
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Great Highway Planning and Temporary Car-Free Great Highway

February 2021



San Francisco
County Transportation
Authority



About the Study

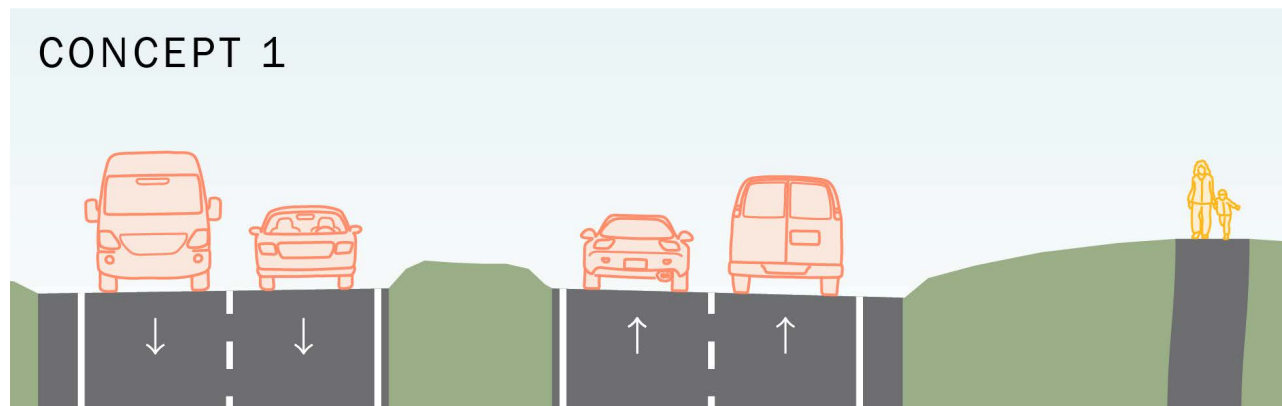
1. Why is the Transportation Authority studying concepts for the future of the Great Highway?

In 2019, Supervisor Gordon Mar requested that the Transportation Authority conduct the District 4 Mobility Study to explore new ideas to improve options for transit, walking, and biking in the Outer Sunset and Parkside neighborhoods. In April 2020, as part of the City's COVID-19 response efforts, San Francisco temporarily repurposed the Upper Great Highway to be a car-free street for recreational use. Because of the high levels of bicycle and pedestrian use during this time, Supervisor Mar asked the Transportation Authority to evaluate a suite of concepts for the future of the Great Highway as part of the District 4 Mobility Study.

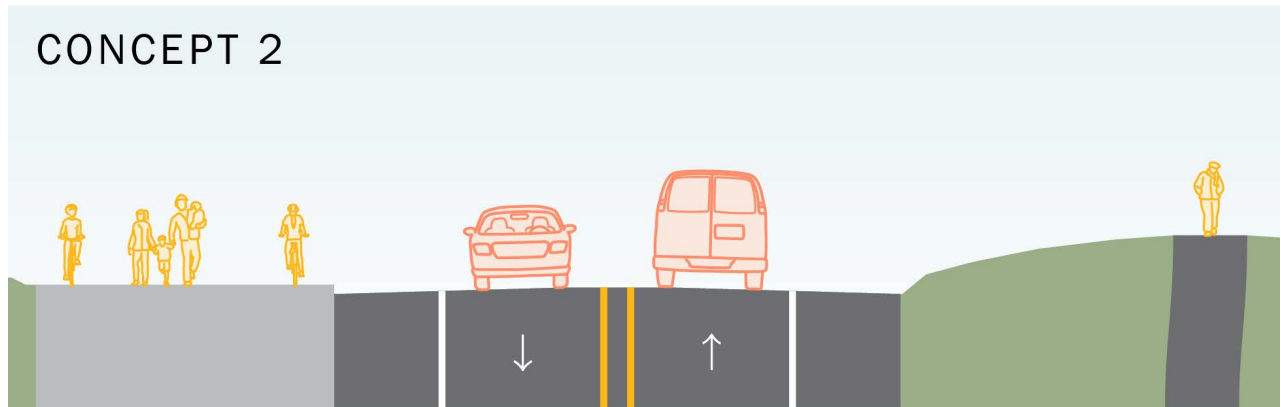
2. What concepts are being considered?

