

West Portal Transit Delay Reduction Pilot Project



Stakeholder meeting with West Portal Merchants and Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association Traffic Safety Committee Members – Meeting #2

DRAFT Meeting Summary, Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Attendees: Phillip Pierce, Tony Henderson, Liz Brisson (SFMTA) and about 20 WPMA and GWPNA stakeholders

Liz Brisson described the revised proposed project proposals as documented in the revised Project Flyer, responded to other comments and suggestions made during Meeting #1, followed by open discussion.

The key changes made in response to feedback from the Meeting #1 include:

1. Dropping the proposal to restrict westbound left turns from Ulloa to West Portal Avenue
2. Dropping the proposal to restrict eastbound through movements on Ulloa at West Portal
3. Adding a proposal to restrict southbound left turns from Lenox to West Portal Avenue, Monday-Friday, 6-10 am
4. Adding a proposal to restrict northbound U-turns from West Portal northbound to West Portal southbound at all times
5. Deferring the date of the SFMTA Board meeting and Public Hearing where these proposals will be considered from May 7 to May 21

The below summarizes comment themes and provides SFMTA responses.

Evaluation plan

- What outcome do you want to see in order to consider these changes a “success”
- If you were to decide to extend the hours, what would the process be

SFMTA Response: SFMTA plans to look at changes in train delay, traffic volumes at several intersections, parking occupancy along West Portal Avenue, transit collisions, and seek feedback from stakeholders as a part of the evaluation. There is no predefined measurement of success, instead, it will be based on a holistic review of all data collected. SFMTA will share a draft evaluation plan for stakeholder input before finalizing it. After the evaluation, SFMTA would convene additional meetings with stakeholders before considering any changes or additions to the restrictions. Any additional restrictions or changes to restriction would have to go through an approval process including consideration by the SFMTA Board before they could go into effect.

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Left lane must turn left on West Portal northbound at Vicente

- Will this restriction slow down the train?

SFMTA Response: Based on existing traffic counts, we believe the volume of cars making this turn is unlikely to slow down the train more than the benefit to train of not having these cars present in the track lane of West Portal at Ulloa northbound. However, we would continue to monitor that location during the evaluation period.

Re-location of commercial loading zone on Ulloa from southeast corner of West Portal to east of re-located bus zone

- How will this affect the way that those loading here to reach a West Portal property works? E.g. would they move palettes in the roadway or on the sidewalk?

SFMTA Response: Those conducting loading this location could use a wedge/ramp to roll items up to the curb mid-block, or proceed to the nearest curb cut

Transit-only lane on West Portal Avenue northbound between Vicente and Ulloa

- Since many of us were not aware that it is ok to enter a transit-only lane to pass a double-parked vehicle, would you consider installing a sign to indicate that this is ok?

SFMTA Response: Based on experience elsewhere in the City, drivers typically enter the transit only lanes when the regular travel lane is blocked. So, this is something that we typically do not place signs for; however, we will monitor this interaction during the evaluation period.

Other suggested alternatives

Minimizing delays to trains from people walking

- Suggestion of a pedestrian-only signal
- Suggestion of a “scramble” where traffic in all directions stops for pedestrians
- Suggestion to use something besides Muni vehicles as pedestrian barrier

SFMTA Response: It is not feasible to implement a pedestrian-only signal due to state and federal requirements. A “scramble” would likely add even more delay at this intersection due to the amount of time it takes to let pedestrians cross in all directions and that all other traffic must be stopped during this phase of a signal cycle. If SFMTA is able to identify an alternative location for the 57 Terminal, then it is possible Muni maintenance vehicles could be located elsewhere, but they currently serve as a way of channelizing pedestrians. If the 57 Terminal is re-located, SFMTA

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would consider installing railing instead. However, Muni maintenance vehicles sometimes need to park in close proximity to the station as a part of the nature of their work so they would continue to be present at the station.

Relocate 48 weekend/evening terminal to 57 Terminal

SFMTA Response: This is not feasible as it would add more conflicts to a high activity area, and SFMTA eventually hopes to relocate the 57 Terminal.

Can you provide West Portal merchants free or discounted advertising space on Muni vehicles/property?

SFMTA Response: During the Twin Peaks Tunnel construction work, SFMTA did provide advertising including a new logo, event support, banners and a new merchant map.. SFMTA is looking into the possibility of additional support and will follow up with a response.

Other comments/questions

Concern that bigger issue with subway delays is aging rail infrastructure

SFMTA response: It is true that some delays to Muni rail vehicles are caused by Muni system challenges unrelated to West Portal traffic. SFMTA has been working on a variety of operational strategies to address these aspects of rail delay, including stationing Parking Control Officers (PCOs) at West Portal Station during AM and PM peak hours. In addition, SFMTA will be testing more active management of the West Portal intersection for train throughput by using a new feature called the “Local Control Panel” that allows a rail inspector to manually operate the train signal at the intersection. In addition, by simplifying the number of legal traffic movements, we anticipate that the PCOs and rail inspectors will be able to better actively manage the system by allowing them to focus on train throughput.

West Portal Elementary Comments

At meeting, conveyed potential concern with no left-turn from West Portal northbound to Ulloa as that is one of the common routes parents use to do school drop-off in the morning. SFMTA has had a chance to discuss further with the school Principal and parent volunteers. Based on those discussions, they do not object to the northbound left-turn restriction and supports the Lenox southbound no left turn restriction.

SFMTA Response: Comments noted.

GWPNA cares about quality of life which is affected by whether there is a thriving business district. These changes will be hard to do right after the Twin Peaks Tunnel Construction

SFMTA Response: SFMTA shares this concern. The evaluation will include parking occupancy as a metric to help gauge whether fewer people driving are patronizing West Portal businesses after

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implementation. This is also why we have conducted stakeholder meetings and revised the proposals in response to merchant and resident feedback.

It appears like there are two travel lanes on Ulloa west of West Portal Avenue:

SFMTA Response: Our understanding is that there is just one travel lane in this location, but people often use the bus zone as a turn lane. However, we understand that the current configuration may be confusing to drivers and will investigate further and report back on potential recommendations to alleviate the confusion while also serving the traffic needs.

Can SFMTA elevate a response to safety concerns about the 5-way Vicente/Wawona/Madrone intersection

SFMTA Response: We are coordinating with others at SFMTA involved in the traffic calming project in this area and will follow up with a response.

Has the SF Police Department reviewed this plan?

SFMTA Response: Yes, there an interagency review process for traffic changes that includes the SF Police Department and they had no objection with these proposals.

Would the 48 inbound shelter move if the stop is moved?

SFMTA Response: Yes, the shelter would be removed. The current location does not have adequate space for a shelter, though we are investigating the potential of installing a bench.

Next Steps

SFMTA is scheduled to present at GWPNA's monthly meeting on May 1. SFMTA will move forward with considering these items for approval at its May 21 regular SFMTA Board meeting. When the date is finalized, all stakeholders will be emailed with the details regarding how to comment on this item.