



Memorandum

AGENDA ITEM 12

DATE: May 20, 2026
TO: Transportation Authority Board
FROM: Jesse Koehler - Director of Strategy
SUBJECT: 6/9/2026 Board Meeting: Adopt the Geary/19th Ave Subway and Regional Connections Study Final Report

<p>RECOMMENDATION <input type="checkbox"/> Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p>Adopt the Geary/19th Ave Subway and Regional Connections Study Final Report.</p> <p>SUMMARY</p> <p>The Geary/19th Ave Subway is one of five recommended major transit expansion projects identified in the ConnectSF Transit Strategy (2021) and the 2050 San Francisco Transportation Plan (2022). At the request of Commissioner Melgar, the Transportation Authority, in partnership with SFMTA and the San Francisco Planning Department (SF Planning), initiated the Geary/19th Ave Subway & Regional Connections Study (Study) to undertake initial planning for the subway and to prepare for subsequent phases of project development. The Study is intended to refine our understanding of potential project performance and benefits, as well as to identify the key strategic choices that would need to be evaluated and considered in future phases of work. The Study finds that the project would deliver broad benefits to San Francisco and the region, and that support exists from community members and stakeholders to continue project development. The project’s capital costs are significant - estimated at approximately \$20-30 billion in current year dollars - and advancing the project will require the development of new funding mechanisms, including sources that harness project benefits. The Study recommends advancing further analysis of alternatives and phasing options, funding strategy development, and continued outreach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Allocation <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Programming <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Legislation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan/Study <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Project Oversight/Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Budget/Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
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BACKGROUND

Local and regional planners have considered the potential for a subway along the Geary corridor through numerous studies over the past several decades. These plans have consistently identified the need for an improved connection between the west side of San Francisco and Downtown, and the needs of travelers have remained constant - faster trips, less crowding, and better connections to the regional transit system. Recent investments in the surface transportation network through projects including SFMTA's Geary Boulevard Improvement Project and 19th Avenue Rapid Project have helped address nearer-term capacity and congestion challenges, but long-term forecasts show the need for grade-separated rapid transit in the future.

The ConnectSF Transit Strategy (2021) and the 2050 San Francisco Transportation Plan (2022) evolved our understanding of potential solutions. By aligning a subway under Geary Boulevard with a new transbay rail crossing in the east (Link21) and by incorporating an alignment under 19th Avenue to make a connection in northern San Mateo County, the project would benefit both San Francisco and regional travelers, acting as an important link in the regional and state rail network.

In April 2022, the Board appropriated \$577,156 in Prop K sales tax funds for the Study. The Board also concurrently allocated \$170,367 in Prop K funds to SFMTA and \$74,751 in Prop K funds to SF Planning to provide for the partner agencies' work within the Study.

DISCUSSION

Study Approach. Planning and construction of a subway is a multi-phase effort, occurring over many years. The Study included work to: identify and preliminarily assess key design choices; refine understanding of project benefits and costs; identify a preliminary framework for project funding; and develop an initial roadmap to inform project planning and development through subsequent phases of work.

The Study Team, with the review of partner agencies and incorporating community input through public outreach, developed a high-level goal framework for the project through which to assess project benefits:

- Improve the traveler experience and provide better transit service to the corridor, San Francisco, and the Bay Area;
- Serve current needs and planned growth in the corridor and region; and



- Contribute to regional and state targets by advancing equity, affordability, climate, and environmental goals

With these goals in mind, we worked to identify significant project attributes that illustrate key options for the project's design and that represent an envelope of anticipated performance. This set of project attributes focused on:

- Regional Connectivity: How could a Geary/19th Avenue Subway connect to the East Bay and to the Peninsula?
- Downtown Routing: What options exist for a route through Downtown San Francisco?
- Connecting Geary Boulevard & 19th Avenue: What are the implications of the alignment to connect these two core segments?
- Train Technology: What options exist to provide strong regional connectivity while serving the corridor's need for high-capacity rapid transit?

The Study Team developed a set of indicative options to evaluate project performance against the project goals. The results of this analysis have been used to describe an initial range for project benefits, including anticipated reductions in travel time, increases in accessibility, and benefits to Equity Priority Communities. We have also identified additional strategic considerations and building blocks that future phases of planning should address.

