

## **Reserving the Upper Great Highway as Public Open Recreation Space\***

**Digest** by the Ballot Simplification Committee

**Status:** Final Digest  
**On:** Friday, July 26, 2024  
**Members:** Packard, Anderson, Wong, Troy, Wang

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**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 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 private 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 is scheduled to end on December 31, 2025. When the pilot program ends, the Upper Great Highway will 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. Changes in use to the Upper Great Highway may require amendments to the General Plan and approvals under the California Coastal Act.

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 for public open recreation space, permanently closing it to private 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 private 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 private motor vehicles. Those approvals may include amendments to the City's General Plan and approvals under the California Coastal Act.

If Proposition \_\_\_ is passed by voters, the current pilot program would remain in place until all necessary approvals are obtained and permits granted, or, until the pilot program is scheduled to end on December 31, 2025.

**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 private motor vehicles seven days a week, with limited exceptions.

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

*\*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.*