



SFMTA COVID STREET TRANSFORMATIONS

TRANSPORTATION RECOVERY PLAN OCTOBER 2021



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INTRODUCTION

COVID CRISIS

On March 16, 2020, six Bay Area counties, including San Francisco, issued an unprecedented Stay-At-Home order. The order directed all individuals to shelter at their place of residence except to provide or receive certain essential services or perform work for essential businesses and governmental services. This was in response to the growing and imminent threat of COVID-19, a pandemic that would upend the world.

Since the first stay-at-home order, almost every aspect of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) changed in how we designed and operated our streets. Our COVID-19 response challenged us to break down silos, think creatively, perform new jobs and expedite processes and practices that traditionally take a much longer time. In the midst of a once-in-a-lifetime public health crisis, SFMTA staff rose to the occasion and delivered excellent projects focused on keeping San Franciscans moving our city safely, equitably and sustainably all the same.

Similarly, our streets evolved in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We designed and implemented creative uses of public space that opened new avenues for enjoying San Francisco even in a time of physical distancing. Now, a walk across any San Francisco neighborhood is characterized by its Slow Streets, outdoor dining configurations, and new opportunities to rediscover the type of outdoor recreation synonymous with San Francisco. Iconic areas like the Great Highway, Golden Gate Park, and the top of Twin Peaks are now more accessible to more people than ever before.

SFMTA TRANSPORTATION RECOVERY PLAN

At the start of shelter-in-place, the SFMTA took action to minimize risk to both our staff and the public, while still meeting the essential travel needs of San Franciscans. The SFMTA worked quickly and diligently to develop the Transportation Recovery Plan (TRP) to meet these challenges with our safety, equity and sustainability goals in mind.



Guided by the public health orders and recommendations from the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the plan responds to incremental increases in economic activity. The plan is a data-driven response to the crisis- from the sequencing of how the SFMTA returns transit service and staff to engaging tactics to keep our streets moving such as installing new bike lanes, slowing street traffic on residential streets to allow for multi-modal use, temporary transit-only lanes, and additional paratransit and taxis service.

Five new street programs evolved within the TRP to immediately respond to the COVID 19 health and safety regulations: **Department Operations Center (DOC)/Curb and Street Operations, Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes (TETLs), Slow Streets, Tenderloin Streets, and Recreational Streets.**

STREETS RECOVERY PROGRAMS

This report looks back at the new streets recovery programs, reporting on the outputs and outcomes of these efforts, especially as they are legislated as formalized programs of the SFMTA or the city.

Each program was evaluated through the lense of **three cross-cutting themes** that align to SFMTA values. These themes are:

Responsiveness: The SFMTA adjusted capital and operating processes and projects quickly to serve the needs that arose from the pandemic. From immediately closing streets for COVID testing and food banking, to implementing new street regulations for transit and walking and biking, to making space for businesses outside, the agency quickly implemented projects and programs citywide. We also learned from those interventions, continuing to adjust programs and projects throughout the year to make them more useful, clear. and accessible efforts.



Equity: The programs of the SFMTA specifically sought to increase transportation equity through small and medium scale interventions, even as the pandemic exposed and created deeper divides between neighborhoods and communities. Whether focusing on ensuring that transit that serves disadvantaged neighborhoods with frequent and reliable service through transit-only lanes, or supporting community-based organizations through new curb and street space, serving the neediest community members and neighborhoods was at the forefront of SFMTA efforts.

Streets for people: As our understanding of the causes of COVID-19 evolved, especially in terms of indoors transmission, it became clear that the outdoor space was important for many new reasons; streets needed to serve as an extension of the outdoors. Closing or reducing access to streets provided more recreational space, new eating spots, and areas for basic social services without endangering participants. The SFMTA used the streets to give people healthy outdoor spaces to live their lives.

TRP DASHBOARDS

Due to the changing nature of this pandemic, the TRP is nimble and aligns with easily trackable metrics and indicators. While this report presents summary data from the five new streets recovery programs, the SFMTA also developed continual data streams, or [COVID 19 data dashboards](#). These dashboards track metrics like bus boardings, transit revenue, and Slow Streets mileage. They are a vital tool in informing changes we need to make in our public health mitigation measures, addressing gaps, making adjustments within our TRP programs, and informing future service changes. The dashboards and more information can be found at [SFMTA.com/COVID19Dashboard](https://sfmta.com/COVID19Dashboard)



Key Accomplishments

The SFMTA recovery programs are responsive, equitable, and people-centered.