Outreach. The Study Team conducted two rounds of public outreach focused on surfacing community interest and questions and sharing the results of the Study's analysis. The Study Team also presented directly to interested neighborhood groups and other community based organizations and hosted an online survey which received over 2,400 responses. The feedback at in-person and online events, along with the survey, was broadly consistent: participants generally understood the need for a Geary/19th Ave Subway and were interested in exploring ways to deliver the project more quickly and at lower cost. Some community members raised questions about potential construction methods and disruptions related to construction for both residents and businesses.

Study Findings. The Study finds that a Geary/19th Avenue Subway has the potential to contribute significantly to improvements across the project's three goal areas described above. Specifically, the Study identifies the following initial findings:



- The case for the project is promising, and San Francisco should continue to advance planning while developing potential project funding mechanisms to support the anticipated project cost of approximately \$20-30 billion.
- Regional connectivity expands and broadens benefits, as the project performs very strongly as an integrated part of the regional rail network with through-running trains.
- Multiple design options can provide improvements, with various approaches to project alignment and connectivity performing similarly in overall ridership while directly serving different destinations.
- The project delivers travel time savings, greenhouse gas reductions, and equity benefits, with greater benefits accruing to residents of Equity Priority Communities.
- Project development and delivery will require significant new funding sources and continuing to advance the project will require a mix of new and existing funding sources from all levels of government.
- A Geary/19th Ave Subway will drive value creation in terms of land value, economic activity, mobility improvements, and reduced climate impacts; capturing a share of this value will be a critical element of the project's funding plan.

Next Steps. The Geary/19th Ave Subway and Regional Connections Study is the initial step of a multi-year process by which a major transit capital investment is planned, environmentally cleared, designed, constructed, and eventually opened for passenger service. Because major transit capital projects are complex undertakings involving many stakeholders, varied interests, and multiple approvals, it typically takes at least 15 to 20 years to progress from project initiation to revenue service. Progressing to each stage of project development also requires the availability and commitment of funding to undertake the next stage of work.

The next broad phase of project development is the Alternatives Analysis stage, in which conceptual alignments, stations, and technologies are defined. These decisions are supported by conceptual engineering, refined conceptual cost estimation, further ridership and benefits analysis, risk and constructability screening, stakeholder engagement, and funding strategy development. The completion of a full Alternatives Analysis stage for the Geary/19th Avenue Subway is estimated to require approximately \$10 million to \$15 million, depending on the number of alternatives to be explored and level of engineering design to be prepared.



We have identified an initial set of prioritized Alternatives Analysis tasks that could be advanced with near-term funding in the range of approximately \$1.5 million - or up to \$3 million if the project is successful in securing competitive regional funding - in the near term. The following technical and engagement task areas have been identified for potential incorporation into the immediate next phase of project development:

- Regional integration - additional early concept-level design development of project interfaces with the regional transit network, including at the Downtown and southern ends of the project alignment.
- Technology evaluation - assessment and comparison of the rail technology options for the project, with consideration of key tradeoffs for cost, integration, phasing, facilities, and other issues.
- Station and facility sizing and potential locations - early concept-level definition of footprints for potential station locations and for needed operations and maintenance facility or facilities.
- Capital cost refinement - development of updated planning-level cost estimates, based on additional early concept-level design development and reference projects.
- Funding strategy - preparation of an indicative funding plan and assessment supported by early development of potential project-specific funding mechanisms.
- Engagement with the public, stakeholders, and partners - community outreach and collaboration with key local, regional, and state agencies.

An overall aim of the immediate next phase would be to undertake prioritized work that is supportive of subsequent completion of the full Alternatives Analysis stage, including preparation for the future Environmental Review stage.

There is \$1.5 million in Prop L funds programmed to advance planning for the Geary/19th Avenue Subway project in the Board-adopted 5-Year Prioritization Program for Next Generation Transit Investments. We are planning to submit an application for an additional approximately \$1.5 million in One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) County funding in July 2026. The underway OBAG call for projects is a competitive process and staff will present recommended project priorities to the Board for approval this fall, that will then be submitted to the Metropolitan



Transportation Commission for selection by early 2027. We will also continue to seek other external grant funding sources to support project development.

Other Major Transit Expansion Projects and Prioritization. The Geary/19th Ave Subway is one of five major rail and transit enhancements identified in the ConnectSF Transit Strategy and the 2050 San Francisco Transportation Plan, San Francisco's long-range planning document for the transportation system. Each project will require substantial funding to advance from concept to final construction and delivery. At this point in project development, responsible agencies have the capacity to advance initial planning for multiple efforts in parallel. For example, in parallel to the proposed prioritized Alternatives Analysis tasks for the Geary/19th Avenue Subway described above, the exploration of potential phasing options for a Central Subway Extension northward from its current terminus at Chinatown - Rose Pak Station is the subject of a separate item on the same agenda.

