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**CDP Application No. 2-24-0933
(Great Highway Vehicular Closure/Sloat Bike Lanes)**

DECEMBER 12, 2024

EXHIBITS

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EXHIBITS

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**PROJECT LOCATION – GREAT HIGHWAY VEHICULAR CLOSURE/SLOAT BIKE LANES
(CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO)**



Figure 1 shows the western side of San Francisco, with the voter-approved ballot measure (Proposition K) Upper Great Highway vehicular closure area indicated in orange, and the adjacent SFMTA Sloat Bike Lanes project indicated to its bottom right (in green).

EXHIBIT 2
IMAGES OF PROJECT AREA



Figure 1 indicates the project area for the voter-approved Proposition K ballot measure, with the proposed vehicular closure area spanning from Sloat Boulevard (to the south) to Lincoln Way (to the north). The Proposition K bikeway (in green) would intersect with the proposed Sloat Bike Lanes project at the location indicated by the black arrow. The approximate Sloat Bike Lanes project area is indicated in yellow.

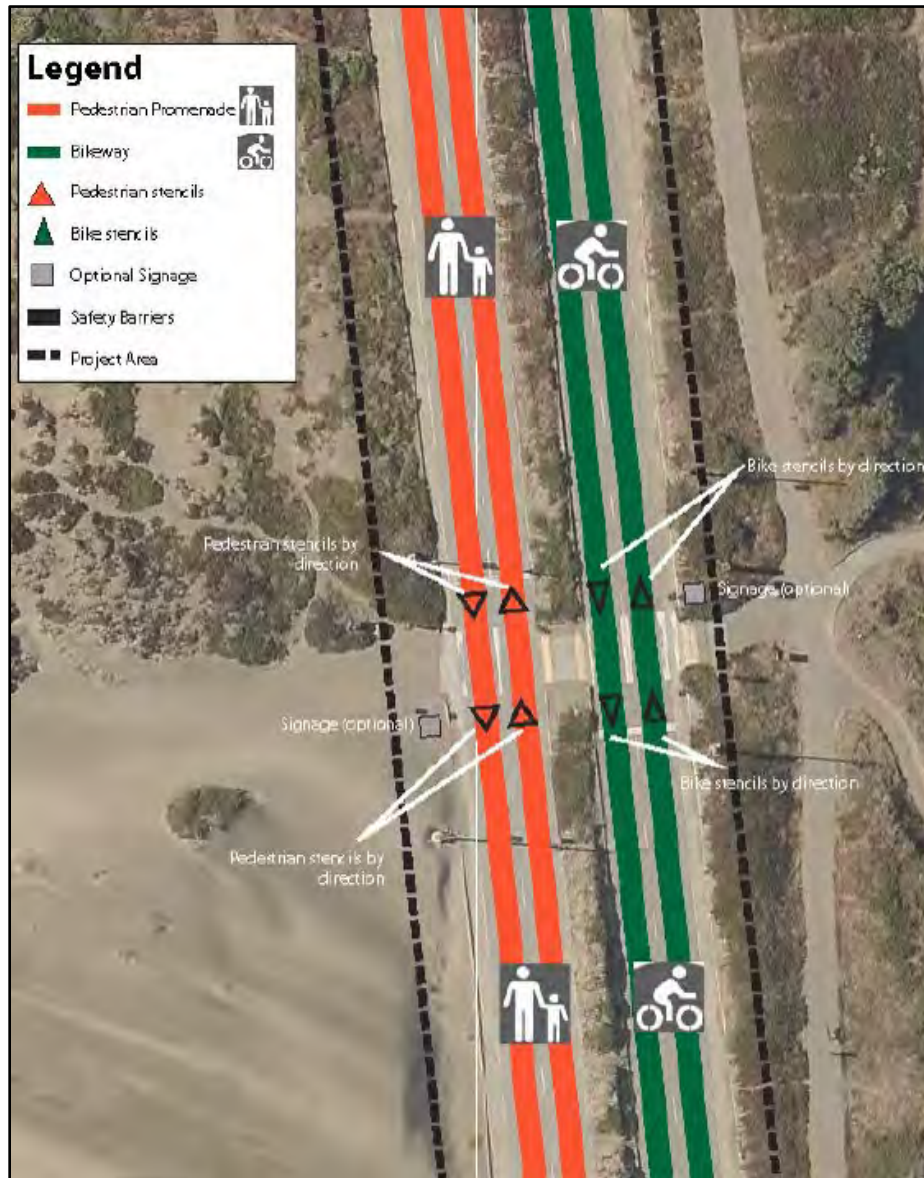


Figure 2 provides a bird's eye view of a typical crosswalk area on the Upper Great Highway, with the bikeway indicated in green and the pedestrian area indicated in orange.

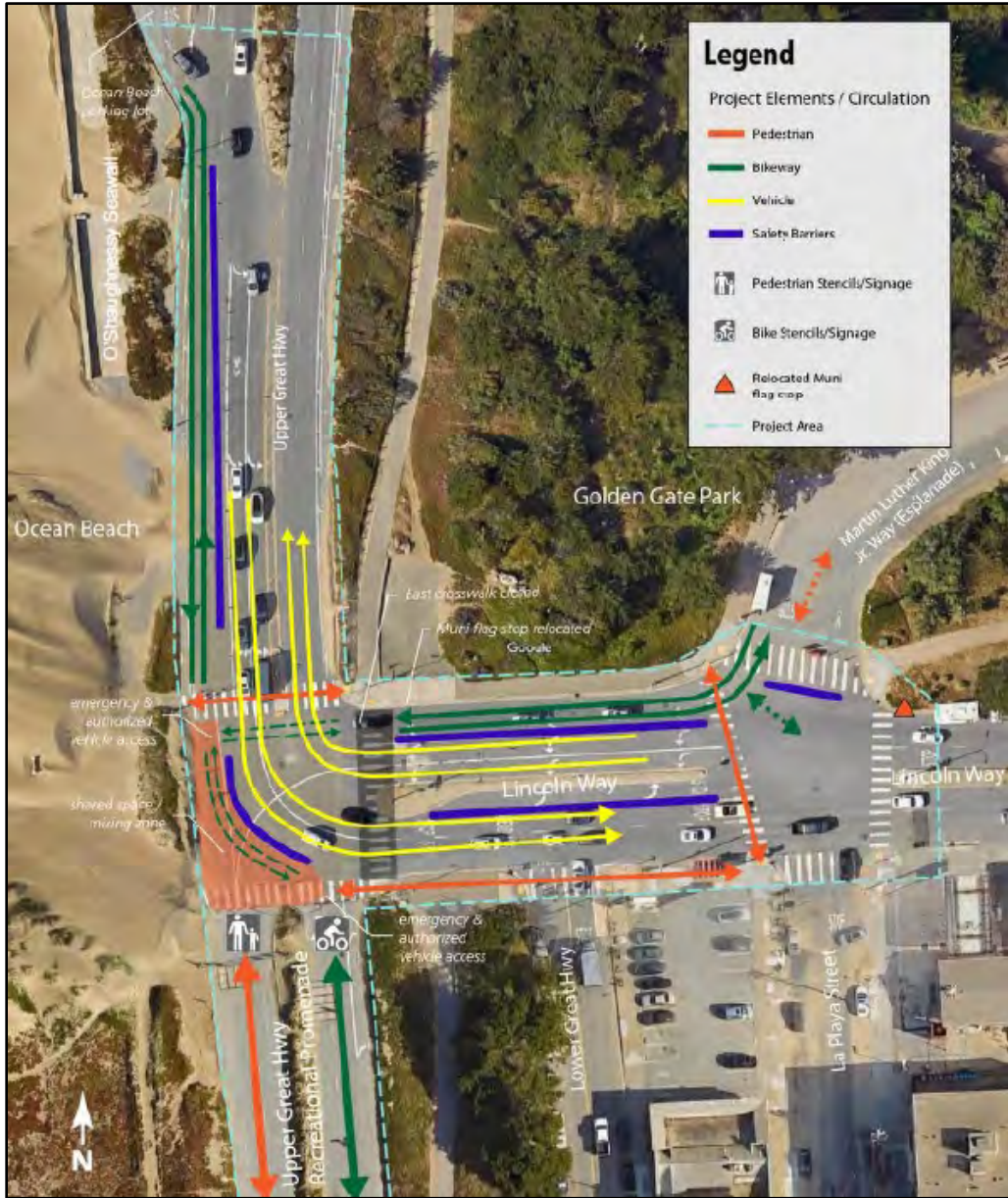


Figure 3 provides an overview of the proposed traffic modifications and pedestrian/cyclist safety measures proposed for the Lincoln Way/Upper Great Highway intersection.

