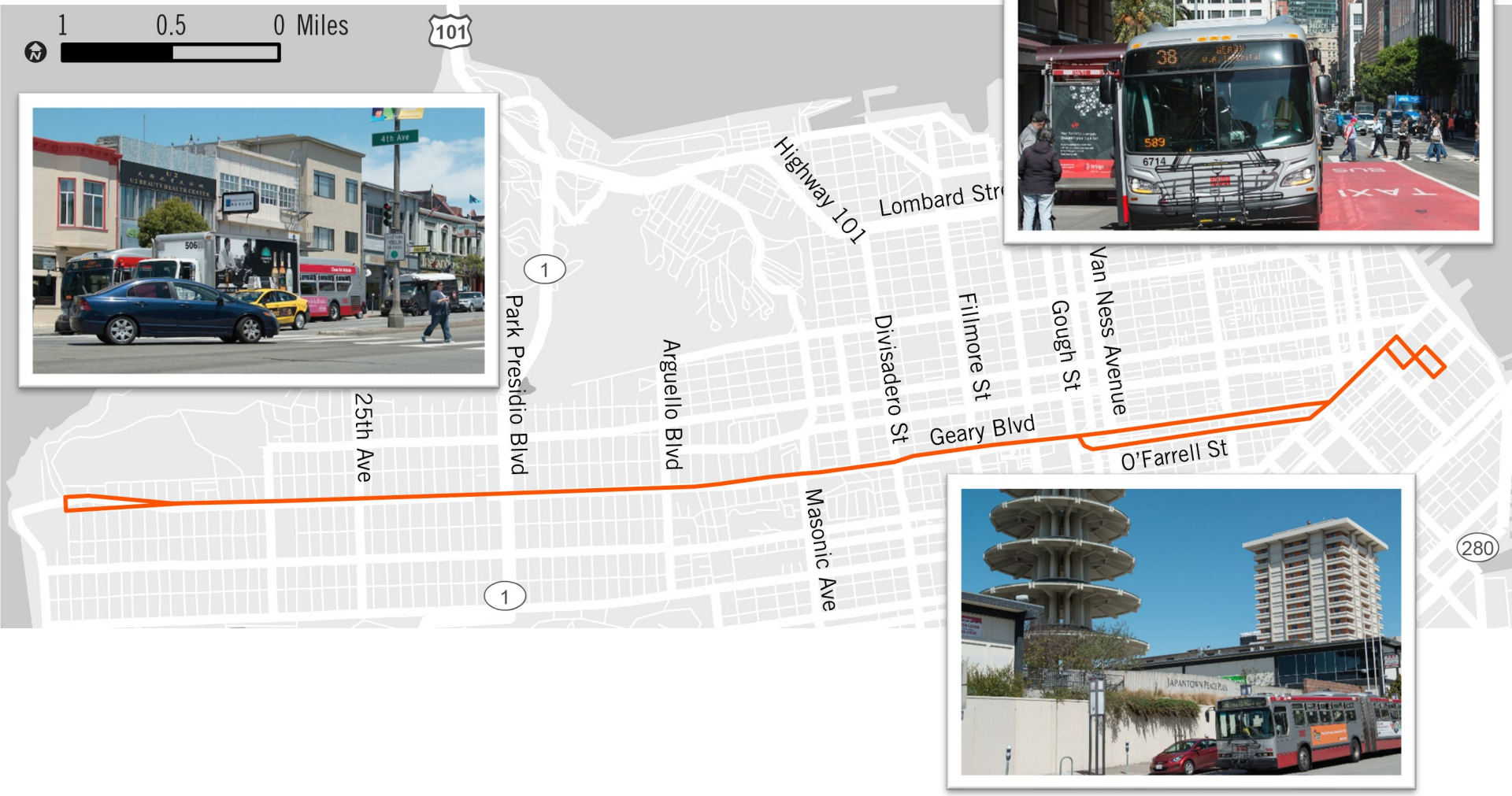
Geary Boulevard Improvement Project

SFMTA Board of Directors

August 15, 2023

The Geary corridor: one of the busiest in the country



Two phases of transit and safety improvements along Geary

Geary Rapid Project: Substantially complete; on-time, on-budget delivery

Geary Boulevard Improvement Project: Today's item for approval

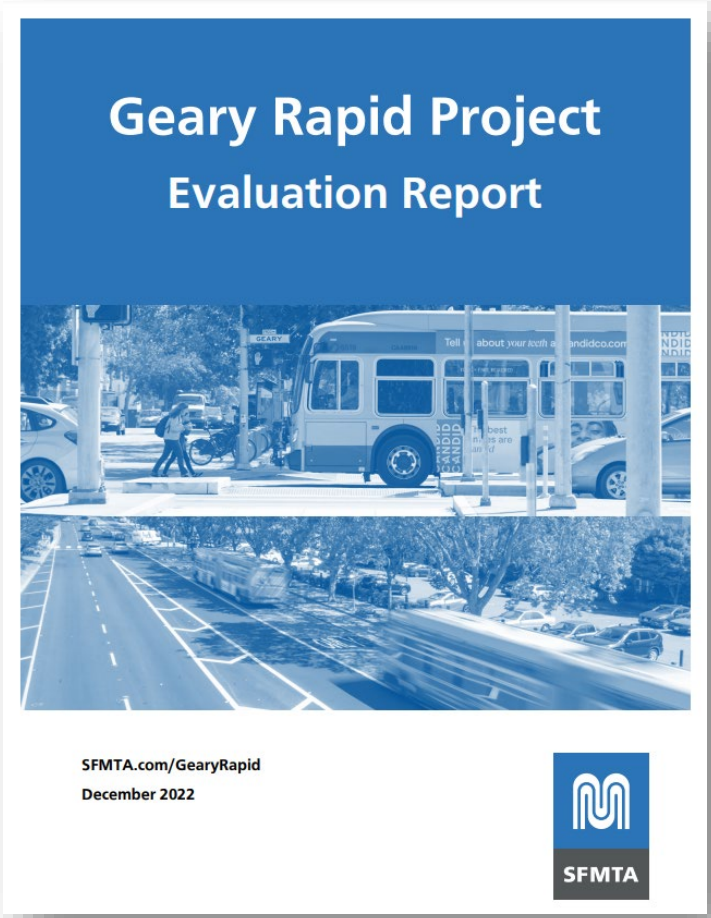
Project need: Improve transit performance and Muni customer experience

