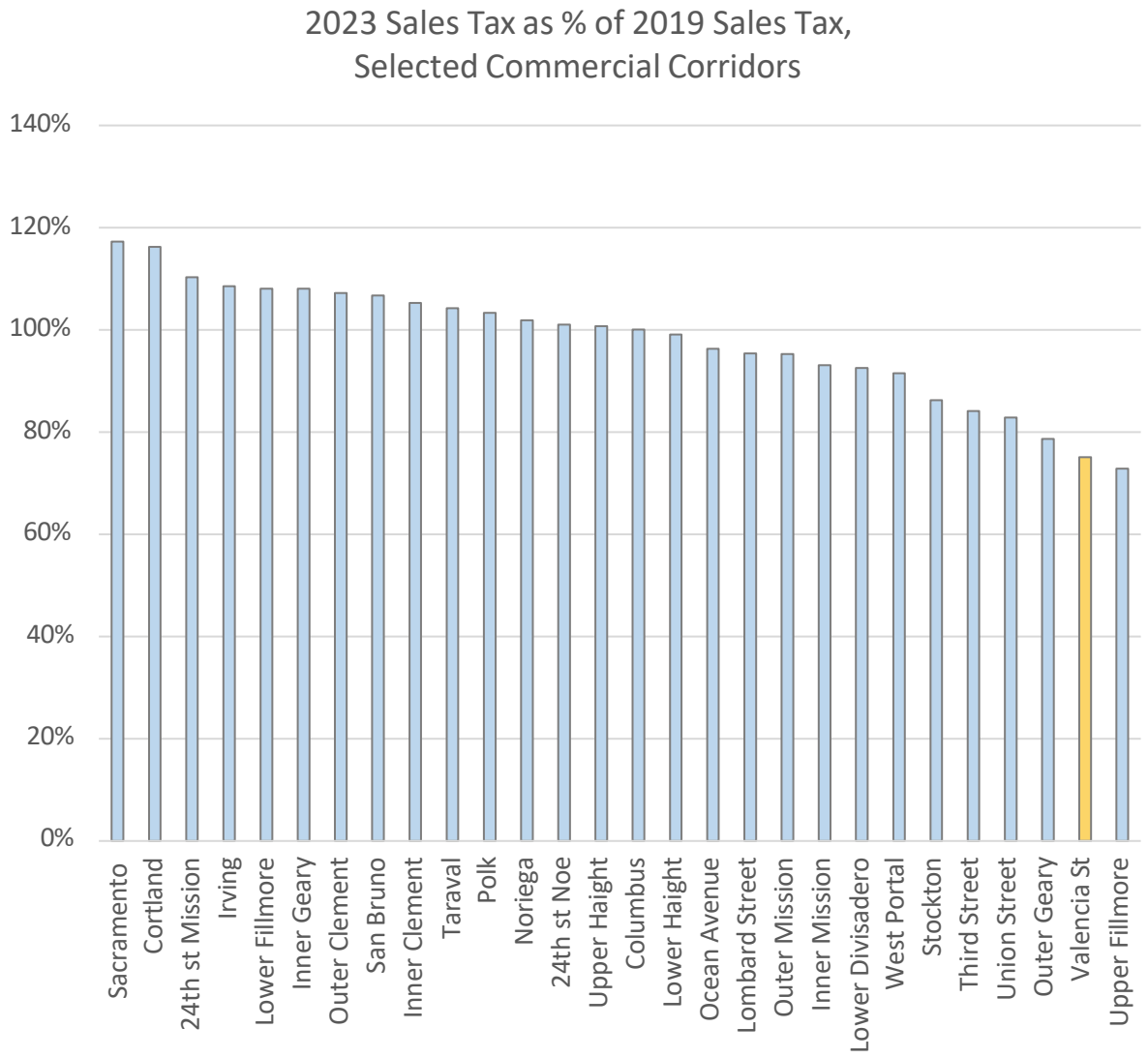
As a whole, the 29 Commercial Corridors considered in this analysis had not fully recovered to 2019 levels by the end of 2023.

After a re-opening period in 2021, sales tax in these areas was relatively flat during most of 2022 and 2023.

The Valencia St. Corridor (between 15th and 23rd streets) has performed worse than average since 2021. It had a much weaker 2021 recovery than other areas, but, like them, remained largely flat during most of 2022 and 2023.

Source: CDTFA / HDL Companies / Office of the Controller

Sales Tax Recovery by Commercial Corridor



Of the corridors considered in this analysis, 15 have generated more sales tax in 2023 than in 2019*.

Valencia St. has had one of the weakest recoveries from 2020 through 2023, with 2023 sales only 75% of 2019 sales.

Source: CDTFA / HDL Companies / Office of the Controller

* - Numbers are not adjusted for inflation.

