

Comments on the SFCTA San Francisco Transportation Plan 2050+

Overall, the Plan is interesting, but it has two major shortcomings and needs to be amended to address two points described below.

- The first point is that the Central Subway needs to be extended to North Beach, Fisherman's Wharf **AND BEYOND** (to Include Russian Hill, Marina & Presidio) – Not Just North Beach & Fisherman's Wharf. The cost of these extensions is very modest, particularly when compared to the price tag of the Geary / 19th Avenue Project. Central Subway extensions would cost perhaps \$1.4 billion for Phase 3 and \$1.8 billion for Phase 4 (based on Phase 2 inflation adjusted) versus \$20 to \$30 billion for Geary / 19th Avenue. The Central Subway extensions are very high impact from a cost-benefit basis, leveraging the most complex downtown / Chinatown component of the Central subway that is already built and in service.
- The second point is that the NORTH-SOUTH component of the Geary Corridor / 19th Avenue North-South Subway needs to be a truly NORTH-SOUTH subway – extending all the way to the Presidio Transit Center – Not stopping at Geary in the Northbound direction as depicted in some schematics. Additionally, more input and outreach to Northern Neighborhoods needs to occur. More detail is set forth below.

1. **Central subway needs to be extended to North Beach, Fisherman's Wharf AND BEYOND (to Include Russian Hill, Marina & Presidio) – Not Just North Beach & Fisherman's Wharf.**

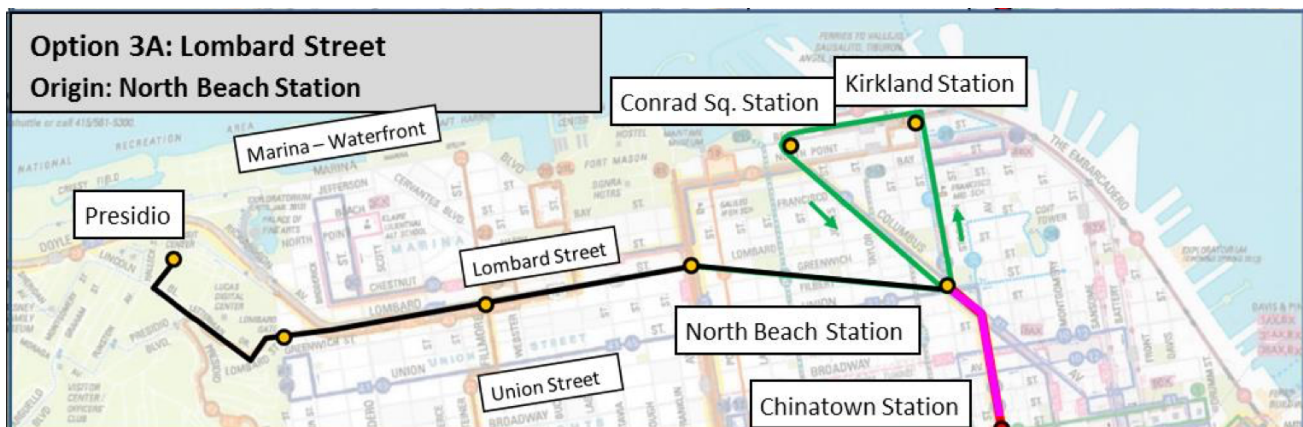
The T-Line Central subway opened for passenger traffic in November 2022 as part of SFMTA's restoration of Metro Subway service once San Francisco began coming back to life after the COVID lockdowns. Part of the value proposition of the Central Subway (Phase 2) was that the initial segment was intended to be an initial investment for a subway line that would extend north to include North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf (Phase 3), eventually continuing further north to include stops in Russian Hill, Marina/Cow Hollow, and the Presidio (Phase 4). SFMTA published its ***T-Third – Phase 3 Concept Study – October 2014*** ("Concept Study"). <https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/agendaitems/2014/12-2-14%20Item%2015%20T-Third%20Phase%203%20Concept%20Study.pdf>

