



Mayor London Breed
City Hall
1 Dr Carlton B. Goodlett Place
Room 200
San Francisco, CA 94102

Vice Chair Stephanie Cajina
SFMTA Board of Directors
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Director Jeffrey Tumlin
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
1 South Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103

November 15, 2024

RE: Biking and Rolling Plan

Dear Mayor Breed, Vice Chair Cajina, SFMTA Board of Directors, and Director Tumlin,

KidSafe SF supports the goals outlined in the Biking and Rolling Plan. We also urge you to adopt an even more ambitious version of this plan, to deliver on our city's ambitious climate goals and aspirations to create a city where kids, seniors, and people of all abilities can bike and roll safely.

Currently, 29% of San Franciscans bike or roll weekly, and over half of families with children ride at least a few times each month. These citizens are already biking and rolling, and as city leaders, it is your responsibility to keep them safe. The report also shows that nearly 80% of residents would bike or roll if it were safer, underscoring the demand for transformative action.

This plan gives San Francisco the opportunity to build a connected network of streets designed for everyone to use safely. By expanding on the success of protected bike lanes, pandemic-era Slow Streets, and other effective safety measures like daylighting and car-free streets, the Biking and Rolling Plan can deliver transformative change. However, the current approach remains too incremental to meet the urgency of our climate, equity, and safety goals.

It's not yet the plan we need for kids to be able to safely bike to school or to the park with their friends, or for parents to feel safe letting their kids do so. Please see our recommendations below for improvements that can be made to the plan to gain our enthusiastic support.



Here are KidSafe SF's primary recommendations for a stronger Biking and Rolling Plan

1. Build Truly Safe Infrastructure for All Ages and Abilities.

- **Eliminate the concept of "Shared Level II and III" streets** and require all streets on the Northstar network to meet All Ages and Abilities standards: car-free paths, protected or separated lanes, or Slow Streets that meet the SFMTA Board's defined safety metrics (average vehicle speeds less than 15mph, average daily vehicle volumes less than 1,000).

Level II and III streets do not meet even the minimal safety standards set by the Board for Slow Streets, creating inequities across neighborhoods. Why should a child riding a bike to school on Lake Street receive the protections of the Slow Street speed and volume metrics, while a child on Oakdale Avenue or Ortega Street is left unprotected from high vehicle volumes and high-speed traffic? Lower safety standards for some shared streets will exacerbate traffic violence in Equity Priority Communities, which already see a disproportionate share of crashes.

It's been 2 years since the SFMTA Board adopted Slow Street safety metrics, and 18 months since the Slow Streets Evaluation Report determined that nearly all Slow Streets exceeded speed targets, with widespread "egregious speeding." While some improvements have moved forward, most streets remain out of compliance with the program's metrics. The draft Plan proposes even weaker standards, eroding trust in the agency's commitment to safety.

While street branding can differ across communities (Slow Streets, neighborways, bicycle boulevards, etc), all streets in the Northstar network must be safe for people of All Ages and Abilities. Eliminating Shared Level II and Shared Level III streets is the necessary first step.

- **Restore protected lanes to the map.** The draft plan states that "where we'd like to be 20 years from now" only includes a handful of new protected lanes. This is not consistent with the expanded vision that the Board has directed during previous project updates.

The draft map includes many proposals for high-quality infrastructure, including upgrades to the Wiggle and a completed protected bikeway for the Embarcadero. But comparing the existing network (p21) with the draft map (p59) shows very few new protected or separated bike lanes. The vast majority of proposed new protected infrastructure is already slated for Quick Builds under existing policy. This is not a 20-year vision.

We ask that some of the earlier protected lane proposals that have been omitted from this map be restored, using dotted and wavy lines where



necessary. Some of the omissions include protected routes into D3 via Broadway, Kearny, and Washington, new protected routes in D6 like Main and Brannan, cross-D4 routes like Vicente, and D10 connectors like Oakdale.

2. **Reference and apply existing policy.** Existing City policies have already answered many of the toughest questions posed by the Biking and Rolling Plan.

The Better Streets Plan (adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2010) states that “Decisions regarding the design and use of the City’s limited public street space shall prioritize space for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit over space for automobiles.” Similarly, the SFMTA’s Curb Management Strategy (adopted by the SFMTA Board) is clear that the highest priority for curb use is the movement of people. These decisions have already been made, and it is up to us to make them a reality.

The Plan can be strengthened by referencing and applying these policies. Instead, Action 3.14.1 violates these policies by prioritizing loading needs over the movement of active transportation users. Similarly, page 62 prioritizes loading over bike lanes on Polk Street. The Plan should be improved to comply with existing law and policy by citing and applying these policies to situations where conflicting curb uses occur.

3. **Expand the vision of what our streets can be.** Within the 20-year horizon considered by the plan, we hope to see a San Francisco that has applied proven strategies from around the world, including woonerfs, thriving car-free commercial spaces, low-traffic neighborhoods, raised cycle tracks, and new car-free promenades and multi-use paths. However, these concepts are largely absent from the Plan. Even if the Plan is unable to specify specific locations for these facilities, it should call for their installation and commit to a clear process for implementation.

4. **Adopt more ambitious goals and timelines for critical network connections**
A patchwork of disconnected improvements will not create the transformative network we need. **And while a 20-year vision is useful, a 5-year timeline for the most critical improvements will help make the plan more likely to be implemented.** To make the Biking and Rolling Plan a success, the SFMTA must:

- ***Prioritize connecting key routes across the city by closing critical gaps.***
There will be hard tradeoffs in prioritizing where to deliver safe infrastructure with limited funding. By focusing on closing critical gaps in the citywide network and creating several gold-standard “trunk” routes running east-west, north-south, and around the waterfront, the agency can provide the greatest value with limited resources.
- ***Fill gaps on the draft network.*** The draft map contains several crucial gaps, such as the 1500 block of Mission St. These gaps should be filled in to ensure a connected network.



- *Eliminate sharrows* and replace them with meaningful safety measures, such as protected bike lanes, modal filters, or traffic diverters.
- *Ensure slow streets infrastructure is effective* by measuring traffic volumes and speeds, and responding to community requests for additional traffic calming infrastructure.
- **Commit to completing a connected network of protected bike lanes and slow streets within five years – even if it means just a few cross-town routes.**

5. **Commit to a transparent and equitable process for all neighborhoods**

The Biking and Rolling Plan must include a clear, transparent process and timeline for implementing bike network improvements, especially in equity priority neighborhoods. These areas often face the greatest transportation inequities but have historically been left behind. The SFMTA must prioritize these communities to ensure everyone benefits from safe, connected, and accessible streets.

We know and appreciate that the agency has been working closely with stakeholder groups in these neighborhoods. At the same time, a citywide network is only as valuable as it is connected. We cannot leave neighborhoods behind, and we must connect the network. *A transparent process and timeline to deliver projects that connect the network is important to ensuring that gaps do not persist.*

The plan should include a requirement for tracking the agency's progress at delivering lane-miles of new safe facilities, and be transparent about sharing that progress with the public at regular intervals.

6. **Accelerate implementation with dedicated funding.** To meet its ambitious five-year timeline, the SFMTA should work with its partners at the SFCTA to ensure funding from Proposition L is prioritized for Biking and Rolling Plan projects, with a focus on completing routes to schools, parks, and job centers.
7. **Mandate Complete Streets with department partners.** Amend the existing policy, requiring that complete streets elements be included whenever a street undergoes major work. SFMTA & DPW should work together and shall implement facilities including concrete protected bike lanes, intersection daylighting, pedestrian safety bulb outs, and/or other complete streets features on corridors scheduled for repaving or other major work at the time of the repaving. Doing so will provide cost savings on Vision Zero work and help bring streets up to modern safety standards.

Every year, hundreds of San Franciscans suffer injuries from traffic violence, and far too many lives are lost. Without a safe, connected, and low-stress mobility network, we cannot increase sustainable transportation use or achieve our climate and Vision Zero goals. Studies have



consistently shown that protected infrastructure is the most significant factor influencing whether people feel safe enough to bike or roll.

By taking bold steps to prioritize safety and equity, the SFMTA can create a transformative network that benefits all San Franciscans, from young children biking to school to seniors using mobility assistance devices.

We urge the SFMTA Board to adopt and strengthen the Biking and Rolling Plan by ensuring it includes:

- A clear, transparent timeline and process for decision-making, especially in equity priority communities.
- Ambitious timelines and goals for protected bike lanes and slow streets.
- Strong accountability measures to ensure progress is steady and tangible over the next five years.

Thank you for your commitment to creating a safer, more equitable, and sustainable San Francisco. We look forward to seeing the SFMTA rise to the challenge and deliver on the vision of a truly connected, kid-safe, and inclusive mobility network.

Sincerely,

KidSafe SF