- **Gaps in transit lanes** through the Geary commercial core result in buses stuck behind cars
- **Substandard bus zones** make it difficult for buses to pull to the curb to provide safe and accessible boarding
- **Near-side bus stops** decrease effectiveness of the transit signal priority system

Project need: Improve multi-modal safety

- On average, one person walking is injured in a traffic collision within the project area every month
- The project area is part of the High-Injury Network, the 13% of city streets that account for 75% of severe and fatal collisions
- 4 of top 10 intersections with highest # of injury/fatality collisions in District 1 within project area (WalkSF analysis 9/2022-2/2023)

Building on success of Geary Rapid



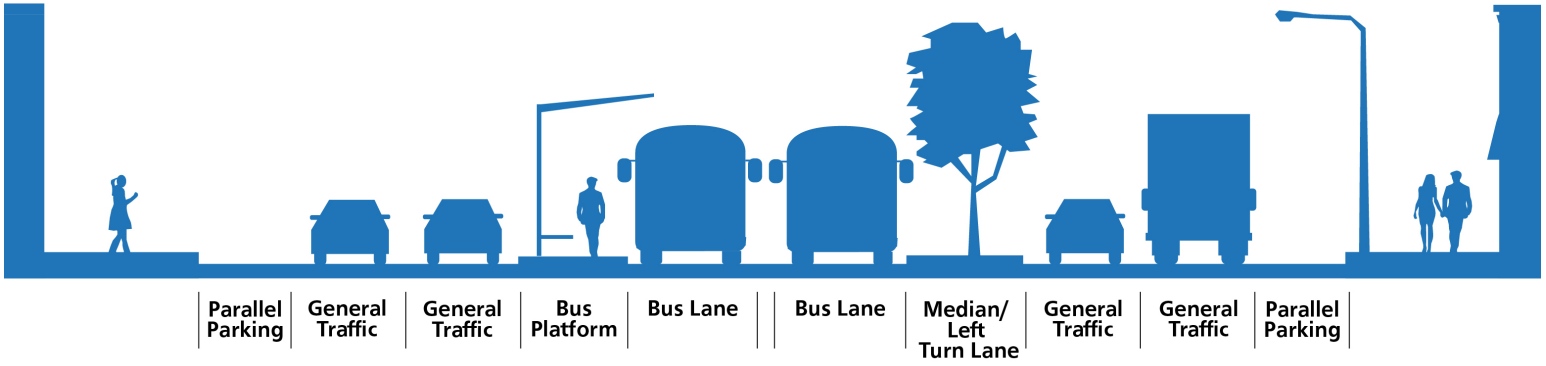
- **Travel time:** Up to 18% decrease in 38R travel time
- **Reliability:** Up to 37% improvement in 38R travel time reliability
- **Traffic collisions:** 70-80% reduction in vehicles going >40 mph, more years of data needed to assess project contribution to change in collisions
- **Transit lane compliance:** Coloring lanes red led to 50% reduction in violations as compared to 2019 non-colored transit lanes
- **Transit collisions:** 38/38R collision rate decreased by 2/3, now about 50% of citywide Muni bus collision rate
- **Equity:** By calming the Geary Expressway, the project helps to reconnect the surrounding communities harmed by 1960s "urban renewal"
- **Parking availability:** Parking availability on the corridor remains high. Average meter occupancy within 1 block of Geary is <60%, garage spots are always available
- **Muni rider experiences:** Rider survey taken after the Quick-Build phase indicated a high level of support and increased usage of Geary buses

Blog post with evaluation highlights:
SFMTA.com/blog/riders-are-feeling-difference-geary

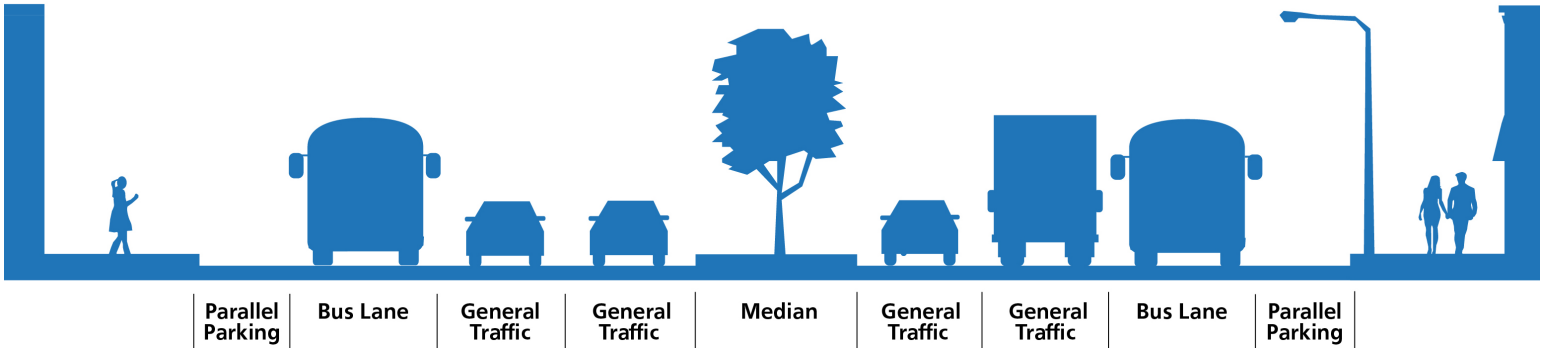
A new side-running design for the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project

Based on success of Geary Rapid and Geary Emergency Transit Lanes, SFMTA is pursuing a revised project design, pending approvals.

Center-running: Approved plan for Arguello-28th Ave



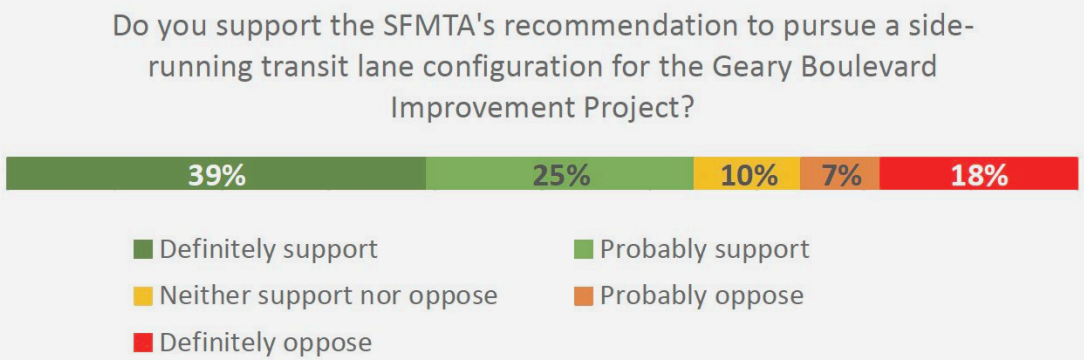
Side-running: New recommended configuration for the entire corridor



Why this change?