CURB AND STREET OPERATIONS

Responsiveness: SFMTA DOC responded to **over 700** work order requests, with the majority having completed issued work orders in under three days.

Equity: COVID Command Center requests primarily focused on serving the most at-risk San Franciscans in the most at risk-neighborhoods. Of these requests, **39% were in Communities of Concerns** (populations and communities that could be considered disadvantaged or vulnerable now and in the future).

Streets for people: **100%** of the work orders installed re-purposed parking spaces or travel lanes to provide more outdoor space for people.



TEMPORARY EMERGENCY TRANSIT LANES (TETLs)

Responsiveness: TETLs were installed from **three to six months** after TETL program launched. The SFMTA installed nearly **10 miles** of TETLs in a year, with an additional 7 miles to be installed by the end of 2021 – **about five times the amount of transit lanes installed in previous years.**

Equity: 100% of installed TETL routes **improved Muni service** to neighborhoods with high percentages of people of color and low-income households.

Streets for people: TETLs improved service on routes that **benefit nearly half of all Muni riders** – 130,000 people every day.



SLOW STREETS

Responsiveness: **30 corridors** were rolled out over 16 months through four phases to create a Slow Streets network.

Equity: The fourth Phase of Slow Streets network expansion focused efforts in Communities of Concerns. From this outreach and planning effort, some communities expressed more interest in traffic calming and street safety efforts rather than Slow Streets.

Streets for People: Slow Streets created **45 lane miles** of streets to support active transportation, exercise, and recreation.



TENDERLOIN STREETS

Responsiveness: The Jones Street physical distancing lanes were implemented in **three months**, one-tenth of the time that it took to outreach and implement a similar project on adjacent Taylor Street.

Equity: **100%** of the Tenderloin programs and projects are in the Tenderloin Community of Concern and directly serve the at-risk community.

Streets for people: Efforts in the Tenderloin resulted in **over two miles** of calm streets for walking, biking, playing, eating, and safe sleeping.



RECREATIONAL STREETS

Responsiveness: Approximately **10 miles** of Recreational Streets were established within the first three months of stay at home order.

Equity: Recreational Streets are located across **five Supervisor Districts** and are directly adjacent or within major city parks and destinations.

Streets for people: Recreational Streets are serving **over 30,000 users** on a typical weekend.



Operations

9



Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes

15



Slow Streets

23



Tenderloin Streets

31



Recreational Streets

39



1

Operations

Curb and Street Operations

In March 2020, the scale and magnitude of the State of Emergency became clear and the Agency launched the SFMTA's Department Operations Center (DOC). Since then, the DOC served as a centralized hub to ensure that the SFMTA is minimizing health risks to employees and the public as we keep transportation running, both by coordinating internally within the agency, and by collaborating closely with our city, state, and federal partners.

Within the DOC, a dedicated team of engineers worked with dozens of city partners to immediately fulfill a range of creative needs for the curb and streets as new pandemic-response programs began. Examples of these permits include curb space for food bank activities, white zones for shopping curb-side pick-up, additional space for people waiting in line at grocery stores, or adjusted curb space to support transit service.





Safe Sleeping Sites

Safe sleeping sites – outdoor locations with areas for tents, access to restrooms, showers, and other facilities – were developed to **keep vulnerable residents safe** from the disease when access to shelters and other tradition homeless support systems were severely limited. Fully closed streets that supported this work include 100 Fulton Street at the San Francisco Public Library and 2100 Jennings Street.

Food Banks

More than a dozen pop-up food bank sites were created to meet the immediate need as many lost jobs or access to healthy food due to closed schools or senior centers. Locations used additional loading space, and some took advantage of street closures to provide social distancing space and improved food banking operations..

Testing and Vaccine Sites

Curbs and streets quickly became spaces to assist with **COVID testing needs, and evolved to include supporting vaccination sites**, an integral part of San Francisco’s successful COVID response. Support from SFMTA Parking Control Officers was critical for keeping these new spaces working efficiently and safely.



