

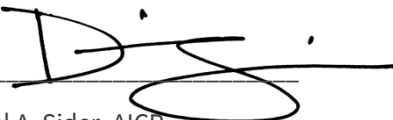


GENERAL PLAN REFERRAL

April 26, 2022

Case No.: 2022-003098GPR
Block/Lot No.: 1700/001
Project Name: Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program, Slow Street Road Closures
Project Sponsor: City and County of San Francisco, Recreation and Parks Department
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Recommended By:


Daniel A. Sider, AICP
for Rich Hillis, Director of Planning

Recommendation: Finding the Project, on balance, **in conformity** with the General Plan

Project Description

A General Plan Referral has been requested in connection with the changes to public rights of way contemplated in Board File Number 220261, the Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program, Slow Street Road Closures (“Project”).

The Project includes bicycle/pedestrian improvements to existing roadways in Golden Gate Park (“GGP”) and restricted access for private vehicles on certain roadway segments, as summarized below:

- JFK Drive, between Kezar Drive and Transverse Drive
- Conservatory Drive East, between Arguello Boulevard to and JFK Drive
- Pompeii Circle, entire length of street
- Conservatory Drive West, between JFK Drive and 500 feet' northeast of JFK Drive
- 8th Avenue, between Fulton Street and JFK Drive
- Music Concourse Drive, between JFK Drive and Bowl Drive
- Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, between JFK Drive and Bowl Drive
- Stow Lake Drive, between JFK Drive and Stow Lake Drive East
- Middle Drive West, between Overlook Drive and a gate 200 feet west of Overlook Drive
- Middle Drive West, between Metson Road and a gate 675 feet east of Metson Road
- Bernice Rodgers Way, between JFK Drive and MLK Drive
- MLK Drive, between Lincoln Way and Chain of Lakes Road

All of these roadways will continue to be open to bicycles, scooters, emergency vehicles, paratransit vehicles, other vehicles as authorized by RPD for park purposes, and park maintenance vehicles. Muni vehicles and the Golden Gate Park shuttle will be permitted to use streets on their respective assigned routes. Vehicles accessing the de Young Museum loading dock will be permitted to use 8th Avenue and JFK Drive for egress and ingress as needed and in coordination with Park Rangers. Signage and barriers will be installed to clearly show the prohibited streets and prevent access from unauthorized users.

The proposal also includes parking and traffic modifications to establish one-way traffic. In these segments, a one-directional travel lane and parking spaces will remain open for private vehicles to use, and another one-directional travel lane and other parking spaces will be closed to allow for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. This will occur on the following two segments:

- MLK Drive, between Chain of Lakes Drive and Sunset Boulevard;
- Middle Drive West, between MLK Drive and Metson Road.

The Project also includes two bicycle facilities:

- One Class IV protected two-way bikeway on Transverse Drive to provide safe connection

between the car-free streets of Overlook Drive and JFK Drive;

- One Class II bikeway on the north side of MLK Jr. Drive between Middle Drive West and Sunset Boulevard, installing a dedicated, safe westbound bike facility on MLK Jr. Drive.

To facilitate the improvements, the Project would remove approximately 976 general unmetered parking spaces, 26 blue zones, and two tour bus zones over almost 3 miles of roadway.

Environmental Review

The Project is exempt from CEQA. A Statutory Exemption was issued on March 10, 2022 under Planning Department case number 2021-010167ENV.

General Plan Compliance and Basis for Recommendation

As described below, the Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 and is, on balance, in conformity with the Objectives and Policies of the General Plan.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

MEETS THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FOR SAFE, CONVENIENT AND INEXPENSIVE TRAVEL WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO AND BETWEEN THE CITY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGH QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THE BAY AREA.

POLICY 1.2

Ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout the city.

POLICY 1.3

Give priority to public transit and other alternatives to the private automobile as the means of meeting San Francisco's transportation needs, particularly those of commuters.

POLICY 1.6

Ensure choices among modes of travel and accommodate each mode when and where it is most appropriate.

