

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO. : 10.3

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Sustainable Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Amending Transportation Code Division II, Section 601 to designate a cable car only lane on California Street, eastbound, from Powell Street to Grant Avenue, and approving traffic modifications at the intersections of California Street and Joice Street, Pratt Place, and Sabin Place.

SUMMARY:

- Since 2011, there have been 48 collisions or near-collisions at California Street and Grant Avenue involving cable cars traveling on a steep downgrade.
- The vast majority of these incidents involve an eastbound vehicle blocking the cable car tracks while attempting to make an illegal left turn onto Grant Avenue.
- The project creates a cable car only lane on eastbound California Street from Powell Street to Grant Avenue to keep the track clear and avoid collisions. Only cable cars, Muni vehicles, and emergency vehicles will be permitted to operate in the lane.
- The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S. F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. Cable Car Safety Map 2011-2016
3. Existing and Proposed Conditions
4. Transportation Code Division II Amendment

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR _____

4/10/17

SECRETARY R. Boomer _____

4/10/17

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: April 18, 2017

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PURPOSE

Amending Transportation Code Division II, Section 601 to designate a cable car only lane on California Street, eastbound, from Powell Street to Grant Avenue, and approving traffic modifications at the intersections of California Street and Joice Street, Pratt Place, and Sabin Place.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

This action supports the Vision Zero Policy goal to eliminate traffic fatalities and the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goals 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 2.2: Improve transit performance.
 - Objective 2.3: Increase use of all non-private auto modes.
- Goal 3: Improve the environment and quality of life in San Francisco
 - Objective 3.4: Deliver services efficiently.

This action also supports the following sections of the Transit-First Policy:

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.

DESCRIPTION

Background

The project area includes the two steepest blocks on the California cable car line. Due to the steep grade, cable cars travelling downhill have difficulty stopping using their regular brakes until they reach the flat area in the center of the intersection, particularly in wet weather. Signals are designed to accommodate this limitation by detecting approaching cable cars and adjusting them to ensure that the signal is green when the cable car reaches the intersection, which keeps the track clear most of the time. However, unforeseen track obstructions, like stopped or stalled vehicles, can cause collisions. Cable cars are equipped with an emergency brake called a slot blade, which is a piece of metal that wedges into the metal cable slot in the street. The slot blade causes the cable car to abruptly stop, which can cause passengers to fall, and it disables the cable car in place causing damage to both the cable car and the track. For these reasons, the slot blade is used only as a last resort.

The intersection of California Street and Grant Avenue has the highest concentration of collisions and near-collisions in the cable car system. Enclosure 2 is a map of all cable car collisions and slot blade incidents between 2011 and 2016. During this time period, there were six reported cable car collisions and 42 documented near-collisions where the slot blades were used. In all six collisions and 35 of the 42 near-collisions, the scenario involved an eastbound cable car traveling downhill encountering a stopped vehicle attempting to illegally turn left onto Grant Avenue. Eastbound vehicles attempting to turn left onto Grant Avenue almost always must wait for a gap in westbound traffic, which causes them to sit stationary in the left lane, blocking the tracks in an area where the cable car cannot easily stop. This scenario occurs more often in wet weather; since the beginning of 2017 at least five more near-collisions fitting the aforementioned profile have been reported.



Eastbound California Street at Grant Avenue

The left turn restriction from eastbound California Street onto Grant Avenue is prominently signed and the traffic signal includes green arrows to reinforce that through the intersection movement is the only legal movement for eastbound vehicles. Still, a high number of crashes occur because vehicles violate this left turn restriction. The cable car lane would help alleviate this condition by further discouraging left turns and keeping vehicles out of the cable car track lane. A similar treatment has been in place on Powell Street between California and Sutter since 1971, and fewer such incidents occur there as a result.

The Proposed Project

SFMTA staff recommends amending the Transportation Code, Division II, Section 601 to designate a cable car only lane on California Street, eastbound, between Powell Street and Grant Avenue. Consistent with other cable car only areas, vehicles will be prohibited from making turns across the proposed cable car only lane. Left turn restrictions are proposed on California Street, eastbound, at

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Joice Street, Pratt Place and Sabin Place and on westbound California Street at Joice Street. Right turn only restrictions are included on southbound Joice Street, Pratt Place and Sabin Place at California Street and on northbound Joice Street at California Street.