The Concept Study provided substantial detail supporting "**Phase 3**" – with different alignment options, but in all cases with three stops as follows:

- North Beach
- Fisherman's Wharf / Joseph Conrad Square
- Pier 39 / Kirkland Bus Yard

The Concept Study also set forth more limited information about "**Phase 4**" – with different alignment options, with four likely stops as follows (Map below is from SFMTA Concept Study):

- Russian Hill (Lombard & Van Ness)
- Marina / Cow Hollow (Lombard & Fillmore)
- Letterman / Presidio / Cow Hollow (Lombard & Lyon)
- Presidio Transit Center (Main Post & Tunnel Tops)



The Concept Study stated that the most likely extension (beyond Phase 3 alignment) would be to serve several neighborhoods and points of interest west of North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf, including Russian Hill, northern Van Ness Avenue, Fort Mason, Union Street / Lower Pacific Heights, the Marina, and the Presidio. "Although a further extension (Phase 4) would likely be several years in the future, initial assessment of issues, opportunities and challenges to such an extension should impact the analysis of alignment concepts of a T-Third Phase 3 extension, which is why this section is present in this concept study. The technical and practical feasibility of future western expansion (Phase 4) should be given serious consideration and will require additional study and analysis beyond the scope of this report." **This Concept Study was 12 years ago – It is time to complete this analysis for Phase 4 and treat Phase 4 as a high priority near term project – perhaps constructed together with Phase 3. Please update the 2050 plan to include this, and let's get this built.**

Initial public meetings regarding both the Phase 3 and Phase 4 route and station alignment were held in September and December 2018. One meeting was held in North Beach on September 27, 2018, hosted by SFMTA and SF Supervisor Aaron Peskin, and another meeting was held at Marina Middle School on December 5, 2018, hosted by SFMTA and SF Supervisor Catherine Stefani. While these meetings primarily focused on questions and public input regarding potential alignment, SFMTA staff were well prepared. They were able to engage in very detailed discussion about what Phase 4 might look like. People left the meeting at the Marina Middle School with the impression that a more detailed study of Phase 4 would soon be launched. The SFMTA staff (and the Concept Study) said that ridership on these Phase 3 and Phase 4 extensions would be high based on assumptions and projections at that time – and based on those projections – such high ridership could perhaps overwhelm the system. But in any case, the SFMTA staff said in the meeting (at Marina Middle School) that those matters would be addressed in a Phase 4 [concept] study, leaving the impression that such a study would be commenced soon. The participants at the meeting seemed to believe that high ridership would be a case **FOR** moving forward with Phase 4 – not an argument against it.

Fast forward to 2026 – Ridership on the Phase 3 and Phase 4 extensions would still be expected to be high – although current trends and events have taken pressure off concerns that ridership might overwhelm planned capacity. These trends and events include adoption of hybrid work models, the demise of retail in the Union Square area, the launch / implementation of state-of-the-art automated train control system (2027-2028), and "The Portal" coming on line for revenue service approximately 2035 which will shift some traffic away from the 4th & Brannan Metro stop as a large percentage of passengers are expected to embark / disembark the Caltrain at the Transbay / Salesforce Transit Center taking some of the passenger traffic away from the current 4th street Caltrain station (or future station on Townsend St. – but in any case still adjacent to the 4th & Brannan surface Metro Stop.) The T-Third Metro line already has the second highest ridership of any Metro line (24,600 average weekday), and with the completion of the Phase 3 and Phase 4 subway extensions, would be expected to significantly surpass the N-Judah (34,900 average weekday) and become the highest ridership Metro line in San Francisco.

PowerPoint slides from the meeting: <https://www.sfmta.com/media/14726/download?inline> and "Story Boards" from the meetings: <https://www.sfmta.com/media/14791/download?inline>. The PowerPoint presentation references the location of the North Beach meeting, but the same slides were used for the presentation in the Marina.