While the ConnectSF Transit Strategy and 2050 SFTP laid out the initial concept for each project, these plans did not prioritize the order in which major expansion projects should advance or be implemented. Project prioritization is planned to be considered through the next major update to the San Francisco Transportation Plan, SFTP 2060, which is anticipated to kick off in 2027. This plan will use updated information about each project's performance, as well as other effectiveness and readiness criteria, including public and policy support along with local and regional financial commitment, to make recommendations regarding how San Francisco's full vision for long-range transit and rail expansion should advance.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommended action would not have an impact on the amended Fiscal Year 2025/26 budget or proposed Fiscal Year 2026.27 budget. Appropriation of additional funds to continue project development is subject to future Board action.

CAC POSITION

The CAC will consider this item at its May 27, 2026 meeting.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- Attachment 1 - Executive Summary
- Enclosure - Draft Final Report

Executive Summary

ES.1 Introduction

The Geary/19th Ave Subway is envisioned as a rail rapid transit subway oriented under Geary Blvd and 19th Ave in San Francisco. An investment of this scale – a dual-track subway approximately 10 miles in length, with approximately 5 - 6 stations – is significant, with a capital cost estimated in the range of \$20B - \$30B. However, the potential benefits to San Francisco, the region, and the statewide rail network are transformative. This study, the Geary/19th Ave Subway and Regional Connections Study Strategic Case, aims to advance the understanding of key project development components and choices, including the anticipated benefits that the subway could deliver.

The idea for a subway under Geary Boulevard has been included in numerous studies over the past decades. Recent planning and community engagement work, documented in the Connect SF Transit Strategy (2021) and the 2050 San Francisco Transportation Plan (2022) evolved the understanding of potential needs and opportunities in both the Geary Blvd corridor and western San Francisco, resulting in a corridor that begins in Downtown San Francisco, continues west along Geary Blvd as far west as the Inner Richmond, where it turns south below Golden Gate Park and continues beneath 19th Ave through the Sunset District, terminating roughly near the existing Daly City Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station.

This study uses evidence and analysis to address four key questions:

- What is the broad case for advancing the Geary/19th Ave Subway to the next phase of study?
- What are the potential benefits unlocked by an investment in a Geary/19th Ave Subway?
- What are the key decisions that will shape those benefits, such as the project's route, technology, and other design options?
- What are the key issues that should be incorporated into the next phase of study?

These questions enable decision-makers, project partners, and the public to understand the benefits that would be unlocked by the Geary/19th Ave Subway and to guide future phases of project development.

Importantly, this study did not:

- Select a preferred alternative or advance planning/design beyond a pre-feasibility level
- Confirm benefits, costs, risks, and timelines for a specific alternative

These decisions will be advanced in future phases of project development, informed by additional analysis and stakeholder engagement, should the project proceed.

ES.2 Project Needs and Goals

The Geary/19th Ave Corridor is critically important for moving people and goods across San Francisco and the wider Bay Area. A Geary/19th Subway provides the opportunity for a high capacity, fast, frequent, and reliable transit service across the corridor and beyond. It can help meet future travel demand, support planned housing development, and better meet the evolving needs of San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Today, the Geary/19th Ave Corridor is home to nearly 29% of San Francisco's population, 43% of its jobs, and many significant employment, cultural, academic, and social service centers and institutions. Communities along the corridor are anticipated to grow significantly in the coming decades. Population growth planned for in San Francisco's 2022 Housing Element reflects 100,000 new people and 80,000 new jobs along the corridor.

Travel demand on the corridor is significant. Each day hundreds of thousands of trips are made to places along the corridor or to access other parts of the Bay Area. This high level of travel demand can make transit crowded and roads congested, resulting in slow and unreliable travel times.

Recently, substantial transit priority investments along Geary Boulevard and 19th Avenue have improved reliability along the congested surface network. However, they do not always provide competitive travel times for trips across the entire city or to key regional destinations elsewhere in the Bay Area, nor do they provide the capacity needed to serve future demand. The improvements required to meet these needs are not achievable solely with at-grade transit service. A new grade-separated rapid transit service – a subway – is needed to provide reliable, fast, frequent, and comfortable mobility and to support the growth expected along the Geary/19th Ave Corridor.

