

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 3

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Information and discussion regarding staff update and community input on the current use of the Great Highway; and regarding the development of a possible pilot project of up to two years to close all or part of the Great Highway south of Lincoln Way to vehicle traffic, subject to environmental review and approval by the Board of Supervisors.

SUMMARY:

- The temporary Great Highway car-free coastal promenade between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard was initiated on April 3, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to create a safe space for recreation and essential trips.
- The Great Highway is situated along San Francisco’s dynamic western shoreline and is proposed to be closed in 2023, south of Sloat Boulevard, due to severe coastal erosion.
- San Francisco’s Transit First Policy, General Plan and Recreation and Park Department (RPD) and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Strategic Plans support prioritization of non-vehicular travel, emissions reduction, open space opportunities, and climate change adaptation.
- The District 4 Mobility Study, initiated in 2020, conducted community engagement and evaluated options for the long-term future of the Great Highway, including the potential for full or partial closure to vehicular traffic.
- In early 2021, the SFMTA delivered a series of traffic calming measures to improve safety and traffic conditions and to direct traffic to adjacent high capacity corridors; and in the spring of 2021 conducted additional network analysis.
- RPD and SFMTA have identified elements for consideration and piloting that could be used along the Great Highway during full citywide activity which would allow for inclusive public engagement, monitoring and evaluation to develop a long-term recommendation.
- The decision about piloting rests with the Board of Supervisors. RPD and SFMTA consider the joint hearing to be the kickoff for a robust, multilingual outreach and engagement process.

ENCLOSURES:

1. History and context of the Great Highway
2. COVID -19 and The Multimodal Transportation Network and Traffic Analysis

APPROVALS:

	DATE
DIRECTOR 	<u>June 7, 2021</u>
SECRETARY 	<u>June 7, 2021</u>

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: June 10, 2021

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PURPOSE

Information and discussion regarding staff update and community input on the current use of the Great Highway; and regarding the development of a possible pilot project of up to two years to close all or part of the Great Highway south of Lincoln Way to vehicle traffic, subject to environmental review and approval by the Board of Supervisors.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

Recreation and Park Department's Strategic Plan: *consistent with 9 objectives in 4 strategies:* Inspire Space with clean and fun parks that promote our parks' historic and cultural resources; Inspire Play to promote active living and the safety, health and well-being of our youth and seniors; Inspire Investment through community engagement and advocacy; and Inspire Stewardship by strengthening the City's climate resiliency by protecting and enhancing natural resources.

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Strategic Plan: *consistent with 3 goals and 4 objectives:* To create a safer transportation experience for everyone; Make transit and other sustainable modes of transportation the most attractive and preferred means of travel; and to improve the quality of life and environment in San Francisco and the region.

Transit First Policy: *consistent with 6 objectives, especially 3, 5, & 6:* To encourage the use of public right-of-way by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, and strive to reduce traffic and improve public health and safety; enhance pedestrian areas to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians and to encourage travel by foot; and promote bicycling by encouraging safe streets for riding, convenient access to transit, bicycle lanes, and secure bicycle parking.

San Francisco General Plan: The pilot effort along the Great Highway that enhances open space and connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians and shifts vehicular traffic to high-capacity roadways is consistent with the Western Shoreline Area Plan, Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE), Transportation Element, Environmental Protection Element, Air Quality Element, and the Housing Element in the General Plan.

Other Plans & Policies: Additionally, the pilot effort aligns with elements of other citywide plans and policies such as the 2017 Transportation Sector Climate Action Strategy, Vision Zero Strategy, Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Consequence Assessment.

DESCRIPTION

The Great Highway parallels San Francisco's western shoreline, running north-south within a set of overlapping jurisdictions. The roadway itself is under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) and is a piece of the citywide transportation network managed by the San

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Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA).

Conversion of the roadway from vehicle use to a car-free coastal promenade, beginning on April 3, 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, has provided a unique open space opportunity for people to enjoy and aligns with multiple City transportation, open space and environmental policies. At the same time, the emergency closure has affected the transportation network of the Outer Sunset and beyond. Substantial public feedback indicates that the car-free promenade has been both a welcome addition to San Francisco's open space offerings, and a challenging situation for residents and those visiting or moving through the Outer Sunset.

Continuing the coastal promenade use of Great Highway beyond the emergency period would require legislative action by the Board of Supervisors. Any such change will involve partnership between RPD and SFMTA to support open space use and address changes in traffic and circulation in the Outer Sunset and adjacent neighborhoods. Consideration of the issue and competing demands has occurred thus far through the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) District 4 Mobility Study and through the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis that the SFMTA has initiated; ongoing communications with members of the public, advocates, neighborhood groups, and Supervisors in Districts 4, 1, and 7 have also been instrumental in defining the complex issues for further consideration.

Furthermore, San Francisco's coastal resources and municipal infrastructure along its western shoreline, including the Great Highway, are situated along a dynamic coast and are vulnerable to coastal erosion and climate hazards. In the years ahead, significant investment in these coastal resources and municipal infrastructure south of Sloat Boulevard is planned to address the erosion which will create more resilient infrastructure, improve coastal resources, create a vibrant and accessible shoreline trail and transform the City's coastal circulation system. This includes the proposed closure of the Great Highway Extension between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard which is proposed for 2023 by the San Francisco Public Utility Commission's Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project. Therefore, it is timely to re-envision this unique part of the San Francisco's coastline as the city emerges from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See Enclosure 1 for additional history and context of the Great Highway.

A. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN USAGE

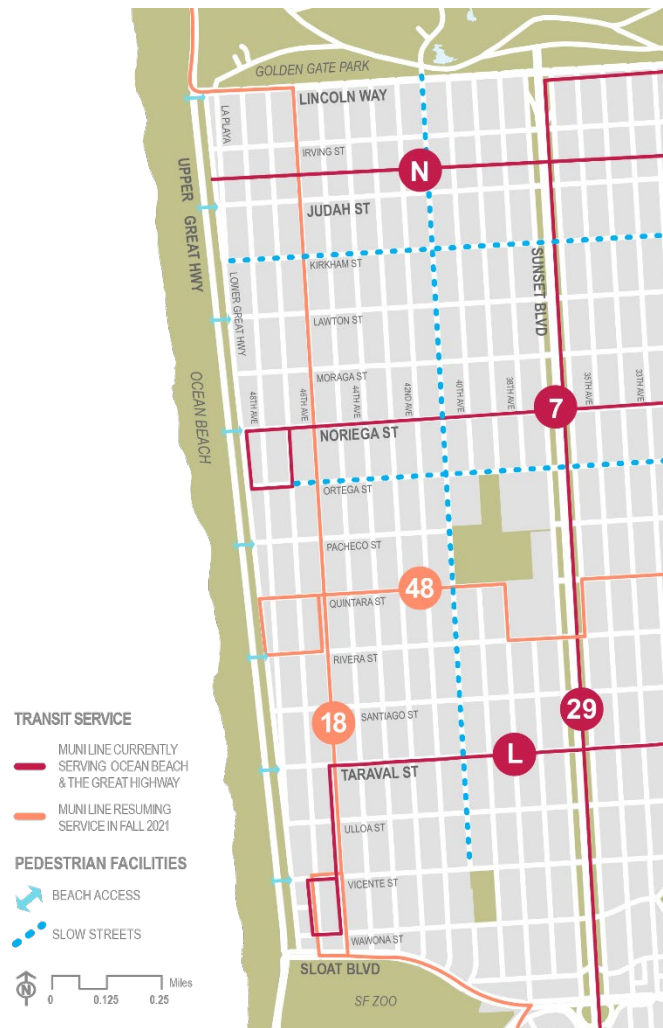
One of the biggest changes that has occurred since the Great Highway was repurposed has been a surge in walking and bicycling along the Great Highway. As a result of the temporary car-free coastal promenade, per RPD ongoing data collection approximately 3,240 bicyclists and pedestrians used the Great Highway on weekdays and 5,230 on weekend days and holidays between October 2020 and May 2021, making the Great Highway the second most visited open space in the city after Golden Gate Park. This past January saw a jump in popularity, breaking the record for daily visits three times and setting a record at 11,661 people accessing the promenade in a single day. Each month, an average of 126,000 people walk, bicycle and skate along the promenade, enjoying opportunities for

physically distanced recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Usage along the Great Highway varies depending on the weather and wind conditions.

As of early summer 2021, it is not possible to project usage of a Great Highway promenade during a time of “regular” or more stable post-COVID-19 pandemic activity, which is a significant reason that RPD and SFMTA feel that a pilot effort would allow for inclusive engagement, monitoring and evaluation as a useful course of action.

B. MULTI-MODAL ACCESS, PARKING MANAGEMENT AND TRANSIT ACCESS

The city’s westside multimodal transportation system connects residents and visitors to schools, work sites, businesses, open space and to the city and region. The major elements of the roadway network, are largely organized in a grid, including 19th Avenue, Sunset Boulevard, Fulton Street, Lincoln Way, Noriega Street, Skyline Boulevard and Sloat Boulevard. The city’s westside neighborhoods of the Sunset and Richmond Districts are served by local transit including light rail and bus service that connect residents and visitors to Civic Center, SOMA, Union Square and downtown, schools and other neighborhoods. The well-developed network of bikeways connects residents throughout the westside; emergency “Slow Streets” on 41st Avenue, Kirkham Avenue and Ortega Avenue are designed to limit through traffic and establish shared spaces allowing people to use them for traveling by foot and bicycles, and future configurations for this network are being explored by SFCTA and SFMTA.



Map 1: Transit service and pedestrian infrastructure during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to changes in commuter and travel patterns resulting in new traffic patterns, transit service reductions and street changes which have placed pressure on certain intersections and roadway segments and created congestion and delay for some motorists in the Richmond and Sunset Districts. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Upper Great Highway carried approximately 20,000 cars per day using the roadway for through travel since the only access points are at Sloat Blvd. and Lincoln Way, based on data that was collected in May 2019. During that time, the roadway carried about equal volumes (approx.

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10,000 trips/daily) on the north and south bound lanes. The SFMTA's Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis was initiated to better understand where these trips are now occurring and how the broader traffic volumes and patterns have changed over the past year. For further discussion of traffic and circulation changes, please see Section E below.

Parking access has remained unchanged since the pandemic began with three public parking lots along the Great Highway. On-street unrestricted parking is also available throughout the area including along the Lower Great Highway, at the intersection of Lincoln Way and along the median of Sloat Blvd. A new public parking facility at the intersection of Skyline Boulevard and Great Highway to support public access to Fort Funston, Ocean Beach and Lake Merced is proposed to be built by city partners as part of the SFPUC's Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project. Over the past six months, parking availability surveys were conducted over seven weekends along the 15 blocks of the Lower Great Highway. Analysis showed between one and 12 available spaces per block during the mid-day and afternoon. Additional parking was observed to be available in the blocks just east of the Lower Great Highway.

Additional details on traffic, parking and transit can be found in Enclosure 2.

C. IMPLEMENTED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

As noted above, the temporary reconfiguration of the Great Highway and other adjacent streets along with new commute patterns contributed to changing traffic patterns in the westside neighborhoods. Based on SFMTA analysis of data, collisions in the Sunset are down relative to pre-pandemic totals; however, with Great Highway no longer available as a through route, some drivers are using local Outer Sunset streets instead, and Great Highway itself is a new destination attracting visitors. In response to public concerns and at the request of District 4 Supervisor Gordon Mar, the SFMTA and partners implemented a series of traffic calming measures in 2020 and 2021 which were delivered over two phases to improve safety conditions for all users and to encourage traffic to use high-capacity arterials, such as Lincoln Way, Sunset Boulevard and Sloat Boulevard. In addition, SFMTA Parking Control Officers and San Francisco Police Department increased staff resources to help manage traffic and parking, especially on weekends.