These changes will reduce cable car collisions and slot blade incidents along this portion of California Street, which has the highest combined rate of collisions and near-collisions in the cable car system.

Specifically the SFMTA proposes the following traffic modifications:

- A. ESTABLISH – CABLE CAR ONLY LANE - California Street, eastbound, from Powell Street to Grant Avenue
- B. ESTABLISH – NO LEFT TURN - California Street, eastbound, at Joice Street, California Street, eastbound, at Pratt Street, California Street, eastbound, at Sabin Street, California Street, westbound, at Joice Street
- C. ESTABLISH – RIGHT TURN ONLY - Joice Street, southbound, at California Street, Joice Street, northbound, at California Street, Pratt Street, southbound, at California Street, Sabin Street, southbound, at California Street

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The SFMTA notified residents and property owners in the project area by mail the week of February 6, 2017. A letter explaining the changes and copies of Enclosure 3 were included in the mailer, which was sent to about 350 recipients. Four responses were received as of April 3, 2017, two of which expressed support for the proposal as-is. The other two responses articulated support for the project goals but expressed concern about the interaction between this project and construction at 875 California Street. To address this concern, staff recommends delaying installation of flex-hit posts along the proposed cable car only lane between Powell and Joice until after construction at 875 California Street is finished in 2019. This recommendation was communicated to those concerned and was received favorably.

SFMTA staff also consulted the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, which occupies most of the south side of the block between Grant Ave and Stockton St, to better understand how they use their loading dock and driveway that opens onto California Street just west of Grant Avenue. The hotel general manager outlined their operations including the types of vehicles that use the dock and the direction they approach from. Following this meeting, SFMTA staff adjusted the design so that the hotel would not experience any loss of access to their driveway and loading dock as a result of this project.

The SFMTA held a public hearing on March 3rd to solicit public comment on the proposal. No comments concerning this proposal were made at this hearing. Notices of the public hearing were posted in the project area two weeks prior to the hearing, and the public hearing date, location and time were included in the February 6 letter.

The SFMTA project engineer attended several cable car operator safety meetings to review the proposals, discuss potential impacts on transit and distribute the project factsheet. All of the cable car operators and staff in attendance at these meetings voiced their support for the project.

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ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The project team explored adjusting the traffic signal timing to provide downhill cable cars a head start over traffic, ensuring that the cable car would not be cut off by left turning vehicles. This plan was determined to cause more delay to both the cable cars and general traffic than the preferred alternative of reserving the left lane for the use of cable cars only.

FUNDING IMPACT

The total cost of this project is \$50,000. Capital funds for this project are from the SFMTA's FY17 operating budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed traffic modifications are subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On March 6, 2017, the San Francisco Planning Department determined that the proposed traffic modifications are categorically exempt from environmental review as a Class 1 exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301) for minor alteration of existing public facilities, pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

The Planning Department's determination (March 6, 2017, Case No. 2017-002107ENV) is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors. The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S. F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this calendar item.

RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors amend Transportation Code Division II, Section 601 to designate a cable car only lane on eastbound California Street from Powell Street to Grant Avenue, and approve the traffic modifications at the intersections of California Street and Joice Street, Pratt Place, and Sabin Place.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The City adopted the Vision Zero Policy in February 2014 which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2024; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency have developed the California Street Cable Car Lane Project to support the City's Vision Zero Policy; and,

WHEREAS, SFMTA staff have proposed traffic modifications as part of the California Street Cable Car Lane Project, a Vision Zero supporting project, as follows:

- A. ESTABLISH – CABLE CAR ONLY LANE - California Street, eastbound, from Powell Street to Grant Avenue
- B. ESTABLISH – NO LEFT TURN - California Street, eastbound, at Joice Street, California Street, eastbound, at Pratt Street, California Street, eastbound, at Sabin Street, California Street, westbound, at Joice Street
- C. ESTABLISH – RIGHT TURN ONLY - Joice Street, southbound, at California Street, Joice Street, northbound, at California Street, Pratt Street, southbound, at California Street, Sabin Street, southbound, at California Street and,

WHEREAS, The proposed parking and traffic modifications are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and,