To support the analysis and development of a Geary/19th Ave Subway, the study team identified three overarching goals for the Geary/19th Ave Subway:



Improve the traveler experience and provide better transit service to the corridor, San Francisco, and the Bay Area



Serve current needs and planned growth in the corridor and region



Support crucial regional policy goals of affordability, equity, and the environment

ES.3 Subway Design Options

The study team identified major design choices for the subway and how each could result in potential tradeoffs that will need to be addressed or resolved in subsequent project phases. The study team identified three key topics of consideration to inform the potential universe of alternatives for a Geary/19th Ave Subway:

- What are the key destinations that a Geary/19th Ave Subway should serve?
- How should a Geary/19th Ave Subway connect to or integrate with the existing and planned regional rail network?
- What rail technologies are well suited for the operational and service requirements of the Geary/19th Ave Subway?

This phase of work has examined an initial range of routing and station location considerations across the corridor, as well as in three focused areas within the corridor:

- Downtown San Francisco;
- The connection between Geary Blvd and 19th Ave portions of the corridor; and
- The southern terminus of the project in northern San Mateo County.

ES.4 Potential Benefits of a Geary/19th Ave Subway

The study team evaluated the performance of the Geary/19th Ave Subway, and the project's potential design options and choices, against a set of metrics developed to illustrate how and to what extent the project would address the project goals.

Key project benefits, and illustrative results, are summarized below:



Grow transit ridership in SF and across the region: Serve 162,000 to 314,000 trips a day, including 62,000 to 106,000 net new transit trips.



Improve customer experience and travel times: Save transit riders from 19,000 to 45,000 hours per day (or roughly 5 - 7 minutes per passenger, per trip) and reduce regional crowding by 15 to 30%.



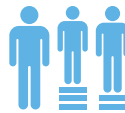
Increase access between jobs and workers: The average San Francisco worker could access up to 47,000 more jobs in 45 minutes by transit, while the average Bay Area worker could access up to 10,000 more jobs in 45 minutes.



Reduce localized air pollution and single-occupancy vehicle travel: Reduce vehicle miles traveled in San Francisco by 4 - 7%, corresponding to greenhouse gas emissions reductions of by 23,000 to over 35,000 tons per year.



Increase regional accessibility: Put 138,000 to 156,000 more households and 382,000 to 404,000 more jobs within walking distance of transit.



Deliver disproportionate benefits to residents of Equity Priority Communities (EPCs): For example, access to jobs within 45 minutes on transit for the average resident of an EPC would increase 60% more than the average of all San Francisco residents (76,000 jobs vs 47,000 jobs).



Support housing affordability: 41,000 to 50,000 new housing units would be in walking distance of rail rapid transit.

ES.5 Key Project Building Blocks

ES.5.1 PROJECT FUNDING

An urban rail transit project such as the Geary/19th Ave Subway is a large, complex public investment. Existing local, regional, state, and federal funding sources are not sufficient to fully fund the project, which has an initial cost estimate range of approximately \$20B - \$30B in 2026 dollars, as discussed in Chapter 4. The project has the potential to drive significant value creation in multiple areas (such as travel time, land value, economic development, and environmental quality). The study team identified potential mechanisms to return a part of this value to the project, helping to support its funding plan. It is important to begin exploring these mechanisms in parallel with early planning, to inform further development of the funding strategy and advancement of specific funding sources during future phases of work.

Subsequent phases of work should include the development of an indicative funding plan for the project, reflecting the ranges of potential funding from existing and new sources. This plan should include initial revenue range analyses for a range of potential

new sources, developed to an order-of-magnitude level, with a focus on the sources that could harness the value created by the project. Development of this indicative funding plan will also require coordination with other related efforts, such as pricing studies, travel demand management initiatives, and regional and statewide rail planning and development efforts. Future phases of study will also seek and include input on potential funding strategies from members of the public and policy-makers.

ES.5.2 ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

In addition to technical work, engagement with residents, businesses, institutions, and community stakeholders is essential to advancing project development for the Geary/19th Ave Subway. This study included public outreach activities, to identify key interests and potential concerns of community members, and to share study analysis and initial findings. Future phases will also include public engagement efforts, as specifics about the subway and its design, construction, and operation come into better focus.

