

# ABOUT THIS OPEN HOUSE

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Welcome, and thanks for joining us today for the Valencia Side-Running Bikeway Project open house!

The purpose of today's open house is to:

- Review the history of the project to date – how did we get here?
- Present the side-running bikeway design
- Gather feedback for staff to consider prior to the city approval process in late 2024



# PROJECT BACKGROUND: WHY VALENCIA?

Valencia is one of the most popular and well-traveled bikeways in San Francisco. It directly connects people and neighborhoods to an amazing commercial corridor.

This route provides cyclists with a flat, direct connection between Market Street and Cesar Chavez Street, linking Downtown, the Mission, and Outer Mission.

Valencia offers a more inviting alternative to the steeper western streets and the busier, transit-heavy eastern corridors. Valencia provides a direct connection between Cesar Chavez and Market Street, unlike other parallel streets in the neighborhood.

It's also the best way for people to bike between northern and southern neighborhoods, and for people to reach downtown from southern points.

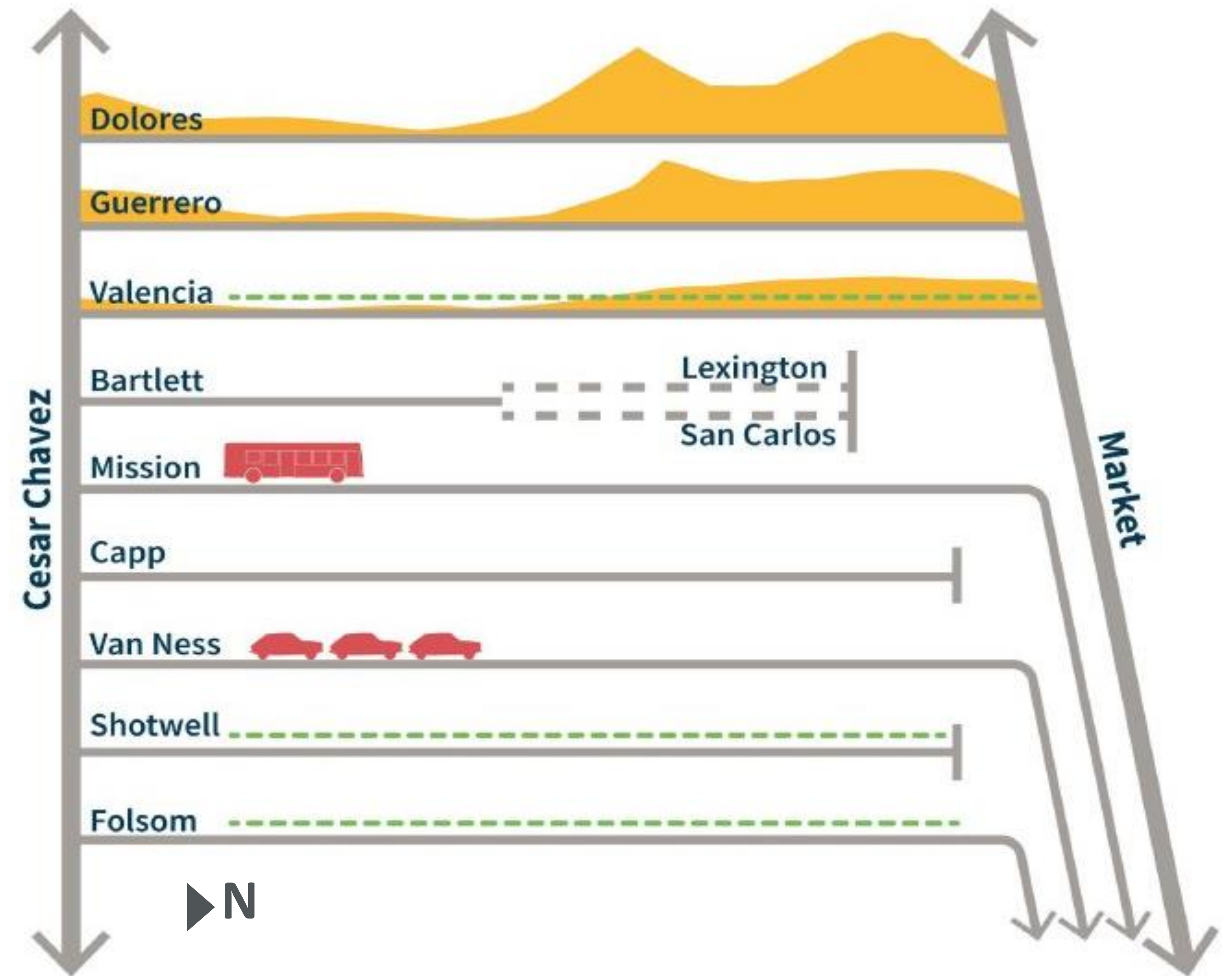


Image source: Gehl

# VALENCIA PROJECT HISTORY

Over the past 25 years, Valencia Street has changed a lot. It has evolved into the thriving shopping, dining and entertainment district it is today. As the street has changed, so have the needs of the people who travel on it. These projects have responded to those changing needs.

- **1999:** First bike lanes striped.
- **2010:** Streetscape project, sidewalks widened between 15th and 19th.
- **2019:** Side-running protected bikeway implemented from Market to 15th.
- **2020:** Quick-Build proposed between 19th and Cesar Chavez. Proposal paused due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- **2021-2023:** Pandemic and expansion of Shared Spaces added complexity, requiring reassessment of viable options.
- **Summer 2022-Spring 2023:** Mid-Valencia between 15th and 23rd pilot planning, design and outreach
- **April 2023:** Pilot approved. Center-running bikeway chosen to maintain parklets and parking.
- **May-July 2023:** Pilot construction
- **August 2023:** Pilot period officially started.
- **Present:** Pilot evaluation and design revisions, additional merchant engagement, start of long-term studies



# HOW DID WE GET HERE?

**Valencia is on San Francisco's high injury network**, the 12 percent of streets that account for 68 percent of severe and fatal traffic crashes.

The unprotected bike lane on Valencia was unpredictable and chaotic. On average, the corridor saw **two serious injury collisions a month** before the center-running bikeway pilot.

**Double parking** in the unprotected bike lane forced people riding bikes to have to ride around double-parked vehicles and into moving traffic. This increased the risk of collisions. Before the center-running bikeway pilot, 67% of loading and unloading took place with a vehicle double-parked, and 40% of those incidents involved vehicles blocking the bike lane.