Phase 1 of traffic calming efforts consisted of installing four speed tables which were originally developed as part of the Lower Great Highway Pedestrian Improvement Project. Phase 1 prioritized turn restrictions and installing delineators at key intersections in the Outer Sunset in the immediate vicinity of the Upper Great Highway.

Phase 2 was funded in February 2021 and delivered by April 2021. This phase installed 12 stop signs, 24 speed cushions and a speed table along with placing six changeable message signs at strategic locations to help improve safety conditions and divert traffic to high capacity streets, such as Lincoln Way and Sunset Boulevard where there is sufficient traffic capacity.

These measures are the first step in managing change around Great Highway. SFMTA will continue to monitor the results of these traffic calming efforts going forward.

D. DISTRICT 4 MOBILITY STUDY

Since the summer of 2019, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) has been leading the District 4 Mobility Study to explore ways to increase the use of non-automobile modes in the Outer Sunset and Parkside neighborhoods. This study broadly aims to improve health, livability, and economic vitality in District 4 while addressing climate change at the local level. The District 4 Mobility Study led the first phase of the planning for the long-term future of the Great Highway and conducted community outreach including a survey, data collection, network analysis / traffic modeling and a high-level evaluation of five concepts for the long-term use of the Great Highway:

- Concept 1: maintains the Great Highway as a four-lane roadway with two vehicle lanes in each direction.
- Concept 2: reduces the width of the Great Highway to one vehicle lane in each direction and creates a promenade in the southbound travel lanes.
- Concept 3: opens the Great Highway as a coastal promenade and closes it completely to



Map 2: Traffic calming and diversion measures during the COVID-19 pandemic

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vehicle traffic.

- Concept 4: opens the Great Highway as a car-free coastal promenade, similar to Concept 3 above, but only during weekends/holidays and/or certain seasons.
- Concept 5: reduces the width of the Great Highway to two southbound vehicle lanes in the current northbound lanes and creates a promenade in the current southbound lanes.

Throughout the District 4 Mobility Study, the project team considered how each of the concepts for the Great Highway aligned with citywide policy goals and objectives such as resilience, open space creation, sustainable mode choices, recreation, health and well-being, safety/Vision Zero, economic vitality, impacts to traffic and transit, and capital and operational costs.

The District 4 Mobility Study has not concluded but, preliminary findings from the evaluation that were shared at a March Open House found the following:

- Bicycle and pedestrian usage is estimated to be highest under Concept 3, the car-free promenade concept.
- The car-free promenade would generate 17 acres of new public open space, which can also help to improve the overall resilience and health of the dunes and coastal area if the management of the corridor shifts from managing a four-lane roadway to managing a public open space/promenade that prioritizes coastal access, stewardship and biodiversity.
- The rate of collisions in the vicinity of the Great Highway under the pandemic closure remained the same as prior to the pandemic, while the overall District 4 rate of collisions trended down. The evaluation found that the highest risk for multimodal conflict between cars/bicycles/pedestrians is in Concepts 1 and 2. Under Concept 1, pedestrians would need to cross four lanes of traffic to access the beach and cyclists ride with vehicles. Under Concept 2, pedestrians cross two lanes of traffic and there is potential for head-on vehicle collisions due to the two-way traffic and lack of barrier.
- Preliminary analysis showed potential traffic impacts due to the diversion of north-south through traffic from the Great Highway. Further analysis is underway and will be included in the SFCTA report to the Transportation Authority Commission scheduled for June 22, 2021.
 - The traffic analysis examines the Great Highway concepts considering 2019 traffic volumes in order to understand the impact of the concepts under future conditions when traffic volumes return to conditions similar to those prior to the pandemic.

The District 4 Mobility Study conducted a public survey in late 2020 and received nearly 4,000 responses with 95% from San Francisco, 33% from the Sunset District in zip codes 94116 and 94122, and 16% in the Richmond District (94121). The survey provided feedback on four concepts and broke down responses for all respondents and those in the Sunset and Outer Richmond. The Great Highway's temporary car-free coastal promenade was supported by 53% of all respondents and 52% of Sunset respondents while 53% of the Outer Richmond respondents favored reopening the roadway to cars.

Additional information about the D4 Mobility Study can be found here:

<https://www.sfcta.org/projects/district-4-mobility-study>

E. TRAFFIC / CIRCULATION SYSTEM ANALYSIS

The SFMTA is focused on improving the understanding of the dynamic traffic network and travel conditions for residents and visitors of the Richmond and Sunset Districts. SFMTA has engaged transportation consultants Fehr & Peers to collect and analyze data via the on-going Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis. This technical analysis is also leveraging the analysis that is being conducted via the District 4 Mobility Study. As part of the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis, staff are currently collecting and evaluating detailed and comprehensive traffic data, conducting site visits at key locations, reviewing observational data and monitoring the efficacy of recent traffic calming measures to understand how the network is operating. The analysis also is identifying intersections/roadway segments where additional investment or improvements in the short term would improve safety or overall functionality of the network, and improve connectivity between the Richmond and Sunset.

Working with the SFMTA, Fehr & Peers analyzed a combination of traffic counts and data obtained from Streetlight, a data vendor that harnesses anonymous cell phone data to measure travel patterns, to understand how travel changed between the fall of 2019 and the winter of 2021 (the most recent data that is available from Streetlight). Based on travel data collected from 2019 for typical weekday and weekends, the Upper Great Highway primarily served as a connection for people driving between the Richmond District and locations in southwest San Francisco and northwest San Mateo County, with a relatively small proportion of trips originating outside of these neighborhoods. Approximately 60% of vehicle trip origins and destinations for trips on the Upper Great Highway were within San Francisco. Approximately 33% were within San Mateo County with the remaining 7% were spread among other counties. Approximately half of the people driving on the Upper Great Highway were residents of San Francisco and 40 percent were residents of San Mateo County.

