



**SPUR**

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July 28, 2022

Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee

San Francisco City Hall

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48

San Francisco, CA 94102

Via email to: [publications@sfgov.org](mailto:publications@sfgov.org)

Re: Uses of the Great Highway and JFK Drive

Dear Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee:

Thank you for drafting the digest for “Uses of the Great Highway and JFK Drive.” The work of the committee is essential to crafting language that is accessible and understandable for voters who are being asked to consider many ballot measures this November. In support of your important work, we respectfully submit the following suggestions to the draft language of the digest for this measure.

Because this measure is closely related to the “Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program,” ballot language that clearly differentiates the two measures will prevent voter confusion. While both measures address impacts to the use of public space in Golden Gate Park, each measure would produce starkly different outcomes with regard to the users of that public space: the Golden Gate Park Access measure affirms protected open space in Golden Gate Park, whereas the Uses of the Great Highway and JFK Drive measure replaces protected open space with roads required to be used by motorized vehicles at all times with limited, predetermined exceptions.

The current language does not make clear to voters that these measures are in opposition, and we recommend making the following five amendments to the language to clarify the differences between the two measures for the average voter. We have also attached a redline of the draft digest that reflects the below recommendations.

**(1) Edit the language of each section to describe the proposed changes to JFK Drive first, and then describe the proposed changes to the use of the Great Highway second.**

Both measures affect the uses of JFK Drive through very different proposals, and sequencing a description of the changes to JFK drive first will help voters understand these differences. We recommend reversing the order of the digest’s discussion to address JFK Drive first and then address Great Highway second, modifying the sequencing in “The Way It Is Now,” “The Proposal,” and “A “YES” Vote Means” sections.

**(2) When mentioning the “repeal of the Board’s ordinance,” briefly explain what that ordinance does.**

The average voter is likely not familiar with the contents of the Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program ordinance, which is only referred to as the “Board’s ordinance” in the ballot language. It is important that ballot language explain the impact of the ordinance – to create protected open space for recreational purposes on JFK Drive – so that voters can understand what is being repealed in this ballot measure.

We recommend amending the digest language concerning “The Proposal” as follows to provide more clarity to the voter about the Board’s ordinance that this measure intends to repeal:

“The Proposal: ~~As to the portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park reserved as open space for recreational purposes,~~ Proposition \_\_ would repeal the Board’s ordinance that reserves portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park as open space for recreational purposes, and would instead require the City to use street space for ~~allow motor vehicles to use these streets~~ at all times, except on Sundays, Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between April and September, and holidays.”

**(3) Articulate the distinction between the Upper Great Highway and the Great Highway Extension to ensure that voters understand how the measure impacts each differently.**

The digest language oversimplifies the proposal by referring to both the Upper Great Highway and the Great Highway Extension as merely the “Great Highway.” While these two sections are part of the Great Highway, the existing and proposed conditions for each section vary considerably.

The Upper Great Highway, which runs along Ocean Beach from Lincoln Way to Sloat Boulevard, has been used for open space for recreational purposes at certain times. In contrast, the Great Highway Extension, which extends south of the Upper Great Highway between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard, has not been used for open space for recreational purposes but is planned to be converted to a recreational coastal trail and open space as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project, a cross-agency infrastructure project needed to address climate-induced sea level rise. To clarify, we recommend using the names “Great Highway” and the “Great Highway Extension” to ensure the voters understand that the proposal would prohibit the recreational use of the Upper Great Highway and would prevent the conversion of the Great Highway Extension to recreational open space as planned through the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project.

We recommend making conforming changes throughout the digest to distinguish between the Great Highway and the Great Highway Extension, as reflected in the attached redline.

**(4) Articulate the impacts to the planned removal of the Great Highway Extension per the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project.**

The measure as written does not clearly articulate the City’s project for the Great Highway between Sloat and Skyline Boulevard, also known as the Great Highway Extension. We recommend explicitly mentioning both the Great Highway Extension and the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project, which plans to close the Great Highway Extension due to coastal erosion and convert it to

recreational open space as soon as 2024, to ensure that voters understand the proposed impacts. We propose the following changes:

“To address environmental impacts of sea level rise and improve coastal access, the City is ~~developing~~ plans to remove ~~close~~ the Great Highway Extension between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard ~~to vehicles seven days a week~~, reserving that area as open space as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project. The City would reroute vehicle traffic to the other side of the San Francisco Zoo along Skyline and Sloat Boulevards.”

[...]

“Proposition \_\_\_ would ~~not allow~~ prohibit the City from closing ~~to close~~ the Great Highway Extension between Sloat and Skyline Boulevards and would prohibit its conversion to recreational open space as planned through the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project.”

**(5) Clarify that the proposed changes to JFK Drive and Great Highway are mandatory rather than permissive.**

The measure as written also does not clarify for the average voter that the city would be *prohibited* from closing these roads to private motor vehicles except on Sundays, Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between April and September, and holidays. The draft digest’s current word choice of “allow” implies that the city maintains discretion about when or whether to let private motor vehicles on the roads, but the text of the measure explicitly removes the city’s authority to designate other uses, such as recreation, in the roadway.

In addition to the changes proposed above under item (4), we recommend the following change to clarify this point:

If you vote "yes," you want to prohibit the City from closing ~~to allow private motor vehicle traffic on the Great Highway and on portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park to private motor vehicle traffic, and to temporarily restrict private motor vehicles on JFK Drive and connector streets~~ except on Sundays, Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between April and September, and holidays, and to prohibit the City from closing the Great Highway and Great Highway Extension to private motor vehicle traffic at any time.