**Dooring**, when a car driver opens a door into the path of a person biking, and **side swipes** were also a problem on Valencia. These two crash factors were present in many vehicle-cyclist collisions and close calls on Valencia.



# WHY PILOT A CENTER RUNNING BIKEWAY?

**Before the pandemic**, our plan had been to create a protected bike lane running along the curb. During the pandemic, parklets became a critical lifeline for businesses. With the increase of new parklets on Valencia, merchants requested an option that would maintain as many parklets and parking spaces as possible.

As we talked with the community, we realized that the most underutilized part of the street was the median. A bike lane placed in the median would preserve most of the parking and loading spaces and ensure that the parklets could remain in at the curb.

So, we piloted a center-running bike lane. We chose this unconventional solution to meet two major needs of the corridor: (1) implement an upgraded, protected bike lane while (2) preserve as much loading, parking and parklets as possible.

Space constraints posed a significant challenge due to limited street width in half of the pilot area. The design also needed enough space for emergency response operations.

The center-running bikeway aimed to efficiently balance the complex needs of road users and businesses while optimizing the limited street space.



# CENTER-RUNNING PILOT ADJUSTMENTS

Since pilot implementation, we made over 150 changes to parking and loading zones in response to community feedback:

- Shortened the hours of loading zones
- Converted longer 6-wheel loading zones into shorter, regular commercial loading zones
- Turned 29 loading zones into full-time general metered parking spaces
- Converted multi-space parking kiosks back to having a meter for every single parking or loading space
- Simplified the permitted times for loading or general metered parking for each space
- Restored bicycle parking at each meter pole
- Adjusted signal timing at the ends of the pilot area to reduce vehicle congestion and improve circulation
- Installed additional no left-turn and no U-turn signs
- Worked with SFPD to increase enforcement of left-turn and U-turn restrictions

We found that the two SFMTA-owned parking garages in the area were rarely at full capacity. We wanted to help merchants get the word out, so we installed **upgraded informational signage about the garages** on utility poles throughout the Mission. We also distributed posters for merchants to post in their windows to inform customers that alternative parking options exist nearby.



# OUTREACH: WHAT WE HEARD

San Franciscans were loud and clear with their thoughts about the center-running lane.

Here's some of what we heard:

- Many people liked the center-running lane because it felt less chaotic and more predictable
- Others felt less safe due to emergency responders in the bike lane or cars illegally turning.
- Some drivers felt confused about how to navigate the street and where they could or couldn't turn.
- Occasionally, residents and customers were confused about where and when they could park.
- Many businesses felt there was too much loading, loading in the wrong locations, and not enough customer parking.
- Some felt removing the striped center median reduced double parking but affected traffic circulation.

I know lane is incomplete, & @SFMTA\_Muni screwed up by dragging 🚧, but that **center Valencia** bike lane design has its advantages (compared to one behind parking). It's safer to pass (esp w/ faster e-bikes, e-scooters), & straight alignment not going around parklets.



Hey @SFMTA\_Muni, your plan for **Valencia** is horrid. I want SAFE bike lanes so my family & I can bike together. There's ZERO chance I'd bike in the **center** lane and less chance I'd have my kids bike there. Bikes & pedestrians need safe spaces to travel! Stop always putting cars 1st.

We've had a terrible experience with the center bicycle lane. For starters, losing over 70 parking spaces has had a significant impact on the restaurant business. We have multiple examples of people calling to say they can't find parking and either will be late or have given up and won't be there at all. This rarely happened before the center bicycle lane went in.

The ill-conceived center bike lanes on Valencia Street are continuing to have negative effects on this important commercial street. As a nearby resident I see the number of small business that have closed (I can name at least nine) and see that others are struggling, losing customers and may be forced to also close.

Hello,

I strongly support changing Valencia Street. The center running bike lanes were poorly thought through and the interaction with vehicles is very problematic.

Rather than spending a ton of time and money moving bike lanes to the edges, why not simply remove the actual problem: cars.

In general, it's extremely frustrating to be anywhere on Valencia street in a vehicle, it leads to a lot of stress and frustration, which is why I believe we are seeing so many people either driving in the bike lane, or doing a u-turn over the bike lane, people just want to get out of here. And after these experiences people simply don't want to deal with it again. People now avoid driving on Valencia street, avoid Valencia street, period.

Dear SFMTA,

After hearing so much bad press on the media and posters put on Valencia store windows about the center bike lane (as though it was the root cause of all problems on Valencia), I'm starting to question why I love it.

Yes, I truly love the center bike lane. I have never felt more safe and protected riding down Valencia as I have with the center bike lane. I'm a resident who lives along the

Pedestrianizing Valencia Street or installing curbside protected bike lanes will make the street safer for people and better for business and help our city take action on climate change. This is an amazing opportunity to lead for our city, and we need you to take that opportunity and lead for our people.

Semi-truck taking an illegal left turn across the unprotected **Valencia center** bikeway.