While some of the traffic that previously used the Upper Great Highway in fall 2019 shifted to parallel routes through the Sunset in winter 2021, based on counts taken in winter 2021 traffic volumes decreased on most streets, including Sunset Boulevard, 19th Avenue, and Lower Great Highway. Traffic volumes increased on Lincoln Way between Upper Great Highway and Sunset Boulevard and on Chain of Lakes, where they doubled from 2019 to 2021. The increased traffic on Chain of Lakes includes drivers who shifted from Upper Great Highway to Chain of Lakes and Sunset Boulevard, which has resulted in southbound vehicle queues extending from Lincoln Way to JFK Drive and additional delay for southbound drivers across Golden Gate Park. SFMTA, RPD and Fehr & Peers are evaluating opportunities for short-term changes to the area to reduce observed delays.

F. NEED FOR PILOT APPROACH

Modifying the use of the Great Highway has created new challenges given the dynamic traffic conditions as the city begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The times and uses of a Great Highway promenade when there are full activity levels citywide are challenging to predict, as are the potential impacts of the diversion of through traffic from Great Highway to other streets and the

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efficacy of measures to manage for it. Piloting solutions would allow for exploration of how an inclusive, integrated and vibrant public coastal promenade can be created while successfully managing impacts to the surrounding multimodal transportation system.

A pilot effort south of Lincoln Way would build upon previous and current work such as the Ocean Beach Master Plan, the District 4 Mobility Study, and the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis to better understand visitor usage patterns, traffic conditions and access to a coastal promenade and adjacent open space. Real-time assessment of these conditions along with inclusive community engagement and outreach is necessary for a fully-informed decision regarding the long-term future and management of the Great Highway.

Even though the Great Highway has been temporarily repurposed over the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of outstanding topics and issues require further exploration, and additional community engagement. A structured approach to piloting would provide RPD and SFMTA the opportunity to balance competing demands, values and priorities via a focused monitoring and evaluation program that engages the public, community stakeholders, agency partners and elected officials. A pilot would assess the potential benefits and impacts of vehicle restrictions on the Great Highway through a robust effort supported by ongoing improvements in the transportation network (e.g. modifications at Lincoln Way and Upper Great Highway) to address observed effects. Vehicle restrictions and promenade usage can be best analyzed during a post-pandemic period when traffic patterns and commute patterns are more consistent than during the Great Highway's year as a car-free coastal promenade during the pandemic.

SFMTA has implemented initial traffic calming and diversion measures as described above, and will be further modifying the signal and roadway at Great Highway and Lincoln Way and the intersection and connection to Martin Luther King Drive in Golden Gate Park. Further changes at Chain of Lakes, Martin Luther King, and Lincoln Way will be considered to better manage traffic flow and pedestrian and bicycle safety, and the coordination between the Golden Gate Park street network (including Slow Streets in the park) and the surrounding street connections. Preliminary analysis in the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis indicates that such changes could be effective in managing traffic flow and understanding how drivers respond to a changed network, providing a way to further understand what long-term capital investments might be useful. These also could be pursued as separate projects independent of any pilot efforts for Great Highway.

During a pilot period, RPD would not plan to pursue any irreversible physical changes to the Great Highway itself; however, future improvements that would be considered if car-free use of Great Highway was recommended for the long term could include new gates, signage and wayfinding, traffic calming measures and removal of the traffic signals.

The alternative to a potential pilot would be to restore the Upper Great Highway to its pre-COVID-19 configuration. If no action is taken by the Board of Supervisors in the coming months, such conversion back to a four-lane roadway would occur soon after the expiration of the City's emergency order.

G. EVALUATION OF A PILOT EFFORT

The evaluation component of a pilot effort is critical, and RPD and SFMTA seek input on topics to include in the evaluation. The purpose of piloting would be to evaluate how the reconfiguration and changed use of Great Highway affects people living in, visiting, and moving through the Outer Sunset in a time of full post-pandemic activity. Some issues to consider are parking, curb management and impacts to transit service and to emergency vehicle access and response times, as well as dune management and addressing shared needs between Ocean Beach and the Great Highway. A pilot effort would monitor and analyze conditions along the Great Highway and the surrounding multimodal transportation network, including but not limited to:

- Visitor usage of the coastal promenade and beach area
- Development and monitoring of programmed activities and recreational experiences
- Traffic and safety conditions throughout the adjacent multimodal transportation network
- Transit performance on routes affected by the pilot
- Efficacy of traffic calming, diversion and management measures
- Emergency vehicle access and response times
- Vehicle and bicycle parking and curb management adequacy in the area
- Bicycle, pedestrian, transit and auto access to the coastal promenade and within the study area
- User experience and public's perceptions of safety, access and comfort in using space