The Project will ensure that that safety for pedestrians, including persons with disabilities, will be given highest priority where conflicts exist with other modes of transportation. In addition, walking and

bicycling will be given priority in Golden Gate Park, where the preservation of the natural environment will not be compromised by auto traffic.

OBJECTIVE 18

ESTABLISH A STREET HIERARCHY SYSTEM IN WHICH THE FUNCTION AND DESIGN OF EACH STREET ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER AND USE OF ADJACENT LAND.

TABLE 3: GUIDE TO THE VEHICLE CIRCULATION

John F. Kennedy Drive: Through, non-park automobile traffic on this recreational drive should be eliminated

POLICY 18.5

Mitigate and reduce the impacts of automobile traffic in and around parks and along shoreline recreation areas.

The Project will eliminate through, non-park traffic on JFK Drive. Proposed changes ensure that streets within Golden Gate Park function for intended access but not as major thoroughfares. Heavy traffic endangers pedestrians and cyclists, cuts-off access to recreation and reduces the pleasure of being in parks by causing noise, pollution, and visual disharmony.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 3

IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE

POLICY 3.4

Encourage non-auto modes of transportation – transit, bicycle and pedestrian access—to and from open spaces while reducing automobile traffic and parking in public open spaces

San Francisco’s transit first policy, first adopted nearly 50 years ago and affirmed by the Board of Supervisors and voters, emphasizes the importance of providing and prioritizing transportation via transit, walking, and bicycling for all trips in the City including to parks and open spaces. The Project would reduce traffic in and around one of the City’s most important public parks. This traffic endangers pedestrians, limits access to open space, endangers plant and animal life and makes the open space less enjoyable.

OBJECTIVE 6

ENSURE A WELL-MAINTAINED, HIGHLY UTILIZED, AND INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

POLICY 1.6

Support the continued improvement of Golden Gate Park while preserving the beauty of its landscape.

The increasing popularity of Golden Gate Park and the COVID-19 pandemic has brought an increase in users. The Project aims to provide incentives for alternative transportation, such as walking, biking and public transit while also aiming to discourage private automobile traffic.

PLANNING CODE SECTION 101 FINDINGS

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;

The proposed changes would not remove existing retail uses or impact future opportunities for resident employment. Increased bicycle and pedestrian activity because of the improvements is expected to increase patronage of local businesses relative to private vehicles passing-through.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

The proposed changes would not negatively impact existing housing or neighborhood character surrounding GGP; the Project's physical changes are limited in nature and do not substantially change the nature of Golden Gate Park.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;

The proposed changes would not affect the supply of affordable housing surrounding GGP or in the City because the Project would not negatively impact, remove, or prevent construction of affordable housing.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;

The proposed changes would not impede Muni transit service as they would not reroute or introduce any obstructions to existing Muni service through GGP. The Project would result in the removal of approximately 975 on-street parking spaces within GGP. These spaces are used by GGP visitors and not neighborhood parking; over 3,900 on-street, unmetered and 1,116 off-street

garage/lot parking spaces would remain within GGP for primarily visitor use.

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;

The proposed changes would not affect the industrial or service sectors because there is no proposal for, or inducement of, commercial office development associated with the Project.

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake;

The proposed changes would not negatively impact the City's preparedness in the event of an earthquake. The Project may create additional safe spaces to reconvene post-earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

Golden Gate Park is designated a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. The circulation system is identified as one of the three elements that establish the parks' spatial relationships. The roadways, originally designed for carriages and bicycles, exist much as they did when the park was built. They were designed as curving paths providing "ever-changing vistas." The proposed changes would not affect the curving nature of the roadways, vistas, or other spatial relationship in the park; the changes would modify the mode of travel on certain roadways.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development;

The Project would not impede access to sunlight or vistas. The Project would increase the opportunity for park visitors to gain access to sunlight and vistas within the park by increasing the area available for outdoor recreation.

Recommendation: Finding the Project, on balance, **in conformity** with the General Plan