



To: Interested parties and stakeholders
From: Better Streets Plan staff
Date: October 14, 2009

Re: Plan Revisions to the Better Streets Plan Draft for Public Review

Dear Interested Community Member,

Across the nation, forward-thinking cities are creating street design manuals as a tool to improve the quality and character of their neighborhoods and districts. In San Francisco, the Better Streets Plan creates a vision and provides guidelines for making the city's streets safer, greener and more enjoyable for all. After nearly three years of work and over 80 public meetings, the Better Streets Plan is nearing its completion!

In June 2008, the City released the Better Streets Plan Draft for Public Review (Public Review Draft), and held several community outreach events to gather feedback on the Public Review Draft. At that time, we also received over 100 written comments, summarized [in this link](#) and at www.sfbetterstreets.org.

Informed by this public input, staff identified changes to the Draft for Public Review and developed new and revised guidelines to supplement or supplant the existing guidelines in the Draft Better Streets Plan. This memo summarizes the major plan revisions to the Draft for Public Review, including new guidelines and revisions to existing guidelines. Full text of proposed changes is shown in a separate attachment.

In October and November 2009, City staff will be holding public discussions and informational hearings to provide an update on the Plan and present new products. Following those informational presentations, staff will finalize the Better Streets Plan and develop specific language for adoption of the Plan.

For more information, please see www.sfbetterstreets.org.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improving San Francisco's streets!

Sincerely,
The Better Streets Team

Contents

- 1) Summary of Plan Revisions
- 2) Attachments:
 - a. Streetscape Maintenance – Rights and Responsibilities: New Sidebar
 - b. Community-Led Streetscape Improvements: New Sidebar
 - c. Element 5: Promote Human Health: New and Revised Policies
 - d. Defining Street Types: New Guidelines
 - e. Street Types: Revised Site Plans
 - f. Guidelines for Non-Right Angle Intersections: New Sidebar
 - g. New Streets in Major Development Areas: New Guidelines
 - h. Sidewalk Width and Sidewalk Zones: Revised Guidelines
 - i. Crosswalks and Pedestrian Signals: Revised Guidelines
 - j. Bulb-Out Design: Revised Guidelines
 - k. Draft PUC Policy on Bulb-out and Sidewalk Widening Guidelines for Water and Sewer Infrastructure
 - l. Transit Stops: Revised Guidelines
 - m. Subway Entrances and Vent Shafts: New Guidelines
 - n. Shared Public Ways: Revised Guidelines
 - o. Draft DPW Director’s Order on Tree Planting
 - p. Stormwater Elements: Revised Guidelines
 - q. Draft DPW Director’s Order on Pervious Paving
 - r. Trench Drains: New Guidelines
 - s. Street Lighting: New Guidelines
 - t. Temporary Private Use of the Pedestrian Realm: New Guidelines
 - u. Signage and Gateways: New Guidelines
 - v. Screening of surface-mounted utilities: New Guidelines
 - w. Utility Undergrounding in San Francisco: New Sidebar



DRAFT BETTER STREETS PLAN

PLAN REVISIONS

1) SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2009



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

Mayor's Office on
Disability

SFPUC



MTA

Municipal Transportation Agency



Summary of Plan Revisions

to the Better Streets Plan Draft for Public Review

(October 14, 2009)

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Add discussion of the historical context of the use of streets as public space
- Add a definition of Better Streets: “A Better Street is designed and built to strike a balance between all users regardless of physical abilities or mode of travel. A Better Street attends to the needs of people first, considering pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, street trees, stormwater management, utilities, and livability as well as vehicular circulation and parking.”

Chapter 2: Context

- Add sidebar on the existing City policy, rights, and responsibilities with regards to maintenance of streetscape features (see Attachment A: Streetscape Maintenance – Rights and Responsibilities: New Sidebar)
- Add discussion of community improvements, including process, permits, how to use the Better Streets Plan, and exceptions (see Attachment B: Community-Led Streetscape Improvements: New Sidebar)

Chapter 3: Goals and Policies

- In Element 1: Memorable, add Policy 1.4 regarding consistency with historic districts: “Streetscape improvements in known historic districts or adjacent to historic landmarks shall be consistent with Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Districts that have been found eligible for the California Register should be reviewed by a preservation specialist to determine suitability.”
- In Element 2: Supports Diverse Public Life, add “enjoyment of nature” as an objective
- In Element 5: Promote Healthy Lifestyles (see Attachment C: Element 5: Promote Human Health: New and Revised Policies)
 - o Change title to “Promote Human Health”
 - o Add a policy to select and use a metric for healthy streets, such as buffers, noise, air pollution, etc.
 - o Under policy 5.2, add guideline: Create occasional open space using existing city streets to provide safe, free space for physical activity
 - o Add additional health-related streets policies that link to other goals and policies that promote health

