

PRESS RELEASE

San Francisco County Transportation Authority Board Approves Geary Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Design and Adopts Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The vote marks a major milestone for the project which will bring quicker, more reliable service to more than 52,000 people who ride transit along Geary daily.



Plan, Fund, Deliver

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Eric Young, SFCTA 415.522.4816 (office) 415.306.4509 (cell) eric.young@sfcta.org	Paul Rose, SFMTA Chief Spokesperson 415.701.4582 paul.rose@sfmta.com
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SAN FRANCISCO, CA – The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) Board has unanimously approved the Geary Bus Rapid Transit project, which will bring quicker and more reliable bus service, safety improvements and infrastructure upgrades to the 6.2-mile-long corridor.

The Transportation Authority Board—comprised of members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors—voted 10-0 to select the project design and certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) at their meeting Thursday, January 5, 2017.

This culminates a decade of project development, undertaken in partnership with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which operates the Muni 38 Geary line services and will construct and operate the new bus facility.

The selected ‘hybrid’ BRT design includes dedicated center-running bus lanes in the Richmond, and side-running bus lanes east of Stanyan Street to Market Street, connecting with existing bus lanes eastward to the Transbay Terminal. The Transportation Authority Board also adopted a recommendation by the Geary BRT Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) to preserve the existing 38-Rapid bus stop at Laguna Street, as well as to retain the 38-Local bus stop at Collins Street.

“Truly effective infrastructure projects are created through community process and honest conversations,” said Transportation Authority Board Chair Aaron Peskin. “The final design and implementation plans for the Geary BRT will continue to be shaped by the community and the Transportation Authority Board, and I want to respect and appreciate the work that has been done thus far.”

Commissioner Eric Mar, who represents the Richmond District, said: “After a decade of planning I am excited we are moving the Geary BRT forward as one of the nation’s best to finally bring speedier, safer and more reliable transit to the 52,000 daily riders on the busiest bus

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corridor West of the Mississippi. Thank you so much to the Citizens Advisory Committee and the staff of the Transportation Authority for the many years of hard, analytical work and for doing their best to address the concerns of neighborhoods, seniors, small businesses and other stakeholders.”

Commissioner London Breed, who represents the Western Addition neighborhood, said: “After years of planning and collaboration with the community, the buses are coming. I am very excited to help move Geary BRT forward and improve service and safety for all who work, travel or walk on this famous corridor.”

Commissioner Jane Kim, whose district includes city streets with high incidents of pedestrian injuries—including Geary and O’Farrell—said, “With over 100 street corner improvements in the plan, Geary BRT will improve safety for everyone using this busy corridor. It will move San Francisco closer to achieving the goal of Vision Zero: truly safe streets in our city.”

“The Geary Bus Rapid Transit project will revolutionize transit along the Geary corridor for the 52,000 daily transit riders of the 38 and for all of San Francisco,” said Supervisor Mark Farrell. “Faster trips, greater reliability, and important pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements make this project something the whole city can be proud of.”

The project fills a key gap in the city’s rapid transit network, as identified in the Transportation Authority’s 2004 Countywide Transportation Plan. That plan recommended Van Ness and Geary as key corridors well suited for BRT, as well as a citywide network of rapid buses. One reason for choosing BRT was its ability to offer rail-like performance at a more affordable cost.

Tilly Chang, Transportation Authority Executive Director, said, “I want to thank everyone who collaborated with the Transportation Authority and SFMTA to provide input on the Geary BRT project. With this approval, and pending actions by the SFMTA and Federal Transit Administration, the project will be well positioned to compete for scarce Federal, state and regional funding.”

Public Input Helps Shape Design for Geary BRT

The Geary BRT ‘hybrid’ alternative is designed to meet the diverse transportation needs of the Geary corridor. Outreach by the project team to residents, community leaders, advocates and merchants from the Outer Richmond to Downtown included over 260 meetings, resulting in several design modifications to reflect community input. These include:

- Preserving the Rapid bus stop at Laguna Street and local bus stop at Collins Street;
- Retaining the pedestrian bridge at Webster Street;
- Preserving merchant parking in the Richmond District, including at Spruce Street, where all existing parking and loading will be maintained with a local-only bus stop;
- Extending the BRT system to Washington High School at 31st Avenue; and
- Addressing Geary’s designation as a ‘high-injury corridor’ by adding pedestrian safety improvements at 100 street corners and safer bicycle connections at Masonic Avenue.