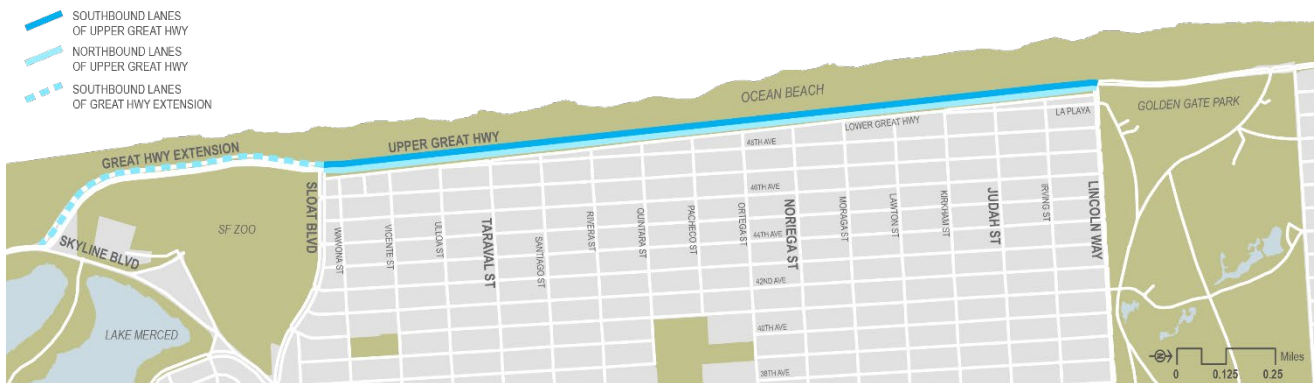
H. PILOT ELEMENTS

SFMTA and RPD have identified elements of pilot approach that are key areas for consideration and input: duration, physical extent, timing and reporting and transparency. All elements would be independent of each other within a pilot framework. SFMTA and RPD are not seeking a to define a single preferred approach combining the elements at this time; rather, feedback and input from the public and from the SFMTA Board and the Recreation and Park Commission will help staff design of a comprehensive proposal for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Equity would be considered throughout all aspects of a pilot framework including culturally appropriate outreach/engagement and would also include understanding if there are any barriers to accessing and using the open space site with a focus on gender, race, income, age and physical ability. A pilot effort would also explore how best to address barriers and obstacles to ensure the open space is a truly welcoming public open space for diverse members of the public.

1. **Duration:** A two-year duration would best serve the purposes of a pilot approach to the decision about Great Highway's future use by allowing for testing of solutions and data gathering over a full year, analysis, and adequate time for inclusive and comprehensive public engagement. At appropriate stages of the effort, staff would report to the Recreation and Park Commission and SFMTA Board to provide a status update and overview, and take direction on potential changes or modifications to inform a recommendation for long-term configuration and use of Great Highway.

2. **Physical Extent:** The pilot effort would focus on the Great Highway from Lincoln Way to Sloat Boulevard; within that area, SFMTA and RPD have identified two possible configurations:
- **Full Promenade:** maintain the emergency configuration of promenade across both sides of the Great Highway, with no vehicular use other than emergency vehicle access
 - **Northbound Vehicular Travel:** The pre-COVID-19 southbound (ocean side) lanes would be used as a promenade and the northbound (land side) lanes would be restored to northbound vehicle use. This configuration would require signal cycle changes at Great Highway/Lincoln Way to accommodate pedestrians crossing.

Potential Additional Extent: Great Highway Extension (Southbound Lane): As discussed above, the SFPUC proposes to close the Great Highway Extension (between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard) in 2023 as a key component of the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project which is currently under environmental review, independent of the COVID-19 emergency. Including the closure of the southbound lane of Great Highway Extension in the piloting would facilitate successful diversion of Great Highway traffic and would provide a better understanding of operations with the anticipated closure of Great Highway Extension, which is likely to occur within 2 years regardless of the ultimate configuration of Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard.



Map 3: Potential configurations of the physical extent of the pilot effort

3. **Timing:** The District 4 Mobility Study considered both full-time and part-time approaches to promenade use of Great Highway. Each approach would involve tradeoffs in their relative degrees of promenade availability, operational considerations, and traffic impacts. RPD and SFMTA consider three options feasible for evaluation: Full Time, Weekend, and Seasonal.
- **Full Time:** This approach would make a promenade available at all times and correspondingly would result in the most diversion of through vehicles to other routes. Great Highway would provide a car-free travel route and a recreational resource throughout the week. Under this approach, vehicles would be affected during

peak times for work and school travel, resulting in potential delays for those traveling by car or transit. A Full-Time pilot would provide the most complete information on the transportation system impacts of car-free use of Great Highway, and would allow commuters, residents and visitors to find consistent, new patterns of travel without the Great Highway.

- **Weekend:** This approach would provide a promenade during the times of most recreational use (i.e. the weekend) and open Great Highway to vehicles during the week when there is less recreational demand and more commute travel. Part-time restrictions would be less disruptive to traffic and circulation during key travel times such as the standard work week and school. Parking and traffic issues experienced in the Outer Sunset during the emergency period would be expected to continue to occur on weekends. Evaluation of this approach would consider the issues and impacts of part time access to a RPD recreational resource, since access is reduced for those who work or attend school on weekends. A Weekend pilot would require ongoing traffic management by city staff to execute and presents operational and safety challenges given the need to flex the space between public usage and as a roadway.
- **Seasonal:** This approach would allow promenade use of Great Highway for a portion of the year, potentially summer and/or times of year that coincide with the most common incidence of road closure for sand. Seasonal closure would present opportunities and challenges similar to those described above for Full Time and Weekend, but would provide a way to manage them towards times when the impacts would be least disruptive and the benefits would be most substantial.

4. **Reporting and Transparency:** Piloting solutions requires transparency and trust with stakeholders, the public and decision-making bodies. Examples of tools that could be used to support ongoing dialogue about Great Highway include those below which would also be translated and shared through culturally competent outreach:

- Project webpage accessible through both SFMTA and RPD websites
- Quarterly progress reports including summary of data collection, and any interim findings
- Informational report to SFMTA Board and RPD Commission (either separately or through joint hearings) within 9 months and 18 months
- Informational report to SFCTA Board within 12 months
- Final report and recommendations to SF Board of Supervisors prior to the conclusion of the 24-month pilot

Within a pilot period, other efforts could include a stewardship and management framework in coordination with National Park Service and other partners to identify opportunities to reduce trash, educate users on the natural resources along the coast and encourage accessing the beach through established routes. During this time there would be continued coordination with Public Works and SFPUC on sand removal along the roadway.

I. EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT DURING A PILOT

Throughout a pilot period, RPD and SFMTA would implement an inclusive and culturally appropriate, multilingual community engagement program that inspires exploring Ocean Beach, its coastal areas and the Great Highway, and would consider impacts to westside residents, visitors, and those moving through the area.