Statistical Analysis

- The data clearly indicates that businesses along the Valencia Street corridor have experienced a weaker economic recovery from the pandemic than almost every other neighborhood in the city. But was this more pronounced at the second half of 2023?
- Statistically, using sales tax data, we can try to explain some of the changes in business sales in terms of a series of systemic or structural factors, such as:
  - Time – business sales tend to grow or contract depending on the business cycle and the state of the city's economy, which can be represented by variable indicating the year and quarter of the sales tax data.
  - Neighborhood – because of surrounding neighborhood and its accessibility characteristics, some areas support business growth better than others over the long term. This can be represented by neighborhood variables.
  - Line of business – because of the structure of the city's economy, some types of businesses grow faster than others over the long term, regardless of the business cycle or the area. This can be represented by business type variables for each business in the database.

Results and Conclusions

- In two statistical models, covering both the construction and post-construction period, and the post-construction period alone, the coefficient for the bikeway improvement variables was not statistically different from zero.
- This indicates that there was no particular impact in the second half of 2023 on business sales on the corridor as a whole.
- While businesses along Valencia Street have clearly suffered more than in other parts of the city since the pandemic, the challenges facing the corridor pre-date the construction of the bike improvements, and there is no statistical basis for linking the two.
- This finding does not mean that no business was adversely affected by the bike improvements. It simply means that any negative impacts on individual businesses were offset by positive impacts on others, and there is no net effect on the corridor as a whole.

Staff Contact

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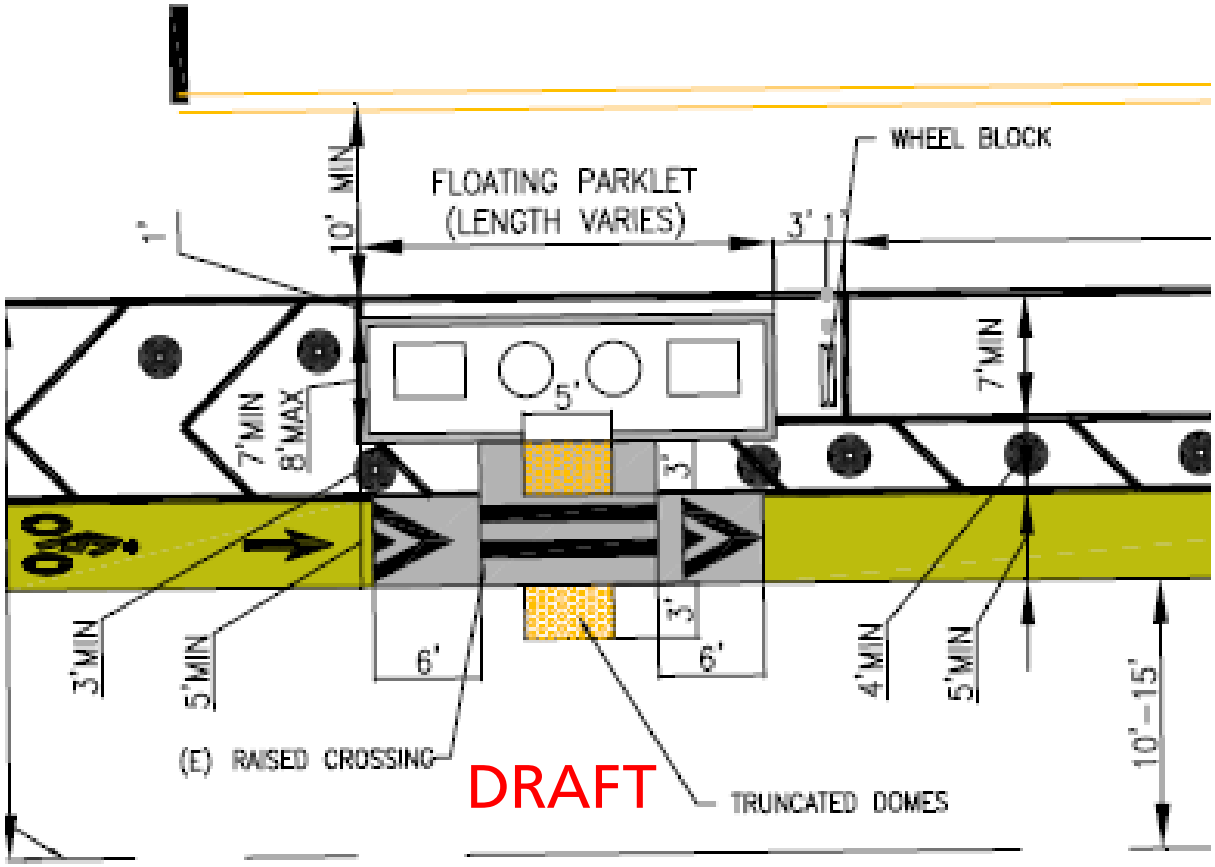
Appendix

Floating Parklet Design Considerations

- Additional Railing
- Ramp, Crossing, Traffic Calming
- Setbacks and Buffer
- Signage



Floating Details

- **Railing –** Additional railing along bikeway-side creates a more controlled and predicable path of travel crossing for pedestrians
- **Ramp –** Raised crossing offers level accessible pathway between sidewalk and parklet as well as traffic calming
- **Setbacks and Buffer –** 3’ buffer from bikeway will improve site lines so people traveling from parklet to sidewalk are not directly in path of travel; -1’ offset from vehicle lane
- **Signage –** Required "slow down" signage ahead of crossing areas