ES.5.3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & PRIORITIZATION

The Geary/19th Ave Subway is one of five major rail and transit enhancements identified in the ConnectSF Transit Strategy and the 2050 San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP). Each project will require substantial funding to advance from concept to final construction and delivery. While these plans laid out the initial concepts of each project, they did not prioritize the order in which each should advance or be implemented.

Project prioritization is anticipated to begin with the preparation of the next major update to the SFTP – SFTP 2060, which is planned to kick off in 2027. This plan will use updated information about each project’s performance, as well as other effectiveness and readiness criteria, to make recommendations regarding how and on what timeline San Francisco’s full vision of long-range transit and rail expansion should advance. Through the SFTP process, projects will be evaluated based on their impact with respect to the SFTP goals: equity, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, safety & livability, and accountability & engagement.

ES.6 Conclusions & Next Steps

ES.6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study finds that a grade separated, high capacity rapid transit investment is both needed and viable in the Geary Boulevard and 19th Avenue corridors in Western San Francisco. As future phases of the project are completed, significant project decisions will need to be considered related to regional integration, routing and station location, technology, and funding, in increasing levels of detail. Future phases will also more deeply explore the trade-offs among these decisions, informed by more robust engineering, planning, and cost estimation than was completed in this initial phase of work.

In summary, this study finds that:

- **The case for the Geary/19th Ave Subway is promising:** The Geary/19th Ave Subway is an integral part of the future San Francisco, Bay Area, and statewide rail system, and San Francisco should continue to advance planning and project development. The project will create value in time savings for travelers, accessibility and value of land, and economic activity and productivity; leveraging this value will be key to the project's viability and success.
- **Regional connectivity expands and broadens benefits:** The Geary/19th Ave Subway performs well as a San Francisco-only investment, but performs much better as an integrated part of the region's rail network. By enabling through-running of trains beyond San Francisco, project benefits would also accrue to a wider range of Bay Area residents, workers, visitors, and travelers.
- **Multiple design options can provide improvements:** Choices about how to route the project at both ends of the alignment and for the connection between Geary Blvd and 19th Ave should be informed by additional technical work and robust engagement with stakeholders. While project performance of the various options for these segments of the project is similar, the profile of project benefits may vary depending on the final routing and station location decisions made in future phases.
- **The Geary/19th Ave Subway delivers travel time savings, environmental improvements, and equity benefits:** In future years, the project drives improvements in many key metrics related to travel time, environmental quality, and equity as compared to a future where the project is not built.
- **Project development and delivery will require significant new funding sources:** While the project is expected to perform well under traditional federal and state funding criteria, major transit investments such as the Geary/19th Ave Subway must secure support from all levels, including the development of new, project-specific funding sources.
- **A Geary/19th Ave Subway will drive value creation:** Investing in the Geary/19th Ave Subway will create value in terms of land use, economic activity, mobility improvements and time savings, and reduced climate impacts. Capturing a share of this value will be a critical element of the project's funding plan, and will help to secure other regional and state funds.

ES.6.2 NEXT STEPS

The Geary/19th Ave Subway and Regional Connections Study is the initial step of a multi-year process by which a major transit capital investment is planned, environmentally cleared, designed, constructed, and eventually opened for passenger service. Projects proceed through multiple stages of development, with the conclusion

of each supporting decision-making regarding the project's readiness and worthiness to advance to subsequent stages.

Because major transit capital projects are complex undertakings involving many stakeholders, varied interests, and multiple approvals, it usually takes at least 15 to 20 years to progress from project initiation to revenue service. Peer projects in California have typically spent a total of approximately 5 - 8 years in the Planning, Alternatives Analysis, and Environmental stages, followed by approximately 7 - 10 years for construction and commissioning. Projects moving more quickly through these steps typically demonstrate robust local and regional financial commitment, including through voter-approved funding measures, that enable project sponsors to secure necessary approvals and commitment of state and federal funding.

The completion of Concept Development and Alternatives Analyses studies for the Geary/19th Avenue Subway are estimated to require approximately \$10 million to \$15 million, depending on the number of alternatives explored and level of engineering design required. The study team has identified an initial set of prioritized Alternatives Analysis tasks that could be advanced with available funding – approximately \$1.5 million in programmed half-cent sales tax funds, up to \$3 million if the project is successful in securing competitive regional funding – in the near term. The inclusion of specific tasks within a next phase of work will be subject to available funding, including external grant funding from regional and state sources. An overall aim of the immediate next phase would be to undertake prioritized work that is supportive of subsequent completion of the full Alternatives Analysis stage, including preparation for the future Environmental Review stage.