Various methods should be employed to both gather data as part of monitoring and to ensure there is a transparent and inclusive community-based process. This engagement could include:

- **Community Meetings/Open Houses:** a minimum of 4 community meetings over the course of the pilot effort, as well as participation in scheduled meetings of community groups.
- **Site walks/Focus Group Meetings:** conduct site walks along Great Highway, in neighborhood, and beach with different constituents to better understand site, user experience, challenges and opportunities. Focus group meetings, potentially in-language, to examine specific topics like promenade usage and design, neighborhood traffic calming, and beach access.
- **Online Input:** use website and emails to gather feedback from public and stakeholders.
- **Surveys:** using a variety of survey methods, better understand user needs and areas for making adjustments or improvements to inform the future proposal.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

Since the establishment of the Great Highway's temporary car-free coastal promenade on April 3, 2020, the SFMTA and RPD project team has been supporting the District 4 Mobility Study which has led the first phase of planning for the long-term future of the Great Highway. The SFCTA held two virtual town hall meetings on November 21, 2020 and March 27, 2021 where hundreds of attendees attended and shared their feedback on the future of the Great Highway, conceptual designs, traffic calming, access and neighborhood livability issues. There were also virtual meetings held with stakeholder groups from across the Outer Sunset. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in person outreach events were not feasible. The District 4 Mobility Study also conducted a survey in late 2020 and generated outreach material that were translated into the Chinese language. A version of the March 2021 Town Hall was recorded and translated into Cantonese and shared with stakeholders.

During the past year, SFMTA, RPD, and policymakers have met with members of the public and received a multitude of email communications regarding the Great Highway, expressing strong feelings about its use and conveying specific issues of concern. These sentiments about Great Highway will continue to help shape RPD and SFMTA considerations about pilot efforts with regard to their duration, extent, timing, and evaluation criteria.

The public engagement related to the future configuration and use of Great Highway is still very

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much underway, and indeed the approach of piloting solutions is intended to serve as an extended phase of public engagement. After the joint hearing if there is support for creation of a pilot, staff plan to conduct targeted stakeholder engagement and community outreach to gather feedback on a pilot framework including attending the SFMTA CAC and RPD PROSAC meetings.

FUNDING IMPACTS

The District 4 Mobility Study conducted a high-level cost estimates of both annual operational costs and capital costs to implement for five concepts. Initial findings from the analysis are discussed below.

RPD staff estimated that operational costs to maintain the Great Highway as a four-lane roadway in the pre-pandemic area cost approximately \$1.5 million annually. Costs include:

- Signal and roadway maintenance
- Sand clearing through street cleaning and excavators
- Trash removal and custodial maintenance of restrooms
- Landscape and gardening maintenance

Based on the cost estimate that was conducted as part of the SFCTA District 4 Mobility Study, staff estimate that costs to maintain the Great Highway's temporary car-free coastal promenade would be approximately \$1.6 million dollars annually. This preliminary estimate includes some level of traffic calming, intersection modifications and slightly increased costs related gardening, garbage and security. The District 4 Mobility Study found that restoring the 4-lane roadway would be \$5 million due to planned traffic signal replacement, intersection changes, and traffic calming. The full promenade, if implemented permanently would cost \$5.6 million due to further intersection improvements, but with lower costs to remove the traffic signals. The concept for a 2-lane 2-way roadway with a promenade, similar to the Ocean Beach Master Plan would cost more than \$22 million due to a complete redesign and rebuild of the roadway, including removal of the road median, and for this reason was eliminated from further consideration in the study.

Funding has not been identified for piloting ongoing promenade use of Great Highway. SFMTA and RPD project team estimate that a two-year pilot effort would cost approximately \$500,000 due to extensive intercept survey work, public outreach and engagement, and data collection and analysis. As mentioned before, a cost estimate exercise would be conducted during piloting to estimate capital and operational costs associated with any proposed changes in the management of the Great Highway and supporting transportation system.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This item is an informational item and does not require environmental review. Environmental review, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act, will be conducted when a proposed pilot has been defined, and prior to any action on the pilot proposal by the Board of Supervisors. The

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SFMTA Board's recommendation and input on this item does not in any way commit the City to approval of any particular pilot, nor does it foreclose the option to not implement a pilot, and return the Great Highway to the pre-pandemic conditions.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

Any car-free use of Great Highway after the emergency period will need to be approved by the Board of Supervisors before it can be implemented. A proposal for piloting could be brought before the SFMTA Board and the Recreation and Park Commission for recommendation before being heard at the Board of Supervisor for authorization. Once the pilot phase is completed, any permanent changes to the Great Highway would need to be consistent with the plans and policies including the Local Coastal Plan / Western Shoreline Area Plan, which is an element of the General Plan, and thus may need to be reviewed and approved by the San Francisco Planning Commission and the California Coastal Commission. Roadway and street changes outside of Recreation and Park Department jurisdiction would have to be approved by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

ENCLOSURE 1 – History and context of the Great Highway

Along with the challenges of maintaining a roadway along the dynamic coastline, a complex array of federal, state and city agencies oversee Ocean Beach and the Great Highway, which is classified as a recreational street in the General Plan. Recreational streets are meant to prioritize non-motorized traffic, and be use for slow recreational, “scenic” or “pleasure” driving. The Great Highway was designated as part of the city’s parks system in 1870. The four-lane roadway and coastal trail are under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department and are maintained by Public Works while the traffic and surrounding street network and multimodal transportation system is managed by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has critical wastewater infrastructure under the Great Highway while the National Park Service manages Ocean Beach within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The California Coastal Commission has jurisdiction along the city’s coastal zone. Finally, Caltrans manages Skyline Boulevard as State Route 35.