WHEREAS, On March 6, 2017, the San Francisco Planning Department determined that the proposed parking and traffic modifications are categorically exempt as a Class 1 exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301) exemption for minor alteration of existing public facilities, pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations; and,

WHEREAS, A copy of the San Francisco Planning Department's determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors and the proposed action is an Approval Action as defined by the S. F. Administrative Code Chapter 31; and,

WHEREAS, The public has been notified about the proposed modifications and has been given the opportunity to comment through the public hearing process; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors amends Transportation Code, Division II, Section 601 to designate a cable car only lane on eastbound California Street from Powell Street to Grant Avenue, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves these traffic modifications as set forth in items A-C above to implement the California Street Cable Car Lane Project.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of April 18, 2017.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Enclosure 2: Cable Car Safety Map 2011-2016

Cable Car Safety

2011-2016

Created December 2016

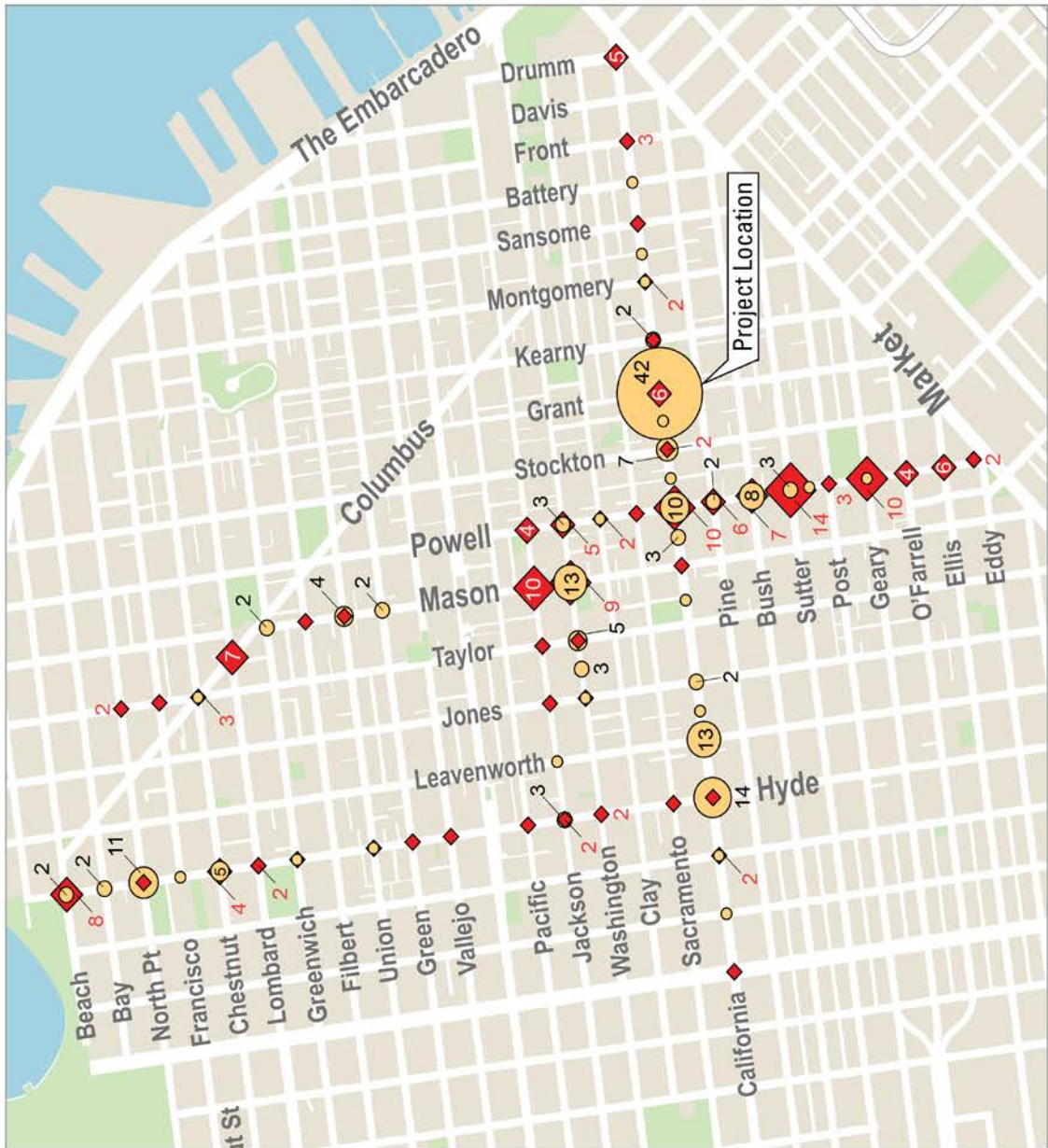
This map shows a five-year history of collisions and near-misses (slot-blades).