It's worth acknowledging that at the time of these meetings (Late 2018), employment, tax revenues and the overall business environment in San Francisco were robust. Less than a year after these meetings, COVID hit, and all momentum was lost on both Phase 3 and Phase 4. As transit planning (including the SF Transportation Plan 2050+) has resumed, these projects seem to have moved way down the priority list and **Phase 4 seems to have disappeared from the radar screen without any transparency or neighborhood input.**

One thing has not changed. To get downtown, to the ballpark, or to Chase Center, people along this corridor (North Beach, Fisherman's Wharf, Russian Hill, Marina, Cow Hollow, etc.) have to deal with one of the slowest, most congested corridors in the city – namely Stockton Street and the streets such as Columbus that feed into Stockton. Chinatown Transportation Research & Improvement Project (TRIP) using data from SFMTA corroborated that Stockton Street stands out as the most heavily used corridor in the SF Muni system, with the 13,300 boardings at the 3 busiest stops on that corridor (including Chinatown / Rose Pak Station). <https://www.chinatowntripsf.org/sfmta-transit-data-results>. Based on April 2026 SFMTA data – the combined weekday average boardings of the T-Third, 30-Stockton and 45-Union-Stockton was approximately 50,000 weekday boardings, which exceeds the boardings of the 38/38R Geary Busses at approximately

47,000 boardings. SFMTA bus lines on Lombard Street (such as the 28/28R 19th Avenue) would also offload some traffic to the Phase 3 and Phase 4 Central Subway but that's harder to quantify – although it's an important consideration for the proposed Geary / 19th Avenue subway – and the importance of connecting the future 19th Avenue subway to the existing 28/28R route through the Marina & Fisherman's Wharf. The 28/28R has 16,200 average weekday riders.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors Land Use and Transportation Committee held a hearing Monday, January 26, 2026, to discuss the possibility of extending the Central Subway from its current Chinatown terminus to North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf. District 3 Supervisor Danny Sauter should be congratulated for getting the Central Subway Extension elevated in the transit conversation. He emphasized that "the primary focus" should remain on pushing through two upcoming operations-funding measures for transit. He continued, "But we also need to give people something bigger and better to keep our city excited about what's next." Dozens of San Franciscans, mostly from District 3, District 2, and a few from the west side, attended and spoke. Substantially all the speakers were highly supportive of extending the Central Subway, although a few cautioned that the impact on residents and businesses during the construction would need to be well thought through. While the hearing wasn't necessary narrow to Phase 3, the turnout from North Beach and Pier 39 were high due to Supervisor Sauter's advocacy and social media presence around this topic. Importantly, Rachel Hiatt, Deputy Director – Planning, at San Francisco County Transportation Authority spoke at the hearing and said that San Francisco's projects of this nature (extending the Central Subway) tend to score well in the Federal Government's funding application process.

The Business Case for the Phase 4 Extension is compelling:

San Francisco needs to support service workers commuting to these neighborhoods – Several thousand service workers are employed in neighborhoods of Fisherman's Wharf, the Marina and Cow Hollow. These service workers generally do not live in these neighborhoods and must commute to and from work in these neighborhoods through this slow and congested corridor – and many commute from the southern neighborhoods in the city as well as the East Bay and elsewhere. From an equity perspective, these lower paid service workers, who are vital to our economy, need our help in getting rapid transit through these corridors. Unlike the busy Geary Corridor which has wide enough streets to provide "Rapid" service, the streets along this corridor do not offer a viable option for Rapid service to downtown. LRT expansion – specifically Phase 3 and Phase 4 is needed to support these workers and create that rapid service.