The Great Highway has a long history on San Francisco’s Pacific Coast. Below are important dates in the history of the Great Highway:

1868	Outside Lands Ordinance - "Order 800" set aside a strip of land from the Seal Rock south to the county line for a city street or highway.*
1874	Naming of “Great Highway” and confirmation of lands under authority of park commissioners via State Legislature, Chapter 2311 **
1915	O’Shaughnessy Seawall construction begins
1920s	2.5 miles of Great Highway built as an 8-lane road with tunnels underneath for pedestrian access to beach
1929	Great Highway opened
1931	Taraval underpass undermined from major storm
1941	Noriega bulkhead completed after bulkhead damage
1970	Planning Department develops recreational drive
1972	Creation of the Golden Gate National Recreational Area
1977	Redesign Plan for the Great Highway, led by the Planning Department, in light of the 1976 California Coastal Act and the Clean Water Act.
1980s	Great Highway rebuilt as a 4-lane roadway with underground stormwater transport box
2009-10	Roadway closed south of Sloat in southbound due to extensive erosion; southbound lanes moved eastward and reopened

* “HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY A CIVIL HISTORY of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Point Reyes National Seashore” California Volume 2 by Anna Coxe Toogood, *“All that portion of the land described in Section 1 of this order which lies south of a line drawn due south, 81° and 35' east, magnetic, through Seal Rock, and west of a line easterly not less than 200 feet from ordinary highwater mark is hereby reserved and set apart for public use as a public highway.”*

** From Memorandum for Files, November 21, 1978: Subject: The Great Highway. Act of the Legislature dated March 11, 1874 (Chapter 231) states in Section 1 *“... that strip of land bounded west by the Pacific Ocean... is designated as 'Great Highway,' shall be hereafter known and designated by such name.”*

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2012	Ocean Beach Master Plan is released by SPUR
April 3, 2020	Great Highway repurposed as a car-free coastal promenade during the COVID-19 pandemic
June 2021	Recreation & Park Commission & SFMTA Board Joint Hearing on Great Highway Pilot Project

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Great Highway served as a four-lane roadway that begins at Skyline Blvd (State Highway 35) in the south and runs along Ocean Beach and ultimately merges into Point Lobos Avenue near the Cliff House. The roadway is situated along the dunes of Ocean Beach, a 3.5-mile stretch of sand along San Francisco’s rugged Pacific coast which is major cultural and natural resource for San Francisco and the region. This stretch of the coast draws a diverse population of more than 300,000 visitors each year to stroll, bike, surf, walk dogs and enjoy the stunning coast. Ocean Beach and the surrounding coastal areas are home to major elements of San Francisco’s wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, which protects coastal water quality as well as the San Francisco Zoo. The coastal area contains significant natural resources and open spaces such as Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, Lands End and Fort Funston which are connected to the city and region by the multimodal transportation system which is comprised of light rail and bus service, bicycle and pedestrian networks and a network of roads such as Lincoln Way, Sloat Boulevard, Skyline Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard.

Ocean Beach and the Great Highway are exposed to the relentless pounding of ocean waves, strong winds, sand and dynamic coastal processes such as coastal erosion. Over more than a century, the beach has been pushed more than 200 feet seaward of its natural equilibrium. Neighborhoods, roads, parks and municipal infrastructure have been built along the dunes and close to the coastline, and seawalls and other structures have been installed to protect them from the strong and dynamic coastal forces.

Over the past decade, the Great Highway near the intersection of Sloat Blvd and along the southern extension of the roadway, have experienced severe coastal erosion resulting in a loss of parking and roadway capacity and were protected by the placement of boulders and rip rap in 2010. In 2015, the California Coastal Commission ultimately approved a multi-phased project to implement temporary coastal protection measures and a management strategy for the area south of Sloat Boulevard with the dual goal of protecting critical public infrastructure and the coastal environment.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is developing the City’s first climate change adaptation project, the South Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project, which is currently undergoing environmental review. This project, if approved, proposes to permanently close the Great Highway, south of Sloat Boulevard, in 2023 resulting in a transformed coastal area along with a multi-use, public path and parking facility consistent with the 2012 Ocean Beach Master Plan and the San Francisco General Plan.

Maintaining the Great Highway for vehicular use is costly and challenging and will become more so in the future with the effects of climate change and sea level rise.

If approved, the City proposes to close the Great Highway at Sloat Boulevard and reroute north-south vehicle traffic using Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard. This closure of the Great Highway

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Extension would fundamentally alter the Great Highway as a north-south travel corridor and will likely shift many trips to more inland and parallel routes such as 19th Avenue and Sunset Boulevard. Starting in 2022, Caltrans and city partners plan to install a signal and crosswalk at the intersection of the Great Highway and Skyline Blvd to improve the safety and connectivity between Lake Merced, Fort Funston and Ocean Beach.

Since April 3, 2020, the Upper Great Highway between Sloat Boulevard and Lincoln Way has been repurposed as a car-free coastal promenade prioritizing pedestrians, bicyclists and safe recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been an extension of a common pre-pandemic management practice when the Great Highway was regularly closed during storms and for roadway maintenance. This unexpected and pioneering use has brought great joy to many residents and visitors who are able to enjoy the coastal promenade on foot, bike, scooter or wheelchair amidst an upswell of both local and citywide support for a bicycle and pedestrian corridor that better connects Golden Gate Park with the Great Highway.

Much has changed during the pandemic with schools closed, many local businesses closed and many residents working from home. Additionally, the multimodal system has also experienced profound changes over the past year. This has been especially true on the city's westside with the reconfiguration of the Great Highway combined with other temporary uses of select streets in Golden Gate Park, the "Slow Street" network, construction projects on 19th Avenue and Taraval Street, and a reduction in transit service which have resulted in new traffic patterns for motorists across the westside of San Francisco causing frustration for many residents of the westside of San Francisco.

ENCLOSURE 2 – COVID -19 and The Multimodal Transportation Network and Traffic Analysis

Over the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a focus on creating a safer and more integrated bicycle / pedestrian network that fosters safe, accessible and inclusive use while also connecting users to open space, schools and other destinations. As a result of a number of forces such as the temporary reconfigurations of roadways within and adjacent to Golden Gate Park, construction projects on 19th Avenue and along Taraval Street and a reduction in transit service due to COVID-19, the city's westside multimodal network has been in a unique transition. The unforeseen circumstances created by the pandemic have led to changes in commuter and travel patterns resulting in new traffic patterns which have placed pressure on certain intersections and roadway segments and created congestion and delay for some motorists in the Richmond and Sunset Districts.