The size of the icon is relative to the number of events in the past five years. An icon with no number associated with it symbolizes one event in the past five years.

LEGEND

 Collision (number of events in red or white)

 Slot-Blade Event (number of events in black)

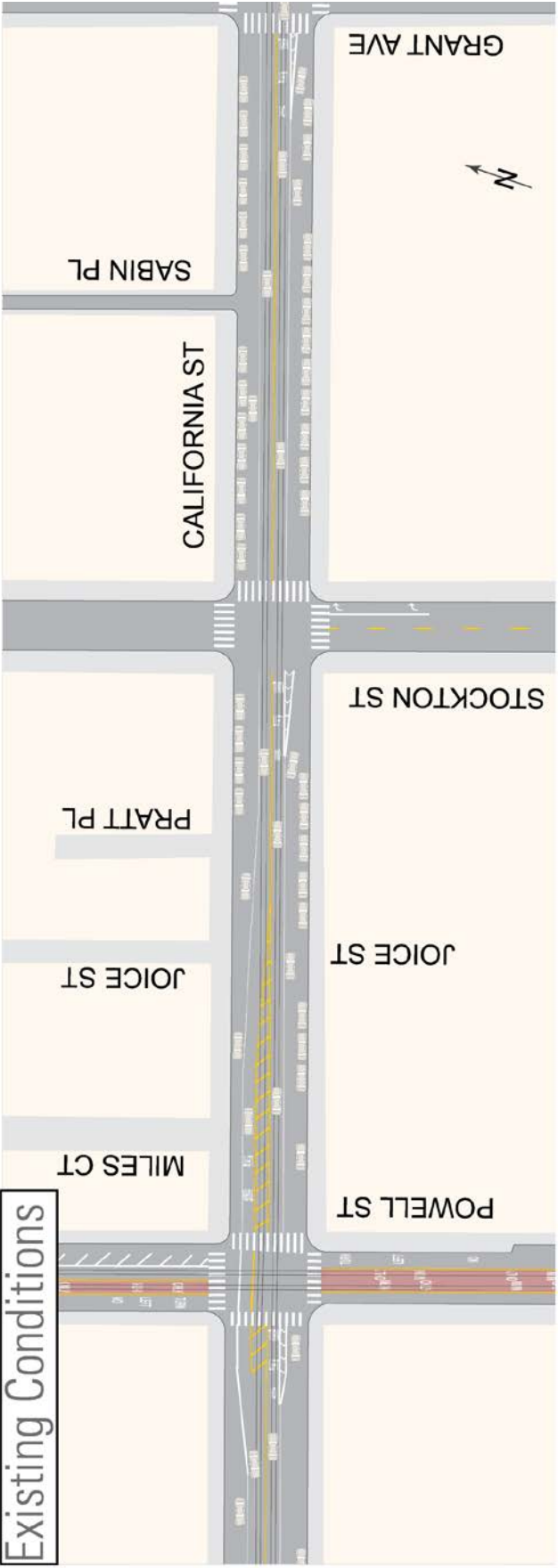
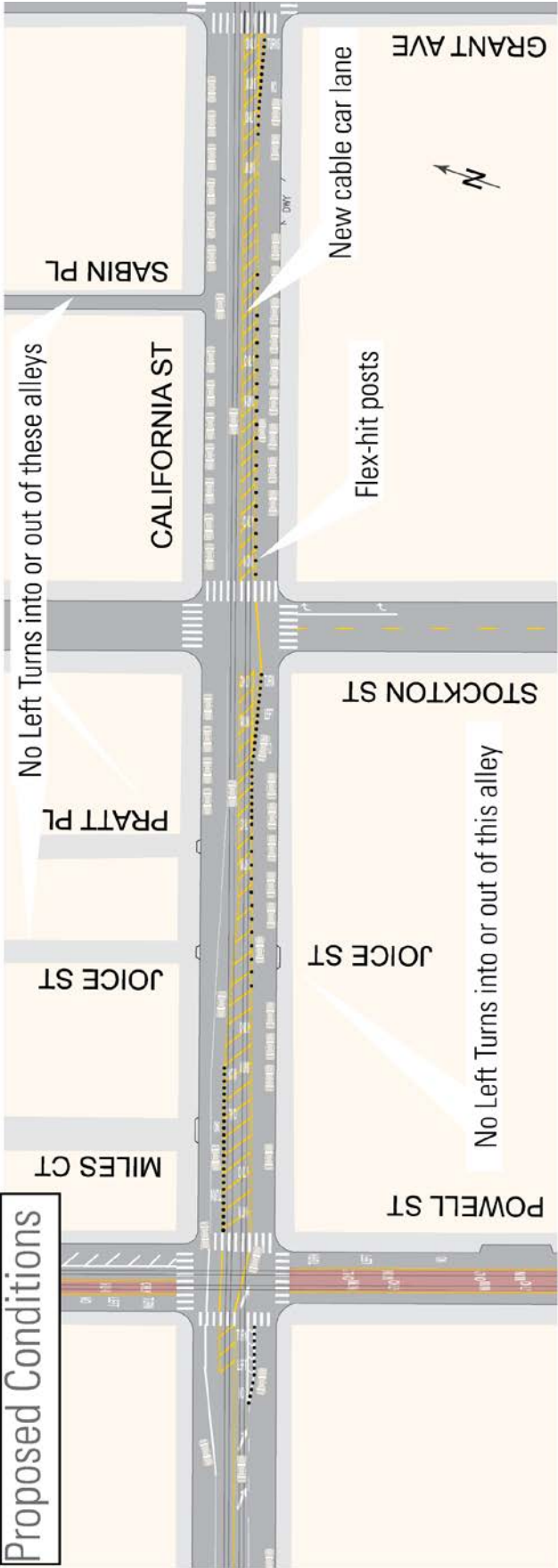