Equitable access to the Presidio and Tunnel Tops Park – From an equity perspective, Phase 4 would make the Presidio and Tunnel Tops park much more accessible to people who live in southern neighborhoods and have fewer options in terms of world-class parks that are easily accessible. The 30-Stockton is not a realistic option for people because it is too slow and is subject to gridlock not only through Stockton Street, but also in the Presidio itself where roads get overwhelmed with automobile traffic, particularly on the weekends.

High population density and high concentration of renters – Population density per square mile in the Marina / Cow Hollow is 28,277 persons per square mile, which is 6% higher than the Richmond District at 26,628 per square mile. But even more glaring – is the population density of Russian Hill (which would be served by one of the Phase 4 subway stops at 40,120 persons per square mile (about the same as North Beach) and 51% higher than the Richmond. <https://maps.geo.census.gov/ddmv/map.html>

Also noteworthy is that the Marina District has high concentration of renters – estimated at 72-74%, which is higher than the San Francisco average of 60%. Russian Hill, the location of one of the proposed subway stops, is even higher at 83%.

Large influx of visitors to popular large events and venues – In addition to the service workers commuting to these neighborhoods as well residents needing better and more rapid transit, these Northern Neighborhoods host a significant number of visitors who are attracted to popular venues as well as events – large and small. Given the absence of rapid transportation options for attending events and venues in the Northern Neighborhoods, a significant number of visitors choose to drive. Once visitors arrive, they find that there is minimal parking available, so the streets are often gridlocked, causing both air pollution and headaches for themselves and for residents.

Large events include:

- **Fleet Week & Blue Angels show** – these events draw up to 1 million visitors across different days and venues, with the Marina Green being one of the main venues, particularly for viewing air shows / Blue Angels. (Living in the Marina, you cannot even get out of your driveway for several hours – worst gridlock of the year and the busses are trapped in that gridlock so busses are not very useful) <https://fleetweeksf.org>, <https://generalaviationnews.com/2024/10/31/san-francisco-fleet-week-draws-millions/>
- **4th of July Fireworks** – Marina Green and Fort Mason are 2 of the major viewing areas, together with Aquatic Park and the Fisherman’s Wharf Area. The runner-up for creating gridlock in the North Waterfront (after Fleet Week Air shows) is 4th of July fireworks. SFMTA estimates that 200,000 people attend this event, and acknowledges the accompanying gridlock and traffic problem, notwithstanding the extra busses that are added, which also get stuck in this traffic mess. <https://www.sfmta.com/travel-updates/fourth-july-fireworks-friday-july-4-2025>
- **Sail GP** – The annual sailing event with viewing from the Marina Green and the Yacht clubs accessed through the Marina are estimated to attract 5,000 - 20,000 total attendance (perhaps 5,000-10,000 per day, generally on Saturday / Sunday). The America’s Cup races, several years ago also included weekday events. <https://www.sfport.com/sites/default/files/2025-02/SailGP.pdf>
- **Formula 1** – Inaugural event held this year along Marina Boulevard, attracting an estimated 40,000 spectators throughout the day. The popularity of F1, and this inaugural event bodes well for similar events in the future, incorporating lessons learned. Again, as with the other large events, too many people tried to drive due to lack of rapid transit options. <https://sfstandard.com/2026/02/22/f1-red-bull-showrun-san-francisco-marina/>
- **Various Running races / Triathlons** — The iconic venues in the Presidio and the Marina Green are widely used for running races as the site of the starting line, finish line and / or event expo. Many of these events draw a large number of participants and spectators.
 - Guardsmen Presidio half marathon 10K & 5K
 - Golden Gate Half Marathon and 5K
 - YMCA Presidio Trail Run – Behind Presidio YMCA and “Inn at the Presidio”
 - Mermaid Run – Crissy Field
 - Escape from Alcatraz

Other venues and destinations in Russian Hill, Marina, Cow Hollow, Letterman District and Presidio Main post include:

- **Fort Mason (lower and lower)** <https://fortmason.org>
 - “Fort Mason Center” Event Venues -- which consists of multiple event venues such as the Festival Pavilion, Gateway Pavilion, Cowell Theatre, and Galleries leased to tenants, etc. Venues routinely handle several thousand people
 - Fort Mason Center Restaurants, Stores and Businesses as well as Food Truck / Off the grid events (March—October).
- **Commercial Corridors – Shops, Restaurants and other businesses:**
 - Chestnut Street
 - Union Street
 - Polk Street
 - Marina Safeway
- **Palace of Fine Arts**
 - Palace of Fine Arts Park – iconic and highly popular park
 - Palace of Fine Arts Exhibition Center for up to 5,000 people / and 135 person theatre <https://palaceoffinearts.com/info/>
- **Lyon Street Steps**
- **Letterman District**
 - Letterman Digital Arts Center – 850,000 square feet of office and creative space, designed for 1,500 employees
 - Letterman Residential Project of 196 units planned in 159,752 square feet of new construction on a 4.66-acre site, to reestablish the historic character and density of the area. The project is

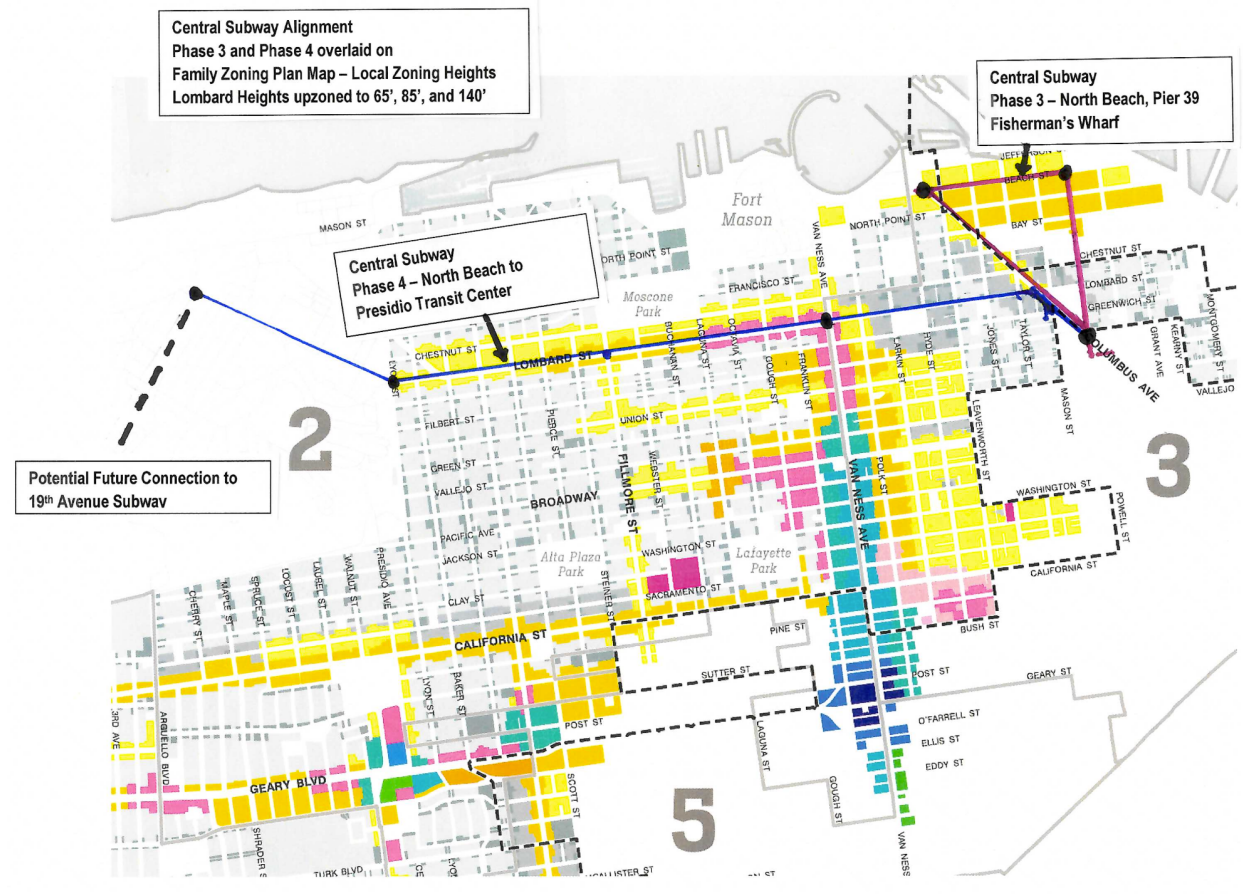
located in the western portion of the Letterman District within the Presidio <https://presidio.gov/about/planning/letterman-residential-project>

