

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO.: 10.3

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving permanent closure of Mary Street, an alley, between Minna and Mission streets to vehicular traffic except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, and approving related parking and traffic modifications to improve safety, expand public open space, and create a vibrant pedestrian connector linking Mary Court to Mission Street and Mint Plaza.



SUMMARY:

- The project will permanently close Mary Street between Minna and Mission streets to traffic, except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, to improve the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable pedestrians since SFMTA staff have determined that the street is no longer needed for motor vehicle traffic.
- The project will also establish Tow Away No Parking Anytime on 5th Street, a turn restriction from Mary Street, and sidewalk widening on 5th Street.
- Local access for residents and businesses are still provided via Minna and Natoma streets. Vehicles can still access Mary Street from Howard Street.
- From the start of the 5M planning and entitlement process, the City and project sponsor conducted nearly 300 community meetings

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. 5M Development Project Final Environmental Impact Report:
<https://sfplanning.org/environmental-review-ments>
3. 5M Development Project CEQA Findings, including the MMRP:
https://sfgov.org/arts/sites/default/files/100515_5M_19459_CEQA_Findings_and_MMRP_opt.pdf

APPROVALS:

	DATE
DIRECTOR 	<u>May 25, 2021</u>
SECRETARY 	<u>May 25, 2021</u>

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: June 1, 2021

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PURPOSE

Approving permanent closure of Mary Street, an alley, between Minna and Mission streets to vehicular traffic except for bicycle and emergency vehicles and approving related parking and traffic modifications to improve safety, expand public open space and create a vibrant pedestrian connection linking Mary Court to Mission Street and Mint Plaza.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND TRANSIT FIRST POLICY PRINCIPLES

This action supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone.
 - Objective 1.1: Achieve Vision Zero by eliminating all traffic deaths.

- Goal 2: Make transit and other sustainable modes of transportation the most attractive and preferred means of travel.
 - Objective 2.2: Enhance and expand use of the city's sustainable modes of transportation.

- Goal 3: Improve the quality of life and environment in San Francisco and the region.
 - Objective 3.4: Provide environmental stewardship to improve air quality, enhance resource efficiency, and address climate change.

This action also supports the City's Transit First Policy with the following principles:

- 2. Public transit, including taxis and vanpools, is an economically and environmentally sound alternative to transportation by individual automobiles. Within San Francisco, travel by public transit, by bicycle and on foot must be an attractive alternative to travel by private automobile.
- 3. Decisions regarding the use of limited public street and sidewalk space shall encourage the use of public rights of way by pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit, and shall strive to reduce traffic and improve public health and safety.
- 5. Pedestrian areas shall be enhanced wherever possible to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians and to encourage travel by foot.
- 8. New transportation investment should be allocated to meet the demand for public transit generated by new public and private commercial and residential developments.

DESCRIPTION

Background

Mary Street is a north-south alley that runs one-way northbound between Howard and Mission streets. Mary Street has one travel lane, and on-street parking is not permitted on either side of the street. Mary Street is a 25-foot right of way, which includes a 15-foot wide travel lane, and 5-

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foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the street. Mary Street does not serve as a major vehicle route and pedestrians often walk in the roadway to avoid the narrow sidewalks.

The 5M project is a large-scale development project bounded by Mission, 5th, 6th, and Howard streets, approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2015. The 5M project would construct three new buildings: a 288-unit residential building located on Mission Street north of Minna Street and west of Mary Street (M-2 building); a 400-unit residential building fronting 5th Street north of Natoma Street (N-1 building); and a 630,000 square-foot office building fronting 5th and Howard streets south of Natoma Street (H-1 building). The project would also involve the rehabilitation of the existing Chronicle Building and the historic Dempster and Camelline Buildings. As of May 2021, the H-1 and M-2 building are currently under construction. The project will provide approximately 59,500 gross square-feet of open space and landscaped areas, including open space created by prohibiting motor vehicle traffic, except for bicycles and emergency vehicles on Mary Street.

Mary Street runs through the 5M project site from Mission Street to Howard Street. Between Mission and Minna streets, Mary Street is currently bounded by a surface-parking lot to the west and the Chronicle Building to the east. The M-2 building would be constructed on a portion of the surface parking lot west of Mary Street between Mission and Minna streets. The M-2 building will include ground-floor active uses, such as cafes and retail uses, along the Mary Street frontage. From Minna to Howard streets, Mary Street is bounded by existing buildings and a surface parking lot west of Mary Street between Minna and Natoma streets.

