

Reserving the Upper Great Highway as Public Open Recreation Space*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Wednesday, July 24, 2024
Members: Packard, Anderson, Wong, Troy, Wang

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

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

In May 2022, the City replaced the pandemic restrictions on the Upper Great Highway with a pilot program closing the Upper Great Highway to private 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 private 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. Under the Commission’s policy direction, the General Manager manages the use of those recreational facilities.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ is an ordinance that would allow the City to reserve the Upper Great Highway as public open recreation space, permanently closing it to private motor vehicles seven days a week, with limited exceptions. This ordinance would continue to allow emergency vehicles, official government vehicles, intra-park transit shuttle buses, and similar vehicles authorized to transport people to access the Upper Great Highway at all times, as they do now. The General Manager of the Recreation and Parks Department would have the authority to allow private motor vehicles to use the Upper Great Highway during an emergency as determined by the General Manager.

Proposition __ would require that, within 180 days of voter approval of this measure, the City seek any other approvals necessary to permanently close the Upper Great Highway to private 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 reserve the Upper Great Highway as public open recreation space, permanently closing it seven days a week to private motor vehicles with limited exceptions.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote “no,” you do not want do not want the City to permanently close the Upper Great Highway this way to private motor vehicles.

**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.*