

San Francisco approves employee shuttle rules (Update)

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Members of the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco and other activists protest outside of City Hall in San Francisco, Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2014. San Francisco officials are set to vote on a plan to start regulating employee shuttles for companies like Google, Facebook and Apple, charging a fee for those that use public bus stops and controlling where they load and unload. Private shuttle buses have created traffic problems, blocking public bus stops during peak commute hours. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

San Francisco transportation officials have approved a new pilot plan to

regulate private employee shuttles operated by tech companies like Facebook and Google and charge a fee for the vehicles to use public bus stops.

The shuttles that transport thousands of workers each day have become a symbol of economic inequality and rising housing costs and evictions in San Francisco.

The Municipal Transportation Agency unanimously approved the pilot program Tuesday in a room packed with people eager to opine about the contentious topic.

The meeting came hours after protesters blocked a Google shuttle bus, hanging a sign on it that read "Gentrification & Eviction Technologies" as police officers moved in.

The city and the companies say the shuttles remove thousands of vehicles from local roads and reduce carbon emissions.

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