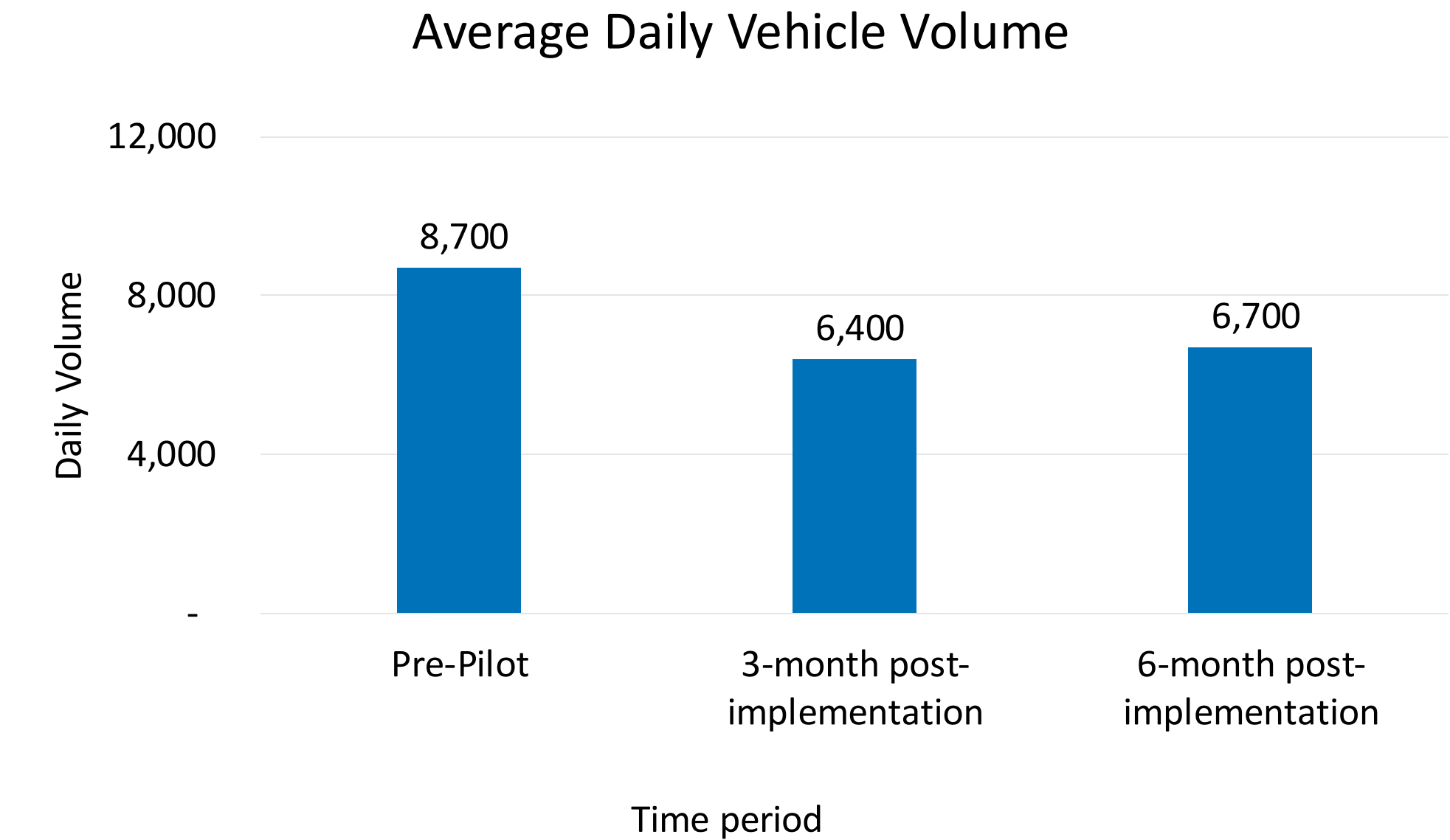
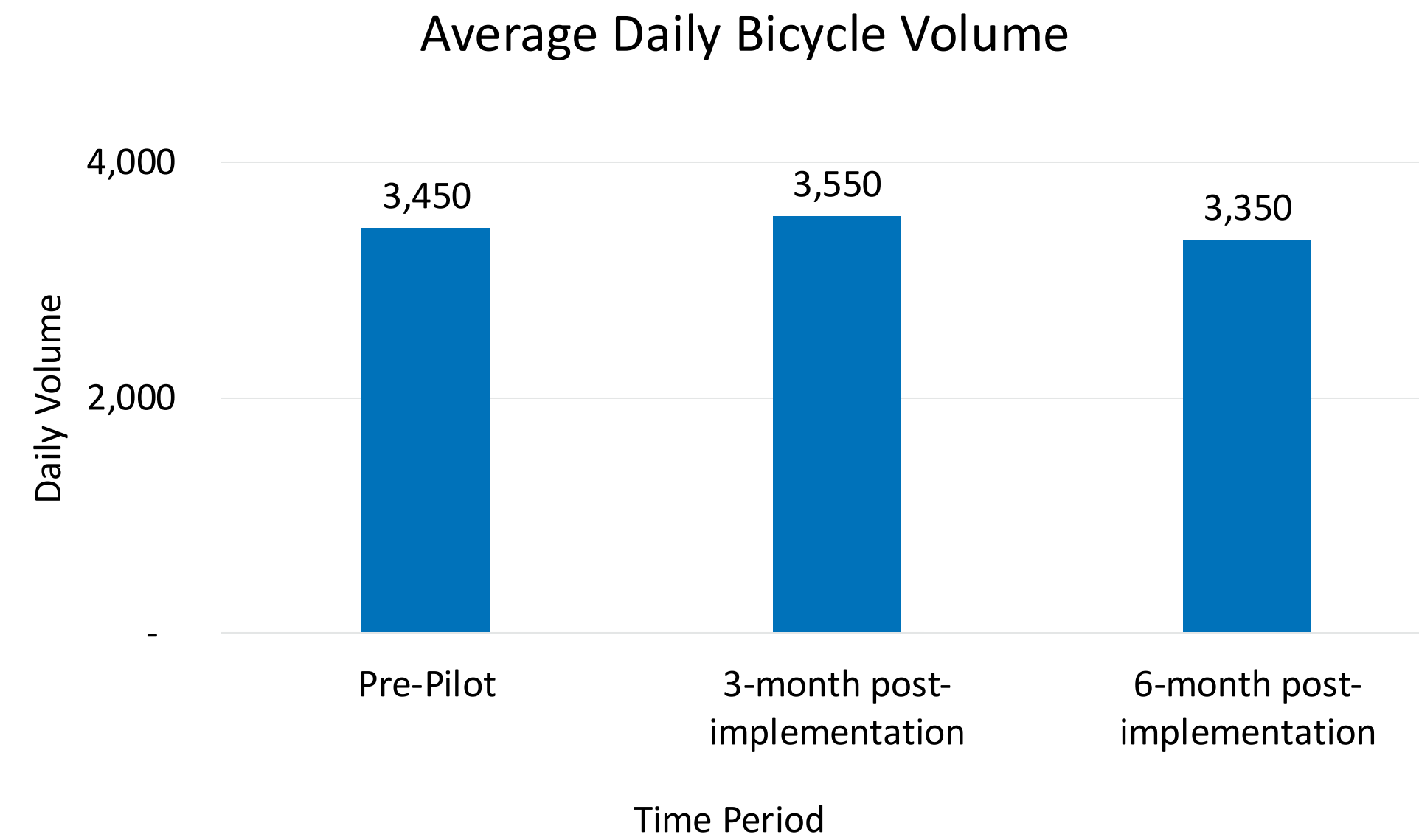
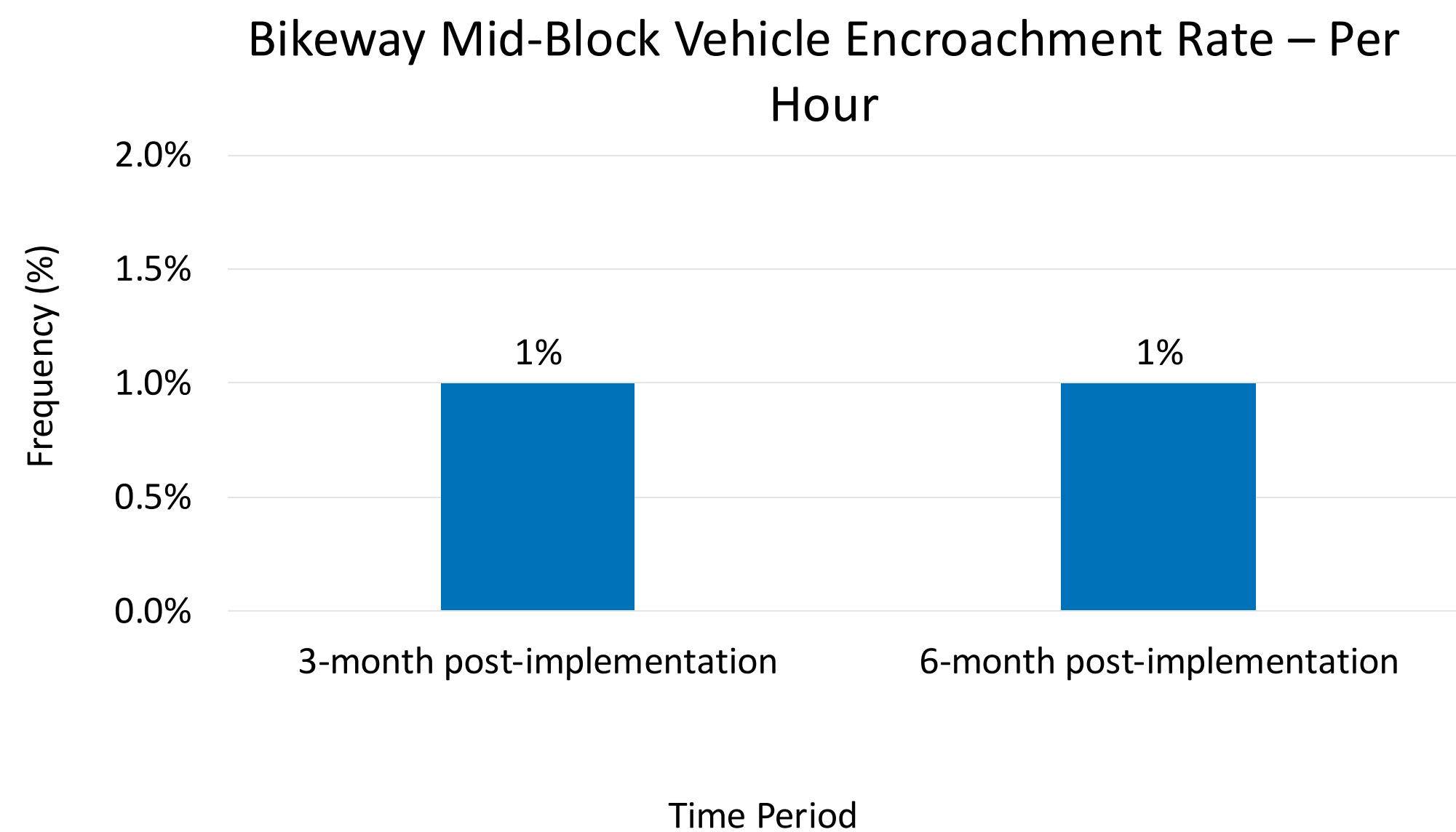