Corridors and intersections that have been impacted as result of the confluence of changes include 19th Avenue, Chain of Lakes, Transverse Drive and intersections such as Lincoln Way at Great Highway and Lincoln Way at 41st Avenue. Many corridors throughout the westside neighborhoods, continue to function as designed, such as Sunset Boulevard which is the closest parallel arterial roadway and with three lanes in each direction and has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional north-south traffic.

In the months ahead, the SFMTA is focused on improving our understanding of the dynamic traffic network and travel conditions for residents and visitors of the Richmond and Sunset Districts via the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis. This technical analysis is also leveraging the analysis that is being conducted via the District 4 Mobility Study. As part of the Richmond/Sunset/Westside Operational Analysis, staff are collecting and evaluating detailed and comprehensive traffic data, conducting site visits at key locations, reviewing observational data and monitoring the efficacy of recent traffic calming measures to understand how the network is operating. Based on observational data, staff are also developing a preliminary list of intersections/roadway segments that might warrant additional analysis, investment or improvements to help improve safety or overall functionality of the network.

A preliminary list of locations is below:

1. Lower Great Highway and adjacent parallel streets due to traffic diversion from Great Highway
2. Chain of Lakes Drive between Fulton Street and Lincoln Way, including 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way and MLK and Chain of Lakes, due to bottleneck for north/south traffic
3. Sunset Boulevard and Lincoln Way interchange (36th/37th Avenues) due to traffic diversion
4. Sunset Boulevard due to traffic diversion and transit impacts
5. 19th Avenue and Crossover Drive due to traffic diversion
6. Lincoln Way between Great Highway and 19th Avenue due to traffic diversion from Great Highway
7. Fulton Street and Stanyan Street due to traffic diversion from JFK
8. Stanyan Street /JFK/Fell Street /Oak Street interchange (due to traffic diversion from JFK
9. Kezar Drive and Lincoln Way east of 9th Avenue, including 9th Ave and Lincoln Way,

- due to bottleneck for park access due to JFK diversion (especially for transit)
10. MLK between Crossover Drive and Sunset Blvd due to MLK and Great Highway diversions

Transit Access and Service Equity:

Many residents of the westside, including the Outer Sunset, are heavily dependent on automobiles to meet their mobility needs, and residents likely used their automobiles at higher rates during the COVID-19 as much of the city's transit system experienced reduced service. However, as of mid-May 2021, transit service is steadily being restored citywide and there is currently more access to the westside and the Outer Sunset from the Bayview, Sunset, Richmond, Mission and Financial District.

The transit lines that service the Outer Sunset include the L-Taraval and N-Judah light rail lines and also the 7-Haight, 28-19th Ave, 29-Sunset, 18-46th Ave bus lines. These lines connect the residents and visitors to Ocean Beach, schools, libraries, work sites and other neighborhoods. Any future improvements to the multimodal network need to consider the existing transit system given its important role in providing mobility services to the public.

Parking Management:

Both the SFMTA and RPD provide and manage public parking for visitors and residents to Ocean Beach, Golden Gate Park and neighborhoods in the Outer Sunset and Richmond. In particular, there are three public parking lots along the Great Highway, two north of Lincoln Way managed by RPD and one parking lot at Sloat Blvd managed by the National Park Service. There is also on-street parking along the Lower Great Highway and at the intersection of Lincoln Way and median parking along Sloat Blvd. As part of the SFPUC Climate Change Adaptation Project, RPD also plans to build a new parking facility at the intersection of Skyline Blvd and Great Highway which will support public access to Fort Funston, Ocean Beach and Lake Merced.

- **Curb Parking on the Lower Great Highway:** Approximately 1050 spaces are situated along the Lower Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Blvd. There are no parking regulations other than an overnight oversize vehicle restriction and street cleaning occurs twice a month for two hours (Fridays 1-3pm on east side, Tuesdays 1-3pm on west side). Approximately 60 of these curbside spaces have been offline due to Taraval St streetscape work which will be returned to general use in late May or early June 2021.
- **Curb Parking on streets east of the Lower Great Highway/Outer Sunset:** There are approximately 3425 spaces on the blocks bound by and including Lincoln Way/45th Ave/Sloat Blvd. There are no parking regulations except for the street cleaning and the nearest Residential Permit Parking (RPP) is on 24th Ave at Taraval; nearest meters are located on Noriega at 33rd Ave.
- **Recreation and Park Department's O'Shaughnessy Parking lot:** RPD maintains a large public parking lot with approximately 400 spaces at the base of JFK/Great Highway. Parking

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is free in the lot and closed overnight from 10:00pm-6:00am. There are six ADA accessible spaces at this lot. There is another public parking lot at the intersection just north of Fulton Ave which has approximately 50 public spaces.

- **GGNRA parking lot at Sloat Blvd's western terminus:** The National Park Service (NPS) maintains a parking lot with approx. 50 spaces at the western terminus of Sloat Blvd. This lot and adjacent parking facilities south of Sloat Blvd have been impacted by recent coastal erosion. The lot is unregulated apart from overnight closure.

Over the past 6 months, parking availability surveys conducted over seven weekend along the 15 blocks of the Lower Great Highway, found between 1 and 12 available spaces per block during the mid-day and afternoon. Additional parking was observed to be available in the blocks just east of the Lower Great Highway.

Parking and curb management practices could be explored further during a pilot effort and potential options to improve parking management could be evaluated. To the extent that parking management is needed in the future, recommendations for future parking projects could include:

- Repave and re-stripe the O'Shaughnessy lot for optimal utilization
- Meter the O'Shaughnessy lot (pay-by-plate), but only after repaving and re-striping
- Mark 20' parking stalls on the Lower Great Highway to improve efficient use of curb resources
- Expand use of meters along Sloat Boulevard, especially at its western terminus.