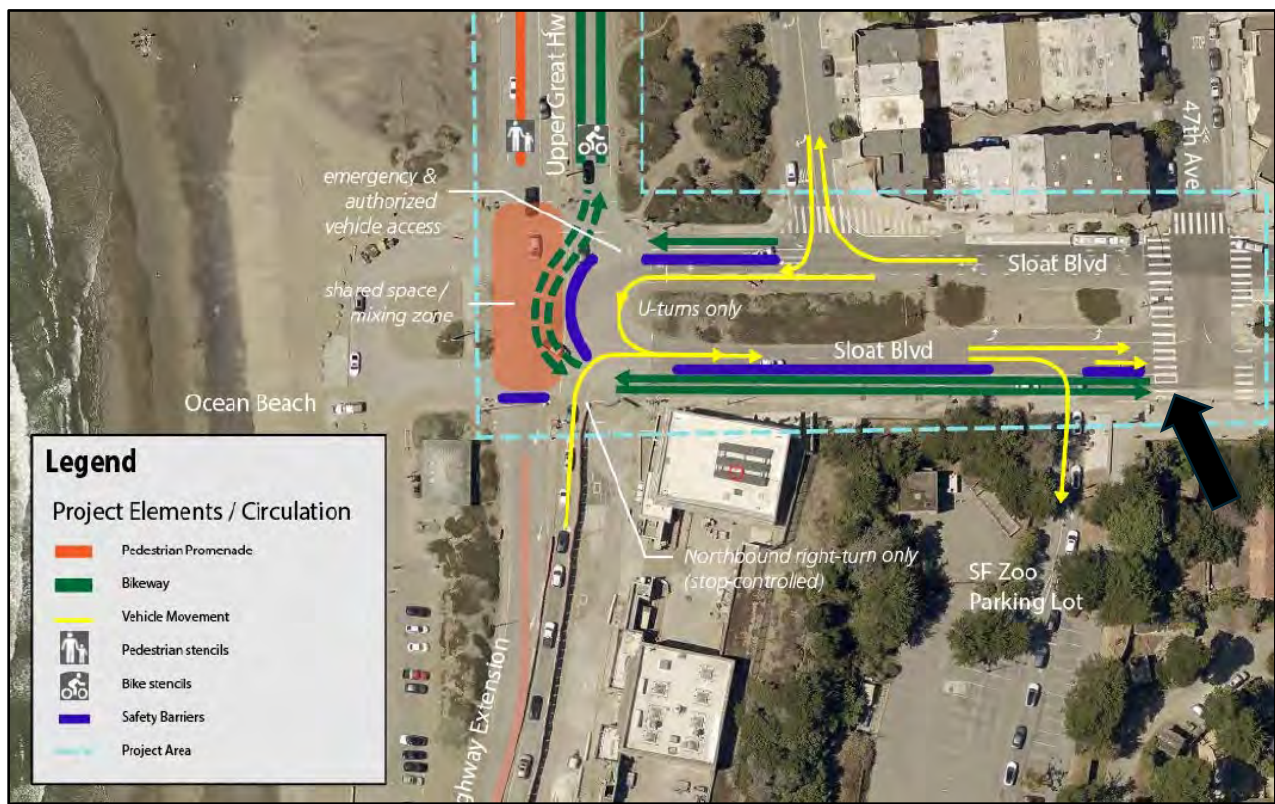


Figure 4 provides an overview of the proposed traffic modifications and pedestrian/cyclist safety measures proposed for the Sloat Boulevard/Upper Great Highway intersection. The Sloat Bike Lanes portion of the project begins in the approximate area indicated by the black arrow.

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION: UPPER GREAT HIGHWAY PROMENADE PROJECT

November 12, 2024



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Upper Great Highway Promenade Project Summary

With the passage of Proposition K in November 2024, the residents of San Francisco voted to transform the Upper Great Highway from Lincoln Way to Sloat Boulevard into a park-like promenade for pedestrian, cycling, and other non-vehicular uses. This application seeks a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the California Coastal Commission to authorize the closure of this 2-mile-long segment of the Upper Great Highway to vehicular traffic, making it a permanent public recreational space, and associated traffic and safety modifications.

This transformation aligns with broader citywide goals to provide greater public access to open spaces and promote sustainable transportation alternatives. Access to the beach for multiple modes, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, is enhanced, while vehicular access to the coast is maintained via the parallel Lower Great Highway, and along the coast north of Lincoln Way, where the Great Highway and the 3.6-acre O’Shaughnessy Ocean Beach Parking Lot both remain accessible to vehicles. See Project location in Figure 1.

Safety and access improvements, as well as minor traffic modifications, will be made to better manage pedestrian, bicycle, transit, operations, and emergency vehicle access along the Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard, as well as associated changes to Sloat Boulevard, Lincoln Way, and a portion of Great Highway north of Lincoln Way, necessary to ensure the safety of all users. In addition, the Great Highway Promenade Project (Project) will include minor modifications along Upper Great Highway to ensure the safety of all users and protect the adjacent Ocean Beach dunes and facilitate beach access through designated access points.

Proposed traffic modifications by San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) on Sloat Boulevard from Upper Great Highway to 47th Avenue and on Lincoln Way from Upper Great Highway to Martin Luther King Drive (MLK) include:

- Turn prohibitions for vehicles to prohibit vehicular access to Great Highway
- New protected bicycle facilities for connections to the Upper Great Highway
- Minor bus stop relocation for the 18 Bus

Proposed roadway modifications by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) include:

- Signage and stencils along the Upper Great Highway to direct pedestrians to the west side of the Upper Great Highway, and bicycles to the east side of the Upper Great Highway
- Low-profile fencing and signage along the Upper Great Highway to reduce pedestrian trampling of the dunes and direct visitors to stay on non-dune surfaces

Additionally, the planned closure of the Great Highway Extension to vehicular traffic between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project (OBCCAP) is scheduled for a hearing with the Coastal Commission on November 14th, 2024¹. To safely implement the closure of the Upper Great Highway and reduce conflict between users, it is necessary for the City to implement the closure of the southbound lanes of the Great Highway Extension in parallel with this Project. Therefore, the Project also proposes the near-term closure of southbound lanes on Great Highway Extension between Sloat and Skyline boulevards. To facilitate this closure, turn restrictions and barriers will be placed to direct traffic away from Great Highway Extension's southbound lane. No change is proposed to the northbound lanes.

¹ Application No. 2-21-0912 (SPUC Ocean Beach Armoring, San Francisco) Coastal Permit Application.



Figure 1 – Project Location Map

Project History and Background

The Great Highway has been under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission since the 1870s. The current 4-lane roadway with a median and parallel path and trail were built in the 1980s and 1990s. An existing paved multi-use pathway is located within the 80-foot-wide landscaped park space between the Upper and Lower Great Highway is used by walkers and cyclists, while a sandy dirt path is located just west of the roadway.

Prior to March 2020, the Upper Great Highway operated as a four-lane vehicular roadway. In March 2020, at the recommendation of Supervisor Gordon Mar and in consultation with Mayor London N. Breed and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), the roadway was closed to private vehicles by the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) General Manager under an emergency ordinance. This was in response to the COVID-19-related shelter-in-place order to provide people with more space outdoors while social distancing. On August 15, 2021, at the request of Supervisors Mar, Chan and Melgar and Mayor London N. Breed, the General Manager issued a directive reopening the Upper Great Highway to private vehicles on weekdays starting Monday at 6:00 am through Friday at 12:00 noon, excluding holidays.

On December 6, 2022, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (BOS) passed an ordinance (Board File 220875) amending the Park Code to restrict private vehicles on the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard on weekends and holidays until December 31, 2025. The restriction was proposed as a 3-year pilot effort, including studies and analysis of the car-free use of the Upper Great Highway to inform a long-term plan for the future of this space.

On November 9, 2023, the San Francisco Planning Commission approved a Coastal Zone Permit (CZP) for the pilot project and determined that the project was consistent with the relevant provisions of the Planning Code and with the objectives and policies of the Western Shoreline Plan.

The CZP was appealed to the San Francisco Board of Appeals, where it was upheld on February 7, 2024, and was later denied a request for a rehearing on March 13, 2024. The CZP was ultimately appealed to the California Coastal Commission. On May 9, 2024, the Commission denied the appeal determining that no substantial issue exists with respect to the grounds on which the appeals were filed and withheld the City's decision to issue the CZP. See Appendix 1 for the Notice of Appeal Action.

The Great Highway Extension south of Sloat Boulevard is currently open to vehicular traffic; however, it is planned to permanently close to vehicular traffic in 2025 as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project, which was approved by the SFPUC October 10,

2023, and by RPD on October 19, 2023. As part of the approval actions, the SFPUC & RPD adopted the findings of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that was certified by the Planning Commission on September 28, 2023 (2019-020115ENV). The San Francisco Board of Supervisors amended the Park Code on May 14, 2024 to remove vehicular traffic from the Great Highway Extension and it was signed by Mayor Breed on May 24, 2024.

In December 2023, the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) issued the *Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach*² report as part of its Sunset Natural Resilience Project. The report reviewed existing and historic conditions and recommended ways to improve both beach and dune habitat and sand management. It highlighted dune blowouts where, over the past two decades, sand has overtopped vegetation near pedestrian access from cross streets with crosswalks. In addition, the report noted that social trails between crosswalks also contribute to destabilization of dune vegetation, albeit less intensely, and made recommendations for both addressing the blowouts and reducing social trails through the middle of the dunes. The dunes between Lincoln Way and Noriega St. have been accreting (widening) since 1992 and are now an average of 300 feet wide, while the dunes between Santiago and Vicente streets have eroded and narrowed since 1992 due to lower sand supply and trampling.