CURB CHANGES BY TYPE

TYPE	NUMBER
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR CURBSIDE PICKUP	437
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR COVID-19 TESTING	51
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING	41
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR MEDICAL FACILITY	39
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR TRANSIT	36
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR FOOD BANK	35
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR MEDICAL VEHICLE / AMBULANCES	27
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION	18
STREET CLOSURE	16
LANE CLOSURE	14
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR DOC	4
TOW- AWAY ZONES FOR DEMOBILIZATION	2



OPERATIONS

“ I am hopeful for the future. I am hopeful for our City. We are not yet out of this pandemic, and there is still a lot more work ahead of us. But as we look ahead and get on the road to recovery, I am confident that we can build a more equitable, just, and thriving San Francisco.”

- Mayor London Breed



SHARED SPACES



Shared Spaces is a multi-agency program of San Francisco's Economic Recovery Task Force that allows merchants and community groups to use sidewalks, full or partial streets, and other nearby public spaces like parks, parking lots and plazas, for restaurant pick-up and other neighborhood retail activities allowed under San Francisco's Public Health Orders.

So far, over 1,700 free Shared Spaces permits have been issued throughout San Francisco to help businesses move outdoors.



2

TETLs

Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes

Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes (TETLs) protected transit from the return of traffic congestion to provide fast, reliable trips for those making essential trips on Muni and to limit crowding and pass-ups. **Nearly half of transit riders on an average weekday ride on routes serving TETL corridors.**

The SFMTA installed nearly 10 miles of TETLs in a year, with an additional 7 miles to be installed by the end of 2021 – **about five times the amount of transit lanes installed in previous years.** TETL routes are listed below.

- ▶ **1 California:** Locations on California, Sacramento, and Clay streets
- ▶ **14 Mission and 14R Mission Rapid:** Mission Street in SoMa
- ▶ **19 Polk:** 7th and 8th Streets in SoMa
- ▶ **28 19th Avenue:** Park Presidio and Lombard HOV Lanes
- ▶ **38 Geary and 38R Geary Rapid:** Geary Boulevard in the Richmond
- ▶ **43 Masonic and 44 O'Shaughnessy:** Locations on Presidio, Masonic, Laguna Honda, Woodside, and Bosworth Street
- ▶ **T Third:** 4th Street Bridge from Berry to Channel Streets





14 Mission and 14R Mission Rapid: Mission Street in SoMa

The new all day transit only lanes on Mission Street keep transit moving even as rising traffic threatens to slow it down. Traffic increased **20% since the summer of 2020**, **yet transit times are staying relatively consistent** –meaning the transit lanes are effective in protecting buses from slow traffic and increased transit travel times. A **majority of community survey respondents (65%) said they wanted to keep the transit lanes permanently**, and the project was legislated as permanent transit lanes by the SFMTA Board in June 2021.

The project upgraded part-time transit lanes to all day use and widened lanes that were previously too narrow for buses to safely pass other traffic. In addition, the project simplified parking and loading by removing tow-away restricting that affected different sides of the street at different times of day, replacing them with all-day parking on one side of the street.. This new configuration is now easier and safer for all road users to navigate. Loading for businesses also changed as part of the project, **with the hours of when yellow zones are available increasing by over 40%**.

Where all-day transit lanes were added, **mid-day transit travel times improved significantly over pre-COVID conditions** and remained relatively steady since last summer, even as traffic increased. Between January 2021 and March 2021, **average daytime round-trip travel time between 5th and 11th streets was 20% lower on the 14 Mission and 18% lower on the 14 Mission Rapid** than in January and February of 2020, prior to the pandemic. As congestion returned in early 2021 and traffic volumes grew by 20% compared to summer 2020, average travel times increased by just 1% on the 14R and 3% on the 14 local. This is an indication that adding transit lanes in the mid-day protected transit against increasing traffic congestion



MISSION STREET FINDINGS

After transit lanes were added, mid-day **transit travel times improved significantly** over pre-COVID conditions. They remained relatively steady since last summer, even as traffic increased.

40%

increase in the hours of when loading zones are available.