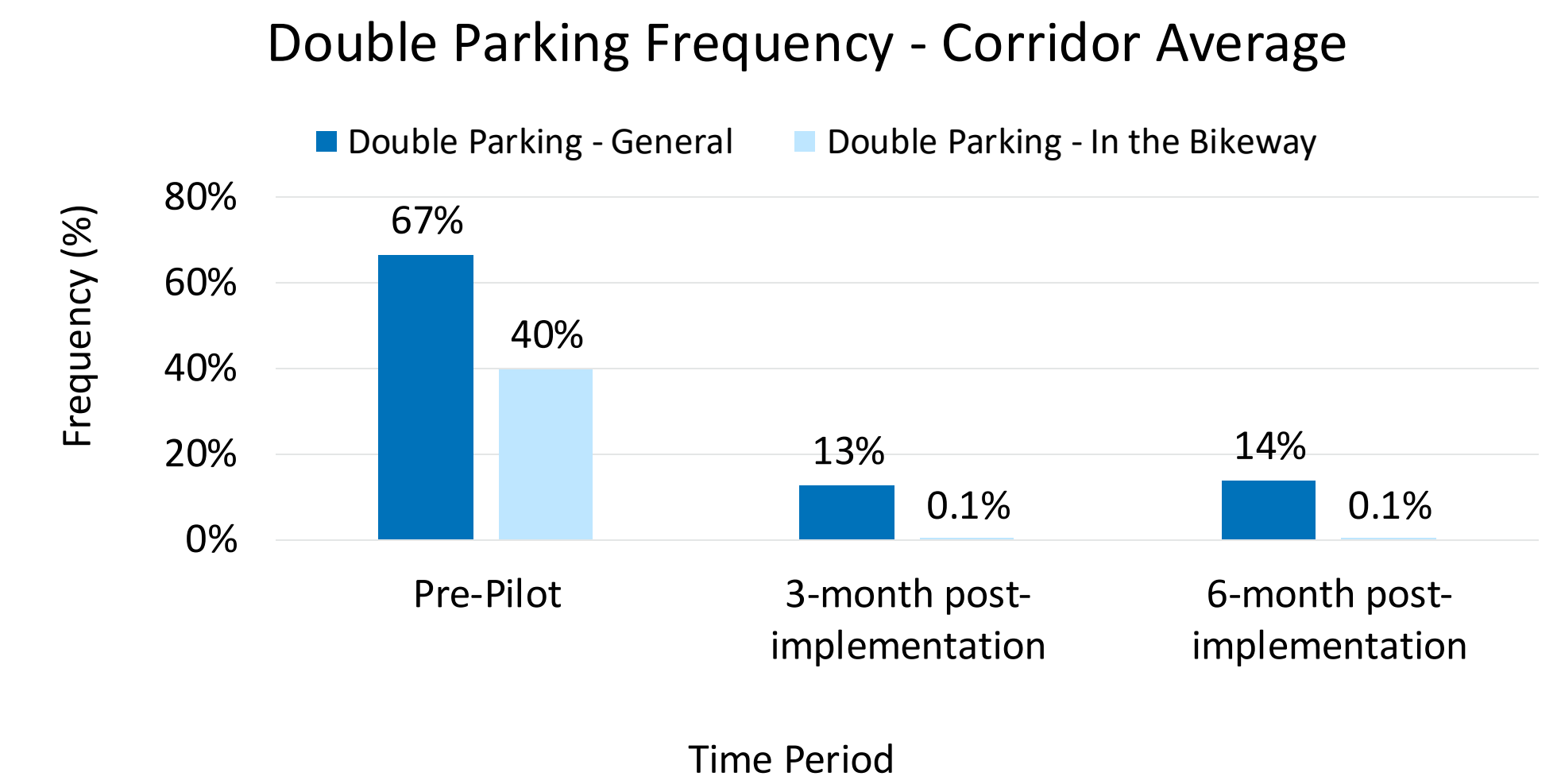
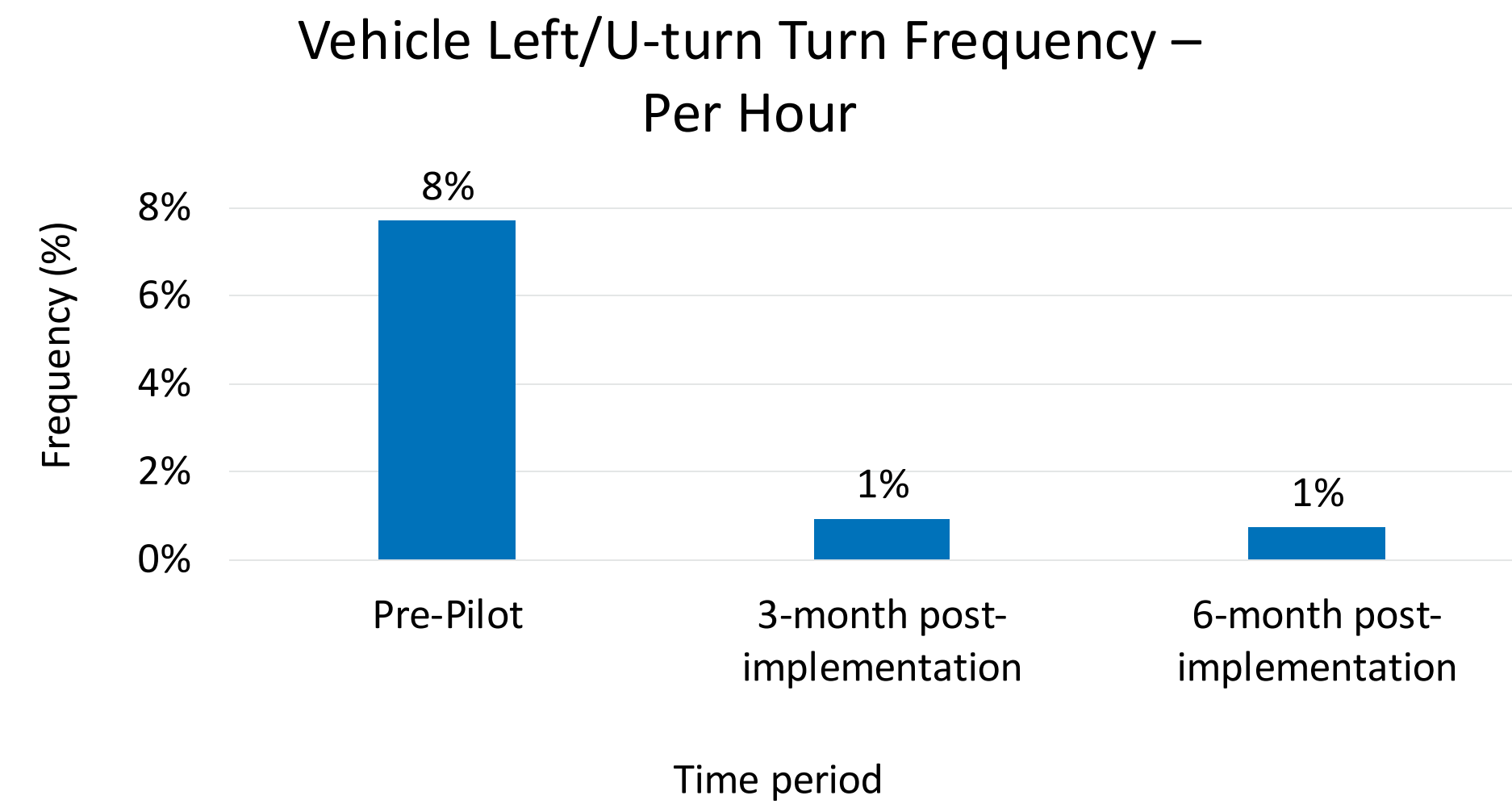