In October 2024, SFEI issued the *Future Opportunities for the Great Highway*³ report that addressed how possible scenarios of using the roadway would affect habitat and ecosystem health and explored opportunities for synergy between ecological improvements and recreational use.

Converting the Upper Great Highway into a park promenade aligns with SFEI's recommendations by expanding recreational opportunities, encouraging sustainable transportation, and benefiting dune ecology. The Project will make the area more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists by eliminating vehicle traffic, enhancing connectivity and improving safety, and creating an expansive recreational corridor.

RPD and the National Park Service (NPS) are jointly planning a separate dune revegetation project which will revegetate native dune plants and improve habitat for local wildlife while reducing maintenance needs associated with sand management. To protect habitat areas and manage sand blowouts, fencing and strategically planted vegetation along sensitive areas will help reduce foot traffic and trampling that leads to sand movement. Together, these initiatives create a dynamic and sustainable park promenade that nurtures

² SFEI [Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach](#)

³ SFEI [Future Opportunities for the Great Highway](#)

recreational enjoyment, fosters sustainable transport options, and preserves the dune ecosystem along the Great Highway.

Project Scope and Detailed Description:

The scope of the proposed project encompasses several distinct elements, which include the complete closure of the Upper Great Highway to vehicular traffic and the development of various improvements to ensure public safety, accessibility, and enhanced recreational use while protecting coastal resources including dune habitat. Below are detailed descriptions of the project elements:

1. Upper Great Highway Promenade

The Upper Great Highway, a 2-mile-long segment between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard of the 3.8-mile-long Great Highway, will be converted into a pedestrian and bicycle promenade. The roadway, previously utilized by vehicles, will now be dedicated to non-vehicular recreational uses, creating a continuous open space along San Francisco's western coastline. This promenade will be organized as follows:

- Designated Lanes for Different Uses: Pedestrian and bicycle lanes will be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage and pavement stenciling to better manage the differing speeds of pedestrians walking and running with faster moving bicycles and other wheeled mobility devices. Bicycle lanes will be situated on the eastern (city-facing) side, further away from the dunes to reduce the need to remove sand as frequently. The pedestrian path will occupy the western (beach-facing) side of the promenade, allowing pedestrians closer proximity to the ocean, dune and beach views. The separation of fast- and slow-moving users ensures safe and organized movement to reduce user conflict.
- Crosswalk Enhancements: Crosswalks at intersections along the Upper Great Highway, including Lincoln, Judah, Lawton, Noriega, Pacheco, Rivera, Taraval, Vicente, and Sloat, will be clearly marked with stenciled symbols indicating designated pedestrian and bicycle crossings. This will enhance safety and help guide movement at intersections. Traffic signals at mid-block crosswalks (Judah, Lawton, Noriega, Pacheco, Rivera, Taraval and Vicente) will be removed.



Figure 2 - Overall Great Highway Map

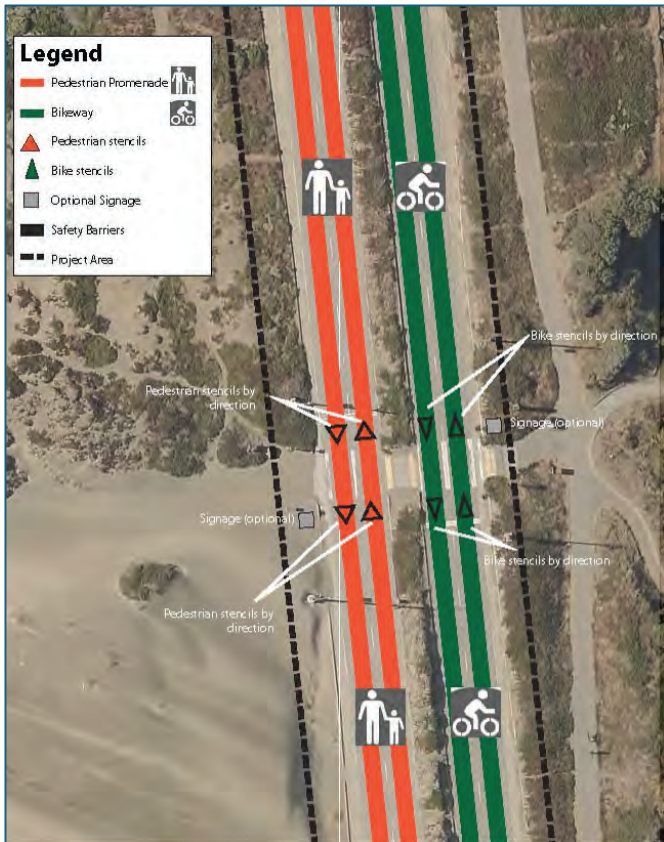


Figure 3 Mode Separation - Typical Crosswalk

- Traffic Barriers: Bollards, gates, and/or other physical barriers will be installed at the entry points along the Upper Great Highway at Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard to prevent unauthorized vehicular access. Collapsible bollards may be used at key locations to allow emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles, shuttles and authorized vehicle access to the promenade when needed.

2. Intersection and Connectivity Improvements

The Project also includes enhancements at critical intersections to improve accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as to manage vehicular traffic at transition points. These changes will provide a seamless rider experience between Golden Gate Park, the Upper Great Highway, and Lake Merced and connect to separated, planned bikeways.

- Great Highway / Lincoln Way Intersection: To connect the Golden Gate Park Promenade and the Upper Great Highway Promenade, a new two-way protected bikeway will be installed from Martin Luther King Jr Drive along Lincoln Way to the northern terminus of the Upper Great Highway Promenade. The Project will also install a two-way protected bikeway along the Great Highway north of Lincoln Way to the O'Shaughnessy Ocean Beach parking lot.

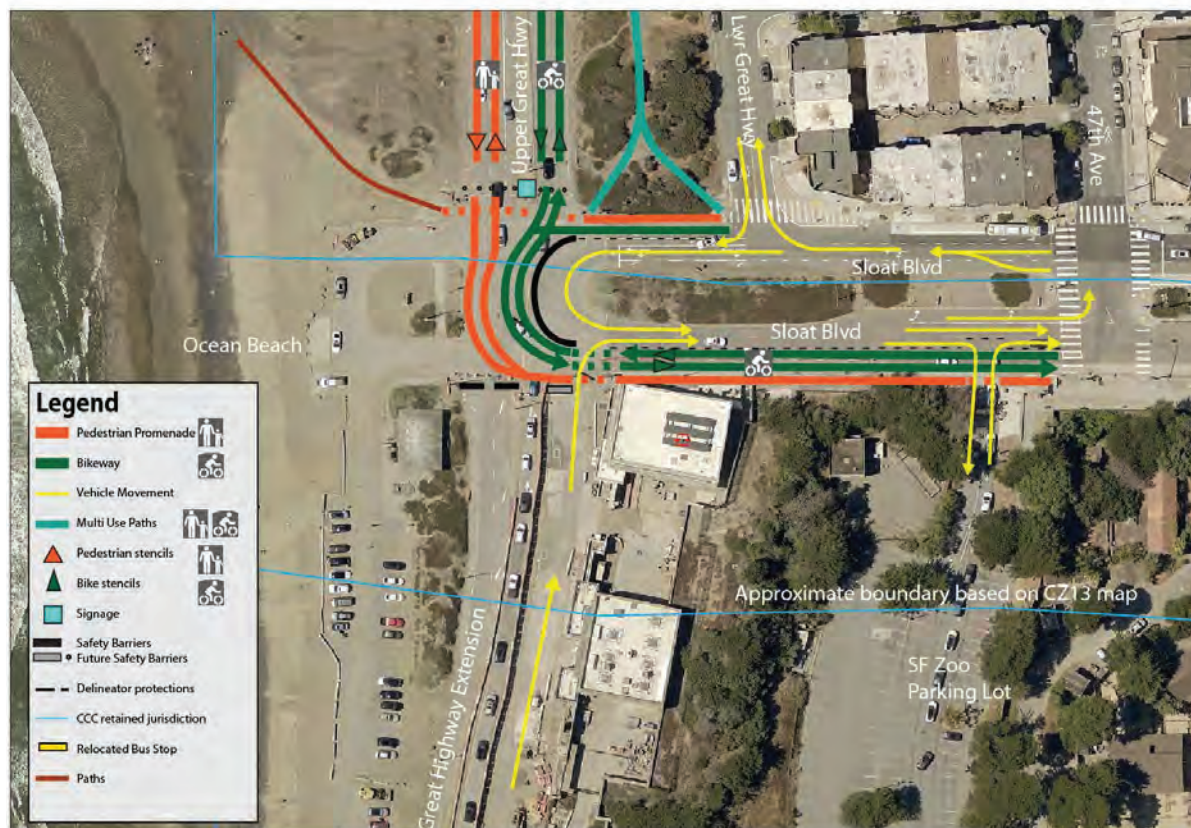
The intersection will also include new paint to designate vehicle turning lanes for the rerouted vehicular traffic. A set of barriers will be placed in the intersection to demarcate where cars will turn left from the Great Highway to Lincoln Way, while protecting pedestrians and cyclists. Signal timing will be adjusted to address the new intersection configuration and designate separate crossing times for vehicles and non-vehicular traffic. See Figure 4 for proposed traffic changes in this intersection.