- **Presidio Main Post and adjacent sites**

- Disney Museum – 162,000 visitors per year (2024)
- Presidio Theatre – 612 seat theatre - Plus additional event venues <https://www.presidiotheatre.org>
- Tunnel Tops Park – 5 million visitors since Tunnel Tops Park opened in mid-2022 (“*Wildly popular S.F. Park is opening a major family-friendly expansion this week*” -- By [Sam Whiting](#), SF Chronicle Reporter - July 16, 2025 <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/presidio-tunnel-tops-park-overlook-meadow-20759311.php>)
- Kids zone “Outpost” at Tunnel Tops – had 500,000 visitors last year
- Crissy Field – 7 minutes’ walk down the stairs from the Presidio Transit Center
- Wide array of restaurants, offices, hotels and schools at main post including Dalida and Colibri (Former Officers Club)
- Lodging
 - Inn at the Presidio
 - Lodge at the Presidio
- Presidio Bowl
- Presidio YMCA – Fitness and aquatics center and other venues as well as youth and community-based programs.
- House of Air – 20 minutes’ walk from Presidio Transit Center

Tourism and Economic Development – The largest number of hotel rooms in San Francisco are generally concentrated downtown, at Fisherman’s Wharf and along Lombard Street (and adjacent streets). At the present time, these three groupings of hotels are not well connected to each other or to many of the major tourist attractions by any rapid transit. It is worth noting that the Lombard Street Corridor has 24+ motels, motor inns and hotels, aggregating over 1,000 rooms. Most of the lodging on the Lombard Corridor consists of properties that are both well utilized and economically viable. Many of these hotels are more budget-friendly for families than the traditional corporate hotels downtown. Completion of Phase 3 and 4 of the central subway would significantly improve the connection of these hotel rooms to major tourist destinations in San Francisco (Fisherman’s Wharf, Pier 39, North Beach, Chinatown, Union Square, Moscone Center, SF Giants, Chase Center and the Presidio). Upon completion of Phase 3 & 4, visitors could stay at any hotel in the 3 major hotel groupings and have easy and rapid access to the tourist / visitor destinations set forth above. Residents would similarly benefit.

Family Zoning Plan – the Marina, Cow Hollow and Russian Hill are likely candidates for increased housing density based on the new height limits set forth in the new Family Zoning Plan, and some projects are already in preliminary planning / negotiations. The so-called “transit rich” nature of these neighborhoods was oversold and resulted in significantly higher height limits along Lombard Street, Van Ness Avenue, and to a lesser extent Chestnut Street and Union Street. But we have an opportunity to genuinely make these neighborhoods “transit rich” by competing Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the Central Subway. See schematic (below) that overlays a potential alignment of Phase 3 and Phase 4 using the Subway Stops identified by SFMTA staff in the Concept Study – onto the final map of the Family Zoning Plan. There is potential for significantly increased density, and much new construction may have little if any parking. The weighted average local height limit along Lombard Street between Lyon and Van Ness at 93.6’ is slightly higher than along Geary in the Richmond District (from Arguello to 48th Avenue) at 84.2’. We need to get moving on Phase 3 & Phase 4 Central Subway construction NOW!



