



# Congestion in San Francisco: A New Strategy

## How is San Francisco Addressing Congestion Now?



### TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

Buses and trains can move many more people than private automobiles in much less space. Improvements to transit services, such as dedicated bus lanes encourage more travelers to use these space-efficient options.



### RIDE HAIL TAX

San Francisco taxes Transportation Network Companies such as Uber and Lyft for each ride provided in San Francisco. This discourages ride-alone trips. Revenues are spent on transit and pedestrian safety improvements.



### MANAGING PARKING SUPPLY

The SFPark program introduced market-rate pricing for public parking. The program makes it easier to park and reduces congestion by reducing the time drivers spend searching for an open space.



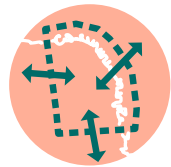
### TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

San Francisco's Transportation Demand Management Ordinance requires new development projects to include amenities which support walking, biking, and transit. The goal of the program is to reduce driving trips associated with new development.



### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

Increases in walking and bicycling alleviate traffic congestion and transit crowding. Pedestrian safety improvements and protected bicycle lanes can enable more people to choose these space-efficient, healthy, and environmentally beneficial ways to travel.



### CONGESTION PRICING (BEING STUDIED)

Congestion pricing involves charging a fee to drive downtown during busy hours. It is one of the most effective tools we can use to get traffic moving, increase street safety, clean the air, and make our transportation system more equitable.

## Why Congestion Pricing?

The city's current strategies for improving transportation attempt to move more people in less space, but the effectiveness of these efforts is challenged by the simple fact that more and more personal vehicles are clogging San Francisco's roads. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority is studying congestion pricing because it can be an effective tool to shift personal vehicle demand to other modes or less busy times. Fewer car trips could mean smoother travel, safer streets, and cleaner air.

Congestion pricing also has the potential to make San Francisco's transportation system more equitable. Higher income individuals are more likely to drive (and pay the fee), while lower income individuals are more likely to walk, bike, or take transit. Revenues could be spent on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure in historically underinvested communities. A program of discounts and exemptions for certain vulnerable groups could also help ensure an equitable application of congestion pricing.



## Congestion During Coronavirus

Amid the global pandemic congestion has mostly vanished as we all try to keep ourselves and our communities healthy. What does coronavirus mean for the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study?

Prior to coronavirus, congestion in San Francisco had reached record levels. In the past, San Francisco's economy has been resilient, and as the city's economy improves, congestion will likely return. This will pollute the air, lengthen commutes, and slow public transit. Quality of life will be especially affected in neighborhoods near San Francisco's busiest roads, which are disproportionately likely to house low-income communities and communities of color.<sup>1</sup>

While we don't know exactly what our post-coronavirus future will look like, the pandemic is spurring cities to think about the kind of future they want. The work we do now can help us plan and prepare for the recovery.

## Citations

- 1 Gunier RB, Hertz A, Von Behren J, Reynolds P. 2003. Traffic density in California: socioeconomic and ethnic differences among potentially exposed children. *Journal of Exposure Analysis and Environmental Epidemiology* 13: 240-246.

## How To Get Involved

Help us shape a congestion pricing program for San Francisco: learn more and get involved at [sfcta.org/downtown](https://sfcta.org/downtown)

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## About the Study

Many recent planning efforts, including San Francisco's long-range transportation plan, Vision Zero Action Strategy, and Climate Action Strategy have recommended that San Francisco explore congestion pricing. These plans and others have identified a wide range of possible benefits. For these reasons, The Board of Supervisors has directed the Transportation Authority's staff to work with the community to explore how such a policy could work for San Francisco.

The preliminary goal of this effort is to reduce car trips downtown by 15% during peak periods. This would significantly reduce congestion and help San Francisco's transit, walking, and biking improvements work.

When San Francisco's road network is congested, traffic moves slowest in the northeast quadrant of the city. In the PM peak, traffic on the slowest of these segments moves an average of 4.5 miles per hour.



Traffic on San Francisco Streets during PM Peak, 2019.

Explore an interactive map of congestion in San Francisco at [congestion.sfcta.org](https://congestion.sfcta.org)