Figure 4- Lincoln Way Intersection - proposed traffic changes

- **Great Highway / Sloat Boulevard Intersection:** At the southern terminus of the promenade and western terminus of Sloat Boulevard, vehicular movements will be managed by updated lane markings and directional arrows, including U-turn lanes and the elimination of the eastern crosswalk to enhance pedestrian safety. Barriers will separate vehicular traffic from pedestrians and bikes in the intersection. The intersection's traffic signal will be removed.
 - **Improvements along Sloat Boulevard:** A one-way separated bikeway will be installed along the north (westbound) side of Sloat Boulevard between Upper and Lower Great Highway to help prioritize bicycle (and emergency vehicle) access. A two-way bikeway will be installed along the south (eastbound) side

of Sloat Boulevard between Upper Great Highway and 47th Avenue. See Figure 5 for proposed traffic changes in this intersection.



Great Highway / Sloat Coastal Zone Areas:

Figure 5- Sloat Blvd proposed traffic changes diagram

3. Closure of Great Highway Extension Southbound Lanes

The Project includes closure of the Great Highway Extension southbound lanes to private vehicles from Sloat Boulevard to Skyline Boulevard to safely implement the vehicular closure on the Upper Great Highway and reduce user conflict. Access to Great Highway Extension southbound will be limited to pedestrians, bicycles and emergency/authorized vehicles only, while northbound Great Highway Extension will remain accessible to vehicles and will be controlled by a STOP sign with right-turns only allowed at Sloat Boulevard. With vehicular access to the Upper Great Highway removed, demand for northbound Great Highway Extension will greatly diminish, therefore the traffic signal at Great Highway and Sloat Boulevard will be removed.

- Traffic Barriers: Bollards, gates, and/or other physical barriers will be installed at the entry points at Great Highway Extension and Skyline Boulevard to prevent unauthorized vehicular access until the OBCCAP project is implemented. Collapsible bollards may be used at key locations to allow emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles, and authorized vehicle access to the promenade when needed.

4. Public Transportation and Accessibility Enhancements

To further support public access, the Project will include enhancements to public transportation options and accessibility:

- New Bus Stop: The SFMTA will install a new bus stop for bus route 18 near the Martin Luther King (MLK) Drive / Lincoln Way intersection, providing convenient transit access to and from the Great Highway Promenade. The exact location is currently under review.
- Shuttle and Emergency Access: Design elements will ensure that the promenade is accessible to shuttle buses for transporting visitors if a shuttle program is implemented in the future. Emergency vehicle access will be prioritized through collapsible bollards and gate systems to ensure prompt access when needed for surf rescues and other emergencies.

5. Dune Protection and Habitat Management

As the Upper Great Highway Promenade is located adjacent to sensitive coastal dunes, protecting these natural features from pedestrian trampling is a key component of the Project. According to the SFEI report, *Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach* (Dune Study), decades of pedestrian access and trampling at major crossings along the Great Highway (e.g. at Judah St., Lawton St., and Noriega St.) have led to significant dune erosion in some areas and sand accretion in others. The Dune Study identified sand blowouts between vegetated areas at these major crossings. While the vegetation on the dunes helps prevent sand transport, repeated foot traffic at these crossings over the last decades has degraded the dunes. Additionally, informal trails have developed in the dunes between these main crossings over time, further damaging the vegetation and increasing the movement of windblown sand across the dunes. To ensure minimal impact and to promote dune health, the Project includes the following measures:

- Dune Fencing: Fencing will be installed along key segments of the dune system — specifically from Lincoln Way to Noriega Street and from Santiago Street to Sloat Boulevard — to help protect sensitive dune habitats from foot traffic and to discourage the creation of informal trails. The type of fencing (e.g., thimble eye posts & cable, posts & cable, or T-posts & galvanized wire fencing) will be chosen to ensure durability, maintainability, reduce intrusions in fenced areas and consider visual impacts while allowing native habitats to flourish, sand to move naturally, and **direct pedestrians to appropriate pathways**. Consideration of the dynamic sand movements, especially at blowouts, will factor into location of fencing and fencing type.
- Dune Scrub Buffer: As recommended in the Dune Study, to further reduce the development of new informal/social trails and encourage beach access at designated points, a band of thick dune scrub may be planted as a buffer zone between the dunes and the Great Highway in some areas. The dune scrub buffer would create a backstop for the blowing sand while enhancing dune habitat. Once established, the dune scrub buffer would be self-sustaining. The dune scrub buffer would reinforce the dune fencing to further reduce the creation of social trails.
- Interpretive Signage: Informational signage will be placed strategically along the promenade to educate the public on the importance of dune preservation and the role of dunes in the coastal ecosystem. Signs encouraging visitors to stay off the dunes will also be installed to share information about the benefits of staying on designated pathways to the natural environment.
- Inter-agency Coordination Strategy: RPD is working together with NPS and stewardship groups to implement a Dune Revegetation effort. This is a first step in developing an inter-agency coordination strategy as recommended by the SFEI dune study, to identify key roles and responsibilities for each agency, coordinate public outreach and education efforts, and work to develop improved sand management practices based on the Dune Study’s recommendations.

6. Dune Revegetation Project

RPD is currently working with the National Park Service (NPS), which has jurisdiction over the land west of RPD’s Great Highway, to implement a separate Dune Revegetation Project as recommended in the Dune Study. The effort includes replanting native dune

grass along a section of dunes near the Judah Street intersection to reduce blowing sand and improve the existing degraded dune conditions in this area. The revegetation project includes the following measure:

- Replanting native dune grass (beach wildrye (*Leymus mollis*) from an existing site north of Judah to a replanting to an approximately 2-acre site. All planting work will be conducted by volunteers and staff, with no use of machinery. Temporary fencing will be installed around the planting site to protect the dune grass to stabilize the dune and prevent trampling. As recommended in the Dune Study, the site could serve as a source population of beach wildrye, allowing propagation for use in planting other reaches of the Ocean Beach dunes. Once vegetation is established, after approximately 2 years, additional species can be planted in the backdune areas to provide additional habitat and stabilization benefits. The report emphasized that propagation of beach wildrye is the critical path item, and that winter planting after rains are critical. Brush matting and brush fencing were not considered due to the high risk of their removal from scavengers for use as firewood and encampments.



Figure 6 - Native dune grass



Figure 7 - Judah dune blowout

7. Trash Management

With the Great Highway as a promenade rather than a roadway, people walking and biking will spend more time along the Great Highway and may generate additional trash. The Project includes the following measures that will continue to build on ongoing trash management efforts implemented as part of the Great Highway Pilot:

- Maintain more frequent trash collection
- Installation of trash receptacles at crosswalks along the Great Highway Promenade



Figure 8 - new high-capacity trash receptacles

Consistency with Coastal Act Policies

The Great Highway Promenade Project complies with the policies and goals of the California Coastal Act in the following areas (see detailed list of relevant Coastal Act Sections in Appendix 2):

- Public Access (Article 2)
- Recreation (Article 3)
- Land Resources (Article 5)
- Development (Article 6)
- Sea Level Rise (Article 8)

This Project is consistent with and supportive of the California Coastal Act's overarching goals, particularly those related to maximizing public access, protecting natural resources, and maintaining compatibility with surrounding coastal uses.

1. **Public Access and Recreation (Sections 30210, 30211, 30212(a), 30213, 30221, and 30252)**

The transformation of the Upper Great Highway into a park-like promenade will significantly enhance recreational opportunities along the coastline by creating a safe, car-free space for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-vehicular users. This aligns with the Coastal Act's goals of maximizing access for all people, including those with limited mobility. The promenade will also provide enhanced connections to the adjacent Ocean Beach, Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced, and nearby transit stops, thereby improving accessibility for a wide range of users. By prioritizing low-cost, publicly accessible recreational opportunities, the Project supports equitable use of the coast. Public access is maintained by all modes via the nearest public roadways: Lower Great Highway, Lincoln Way and Great Highway to the north, and Sloat Boulevard to the south. Parking access is provided along the full length of the Project site, with the 3.4 acre O'Shaughnessy Ocean Beach Parking lot at the north end, street parking along the Lower Great Highway, and street and median parking at Sloat Boulevard.

2. **Protection of Coastal Resources (Section 30240)**

The Project incorporates several elements aimed at protecting sensitive coastal resources, particularly the dunes fronting Ocean Beach. Dune fencing, dune vegetation, and interpretive signage will direct visitor activity to designated paths, thereby minimizing the risk of additional informal trails and protect dune habitat. Additionally, the city is working in tandem with the National Park Service and San

Francisco Estuary Institute to implement dune vegetation and management initiatives independent of this project. This ensures that dune ecosystems are not only protected but also enhanced in line with Coastal Act requirements.