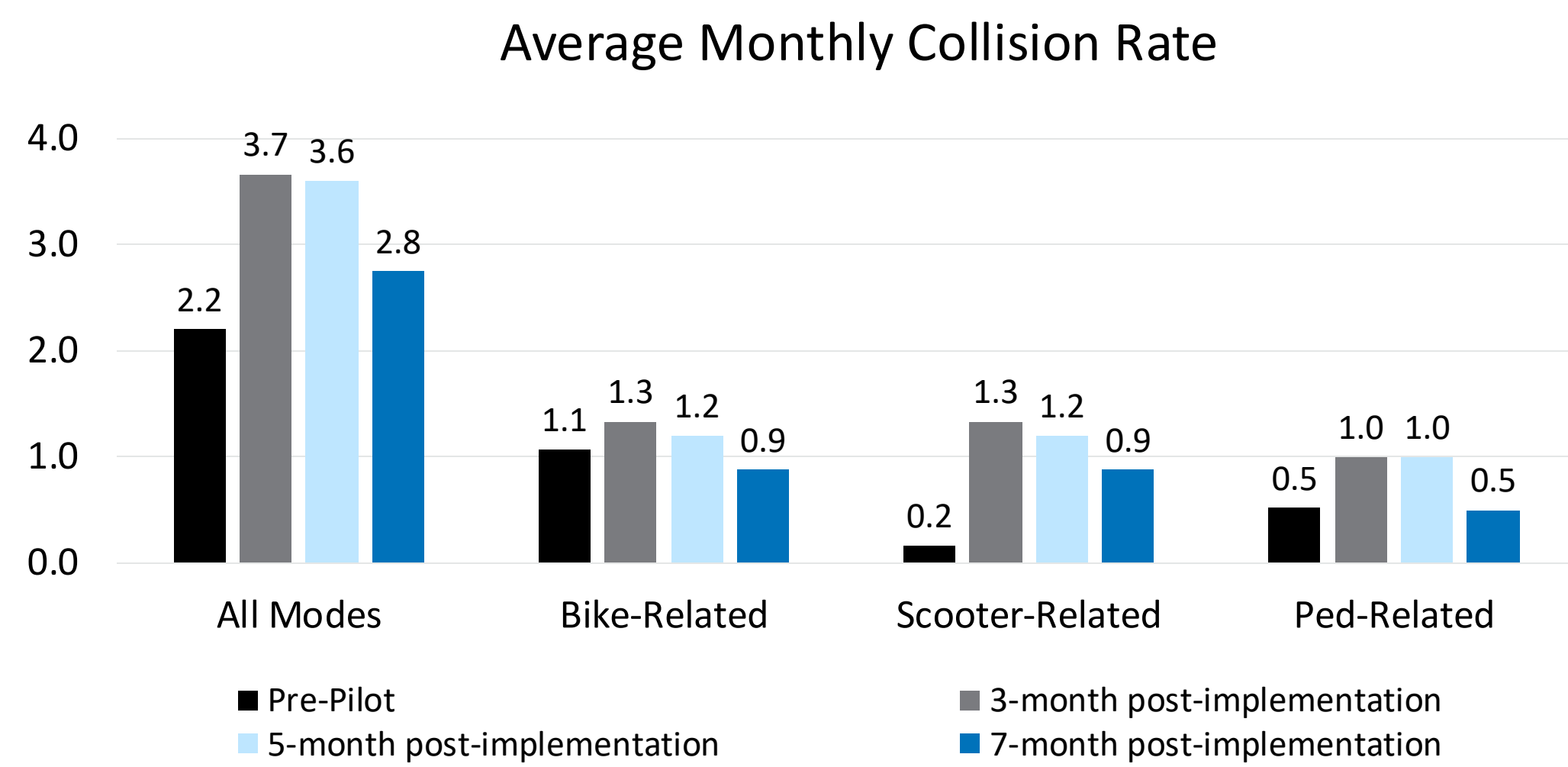
This design — which relies on drivers to see / obey signs — is fundamentally flawed.

