

Reserving the Upper Great Highway as Public Open Recreation Space*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Approved Digest
On: Wednesday, July 24, 2024
Members: Packard, Anderson, Wong, Troy, Wang

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 4:00pm on Thursday, July 25, 2025

The Way It Is Now: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City closed certain public streets to personal and commercial motor vehicles, reserving the streets as public open space for recreational purposes. These closures included the Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard (Upper Great Highway), adjacent to Ocean Beach.

In May 2022, the City replaced the pandemic restrictions on the Upper Great Highway with a pilot program closing the Upper Great Highway to personal and commercial motor vehicles on Friday afternoons, weekends and holidays. The closure does not apply to emergency vehicles, official government vehicles, intra-park transit shuttle buses and similar vehicles authorized to transport people. This pilot program will end on December 31, 2025, unless the City extends it. When the pilot program ends, the Upper Great Highway will return to its use before the pandemic and be open to personal and commercial motor vehicles.

The City's General Plan sets objectives and policies for land uses within San Francisco, including streets. The California Coastal Act guides land uses along the California coast. The General Plan and Coastal Act may limit changes in use of the Upper Great Highway.

The Recreation and Parks Commission has jurisdiction over most public parks and other recreational facilities in San Francisco, including the Upper Great Highway. Under the Commission's direction, the Recreation and Parks' General Manager oversees the use of those recreational facilities.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ is an ordinance that would allow the City to use the Upper Great Highway as public open recreation space, permanently closing it to personal and commercial motor vehicles seven days a week, with limited exceptions. It would continue to allow emergency vehicles, official government vehicles, intra-park transit shuttle buses and similar authorized vehicles to access the Upper Great Highway at all times. The General Manager of the Recreation and Parks Department would have the authority to determine an emergency exists and allow personal and commercial motor vehicles to use the Upper Great Highway.

Proposition ___ would require, within 180 days of voter approval of this measure, the City to seek any other approvals necessary to permanently close the Upper Great Highway to personal and commercial motor vehicles. Those approvals may include amendments to the City's General Plan and approvals under the California Coastal Act.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want the City to use the Upper Great Highway as public open recreation space, permanently closing it to personal and commercial motor vehicles seven days a week, with limited exceptions.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you want the Upper Great Highway to continue to be closed to personal and commercial vehicles only on Friday afternoons, weekends and holidays until the pilot program expires.

**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.*