

# Solutions for an Accessible and Inclusive Golden Gate Park for All



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## ***Solutions for an Accessible and Inclusive Golden Gate Park for All***

This paper lays out a policy vision to make Golden Gate Park accessible and inclusive for all. The JFK Promenade is a unique place where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy the joy and serenity of San Francisco’s crown jewel park. The JFK Promenade has had more than 7 million visits since April 2020, a 36% increase in daily visitors from across the city and beyond.

The creation of the JFK Promenade has also changed the way that some people access Golden Gate Park and move within it. The focus of this paper is on **practical solutions**: what are the ways that we can improve access, equity, and the park experience for all visitors, while preserving and enhancing Golden Gate Park’s most popular new amenity and destination.

### ***Summary of KidSafe SF Recommendations***

#### ***Enhance Access for People with Disabilities and Elderly Visitors***

1. High frequency shuttle service within the Park with infrastructure improvements
2. Improved access for paratransit pickups and dropoffs
3. Fast and high frequency transit service for MUNI lines like the 44
4. Affordable parking in the Concourse Garage, including more affordable ADA spots
5. Broad awareness of the 15 minute free drop in the garage at the museum entrances
6. More free above-ground ADA parking spots close to major park destinations

#### ***Strengthen North-South connectivity across all transportation modes***

7. Paratransit access to the Music Concourse via 8th Avenue, alongside MUNI
8. Private vehicle access to the Music Concourse via 10th Avenue and the underground Concourse Garage, allowing easy drop-off at the museums and access to MLK, the Bandshell lot, and other destinations south of the JFK Promenade

#### ***Improve access for low-income visitors***

9. Expanded Museums for All program with subsidized garage parking for low-income visitors who drive
10. Fast and high frequency transit service for cross-town MUNI lines that serve Golden Gate Park like the 44
11. Outreach programs with local community organizations in equity priority neighborhoods to improve awareness and access to all that Golden Gate Park has to offer
12. Affordable parking in the Concourse Garage, including a program for low-income access

### ***Public Opinion and Survey Results***

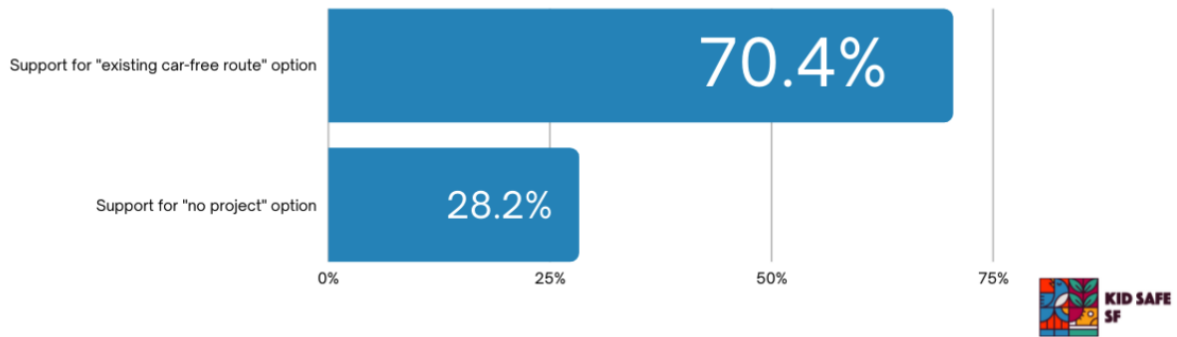
Nearly three-quarters of San Franciscans are in favor of keeping the eastern portion of John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park as a permanent car-free promenade, according to the largest-ever survey conducted by the San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority and San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. The survey, conducted from September through November, 2021, includes responses from nearly ten thousand San Francisco residents regarding the future of JFK Drive. Kid Safe SF obtained the survey response data via public records request.



GOLDEN GATE PARK ACCESS STUDY

# JFK Survey Results

Conducted by SFMTA and Recreation and Parks Department Sept - Nov. 2021, n=9,749

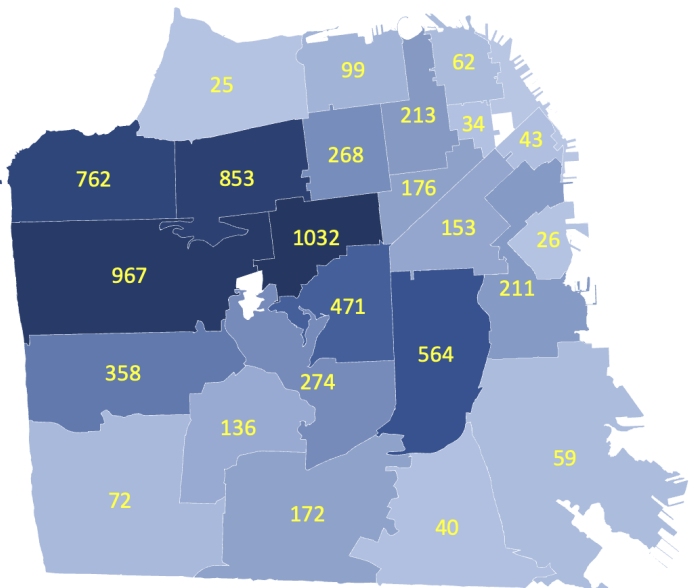
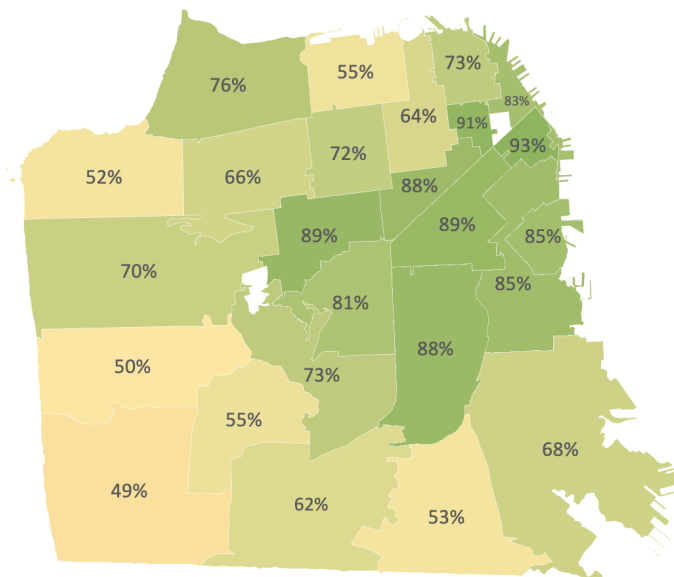


This was an unprecedented level of engagement by San Franciscans on a city-wide level:

- Among San Francisco residents, support for the JFK Promenade was even higher: 72%
- All income groups were more than 50% supportive of the JFK Promenade
- All race / ethnicity groups with more than 25 respondents were more than 50% supportive of the JFK Promenade
- 24 of 25 San Francisco ZIP Codes were more than 50% supportive of the JFK Promenade, and 59% of responses came from ZIP Codes that don't border the Park
- People 65 years old and older were well represented in the survey with 16.4% of total responses, as compared to 16.1% of San Francisco's population

Percent in support of The JFK Promenade by ZIP Code

Volume of Survey Responses by ZIP Code



People with disabilities were well represented in the survey, submitting over 1,100 responses. Blind individuals and those with a cognitive disability were more than 50% supportive of the JFK





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Promenade, but respondents who identified a mobility disability expressed legitimate concerns. We believe that access for people with disabilities and elderly visitors can be greatly improved with the right solutions.

### ***Solutions for People with Disabilities and Elderly Visitors***

Investing in improved access for people with disabilities and elderly visitors is essential so that the JFK Promenade can realize its full potential as an inclusive destination for all San Franciscans. Senior and Disability Action (SDA) has articulated several concerns with access in Golden Gate Park, and many of our proposed improvements align with SDA's requirements:

- Higher frequency shuttle service along JFK – seven days a week including stops with adequate shelter, seating, well maintained paths, ramps, and wayfinding signage
- Improved access for paratransit pickups and dropoffs
- Fast and high frequency transit service for MUNI lines like the 44 which connect the park and its institutions to many neighborhoods throughout the city
- Affordable parking in the Concourse Garage, including more affordable ADA spots and a program for low-income access
- Clear communications and signage to increase awareness of the free 15 minute drop off grace period in the Concourse Garage, directly next to the museum entrances
- More free above-ground ADA parking spots close to major park destinations and throughout the park

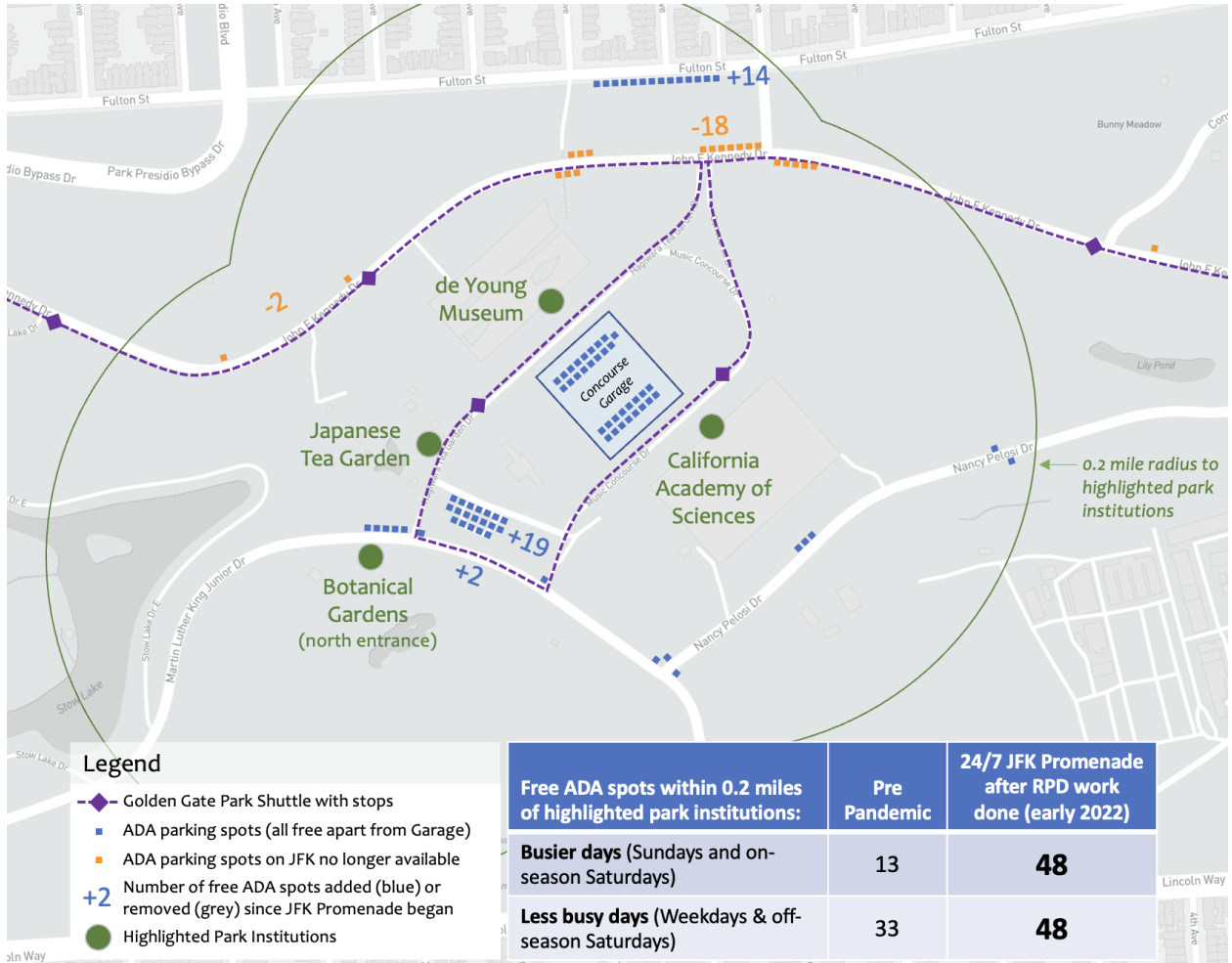
#### **Ongoing RPD improvements will yield more free above-ground ADA parking close to major park institutions than before the pandemic, while preserving the JFK Promenade.**

The JFK Promenade removes 20 free ADA parking spots near the Music Concourse, which were only available on weekdays and off-season Saturdays prior to the pandemic. RPD is adding back 35 free above-ground ADA spots, which are available seven days a week and are more central to popular park destinations.

The 20 free ADA spots on JFK near the Music Concourse that are removed are shown in orange on the map below. The 35 new free ADA spots are shown in blue with numeric callouts: +14 at Fulton, +19 at Bandshell, and +2 on MLK. **The increase in free ADA spots close to the Music Concourse is particularly prominent on the park's busiest days, where the new layout will yield a 269% increase in free ADA parking capacity.**



**Free ADA Parking: Before and After the 24/7 JFK Promenade**



In addition, adding more affordable ADA spots in the underutilized Concourse Garage would greatly improve access for people with disabilities and elderly visitors who drive, providing them with the best possible proximity to the museums. The Concourse Garage was approved by voters through [Proposition J](#) and was built to enhance access to Golden Gate Park and create a pedestrian oasis in the center of the park. Proposition J does not prohibit discounted or free ADA parking – it only prohibits “discounts or other preference for parking in the Underground Parking Facility to any officials, commissioners, directors, or employees of the City or any of the institutions located in the Park”. The current annual cost of a dozen parking spots in the Concourse Garage is just \$35K. Adding more affordable ADA capacity to the Concourse Garage could be a near-term solution provided the garage non-profit is open to collaboration, or it may be a medium-term solution with greater SFMTA and Board of Supervisors control.

**Solutions for Accessing Golden Gate Park from The Richmond**

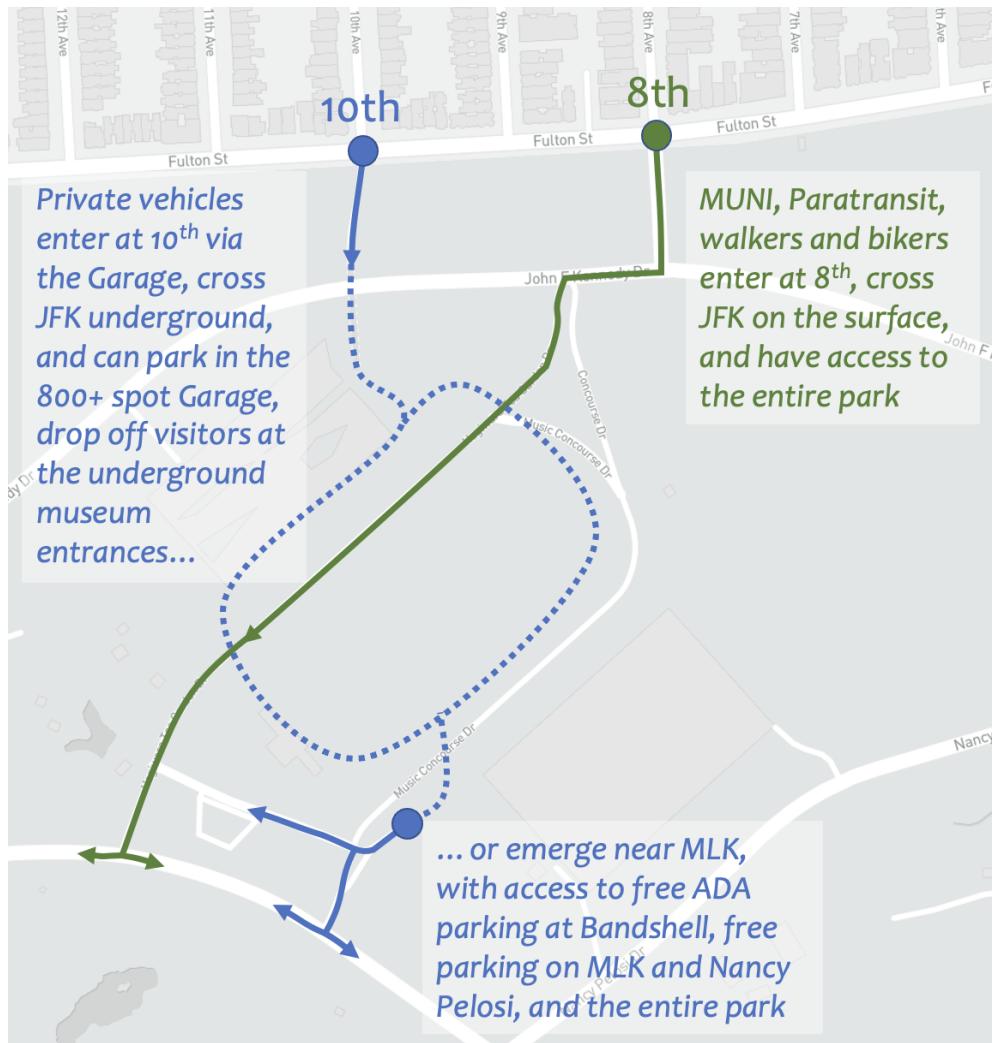
The JFK Promenade had strong support and participation from the inner Richmond zip code, with 66% of 853 respondents in support of a 24/7 promenade. Creative solutions are needed to ensure robust access to the Park and its institutions from the North across all modes. There are



two main ways to traverse JFK and access the Music Concourse area from the North: via 8th Avenue on the surface, and through the underground Concourse Garage via 10th Avenue.

Using 8th Avenue for MUNI and Paratransit introduces some complexity to the intersection with the JFK Promenade, but we believe that this compromise is appropriate given the importance of transit and paratransit access. **The 44 bus deserves priority on 8th Avenue – if it has to share the right of way with private vehicles, it will become slower and more unreliable for people coming from far away neighborhoods, reducing equitable access to the park.** Private vehicle access to 8th Avenue would also decrease safety, increase congestion, and introduce cut through traffic to the Music Concourse. Using 10th Avenue and the Concourse Garage to facilitate private vehicle North-South travel is a viable alternative that supports access for all transportation modes.

*North-South Access Solutions to the Music Concourse Area*





*Table: North-South Access Solutions to the Music Concourse Area*

| Mode                           | GGP Access Solution from the North   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Transit                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use 8th Avenue:</b> The 44 line enjoys direct access to the Music Concourse via 8th Ave., which saves transit riders significant time by avoiding congestion</li> </ul>  |
| Paratransit                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use 8th Avenue:</b> Paratransit vehicles (including taxis when they are acting as a paratransit vehicle) should be permitted to access the Music Concourse area via 8th Ave., just as the 44 MUNI line does</li> </ul>   |
| Private cars                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use 10th Avenue and Garage:</b> For drop off at the museums, enter the Concourse Garage at 10th Avenue, drop visitors off at the underground museum entrances for free (15 minute grace period)</li> <li>● For paid parking, enter the Concourse Garage at 10th Ave.</li> <li>● For free parking, enter the Concourse Garage at 10th Ave., travel through the garage and exit by MLK to access free parking on MLK and Nancy Pelosi</li> </ul> |
| Private cars with ADA placards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use 10th Avenue and Garage:</b> For free ADA parking, access the Fulton Street ADA spots, or travel through the Concourse Garage via 10th Avenue, to the above-ground Bandshell Lot with 19 free ADA spots</li> <li>● For paid ADA parking, access the Concourse Garage at 10th Avenue</li> </ul>  |
| Walking / Biking               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Use 8th Avenue:</b> as currently designed</li> </ul>   |

### ***Solutions for low-income visitors***

San Francisco’s parks are an incredible resource and amenity. However, access to green space is not distributed equitably. According to [the Trust for Public Land](#), lower income neighborhoods in San Francisco have less access to green space than higher income neighborhoods.

Free parking is a first-come-first-serve system, and does not allocate parking benefits on the basis of need or income level. Adding back several hundred free parking spots on JFK is not a targeted policy solution to improve equitable access to Golden Gate Park. We support solutions that directly and effectively address low-income access, such as:

- Expanded benefits for the [Museums for All](#) program, so that low-income visitors to the museums receive subsidized or free parking in the Concourse Garage
- Improved transit frequency, speed, and transit-only lanes for MUNI routes that connect equity priority communities to Golden Gate Park such as the 44 bus line.
- Outreach programs in collaboration with local community organizations in equity priority neighborhoods. Not all San Franciscans are aware of what Golden Gate Park has to offer, and some may not feel welcome. Outreach programs can promote greater awareness of Golden Gate Park amenities and offer welcoming and inclusive park experiences to San Franciscans who do not have equitable access to green space.
- More affordable parking in the Concourse Garage. The Concourse Garage is heavily underutilized and overpriced, and has not adopted best practices in variable pricing.

The JFK Promenade is a unique and extremely popular amenity – as a city we should be focused on how to make that joy and magic as accessible as possible for all San Franciscans, and also on how to replicate it in other parts of our city.