65%

of community survey respondents (65%) said they wanted to **keep the transit lanes permanently**.



38 Geary: Geary Boulevard in the Richmond

Similar to the Mission Street lanes, the Geary TETL improvements prevented increases in travel time that would have either exacerbated pass-ups or slowed the restoration of service in other parts of the Muni network. **On Geary Street, Muni maintained travel times up to 13% faster than prior to the pandemic.** The project also did not lead to significant diversion of traffic to parallel streets.

The Geary Boulevard TETL includes temporary emergency transit lanes, and additionally installed temporary bus bulbs and Muni head start signals at select locations along Geary Boulevard in the Richmond. Transit lane installation and Muni head start signals were completed in December 2020, and wooden bus bulb installation was completed at the beginning of February 2021.

This project was legislated as permanent transit lanes by the SFMTA Board in July 2021.



GEARY STREET FINDINGS

80%

of survey respondents said it the new lane is **somewhat, very, or extremely important to make sure Muni does not get delayed in traffic.** Of the 87% of operators who were aware of recent Geary TETL changes, most **(83%) reported that these changes made their jobs easier.**

Muni travel times were **13%** faster on Geary Street than prior to the pandemic.

The project did not lead to significant diversion of traffic to parallel streets.





4th Street Bridge

The 4th Street Bridge Temporary Emergency Transit Lanes Project (4th St Bridge TETL Project) are targeted engineering treatments intended to protect light-rail transit from the return of congested bridge traffic to provide fast, reliable trips for those making essential trips on Muni. Installation of the changes was complete in time for the return of T Third Street rail service on January 23, 2021.

The project included a southbound temporary emergency transit lane, as well as a northbound left-turn restriction and signal timing changes at the intersection of 4th Street and Berry Street. Prior to 2020, this was one of the only sections of the T Third Street line without dedicated lanes. Transit travel time improved where transit lanes were implemented. **Northbound travel times from 4th and King to Mission Rock decreased 28%, while southbound travel times decreased by 16%.** There does not appear to be a significant rate of diversions from 4th Street to nearby streets.

4TH STREET TETL SURVEY

80%

of operators who were aware of recent 4th St Bridge TETL changes **reported that these changes made their jobs easier.**

Most respondents who regularly ride the T Third Street line either **thought trip quality, travel time, and reliability was better or about the same.**

Residents of the Bayview-Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley neighborhoods were much more likely to **support making the project permanent**, and to prioritize transit over driving, than other respondents.





3

Slow Streets

Safe Spaces to Share the Roadway

The Slow Streets program was designed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide more space for physically distant essential travel and exercise. The program limits through traffic on certain residential streets and allows them to be used as a shared roadway for people traveling by foot and by bicycle.

Throughout the city, **nearly thirty corridors transformed into Slow Streets**. On these Slow Streets, signs and soft vehicle diversions were implemented to minimize through vehicle traffic, encourage slower vehicle speeds, and **prioritize people** walking and biking.

Slow Streets make San Francisco more welcoming and accessible for people who want to travel on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, scooter, skateboard or other forms of micro-mobility. The corridors attract a wide range of users—including children, older adults, people with disabilities and people of color, providing these residents critically needed outdoor space throughout the pandemic.



General Findings

The Slow Streets designation and traffic barricades, which discourage non-local vehicle access, are fulfilling their purpose. On average, Slow Streets experience a **35% decrease in average daily vehicle volumes** and **14% decrease in median vehicle speeds**. On average, Slow Streets saw a **27% increase in bicycle volumes** and **65% increase in pedestrian volumes**. Many neighborhoods embraced the local streets as their own, with creative signs, street art, and on-porch concert series.

Impacts to side streets were minimal; while there were slight increases on some streets adjacent to Slow Streets, congestion levels are low and increases do not correlate with the decrease in vehicle volume on Slow Streets.

Perhaps the most significant was the community response to the Slow Streets program - in survey responses, **residents overwhelmingly noticed less traffic on these streets and perceived the streets to be safer than in pre-pandemic conditions**. Both the public and the SFMTA board declared the program **an innovative way** to help improve safety and reduce pedestrian fatalities on San Francisco's streets.

