



**Date:** July 25, 2025

**To:** Viktoriya Wise, SFMTA Director of Streets

**From:** Chava Kronenberg, SFMTA Senior Planning Manager

**Re:** Outer Sunset Traffic Data, Spring 2025

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This report shares traffic data collected pre- and post- full time closure of Upper Great Highway and Great Highway Extension southbound. Primary findings include:

1. Traffic circulation changes were largely aligned with transportation model predictions
  - Traffic volumes on key arterials (Lincoln and Sunset) remain below pre-pandemic levels
  - Additional traffic on Lower Great Highway, above pre-pandemic average daily traffic
  - There is additional traffic and resultant congestion on Chain of Lakes
  - Vehicle traffic on residential Avenues remains low
2. There were some minor and manageable increases on Muni travel times on adjacent routes, especially for southbound 28 19th Avenue
  - There were no significant changes in travel time for the 18 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - The 29 Sunset had an average daily increase in both directions of about half a minute, but with a decrease in travel time in AM peak southbound and increase in travel time in the PM peak southbound
  - There was consistently additional travel time for the southbound 28 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, especially at evening peak hour

Additional roadway changes will change circulations patterns

- Eventual closure of Great Highway Extension, northbound, from Skyline to Sloat Boulevard will likely shift additional trips away from Lower Great Highway and Avenues to Sunset Boulevard.

## Background

Two separate street segments on the coast had separate public projects and processes resulting in full-time roadway closures: Upper Great Highway, Lincoln to Sloat and Great Highway Extension, Sloat to Skyline. The background below describes the projects and regulatory changes made to the two segments prior to March 2025.

### Upper Great Highway, Lincoln to Sloat

- [Great Highway Covid Closure \(2020\)](#)

In April 2020, SF Recreation and Parks (RPD) closed Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat to provide recreational opportunities and social distancing space during the Covid-19 pandemic under the authority of RPD General Manager Phil Ginsburg. On August 16, 2021 the Great Highway opened to vehicular traffic on weekdays, Monday morning through Friday at noon, excluding holidays.

- [Great Highway Pilot \(2023\)](#)

In December 2022, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed legislation establishing the Great Highway Pilot. The Pilot was a weekend closure starting on Fridays at noon and restoring the roadway on Mondays at 6 am; the road was also closed on holidays. The pilot allowed RPD and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to collect data on the Great Highway's use as both a roadway and a promenade. Requirements of the pilot included reporting to the Board of Supervisors on traffic and related project data about the weekend Upper Great Highway between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard roadways and traffic conditions.

- [Great Highway Ballot Measure \(2024 Prop K\)](#)

In June 2024, five members of the Board of Supervisors signed a ballot initiative proposing to close Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat to vehicular traffic for consideration by voters in the November 2024 election. On December 5, 2024, Proposition K passed with 54% of the vote. The legislation superseded the previously legislated Great Highway Pilot, which was to end December 31, 2025.

### **Great Highway Extension, Sloat to Skyline**

Since 2012, the Ocean Beach Climate Adaptation Project, including the Great Highway Extension Closure is a decade in progress mega-project coordinating multiple City, regional and State agencies to ensure the long-term future of wastewater infrastructure and reduce the impacts of climate change on the western shoreline. This work is necessary to address climate induced sea level rise and protect the integrity of wastewater assets built in response to the Clean Water Act. The wastewater assets, built to protect public health and the environment, include the Lake Merced Tunnel, the Westside Pump Station, and the Oceanside Treatment Plant.

The Ocean Beach Master Plan outlined a managed retreat strategy to allow for some retreat of the coastline, while still protecting important city infrastructure, namely PUC wastewater pipes and associated infrastructure. The strategy included four key aspects:

- Buried seawall to protect the Lake Merced Tunnel;
- Creation of multi-use trail and parking;
- Roadway changes and intersection improvements, including closing Great Highway Extension to general traffic; and
- Replace the Sloat Restroom with a new restroom building

In April 2024, the Board of Supervisors voted to permanently close Great Highway Extension to private vehicles.

## **March 2025 Roadway Changes and Supportive Projects**

In alignment with the majority 'yes' vote on 2024 Proposition K and the Board of Supervisors vote to close Great Highway Extension to vehicular use, RPD in coordination with SFMTA and the San Francisco Public

Utilities Commission (SFPUC) closed Upper Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat, and Great Highway Extension, from Sloat to Skyline, southbound only, on March 14, 2025 (the project).<sup>1</sup>

To support these closures, the City and Caltrans completed the following supportive projects to facilitate traffic movement on key alternate routes and at key congestion points:

1. Caltrans Great Highway/ Skyline Signal - This signal was activated in January 2025. It improves pedestrian crossing to the future park on Great Highway Extension and allows for safe access into the future beach parking lot and PUC facilities. It also reduces traffic delays related to the prior STOP sign condition on Skyline.
2. SFMTA Sloat/ Skyline Signal - This signal was activated in February 2025. Traffic signals were added for all three approaches to the intersection, and curb ramps were upgraded to meet current accessibility standards. This signal accommodates additional traffic originating from Sunset Boulevard resulting from the Great Highway and Great Highway Extension closures.
3. SFMTA 41<sup>st</sup> at Lincoln - This signal was activated in February 2025. This signal replaced the prior STOP controlled intersection, improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the park and reducing some traffic delays on Chain of Lakes. Additional changes to turn movements and signal timing are under consideration.
4. SFMTA Great Highway at Lincoln - This project reconstructed Lincoln Way at Great Highway to facilitate a full-time closure of the Great Highway. The project included moderate traffic signal and traffic lane changes to redirect traffic away from the Upper Great Highway and increase traffic capacity throughput. It also included a full-time separated bikeway connections to Golden Gate Park (via Lincoln Way). These changes provided immediate safety and recreational benefits in addition to a legible and efficient intersection for traffic movement while there is ongoing planning and community engagement to consider potential longer-term capital changes in the area.
5. Public Works Sunset Boulevard Paving - San Francisco Public Works repaved Sunset Boulevard from Martin Luther King Drive to Lake Merced Blvd. Construction began in February 2024 and was fully paved and re-striped in April 2025. The work consisted of pavement renovation (grinding and paving), concrete road base reconstruction, curb ramp installation, drainage work, bus pad work, bus shelter electrical infrastructure upgrades and traffic signal infrastructure modifications, structural work, traffic control, and all related work.

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<sup>1</sup> Great Highway Extension, from Skyline to Sloat northbound will remain open until the SFPUC Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project completes enabling works including re-alignment of the Zoo driveway on Sloat for both entry and exit; this project is not anticipated to advance to construction before early 2027.

## Findings

### 1. Traffic circulation changes were largely in accordance with transportation model predictions at key intersections, arterial roadways, collectors and venues

- Key Intersections

Transportation models indicated that key intersections would experience delay but all other arterial intersections would not be significantly affected by the closure.<sup>2</sup> Key intersections where San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) modeling and SFMTA staff observation predicted additional delay (for west Richmond District origins to south of Sloat destinations):

- Great Highway at Lincoln, flashing red during the pilot closure,
- Chain of Lakes and MLK Drive, STOP controlled,
- 41<sup>st</sup> at Lincoln, STOP controlled,
- Sloat Boulevard at Skyline, STOP controlled.

Delays have been subsequently observed at primarily 41<sup>st</sup> and Lincoln, where demand remains high at peak hours. Other locations have observed delay but not significantly higher than prior to road closure conditions, primarily as a result of new signal installation (Sloat at Skyline) or reconfigured intersections and changed signal timing plans (Great Highway at Lincoln).

Intersections where modeling predicted there to be delays that have not been observed include eastbound Lincoln at 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue and southbound Sunset at Sloat. More details on selected intersection traffic operations are in Appendix A.

- Arterial Roadways

Prior to the full time closure in March 2025, Upper Great Highway average daily traffic (ADT) volumes were approximately 38% lower than pre-Covid volumes, reflecting the broad commuting pattern changes with significant adoption of work from home, with a last reported ADT of 14,471 in Fall 2023.

In late 2023, Sunset Blvd. mid-week volumes were approximately 30% lower than pre-pandemic volumes; Lincoln Way mid-week volumes were approximately 7% lower than pre-pandemic volumes. Post-project, Sunset Boulevard saw a 28% increase in traffic from prior traffic counts, but volumes remain at 90% of pre-pandemic levels. Lincoln Way had no increase east of Chain of Lakes from pre-closure and remains 7% below pre-pandemic volumes.

Sloat Boulevard experienced a 39% increase in ADT, with approximately 19,500 vehicles on the roadway, but that is still significantly less than the anticipated modeled condition for a fully closed Great Highway

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<sup>2</sup> SFCTA Great Highway Concepts Report; [https://www.sfcta.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/SFCTA\\_Great-Highway-Evaluation-Report\\_2021-07-13\\_FINAL\\_a.pdf](https://www.sfcta.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/SFCTA_Great-Highway-Evaluation-Report_2021-07-13_FINAL_a.pdf)

Extension with all Upper Great Highway Traffic redirected to Sloat Boulevard (estimated at a future 30,500 ADT).<sup>3</sup>

- Collectors and Avenues

SFCTA traffic modeling predicted a shift of 15% to 20% of Upper Great Highway vehicle traffic onto Lower Great Highway and Avenues. Lower Great Highway had less than half the average weekday traffic volumes in 2024 than prior to the pandemic. Lower Great Highway now experiences volumes that are above the pre-pandemic weekday for the roadway, with approximately 700 additional vehicles per day on a typical<sup>4</sup> roadway segment compared to pre-pandemic conditions or 5% of the trips formerly made on Upper Great Highway.

SFCTA traffic modeling predicted an increase of 20 to 25% of traffic volumes on Chain of Lakes Drive; weekday counts are approximately 21% higher than the pre-closure condition. Correspondingly, the model predicted a 25% decrease in traffic on the western segment of Upper Great Highway from Fulton to Lincoln; weekday traffic counts are 30% lower than the pre-project condition. These two roadway segments together (Chain of Lakes Drive and Upper Great Highway) remain the only two western crossings of Golden Gate Park have seen a cumulative reduction of approximately 3,200 vehicles daily; those trips may have shifted to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue or to east-west roadways, changed mode of travel or are no longer taken.

Average daily weekday traffic was captured at 4 additional Avenues post-closure, with ADT ranging from as low as 1247 vehicles on 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between Kirkham and Lawton, to 3542 vehicles on 41<sup>st</sup> between Kirkham and Lawton. These are typical ranges for low-density residential roadways. More details on traffic volumes can be found in Appendix B.

## **2. There were some minor and manageable increases on Muni travel times on adjacent routes, especially for southbound 28 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

SFMTA compared February 2025 travel times to May 2025 travel times for three Muni routes that run parallel to the former Upper Great Highway segment and where additional traffic was anticipated. Full details of Muni travel times are in Appendix C.

There were no changes in travel time for the 18 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue that runs directly adjacent to the Upper Great Highway segment comparing February 2025 to May 2025 for all runs during the day<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation Project Draft Environmental Impact Report Appendix D: Transportation Analysis Supporting Documentation, December 2021

<sup>4</sup> One northern segment, on Lower Great Highway between Irving and Judah, had lower ADT than other typical segments in prior traffic counts. In May 2024, the SFMTA restricted northbound and southbound movements on La Playa to improve safety at the N-Judah turn-around, shifting La Playa traffic to the directly adjacent Lower Great Highway and bringing this roadway segment ADT up to average Lower Great Highway traffic volumes.

<sup>5</sup> There was insufficient sample size to compare peak hour travel times for the 18 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The 29 Sunset had an all-day average increase of 26 to 33 seconds of travel time over a 3 mile segment, with a 71 second increase in travel time in the southbound PM peak. Conversely, the AM Peak for the southbound 29 Sunset had a 44 second reduction in travel time.

The 28 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue experienced some additional travel time in the northbound direction but had an all-day average increase of 104 seconds of travel time over 4.6 miles of its route southbound, from Park Presidio at Fulton to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Junipero Serra. In the PM Peak, this increased to 110 seconds of additional travel time. In the AM peak, both directions had an increase of about 55 seconds of travel time.

### **3. Future projects will continue to change local circulation patterns and vehicle trip travel times**

The closure of Upper Great Highway and Great Highway Extension, southbound, represents a significant change in travel patterns and trip distribution from pre-Covid and the Upper Great Highway Polit conditions. As noted above, there will be continued minor changes to travel behavior and patterns when the SFPUC-led Ocean Beach Climate Change Adaptation project advances to construction, and the Great Highway Extension, northbound, is additionally permanently closed. This street segment closure is not anticipated prior to early 2027.

Some traffic currently on Lower Great Highway and Avenues may shift to Sunset Boulevard when the northbound Great Highway Extension segment is closed. SFMTA will coordinate with the project lead (SFPUC) and the road owner (Rec and Park) to facilitate the closure and monitor for additional traffic engineering or infrastructure improvements.

## Appendix A: Turn movement counts (TMC) for key intersections at peak hour

Figure A.1: Sloat/ Skyline TMC

Type of peak hour being reported: Intersection Peak

Method for determining peak hour: Total Entering Volume

LOCATION: 39th Ave/Skyline Blvd -- Sloat Blvd  
CITY/STATE: San Francisco, CA

QC JOB #: 16980701  
DATE: Thu, May 8 2025

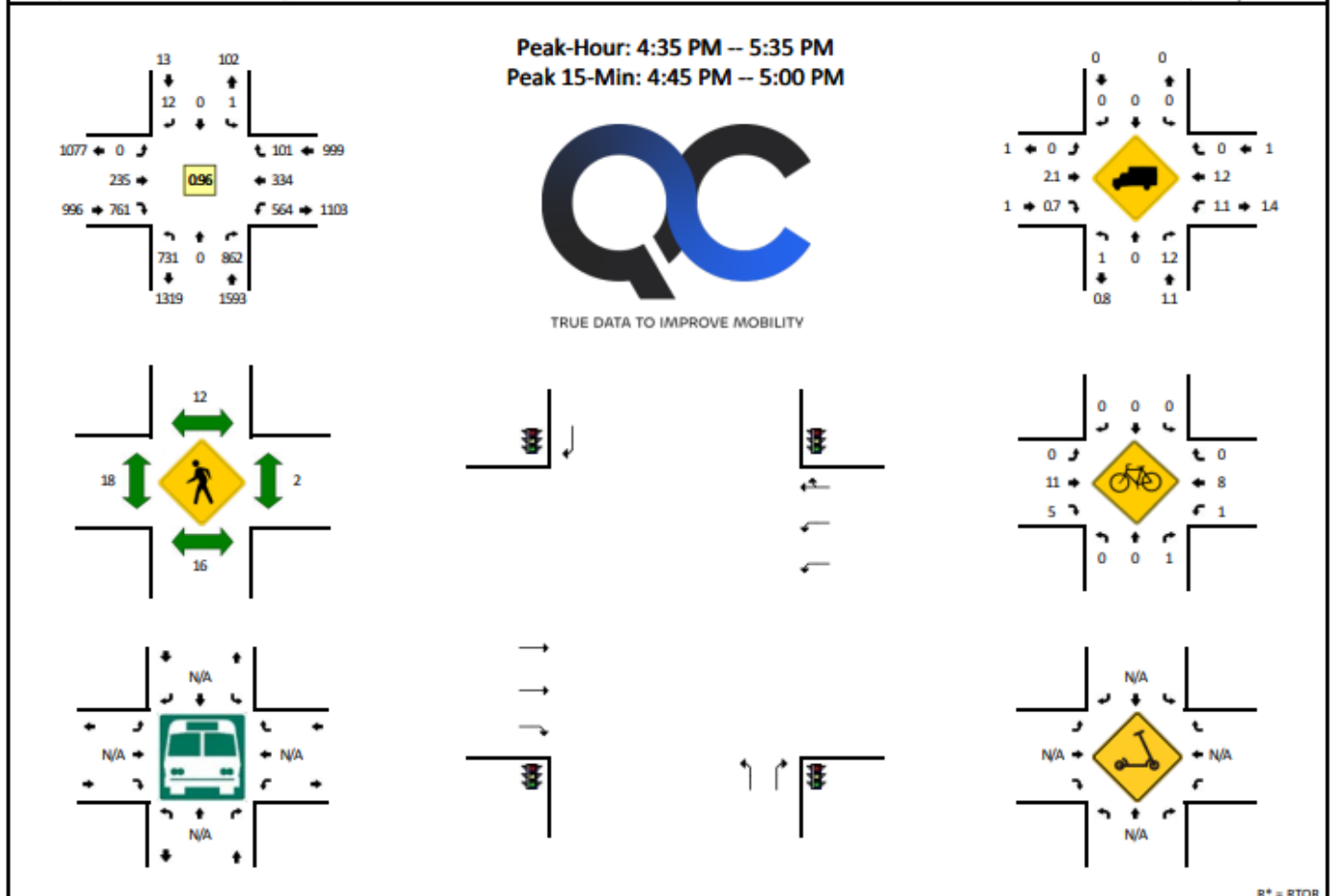


Figure A.2: Upper Great Highway at Lincoln Way TMC

Type of peak hour being reported: Intersection Peak

Method for determining peak hour: Total Entering Volume

LOCATION: Upper Great Hwy -- Lincoln Wy  
CITY/STATE: San Francisco, CA

QC JOB #: 16980703  
DATE: Thu, May 8 2025

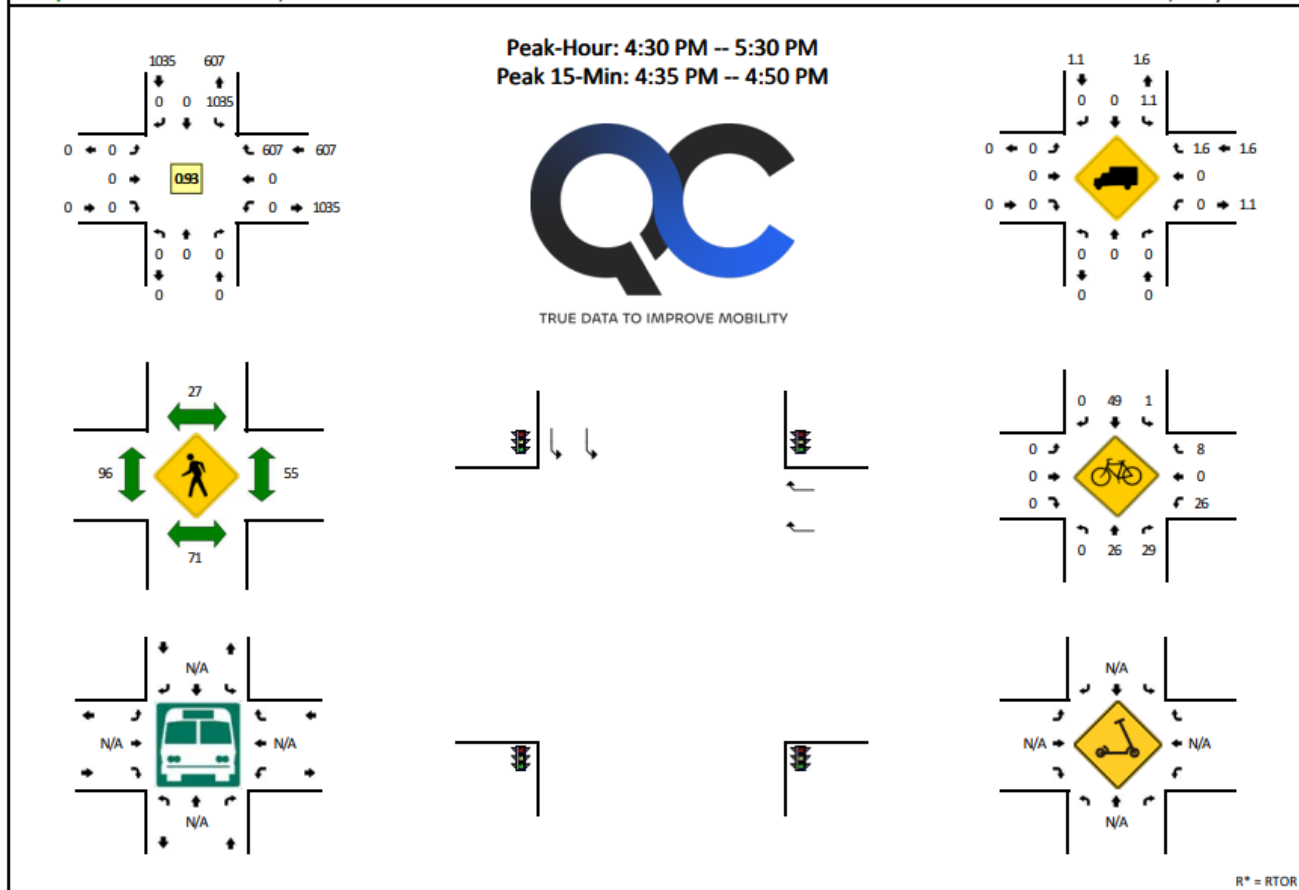




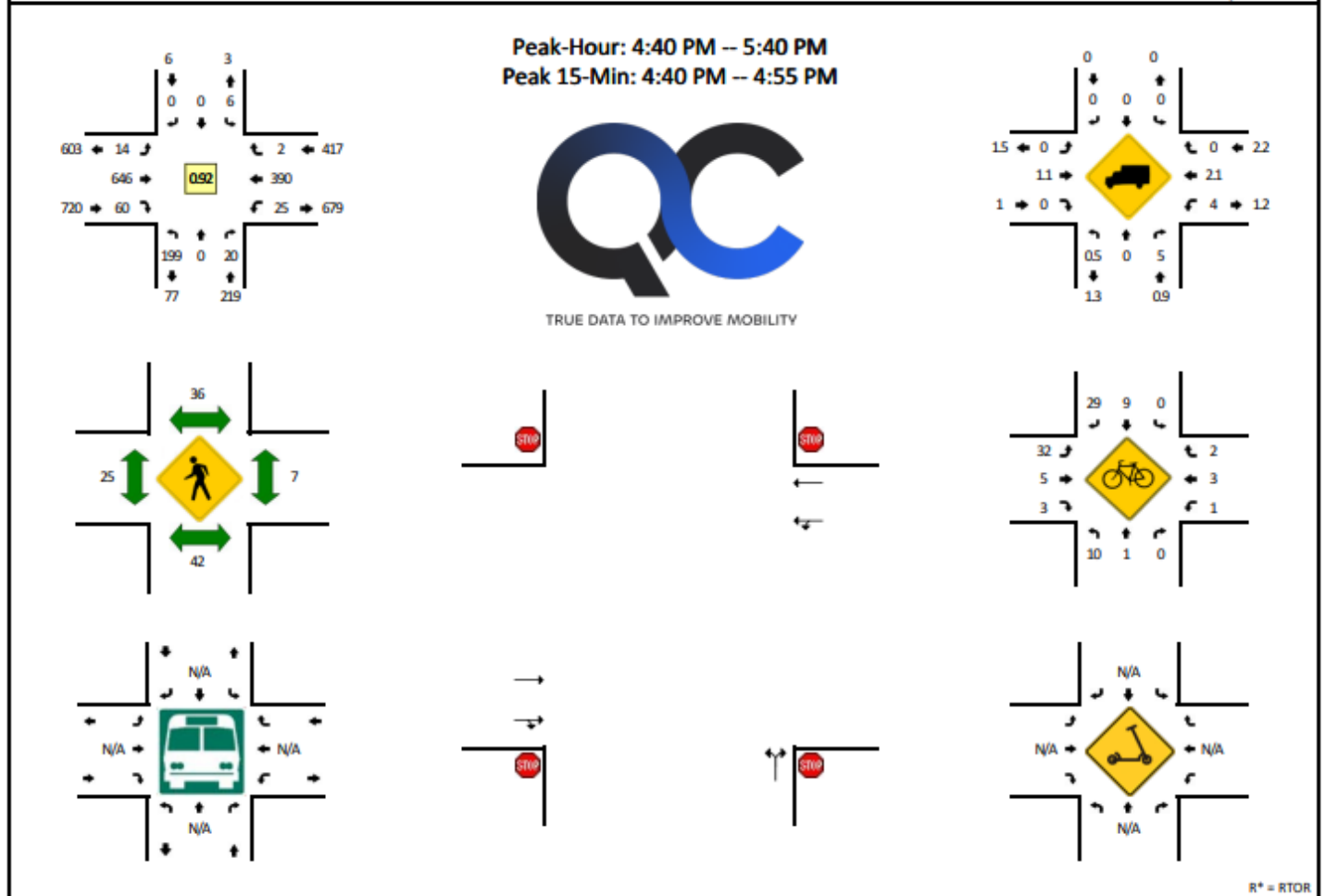
Figure A.3: Martin Luther King Drive at La Playa TMC

Type of peak hour being reported: Intersection Peak

Method for determining peak hour: Total Entering Volume

**LOCATION:** Martin Luther King Jr Dr/La Playa St -- Lincoln Wy  
**CITY/STATE:** San Francisco, CA

**QC JOB #:** 16980706  
**DATE:** Thu, May 8 2025



#### Method for determining peak hour: Total Entering Volume

QC JOB #: 16980709  
DATE: Thu, May 8 2025

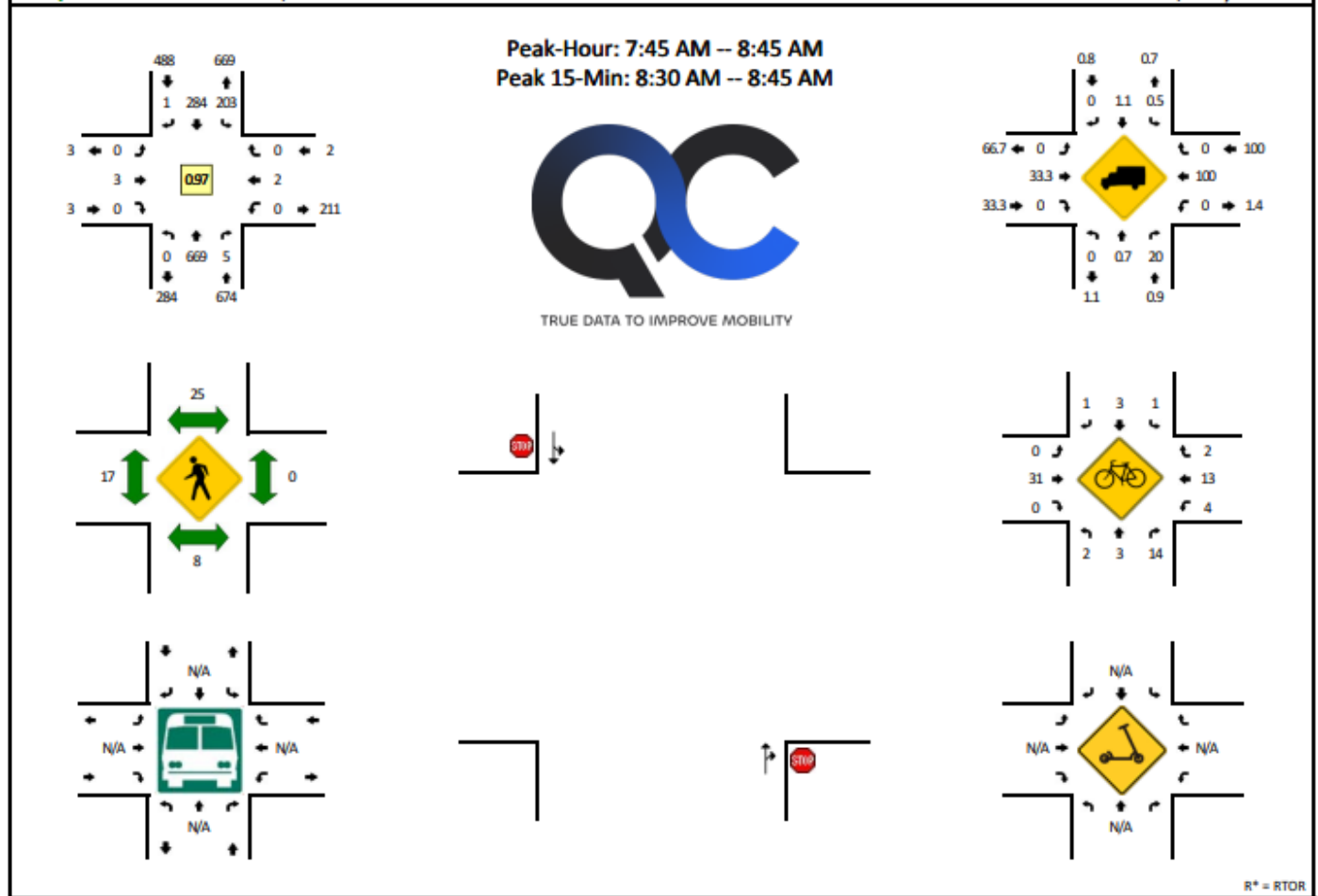


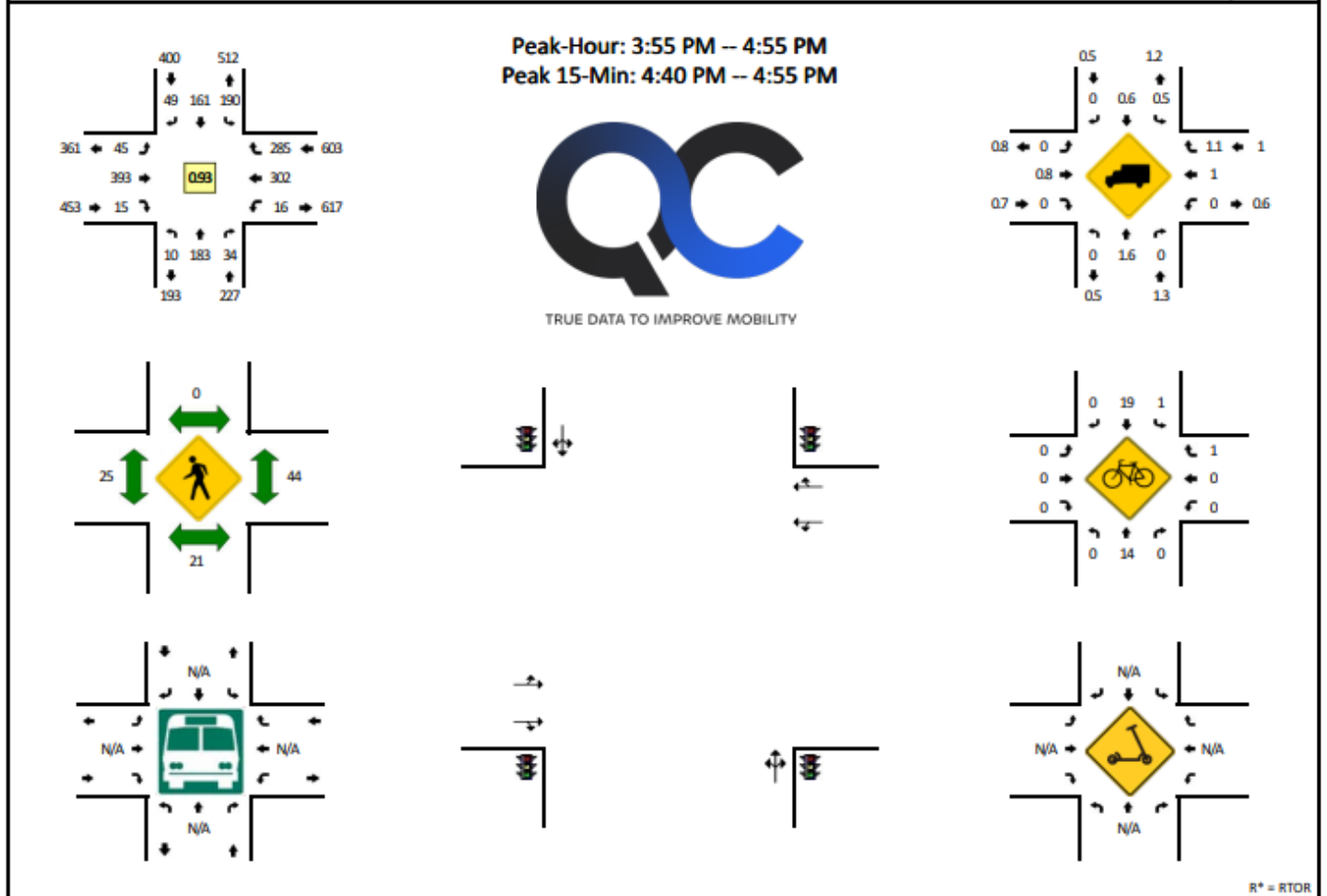
Figure A.5: 41<sup>st</sup> Ave/ Chain of Lakes Drive – Lincoln Way

Type of peak hour being reported: Intersection Peak

Method for determining peak hour: Total Entering Volume

**LOCATION:** Chain of Lakes Dr E/41st Ave -- Lincoln Wy  
**CITY/STATE:** San Francisco, CA

**QC JOB #:** 16980712  
**DATE:** Thu, May 8 2025



## Appendix B: Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts for Arterials and Avenues

Location	Spring 2025		Fall 2023/Winter 2024		Winter 2022	Winter 2021	Summer 2021	Fall 2020	Pre-Covid
	Mid-Week	Weekend (Avg. Sat/Sun)	Mid-Week	Weekend (Avg. Sat/Sun)	Mid-Week	Mid-Week	Mid-Week	Mid-Week	Mid-Week
Great Highway btwn JFK/ Lincoln	12,191		17,325	11,005					
Chain of Lakes btwn JFK/ MLK	11,206		9,257	7,617			7,974		
Lower Great Highway btwn Judah/Irving	5,121	4,302	1,718	3,283		3,302	3,048		3,121
Lower Great Highway btwn Ortega/ Pacheco	5,222	4,352	2,376	4,976	4,604	5,016	4,512		4,548
Lower Great Highway btwn Wawona/ Vicente	5,519	4,645	2,149	4,410		5,262	4,641		
Lincoln Way btwn 42/ 43	9,368		7,987	10,616					
Lincoln Way btwn 23/ 24	17,860		17,891	16,516					19,266
Sloat Blvd btwn 41/42	18,058		13,725	12,009					
Sloat Blvd btwn 41/ Skyline	19,613		14,108	13,103					15,699
Sloat Blvd btwn Skyline/ Sunset	20,976		16,698	15,692					20,068
Sloat Boulevard btwn 35/ 36	16,363		15,482	13,814					
Skyline Blvd btwn Sloat/ Lake Merced	22,837		15,112	15,606					18,674
Skyline btwn Great Highway Ext/ John Muir	26,021		27,693	20,445					
39th Ave btwn Yorba/ Sloat	980		624	601					
NB Sunset Blvd btwn Ortega/ Pacheco	11,920		9,616	8,954	9,007				13,287
SB Sunset Blvd btwn Moraga/ Noriega	11,755		8,827	9,854				9,527	13,555
41st Ave btwn Kirkham/ Lawton	3,542								
43rd Ave btwn Kirkham/ Lawton	1,247								
45th Avenue btwn Wawona/ Sloat	2,983		2,845	3,840					
46th Ave btwn Irving/ Judah	2,873								
47th Ave btwn Vicente/ Wawona	2,033								

## Appendix C: Muni Travel Times

### Full day (6 AM to 7:59 PM)

ALLDAY				Distance	Average of Travel Time (s)		seconds change	Count (n)	
Route	Direction	Stop Name 1	Stop Name 2		2025_Feb	2025_May	2025Feb to 2025May	2025_Feb	2025_May
18	Northbound	Lake Merced & Lakeshore N-NS/SB	La Playa St&Fulton St NE-FS/BZ	4.1 miles	1102.4	1086.5	-15.9	42	62
18	Southbound	La Playa St&Cabrillo St SW-FS/BZ	Lake Merced & Lakeshore S-NS/SB	4.2 miles	1144.7	1152.1	7.3	28	47
28	Northbound	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd N-FS	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NE-FS	4.6 miles	1409.8	1439.9	30.1	424	474
28	Southbound	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NW-NS	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd W-NS	4.6 miles	1462.2	1565.6	103.4	368	403
29	Northbound	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr NE-NS	Lincoln Way & 34th Ave SE-FS/BZ	3 miles	889.2	921.8	32.6	353	390
29	Southbound	Lincoln Way&33rd Ave NW-FS/BZ	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr SE-FS/SB	3.1 miles	854.6	880.6	26.0	252	259

### AM Peak (6 AM – 8:59 AM)

AM Peak				Distance	Average of Travel Time (s)		seconds change	Count (n)	
Route	Direction	Stop Name 1	Stop Name 2		2025_Feb	2025_May	2025Feb to 2025May	2025_Feb	2025_May
28	Northbound	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd N-FS	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NE-FS	4.6 miles	1,340.6	1,394.3	53.7	105	141
28	Southbound	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NW-NS	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd W-NS	4.6 miles	1,307.6	1,363.7	56.1	75	70
29	Northbound	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr NE-NS	Lincoln Way & 34th Ave SE-FS/BZ	3 miles	899.8	911.3	11.5	112	116
29	Southbound	Lincoln Way&33rd Ave NW-FS/BZ	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr SE-FS/SB	3.1 miles	871.5	827.7	-43.8	79	63

### PM Peak (4 PM – 6:59 PM)

PM Peak				Distance	Average of Travel Time (s)		seconds change	Count (n)	
Route	Direction	Stop Name 1	Stop Name 2		2025_Feb	2025_May	2025Feb to 2025May	2025_Feb	2025_May
28	Northbound	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd N-FS	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NE-FS	4.6 miles	1,449.3	1,427.8	-21.5	160	156
28	Southbound	Park Presidio Blvd&Fulton St NW-NS	19th Ave&Junipero Serra Blvd W-NS	4.6 miles	1,655.6	1,765.2	109.7	141	175
29	Northbound	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr NE-NS	Lincoln Way & 34th Ave SE-FS/BZ	3 miles	924.0	940.7	16.7	117	127
29	Southbound	Lincoln Way&33rd Ave NW-FS/BZ	Lake Merced&Middlefield Dr SE-FS/SB	3.1 miles	862.0	932.6	70.6	77	94