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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

**Geary Rapid Project Breaks Ground**

*Suite of improvements coming to one of the city's busiest corridors*

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Mayor London Breed, in partnership with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and other City departments, officially broke ground on the Geary Rapid Project. This civic improvement project is bringing much-needed transit, safety and utility upgrades to one of San Francisco's most-traveled corridors. With more than 54,000 daily customers who rely on the 38 Geary and 38R Geary Rapid, the Geary Rapid Project aims to improve the efficiency of the bus route, while making the corridor safer for people walking.

"The Geary Rapid project is a major step in our efforts to create a faster, more reliable transit system in San Francisco," said Mayor Breed. "Tens of thousands of San Franciscans rely on the 38 Geary every day to get to work, drop their kids off at school, and shop at our local businesses. The new Geary Boulevard will better connect our City and create a safer, more consistent transit experience for our residents."

The first set of transit treatments, including bus stop changes and side-running bus-only lanes, was completed at the end of 2018. Also planned as part of the project are new crosswalks, transit signal priority to help buses get a green light, and "bus bulb-outs"—sidewalk extensions at stops so buses can remain in the travel lane and people have more space to wait. These improvements will help reduce unpredictable delays and provide a smoother ride.

"These transit priority treatments on Geary are part of our strategy to provide faster and more reliable service for the 70% of our customers who rely on our Rapid network. Similar types of improvements have increased ridership on Muni's Rapid Network by 8%, despite national ridership being on the decline," said Malcolm Heinicke, SFMTA Board Chair. "This project will also address the serious safety needs along the corridor, especially for people walking."

To minimize community disruption, construction is being coordinated with other City agencies. San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is replacing one and a half miles of sewer and two miles of water pipelines along Geary, to repair these aging systems before they fail and require costly emergency repairs. Sewer and water replacement has already begun between Masonic and Van Ness avenues. That work will be followed by Public Works-sponsored roadway repaving, to rejuvenate 1.5 miles of deteriorated streets between Van Ness and Masonic avenues.



Other changes include a host of safety improvements to address the Geary corridor's designation as a high-injury corridor and help meet the City's "Vision Zero" goal to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2024. To immediately address safety, many intersections have already received painted safety zones or have been "daylit" by painting red curb at the approach to intersections to increase the visibility of pedestrians. Later in the project, pedestrian countdown signals will be added at all locations that do not yet have them, and 18 intersections will receive new pedestrian bulbs. By extending the sidewalk at intersections, pedestrian bulbs increase safety by shortening crossing distances and reducing motor vehicle turning speeds. There are also plans to "calm Geary" by decreasing the number of travel lanes between Scott and Gough streets.

"The Transportation Authority is proud to celebrate with the many community members, transit riders and agency partners who have collaborated to increase reliability and safety for everyone along this vital corridor," said Tilly Chang, Transportation Authority Executive Director. "We are pleased to direct \$12 million in local and regional funds to the first phase of the Geary BRT Project and look forward to delivering the full project together."

One safety improvement in particular is a welcome addition to residents of the Fillmore, St. Francis Square and Japantown communities: a new signalized crosswalk at Geary and Buchanan. That and other planned new crosswalks in the area will provide safe crossing opportunities for people walking and help to reconnect neighborhoods that were ripped apart by "urban renewal" redevelopment projects. It's a symbolic reconnection as well; also planned at Buchanan is a median pedestrian refuge area, where decorative panels depicting the three neighborhoods will be installed.

"The Buchanan Street crosswalk across the busy Geary Expressway is a significant milestone in reconnecting the two communities (African American and Japanese American) that were separated by urban renewal in the 1960s," said Richard Hashimoto, a former Western Addition resident displaced by redevelopment and the current President of the Japantown Merchants Association. "The crosswalk across Geary will also provide a safe passageway across the busy street, especially for our seniors and children."

Later this year, the pedestrian bridge at Geary Boulevard and Steiner Street, which is currently not ADA-compliant, will be permanently removed. In its place, improved surface-level crosswalks and medians will be installed, and the entrances to the adjacent San Francisco Recreation and Park facilities, Hamilton Recreation Center and Raymond Kimbell Playground, will be enhanced.

Geary Rapid Project construction is expected to be completed in spring 2021.

The Geary Rapid Project is the first of two phases of improvements, planned for a three-mile stretch of Geary and O'Farrell between Stanyan and Market streets as part of the Geary Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project approved by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority and



the SFMTA in 2017. The project builds upon prior improvements, including new low-floor buses and red transit-only lanes downtown.

The second phase of improvements would bring similar transit and safety improvements west of Stanyan to 34th Avenue.

For more Geary Rapid Project details and to sign up for construction updates, please visit [SFMTA.com/Geary](https://www.sfmta.com/Geary).