SFMTA should replace it with curbside protected bike lanes while working towards pedestrianizing **Valencia**.



# WHAT WE LEARNED

We wanted to know what worked and didn't work about the center-running pilot so we evaluated it 3 months and 6 months after implementation. Those evaluations showed that the center-running bikeway was successful in many ways. Here are some of the major findings:



Visit [www.SFMTA.com/Valencia](http://www.SFMTA.com/Valencia) to read the full evaluation summaries for the 3-month and 6-month evaluations.

Data collection for the 12-month mark is currently on-going



# MOVING FORWARD: A NEW DESIGN

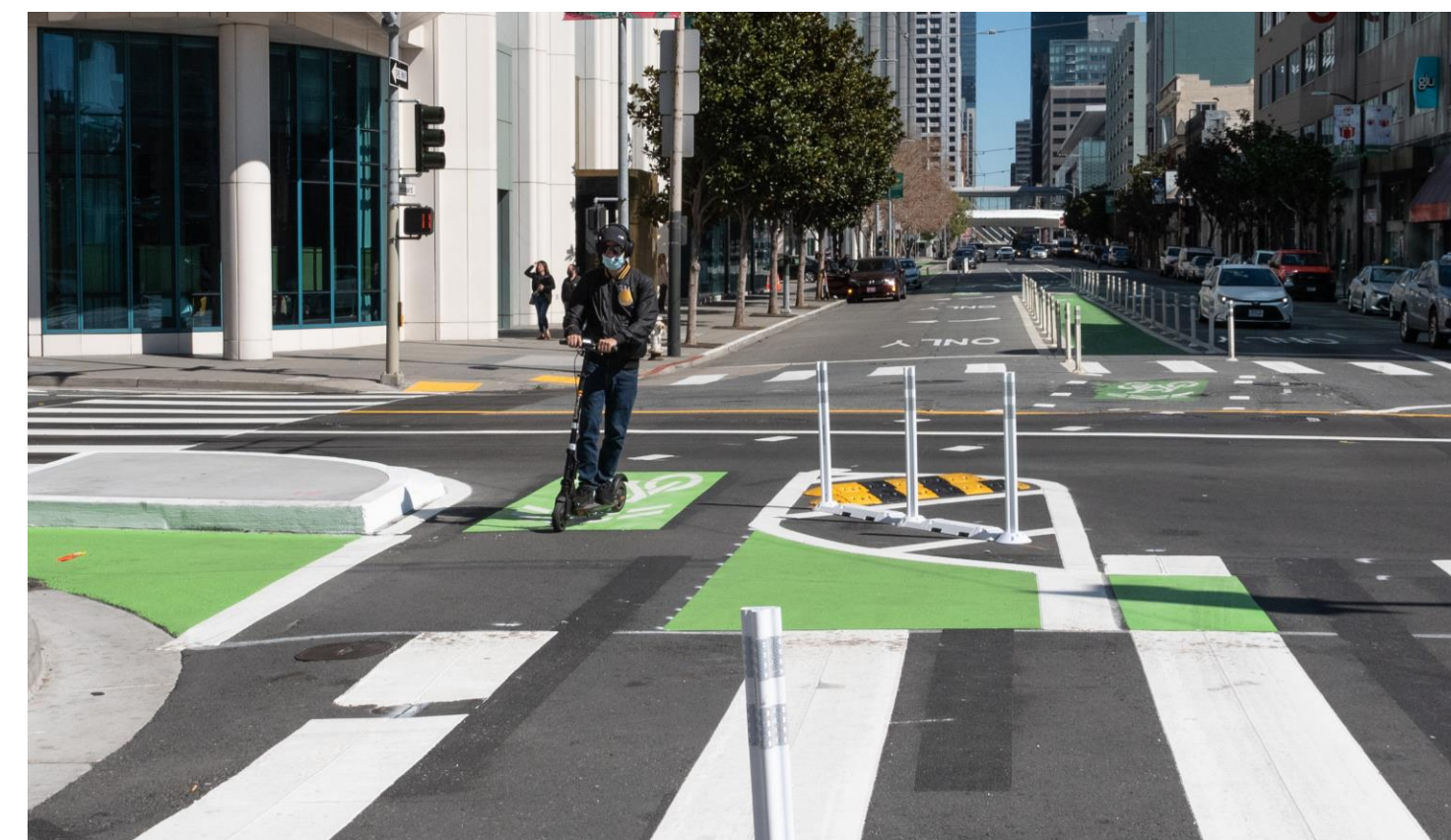
Valencia is a key bike route in San Francisco. People who ride bicycles on Valencia should be able to do so in a predictable and comfortable way. That hasn't always been the case.

