

Highways



San Francisco Routes

San Francisco is very crowded, and so unfortunately are its main thoroughfares. The fastest routes in and out of the city are usually Highway 280 and 35, although their scope of penetration is limited. Highways 80 and 101 (freeway section) are the main transectors and are most subject to congestion during rush hour and also on weekends. These are the main commuter access routes, along with the Golden Gate Bridge. Hwy 1 as 19th Ave. should also be noted as a main rush hour corridor. Rush hour is defined for carpool purposes at the times between 5am-10am and 3pm-7pm although the mass exodus can more properly be said to begin as early as 1:30-2:00pm. The biggest crunches are entering the city in the morning and leaving it in the afternoon. Peak time backups typically extend: a) northbound 101: from Bay Bridge to Candlestick Park, b) southbound 101: GG Bridge toll plaza to Marin City, c) eastbound 80: for the full way from the S Van Ness on ramp and bleeding down to S Van Ness itself, d) northbound 280: unknown (estimate from Ocean/Geneva). Bay Bridge work often begins after 11pm which means that late night traffic avoidance strategies can backfire, but it's not usually enough of an issue to make late night travel a mistake. Easiest times to traverse the city are around 12 noon and 9-11pm during the week. The slowest way to traverse the city in general is via Hwy 1 as 19th Ave and Park Presidio Blvd, with especially bad congestion on 19th Ave between Junipero Serra and Vicente. Closely following 19th Ave as the slowest transect is Hwy 101 as Van Ness Ave and Lombard Street to the Doyle Expressway with a special emphasis on the slowness of Van Ness. Van Ness has the added down-side of being the most unpleasant driving due to high volume, aggressive downtown performance, poor light timing, and career panhandlers at every island crossing.

The prettiest way to transect the city is suggested in a combination route which will also access a great number of parks and the best coastal sections. This transection is an alternative to Hwy 1 to the Golden Gate Bridge and may also avoid a lot of traffic. It will generally take 10-30 minutes longer than 19th Ave. but is infinitely more interesting.

The main thoroughfares are discussed here mainly with and for their relationship to their parent routes which extend beyond the county. The focus for routes in San Francisco is on logistics, exit mapping, and access to parks. Significant streets and routes inside San Francisco (such as Lombard St) are clearly an interesting feature of the city, but not the focus of this project. The focus in San Francisco is on exit mapping and park access.

Hwy 1 in San Francisco County SEP98 Scenic ★+ Ease ★★★
8.9 mi. AVS10-28est G13,12 20-50"

From a 6/6 lanes in Daly City to 3/3 as 19th Ave. and Park Presidio, to the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Hwy 1 crosses the city as 19th Ave. and Park Presidio Blvd, a transformation to city streets which involves 29 traffic lights and is generally slow. The slowness is due mostly to local traffic, which is frequently intense through this inner-city commute corridor. Peak times are during rush hour and exodus from the city on weekends after 12 noon. Adding to the problem are poorly timed lights, especially along Park Presidio. Leaving the city, for example, at about 1:30pm on a Saturday can be very frustrating along Hwy 1 in either direction and take 30-40 minutes. The key congestion points are on 19th between Vicente and Junipero Serra and northbound on Park Presidio during a weekend afternoon. The southbound approach across the Golden Gate Bridge is a major commuter bottleneck. A typical rush hour evening commute can back up traffic for two miles along the Waldo Grade. It is especially relevant to note that this bottleneck also applies on weekend late afternoon and evenings as many people leave and return to the city to visit the parks of Marin County. 19th Ave and Park Presidio both share the feature of *no left turns* as a traffic abatement strategy. This applies uniformly throughout their span, the only exceptions being inside Golden Gate Park. This is useful to note in advance.

Scenically Hwy 1 poorly represents the city, as it manages to avoid any interesting sights. It passes next to *Sigmund Stern Grove*, and through *Golden Gate Park* and *The Presidio*, but not in a way which accesses these parks well or easily. There

is a good access to Golden Gate Park as it crosses Martin Luther King Jr Way. The Presidio can be accessed at one point only, a last chance northbound exit near the toll plaza which then accesses Merchant St and hence Lincoln Blvd. Stern Grove is best addressed from a westbound turn onto Sloat, which again is not possible in the northbound direction.

An alternative to Hwy 1 for transecting the city this way follows this description. It may add 10-30 minutes, but contrasts by being very scenic, accessing all the interesting parks while still staying to major streets.

Events: *Northbound from the San Mateo County line (main events only)*

- 0.0: San Mateo County line
- 0.9: Expwy ends, becomes 19th Ave
- 1.6: Stonestown
- 2.1: Sloat Ave, *Sigmund Stern Grove*
- 4.2: Lincoln Ave, enter *Golden Gate Park*
- 4.6: 25th St exit (left)
- 5.1: Fulton St, begin Park Presidio section
- 5.6: Geary St
- 6.0: Lake St, becomes expressway through *The Presidio*
- 6.4: General Douglas MacArthur Tunnel
- 7.1: Marina Blvd, Downtown (JCT Hwy 101)
- 7.5: View Area, last SF exit
- 7.6: enter Golden Gate Bridge
- 8.9: north tower and Marin County line

Scenic Alternative to Highway 1:

This route accesses the following: *Thornton Beach, Fort Funston, Lake Merced, The San Francisco Zoo, Ocean Beach, Golden Gate Park and Beach Chalet, The Cliff House, Land's End Area, Sutro Heights Park, Palace of the Legion of Honor, China Beach, Baker's Beach, The Presidio & Presidio Cliffs, Fort Point (optionally)*, and finally crossing the *Golden Gate Bridge*. Notice the bolded points—these are the most spectacular natural areas.

Use Hwy 35-Skyline Blvd from JCT with Hwy 1 in Daly City. Follow Skyline north until Great Highway (left, west). Follow Great Highway 3 miles to The Cliff House where it turns sharply and becomes Point Lobos Ave. Point Lobos joins and becomes Geary Blvd. Turn left/north on 34th Av and continue straight as it becomes Legion of Honor Dr. Pass the Legion of Honor and turn right/east on El Camino Del Mar. Follow El Camino Del Mar and take special care to stay on it in within the winding streets of the Seacliff district. El Camino Del Mar will become Lincoln Blvd as it moves into *The Presidio*. Follow Lincoln as it winds up towards the Golden Gate Bridge and turn left/west on Merchant St just before Lincoln crosses under the Doyle Expressway. Merchant St will lead to a tourist view area which allows entrance onto the bridge just south of the toll plaza. The route has now rejoined 1/101 northbound heading into Marin County.

Hwy 35 in San Francisco County OCT98 1.9 mi. G12

Scenic ★★★+ Ease ★★★+

From split off Sloat Blvd. Usually 2/2 with extra left turn lanes. 8 miles from Sloat to Hwy 280. 20 miles from Sloat to Hwy 92.

Probably the best way to get in and out of San Francisco is Hwy 35. Although only 1/1 to 2/2 lanes until joining up with Hwy 280, it is generally low congestion at 40-50 mph and prettier than other alternatives, although it does get slowed down by occasional traffic lights. Between the *S.F. Zoo* and its joining with Hwy 280, Hwy 35 climbs to and stays at an astoundingly high altitude for being this close to the ocean. There are very tall cliffs close to shore here, a fact which is most dramatically demonstrated by the monstrous slopes at mid-Daly City. A scenic highlight is the relatively high altitude stretch in Daly City which gives a long view over the South San Francisco basin to San Bruno Mountain and the bay. There is surprisingly little view of the ocean. In San Francisco, Hwy 35 accesses *Lake Merced* and the *Fort Funston Area*. The Fort Funston beach strip is accessible from the main entrance, and though it involves a difficult 'sand ladder' return climb, it is the most recommended beach access in San Francisco. The beach is also accessible from the John Muir Entrance with more of a hike to. Hwy 35 has some extended est 7% grades

CA - San Francisco County - Routes

between Great Highway and Hwy 1. It supports a nice paved shoulder, but would make for a difficult bike ride. It is not popular for this use.

Events: from Sloat Blvd

- 0.1: Lake Merced Av, Herbst Rd (to back of SF Zoo)
- 0.5: Lake Merced: parking, boat house, picnic area
- 0.6: JCT Great Highway
- 1.2: John Muir Dr, John Muir access-Fort Funston (parking for est15 cars)
- 1.5: **Fort Funston** main entrance
- 1.8: Olympic Country Club (east only)
- 1.9: San Mateo County line

Hwy 80 in San Francisco County MAY 01 Scenery ★★★ Ease ★

4.5 mi. AVS 50 G13 6"

3/3 lanes elevated expressway becoming 5 over 5 lane double-decked suspension bridge.

The *San Francisco Skyway* kicks off one of the longest transcontinental freeways in the country which begins unceremoniously as a seamless interchange with Hwy 101. Interstate 80 is 2,930 miles from San Francisco to New York City. It is the most central rush hour bottleneck in the Bay Area, and rated as one of the ten most congested traffic jams in the United States. It is also quite pretty. It is perhaps the grandest entrance into San Francisco, especially at night, and *especially* when the fog barrier is pouring over Mt. Sutro. Locally, however, it is known mostly for the nightmare of its logistical use.

Some practical things to know. The Bay Bridge has no shoulder (2001) which contributes badly to an already bad situation in the event of a stall or accident. Since the most common violation is following too closely, the most common accident is therefore a rear-end and multiple vehicle accidents are not uncommon. Most times the problem is a stall, however, and it is amazing how few accidents there are considering the volume. A carpool lane only exists on westbound approach to the toll plaza at the extreme right from West Grand Ave (nowhere else). Rush hour is defined for carpool purposes as weekdays between 5am-10am and 3pm-7pm. Congestion seems to really range from eastbound 2:00 pm-8:00 pm, and westbound 6:30am-11am* on weekdays. Weekends include a massive westbound backup in the early to mid afternoon (toll plaza to the maze in Oakland) and milder late afternoon exodus just like rush hour (eastbound). This is important to note. The Bay Bridge has one turn around opportunity at Yerba Buena Island. 80 does not access any parks. Exits are significantly different in different directions.

* 11am marks the average end of morning wait at the Bay Bridge toll plaza entering the city.

Events: eastbound from origin off Hwy 101

- 0: End of transition ramp of Hwy 101 southbound from Van Ness Ave
- 0.2: 7th St exit
- 0.7: 4th St, Embarcadero
- 1.4: Begin Bay Bridge (five lanes)
- 3.4: Treasure Island exit (left)
- 3.6: Yerba Buena Island exit (right)
- 4.5: Alameda County line, Oakland city limit (pop: 376,000) (1.2 mi. from east end of bridge)

Events: westbound from Alameda County line on Bay Bridge

- 0.9: Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island (left)
- 3.2: Harrison St, Embarcadero (left only)
- 3.2: Fremont St (right only)
- 3.7: 5th St, 101 North, Golden Gate Bridge
(*less efficient through route for 101*) (2 lanes off to left)
- 4.2: 9th St, Civic Center (1 exit only lane, right exit)
- 4.6: 101 North (Central Freeway) to Van Ness Ave and Fell St. Becomes 101 South (James Lick Freeway)

Hwy 101 in San Francisco County OCT 98 Scenery ★+ Ease 🚗

5.0* mi. AVS 50 G13 6" (for city streets section, add est 20" - 50")

* freeway section only

4/4 lanes as the James Lick Freeway, 3/3 as the Van Ness connector (elevated expressway), 3/3 as both Van Ness Av and Lombard St, 2/2 as the Doyle Drive Expressway (elevated).

Hwy 101 can be thought of in two distinct sections: the expressway which hands its baton to Interstate 80 for the Bay Bridge, and the descent to Van Ness Ave to Lombard St which connects to the Golden Gate Bridge. Hwy 101 is probably the most difficult way to traverse San Francisco to the Golden Gate Bridge on a 'freeway.' This is because it is forced by limited space to descend onto local streets near

downtown, and downtown means heavy traffic, aggressive driving, and career pan-handlers at every intersection soliciting cars. Lombard St completes the circuit via Doyle Drive Expressway and the Golden Gate Bridge. The lights along Van Ness are not well timed, but left turns are generally allowed *alternately* where extra lanes are provided. Hwy 101 is 3.6 miles on city streets compared to 29 for 1. The one great reward for taking this route is the *Palace of Fine Arts*. Access from here is preferred. Turn right on Lyon St which is the last street before Richardson Av transitions to the Doyle Drive Expressway and park easily on the street. Get back on Richardson easily from the same location. The route also passes by *Davies Symphony Hall, City Hall, Ghirardelli Square (reasonably close), Fort Mason, and The Presidio*. To access *Crissy Field*, continue straight on Lombard to Lincoln. The only way to access The Presidio from 101 is from the very last (or first) San Francisco exit just south of the toll plaza for the Golden Gate Bridge. This 'tourist perch' view area gives access to Merchant St, which means also to the highlight area of the Presidio cliffs via Lagoon Ct. The best time to take 101 through the city is after 7pm. Then it's pretty fast.

East of Van Ness, 101 is elevated 3/3 for 0.4 where it interchanges with I-80 and becomes a large expressway. South of this interchange it is the *James Lick Freeway*. It is 4/4, pumping cars through the southeastern city. It is subject to rush-hour congestion and aggressive driving is the rule in this 4/4 section, but it is fast during non-peak times. The county line can be marked by Candlestick Park/Stadium and it is here that 101 passes very close by two interesting parks, *Bayview Park* and *John McLaren Park* (see Parks) The interchange for this access is difficult however. *Candlestick State Recreational Area* is another park here.

Events: southbound from South Van Ness on ramp to San Mateo County line

- 0.4: JCT I-80 and 101 South
- 0.7: interchange with I-80 complete
- 1.8: Army St, Bayshore Blvd
- 2.7: JCT 280, down to 3/3
- 3.2: Silver Ave
- 3.9: Paul Ave: *Use for McLaren Park, Bay View Park, Candlestick Park*
- 4.1: Cow Palace, 3rd St, Visitacion Valley, back to 4/4
- 4.8: 3Com Park exit
- 5.0est: Brisbane city limit, San Mateo County line

Events: northbound from San Mateo County line to Marin County line

- 0.0: San Mateo County line
- 0.5: 3rd St, Silver Ave: *use for McLaren Park, Bay View Park, Candlestick Park*
- 1.2: JCT Hwy 280 (2 mandatory lanes right, 2B: N & S 280)
- 1.6: Silver Av
- 1.9: Alemany Blvd, Bayshore Blvd
- 2.7: Army St, Portrero Av
- 3.9: Vermont St
- 4.1: Central Freeway transition (101: 2 lanes left, I-80: 2 lanes right)
- 4.4: 9th St, Civic Center
- 4.6: transition complete
- 5.0: Duboce Ave, Mission St: *Use Mission St for 101 North*
- 5.3: S Van Ness (left, north)
- 5.5: Market St
- 5.7: Grove St: *City Hall*
- 6.2: Geary St
- 7.3: Lombard St (3 left lanes mandatory left) *left here*
- 8.3: Divisadero St
- 8.6: Lyon St: last street before expressway: **Palace of Fine Arts**
- 8.9: 19th Ave exit
- 9.3: View Area, last S.F. exit: **Presidio Cliffs-Fort Scott Overlook, Presidio**
- 10.7: Marin County line on Golden Gate Bridge

Hwy 280 in San Francisco County MAY 99 Scenic ★★ Ease ★★★

7.7 mi. AVS 50 G13 9"

From origin at King and 5th St to the 280/1 split. 4/4 west of the 101 interchange. 3/3 east of 101 switching eastbound from double-deck to adjacent divided at Army St.

Hwy 280 gets the utilitarian gold medal for use in San Francisco. This is due in no small part to its size, speed and excellent new construction. A problem with 280 is difficulty of navigating to intended streets from its complex exits. It is therefore more important here to use a map. The interchange with Alemany Blvd and Brotherhood Wy is especially confusing, making it a poor way to access *Lake Merced*. Greatest probability of heavy traffic is southbound between downtown and Hwy 101. The only park accessed directly is *Balboa Park*. Hwy 280 is an excel-

CA - San Francisco County - Routes

lent way to access Hwy 1 to the coast of San Mateo County. Exits are significantly different in opposing directions.

Events southbound from King St origin

- 0.0: Begin King St on ramp
- 0.7: 18th St, Mariposa St
- 1.4: 25th St, Army St
- 2.1: *becomes double-deck*
- 2.8: Hwy 101 South (2 lanes left, 1 optional) *No 101 North*
- 3.3: *interchange complete*
- 3.6: Alemany Blvd, Mission St
- 4.5: Monterey Blvd
- 5.4: Ocean Av, Geneva Av: City College, Cow Palace
- 6.3: Mission St: Hwy 82, Hwy 1 North: 19th Ave, SF State University
- 7.1: Westlake District: John Daly Blvd: to *Thornton Beach* °
- 7.4: San Mateo County line, Daly City limit (pop 101,500)

Events northbound from San Mateo County line

- 1.7: Geneva Av, Ocean Av
- 2.6: San Jose Av, Bosworth St
- 3.6: Alemany Blvd
- 4.1: Hwy 101 South (2 lanes right)
- 4.2: Hwy 101 North (2 lanes left)
- 5.3: Army St
- 6.6: Mariposa St
- 7.1: 6th St (to I-80)
- 7.7: 280 ends, descends to become 5th St at King St