

1 [John F. Kennedy Drive and Great Highway - Permanent Closures to Cars]

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3 **Resolution urging the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the San**
4 **Francisco County Transportation Authority, and the Recreation and Parks Department**
5 **to consider various parameters for an equitable plan to support the long-term closure**
6 **of John F. Kennedy Drive and the Great Highway to cars.**

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8 WHEREAS, In April of 2020 and as a part of the City’s Slow Streets Initiative, stretches
9 of road throughout San Francisco were closed off to cars to prioritize recreational activity for
10 citizens during the emergency stay at home order due to COVID-19; and

11 WHEREAS, Closures as a part of the Slow Streets program were initially intended to
12 be temporary, but have since been extended for certain stretches of road to maintain
13 recreational and community spaces throughout and beyond the pandemic; and

14 WHEREAS, The Great Highway and John F. Kennedy (“JFK”) Drive in Golden Gate
15 Park, which can be considered significant thoroughfares in the City, were closed as a part of
16 the Slow Streets program and have remained closed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Both the Great Highway and JFK Drive have served as valuable
19 community and recreational spaces for citizens amidst the pandemic; and

20 WHEREAS, Closing JFK Drive is a step toward increasing pedestrian and cyclist
21 safety, especially on a thoroughfare like JFK Drive which is on the City’s High Injury Network
22 map; and

23 WHEREAS, Since the closure of JFK Drive to cars, Golden Gate Park has seen a 23%
24 increase in people biking, walking and running along the closed section of JFK, with
25 pedestrian visits up 42%; and

1 WHEREAS, 4,700 parking spaces remain available in the park representing 83% of the
2 parking spaces in the park; and

3 WHEREAS, An initial survey conducted by the San Francisco County Transportation
4 Authority (“SFCTA”), which had nearly 4,000 responses from throughout the City, showed that
5 53 percent of respondents citywide supported the permanent closure of the Great Highway
6 and its conversion to a permanent promenade; and

7 WHEREAS, San Francisco youth benefit from the increased pedestrian safety provided
8 by the closures of the Great Highway and JFK Drive to cars; and

9 WHEREAS, The addition of more car-free space in San Francisco aligns with the Child
10 Friendly City initiative that the Board of Supervisors adopted in File No. 191158, which was
11 supported by the Youth Commission in YC File No. 1920-RBM-04; and

12 WHEREAS, Relative to the closure of JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park there are
13 however concerns regarding the accessibility of Golden Gate Park for people with disabilities
14 and the elderly, which predate the temporary closure of JFK Drive to cars during the
15 pandemic but have been brought to the fore during discussion around a permanent closure;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, In the context of a history of excluding residents from the south-east
18 quadrant of the City, particularly Black residents and other residents of color, from accessing
19 Golden Gate Park, the closure of JFK Drive has the potential to exacerbate existing
20 challenges in accessing Golden Gate Park if it is not coupled with an investment in robust
21 alternatives to driving to Golden Gate Park for south-east residents, including more frequent
22 headways and reliability on the 29-Sunset, 43-Masonic, and 44-O’Shaughnessy, which
23 directly connect the park to south-east neighborhoods; and

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1 WHEREAS, However, reopening JFK Drive to cars will not solve the systemic issues
2 underlying the segregation of green space in San Francisco, and will reduce the ability of
3 youth to use Golden Gate Park as a space for recreation and community-building; and

4 WHEREAS, In order to be successful, the closure of JFK Drive and the Great Highway
5 to cars must lead to those roads becoming truly shared spaces for all San Franciscans; and

6 WHEREAS, Communities in parts of the City not adjacent to Golden Gate Park have
7 raised concerns about a lack of clarity, transparency, and inclusion of all residents in the initial
8 public outreach process; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission supports the permanent closure of JFK Drive
10 and the Great Highway to cars, with the provision that the City conduct a robust community
11 outreach effort with a focus on the equity and access to newly created open spaces for
12 residents across the City, and on increasing the presence of youth voices in this process; and,
13 be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the San Francisco
15 Municipal Transportation Agency (“SFMTA”) to ensure separated traffic for bicycles and
16 pedestrian on JFK Drive and the Great Highway; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the SFMTA, Recreation &
18 Parks Department (“RPD”), and other City departments to invest in making JFK Drive and the
19 Great Highway into true community spaces for all San Franciscans, including benches, play
20 areas, exercise facilities, and other community facilities; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the SFMTA and SFCTA to
22 implement more robust transit options for those farther away from Golden Gate Park, more
23 robust planning for disabled accessibility, and additional improvements to public transit; and,
24 be it

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the SFMTA and RPD to
2 ensure that all disability spaces removed by the closure of JFK Drive are replaced in a
3 comparable distribution throughout Golden Gate Park; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFMTA and RPD to
5 restore frequent increase shuttles to Golden Gate Park from all over the City, especially from
6 the south-east; and, be it

7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFMTA, RPD, and SFCTA
8 to conduct intensive outreach in Districts 10 and 11 on the effects of the closure of JFK Drive
9 to cars; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the City to ensure an
11 inclusive community engagement process regarding the closures of JFK Drive and the Great
12 Highway to cars, and make sure that all voices are heard including those most affected, both
13 positively and negatively, by the closures.

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Nora Hylton, Chair
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