



# Memorandum

## AGENDA ITEM 2

**DATE:** April 26, 2022  
**TO:** Transportation Authority Board  
**FROM:** Joe Castiglione - Deputy Director for Technology, Data, and Analysis  
**SUBJECT:** 04/26/22 Board Meeting: Accept the Golden Gate Park, John F. Kennedy Drive Access Equity Study Report

<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b>   <input type="checkbox"/> Information   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p>Accept the Golden Gate Park (GGP), John F. Kennedy (JFK) Drive Access Equity Study report.</p> <p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) closed JFK Drive to personal cars full time to allow for socially distanced recreation. In response to Commissioner Shamann Walton’s request, Transportation Authority staff collected data and prepared an equity study to understand use of and barriers to access to the Eastern portion of GGP and JFK Drive from Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) in District (D) 3, D10, and D11. The study also included an equity assessment of three alternatives for the future of JFK Drive proposed by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and RPD: 1) Restoring vehicle access to JFK Drive; 2) Maintaining the car-free closure of JFK Drive; and 3) Restoring partial vehicle access to JFK Drive. The equity assessment found pre-pandemic access equity to the park was mixed for people traveling from EPCs, and that all JFK alternatives have the potential to reduce transportation barriers. The attached study does not recommend a JFK alternative but provides data and assessments to inform decisions that the Board of Supervisors, RPD and SFMTA may make regarding the final configuration and associated program of improvements for JFK Drive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Allocation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Programming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Legislation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan/Study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capital Project Oversight/Delivery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Budget/Finance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>
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## **BACKGROUND**

In response to COVID-19, JFK Drive was closed to private vehicles every day of the week to create more spaces for people to safely recreate and maintain social distancing guidelines. This was an expansion from pre-COVID-19 conditions when JFK Drive was closed on Sundays, holidays, and some Saturdays. In early 2021, the Golden Gate Park Stakeholder Working Group was convened to determine shared values and priorities to inform subsequent park access planning and long-term operations. The Stakeholder Working Group developed an Action Framework to aid in the ongoing planning process and identified, among other findings, a need to improve access to GGP for communities of color, especially the city's southeastern neighborhoods (Resolution 21-49, May, 2021).<sup>1</sup>

The Access Equity Study focuses on D3, D10, and D11 as these three districts are home to the EPCs that are furthest from GGP. The purpose of the study is to help decision makers understand the access experiences of D3, D10, and D11 EPCs when visiting the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive, covering: pre-COVID and current car-free conditions; the access barriers that EPC residents perceive or face; and how the current full-time car-free status of JFK Drive has impacted travel to the park. The study also assesses the potential equity impacts of three alternatives for JFK Drive developed by SFMTA and RPD.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Outreach.** Outreach was conducted in January and February of 2022 and was focused on answering five questions:

1. From EPCs within D3, D10, and D11, who used the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive, before COVID-19?
2. From EPCs within D3, D10, and D11, who is currently using the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive?
3. From EPCs within D3, D10, and D11, for those who do not use the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive, as much as they would like, why and what are the barriers?
4. From EPCs within D3, D10, and D11, how has the closure impacted the desire/ability to visit the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive?
5. From all districts, who is currently using the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive?

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<sup>1</sup> SFCTA, Golden Gate Park Stakeholder Working Group and Action Framework, May 2021, <https://www.sfcta.org/ggp-stakeholder>



Three outreach methods were used to collect data to answer the study questions - a phone/email survey, focus groups, and an intercept survey within the eastern portion of GGP.

*Phone and Email Survey:* The statistically significant phone/email survey was sent to a random sample of the study's focus district EPCs. This survey was conducted by phone and email in English, Spanish, and Chinese. In total, 310 people responded to the survey across all three districts. In addition, this survey was also distributed as an online survey through Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) within these districts and allowed respondents to opt in to focus groups. However, Transportation Authority staff did not have confidence in the data collected through this supplementary distribution method and results are not included in this report.

*Focus Groups:* Focus groups gave the project team an opportunity to hear from community members about how the full-time closure of JFK Drive has impacted their ability and desire to use the eastern portion of GGP, as well as transportation barriers for trips to the area. Participants live in zip codes partially or fully within the EPCs of the study's focus districts and used the eastern portion of the park both before and during the COVID-19.

*Intercept Survey:* The intercept survey was conducted in eastern GGP by surveyors who spoke Cantonese, Tagalog, and English; and paper surveys and digital surveys were available in English, Chinese, and Spanish. Surveys were conducted near main destinations in the area that are close to JFK Drive: JFK Drive itself, the Music Concourse, and the Botanical Gardens.

### **Study Questions and Findings.**

1. From Equity Priority Communities within D3, D10, and D11, who used the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive, before COVID-19?
  - Less than half of the phone/ email survey respondents from each of the three districts were visiting the eastern portion of GGP at least a few times a month before COVID-19.
  - Frequent visitors among survey respondents most often identified as Asian or Pacific Islander and White.
2. From Equity Priority Communities within D3, D10, and D11, who is currently using the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive?
  - The race/ethnicity of phone/email respondents remained relatively unchanged among frequent users of GGP, with frequent visitors identifying most often as Asian Pacific Islander and White.
  - The share of respondents rarely (a few times per year) or never making trips to eastern GGP increased in District 10 and District 11, but remained constant in District 3.
3. From Equity Priority Communities within D3, D10, D11, for people who do not use the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive, as much as they would like, why and what are the barriers?