For your reference, we have attached a redline version of our proposed edits to the digest for the measure. We appreciate your dedicated work on behalf of San Francisco voters and thank you for your consideration of these suggestions.

Sincerely,



Sujata Srivastava

San Francisco Director, SPUR

Attachment 1: Proposed Edits to Digest for “Uses of The Great Highway and JFK Drive”

*ATTACHMENT 1: PROPOSED EDITS TO DIGEST FOR “USES OF THE GREAT HIGHWAY AND JFK DRIVE”*

**Uses of The Great Highway and JFK Drive \***

**Digest** by the Ballot Simplification Committee

**Status:** Draft for Consideration

**On:** Thursday, July 28, 2020

**Members:** Packard, Anderson, Merrill, Patterson

**Deadline to Request Reconsideration:** TBD

**The Way It Is Now:** John F. Kennedy Drive (JFK Drive) is a public street that runs east to west within Golden Gate Park. The Great Highway is a roadway that runs along Ocean Beach from Point Lobos Avenue to Skyline Boulevard. The portion known as the Upper Great Highway is a four-lane public roadway that runs along Ocean Beach from Lincoln Way to Skyline Sloat Boulevard. The portion known as the Great Highway Extension is a three-lane roadway that runs between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard. John F. Kennedy Drive (JFK Drive) is a public street that runs east to west within Golden Gate Park. The City has provided for the use of portions of JFK Drive and the Upper Great Highway and these two street areas as open space for recreational purposes and allowed private motor vehicles only under certain circumstances or at certain times:

- In April 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted an ordinance that closed portions of JFK Drive and certain connector streets seven days a week, reserving the streets as open space for pedestrians, bicyclists, those using wheelchairs, and all other forms of recreation. The closures do not apply to emergency vehicles, official government vehicles performing government business, intra-park transit shuttle buses and similar vehicles used to transport persons, and vehicles making deliveries to the de Young Museum.
- In April 2020, the City temporarily restricted private motor vehicles on weekends and holidays from the Upper Great Highway, reserving it as open space for pedestrians, bicyclists, those using wheelchairs, and all other forms of recreation. During weekdays other than holidays, the Upper Great Highway is open in both directions to private motor vehicle traffic.
- ~~In April 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted an ordinance that closed portions of JFK Drive and certain connector streets seven days a week, reserving the streets as open space for pedestrians, bicyclists, those using wheelchairs, and all other forms of recreation. The closures do not apply to emergency vehicles, official government vehicles performing government business, intra-park transit shuttle buses and similar vehicles used to transport persons, and vehicles making deliveries to the de Young Museum.~~

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (Rec Park) manages the City's public parks and recreation spaces, including certain streets within or along the parks such as JFK Drive, the Upper Great Highway, and the Great Highway Extension and JFK Drive. The San Francisco Department of Public Works (Public Works) currently maintains the City's other streets and sidewalks, but that function will transfer to a new Sanitation and Streets Department in October 2022.

To address environmental impacts of sea level rise and improve coastal access, the City ~~is developing plans to remove close~~ the Great Highway Extension between Sloat Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard ~~to vehicles seven days a week~~, reserving that area as open space as part of the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project. The City would reroute vehicle traffic to the other side of the San Francisco Zoo along Skyline and Sloat Boulevards.

**The Proposal:** ~~As to the portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park reserved as open space for recreational purposes,~~ Proposition \_\_ would repeal the Board's ordinance that reserves portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park as open space for recreational purposes, and would instead require the City to use street space for ~~allow~~ motor vehicles ~~to use these streets~~ at all times, except on Sundays, Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between April and September, and holidays."

Proposition \_\_ would remove the use of the Upper Great Highway as open space for recreational purposes on weekends and holidays, by requiring private motor vehicle traffic in both directions at all times.

For ~~both~~ the Upper Great Highway, Great Highway Extension, and JFK Drive along with the other affected streets in Golden Gate Park, the City could only temporarily restrict private motor vehicles to respond to emergencies; for construction, maintenance, or street repairs; or for permitted parades, celebrations, concerts, community events, or similar activities.

Proposition \_\_ ~~would not allow~~ prohibit the City from closing ~~to close~~ the Great Highway Extension between Sloat and Skyline Boulevards and would prohibit its conversion to recreational open space as planned through the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project.

Proposition \_\_ also would require Public Works to take over management of the Upper Great Highway and the Great Highway Extension from Rec Park.

The Board may later amend Proposition \_\_ by a two-thirds vote, only if the amendments are either consistent with the measure's purposes or required by a court ruling.

*\*Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*

If Proposition \_\_ receives more votes than Proposition [four-supes measure], then Proposition [four-supes measure] would have no legal effect.

**A "YES" Vote Means:** If you vote "yes," you want to prohibit the City from closing ~~to allow private motor vehicle traffic on the Great Highway and on portions of JFK Drive and connector streets in Golden Gate Park~~ to private motor vehicle traffic, and to temporarily restrict private motor vehicles on JFK Drive and connector streets ~~except~~ on Sundays, Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. between April and September, and holidays, and to prohibit the City from closing the Upper Great Highway and the Great Highway Extension to private motor vehicle traffic at any time.

**A "NO" Vote Means:** If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.