The side running bikeway on Valencia would be “parking protected,” which means cyclists ride next to the sidewalk, and parked vehicles are between vehicle traffic and cyclists. There are many examples of this type of bikeway in San Francisco, including on Valencia Street between Market and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Valencia's new design has been developed through extensive public outreach, input, and observation. Every inch of the corridor has been considered. The new design will include protected intersections, parklets, bikeshare stations, opportunities for landscaping, emergency services access, and clear space for better visibility among motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Parking and loading spaces will be tailored to accommodate time-of-day needs for deliveries and customer parking.

This new design also comes with tradeoffs. In some areas, the bikeway is narrower. Some parking and loading is removed (about 40% fewer spaces compared to the center-running design). Vehicle travel lanes are tighter. Left turn restrictions will remain. Everyone must give a little for new a design that is more predictable, flexible and familiar to San Franciscans.

Side-Running Bikeway Design  
Time-of-Day Parking and Loading Totals



Curb Use	Before 4pm	After 4pm	Percent Change
Parking	120	163	+36%
Loading	88	45	-49%
Motorcycle	49	49	0%
Total	257	257	0%

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR PARKLETS

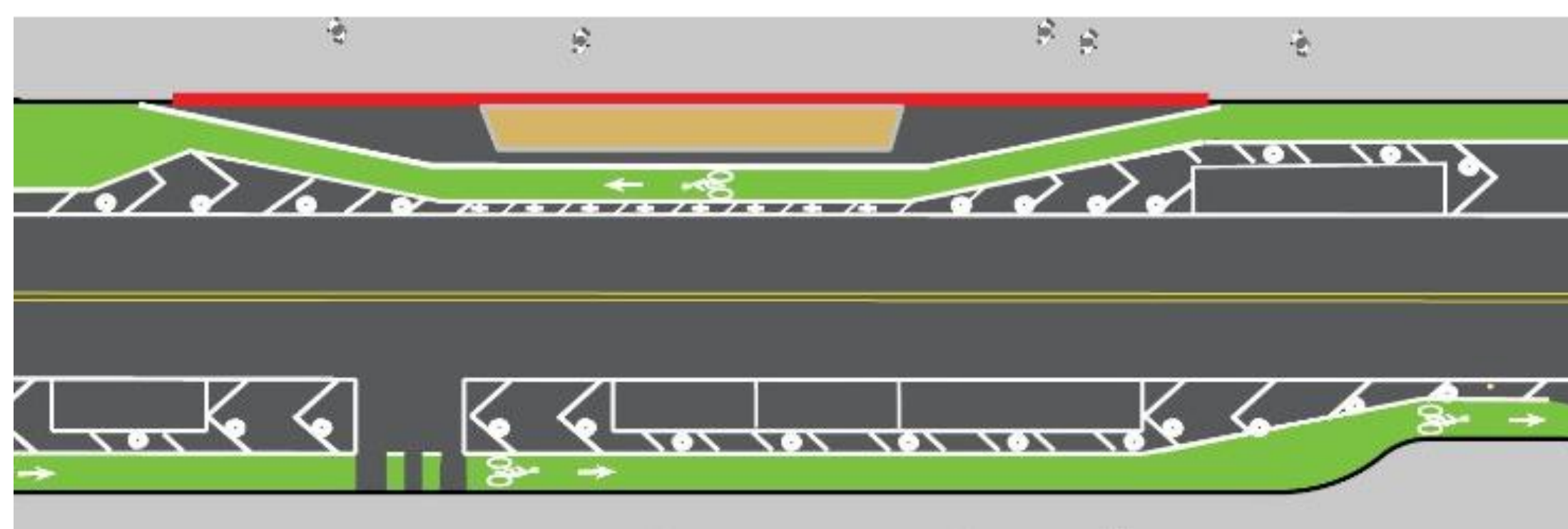
There are currently 26 parklets on the project corridor and each one is personal to its owner. We met with each parklet owner multiple times to share how a side-running bikeway would impact their parklet and the trade-offs between keeping it curbside, removing it, or moving it to a floating position away from the curb. Every parklet owner was asked to select one of these three options.

- **Curbside** – 21 businesses decided to keep their parklet in their current location at the curb
- **Remove** – 2 businesses decided to remove their parklets before the project is installed
- **Floating** – 3 businesses decided to rebuild as “floating” parklets when the project is finished

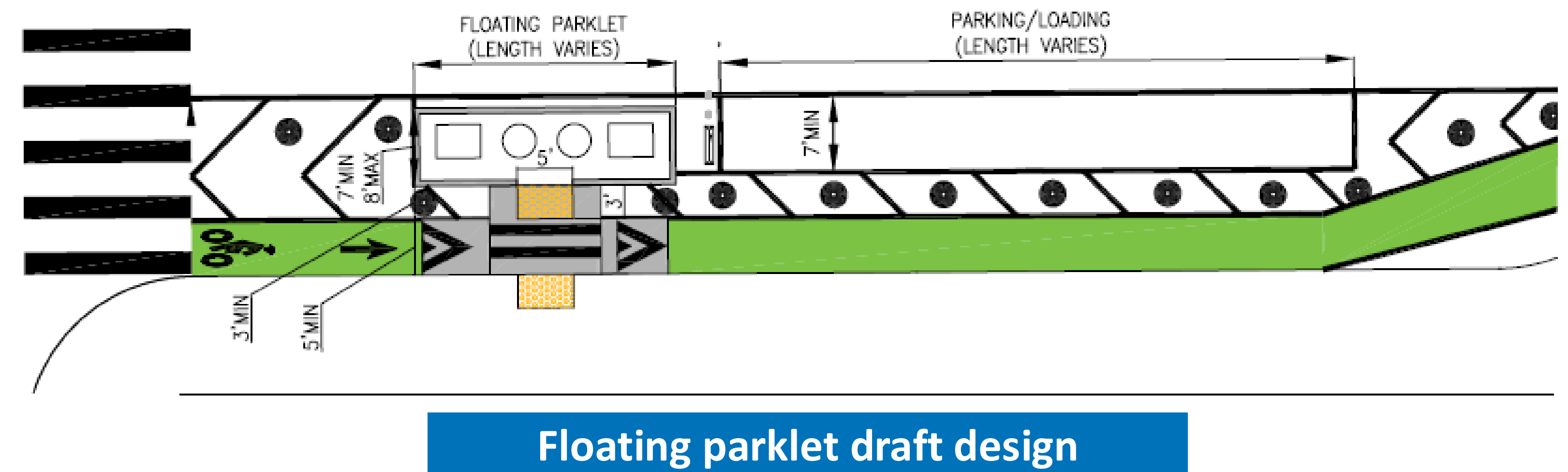
Example Side-Running Bikeway with Floating Parklet



Example Side-Running Bikeway with Curbside Parklet



**Future parklets** will need to be “floating” where there are floating parking spaces present. New curbside parklet locations will not be allowed after the design is implemented.