- Accelerates delivery of most transit and safety benefits
- Limits construction disruption
- Preserves transit operational flexibility and preserves local stops
- Improves cost effectiveness of travel time & reliability benefits
- Avoids center median tree removal

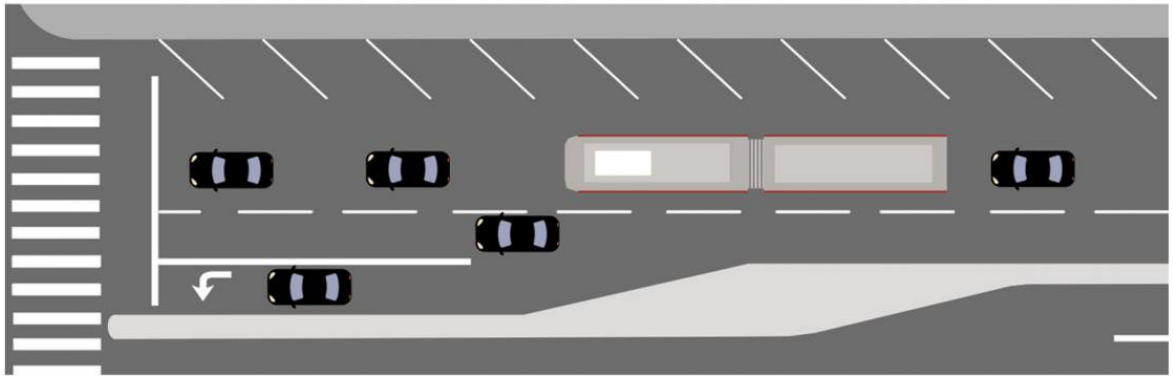
A survey in 2021 showed 2/3 support side-running lanes



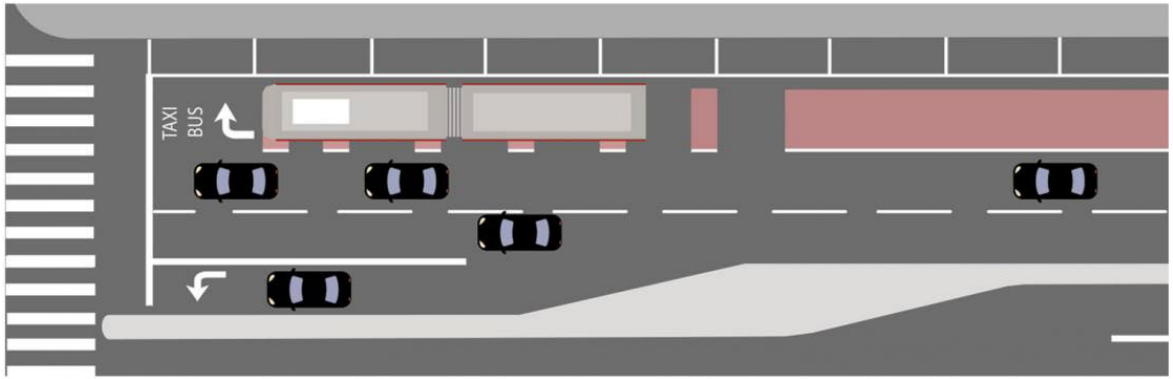
More information: SFMTA.com/project-updates/new-side-running-design-geary-boulevard-improvement-project

Closing the transit lane gap

Diagram showing a bus approaching an intersection without transit lanes versus with transit lanes.

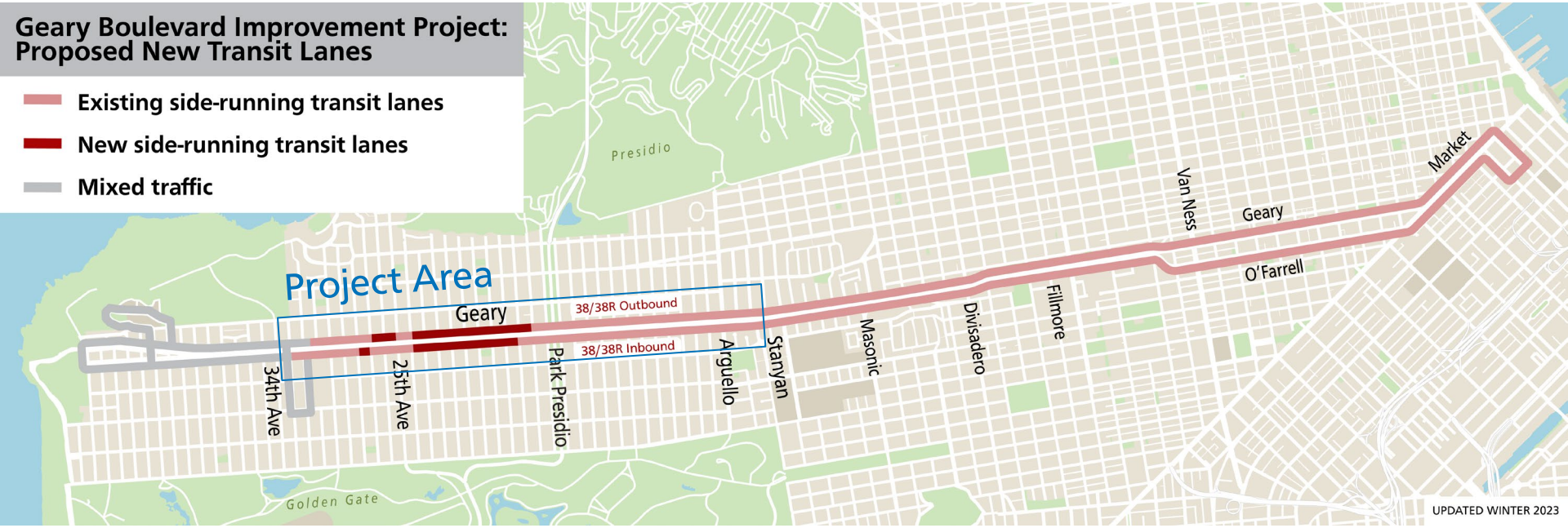


It only takes one or two cars to prevent a bus from catching a green light.