- In Element 5: Safe, under Policy 6.4, add guideline, “emphasize design treatments that are self-enforcing with respect to cars parking on the sidewalk (e.g. use of linear planters, street furnishings)”
- In Element 8: Ecologically Sustainable, add Policy 8.4: "Plantings in the public right-of-way should emphasize water conservation"
- In Element 10: Attractive, Inviting and Well Cared-For
 - o Policy 10.3, remove phrase “orderly and efficient” from “streetscape environment that minimizes visual clutter”

Chapter 4: Designing Great Streetscapes

4.1. *Street types*

- Define street types by specific land use designations (in the Planning Code) and transportation characteristics (in the Transportation Element of the SF General Plan); based on existing policy. (see Attachment D: Guidelines for Defining Street Types)
- Add discussion of general goals for street types
- Change title of “Industrial Mixed-Use” to “Mixed-Use” to reflect commercial/residential mixed-uses as well, consistent with Eastern Neighborhoods zoning appellations
- Add “Shared Public Ways” as a street type
- Revise site plans to add greenery, sidewalk landscaping to residential and park edge street types (see Attachment E: Revised Street Type Site Plans)
- Revise site plans to incorporate appropriate stormwater treatments to industrial and mixed-use street types (see Attachment E: Revised Street Type Site Plans)
- Revise street sections to include dimensions based on recommended sidewalk widths

4.2. *Overall Streetscape Guidelines*

Intersection Design

- Add ‘parking restrictions at corners’ as an “Element of a Good Intersection” (Figure 4.1 in the Draft Better Streets Plan)
- Add discussion of guidelines for non-right angle intersections, such as safety considerations, use of space, turning radii, etc. (see Attachment F: Guidelines for Non-Right Angle Intersections: New Sidebar)
- Add discussion of ‘New Streets,’ to describe requirements for newly-built streets created as part of major new development or redevelopment plans (see Attachment G: New Streets in Major Development Areas: New Guidelines)

Sidewalk width and zones

- Revise sidewalk width section (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) to:

- Highlight overall width
- Focus on minimum requirements for throughway width
- Provide appropriate guidelines for edge, throughway, and furnishings zones
- Illustrate sidewalk zones in constrained sidewalk conditions.
(see Attachment H: Revised Sidewalk Width and Sidewalk Zones Guidelines)
- Allow flexibility on frontage zone if buildings are set back, on a case-by-case basis

Chapter 5: Street Designs

5.1. *Crosswalks and pedestrian signals*

- Change title of Section 5.1 from “Crosswalks” to “Crosswalks and Pedestrian Signals”; re-format section to highlight pedestrian signals more (see Attachment I)
- Expand criteria for use of high-visibility crosswalks to include uncontrolled intersections; the base treatment for a marked crosswalk at an uncontrolled location should be a high-visibility continental style crosswalk
- Clarify text to highlight discouragement of use of pedestrian push-buttons

5.2/ 5.3. *Corner curb radii/Curb extensions*

- Revise bulb-out guidelines to describe appropriate design criteria, turn radii, design vehicles, and exceptions (see Attachment J: Bulb-Out Design Guidelines)
- Change policy to allow for building curb extensions over sewer and water infrastructure per certain criteria (see Attachment K: PUC Bulb-out and Sidewalk Widening Guidelines for Water and Sewer Infrastructure)

5.4 *Medians and islands*

- Correct dimensions for median widths and detectable warnings per accessibility regulations: minimum width for refuge with detectable warnings should be 6’; minimum width for raised median with curb ramps should be 16’; detectable warnings at curb ramps should be 3’

5.5 *Transit-supportive streetscape design*

- Revise transit stop guidelines to reflect new bus shelter design, accessibility requirements, and appropriate transit stop amenities, based on the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) Muni operating framework (see Attachment L: Transit Stops: Revised Guidelines)
- Add discussion of design requirements for ‘Proof-of-payment’ stops. (see Attachment L)
- Remove discussion of transit priority flashing signal and timed transfers

- Add discussion of subway entrances, design guidelines for streetscape considerations (see Attachment M: Subway Entrances and Vent Shafts: New Guidelines)

5.6 *Parking lane treatments*

- Move discussion of perpendicular and angled parking to Section 5.3: Curb Extensions, and frame discussion about providing curb extension plazas on streets with perpendicular or angled parking
- Revise discussion of on-street bicycle parking to focus on on-street bicycle parking as it relates to other streetscape elements; technical guidelines for on-street bicycle parking can be found in the San Francisco Bicycle Plan

5.7. *Traffic calming and roundabouts*

- No substantive changes

5.8. *Pedestrian-Priority Designs*

- Change title of ‘Shared Streets’ to ‘Shared Public Ways’
- Replace existing language under ‘Shared Streets’ with “Shared Public Way Guidelines,” to describe necessary pedestrian, accessibility, traffic calming, and drainage features of shared public ways (see Attachment N: Shared Public Ways: Revised Guidelines)
- Add discussion of multi-use paths, and add reference to existing resources and guidelines

Chapter 6: Streetscape Elements

6.1. *Urban Forest*

- Add greater emphasis on water conservation and drought-tolerant plantings
- Revise guidelines for tree plantings on sidewalks and medians adjacent to intersections (see Attachment O: Draft DPW Director’s Order on Tree Planting)
- Revise discussion of soil amendments to say that existing soil conditions should be evaluated, and soil amendments added as necessary if they will improve the health of the tree
- Add reference to Bureau of Urban Forestry’s tree species list as a resource
- Eliminate discussion of selecting tree species based on food value for wildlife
- Change language to allow caliper sizes less than 2” for volunteer planting efforts
- Change language to allow for building-adjacent planters to be as little as 6 to 12”

6.2. *Stormwater Management Tools*

- Add sidebar about relation of the Better Streets Plan to the Stormwater Design Guidelines:

The Better Streets Plan focuses on types of criteria appropriate to public right-of-ways, and their applicability and design considerations for placement in the right-of-way. Technical specifications for sizing and infiltration rates of stormwater management tools can be found in the Stormwater Design Guidelines, Appendix A, as well as non-right-of-way strategies for treating and managing stormwater. The SDG sets requirements for stormwater management in separate sewer areas; however the guidelines are applicable to combined sewer areas as well.

- Add new stormwater tools: ‘vegetated buffer strip’ (sloping planted areas designed to treat and infiltrate sheet flow from adjacent impervious surfaces) and ‘vegetated gutter’ (narrow, landscape systems along street frontages that capture and slow stormwater flow). See Attachment P: Stormwater Elements: Revised Guidelines.
- Refine Figure 6.2: Appropriate Stormwater Facilities by Street Type to reflect which stormwater facilities are appropriate in which circumstances, rationalized to goals for and character of street. Change figure title to “Best Fit for Stormwater Facilities by Street Type” (see Attachment P)
- Add a figure describing appropriate stormwater element by location within right-of-way (see Attachment P)
- Add performance measure for sizing of stormwater facilities from Draft Stormwater Design Guidelines (see Attachment P)
- Permit use of pervious paving in portions of the roadway per guidelines and appropriate maintenance agreement (see Attachment Q: Draft DPW Director’s Order on Pervious Paving)
- Permit use of trench drains per guidelines and appropriate maintenance agreement (see Attachment R: Trench Drains: New Guidelines)

6.3. *Lighting*

- Add performance guidelines for energy efficiency, fixture cut-offs, color, and pedestrian light levels (see Attachment S: Street Lighting: New Guidelines)
- Add guideline: "Historic light standards (for example, the Path of Gold lights on Market Street) shall be preserved, and restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as funding allows."

6.4. *Paving*

- Add environmental performance guidelines for paving materials: paving materials should use salvaged, refurbished or re-used paving materials, re-direct re-usable materials to other project sites, specify paving materials with recycled content, and use regionally extracted and/or produced materials. Paving materials should use the San Francisco Greening Checklist (still being developed) for specific targets for these performance measures.

6.5. *Site furnishings*

- Add general guidelines for “Miscellaneous Site Furnishings” (e.g. EV charging stations, mail boxes, phone booths, call boxes, vent shafts, etc.); based on

- minimizing size and streetscape clutter, and retaining accessibility and the ability to provide trees and landscaping and a consistent streetscape environment
- Add environmental performance guidelines for site furnishings: paving materials should use salvaged, refurbished or re-used paving materials, re-direct re-usable materials to other project sites, specify paving materials with recycled content, and use regionally extracted and/or produced materials. Site furnishings should use the San Francisco Greening Checklist (still being developed) for specific targets for these performance measures.
- Add section for “Temporary Private Use of the Pedestrian Realm”: includes outdoor café and restaurant seating, merchandise displays, pushcarts and peddlers, and street artists, based on existing city guidelines (see Attachment T: Temporary Private Use of the Pedestrian Realm: New Guidelines)
- Revise discussion of bicycle racks to focus on bicycle racks as they relate to other streetscape elements; technical guidelines for bicycle racks can be found in the San Francisco Bicycle Plan
- Combine ‘gateways’ and wayfinding signage’ into one section; add new guidelines (see Attachment U: Signage and Gateways: New Guidelines)

6.6. *Utilities and driveways*

- Add guidelines for screening and minimizing visual impact of surface-mounted utilities (see Attachment V: Screening of surface-mounted utilities: New Guidelines)
- Add sidebar with discussion of City’s utility undergrounding program and the Utility Underground Task Force report (see Attachment W: Utility Undergrounding in San Francisco: New Sidebar)
- Add reference to DPW director’s order # 176,707: Regulations for Excavating and Restoring Streets in San Francisco, which requires paving to be replaced in-kind after excavation
- Remove language about shared driveways

Chapter 7: Implementation

See accompanying memo from the San Francisco Controller’s Office for discussion of institutional study to accompany the Better Streets Plan (report forthcoming).