On average, **63% of residents surveyed support keeping Slow Street vehicle restrictions in place after COVID-19**. Four of the most popular streets in the program, Golden Gate Avenue, Lake Street, Sanchez Street, and Shotwell Street, were approved in August 2021 by the SFMTA board for post-pandemic authorization and disassociation from the Mayor's State of Emergency, becoming permanent Slow Streets.



SLOW STREETS SURVEY

78% of residents surveyed noticed **less traffic and fewer speeding cars** on Slow Streets

69% of residents surveyed say they have a **positive experience** on Slow Streets

63% of residents surveyed **support keeping Slow Street vehicle restrictions in place** after COVID-19

Highlighted Slow Streets

Lake, Page, Shotwell, and Sanchez Streets are the most popular and well utilized Slow Streets implemented. These streets exemplify the benefits offered by the program- **high pedestrian and bike use combined with low vehicle volumes and speeds**. These Slow Streets are creating a **safer and more comfortable walking and biking environment**.

Three of the four streets meet all the criteria to be considered as very “low stress” streets, or streets with very **low average vehicle volumes** (below 1,500 vehicles per day) and **low median vehicle speeds** (below 20 miles per hour).

The lower the vehicle volumes, the lower the chances of a conflict between a pedestrian or bicyclist and a vehicle. Additionally, if a person walking or biking in the roadway must interact with a moving vehicle, lower vehicle speeds ensure that the driver can better see and react to the situation.



AVERAGE COUNTS ON HIGHLIGHTED SLOW STREETS

SLOW STREET	TRAFFIC SAFETY		MOBILITY		DIVERSION IMPACTS
	AVG. WEEKDAY DAILY VEHICLE VOLUME	AVG. WEEKDAY MEDIAN VEHICLE SPEED (MPH)	ESTIMATED PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY (15 HR TIME PERIOD)	OBSERVED BIKE ACTIVITY (15 HR TIME PERIOD)	ROADWAY VOLUME TO CAPACITY (V/C RATIO)
LAKE STREET	610	13	1,410	540	MODERATE
PAGE STREET	670	12	1,850	660	LOW
SANCHEZ STREET	2,210	15	3,650	120	LOW
SHOTWELL STREET	870	12	2,410	120	LOW

V/C Ratio is the Volume-to-Capacity Ratio, or a measure that reflects mobility and quality of travel of a facility or a section of a facility. It compares roadway demand (vehicle volumes) with roadway supply (carrying capacity).



These four corridors are also some of the most utilized in the overall Slow Streets network. Data collected shows that within a fifteen-hour period, all four streets see at least 1,000 pedestrians, with **Sanchez and Shotwell Streets having at least more than 2,000 pedestrians.**

Similarly, bicycle volumes are very high on these four Slow Streets. **Lake and Page Street see the most number of bicyclists within a 15 hour time period.**

The simple but effective safety improvements in the Slow Streets toolbox transformed these residential streets from spaces that were previously primarily used for car movement and storage into streets for people to travel, exercise, and recreate, by foot or bike.



RE-ENVISIONED OUTREACH

With shelter-in-place and social distancing, the SFMTA found new ways to reach communities. The agency's toolbox grew to include virtual open houses with correlating websites, or "Story Maps", that provide project details and visuals in multiple languages; online surveys distributed by mailers, posters and QR codes displayed in the project area; paper surveys sent through the mail, and interactive applications such as Google Jamboard and Microsoft Teams to host stakeholder meetings.





4

Tenderloin Streets

In May 2020, Mayor Breed announced the release of the Tenderloin Neighborhood Safety Assessment and Plan for COVID-19 – a report of the conditions in the Tenderloin and a block-by-block plan for addressing those challenges. The disproportionate impacts from COVID-19 to the Tenderloin are part of the broader intersectional public health issues that the Tenderloin faces, and the **SFMTA** continues to work with the community to be part of the solution.





Jones Street Distancing Lanes

Due to the heavy foot traffic and sidewalk encampments on Jones Street and the need to safely maintain distance, the SFMTA installed physical distancing lanes on Jones Street from O'Farrell Street to Golden Gate Avenue. These lanes help expand walking space and alleviate overcrowding on sidewalks by removing one travel and one parking lane.