3. Sea Level Rise (Section 30270)

Section 30270 of the California Coastal Act directs the Commission to consider the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise. The Upper Great Highway promenade will reduce impacts from vehicular traffic and alleviate the need to continue maintaining a 4-lane roadway clear of coastal sand. With the Great Highway Promenade, the City can begin planning for additional coastal access improvements, habitat protection, and continue to study and address sea level rise along the shoreline and the coast. The proposed closure of the Great Highway Extension's southbound lanes supports the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project which, among other goals, addresses coastal erosion and sea level rise impacts south of Sloat Blvd.

Approval Action

The passage of Proposition K, "Reserving the Upper Great Highway as Public Open Recreation Space", by a majority of San Francisco voters on November 5th, 2024, permanently closes the Upper Great Highway to private vehicles between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard. No additional discretionary action by the City and County of San Francisco is required for the closure of this road.

The Approval Action for the proposed modifications outlined in this application, as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31, Section 31.04(h)(2) is approval by the SFMTA Board of Directors (SFMTA Board). The approval action starts the 30-day appeal period for the environmental review determination under Administrative Code Section 31.16. SFMTA Board is scheduled to hear the Project on December 3, 2024.

Portions of the Project fall within the retained jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission and will require Commission approval prior to implementation. Portions of the Project outside of the Coastal Commission's retained jurisdiction may be approved by the San Francisco Planning Department or the whole project could be heard by the Coastal Commission as a consolidated permit.

With this application, RPD seeks a consolidated Coastal Development Permit under the California Coastal Act to change the use of the Upper Great Highway from a vehicular

roadway to a permanent recreational promenade and implement the associated improvements and modifications outlined in this application, as well as the near-term closure of the Great Highway Extension's southbound lanes.

Environmental Review

The passage of Proposition K permanently closes the Upper Great Highway to vehicular traffic between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard. As a ballot initiative, the closure does not require review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, the minor traffic, signage and wayfinding, and dune protection measures included in the proposed Project and meant to facilitate the closure are subject to CEQA review.

The San Francisco Planning Department has reviewed the proposed project and issued a Statutory Exemption (Record No. 2024-010317ENV) under SB 922 on November 12, 2024

The closure of the Great Highway Extension to vehicular traffic was previously studied as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which was certified by The San Francisco Planning Commission on September 28, 2023 (Case No: 2019-020115ENV).

Appendix 1: Commission Notification of Appeal

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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**COMMISSION NOTIFICATION OF APPEAL**

April 4, 2024

To: Brian Stokle, Planner
SF Recreation & Parks Department
49 South Van Ness Ave., Suite 1220
San Francisco, CA 94103

From: Luke Henningsen, Coastal Planner

Re: **Commission Appeal No. A-2-SNF-24-0009**

Please be advised that the coastal development permit decision described below has been appealed to the California Coastal Commission pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 30603 and 30625. Therefore, the decision has been stayed pending Commission action on the appeal pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 30623.

LOCAL PERMIT #: **2022-007356CTZ**

APPLICANT(S): **San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department**

DESCRIPTION: Approval to retroactively authorize the Great Highway Pilot Project and continue authorization of the Project until December 31, 2025, to restrict automobile access, on a temporary basis, to the Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard (approximately 2.0 miles), for a car-free bicycle and pedestrian promenade on weekends and holidays.

LOCATION: Upper Great Highway between Sloat Boulevard and Lincoln Way, plus surrounding streets, in the City and County of San Francisco.

LOCAL DECISION: Approval with Conditions

APPELLANT(S): Sunset-Parkside Education and Action Committee ("SPEAK") Attn. Elieen Boken; Charles Perkins

DATE APPEAL FILED: 4/2/2024

The Commission appeal number assigned to this appeal is A-2-SNF-24-0009. The Commission hearing date has not been scheduled at this time. Within 5 working days of receipt of this Commission Notification of Appeal, copies of all relevant documents and materials used in the City and County of San Francisco's consideration of this coastal development permit must be delivered to the North Central Coast District Office of the Coastal Commission (California Administrative Code Section 13112).

COMMISSION NOTIFICATION OF APPEAL

Please include copies of plans, relevant photographs, staff reports and related documents, findings (if not already forwarded), all correspondence, and a list, with addresses, of all who provided verbal testimony.

A Commission staff report and notice of the hearing will be forwarded to you prior to the hearing. If you have any questions, please contact Luke Henningsen at the North Central Coast District Office.

cc: Alex Westhoff, Senior Preservation Planner for the SF Planning Department
Dan Sider, Chief of Staff for the SF Planning Department

Appendix 2: Relevant Coastal Act Sections

Article 2 – Public Access

- **Section 30210.** In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.
- **Section 30211.** Development shall not interfere with the public’s right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.
- **Section 30212(a).** Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where: (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or, (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. ...
- **Section 30213.** Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

Article 3 – Recreation

- **Section 30220.** Coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities that cannot readily be provided at inland water areas shall be protected for such uses.
- **Section 30221.** Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.

Article 5 – Land Resources

- **Section 30240.** (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas. (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

Article 6 – Development

- **Section 30250.** (c) Visitor-serving facilities that cannot feasibly be located in existing developed areas shall be located in existing isolated developments or at selected points of attraction for visitors.

- **Section 30252.** The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.
- **Section 30253.** New development shall do all of the following: (a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard. (b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs

Appendix 3: San Francisco Estuary Institute Reports

CCC staff note: Due to its length, SFEI's December 2023 dune report has been removed from this exhibit. Instead, it is available upon request to CCC staff, and is readily available on SFEI's website.

What are the Benefits for Nature and People?



A fixture of Western San Francisco, the Great Highway is home to a diverse ecosystem of sand dunes, native plants, and wildlife. Birds, butterflies, and other animals use this narrow corridor to travel between the largest open spaces in San Francisco: the Presidio, Lands End, Golden Gate Park, & Lake Merced.

Changes may be on the horizon for this iconic coastal roadway. Sea-level rise and coastal erosion from increasingly powerful storms threaten the Great Highway. Additionally, San Francisco will vote in November 2024 to decide if the space should become a full-time park, and outcomes of the City's ongoing Great Highway Pilot project will inform the future use of the space. Possible use scenarios for the roadway include:

- 1 a full-time promenade for pedestrians and cyclists
- 2 partial road closure (promenade on weekends / vehicle traffic on weekdays)
- 3 a full-time, 1 or 2 lane thoroughfare for cars

Each scenario offers different benefits for ecosystem health—defined as the capacity of a living system to sustain flora, fauna, and human beings while remaining resilient to stress. In this short report we investigate the following questions:

- What ecologically-beneficial actions are possible under these different scenarios?
- What are the opportunities for synergy between ecological improvements and recreational use?

While all planning scenarios for the Great Highway present some opportunities to enhance or protect ecosystem health, closing the roadway to cars entirely has the greatest and most immediate ecological benefits. This would eliminate fast-moving vehicles that restrict the movement of many animals, and reduce car-associated light and noise which can disorient and harm wildlife.



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Aerial view of Ocean Beach and the Great Highway. Imagery courtesy of Google Earth.

Opportunities to support people and ecosystem health in three scenarios

The Great Highway can support plants, wildlife, and their habitat, while also encouraging stewardship and providing health and recreational benefits to visitors. Below we summarize actions to protect wildlife and their habitat, restore the sand dunes, and foster positive visitor experiences. The table below highlights what actions are suitable for each scenario.

Ecological Opportunity	Supporting Actions	1 Full Time Promenade	2 Partial Road Closure	3 Open Road	Benefits to Nature and People
Restore and revegetate	Restore dune habitat	✓	✓	✓	Reduces sand on roadway, decreases maintenance costs, and improves recreational experience Benefits wildlife in dune habitats
	Replace non-native plants with ecologically-beneficial landscaping	✓	✓ <i>with limitations</i>	✓ <i>with limitations</i>	Increases biodiversity and enhances habitats for native birds and pollinators Supports human health and strengthens emotional connection to the environment
	Plant larger shrubs and bushes	✓			Provides shelter, nesting habitat, and food resources for wildlife Guides pedestrian traffic and limits trampling of habitat
Protect habitat and improve recreation	Reduce and adjust street lighting	✓	✓ <i>with limitations</i>	✓ <i>with limitations</i>	Improves wildlife and plant functioning, including navigation abilities of night-migrating birds Provides human health benefits
	Improve trash management practices	✓	✓	✓	Reduces litter and nuisance species activity, improving overall visitor experience
	Install educational signage	✓	✓		Maintains recreational access while protecting sensitive habitat Educates visitors and encourages stewardship



Both beach wildrye and marram grass stabilize dunes. However, restoring a dune plant community dominated by native beach wildrye rather than invasive marram grass would increase ecosystem diversity and complexity. Photo by Bob Battalio, ESA.



Regardless of which planning scenario is adopted for the Great Highway, there are numerous opportunities to undertake strategic revegetation that would **reduce sand encroachment** onto paths and roads, **improve visitor experiences**, and **support biodiversity**.