- About half to two-thirds of phone/email respondents want to use the park more often than they currently do. Of these respondents, the most common reported barriers are related to parking availability and cost and the overall trip to eastern GGP taking too long.
  - In focus groups, participants expressed that the cost of parking in the Music Concourse Garage is a barrier, transit options are slow, indirect, or unreliable, protected bike lanes would reduce barriers and improve safety for bike trips, and that access barriers for seniors need to be considered.
4. From Equity Priority Communities within D3, 10, 11 how has the closure impacted the desire / ability to visit the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK?
- About half of respondents stated that they do not visit the eastern portion of GGP; 18% visit less and 31% visit the same amount or more often since JFK Drive became closed to cars full time.
  - Of intercept survey respondents, 10% stated that they visit eastern GGP less often during COVID as a result of the JFK Drive closure.
  - In focus groups, participants expressed that the removal of parking on JFK Drive made travel more difficult because of the loss of ADA parking, passenger loading, and free parking in the area.
5. From all districts, who is currently using the eastern portion of GGP, including JFK Drive?
- Most intercept survey respondents reported living in zip codes within two miles of eastern GGP, though zip codes from across the city were provided, with about 10% partially or fully within D3, D10, and D11.
  - The race/ethnicity of intercept survey respondents are similar to the city overall, though respondents who identified as White are slightly overrepresented and Asian and/or Pacific Islander and Hispanic and/or Latinx are slightly underrepresented.

**Equity Assessment.** In 2020, as part of the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the portion of JFK Drive East of Transverse Drive, and other roads in GGP were designated as full-time car-free streets. The SFMTA and RPD developed three potential long-term configurations for JFK Drive (also described in a public survey released last fall), paired with varying levels of supporting transportation programs such as shuttles, parking fees/subsidies, and passenger loading zone areas. Supporting transportation programs for each alternative are shown on page 8 and 35 of the report:

1. Restoring vehicle access to JFK Drive (Open JFK) includes restoring vehicle access on JFK Drive to pre-COVID conditions where the road was car-free every Sunday, on holidays, and on some Saturdays.



2. Maintaining the car-free closure of JFK Drive (Car-Free JFK) includes maintaining the current full-time car-free status. This configuration results in removing about 478 general and 26 ADA parking spaces (504 parking space in total) and allows paratransit service and transit to operate along and across JFK drive.
3. Restoring partial vehicle access to JFK Drive (One-Way Private Vehicle Access) includes a partial reopening to allow private vehicles to travel westbound on JFK Drive with an entrance at 8th Ave. The total amount of parking spaces that would be removed under this alternative is unclear.

The equity rubric "STEPS"<sup>2</sup> was first used to establish baseline understanding of barriers during pre-COVID conditions. Each of the three alternatives for JFK Drive was compared to the baseline to determine if park access would improve or worsen for EPCs from D3, D10, and D11 under each alternative.

**Equity Assessment Findings.** The equity assessment found that the pre-COVID configuration of JFK Drive resulted in many spatial and temporal travel barriers, and moderate economic, physiologic, and social travel barriers to accessing GGP from EPCs in Districts 3, 10, and 11. As shown on page 44 of the report, all three of the long-term configurations proposed by SFMTA and RPD improve access as compared to pre-COVID conditions. The Car-Free JFK alternative has the most impactful program combinations to offset parking removal, parking costs, ADA parking and loading removal, and improve transit connectivity, and therefore addresses the most travel barriers, as compared to the other proposed alternatives. However, each of the alternatives does present some areas of uncertainty or, in the case of the one-way vehicle access alternative, potential worsening conditions, due to the lack of definition around the location of ADA parking and passenger loading in proximity to destinations in the park, as compared to pre-COVID conditions; see Figure 1, below.

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<sup>2</sup> Travel Behavior: Shared Mobility and Transportation Equity, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 2018, [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/shared\\_use\\_mobility\\_equity\\_final.pdf](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/shared_use_mobility_equity_final.pdf)



Figure 1 Summary of Equity Assessment Alternatives

	SPATIAL	TEMPORAL	ECONOMIC	PHYSIOLOGICAL
Baseline (pre-covid)	many barriers to access	many barriers to access	moderate barriers to access	moderate barriers to access
No Closure	+	+	?	+
Full JFK Closure	+	+	+	?
One-Way Vehicle Access	+	+	+	-

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommended action would have no impact on the adopted Fiscal Year 2021/22 budget.

### CAC POSITION

The CAC will be briefed on this item at the April 27 meeting.

### SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- Attachment 1 - Golden Gate Park, John F. Kennedy Drive Access Equity Study Report
- Attachment 2 - Golden Gate Park, John F. Kennedy Drive Access Equity Study Appendix