Date Saved: 12/7/2016
For reference contact: Dan.Howard@sfmta.com

By downloading this map, you are agreeing to the following disclaimer: "The City and County of San Francisco (City) provides the following data as a public record and no rights of any kind are granted to any person by the City's provision of this data. The City and County of San Francisco (City) makes no express or implied warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, or timeliness of this data. Any user who uses this data or otherwise warrants that the user does so entirely at their own risk. The City shall not be liable or otherwise responsible for any loss, harm, claim or action of any kind from any person arising from the use of this data. By accessing this data, the person accessing it acknowledges that she or he has read and does so under the condition that she or he agrees to the contents and terms of this disclaimer."



Enclosure 3: Existing and Proposed Conditions



RESOLUTION

[Transportation Code – California Street Cable Car Lane]

Resolution amending the Transportation Code to designate a cable car only lane on eastbound California Street from Powell Street to Grant Avenue.

NOTE: Additions are single-underline Times New Roman;
deletions are ~~strike-through Times New Roman~~.

The Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors of the City and County of San Francisco enacts the following regulations:

Section 1. Article 600 of Division II of the Transportation Code is hereby amended by revising Section 601, to read as follows:

Sec. 601. DESIGNATED TRANSIT-ONLY AREAS.

(a) The locations listed in this Section 601 are designated as Transit-only Areas. Any vehicle operating within a Transit-only Area during times that the Transit-only Area is enforced is in violation of Transportation Code, Division I, Section 7.2.72 (Driving in Transit-only Area).

(1) Cable Car Lanes On Powell Street Between California Street and Sutter Street. Except as to cable cars, Municipal Railway vehicles, and authorized emergency vehicles, no vehicle may operate within, over, upon or across the cable car lanes, or make any left or U-turn on the exclusive cable car lanes on Powell Street between California and Sutter Streets except to pass a disabled vehicle.

(2) Cable Car Lanes On Eastbound California Street Between Powell Street and Grant Avenue. Except as to cable cars, Municipal Railway vehicles, and authorized emergency vehicles, no vehicle may operate within, over, upon or across the cable car lanes, or make any

left or U-turn on the exclusive cable car lanes on eastbound California Street between Powell Street and Grant Avenue except to pass a disabled vehicle.