Closing the transit lane gap

The project would close an approximate 10 block gap in transit lanes, providing near-continuous transit lanes east of 32nd Avenue.



** Note that small gaps in transit lanes exist at: inbound Collins-Masonic, Presidio-Baker, Steiner-Fillmore; and outbound Minna-Mission, Baker-Presidio, Masonic-Collins.*

Bus stop removal, relocation, and zone lengthening

- 10 near-side bus stops would be relocated far-side
- 2 local bus stops would be removed (12th Ave inbound and outbound)
- All bus zones would be lengthened to provide enough space for buses to pull over flush to the curb for accessible loading

Proposed bus stop changes

Proposed re-location of 17th Ave local and 25th Ave Rapid outbound stops to far-side were dropped in response to stakeholder feedback

Multi-modal safety proposals

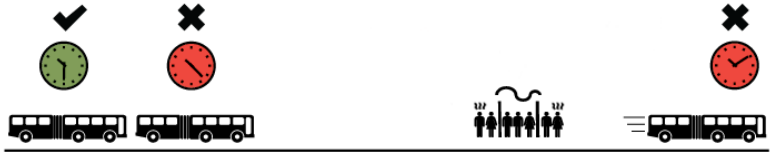
- Elimination of 11 unprotected left turns
- 23 pedestrian bulb-outs
- 37 pedestrian median refuges
- Daylighting at all intersections
- Re-timed signals that give people walking more time to cross the street and a head start before vehicles

Saving time for Geary riders

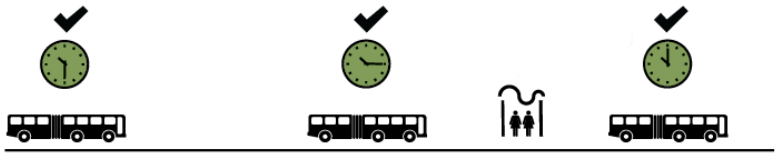
Forecast 38 Geary travel time savings after implementation of project proposals

All time savings are calculated for riders traveling roundtrip between 33rd Avenue and Stanyan Street during rush hour. For a 38R Rapid rider traveling during rush hour, the savings would be: 4.3 minutes per day and 17.8 hours per year.

Transit priority treatments on Geary in the Richmond will benefit riders across the whole line

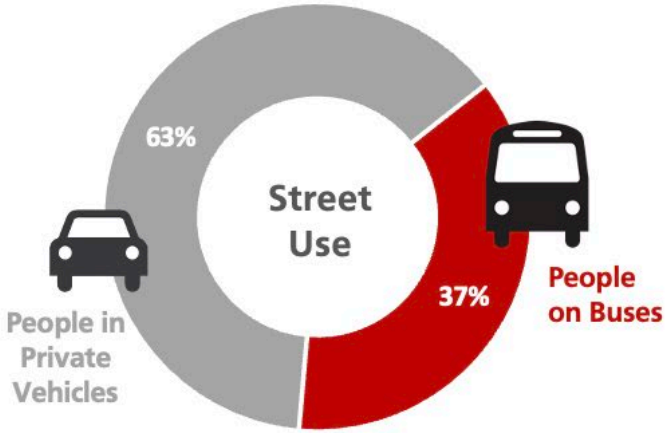


A bus stuck in traffic anywhere on the route can create gaps that cascade through the whole route

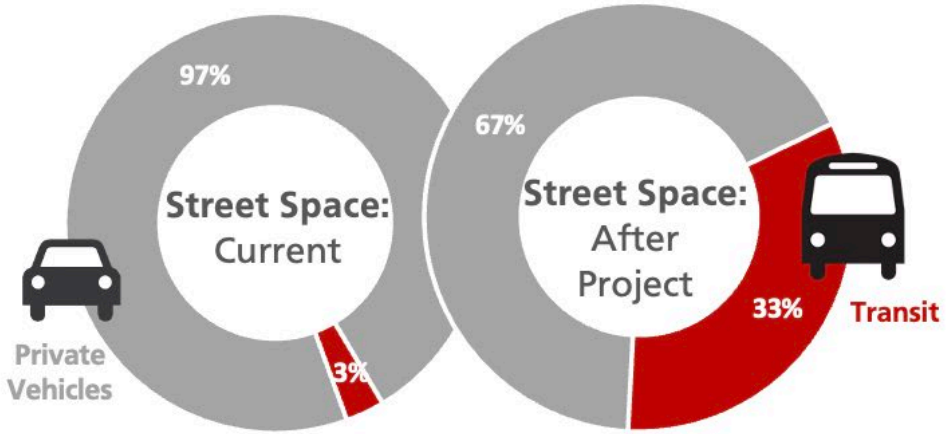


By expanding near continuous transit lanes west to 33rd Avenue, 38 Geary buses will be less likely to be faced with traffic delays, meaning less time waiting at bus stops

Aligning street space with how the corridor is used



Daily trips on Geary at 25th Ave eastbound (~18,500 daily trips)



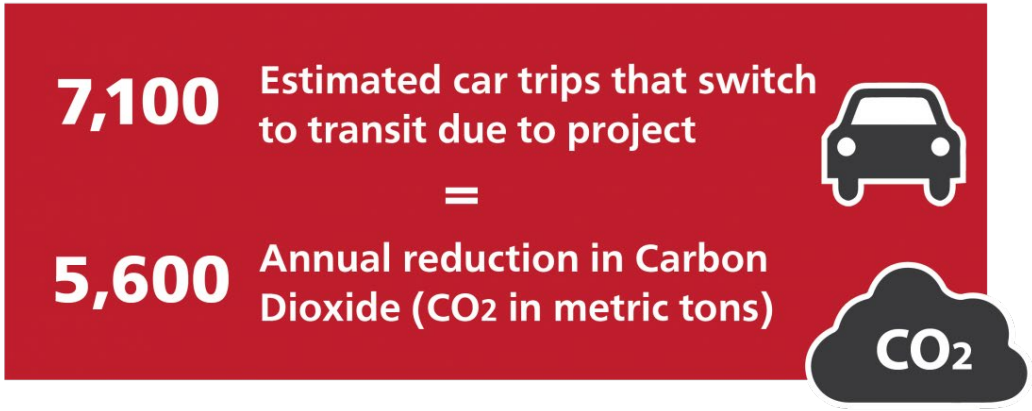
Geary between 15th - 25th Avenue

Sources: People in private vehicles = Pre-COVID traffic daily inbound volumes at Geary and 25th Avenue from Geary BRT EIR/EIS. People on Buses = SFMTA weekday load on 38 and 38R at Geary/25th Avenue in January/February 2020. Street space is estimated proportion of curb-to-curb space dedicated to transit (transit stops and transit lanes) vs. dedicated to general traffic (travel lanes, parking, loading). 24-hour Geary/25th Avenue vehicle trips weren't available for post-COVID period, although analysis of Geary/25th Avenue peak period traffic counts and bus loads found similar proportionality.

Environmental benefits

Forecast reduction in carbon dioxide emissions after implementation of project proposals

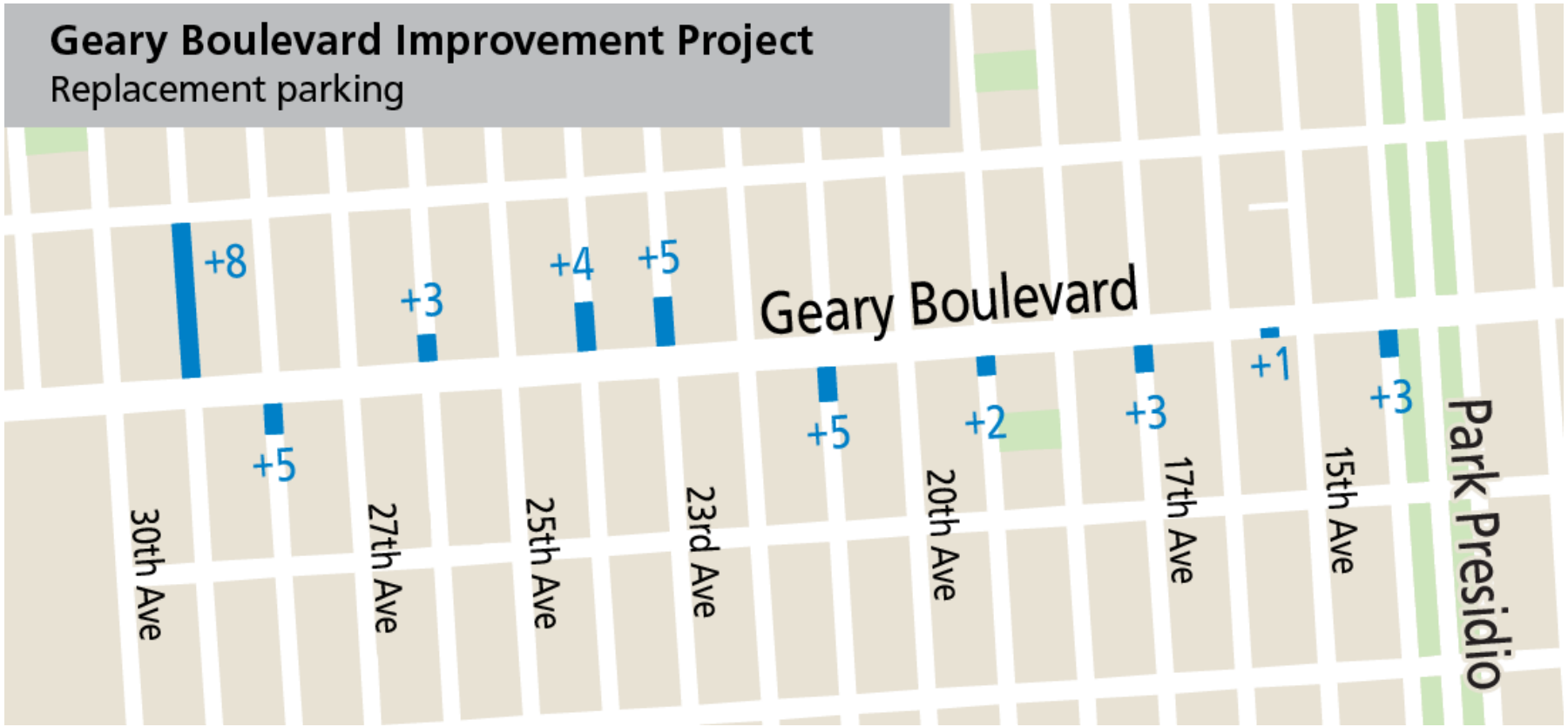
Reduced greenhouse gases:



Equivalent to CO_2 reduction from:

Source: SFCTA SF-CHAMP estimate for 2030

Minimizing parking reductions:
39 proposed replacement parking spaces



**One space shown on the south side of Geary between 15th and 16th Avenue indicates the shortening of the project proposal's right-turn pocket in this location*

Parking impacts:
Net loss of less than one space/block

Corridor Segment	Estimated Public Parking Spaces in Area[1]	Parking Spaces on Geary Blvd	Parking Loss Due to Project Proposals		Previously Planned Cross-Street Parking Additions	Additional parking	Net Parking Change	Net Parking Loss Per Block
			Total	Per Block				
34th Avenue – 25th Avenue	1,000	127	-13	-1.4	8	8	+3	+0.3
25th Avenue – Park Presidio	1,430	226	-39	-3.5	14	9	-16	-1.5
Park Presidio – Palm/Jordan	1,750	230	-18	-1.3	0	0	-18	-1.3
Total	**4,180**	**583**	**-70**	**-2.1**	**22**	**17**	**-31**	**-0.9**

[1] Public parking spaces within 1 block of Geary (Clement to Anza). Source: SFCTA, 2018.

What is the project's Quick-Build phase?

How long it will take

- Striping/signage changes will take 1-2 days per block
- The entire project area will take ~3 months
- This phase does not include any excavation

What's Included?

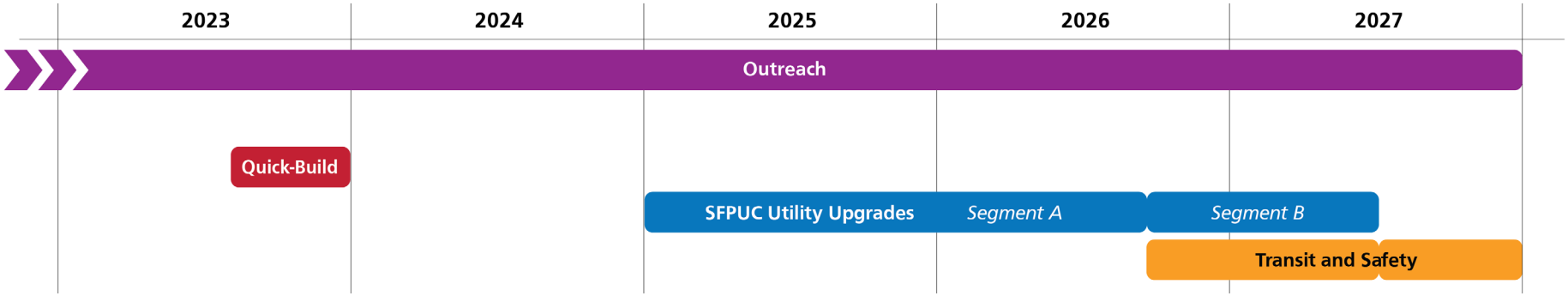
- Install **new angled parking on cross streets *prior to* converting Geary angled to parallel parking**
- Install **new transit lanes** with white paint and signs
- **Changes to the curb color** for new and relocated loading zones (commercial, passenger, general)
- **Safety improvements** including red curb, left-turn restrictions, and re-timing signals for slower walk speeds

Marketing support for Geary businesses during Quick-Build

- SFMTA will convene a Merchant Working Group, open to all Geary merchants, to create a customized marketing campaign to support the Geary commercial district.
- Project has budget to convene/facilitate meetings, prepare artwork/marketing materials, and up to $25,000 in direct costs to execute campaign.
- Examples include: designing or printing business directories, ads on buses, event support, social media ads, radio ads, etc.
- This is *in addition to* business support during the construction phase

Examples of Geary Rapid Project marketing support. Above: Project covered cost to design and print directories for Tenderloin businesses. Below: Project-funded bus ads promoting Japantown.

Draft implementation schedule



"Quick-Build" Treatments

- Transit lanes
- Pedestrian safety treatments
- Bus stop changes
- Roadway striping changes

SFPUC Utility Upgrades

- Water main replacement (32nd to Stanyan)
- Fiber-optic cable conduits (25th to Stanyan)
- Sewer main replacement (31st-24th & 14th-Stanyan)

Transit and Safety Improvements

- Bus bulbs
- Upgraded traffic signals
- Pedestrian bulbs
- Roadway repaving

Minimizing construction impacts

- Construction impacts would be similar to the Geary Rapid Project east of Stanyan street, which was completed in ~3 years, on-time, on-budget with limited disruption.
- Construction disruption would be limited to a few blocks at a time for a few months as the work moves through the corridor.
- Combined duration of SFPUC and SFMTA work would last about 3 years (vs. 6-year Van Ness Improvement Project), 15 months for SFMTA's scope.

Example of bus bulb construction

SFMTA and SFPUC will partner on a Business Support Program, including:

- **Marketing campaign(s)** such as business directories, ads on buses, social media ads, radio ads, etc.
- **OEWD support** with a business liaison, small business services, merchant survey
- **Wayfinding signage**
- **Banners** for individual businesses whose frontage is obstructed
- **Community enhancement project feature** to be defined during design phase to further increase attractiveness of Geary commercial corridor (e.g. gateway signage, string lighting, or other ideas developed by community stakeholders)

Example banner for obstructed frontage

Example wayfinding signage

Community engagement

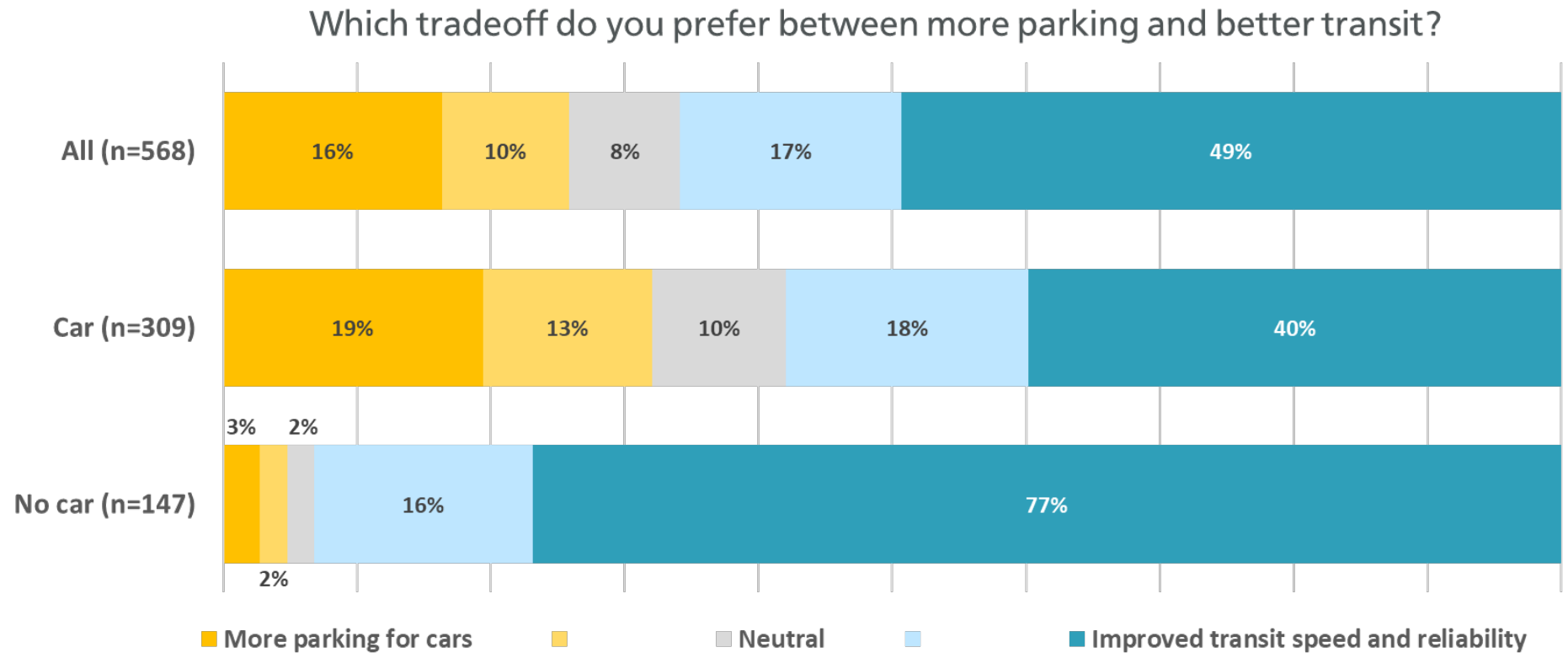
- Geary Community Advisory Committee
- Project drawings
- Online community meetings
- Online/in-person (self-guided) open houses
- Online and in-person office hours
- Stakeholder meetings
- Pop-up events on the corridor
- Merchant loading survey
- Door-to-door outreach
- 38/38R transit operator in-reach
- Posters along the corridor
- Website
- Project emails/texts
- Direct mailings
- Social media, Spotify and newspaper ads
- Multilingual communication

Rounds of outreach

	Outreach Goals
Merchant Loading Survey (Spring 2021)	• Input on where curb space changes could improve access for businesses.
Outreach Round 1 (Fall 2021)	• Input on general project priorities • Feedback on bus stop changes, transit lanes, parking, loading and safety issues • Level of support for change from center-running to side-running transit lanes
Outreach Round 2 (Spring 2022)	• Specific input on draft detailed block-by-block design • Level of support for evening/Sunday metering and parallel-to-angled parking conversion on some cross streets • Feedback used to update and finalize draft detailed project design
Geary Merchant Outreach (Summer 2023)	• Inform merchants of increase in proposed replacement parking, planned marketing support for Geary businesses during Quick-Build, and provide more information about implementation and construction impacts and mitigations.

Outreach Round 1 survey results

Most respondents prioritized better transit over more parking, even among car owners.



June 2023 additional merchant outreach

Shared information about new replacement parking, business support resources, and construction impacts via door-to-door outreach with flyers and project drawings between 28th and 14th avenues:

- Had 98 conversations with merchant owners and staff
- Left materials at 94% of businesses

Sent 117 direct emails to Geary merchants we had email contact information for

Geary project team members eating lunch at Joe's Ice Cream during door-to-door outreach on June 22, 2023

Changes in response to feedback

- Substantially decreased net parking loss down to 31 spaces, from an earlier estimated 60 spaces for a center-running design and 140 spaces for a side-running design
- Added new business support resources during Quick-Build implementation to overall project business support plan
- Dropped two proposed bus stop re-locations (17th Avenue and 25th Avenue outbound)
- Removed evening and Sunday meter hours expansion from project proposals (although citywide implementation is still being pursued)
- Introduced additional safety treatments, including left-turn restrictions
- Committed to reimburse modification costs for Shared Spaces directly impacted by the project proposals

Additional stakeholder feedback

- Support for transit and safety improvements and appreciation for other recent improvements via Geary Rapid and Geary Emergency Transit Lanes
- Concern about proposed conversion of angled to parallel parking and parking loss
- Location-specific concerns with specific proposed bus stop relocations or turn restrictions
- Planning and outreach fatigue
- Concern about relative effectiveness of side-running versus center-running transit lanes
- Appreciation for approach that minimizes construction disruption, continued concern about construction impacts
- Support for the climate benefits of the project proposals