**Floating parklets** allow the side-running bikeway to stay next to the curb, with people on bikes protected by floating parklets and parking spots. Floating parklets will include the following protective elements:

- **Railing** – Railing across the parklet opening will permit a single point for people to cross the bikeway. This will make the crossing more predictable for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Ramp** – Raised crossings will provide a level and accessible path between the sidewalk and floating parklets. The raised crossing will slow down cyclists and prioritize pedestrians.
- **Setbacks and Buffer** – 3’ buffer between the parklet and the bikeway will allow parklet patrons to step out of the parklet and see if bikes are coming without being in the bikeway. There will be a 1’ offset between the parklet and the vehicle lane.
- **Signage** – Signage ahead of the raised crossings will encourage cyclists to slow down and alert them to pedestrians crossing the bikeway

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: SIDE-RUNNING BIKEWAY

## Who we've talked to:

We've engaged with Valencia stakeholders through hundreds of meetings, emails and phone calls to discuss a side-running bikeway option. We hosted block-by-block meetings to get merchant feedback on conceptual designs.

We also have regular meetings with groups including:

- Valencia Corridor Merchants Association
- San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
- Kid Safe SF
- Friends of Valencia
- Mission Merchants Association

We've tabled at community events like Sunday Streets, sent out monthly email and text updates and hosted media roundtables. We organized an event for bike advocates to test out the narrow width of the side-running bikeway and sent a mailer about the proposed design to 12,000+ households and businesses within two blocks of Valencia.

## Project Update



### Mid-Valencia Project Update

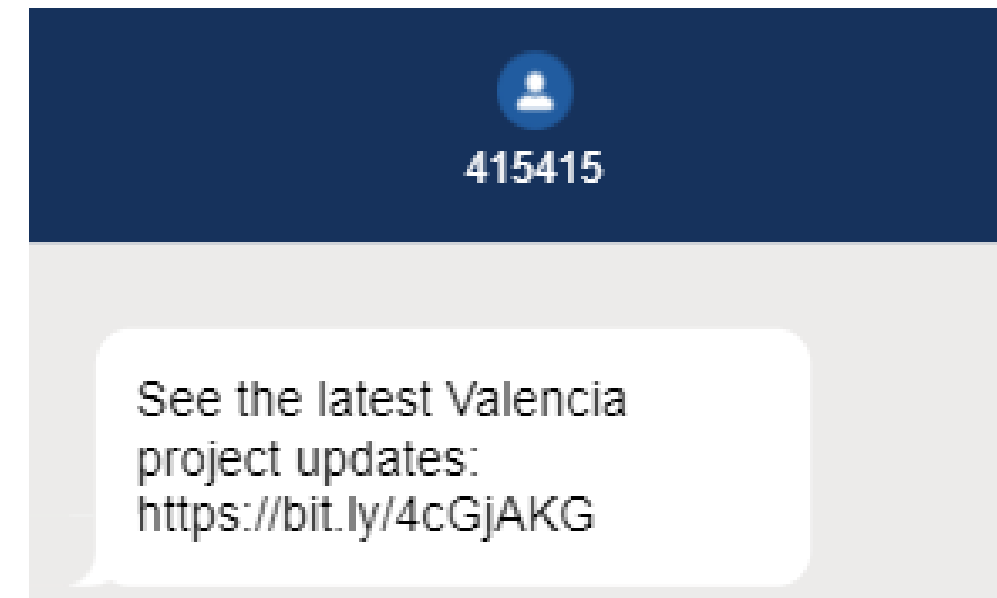
Spanish follows/Español siguiente

We have made significant progress on designing the side-running bikeway for Valencia Street this month. Read on for more details and check out what else we've been working on:

Now Recruiting Residents to Join the Valencia Bikeway Project's Construction Working Group

Pending SFMTA Board approval this fall, we're preparing to begin construction on the new side-running bike lane on Valencia in early 2025. Because construction can be challenging for residents, businesses and people who visit or travel through the area, we want to be proactive and address possible challenges during construction. Our short-term, focused Working Group will meet four times before Thanksgiving to help us work through questions around impact, duration and access.

Are you interested in participating? We have representation from businesses, cyclists and stakeholder groups, but have a few spots open for residents. Please email [Valencia@SFMTA.com](mailto:Valencia@SFMTA.com) by August 14 with a quick summary (no



## What we've heard:

- People are optimistic about the side-running bikeway. Many feel it as a better option than the center-running bikeway. The side-running bikeway is seen as more predictable and common.
- People biking want vehicle and bicycle traffic to remain separated. Moving to the curb would make it easier for people on bikes to visit mid-block locations.
- Merchants and customers were concerned about pedestrians crossing between floating parklets and the sidewalk. Our floating parklet design prioritizes customers, staff, and pedestrians crossing the bikeway.
- Making a parklet floating is expensive. We created a program to reimburse up to \$30,000 for merchants to move their parklet.
- We heard from drivers that they want to be able to make **left turns on the corridor**. Left turns will not be reintroduced due to infrastructure, safety, financial, and technical challenges but may be revisited in the future.



# WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION

We've heard from, residents, merchants, and bars and restaurants that they would like us to schedule construction when the commercial and shopping seasons are less busy. Therefore, we expect to begin **implementation in early January** after the winter holidays. Since construction will occur during the rainy season, the implementation schedule can change, but we expect project-related work to last **2-3 months, weather dependent.**

The community has told us that **the duration and disruption of construction activities should be minimized.** We have also been told that during construction, lines of communication should be kept open and that we should provide **regular updates** to the public about upcoming construction activities.

Now that a final design is nearly ready, we're shifting our focus to construction planning. As the implementation phasing and schedule become clearer in the next few months, we'll share that through our continued engagement with community groups, residents, merchant associations and advocacy groups.

**Stay in touch:** The best way to stay informed of project news is to sign up for texts and email updates, check our website ([www.SFMTA.com/Valencia](http://www.SFMTA.com/Valencia)) or scan the QR code below. Project staff are available for questions and comments through our project email ([Valencia@SFMTA.com](mailto:Valencia@SFMTA.com)) and phone number ([415.646.2025](tel:415.646.2025))