The Transportation Authority is studying a number of concepts for the long-term future of the Great Highway:

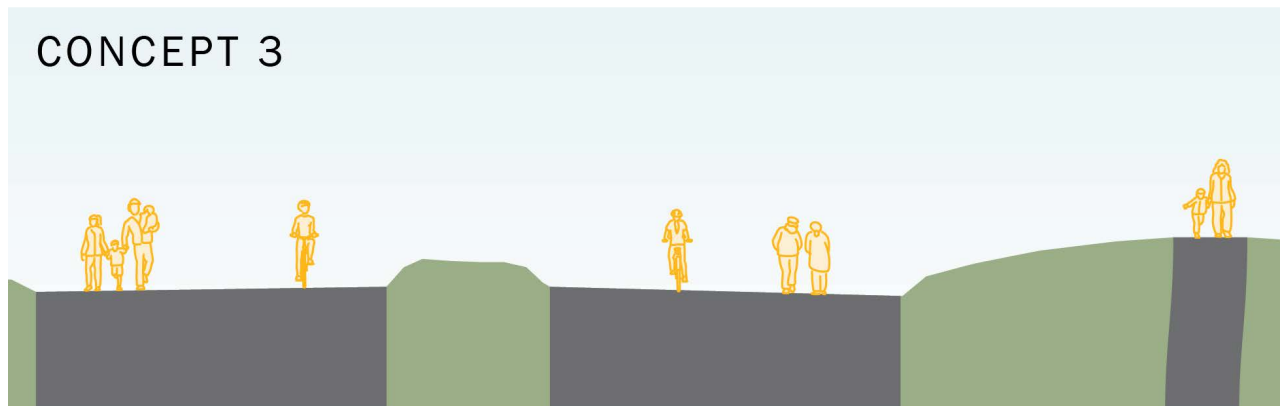
Concept 1 maintains the Great Highway as a four-lane roadway with two vehicle lanes in each direction.



Concept 2 reduces the width of the Great Highway to one vehicle lane in each direction and creates a promenade in the current southbound lanes.



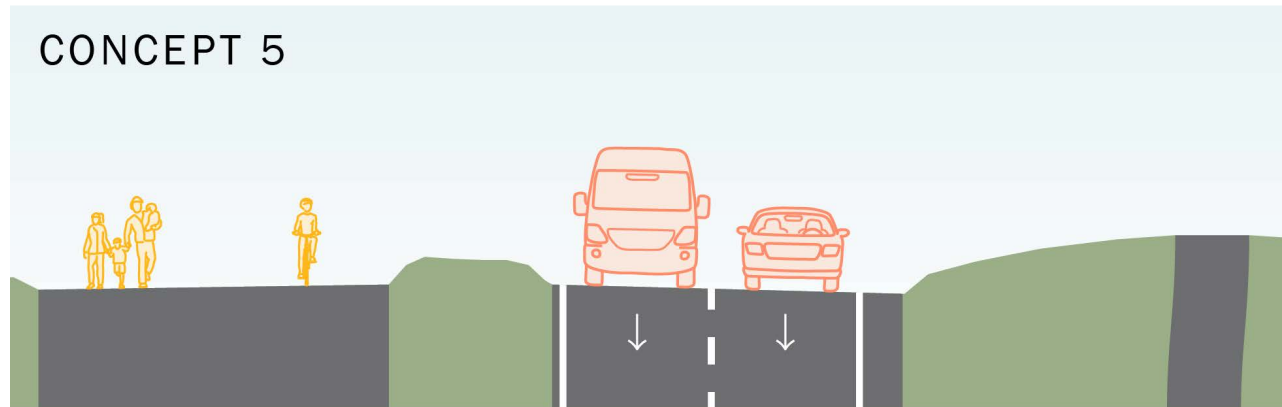
Concept 3 opens the Great Highway as a promenade and closes it completely to vehicle traffic.



Concept 4 opens the Great Highway as a promenade, similar to Concept 3 above, but only during weekends/holidays and/or certain seasons.



Concept 5 reduces the width of the Great Highway to two southbound vehicle lanes in the current northbound lanes and creates a promenade in the current southbound lanes.



3. How are the concepts being studied?

The Transportation Authority is working with the SFMTA and the Recreation and Park Department to evaluate the transportation impacts of the concepts as well as identify necessary complementary street changes, traffic management, recreation and open space benefits, high-level cost estimates, and operational issues.

4. What is the timeline for the study?

Through winter 2021, the Transportation Authority is evaluating the Great Highway concepts, continuing outreach to get feedback and will report back on initial recommendations. Project staff expect to complete a final report for the District 4 Mobility Study by spring 2021 which will include final recommendations for the future of the Great Highway.

5. How will the recommendations be developed?

The evaluation of the concepts and findings from public outreach will inform the final recommendations. The evaluation includes understanding how each concept performs by qualitative and quantitative metrics that relate to City policies and goals. The final Great Highway recommendations will be included as part of the District 4 Mobility Study report. The Transportation Authority Board will vote to adopt the report and recommendations when the study concludes in late spring.

6. What steps are required to approve and move the recommendations forward?

The recommendations would need approval by a number of decision-making bodies such as the Recreation and Park Commission, the SFMTA Board, and the Board of Supervisors before they can be implemented.

7. How can I stay up to date and give feedback on the study?

Sign up for the District 4 Mobility Study mailing list at the bottom of the [project webpage](#) or give feedback by emailing d4mobility@sfcta.org.