Link to entire Family Zoning Plan map with color legend:

https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/citywide/fzp_zoning_map_local_program_heights.pdf

Let's finish the Central Subway – Both Phase 3 AND Phase 4 before moving on to the detailed planning for the Geary Subway, (which I also Support – with modifications)!

2. **Geary Corridor / 19th Avenue North / South Subway needs to be a truly NORTH / SOUTH subway – extending all the way to the Presidio Transit Center – Not stopping at Geary in the Northbound direction as depicted in early schematics**

Northern Neighborhoods need to be included in any input / Concept Study. The neighborhoods affected by NORTH / SOUTH subway line include the Marina, Cow Hollow, Presidio Residents, and Fisherman's Wharf workers and employers. Essentially, anyone who is along or affected by the current route of the 28 – 19th Avenue Bus line must be within scope and included as neighborhoods canvassed as part of the formal input process – not just people in the Richmond and Sunset, especially given the magnitude of transit dollars to be consumed by this project. Plus – this bus route is a good indication of who uses the North / South transit. Since people in the Northern Neighborhoods are important users of the North / South transit line, we need equal input in determining the 19th Avenue subway route.

It is important to note that the 28/28R – 19th Avenue bus line, a proxy for the 19th Avenue Subway, has 16,200 average weekday trips (based on April 2026 SFMTA data). Of the stops on this bus line, 21 stops are south of Geary & Park Presidio, while 16 stops are north of that point and are being unfairly scoped out of the 19th Avenue Subway as currently depicted in the concept. A large number of these 16,200 passengers board or disembark at 16 stops north of Geary & Park Presidio – service workers in particular. This needs to be part of the North / South 19th Avenue Subway.

North / South Alignment must go all the way to the Presidio Transit Center – not terminate in the Richmond. The North / South Alignment might (and should) approximate the route of the 28 – 19th Avenue bus which would connect to a completed Central Subway Metro Stop at the Presidio Transit Center – which

should be completed by then. The SFCTA current schematic of the proposed route unfairly shuts out the Northern Neighborhoods, who would be important users of a North / South subway line, just as they are now with the 28 / 28R bus.

Assuming the Central Subway extension to Presidio Transit Center is complete, it becomes very easy – and high impact – to extend the 19th Avenue Subway northerly to the Presidio Transit Center Metro Subway stop. (Whether riders would transfer at that station, or the ideally the train would continue onward on the Central Subway line, would be subject to future engineering and capacity management).

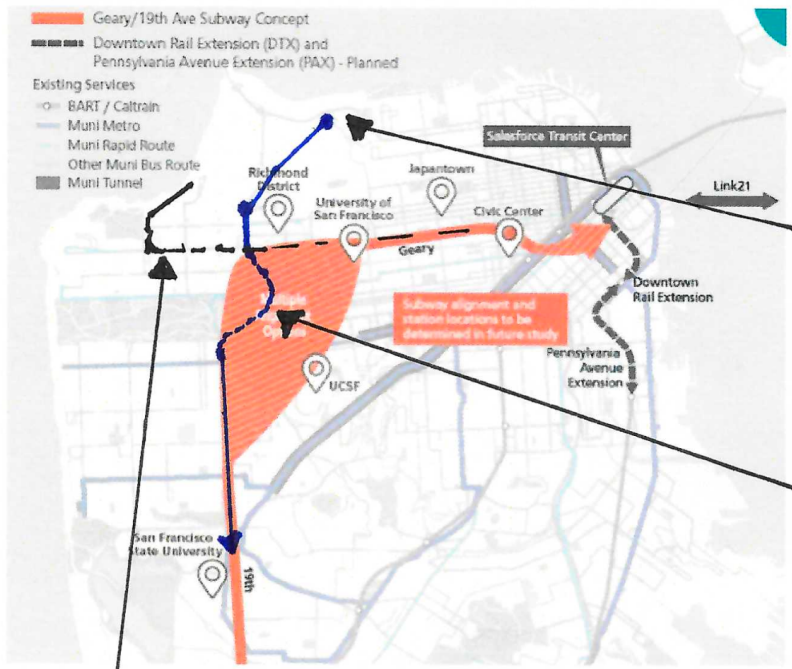
When the 19th Avenue Subway is connected to the Central Subway, this North / South route is particularly high impact for the following reasons:

