

July 22, 2024

To: Ballot Simplification Committee  
From: Alyse Ceirante, Registered Voter, District Four

RE: Measure should be called: **Closing Upper Great Highway to Private Vehicles, not Reserving the Upper Great Highway as Public Open Recreation Space**

The measure, as currently written, is a bit deceptive. The description provided in the first paragraph states, in part, that the Park Code will be amended to “establish a new recreation area and open space...” at the Great Highway; however, the only thing this measure is created to mandate is that private motor vehicles be permanently banned from the Great Highway. There is nothing in this measure that definitively states a park or “open recreation space” will be created in place of a highway. The language needs to be changed to clarify this, with no mention of “new recreation area” or “open space”. This is a measure to to ban private motor vehicles, and nothing more.

Additionally, several sub-sections of Section One further muddy the waters over the true purpose of the measure. For example, Section (1)(b) of this measure provides a myriad of statistical information without anything to back it up; however, these statistics, verified or not, have nothing to do with the Highway being permanently closed to motor vehicle and everything to do with the Highway being used as a “recreational space”. As this measure is about the banning of vehicles and not about the creation of “recreational space”, this section should be struck.

In section (g)(1) we are told that “Section 4.113 of the Charter...states that park land, which includes the Great Highway, shall be used for recreational purposes”; however, this section neither tells us which Charter, nor provides a direct citation. How do we know that the Great Highway is actually a “park land...intended for recreational purposes”? And what does this have to do with the permanent prohibition against motor vehicles? This section needs to be clarified or struck.

Section (g)(2) makes absolutely no sense without further clarification. How does permanently banning private vehicles from the Great Highway “address population growth in high need and emerging neighborhoods”? The Sunset is a well established neighborhood - hardly “emerging” - and it is densely populated. Any growth in population will be minimal when compared to existing population. Nor is the Sunset “high need”. There are numerous parks in and around the Sunset, and the measure must establish that despite this, the district is somehow still in “high need” of more “open recreation space”. (It has always been my understanding that this section of the Rec&Park Strategic Plan was for areas such as the Bayview, which has a growing population but very little green space in which to provide open recreation areas.) This section should either be clarified or stuck.

Section (g)(4) claims that this measure will also address environmental issues in accordance with San Francisco's Climate Action Plan. The measure implies that permanently banning personal vehicles on the Great Highway will somehow improve air quality and the environment but makes no mention of what is to become of the 18,000 - 20,000 cars that use the Great Highway on a daily basis. In reality, they are simply transferring cars from one road to another, and the voter needs to be made aware of this. Only when armed with this information can the voter make their own determination as to the credibility of this claim.

Section (g)(5), while discussing potential costs of maintaining a highway, makes no mention of the cost of keeping the Highway free of cars. Who will do the sand removal? How much will that cost? Who will do routine road maintenance? How much will that cost? Who will patrol the area and what will be the cost? The measure needs to provide the voter with information on what it will cost to maintain the Highway free of cars in order for them to make an informed decision.

As you can see, this measure, as written and as named, is both confusing and somewhat confounding. It is important that the voters of San Francisco are able to fully understand this measure before going to the polls. It is extremely important that they understand they are *not* voting for a park; rather, they are voting to permanently prohibit private motor vehicle from using the Great Highway - nothing more and nothing less.