(~~23~~) West Portal Avenue Between 15th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. Except as to streetcars and Municipal Railway vehicles, no vehicle may operate within Transit-only Areas on West Portal Avenue between 15th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard.

(~~34~~) Exclusive Commercial Vehicle/Transit Area on Sansome Street. Except as to buses, taxis, authorized emergency vehicles, and commercial vehicles, no vehicle may operate within the Transit-only Area running southbound on Sansome Street between Washington Street and Bush Street.

(~~45~~) Exclusive Transit/Taxi/Commercial Vehicle Area on Powell Street from Ellis Street to Geary Street in the northbound (outbound) direction, and from O'Farrell Street to Ellis Street in the southbound (inbound) direction. Except as to buses, taxis, authorized emergency vehicles, and commercial vehicles, no vehicle may operate within the Transit/Taxi/Commercial Vehicle-only Area on Powell Street from Ellis Street to Geary Street in the northbound (outbound) direction, and from O'Farrell Street to Ellis Street in the southbound (inbound) direction.

(~~56~~) Judah Street, from 9th Avenue to 20th Avenue. Except as to streetcars and Municipal Railway vehicles, no vehicle may operate within Transit-only Areas on Judah Street from 9th Avenue to 20th Avenue.

(~~67~~) Other Transit-Only Areas. Except for buses, taxicabs, vehicles preparing to make a turn, vehicles entering into or existing from a stopped position at the curb, and vehicles entering into or exiting from a driveway, no vehicle may operate in the following Transit-only Areas during the times indicated:

Hours of Operation	Street	From	To
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All Times	1st St.	Market St.	Howard St.
	3rd St.	Townsend St.	Market St.
	4th St.	Harrison St.	Townsend St.
	4th St.	Market St.	Howard St.
	Church St.	16th St.	Duboce Ave.
	Clay St.	Sansome St.	Davis St.
	Fremont St.	Mission St.	Market St.
	Geary St.	Market St.	Powell St.
	Geary St.	Mason St.	Gough St.
	Geneva Ave. (Outbound)	Delano Ave.	280 Freeway Overpass
	Judah St.	20th Ave.	La Playa St.
	Market St. (Inbound)	12th St.	3rd St.
	Market St. (Outbound)	So. Van Ness Ave.	3rd St.
	O'Farrell St.	Gough St.	Hyde St.
	O'Farrell St.	Jones St.	Powell St.
	Post St.	Gough St.	Grant St.
	Potrero Ave. (SB)	25th St.	18th St.
	Stockton St.	Bush St.	Geary St.
	Sutter St.	Gough St.	Kearny St.
7:00 AM-7:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Sacramento St.	Drumm St.	Kearny St.
7:00 AM-7:00 PM, Monday-Saturday	Stockton St.	Geary St.	O'Farrell St.
7:00 AM-6:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Mission St. (Inbound)	5th St.	Beale St.
	Mission St. (Outbound)	Main St.	4th St.

7:00 AM-9:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Mission St. (Inbound)	11th St.	5th St.
	O'Farrell St.	Hyde St.	Jones St.
	Clay St.	Powell St.	Battery St.
4:00 PM-6:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Mission St. (Inbound)	11th St.	5th St.
	Mission St. (Outbound)	4th St.	11th St.
	Geary St.	Mason St.	Powell St.
	Sacramento St.	Kearny St.	Larkin St.
3:00 PM-6:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Sutter St.	Sansome St.	Kearny St.
3:00 PM-7:00 PM, Monday-Friday	Bush St.	Montgomery St.	Battery St.
	4th St.	Howard St.	Clementina

Section 2. Effective and Operative Dates. This ordinance shall become effective 31 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves this ordinance. The amendments to Section 601 of the Transportation Code made by this ordinance shall become operative on December 4, 2015, and shall expire by operation of law and be deemed repealed on June 4, 2017. The City Attorney shall thereafter cause those amendments to be removed from the Transportation Code.

Section 3. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles, numbers, letters, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Transportation Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions or deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under the official title of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By: _____
JOHN I. KENNEDY
Deputy City Attorney

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of April 18, 2017.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency