

BETTER STREETS PLAN – Community Advisory Committee

MINUTES

July 2, 2007

1145 Market Street, 4th Floor

CAC Member Present: Jason, Pi, John, Rene, Jane, Roger, Nancy

CAC Member Absent: Rosi, Jessie, Alexandra, John

Not sure: Emily, Tim, Amy, Amy

City Staff Present:

Rosey Jencks, Neil Hrushowy, Andres Power, Ana Validzic, Cristina Olea, and Joanna Fraguli

1. Announcements and Committee Matters

- **Minutes from the May 2007** - Meeting minutes were accepted with a few exceptions. 1) Ana Validzic was not present at the previous meeting, and 2) Section 2, first bullet on P. 3 should say that the countdown timers should reflect 4.0 ft. per second, and 3) Roger Bazeley's name was misspelled in the public comment record.
- **Report from the CAC working group** – The BSP CAC working group did not meet in May so Jason Patton suggested that the CAC members check in to see how the group was working and to determine if it should continue meeting. CAC members commented that they thought that the working group was a good idea, that they enjoyed the opportunity to get to know their fellow CAC members better and discuss the issues in greater detail. Another CAC member liked the format and appreciated the opportunity to discuss the issues in a casual manner. However, they felt that the attendance was not good and wondered if there was a time conflict. One of the CAC members said that it was difficult to attend another day, but could participate if the Regular CAC monthly meeting could be extended to include a working group meeting. Childcare issues were also raised and one of the mothers in the group said that she could attend if she could bring her child. Other ideas raised were that it is important to have the City staff present. Other CAC members supported the continuation of the group and appreciated reading the minutes. Jason recommended that the CAC continue to have a working group, but that Pi Ra should check with the members to determine if there is a better day or time to meet.

2. Better Streets Plan Progress Report – (Cristina Olea, MTA)

- Cristina Olea from the MTA gave the update on the progress of the BSP. The coordination team has been meeting to discuss the scope and outline of the BSP.

The schedule is that there should be a first draft by October 1, 2007. The third round of outreach is planned for October and November before the holidays.

- Round 2 of the outreach is being developed with the consultants and should begin the 3rd week of July. The main change is that the outreach will shift to “piggyback” on other meetings instead of having its own larger events.
- The BSP Coordination team has also been busy organizing “in reach” efforts to involve the City staff that is active in street design and maintenance. The group is called the Technical Advisory Committee and the kick off meeting was attended by 35 people representing 11 departments. There are more small meetings planned for July.
- Outreach – there are several meetings remaining for Round I outreach that staff will or have attended. Additionally, there are several more focus groups planned with groups that include the Lighthouse for the Blind, and the Independent Living Resource Center. A list of all meetings was given to the TAC.

3. Round 2 Outreach Strategy – (Neil Hrushowy City Planning)

- Neil Hrushowy from City Planning gave the update on some of the refinements to the Round II outreach strategy. Some of the changes include responses to suggestions from the CAC such as increasing the cultural sensitivity and languages of the materials? The CAC should have received the draft plan and can see that there is a new role planned for Circle Point, one of the consultants.
- A major change to the strategy involves working with pre-existing meetings of community groups to piggyback on their meetings. The BSP team will also partner with the Mayor’s and Supervisors to identify key groups and coordinate meetings with the BSP.
- Stakeholder interviews - The CAC was asked to identify potential groups for stakeholder interview and focus group to allow less represented views to be heard.
- Street level events – Other activities include walking tours and tabling. The CAC was asked to assist the BSP team in identifying which groups were best served by street level events.
- Neil suggested that there was a need to formalize the CAC’s role in outreach. He asked the CAC which civic groups or meetings should be used to bring the BSP to neighborhoods? He listed the four criteria for outreach 1) that it is inclusive; 2) that there is adequate geographic representation and that it makes efforts to reach underrepresented groups, 3) and that it is a strategic use of limited resources; and 4) it is cost effective.
- Discussion and Questions and Comments from the CAC members
- Where should the CAC send comments and ideas? Neil.Hrushowy@sfgov.org - Ph. 415-558-6471.
- A CAC member commented that staff should start planning this ASAP since you’d need about 45 minutes at another organization’s meeting.
- What is the content of the outreach? Can the CAC give feedback on the website and the packaging on how to best get it to people. – Staff replied that it consists of the 17-page document of each street type as well as the policies and that comments were welcome.

- Another CAC member asked whether the BSP team could show how it plans on getting from a policy to street level designs? Perhaps a case study would be useful or a before and after simulation. The renderings on the website are fine, but it would be better to see graphics of the regulatory framework.
- Consider an existing street that exemplifies the ideas in the BSP. This might solve some the rendering problems. The examples don't need to be high tech, but should be shown in perspective.
- You should provide a simple brochure and example of what you'd want people to get out of it.
- Make the materials "explore-able" i.e., the postcard, brochure and website should all reference other documents that include more details if the reader wants them.
- Neil asked the CAC which formats are best for posting materials to the website. – PDFs are best
- Another CAC member commented that accessing a newsletter article for each organization is very important.
- The website could have increased information on it.
- What are the goals of the materials, what do you want to get back from this? – Staff answered, the schedule for presentations; the locations of the street events and a survey and comments cards are all the various ways people can submit comments.
- CAC members suggested that you should be clear about the various levels of engagement; i.e., what are the opportunities how can people get involved?
- The postcard for April was too specific and it got out of date quickly. Design for extended usefulness.
- The longer term the schedule, the better because that allows people to plan their summer vacations around the meetings.
- It would be better to hand out the overall outreach schedule at each meeting.
- Agenda's are set months in advance, so it would be important to ensure that the organizations can accommodate this outreach strategy. - There will still also be individual BSP meetings and the team will get those dates out soon and advertise the list of meetings.
- The package should also include a really integrated explanation of the pedestrian and transportation safety portion.
- It is a good idea to include good examples of San Francisco. There are good examples in San Jose and Mountain View too.
- Really ensure that we don't reduce pedestrian safety in multi-modal corridors
- Include the PTA in the outreach groups.

**Neil asked that everyone emailed specific contacts and organizations to him.

4. Pedestrian Safety and accessibility policies – (Cristina Olea)

Presentation

- Cristina mentioned that the MTA has limited funding to maintain crosswalks
- Sustainability will be considered as both financial and environmental sustainability

- We must look for ways to reduce the costs of bulbouts
- Textures and pavers are difficult to maintain
- Environmental sustainability will be overlaid
- APS how does it work? What is the purpose? Pedestrian signals that are only activated by pedestrians when they push the button, and give you an audible signal.
- People dislike having to push the button to get a walk signal.
- Some signals are used, but sparingly

Discussion

- A CAC member asked, whether or not we could use APS to increase the amount of time to cross the street? – Staff replied that the APS are only auditory cues. The City is experimenting with video detection cameras that respond when a pedestrian is still in the crosswalk one second before the light is about to change.
- Staff explained that there are opportunities for saving energy with the signals the city has used LED bulbs that reduce the energy costs of signals, so much that they've paid for the installation.
- Push buttons are used to activate a pedestrian signal and/or for APS. The City is working to develop a sign that will indicate when pushbuttons are for APS only.
- Street trees are better for pedestrians. It is also a safety issue. Trees are also important for reducing the heat island effect. Policies about trees do affect public health. A staff member replied that the BSP is a multi-agency effort that will broaden the scope of what the plan will address.
- A meeting participant asked, "What is the standard crossing time?" – Staff replied, duration of the flashing red hand is determined by dividing the width of curb to curb crossing by 4 ft/sec and then subtracting the yellow and all-red phase. For typical intersections, the duration of the green + yellow + all-red for an approach should be sufficient to allow a pedestrian to travel from curb to curb at a rate of 2.5 feet per second.
- Medians are also a refuge for pedestrians. A meeting participant asked, "what policies are there for medians to be installed?" – Staff replied that there is no current policy, but we will be developing policies as part of the Better Streets Plan.
- A meeting participant commented on a leading pedestrian interval or pedestrian head start - Mission and Ocean – where the pedestrian signals allow the pedestrians some lead time before the drivers can go. The participant stated that there should be more intersections with pedestrian head starts.
- Staff commented that the pedestrian scrambles are popular with pedestrians, especially where there is a larger volume of pedestrians.
- A meeting participant commented that this was a helpful presentation. It showed a broad framework and outlined the codes and options. Is there an opportunity for public input on the interpretation of these policies? For example, the medians and the bulb-puts, how do the regulations impact the design toolkit? Staff commented that the pedestrian policies would be worked into the toolkit. Not everything is currently in the design toolkits, but they will be integrated and added to the details in the toolkit. As we go forward, pedestrian safety measures will go in.

- A meeting participant commented the BSP should publicize the rule for pedestrians crossing at intersections without the painted crosswalks.
- A meeting participant asked, how does the fire and emergency access impact the Better Streets Plan? The Fire Department is part of the BSP TAC.
- What about street trees at the bus stops? Can we add trees near bus stops? This issue will be raised with Muni.
- A CAC member asked about when will the changes suggested by the CAC will be integrated into the draft toolkit? – Staff replied that they would be integrated in the future. This will not happen before Round 2 of outreach.
- A CAC member suggested that staff develop a library of all the comments on the toolkit. Some of the graphics are very difficult to read. The presentation and readability of the toolkit will improve. But incorporating changes to the toolkit is not a part of the contract.
- A meeting participant suggested that staff preserve time for discussion on the policies and design toolkit at the end of the meeting, including tradeoffs.
- Another suggested that staff add dimensions to the toolkit to highlight the tradeoffs.
- A CAC member commented that while today’s presentation was a good presentation he/she was concerned that parts need to be integrated i.e., ADA transit shelters that cost \$200,000 each. This was not explained well. Maintenance and costs need to be discussed for the long term funding.
- We need to include a diagram for costs that it easy to use and read.
- Staff thanked the CAC for their points and asked that the CAC continue to point out these issues so that the BSP and staff meet their expectations.
- Another comment was made that because so many of the elements in the plan are legally required and that it can be much more expensive, than trees, to meet legal responsibilities.

Public Comments

- A meeting participant reminded the group that policies can be changed and that we should set the bar high. He cited an example where the PTA and DPT work to install the ladder crosswalks in areas where there are lots of accidents. It is possible to require new rules and re-pave and make changes as we go such as aesthetic and pedestrian safety. He also commented that studies on the safety impact of marked crosswalks are flawed. In some environments we have seen DPT reduce the number of injury rates due to the crosswalks.
- A community member complained that the pedestrian activated buttons bother him, as well as the advance green light that give the pedestrians the right of way. He also asked whether or not unmarked crosswalks are the same as a marked crosswalk? He also suggested that we increase the number of intersections signs that say, “Yield to Pedestrian, State Law.”
- Another meeting participant mentioned that in Australia one must push the buttons to cross the street. They are not universal here and not everyone knows what do to. He also pointed out that ladder crossings could be painted with a piano key pattern leaving an area where the wheels go and reduce the maintenance costs.

5. Follow-up from last month's items
 - Design concept alternatives
 - Public Comments