- Service workers living in the Richmond, Sunset & Parkside that are working at Fisherman's Wharf, the Marina and Cow hollow would have a better and more rapid connection to their jobs. The 28 / 28R gets hung up in traffic on Crossover Drive in particular, as well as the MacArthur Tunnel on Highway 1, and many stretches of Park Presidio and 19th Avenue – notwithstanding the dedicated transit lanes (that are not well enforced). Based on equity considerations, the workers' need to be better represented in the alignment design.
- This alignment – assuming there is a subway stop at the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park – would be another needed boost to our tourism economy by better connecting the hotels in Fisherman's Wharf and Lombard Street with the California Academy of Science, DeYoung Museum, Japanese Tea Garden, the Arboretum, other nearby attractions in Golden Gate Park, and 10 minute walk to the booming 9th & Irving shopping corridor. This would benefit SF residents as well.
- Northern Neighborhoods need to be connected to amenities, shops and restaurants in the Richmond & Sunset Districts, as well as being connecting to Stonestown, SF State, and Daly City BART.
- New homes constructed in the big Stonestown Redevelopment would benefit from the more diverse set of subway stops available to them to the North – assuming the 19th Avenue subway is connected the Central Subway at the Presidio Transit Center.
- People in the Richmond, Sunset and Parkside districts would benefit from having the Presidio, Tunnel Tops, and the north Waterfront available to them with a short subway ride.

The Geary Boulevard element of the Project needs to go farther out Geary versus turning left at Park Presidio or 19th Avenue -- The Concept depicts the subway making a left hand turn at 19th Avenue or at the better alignment at Park Presidio, but either way it's a left turn that gets in the way of properly determining the best endpoint for the westward terminus of the Geary Subway. Some people from the Richmond District at the San Francisco Transportation Plan 2050+ virtual Town Hall on April 18, 2026, highlighted the importance of connecting the Geary Subway to the largest employer in the Richmond district – The San Francisco VA Medical Center at Clement and 42nd Avenue. The Medical Center has 3,800 employees (including employees at a handful of remote outpatient clinics). A well-designed subway station could serve both the VA Medical Center and the Legion of Honor Museum and could serve as the western terminus of the new Geary Subway. Plus, that station could be built long enough to accommodate 2 or 4 trains being stored there with 2 crossover tracks for headway management and operational effectiveness.

The left turn depicted in the concept drawings artificially constrains the westward expansion on Geary as well as the best terminus of the North / South 19th Avenue element. This left-hand turn needs to be scrapped in favor of a more traditional transfer point where the Geary Subway East / West Subway would cross the North / South - 19th Avenue Subway (or Park Presidio which would be better transfer point). This could be a well-designed transfer and have escalators and stairs between the higher and lower platforms within the paid area.

See below for the SFCTA Geary / 19th Avenue subway concept with these modifications overlaid.



19th Avenue Subway needs to continue north through GGP and Connect to Central Subway at Presidio Transit Center

19th Avenue Subway needs to be routed through GGP with an important stop at the Music Concourse serving Museums, Japanese Tea Garden, & Arboretum

Geary Subway –
Needs to continue farther out Geary –
Right turn at 42nd Ave. to final stop
Veterans Hospital /
Legion of Honor Station
(Plus – crossover tracks & trains storage)