The 5M project proposes to convert Mary Street from Mission to Minna streets to a pedestrian alleyway, referred to as the North Mary Pedestrian Alley. A 1,600- square- foot band of open space will be established on the west side of the North Mary Street alleyway and adjacent to the future M-2 building, within the existing parcel line of the proposed M-2 building. The North Mary Pedestrian Alley will include landscaping, site furnishings, and seating to encourage ground-floor activation of cafes and retail uses proposed for the M-2 building Mary Street frontage.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Street Closure on Mary Street

The project will permanently close Mary Street between Minna and Mission streets, except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, to enhance the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable pedestrians since SFMTA staff have determined that the street is no longer needed for motor vehicle traffic pursuant to California Vehicle Code section 21102.1. The alley closure will also provide more public open space. As required by state law, signs giving notice of the restriction will be posted at every entrance to the alley. In order to ensure adequate ingress and egress for adjoining property owners, the alley closure will not go into effect until the quit claims of abutter's rights (legal document confirming relinquishment of access rights) is obtained by the City from these property owners.

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Bicycles will continue to be permitted along the sections of Mary Street closed to motor vehicles, offering a car-free connection between Minna and Mission streets.

With the proposed closure of Mary Street, between Minna and Mission streets, local access for residents and businesses will still be provided via Minna and Natoma streets. Vehicles can still access Mary Street from Howard Street.

The SFMTA's Accessible Services Division has reviewed this project through the interagency Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC).

Sidewalk Widening on 5th Street at Natoma

The 5M project developer proposes to widen the sidewalk on the west side of 5th Street between Natoma and Howard streets from ten feet to 16 feet, which exceeds the recommended width set forth by San Francisco's Better Streets Plan, subject to Public Works approval. The increased width will allow pedestrians to move comfortably and safely. The increased width also requires the removal of parking and the implementation of a Tow Away No Stopping Anytime zone for the entire length of the west side of 5th Street between Natoma and Howard streets.

Proposed Traffic and Parking Modifications

- A. ESTABLISH – ROAD CLOSURE, EXCEPT BICYCLES, and EMERGENCY VEHICLES – Mary Street, from Minna Street to Mission Street Octavia Street, from Linden Street to Hayes Street (both northbound and southbound roadways).
- B. ESTABLISH – LEFT-TURN ONLY – Mary Street, northbound, at Minna Street Octavia Boulevard (center lanes), northbound, at Fell Street.
- C. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY, NO STOPPING ANYTIME – 5th Street, west side, Natoma Street to 140 feet southerly (widening sidewalk to 16 feet, removes 4 metered parking spaces, 205-01500, 205-01520, 205-01600, 205-01620 and 6 motorcycle spaces).

Emergency Access

To maintain appropriate emergency access for the San Francisco Fire Department, San Francisco Police Department, and other first responders, the project will secure the closure area using collapsible bollards placed within the roadway. These bollards are rigid yet break-away when impacted by an emergency vehicle; they are also able to be manually removed and reinstalled as desired. The bollards will be installed and maintained by the SFMTA's Sign Shop, and in the event they are collapsed, can be reinstalled within a few minutes by replacing a small metal insert that SFMTA will keep on-hand. These bollards have been tested and were approved by both the San Francisco Fire Department and San Francisco Police Department.

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Maintenance

The San Francisco Department of Public Works will use mini street sweepers (originally purchased to clean the City's protected bikeways) to fit between the collapsible bollards and mechanically clean the block of Mary Street closed to vehicular traffic.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

From the start of the 5M project planning and entitlements process, the City and project sponsor conducted nearly 300 community meetings. The San Francisco Planning Commission held informational hearings on the 5M project on November 20, 2014, July 23, 2015, August 6, 2015 and September 3, 2015. Additionally, the San Francisco Planning Department received extensive comments from the public during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). While most comments were in support of the development, there were concerns regarding displacement and changes to neighborhood traffic, changes in neighborhood character, traffic, incompatibility in the scale of the new buildings, and changes to existing height and zoning controls necessary to allow the project to proceed.

While under construction, the sponsor has continued outreach to key stakeholders. Outreach methods have included monthly construction newsletters, monthly joint public meetings with the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, and regular meetings with neighbors to provide updates and field questions.

On April 30, 2021 the SFMTA held an Engineering Public Hearing on the North Mary Pedestrian Alley and proposed traffic and parking modifications included in this calendar item. There was no public comment received at the public hearing.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A range of alternatives to the 5M project were considered during the preparation of the project Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR considered a No-Project alternative (consistent with CEQA Guidelines) and a variety of land use alternatives ranging in scale, from lower-to-higher residential densities and commercial intensities. However, the North Mary Pedestrian Alley would remain closed to vehicles and bicyclists under all alternatives evaluated in the EIR.

FUNDING IMPACT

This project would be funded by the 5M project developer, as they comprise a portion of the public improvements agreed to be constructed as part of the 5M project. The 5M project developer is required to cover the soft administrative costs and hard construction costs associated with public improvements that are part of the 5M project. SFMTA would be reimbursed of these costs by the developer, consistent with the Development Agreement.

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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The 5M Project Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) evaluated the environmental impacts of the 5M development project. The San Francisco Planning Commission certified the FEIR for the 5M development project (Case No. 2011.0409E) on September 17, 2015, and in approving the project in Motion No. 19459, adopted CEQA findings, including a statement of overriding considerations, and adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). The North Mary Pedestrian Alley and parking and traffic modifications included in this calendar item were analyzed in the FEIR.