8. What is the city doing to ensure that a potential car-free Great Highway is accessible to people with disabilities?

Any long-term Great Highway concept would require accessibility for people with disabilities and may include recommendations on how to improve access. For example, recommendations may include improvements to Great Highway access points to ensure they are compliant with the most current ADA standards.

9. How will parking in the area change?

There are existing public parking lots just north of Lincoln Way. There are currently no proposals to change parking in the area.

The repurposing of the Great Highway as a car-free street has attracted people to the area using different modes of travel, including personal vehicles. SFMTA may consider implementing parking management measures during periods of high parking demand to help provide better availability. Any parking management measures would be developed with outreach to the local community.

10. What data has been collected and how will it be used?

The project team gathered pre-COVID vehicle data for streets in the area to inform the traffic modeling of the different concepts under non-pandemic conditions.

- The Recreation and Parks Department has been collecting bike/pedestrian usage data of the Upper Great Highway since mid-September 2020.
- The Transportation Authority collected vehicle volume and speed data in October 2020 on key Upper Great Highway parallel routes.
- The SFMTA is planning to collect vehicle data to gauge the effectiveness of traffic management strategies under the current temporary car-free condition.

These counts are being used to provide a picture of how much the Upper Great Highway, Lower Great Highway, and other roadways are being used by people using various modes. Data summaries have and will be shared with stakeholders, the public, and decision makers throughout the planning process.

11. What are the long-term impacts/threats of climate change and how will the study address them?

Erosion problems related to sea level rise are the major issues related to climate change. This is why the Ocean Beach Master Plan recommended “managed retreat” as one of the coastal management tools. Managed retreat would entail strategically reducing infrastructure vulnerable to erosion while striving to increase the resiliency of natural coastal features that mitigate wave and flood impacts such as coastal dunes. As part of the District 4 Mobility Study, we are considering future concepts for the Great Highway that allow for managed retreat and less infrastructure maintenance along the coast.

Current Temporary Car-Free Great Highway

12. How does the District 4 Mobility Study relate to the current temporary usage of the Great Highway as a car-free street?

The study is exploring the long-term future of the Great Highway while the Great Highway is being used to provide for safe recreation for the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. How can I stay up to date and give feedback on the traffic management for the temporary car-free Great Highway?

Sign-up for the [SFMTA's Traffic Management mailing list](#) or email GreatHighway@SFMTA.com to get updates about upcoming outreach events.

14. How are the traffic and speeding issues of the car-free Great Highway being addressed?

The Great Highway's closure to vehicles has resulted in some changing traffic patterns in the neighborhood, including reports of increased vehicle traffic and speeds on nearby streets including the Lower Great Highway, which is parallel to the Upper Great Highway.

Since the repurposing of the Upper Great Highway, the SFMTA has taken numerous actions to minimize impacts from changing traffic patterns including: installing over 20 traffic management tools such as detour signs, road closure signs and plastic delineator posts in strategic locations in the neighborhood. The SFMTA has also installed "speed tables" on Lower Great Highway that will encourage slower driving on that parallel street. Speed tables are similar to speed humps but longer and flat-topped.

The SFMTA has also been engaging stakeholders and members of the public to better understand the opportunities and constraints of modifying the Great Highway. As we go forward, the traffic and safety impacts to the community are priorities as we evaluate the concepts for the Upper Great Highway as part of the District 4 Mobility Study.

SFMTA collected and evaluated traffic speed and volume data on the Lower Great Highway in late December 2020/early January 2021 which was used to develop traffic management strategies for the Great Highway. For a map of the installations and the most current information regarding the traffic management efforts, please visit the [SFMTA webpage](#).

15. What have you heard from outreach?

Under the current temporary condition, we've heard concerns from local residents about speeding and high traffic volumes on local parallel streets, especially Lower Great Highway. We've also heard from many people who have benefited from using the roadway for walking, cycling, and gathering safely during the pandemic.

Related Projects

16. How does District 4 Mobility Study relate to other projects in the Ocean Beach Master Plan?

The District 4 Mobility Study and analysis of future Great Highway concepts incorporates the goals of the Ocean Beach Master Plan. As the rest of the City works on implementing the plan's recommendations, we are coordinating with partner agencies to ensure consistency with the plan's goals such as better coastal access, stewardship of natural resources, protection of municipal infrastructure, and improved connectivity between open space.

Other Ocean Beach Master Plan projects include:

- South Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project (SFPUC)
 - Installation of buried seawall
 - New multi-use trail from Sloat to Skyline.
- Lower Great Highway Traffic Calming Project

17. What is the relationship of the Great Highway efforts to the 19th Avenue Combined City construction project?

The 19th Avenue Combined City project is a long-overdue investment to replace the aging roadway infrastructure on 19th Avenue and will include ongoing construction through February 2023. The Great Highway team is coordinating with the construction team to monitor any traffic impacts to the neighborhood. [Learn more about the 19th Avenue Combined City project.](#)