Data collected shows about 23 percent of people walking on Jones use the new physical distancing lane; **the lanes are helping to reduce crowding on sidewalks.**

The number of vehicles traveling on Jones Street and Hyde Street **dropped by 24 percent and 15 percent, respectively.**

When comparing a six month-post implementation condition to the pre-project condition; vehicle travel times generally remained constant over time.



JONES STREET DISTANCING LANES

23%

of people walking on Jones use the new physical distancing lane; the new lanes are helping to reduce crowding on sidewalks.

24%

decrease in the number of vehicles traveling on Jones and Hyde street after the distancing lanes were installed.

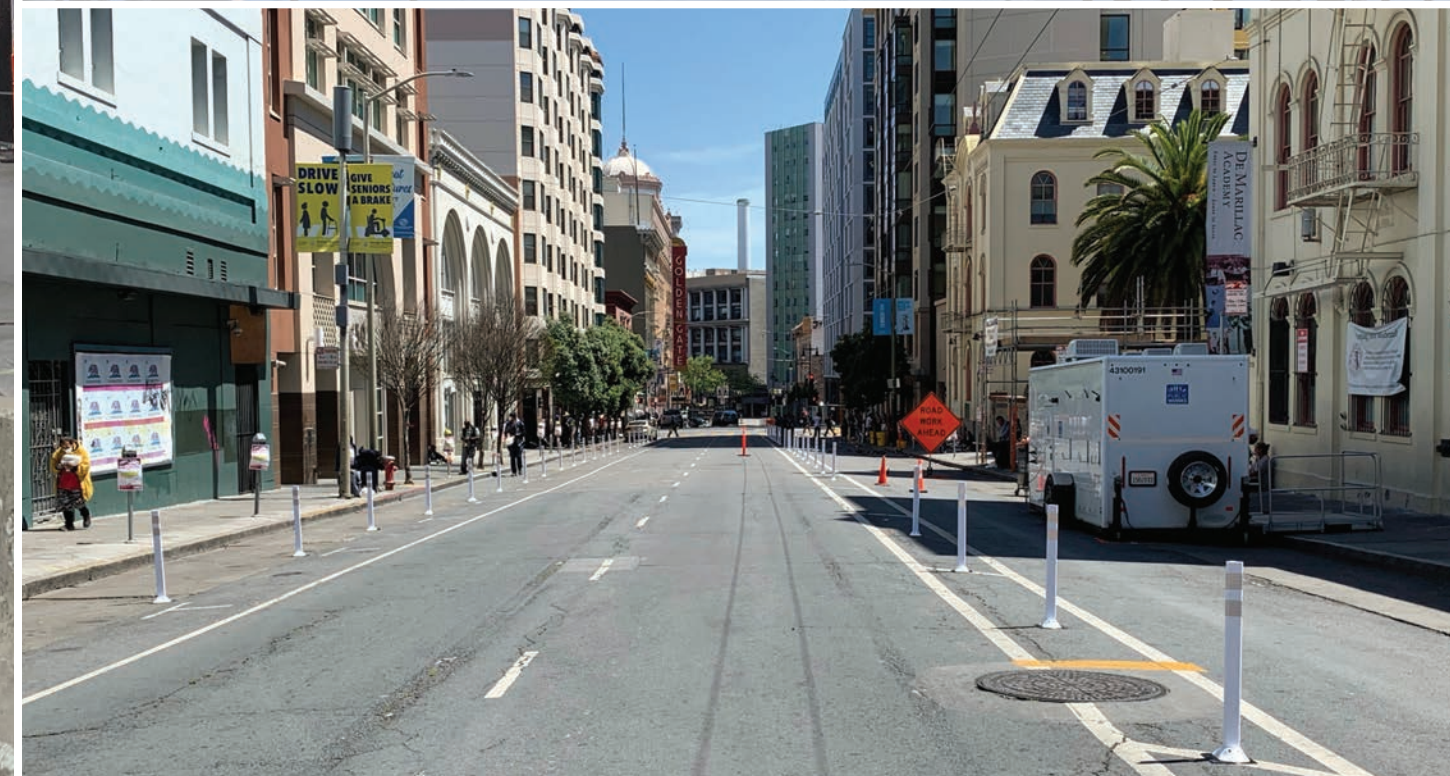


100 Golden Gate

Sidewalks were overcrowded and did not allow for physical distancing at St. Anthony's free meal program, an important community resource for the Tenderloin Neighborhood in San Francisco. The community services organizations serving the block - Larkin Street Youth Services, Mercy Housing, Lutheran Social Services, De Marillac Academy, St. Boniface, 826 Valencia and St. Anthony's- worked together with the SFMTA to close the street to vehicle traffic daily from 6 AM to 3 PM to provide food and other social services directly on Golden Gate Avenue. **Since the closure in early 2020, thousands of Tenderloin residents accessed services and more space to access services and travel on Golden Gate Avenue.**

300 Ellis Tenderloin Hub

As a result of pedestrian safety and overcrowded sidewalks on Ellis Street, the SFMTA worked with local organizations such as GLIDE Memorial Church to close a block of Ellis Street to provide more space for organizations to **provide services like free meals, open-air medical services, COVID-19 testing, food pantry box distribution** and more. This closure began in March 2020 and continues today.





Larkin Shared Space

To provide economic relief for small businesses, the SFMTA worked with the Tenderloin Merchants Association to bring Shared Spaces to Larkin Street. A coalition of community groups and non-profits including the Tenderloin Merchants Association, the Tenderloin Community Benefit District (TLCBD) and Livable City worked in close partnership to secure a Shared Spaces closed street permit, which allowed businesses all over San Francisco to more quickly transition their operations outdoors without fees.

Tenderloin Play Streets

Children and families were not able to leave their homes for months during the pandemic. In collaboration with TLCBD and Livable City, Play Streets provided space for families and children to play. Through partnerships with local organizations, a weekly closure of Turk Street between Leavenworth and Jones streets provided temporary, **car-free open space for children, seniors and Tenderloin neighbors** to enjoy every Saturday. Play Streets were successful in creating spaces for children to play, providing areas for COVID-19 testing, and allowing neighbors to take a break outside.