Photo at left: Sand spills over onto a path next to the Great Highway and Ocean Beach. Photo by Ellen Plane, SFEI.

Restoration of native dune grasses would trap sand and minimize sand encroachment onto heavily used paths and roadways, reducing the need for frequent and costly sand management. Planting a greater diversity of plant species, including native grasses and larger shrubs, will enhance the recreational experience for visitors to the Great Highway and support biodiversity of native pollinators and wildlife.

On the next page, we detail recommended actions across all three planning scenarios that would make the most of opportunities for revegetation at the Great Highway. **While many of these actions are possible without conversion of the Highway into a pedestrian promenade, their benefits would be even greater, and enjoyed by a larger number of pedestrians, if accompanied by full road closure.**

RESTORE DUNE HABITAT



Beach wildrye. Photo by Ellen Plane, SFEI

SCENARIO:

PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE
OPEN ROAD

WHY?

Revegetation of the parkland strip (between the Upper Great Highway and the dune crest) with native dune species, such as beach wildrye (*Leymus mollis*), presents a **valuable opportunity to increase native vegetation in an area with low existing native plant diversity**. These plants would also support sand-trapping along the seaward portion of the Highway, reducing maintenance costs linked to sand encroachment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

See [Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach](#) for more recommendations regarding dune restoration, maintenance, and protection.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW:

Early propagation of key species—such as beach wildrye—is critical to making dune restoration feasible and successful. Since the publication of *Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach*, several SF agencies have been collaborating to establish a wildrye propagation pilot study at Ocean Beach. Additional funding is currently being sought for further implementation.



A field of invasive iceplant. Photo by Ellen Plane, SFEI

REPLACE NON-NATIVE PLANTS WITH ECOLOGICALLY-BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPING

SCENARIO:

PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE | OPEN ROAD

WHY?

Ice plant and marram grass, which dominate the Highway's median strip, are non-native, have low habitat value, and produce few food resources for local species. **Removal of these plants would create space for ecologically beneficial plants that support wildlife and trap sand.** There are benefits for humans as well: increased biodiversity has been linked to improved mental health and native flowering plants have been linked to reduced allergen sensitivity.

The amount of benefit depends on the quality of replacement plantings: See *Appendix Table 2* for expert recommendations on plant replacements. Revegetation can also incorporate nectar and fruiting plants that provide high-quality resources for species in the area.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach; Ocean Beach Master Plan; EcoHorticulture in the Presidio; Ecology for Health

PLANT LARGER SHRUBS AND BUSHES

SCENARIO: PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE

WHY?

A buffer of dune-scrub vegetation planted at the edge of restoration or sensitive areas can **guide pedestrian access and limit vegetation trampling, protecting habitat.**

Multiple layers of vegetation are also beneficial for many species, providing **shelter, nesting habitat, and food resources for birds, reptiles, and small mammals.** Vegetative structure introduced by larger shrubs is particularly beneficial for invertebrates such as insects.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Making Nature’s City Report; Ocean Beach Master Plan—Key Move 5, Strategic Action 5.8



A native shrub, yellow bush lupine, at Bodega Head State Park. Photo by David A. Hofmann, Creative Commons.



OpenSFHistory.org
outsidelands.org

Areas in need of further funding and research:

- Additional funding for pilot projects supporting the propagation and planting of native grasses such as beach wildrye at Ocean Beach.
- Monitoring of the response of nuisance species to increases in vegetation structure and density.

Photo at left: Sunset dune fields circa 1910. View west from Near 30th and Pacheco. Radio towers visible at the beach. From Western Neighborhoods Project - wnp15.641.



Photo by SF Recreation & Parks Department

Conversion of the Great Highway from a vehicle roadway to a promenade will provide immediate benefits to many species due to a reduction in harmful traffic-associated impacts. These impacts include wildlife disorientation or avoidance behaviors caused by traffic, noise, and artificial light, in addition to wildlife-vehicle collisions.



A California tortoiseshell, which can be seen along the Great Highway. Photo by Walter Siegmund. Creative Commons BY-SA 3.0

Additional benefits of road closure include enhanced recreational use due to reduced traffic. Outdoor recreation improves physical and mental health outcomes, and reduced traffic will increase pedestrian and cyclist safety. A vehicle-free Great Highway will create a better pedestrian and cyclist connection between Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach, in alignment with the Ocean Beach Master Plan.

Supporting actions:

While road closure alone is beneficial, the additional actions listed on the next page could support wildlife and habitat even further. Benefits of these actions include:

- **Reduced wildlife disruptions** while **supporting recreational access** via *lighting changes*
- **Protecting sensitive habitat** while **educating visitors and encouraging stewardship** via *signage*
- **Reduced nuisance species** in Ocean Beach via *trash management*

The following pages provide greater detail on why these suggested actions are beneficial and highlight supporting documents and resources .



Illustration of wildlife friendly lighting. By Jennifer Symonds, SFEI. From *Ecology for Health* (2023)

REDUCE LIGHTING AMOUNT

Decrease street lighting between dusk and dawn as much as possible, minimize light intensity, ensure lights are shielded, and remove unnecessary light fixtures



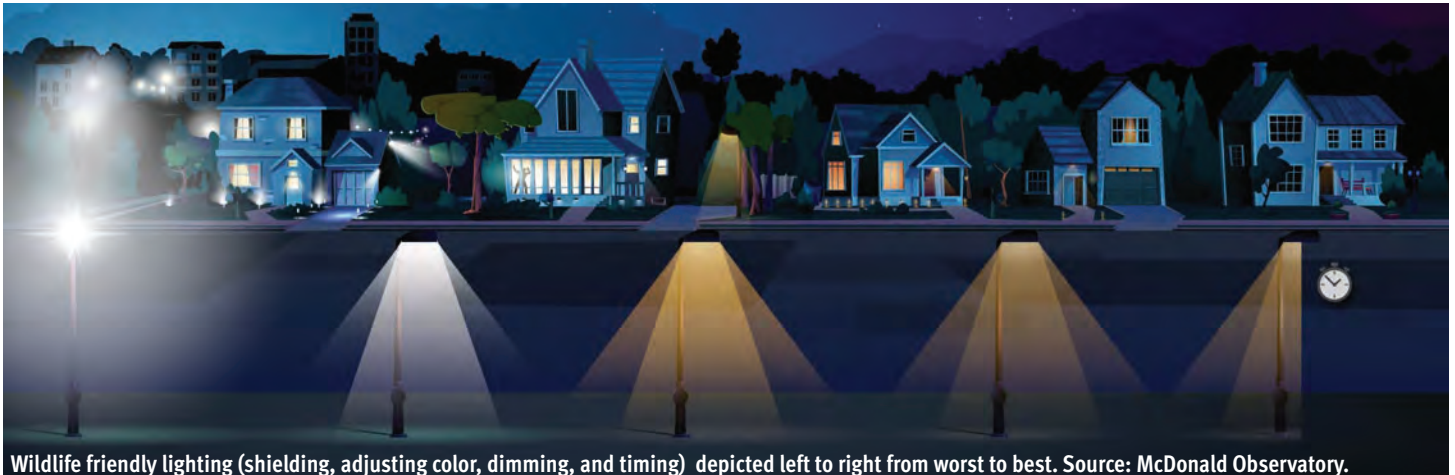
The Great Highway at night.
Photo by Peter Thoeny
Creative Commons BY NC-SA 4.0

SCENARIO: PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE* | OPEN ROAD*

WHY? A reduction in street lighting—a major source of artificial light at night —between dusk and dawn improves animal navigation and movement.

Artificial light at night negatively impacts a range of wildlife, and is particularly disruptive to bats and migrating birds. Certain human health impacts, such as cancer risk and disruptions to melatonin production, have also been linked to artificial light at night.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: *SF Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings; Ecology for Health; DA - IES Model Lighting Ordinance*



Wildlife friendly lighting (shielding, adjusting color, dimming, and timing) depicted left to right from worst to best. Source: McDonald Observatory.

CHANGE LIGHTING COLOR TEMPERATURE

Adjust street lighting to a warmer light temperature

SCENARIO: PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE* | OPEN ROAD*

WHY? Street lighting that has a cooler light temperature contributes more to night sky brightness, negatively impacts bird movement, and is generally disruptive to a many plant and animal species.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: *Ecology for Health; DA - IES Model Lighting Ordinance*

* Asterisks indicate the scenarios in which a supporting action can only be partially implemented. In scenarios allowing vehicles, lighting will still need to meet the needs of a vehicle roadway, limiting possible lighting adjustments.