An Innovative Design for BRT

Geary BRT will enhance and maintain Local, Rapid and Express 38 bus service along the corridor with dedicated bus lanes from Market Street to 34th Avenue, separating buses from general traffic. Between 26th Avenue and Arguello Boulevard, buses would travel in center-running bus lanes and all buses would stop at a common set of stops, referred to as ‘consolidated service.’ East of Stanyan Street, rapid buses would make fewer stops than local buses as they do today, traveling in side-running bus lanes connecting to existing bus lanes downtown.

Other bus priority features and amenities designed to provide a safe, reliable and rapid transit service include:

- Traffic signal upgrades to keep the green light for buses and improve traffic flow;
- Bus Rapid Transit Stations with seating and more shelters;
- More accessible bus stops, where the bus can easily pick up and drop people off, either directly at an extended curb or at a transit boarding island; and
- Pedestrian safety improvements at more than 100 street corners and reduced left turn conflicts.

The project also includes safety improvements and infrastructure and urban design upgrades like:

- New crossings and traffic lights where they do not exist today;
- Repaving and pavement repairs;
- Utilities, sewer and water line replacement along some segments;
- Increased landscaping/green area; and
- New pedestrian scale lighting.

These project features would reduce crowding on buses, and make bus service more reliable and efficient, saving people who rely on Geary bus routes up to 20 minutes per round trip. In addition, numerous safety improvements would reduce collisions and make Geary safer to cross on foot or by bicycle.

Role of SFMTA as Geary BRT moves forward

Following the Transportation Authority Board's action, the SFMTA will begin finalizing designs for the approved hybrid BRT alternative and its many transit, safety and infrastructure upgrades.

The SFMTA will focus first on designing and implementing improvements between Market and Stanyan streets, and then on the improvements west of Stanyan Street that require redesigning the street for center-running bus lanes.

A phased implementation approach allows the SFMTA to offer those who travel on the Geary corridor transit and safety benefits as soon as possible.

Ed Reiskin, the SFMTA Director of Transportation said: "We are proud to work with our partners to bring a transit solution designed for this corridor to make it safer and more reliable for all users. This Bus Rapid Transit project will provide subway-like bus service to more than 50,000 people who depend on public transit to get around safely on one of the City's busiest transit and commercial corridors."

Following additional public outreach to get input on detailed design proposals, the SFMTA plans to roll out the red carpet late 2017 extending red bus lanes to Stanyan Street and adjusting stop spacing.

There will be many opportunities for the public to weigh in on project proposals before changes come to Geary. Most notably, there will be an additional SFMTA Board meeting open to the public where each parking, loading, transit and traffic change will be presented to the SFMTA Board for their consideration.

Environmental Review Next Steps

While the Transportation Authority Board's action approves the Final EIR, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) later this year will also consider approving a Final Environmental Impact Statement to meet federal requirements. Upon receiving FTA approval, the project will be able to compete for as much as \$100 million in Federal Small Starts funding.

Pending these approvals, the Transportation Authority's role will shift to that of oversight and funding partner, and the project lead role will transition to the SFMTA as the lead agency managing final design and construction of Geary BRT.

The project website is GearyBRT.org.

Follow this this Dropbox link to download [high-resolution images and project visualizations](#).

About the San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Created in 1989, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is responsible for long-range transportation planning for the city, and it analyzes, designs and funds improvements for San Francisco's roadway and public transportation networks. The SFCTA administers and oversees the delivery of the Prop K half-cent local transportation sales tax program and the Prop AA \$10 annual vehicle registration fee program, serves as the designated Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for San Francisco, under state law, and acts as the San Francisco Program Manager for grants from the Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA). The SFCTA Board consists of the eleven members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, who act as SFCTA Commissioners. For more information about SFCTA, visit sfcta.org.

About the San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency

Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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