PLAY STREETS

Play Streets SF launched in 2017 with an equity-first pilot to ensure the citywide launch was accessible and responsive to the communities who needed it most in San Francisco – African American, Latino, Chinese, Filipino, and Samoan/Pacific Islander communities who all experience disproportionately high rates of poor health.

Through community partnerships in San Francisco's most under-served neighborhoods (which also correlates closely with San Francisco's largest minority communities), the program developed a suite of resources making it easy for all San Francisco residents to focus on community building and fun with their neighbors.

The Play Streets on Turk Street later evolved into Safe Passage Park, a block-long activation space that offers community programming and collaboration.





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Recreational Streets

Miles of San Francisco streets within and next to parks were closed to facilitate physically-distanced recreating or to separate cyclists from busy recreational spaces. These included spaces in Golden Gate Park, the Panhandle/Fell Street, McLaren Park, Twin Peaks, and on the Great Highway. These places provided unique opportunities for the city (led by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) but supported by SFMTA) to consider full-time or part-time full closures of some of these spaces even after the COVID emergency.





John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park

At the end of April 2020, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, in partnership with the SFMTA, closed John F. Kennedy Drive to vehicular traffic from Kezar Drive to Transverse Drive to create a car-free route for the entire east-west length of Golden Gate Park. The new car-free route supports physically distanced public health and recreation, and safe travel for people walking, rolling, and cycling through Golden Gate Park. Since the implementation of the street closure, on a busy weekend day **more than 17,000 people walking and biking** typically enjoy the space.

Great Highway

As part of the city's response to the COVID pandemic, the city re-purposed the Great Highway to be a promenade for recreational use. The road was closed prior to the start of the pandemic for regular sand removal and remained closed through 2021. Today, the Great Highway is the city's second most visited open space behind Golden Gate Park. Even on a foggy weekday morning, people can be seen on the shoreline path jogging, walking with coffee, or riding their bikes. According to Recreation and Park Department data, on average, **5,230 cyclists and pedestrians used the Great Highway on weekend mornings** between October 2020 and May 2021. As of August 2021, Great Highway remains open to people walking and biking from Friday at noon through Sunday night.