Example of an animal resistant trash receptacle along the Highway. Photo by SF RPD

IMPROVE TRASH MANAGEMENT

Install additional refuse containers with signage, and increase frequency of trash collection

SCENARIO: PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE
OPEN ROAD

WHY? Litter attracts nuisance species like raccoons and crows. Expanding trash storage capacity and collection frequency will reduce unstored food and other waste, reducing the presence of predators of sensitive species, helping prevent nuisance wildlife interactions with humans, and reducing impacts of trash on terrestrial and marine animals. The SF Recreation and Park Department has begun installing animal-resistant trash receptacles to improve trash management and expand capacity.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: *Ocean Beach Master Plan*

INSTALL EDUCATIONAL WALKWAY SIGNAGE & FENCING

Install interpretive signage, planting strips, and low fencing to manage pedestrian circulation, protect sensitive habitat areas from trampling, and encourage stewardship

SCENARIO: PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE | PARTIAL CLOSURE

WHY? Interpretive signage and fencing can provide educational and recreational value for visitors while discouraging trampling and disturbance of habitat areas. Low fencing and strips of larger plants and shrubs can also curb trampling while maintaining visitor access. These interventions encourage stewardship of the dunes and engage a wider audience with protection of this unique urban habitat.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: *Growing Resilience: Recommendations for Dune Management at North Ocean Beach; Ecology for Health*



Fencing at Pillar Point, Half Moon Bay. Photo by Ellen Plane, SFEI



Photo by Ellen Plane, SFEI

Areas in need of further funding and research:

- Assessment of how much street lighting is needed across scenarios to ensure ecologically-beneficial lighting adjustments also guarantee safety for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Investigation of how transforming the roadway into a promenade would affect the movement of nuisance species.
- Monitoring of pedestrian responses to signage and other interpretive elements post-installation.
- Monitoring of wildlife and plants to evaluate the ecological effects of supporting actions.
- Consultation with GGNRA and other local experts to assess how creating a promenade would impact active migratory shorebird habitat on Ocean Beach.

The future of the Great Highway will be shaped by sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and upcoming decisions about its planned vehicle and pedestrian use. This report highlights the diverse array of options available across planning scenarios for supporting ecosystem health and recreational use on the Highway. Restoration and revegetation of the dunes present an opportunity to bring back a native ecosystem while simultaneously enhancing visitor experiences. Actions related to trash management, lighting adjustments, and educational signage could have significant benefits for wildlife and public engagement with habitat stewardship.

Conversion of the roadway to a promenade presents the greatest opportunity for ecological improvement. But regardless of how the Great Highway evolves over time, actions can be taken to enhance ecosystem health, maintain public access, and foster environmental education and stewardship along this treasured roadway.

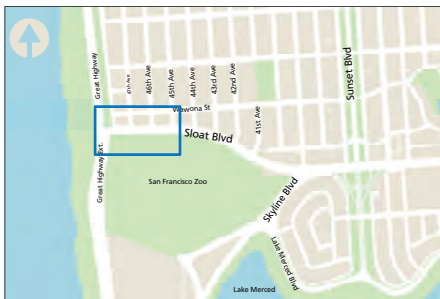
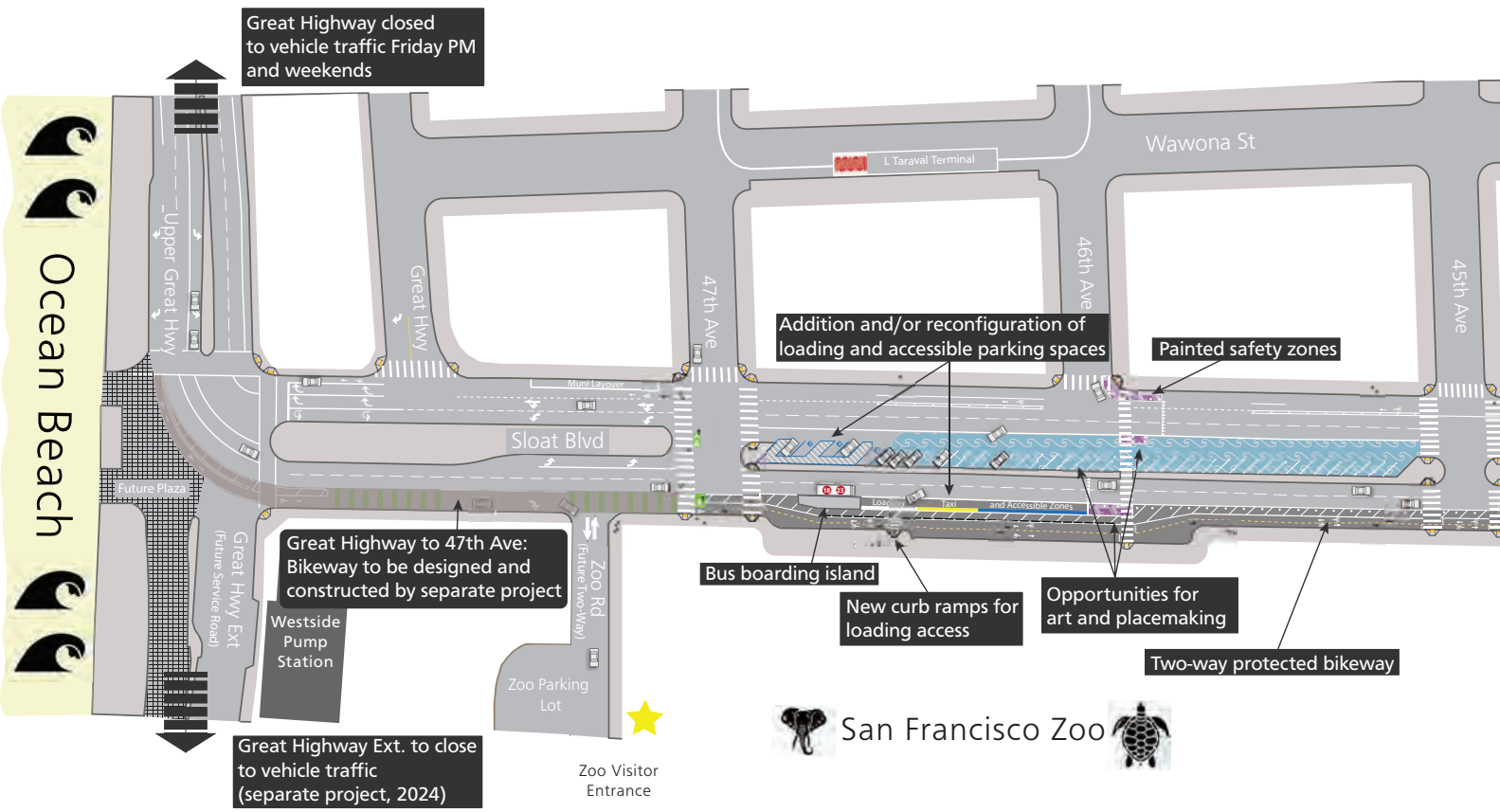


Photo by Pi.1415926535, Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons SA-3.0

Interested in more detailed guidance or learning about the research behind this report?
See the companion **Appendix** for supporting information.

Ocean Beach Dune Revegetation



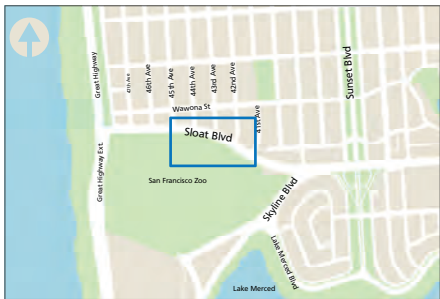
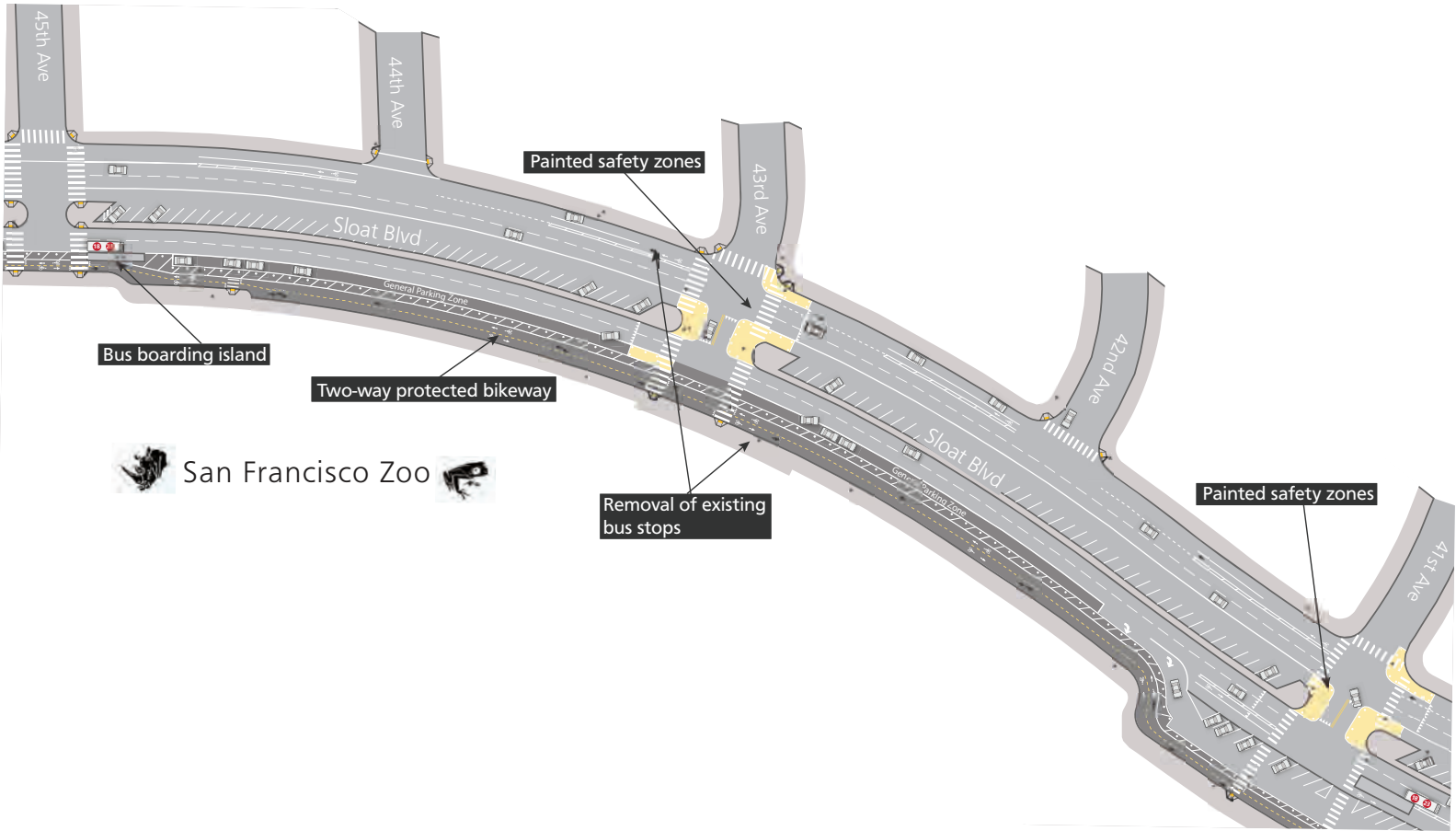