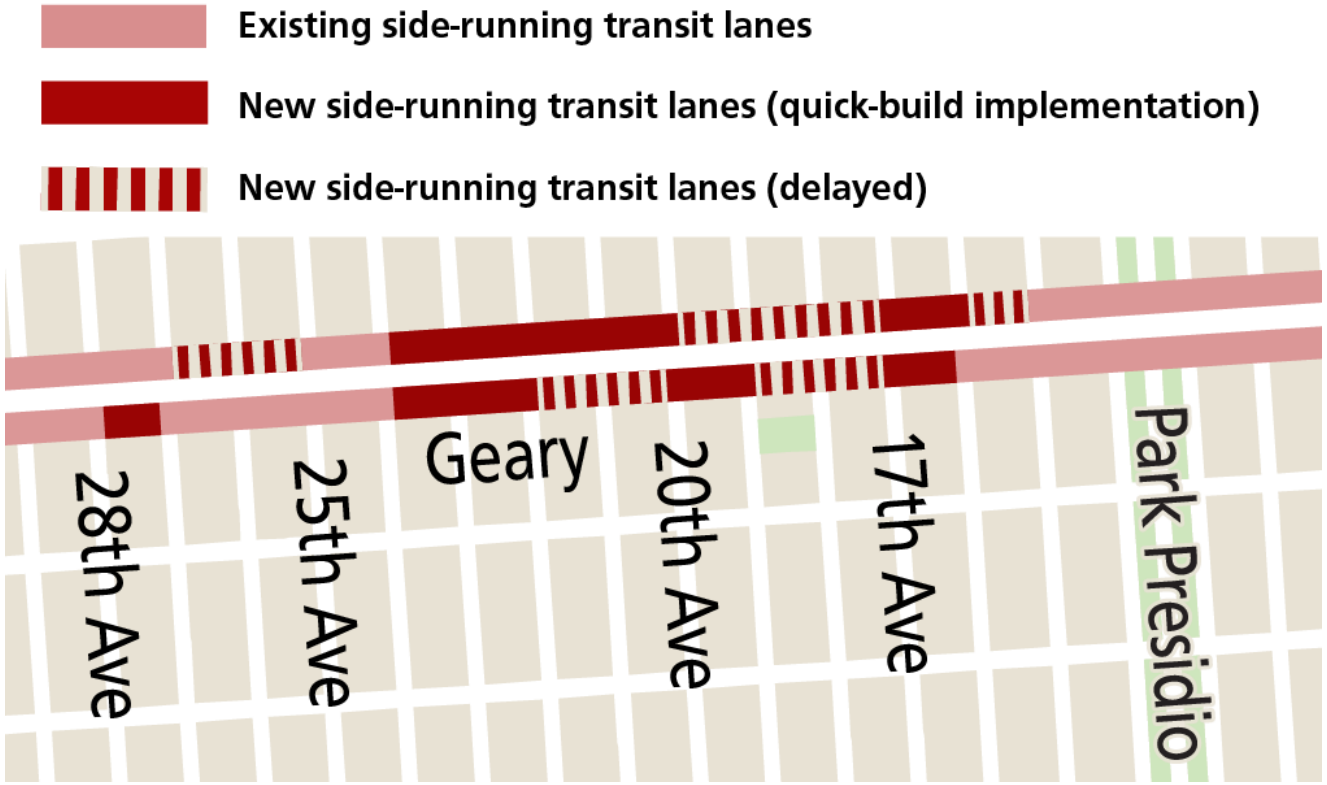
Key merchant concerns and responses

Merchant concern	Project response
Minimize construction impacts	Design modified from center- to side-running transit lanes, dramatically decreases construction impacts
Minimize parking loss due to transit lanes	Identified an additional 17 parking spaces to almost entirely mitigate the 18 spaces attributable to transit lanes
Minimize parking loss	Significantly decreased parking loss to an average net loss of <1 spaces per block, saving almost twice as much parking as original center-running design (-31 spaces vs. -60 spaces)
Help Geary merchants' economic recovery	Project has committed to project-funded business support during both Quick-Build and full project construction
Location-specific feedback	Revised several project proposals in response to merchant feedback including dropping proposals to re-locate 17th and 25th Ave outbound stops, and changes to the color curb plan
Help parklet owners in angled parking that would need to re-build into parallel parking	Committed to cover costs to re-build directly impacted parklets
Delay implementation of Quick-Build project	Provided more information on Quick Build timing needs and benefits, and included a "Delayed Transit Lane Option" alternative for consideration by the SFMTA Board of Directors

Why is near-term implementation of Quick-Build important?

- Act with urgency to decrease traffic injuries and deaths in the project area.
- Support the city's economic recovery by improving transit travel time and reliability for 36,000 daily transit riders.
- Protect buses from delays and keep more on-street parking during SFPUC construction.
- Deliver State grant-funded signal re-timing that must be spent by end of 2023. This signal retiming also helps keep buses and cars moving with improved signal progression.
- Improve traffic flow and predictability by getting the bus out of the traffic lane and giving general traffic two lanes.

Delayed transit lane option



- Delays implementation of transit lanes along ten block faces until early 2025, thereby delaying the loss of 18 parking spaces.
- Not recommended because it would result in a net loss of transit benefits (up to 10.5 hours for a daily 38 rider over ~18 month delay), creates additional 600 hours of staff work, additional $200,000 in costs, detracts from the legibility of transit lanes, and prompts the potential need for affected Shared Spaces to rebuild twice.

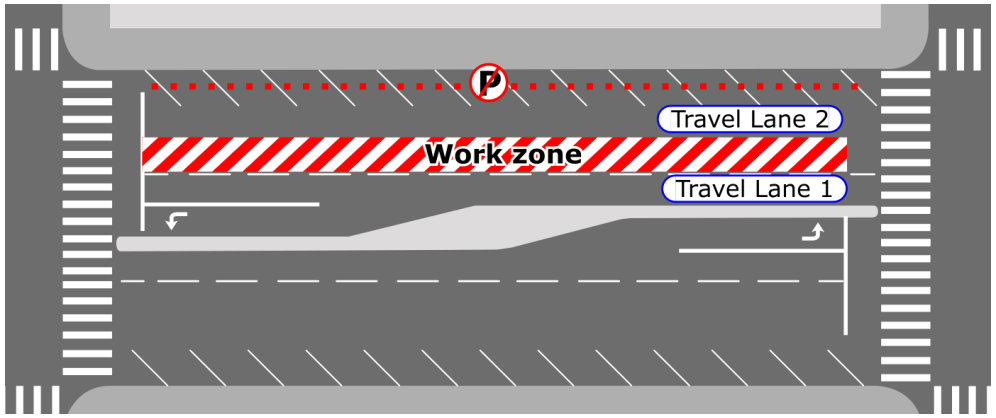
Thank you.

Proposed new transit lanes

Proposed bus and pedestrian bulbs

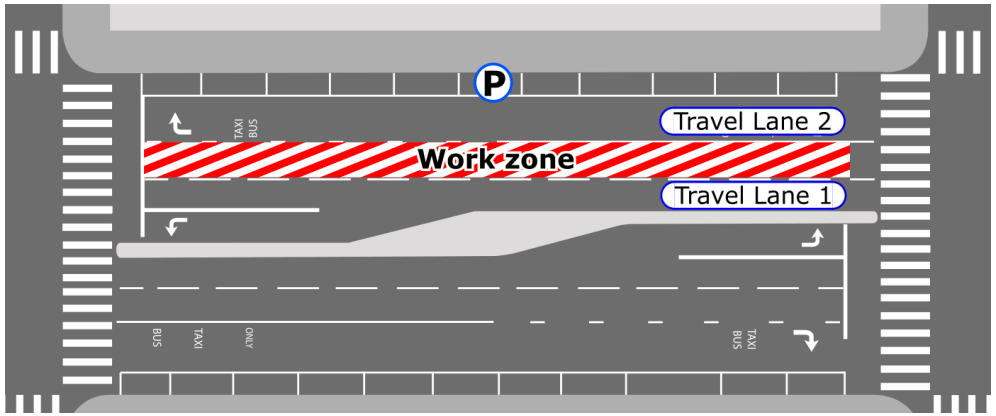
Parallel parking would allow more parking to be retained during SFPUC construction

Example street configuration during construction with angled parking



Angled parking lane would be used as a traffic lane during SFPUC construction.

Example street configuration during construction with parallel parking



With parallel parking, there would be enough room to keep both parking lane *and* traffic lane during most activities.

Converting angled parking to parallel parking would help preserve more parking during SFPUC water and sewer construction. The diagram shows an example roadway configuration during construction. There would be times when the parking lane with parallel parking would need to be used during construction, but the amount of time it would be used would be less than with angled parking.

Project supporters and opponents

Supporters

Faster Safer Geary Coalition

Geary CAC

SAN FRANCISCO JAPANTOWN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

OUTER SUNSET NEIGHBORS

SFMTA CAC

Opponents

GEARY BOULEVARD MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods

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