

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 10.2

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Sustainable Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modifications associated with the Commuter Shuttle Program.

SUMMARY:

- The SFMTA Board of Directors has authority to adopt changes to parking and traffic regulations.
- On March 1, 2016, the SFMTA Board adopted the Commuter Shuttle Program which permits eligible commuter shuttle operators to use a designated network of stops in San Francisco. The Commuter Shuttle Program went into effect on April 1, 2016 with a one-year term limit.
- On February 21, 2017 the SFMTA Board voted to continue the Commuter Shuttle Program, allowing the SFMTA to continue regulating operations of commuter shuttles in San Francisco and charging a per-stop fee beyond March 31, 2017.
- The requested change would create a new commuter shuttle zone on the south side of Mission Street at Spear Street. Parking would be restricted at seven metered parking spaces.
- The San Francisco Planning Department has determined that the Commuter Shuttle Program is exempt from environmental review.

ENCLOSURES:


1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. Map of shuttle zone

APPROVALS:

DIRECTOR  _____

DATE

5/8/2017

SECRETARY  _____

5/8/2017

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: May 16, 2017

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PURPOSE

Approve permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modifications to support the Commuter Shuttle Program.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

This action supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goal 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 2.3: Increase use of all non-private auto modes

This action supports the following Transit First Policy Principles:

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.
9. The ability of the City and County to reduce traffic congestion depends on the adequacy of regional public transportation. The City and County shall promote the use of regional mass transit and the continued development of an integrated, reliable, regional public transportation system.
10. The City and County shall encourage innovative solutions to meet public transportation needs wherever possible and where the provision of such service will not adversely affect the service provided by the Municipal Railway.

DESCRIPTION

Commuter Shuttle Program Overview

On March 1, 2016, the SFMTA Board approved revisions to the Commuter Shuttle Program based on findings from the evaluation of the Commuter Shuttle Pilot Program which ran from August 2014 to January 2016. The Commuter Shuttle Program permits eligible commuter shuttle operators to use a designated network of stops including both designated Muni stops and a number of permitted commuter shuttle-only loading zones in San Francisco. The Commuter Shuttle Program went into effect on April 1, 2016 with a one-year term. On February 21, 2017 the SFMTA Board voted to approve the continuation of the Commuter Shuttle Program, enabling the SFMTA to continue regulating operations of commuter shuttles in San Francisco and charging a per-stop fee after March 31, 2017.

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The Commuter Shuttle Program includes the following characteristics:

- A network of up to 125 shuttle stop locations, including shared Muni zones and shuttle-only loading zones
- Large shuttles over 35 feet in length may travel and load only on the arterial network as designated by the California Department of Transportation
- Shuttle service providers apply for a permit to use network, and pay a permit fee based on the number of stops made at authorized locations, with the permit fee covering the SFMTA's costs for administering and enforcing the program
- Permittees are responsible for ensuring that their operators comply with agreed-upon operating guidelines
- Shuttles must display permit placards on four sides of vehicle and display a “how is my driving?” sticker
- The program is enforced by SFMTA Parking Control Officers and Muni Inspectors, including a dedicated team of Parking Control Officers focused solely on commuter shuttles
- Permittees are required to share data on operations with the SFMTA, following specifications established by the SFMTA
- Permittees must submit a Service Disruption Prevention Plan with their permit application

The Commuter Shuttle Program includes clear and enforceable guidelines for shuttle loading and unloading which lead to increased safety when shuttles interact with other road users, reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and associated emissions reduction and lessening of congestion, as well as minimal impact on Muni service.

Mission Street and Spear Street Location

Currently, the only designated commuter shuttle zone in the vicinity of the Transbay Transit Center is a shared Muni zone at the northeast corner of Howard and Fremont Streets. This zone, which is not currently in use by any regular Muni routes, is relatively short and located at the near-side of the intersection. As a result, it is very difficult and often impossible for shuttles to pull into the curb at this stop, resulting in shuttle vehicles blocking the Howard Street bicycle lane while loading and unloading.

This stop has seen a significant increase in usage, from 11 stop events per day in January 2016 to 64 stop events per day in April 2017. The SFMTA has received at least two dozen complaints about blocked bike lanes and vehicle travel lanes at this location in the past year. In addition, building management staff of the office building adjacent to the stop has complained that long lines of riders waiting for the shuttle in the afternoon often block the entrance to their building. Finally, construction activity frequently blocks this stop so shuttles are forced to block the entire travel lane when they load or board passengers.