RECREATIONAL STREETS

17,000

people enjoy the new car-free JFK Boulevard in Golden Gate Park on a typical weekend day.

5000+

bicyclists and pedestrians use the re-purposed Great Highway on an typical weekend day.



Fell Street Protected Bike Lane

In response to crowds on the shared-use Panhandle Path, the SFMTA installed a parking-protected bikeway on Fell Street adjacent to the Panhandle between Baker Street and Shrader Street. The project reduced the number of travel lanes on Fell Street from four to three lanes to accommodate the new protected bike lane. Data collected show since implementation, **pedestrian counts are up 7% and total bike volumes up 10%** from pre project conditions, with **23% of cyclists diverting to the Fell Street** Bike lane and alleviating congestion on the Panhandle Path.



Shelley Drive in McLaren Park

Shelley Drive in John McLaren Park is closed to vehicles 24 hours per day throughout the duration of the pandemic. The street closure is intended to ensure there is enough space for people who choose to exercise in McLaren Park to maintain required physical distancing. The gates at Cambridge and Mansell Streets are locked, closing much of the Shelley Drive loop to vehicles. Data collected after the street closure shows that **over 700 people now walk and bike** on Shelley Drive on a typical Saturday afternoon. As of September 2021, the full closure was shortened from Mansell Street to the Water Tower parking lot.

Third Street Bridge

In July 2020 during the height of the pandemic, the SFMTA completed a two-way bikeway connection between the Promenade/Berry St. and Terry Francois Blvd. to the south across the Lefty O'Doul (3rd St) Bridge as part of the Third Street Bridge quick-build project. The protected bikeway provides dedicated space for bicyclists, reduces the risk of conflicts with vehicles, and alleviates crowding on the narrow sidewalk. The Third Street Bridge Bikeway Connection **closes a critical gap in the city's bike network** by connecting the existing protected two-way bikeway on Terry Francois Boulevard to the San Francisco Bay Trail. Recent data shows that almost **4,000 pedestrians** and over **500 bicyclists** used the new connection on a typical Saturday afternoon.





Twin Peaks

The Twin Peaks Boulevard gates were closed early in the pandemic to reduce crowding at the lookout point parking lot. While the new park configuration received support, there were community concerns around accessibility and neighbors. To address these concerns, the SFMTA led an effort to determine permanent access to Twin Peaks Boulevard including options to open or close the north gate at Burnett Avenue and the south gate at Portola Drive.

In Fall 2020, the SFMTA and the Recreation and Parks Department released a public survey to collect feedback on five alternatives for Twin Peaks Boulevard. **Over 1,700 responses were collected from neighbors and residents citywide.** Results were polarized between the pre-COVID alternative when both the north and south gates were open to all modes and the alternative with both gates closed at all times, providing the most car-free space.

The project ultimately closed the northern gate at Burnett Avenue except to people walking, biking and rolling and opening the southern gate at Portola Drive to all users, including drivers. This option provided the best combination of safety and access, while addressing the negative impacts affecting neighbors and ensures the return of tour bus access to Twin Peaks Boulevard by way of Portola Drive.

Data collected shows **more than 800 people walking or biking** to and from both gates on a Saturday between 1 and 5 PM. In total, **more than 800 people** visited Twin Peaks on weekdays and 1,100 visited on weekends.



“Now more than ever, San Franciscans are relying on our parks and urban trails to relieve stress and give a sense of familiarity during this unprecedented time... Parks aren’t a luxury; they are a necessity.”

- Phil Ginsburg, General Manager of San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department



CONCLUSION

In response to unprecedented circumstances, the SFMTA delivered a suite of responsive, innovative programs and projects within short timelines. Some aspects of these new programs and projects, such as four of the Slow Street corridors, demonstrated benefits beyond emergency response and are now permanent. Other programs will continue to be monitored to understand their value within a rapidly evolving environment. As the pandemic continues and the needs of our streets and residents continue to shift, the SFMTA is committed to keeping San Francisco moving.

This project is made possible by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority through a grant of Proposition K Local Transportation Sales Tax Funds. For more information about the Safe Streets Evaluation Program, please visit:

sfmta.com/safestreetsevaluation



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