The 5M Project FEIR is on file with the SFMTA Board of Directors, may be found in the records of the Planning Department at <https://sfplanning.org/> and 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400 in San Francisco, and is incorporated herein by reference.

The SFMTA Board of Directors, in Resolution No. 15-142, dated October 20, 2015, adopted the 5M Project FEIR and CEQA findings as its own, and to the extent the above actions are associated with any mitigation measures, the SFMTA Board of Directors reaffirms those measures as conditions of this approval.

In a letter dated August 27, 2020, the Planning Department found that the actions contemplated in this calendar item, including the pedestrian encroachment designed of Mary Street North, were addressed in the 5M Project FEIR, and the said letter is incorporated in this calendar item by reference. The SFMTA Board of Directors relies on the Planning Department's CEQA findings as its own.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

Final SFMTA decisions, whether made by the City Traffic Engineer or the SFMTA Board, can be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Ordinance 127-18. Information about the review process can be found at:

https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/SFMTA_Action_Review_Info_Sheet.pdf

SFMTA staff has determined that none of the proposed parking modifications are subject to review by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Ordinance 127-18.

The City Attorney has reviewed this item.

RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff request that the SFMTA Board of Directors approve permanently closing Mary Street, an alley, between Minna and Mission streets to vehicular traffic except for bicycles and emergency vehicles and approving related parking and traffic modifications, to improve safety, expand public space, and create a vibrant pedestrian connector linking Mary Court to Mission Street and Mint Plaza.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency is committed to achieving Vision Zero Goals and implementing safety improvements on Mary Street; and,

WHEREAS, The project aims to improve traffic safety, improve pedestrian connectivity, and expand public open space; and,

WHEREAS, SFMTA staff have determined that Mary Street, between Minna and Mission streets, is no longer needed for vehicular traffic pursuant to California Vehicle Code section 21102.1, except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, because it is necessary for the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable pedestrians in the vicinity; and,

WHEREAS, As required by state law, signs giving notice of the restriction will be posted at every entrance to the alley; and,

WHEREAS, In order to ensure adequate ingress and egress for adjoining property owners, the alley closure will not go into effect until quit claims of abutter's rights is obtained by the City from these property owners; and,

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has proposed traffic and parking modifications along Mary, Minna and 5th streets as follows:

- A. ESTABLISH – ROAD CLOSURE, EXCEPT PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLES, and EMERGENCY VEHICLES – Mary Street, from Minna Street to Mission Street
- B. ESTABLISH – LEFT TURN ONLY – Mary Street, northbound, at Minna Street
- C. ESTABLISH – TOW-AWAY, NO STOPPING ANYTIME
– 5th Street, west side, Natoma Street to 140 feet southerly (widening sidewalk to 16 feet, removes 4 metered parking spaces, 205-01500, 205-01520, 205-01600, 205-01620 and 6 motorcycle spaces); and,

WHEREAS, The 5M Project Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) evaluated the environmental impacts of the 5M development project; the San Francisco Planning Commission certified the FEIR for the 5M development project (Case No. 2011.0409E) on September 17, 2015, and in approving the project in Motion No. 19459, adopted CEQA findings, including a statement of overriding considerations, and adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP); and,

WHEREAS, The North Mary Pedestrian Alley and parking and traffic modifications were analyzed in the FEIR; and,

WHEREAS, The 5M Project FEIR is on file with the SFMTA Board of Directors and may be found in the records of the Planning Department at <https://sfplanning.org/> and 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400 in San Francisco, and is incorporated herein by reference; and,

WHEREAS, That the SFMTA Board of Directors, in Resolution No. 15-142, dated October 20, 2015, adopted the 5M Project Final Environmental Impact Report CEQA findings as its own, and to the extent the above actions are associated with any mitigation measures, the SFMTA Board of Directors reaffirms those measures as conditions of this approval; and,

WHEREAS, In a letter dated August 27, 2020, the Planning Department found that the actions contemplated herein, including the pedestrian encroachment designed of Mary Street North, were addressed in the 5M Project Final Environmental Impact Report, and said letter is incorporated herein by reference; and,

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors relies on the Planning Department's CEQA findings as its own; and,

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors finds that Mary Street, between Minna and Mission streets, is no longer needed for motor vehicle traffic pursuant to California Vehicle Code Section 21102.1, except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, because it is necessary for the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable pedestrians and to improve traffic in the vicinity; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the SFMTA Board of Directors approves permanently closing Mary Street, between Minna and Mission streets, to motor vehicle traffic except for bicycles and emergency vehicles, and parking and traffic modifications, as set forth in Items A through C above, to improve safety, expand public open space, and create a vibrant pedestrian connector linking Mary Court to Mission Street and Mint Plaza.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of June 1, 2021.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency