



Friends of Great Highway Park

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Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Friends of Great Highway Park—a group of neighbors that believe that Great Highway Park makes our oceanfront more accessible, equitable, and enjoyable to all—urges you to support Supervisor Mar’s legislation to codify the current “compromise” configuration of Great Highway Park as a pilot through December 2025 and establish a public process to study long-term solutions for the Great Highway. The legislation will satisfy the vast majority of San Franciscans while giving everyone an equal opportunity to engage in a clearly defined public process to determine the long-term future of the Great Highway. While supporting the legislation, we urge you to amend it to have the park open on Fridays starting at 6 AM during the pilot, in order to increase equity and access for people who work weekends and allow SFMTA and RPD to study the effects of having Great Highway Park open to people for a full weekday on an ongoing basis.

Our oceanfront is one of nature’s greatest gifts to our city, and it can be so much more. Great Highway Park—which has received more than two million visits in under two years—has become a community space, a sustainable transportation corridor, a place where kids learn to ride a bike, and a place where all San Franciscans improve their health and well-being. Our oceanfront is a uniquely inspiring space we should preserve from the pollution of climate changing-inducing cars and make a safe, pleasant place for all San Franciscans to enjoy free from the danger of automobiles. Supervisor Mar’s proposal takes an important first step towards realizing that future.

The Great Highway has been managed by the Recreation and Parks Department, as one of the city’s first three park spaces, since the 19th century. San Francisco has discussed dedicating portions of the Great Highway to coastal recreation and preservation since at least the 2012 Ocean Beach Master Plan. The COVID-19 Pandemic shined a light on these discussions; the opening of this space during the pandemic showed San Franciscans the potential for their oceanfront to be a space for community, sustainable transportation, recreation, and preservation. Our organization—which grew out of the community’s recognition of this potential—has advocated for a permanent and full-time oceanfront park ever since.

To be clear, we would like to see more than the temporary and part-time park that is proposed in this legislation. We believe we should act now to designate the Great Highway as a full-time, permanent oceanfront park. Nature already regularly declares the space a park due to sand accumulation. Short of a full-time park designation, we believe that the pilot program should include at least one weekday of park access for people who work weekends, people who use the space as a sustainable transportation corridor, kids who want to enjoy our oceanfront all week, and all San Franciscans to enjoy the mental and physical health benefits that come with our coast. That said, we support Supervisor Mar’s proposal, because it takes an important first step towards creating a permanent full-time oceanfront park, while building on a “compromise” approach that has calmed a tense debate about the future of the space.

As community members, we hear and value the concerns expressed by some neighbors about traffic impacts, and recognize the value in the pilot giving time to study and improve traffic impacts of a full-time Great Highway Park. We are confident these concerns can be addressed and look forward to working with our neighbors, SFMTA, RPD, Supervisor Mar, and other City leaders to realize the incredible impact of a full-time oceanfront park.

Sincerely,

Friends of Great Highway Park