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Due to these safety and operational issues at this stop, the SFMTA rescinded this stop and is proposing to create a new shuttle-only white zone along the south side of Mission Street between Steuart and Spear Streets. The new stop would be approximately 140 feet long, restricting parking in seven metered spaces between 6am-8pm, Monday through Friday. This new stop is significantly longer than the existing stop, allowing shuttles to pull fully to the curb and out of traffic. It also minimizes potential conflicts with Muni, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The rescission of the stop at Howard and Fremont Streets was approved by the City Traffic Engineer after an April 14, 2017, Engineering Public Hearing.

The proposed item was presented at a duly noticed public hearing on April 14, 2017.

These changes require SFMTA Board approval:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE BUS ZONE, 6AM to 8PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - Mission Street, south side, from 55 to 200 feet east of Spear Street (restricts parking at seven metered spaces, #33, #35, #37, #39, #41, #43, and #45)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This item was discussed at the April 14, 2017 engineering public hearing. Prior to the hearing, notices were posted on nearby light poles. The users of the stop, who represent major tenants in office buildings adjacent to the proposed stop, were consulted as well. No people testified at the hearing and no feedback was received by email or telephone.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The SFMTA carefully considered alternative locations before proposing the creation of this new commuter shuttle zone. Alternatives were evaluated based on a number of criteria, with the highest priority being the safety of people walking, biking and driving in the area. Specific factors include, among others:

- Adjacency to an intersection – shuttle zones located at the “near-side” of an intersection can obstruct right-turning drivers’ view of pedestrians in a crosswalk
- Curb access – tree limbs or extending over the roadway or zones located in the middle of a block can prevent shuttles from pulling all the way to the curb, leading to blocked travel lanes
- Driveways and parking – the SFMTA works to minimize shuttle zones’ impact on driveways and on parking supply
- Reduction of conflicts between Muni buses and commuter shuttle vehicles
- Minimizing impacts to street trees

Specific alternatives considered include the following locations:

- Howard Street, north side, extending west from Fremont Street: Would conflict with casual

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carpool drop-off area in mornings and conflicts with the bike lane would remain.

- Mission Street, north side, between Steuart and Spear: Would conflict with Muni layover space
- Mission Street, south side, between Fremont and Beale Streets: Very heavy Muni traffic and narrow lanes, so shuttle stops are infeasible on Mission west of Main Street.
- Beale Street, west side, between Market and Mission Streets: Would conflict with Muni zone and/or commercial loading spaces, and could lead to an increase in number of shuttles on Market Street.
- First Street, west side, extending south from Howard Street: Far from most shuttle operators' destinations in area. However, still considering for future stop location.
- Natoma Street, adjacent to new Transbay Transit Center: Considering zone for small circulator shuttles on Natoma after new Transit Center opens.

The SFMTA also considered not creating a new zone to replace the existing zone at Howard and Fremont Streets. However, taking no action would result in shuttles continuing to block the bicycle and vehicle travel lanes, which poses a safety hazard.

FUNDING IMPACT

All costs associated with the Commuter Shuttle Program are recovered through the Designated Stop Use and Permit Fee.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On October 22, 2015, the San Francisco Planning Department determined (Case Number 2015-007975ENV) that the Commuter Shuttle Program is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301 and Section 15308.

The Planning Department's determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

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

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors approve the proposed bus zone modifications, to remain in effect for the duration of Commuter Shuttle Program.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has identified a need for parking modifications in support of the Commuter Shuttle Pilot program as follows:

- A. ESTABLISH – TOW AWAY NO PARKING, PERMITTED COMMUTER SHUTTLE BUS ZONE, 6AM to 8PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY - Mission Street, south side, from 55 to 200 feet east of Spear Street (restricts parking at seven metered spaces, #33, #35, #37, #39, #41, #43, and #45)

WHEREAS, On October 22, 2015, the San Francisco Planning Department determined (Case Number 2015- 007975ENV) that these traffic and parking modifications are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15301 and Section 15308; and,

WHEREAS, The Planning Department’s determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors; and,

WHEREAS, The Commuter Shuttle Program established by the SFMTA Board of Directors calls for the creation of a network of designated stops, composed of shared existing Muni zones, and to include extensions of existing Muni zones and permitted commuter shuttle only loading zones as needed; and,

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

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves the permitted commuter shuttle bus zone modification listed as A above, to remain in effect for the duration of Commuter Shuttle Program.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of May 16, 2017.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency