



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

4/27 meeting of the SFTCA Board

Christina Shih <christinashih@comcast.net>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 5:54 PM

This is a comment for the board.

As traffic has begun to resume, keeping the Great Highway closed and attempting to ameliorate the resulting pouring of traffic into previously quiet adjacent streets with "traffic calming" measures, it should be increasingly obvious that closing a major artery without first providing decent alternatives is an exercise in futility.

Number one, the decision to close the Great Highway apparently did not take into consideration the two year construction work on 19th Avenue and the additional slow street closures in GG Park. This has resulted in major jams at Chain of Lakes and Crossover Drive. I use to use the Great Hwy 1-2 times/week to go north/south to the Sunset and the Peninsula and now there are regularly 30 min delays trying to use alternate routes. Several parents and teachers attempting to make that commute for their children and to work also report 30-40 minutes delays. I was on Chain of Lakes around 2:30 pm last week and the traffic was backed up from MLK to beyond JFK (at least 30-40 cars).

Number two, the purported numbers of 4000/day recreational users of the closed Great Highway vs the 18,000/day cars that use to use the GH seems dubious. We have numerous observers who live by the Great Hwy and others who have taken photographs of the recreational use of the GH at all hours of the day show nothing close to 4000 users/day. We also have numerous observers and photographs of the resultant crush of cars on the Lower Great Highway including mobs of dirt bikes using this formerly residential street as the surrogate Great Highway and along Chain of Lakes.

Number three, the Great Highway was designed as a car thoroughfare with many safety features. Timed lights to slow traffic. Controlled intersections to allow for safe pedestrian crossing. No cross traffic with cars reducing the chances of crashes at intersections. A median to lessen the chance of head on collisions. Now you have diverted 18,000 cars on to residential streets that have NONE of those safety features. Speed bumps, more stop signs, closures of entrances and forced turns will only displace drivers to yet other streets without these obstacles. Drivers will always find a speedier route if they find hindrances such as what is being created now with "traffic calming".

Number four, there are many other recreational facilities for walkers and bicyclists. The adjacent paved walkways (which I use to walk along all the time without feeling any need to walk on the Great Hwy itself), the beach itself, GG Park, Lake Merced. It seems ironic that you want to create a "park" out of a highway when there are already so many other real parks, and in the course of making this unwise decision forcing more cars into genuine parks like GG Park.

Number five, air pollution invariably will rise with these idling cars stuck in traffic and taking longer and more circuitous routes. Not everyone can ride a bike. Personally I am 71 years old, injured my meniscus two years ago, sold my bike years ago and will NEVER use the Great Highway to bicycle. Going to Home Depot for lumber will not be done on a bicycle. Traveling to San Mateo, SFO, etc will not be done on a bicycle. When I want to walk, I will use sidewalks, the paved walking path along the GH, or trails along GG Park or Lands End and NOT a highway. (As an aside, when I cross Cabrillo and 23rd Ave which have become slow streets I see the few pedestrians still using the sidewalks and rarely a bicyclist).

Number six, there are few public transportation options to go north south from the Richmond. Going east west is not a problem. So closing the Great Highway to cars hoping people will shift to Muni is a mirage.

Number seven: Outside Lands and other events are being resumed. This will impact traffic even more with the continued closures and inability to drive north south through GG Park.

I hope that turning the Great Highway into a "promenade" is looked at very very carefully, not just from the perspective of Sunset district residents, but the entire city who needs safe efficient routes to commute north south across the city. I don't see how converting a PUBLIC highway into an essentially local recreational spot can be justified. If other people outside the Sunset district are going to enjoy this "park", how will they get there? If they drive where will they park (residential streets of course)?

A very vocal, very impassioned group of bicycling advocates has made this seem like a no brainer of a decision but I believe that an even larger number of people impacted by the closure of the Great Highway has not had the chance to be heard and protest. I think you are about to hear from them.

4/27/2021

SFCTA Mail - 4/27 meeting of the SFTCA Board

Christina Shih
Outer Richmond resident since 1985



San Francisco
County Transportation
Authority

Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

April 27 meeting - Open the Upper Great Highway

Elisa Ignatius <eignatius@sbcglobal.net>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 10:47 PM

Hello,

I respectfully ask that the Upper Great Highway be re-opened. I live in the Outer Richmond and used the UGH often for travel to Sloat Blvd to businesses and to access the south bay. It is an incredibly scenic wonder of San Francisco and saves significant time when traveling south. It allows people who cannot walk or bike to enjoy the ocean and dunes. Could the city please re-open the UGH? I walked along it when it was closed to cars and found it like walking in a parking lot, whereas the landscaped and elevated pedestrian path along the side allows for better views. I've also biked along the road and found there was ample room for a safe ride.

Thank you,
Elisa Ignatius
Outer Richmond Resident



San Francisco
County Transportation
Authority

Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

April 27 Meeting Comment - Re-open the Great Highway to vehicle traffic ASAP

'Shelly' via Clerk <clerk@sfcta.org>
Reply-To: Shelly <bjhorton@aol.com>
To: "clerk@sfcta.org" <clerk@sfcta.org>

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 10:58 PM

Comment for SFMTA April 27th Meeting.

As a long-time resident of the Outer Richmond, I feel compelled to comment on the negative impact of the Great Highway closure. As the Great Highway increasingly sits empty the traffic impacts to motor vehicles are becoming unbearable. I frequently need to travel to destinations South of the City to help care for aging family, shop etc. the traffic backups just continue to get longer and longer. A recent trip to the SF Zoo from my home at 46th and Geary took 30 minutes each way!! A trip that would take less than 10 when the Great Highway is open. After several times experiencing similar terrible delays, I have found myself often choosing to drive to Marin for shopping rather than head Southbound in or out of the city.

This situation has gotten absolutely ridiculous, the Great Highway needs to be re-opened for vehicle traffic ASAP

Thank you



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

April 27, 2021 SFCTA Meeting: Public Comment

'Charles Perkins' via Clerk <clerk@sfcta.org>
Reply-To: Charles Perkins <cperkinssf@yahoo.com>
To: Transportation Authority <clerk@sfcta.org>

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 5:25 PM

Dear Commissioners,

At your April 27, 2021, meeting you are considering an update on San Francisco's important Vision Zero program. At the same time, a group within the Transportation Authority and others are pushing to close the Great Highway to automobiles for the two-mile stretch between Sloat and Lincoln permanently, which completely undermines the Vision Zero principles.

The stretch of Great Highway in question is four-lane divided highway, meaning it presents virtually no chance of head-on collisions. And more significantly, there are no four-way intersections, meaning there is no cross-traffic. As your own experts will tell you, and as Vision Zero information that will be shared with you today proves, intersections are where the majority of significant accidents take place. Many occur when drivers turn right as pedestrians step out into the streets (again, see today's Vision Zero presentation) or turn left in front of oncoming traffic. A large percentage of other serious accidents are the result of cars, bicycles, skateboarders, scooter riders, etc. running red lights as cross-traffic begins to move forward into the intersection. None of these risks are present on the Great Highway.

And intersections and turns aside, the Great Highway historically has been an incredibly safe two-mile stretch of road, with virtually no accidents to speak of. Running immediately parallel to the Highway on either side are excellent, heavily used, pedestrian/biking paths. Most bicyclists historically used those paths resulting in very low incidence of cars and bikes traveling together on the two-mile stretch of road, and pedestrians walking on the Highway when it is open is virtually unheard of. And even as to pedestrians crossing the Highway to get to the beach, there are lighted intersections every-other block, and even as to persons who jaywalk in between those intersections, there is a center median, and the lights are timed such that long stretches--30-60 seconds, I estimate--of zero traffic occur every minute or so. Again, the statistics prove that the Great Highway historically has been an exceptionally safe stretch of roadway (far safer than, e.g., Sunset Boulevard or 19th Avenue).

With the closure of the Great Highway to cars, approximately 18,000-20,000 cars every single day (SFCTA numbers) must detour onto other significantly less safe routes; primarily residential streets. On these streets there is far less visibility, and far more hazards exist, including oncoming traffic (to go along with kids running into the street, cars backing out of driveways and pulling off curbs, parked car doors opening, double-parked cars around which a driver must navigate, among many other things), and intersections having cross-traffic every block. And again, for those drivers who do detour using Sunset or 19th, those thoroughfares are significantly more dangerous than the Great Highway, as the statistics bear out. Not to mention the fact that with drivers having to detour, they necessarily have to drive further, and statistically, more time behind the wheel equates with higher incidence of collision. (I won't get into here how more time behind the wheel in the less fuel-efficient driving conditions that the closure causes means somewhere in the range of 10-20 metric tons of additional greenhouse gasses being pumped into the atmosphere every single day.)

With so much attention being given to Vision Zero, how the permanent Great Highway closure is even a consideration has me truly dumbfounded. Seriously, the two things are incompatible and

nobody has even attempted to reconcile them because that's impossible. Is Vision Zero only the goal when it doesn't conflict with some important interest group's agenda? I hope that's not the case, and someone really needs to put the brakes on now to the permanent Great Highway closure plan.

Thank you,

Charles Perkins
San Francisco



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

April 27, 2021 SFCTA Meeting: Public Comment

Judi Gorski <judigorski@gmail.com>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Tue, Apr 27, 2021 at 2:25 AM

Dear City Officials,

I am sending this email to you in advance of the SFCTA meeting scheduled to take place this Tuesday, April 27, 2021, at 10:00 am. I am writing to object again to any plans that may be considered to effectuate the permanent closure of the Upper Great Highway and to object to the results of any studies SFCTA, SFMTA, SFR&P have conducted and referenced so far that may be used in support of the temporary closure becoming permanent. I have, on behalf of myself and my neighbors, requested detailed information concerning these studies that has not yet been disclosed, and until we can independently analyze such studies, we dispute and disagree with the statistics that have been presented to date.

I was informed by email on March 5, 2021, by Mariana Maguire of SFMTA that "Each month, an average of 140,000 people roll and stroll along the corridor, with a recent high of 11,661 people over the course of a single day."

I have still not seen the studies that back that up and requested to see all studies taken between April 2020 and February 2021. All I was able to find out regarding this was from Brian Stokle of SFR&P who wrote:

"I've compiled our data, which is based on on site visits made in October and November 2020 in the morning, midday and the late afternoon, at two locations along the Upper Great Highway. Based on our data we observed:

Pedestrians 38%

Jogging and running 8%

Wheelchair or other disabled: 0.2%

People walking dogs 3%

Bikes 51%"

His response did not explain Ms. Maguire's "each month" figures or many other things. Mr. Stokle invited my comments and questions and I sent him an email with 16 questions. He then responded on April 9, 2021, that he has gathered together his team to help him answer my questions "in a timely manner." I asked again for the information on April 21, 2021, but now at nearly 11 pm April 26th, the night before the meeting there is still no response.

So that the questions I asked about this October/November 2020 study will be part of the permanent record I am including them here.

1. What are the exact dates, days, times and hours of duration when the above percentages were being observed in October and in November 2020 in the morning, midday and late afternoon?

2. What are the exact locations of the two locations where this study was done, closest to which intersections?

3. When you say "on site visits," please specify the names and professions of the people who visited, who they were working for and how much they were paid to observe and record the information they supplied to Rec&Park and who paid them.

4. How long was each person's visit (from what time start to finish) to the UGH to record its use by pedestrians and others?
5. Did the people making on site visits to do the counting take notes and if so, please provide dated copies of those notes.
6. What is the exact number of pedestrians that were counted?
7. What is the exact number of bicycles that were counted?
8. What is the exact number of wheelchairs or other disabled that were counted to arrive at a number of 0.2%?
9. Are pedestrians a separate number from joggers and runners? If so, what is the exact number of joggers and runners?
10. Did the on site visits include any equipment that produced images, such as videos or cameras? If so, may I please have access to that feed?
11. Please send me a copy of what official documents you used to compile this information or where I may access this public record.
12. What is the exact number of "People walking dogs?"
13. Does SF Rec&Park believe that since 3% of its studies in October and November 2020 showed there were "People walking dogs" that it is a valuable statistic to be included in the studies being used today to justify the permanent closure of a 4-lane highway that pre-pandemic was used by 18,000-20,000 vehicles daily? Yes or No?
14. When Rec&Park made the decision to suddenly close the Upper Great Highway, what was the date, time and place where that meeting was held and what are the names of the people who attended it? If there are minutes of this meeting, may I please have them or be directed to where I may access this public record?
15. At what date, time and place was the decision to close the Upper Great Highway approved, and who approved it? May I have a copy of that approval or be directed to where I may access this public record?

16. Has Rec&Park done any more studies concerning the public's use of the Upper Great Highway since the one referred to here in October and November of 2020? If so, please provide the study.

Some of the many confusing things about the incomplete information Mr. Stokle provided in his 4/9/21 response are the categories of users of the highway. For example, "jogging and running" is a category separate from "pedestrians" and separate from "people walking dogs." Why would a person with a dog be in a separate category? What if a person with a dog walks a little, jogs a little and runs a little with the dog? Is that considered a count of 3? Is that person also a pedestrian or not a pedestrian?

What if a pedestrian walks from Sloat to Lincoln and then back again from Lincoln to Sloat; is that person counted once or twice as they pass whatever device is doing the counting?

If devices are at two locations how many times are the pedestrians counted if they pass by both locations twice?

What if the same bicyclist goes back and forth on the highway several times in front of the counting device? How many times is that bicyclist counted?

What if one day there was a protest on the highway where hundreds of people showed up for a few hours for a cause, like the Black Lives Matter march in June 2020 and the march against Asian hate on April 18, 2021? Do those exceptional numbers get counted as part of the normal monthly count of people using the highway? What about the exceptionally hot holiday weekend when the beach parking lot north of Lincoln to the Cliff House was closed and hundreds of people came to the Lower Great Highway to find parking and get to the beach from there? Are all those people counted as normal users of the highway during that month?

Although I keep asking for information and it keeps being promised to be sent to me timely, again I am attending one of your meetings without it. Why does Mr. Stokle require a team to send me a copy of the one and only study from which he was quoting? Please help me obtain this from him within the next 48 hours.

MTA's efforts to calm and redirect this volume of highway traffic after the fact has not worked. Vehicles are not hitting their brakes as they drive over speed cushions. The claim that multiple thousands still flock here every day to use a highway they've turned into a 4-lane bicycle path is untrue. Thousands are not on it every day and if those who were on it last October and November are 51% bicyclists, they have bicycle lanes as they had before and local streets with bike lanes as well. My neighbors and I need the dangerous constant traffic that races by a few feet from our front doors spewing greenhouse gasses as vehicles stop and go to be back on the highway where it is less harmful to us and our environment. We need the street closures to open and the gridlock of the diverted traffic to stop.

The Ocean Beach Master Plan with 2 lanes of traffic was rejected by SFCTA as being too "high risk" to bicyclists or for pedestrians to cross the highway at crosswalks. Please produce police reports of accidents involving bicyclists and pedestrians in crosswalks that occurred on the highway between Lincoln and Sloat during the past several years pre-closure that informed SFCTA's decision. Why aren't SFMTA, SFCTA or SFR&P providing the source of their statistics? The Board of Supervisors should have this information before voting to make the closure permanent. The agencies should be transparent with the public and reveal all documents and studies that will be submitted to the Supervisors to be used to inform their votes. The public deserves time to review the same materials and be informed long before the vote as well.

My neighbors and I are documenting a barely populated Upper Great Highway that is mostly used by bicyclists who could easily share the road with vehicles and pedestrians. There is no reasonable need to keep this highway closed. There is no longer a lockdown, most of us have been vaccinated, schools and businesses are reopening, and the commuter traffic is back. It would be unconscionable to permanently keep so many residents living in constant stress and danger from the traffic, or to continue expensive studies, or to leave this necessary artery closed off. Stop wasting our money on studies and surveys trying to prove the highway should be permanently closed because it should not. Do the right thing and Open the Great Highway.

Respectfully,

Judi Gorski

San Francisco taxpayer, voter
and resident for 40+ years

Member of Concerned Residents
of the Sunset and in support of Concerned Residents of the
Richmond
judigorski@gmail.com



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

April 27th, 2021 Great Highway Public Comment

Kelli Marks <kellimsf@gmail.com>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 9:41 PM

Hello,

My name is Kelli Marks and I live on 36th Ave in the Outer Richmond. My comment is in favor of opening the Great Highway as I need to cross over through the park several times a day. I not only commute in the morning to take my son to school but I also must take him to all his activities which are on the other side of the park. I cannot take Presidio to 19th because of the amount of traffic with rush hour but also the 19th Ave road work currently going on. Therefore I am forced to go through the park or drive down to the beach only to drive up to 46th Ave to get across to Sloat. This congestion is backed up through the Presidio and the one artery through the park on 43rd Ave takes 20 min to get across.

With streets through the park closed to Sunset, the construction on 19th Ave, and now Great Highway closed you have made living in this part of town impossible for parents to get around through the Richmond to Sunset side. PLEASE OPEN THE GREAT HIGHWAY. There are less and less things for families like me to stay in this city these days and this just adds to it.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Kelli Marks



Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

Comments for meeting on 4/27

Alyse _ <honorlabor@hotmail.com>
To: Transportation Authority <clerk@sfcta.org>

Mon, Apr 26, 2021 at 7:58 PM

I am writing to express my strong opposition to a permanent closure of the Upper Great Highway due to the fact that my question as to who benefits from such a closure has never been adequately addressed.

People are now returning to work and children are returning to school. Who will be using the Upper Great Highway now? Certainly not the tradespeople who have to be at work all day. Nor will those in the service industry be able to use it. Or bank tellers. Or Administrative Assistants. No one who works an 8:00 to 5:00 job will be using the UGH during the day. Children and teens will not be using it during the day. The only people who will be using it during the day are those who are fortunate enough to work from home (or not work at all) with a job that allows for a great deal of flexibility. This exempts the majority of the people in San Francisco, and it adversely affects those who use the UGH for their daily commute.

The Upper Great Highway has both foot paths and bike lanes. There is room for everyone, including cars. Any permanent closure would be exclusionary and elitist, and would do a great disservice to the working men and women of San Francisco. Please reopen the UGH.



San Francisco
County Transportation
Authority

Britney Milton <britney.milton@sfcta.org>

Time to Open the Great Highway and Slow Streets

Jane Dunlap <dunlapjc@att.net>
To: clerk@sfcta.org

Tue, Apr 27, 2021 at 3:49 AM

To the SFCTA Board:

The closure of Upper Great Highway, as well as all of the Slow Streets throughout the city, was supposed to be a temporary measure offering an easily accessible and safe outdoors respite for those affected by stay-at-home mandates during these unprecedented times. They were emergency measures to allow healthy outlets to a locked down city. They were never meant to be permanent (at least that is what we were lead to believe when they were first implemented). The Great Highway and all of the Slow Streets needs to open up as soon the city has reached a safe status. The closures never had prior scrutiny, rigorous or accurate fore planning, nor input from local constituents to each street closure, to be placed in permanent closure. On so many levels, especially as traffic is coming back to normal, the closures are a serious impediment to the efficiency of travel and to the wellbeing of those neighborhoods. They also cause inequities to the less than able .

If a Slow Street program were to be implemented it should be done transparently with local constituent input. The streets should have a thorough assessment regarding its impact upon the immediate community and overall traffic patterns. A solid well thought out and studied plan should be in place well before permanent implementation. None of which was done in the current situation. As it stands now, the closures have caused divisiveness and controversy amongst communities. Until a civil dialogue has happened and appropriate extensive planning has taken place, inclusive of local public community input, then perhaps some permanent Slow Streets can happen.

Thanks.

Jane Dunlap
Outer Sunset District