Sloat Boulevard Quick-Build Plan View: Great Highway to 45th Avenue

Conceptual Draft June 2023



SFMTA.com/SloatQB



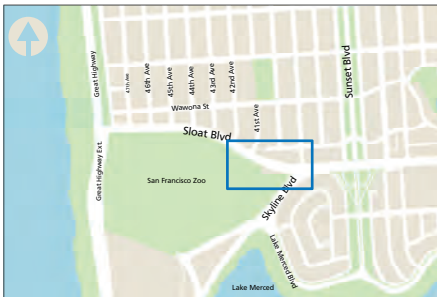
Sloat Boulevard Quick-Build

Plan View: 45th Avenue to 41st Avenue



Conceptual Draft June 2023

[SFMTA.com/SloatQB](https://www.sfmta.com/SloatQB)



Sloat Boulevard Quick-Build Plan View: 41st Avenue to Skyline Boulevard



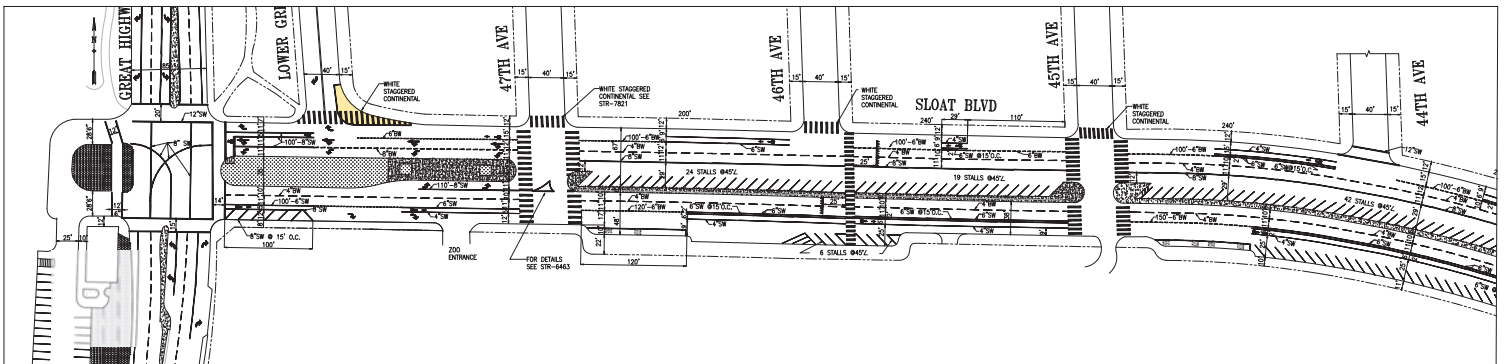
Conceptual Draft June 2023

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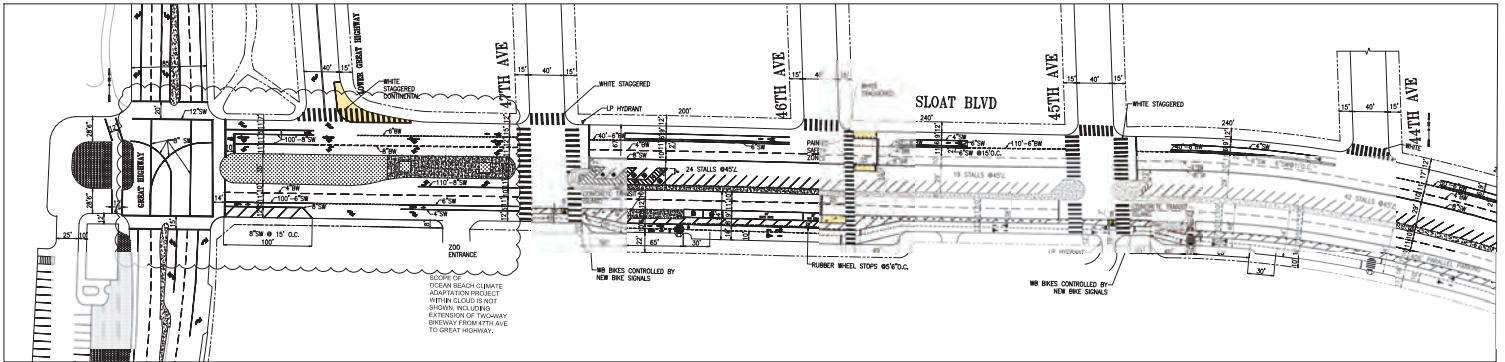
Sloat Blvd Quick-Build Project - Parking Impacts Analysis



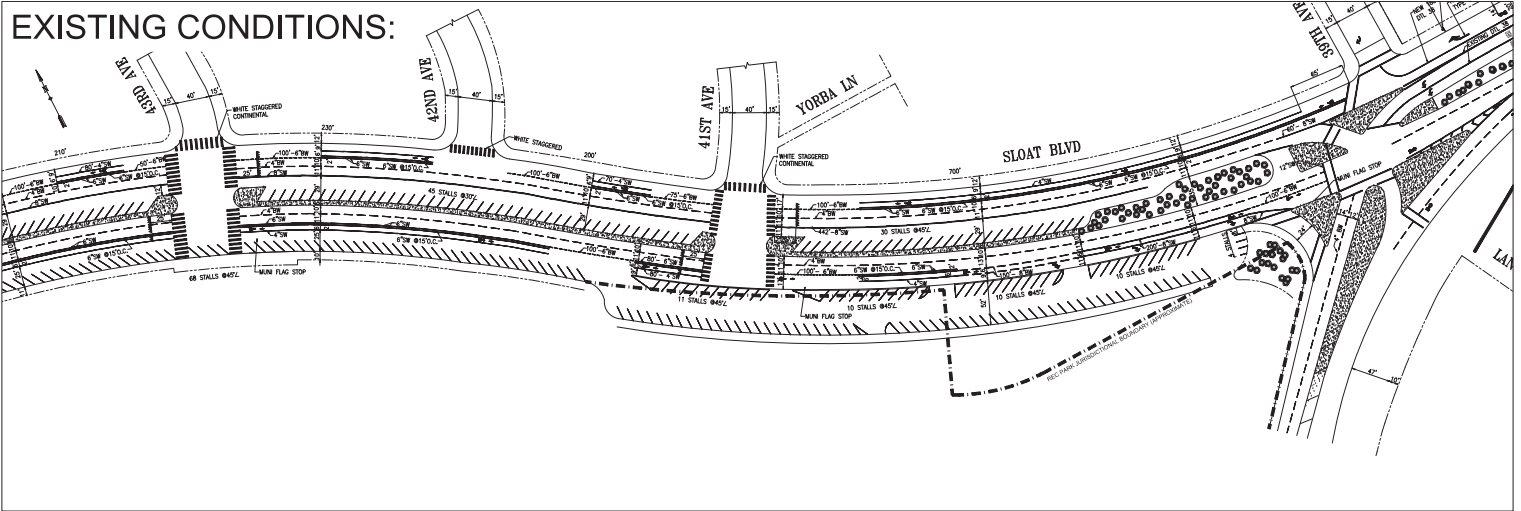
EXISTING CONDITIONS:



PROPOSED PROJECT:



EXISTING CONDITIONS:



PROPOSED PROJECT:

