

Policy Update for Commuter Shuttle Stop Changes

An updated policy of the Commuter Shuttle Program for making changes to the network of Designated Stops for use by permitted Shuttle Service Providers

Commuter Shuttle Program
Taxi, Access and Mobility Services
Streets Division
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

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[SFMTA.com/CommuterShuttles](https://sfmta.com/CommuterShuttles)

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
Definitions	4
Background	5
Commuter Shuttle Stop Network	5
Zone Types	5
Changes to Network of Designated Stops	7

Executive Summary

Background: Commuter Shuttle Program Policy

The [Commuter Shuttle Program](#) is an opt-in permit program that provides a network of Designated Stop locations to participating Shuttle Service Providers. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) implemented the Commuter Shuttle Program in 2016 to manage work commute-oriented Shuttle Service with the objectives of minimizing conflicts with Muni, reducing emissions, improving traffic flow, enhancing pedestrian safety, keeping larger vehicles off smaller non-arterial streets, and limiting unsafe boarding situations. Rules for the Commuter Shuttle Program are enumerated in [Section 914 of Division II of the San Francisco Transportation Code](#), and the [2025-26 Commuter Shuttle Permit Terms and Conditions](#) detail specific administrative requirements.

The Commuter Shuttle Program Policy was [last updated in 2017](#), and this current policy update revises and clarifies the process by which Commuter Shuttle stops are designated.

Policy Update: Changes to Network of Designated Stops

The 2017 Commuter Shuttle Program Policy specified that all proposed changes to Designated Stops go through the internal Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) process, in which staff from across the SFMTA and other City departments have an opportunity to provide comments. Proposals then go to [Engineering Public Hearing](#), where members of the public can testify about the change. Prior to the hearing, the SFMTA posts notices on poles, sends postcard mailings to nearby addresses, and reaches out directly to key stakeholders. The SFMTA considers feedback received before and during the public hearing and makes changes if feasible alternatives are identified. Proposals then go to the SFMTA Board for final approval.

This policy update revises this process, and—effective December 1, 2025—all proposed changes to the network of Designated Stops that are not required to be approved by the SFMTA Board may be approved by the City Traffic Engineer after going through the TASC and the Engineering Public Hearing processes. Proposals that include the addition of a Muni zone as a Designated Stop for shared use by permitted Shuttle Buses will continue to go to the SFMTA Board for final approval, as required by the Transportation Code, pursuant to Division II, Section 201.

Reason for Policy Change

The Commuter Shuttle Program is making this policy update to align program policy with the requirements of the Transportation Code, which supports making changes to curb zones in this way. Furthermore, this policy change will generate process efficiencies and quicker responses by program staff to address operational issues at Designated Stops as well as City and industry needs generally. City staff-led oversight of traffic and curb management conditions as well as community and resident input at public hearings will also continue as part of the review and approval process for any proposed Designated Stop change.

Definitions

As used in [Section 914 of Division II of the Transportation Code](#), the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

- **Designated Stop:** An SFMTA bus stop or a white zone designated by SFMTA as a stop available for loading and/or unloading of passengers by Shuttle Service Providers that have been issued a Shuttle Permit under Section 914.
- **Director:** The Director of Transportation or his or her designee.
- **Shuttle Bus:** A motor vehicle designed, used or maintained by or for a charter-party carrier of passengers, a passenger stage corporation, or any highway carrier of passengers required to register with the California Public Utilities Commission that is being operated in Shuttle Service. A Shuttle Bus shall also include any bus that is owned, or being operated on behalf of, a governmental entity and being operated in Shuttle Service.
- **Shuttle Permit:** A permit issued by the SFMTA that authorizes a Shuttle Service Provider to load and/or unload passengers at specified Designated Stops in one or more Shuttle Buses.
- **Shuttle Permit Authorization Sticker:** A sticker issued by SFMTA that is visible from outside the Shuttle Bus at front, side, and rear locations as specified by the SFMTA and that identifies the Shuttle Permit authorizing the Shuttle Bus to use Designated Stops.
- **Shuttle Service:** Transportation by Shuttle Buses offered for the exclusive or primary use of a discrete group or groups, such as clients, patients, students, paid or unpaid staff, visitors, and/or residents, between an organization or entity's facilities or between the organization or entity's facilities and other locations, on a regularly-scheduled basis.
- **Shuttle Service Provider:** Any Person using Shuttle Buses to provide Shuttle Service within the City.
- **Stop Event:** A single instance of stopping by a Shuttle Bus at a Designated Stop for the purpose of loading and/or unloading passengers.

Background

The Commuter Shuttle Program is an opt-in permit program that provides a network of Designated Stop locations to participating shuttle operators. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) implemented the Commuter Shuttle Program in 2016 to manage work commute-oriented Shuttle Service with the objectives of minimizing conflicts with Muni, reducing emissions, improving traffic flow, enhancing pedestrian safety, keeping larger vehicles off smaller non-arterial streets, and limiting unsafe boarding situations.

Shuttle Buses taking workers and students to jobs or schools have operated for decades in San Francisco and are allowed by State law. Prior to August 2014, San Francisco did not regulate Shuttle Buses, which led to a growing number of conflicts with Muni operations and complaints from residents. The Shuttle Buses conducted pick-ups and drop-offs in general travel lanes, similar to other passenger vehicles, obstructing traffic and key Muni routes. The larger size of the vehicles along with the frequency of stops for onboarding/offboarding led to Muni service interruptions and safety issues for communities and residents. In response, the SFMTA launched a voluntary pilot program to regulate and manage Shuttle Buses in San Francisco.




The pilot program ran from August 2014 through January 2016 and provided insight and a regulatory framework that helped to shape the current Commuter Shuttle Program. In November 2015, the SFMTA Board of Directors passed legislation to authorize a permit program to allow Shuttle Service Providers to use designated Muni zones, which created the existing voluntary Commuter Shuttle Program. Subsequent revisions to the program were enacted by the Board in March 2016, and the Commuter Shuttle Program Policy was [last updated in 2017](#).

Commuter Shuttle Stop Network

The Commuter Shuttle Program allows participating Shuttle Buses to load passengers curbside at a limited network of Designated Stops—specifically designed to accommodate their size, length, weight, and frequency—in exchange for paying a fee and adhering to a set of rules and regulations. Designated Stops in the [Commuter Shuttle Program Network](#) are a mix of Muni zones shared with permitted Shuttle Buses, white zones exclusively for permitted Shuttle Buses, and several “peak extension zones,” which are temporary extensions of existing Muni stops.

Zone Types

Commuter Shuttle Program Designated Stops, as authorized by the SFMTA, generally fall under one of the following zone types:

Zone Type	Description	Standard Color Curb Paint Type	Effective Period	Example
Shuttle Bus Only	Zones designated for the loading or unloading of passengers by permitted Shuttle Buses at certain times	White	AM-peak, PM-peak, or AM & PM peak	 <p data-bbox="1036 768 1398 793">Stop #20016 (Castro St & 18th St, NW corner)</p>
Shared Muni Stops	Muni zones designated for shared use by permitted Shuttle Buses	Red	At all times	 <p data-bbox="1036 1255 1373 1281">Stop #13478 (24th St & Noe St, NE corner)</p>
Peak Extension Zone	Zones designated for loading or unloading passengers at certain times, adjacent to an existing Muni zone	White or Red	AM-peak, PM-peak, or AM & PM peak	 <p data-bbox="1036 1732 1446 1757">Stop #14424 (Divisadero St & Haight St, SW corner)</p>

Changes to Network of Designated Stops

The SFMTA periodically proposes changes to Designated Stops to optimize service and minimize shuttles' impact on residents and community stakeholders. The SFMTA considers stop changes based on staff observations and feedback from stakeholders, including residents, fronting and nearby businesses, Shuttle Service Providers, Shuttle Bus riders, and operators of other transportation services. When problems in the Designated Stop network are identified, SFMTA staff evaluates potential alternatives based on a set of engineering criteria, including:

- **Safety:** The SFMTA avoids placing Designated Stops where Shuttle Buses could block turning drivers' view of pedestrians in the crosswalk or other vehicles, and proposes locations that minimize conflicts with people walking, biking, or driving.
- **Slow Streets:** The SFMTA does not allow placing Designated Stops on SFMTA designated [Slow Streets](#) and considers the impact that shuttle stop placements will have on traffic volumes at nearby Slow Streets.
- **Impact on Muni:** The SFMTA's Transit Division reviews all Designated Stop changes. The SFMTA prioritizes Muni services and will not place Designated Stops in locations that will cause detrimental impacts to Muni services. The SFMTA will work to remove Shuttle Buses from existing Muni zones designated for shared use by permitted Shuttle Buses where conflicts are observed and will find feasible alternatives when such conflicts arise.
- **Length:** Designated Stop zones must be long enough to allow Shuttle Buses to pull in fully to the curb while avoiding blocking bicycle lanes, travel lanes, or driveways.
- **Community Input:** The SFMTA conducts outreach among residents and stakeholders and considers changes to proposals based on feedback and the ability to incorporate feedback based on engineering constraints.

Based on these criteria and other considerations analyzed on a case-by-case basis, the SFMTA may propose to add, remove, move, or otherwise alter Designated Stops within the network when deemed necessary. The SFMTA will consider feedback received before moving forward with final approval of an addition, removal, or modification of a stop within the Commuter Shuttle Program network.

The 2017 Commuter Shuttle Program Policy specified that all proposed changes to Designated Stops go through the internal Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) process, in which staff from across the SFMTA and other City departments have an opportunity to provide comments. Proposals then go to [Engineering Public Hearing](#), where members of the public can testify about the change. Prior to the hearing, the SFMTA posts notices on poles, sends postcard mailings to nearby addresses, and reaches out directly to key stakeholders. The SFMTA considers feedback received before and during the public hearing and makes changes if feasible alternatives are identified. Proposals then go to the SFMTA Board for final approval.

This policy update revises this process, and—effective December 1, 2025—all proposed changes to the network of Designated Stops that are not required to be approved by the SFMTA Board may be approved

by the City Traffic Engineer after going through the TASC and the Engineering Public Hearing processes. Proposals that include the addition of a Muni zone as a Designated Stop for shared use by permitted Shuttle Buses will continue to go to the SFMTA Board for final approval, as required by the Transportation Code, pursuant to Division II, Section 201.

Therefore, as allowed by the Transportation Code, Division II, [Section 201](#) and [Section 914](#), the SFMTA may implement Designated Stop changes in the following ways:

1. The addition of a painted white zone as a new Designated Stop or the change, including removal, of an existing Designated Stop, regardless of zone or color curb paint type, may be implemented by the City Traffic Engineer following a public hearing.
2. The addition of a new Designated Stop at an existing Muni zone for shared use by permitted Shuttle Buses shall be approved by the SFMTA Board of Directors.

The Commuter Shuttle Program is updating how changes are made to the network of Designated Stops to align program policy with the requirements of the Transportation Code, which supports making changes to curb zones in this way. Furthermore, this policy change will generate process efficiencies and quicker responses by program staff to address operational issues at Designated Stops. City staff-led oversight of traffic and curb management considerations as well as community and resident input at public hearings will also continue as part of the review and approval process for any proposed Designated Stop change.