



BETTER STREETS PLAN – Community Advisory Committee

MINUTES

June 4, 2007

1145 Market Street

CAC Members present: John Bela, Rene Bihan, Emily Drennen, Timothy Dunn, Alexandra Hernandez, John Hirten, Jessie Lorenz, Jane Martin, Jason Patton (chair), Pi Ra, Nancy Strahan, Amy Tanner, Amy Tran

CAC Members absent: Rosi Bustamante, Roger Rose

City Staff present: Adam Varat (Planning), Neil Hrushowy (Planning), Andres Power (Planning), Frank Markowitz (MTA),

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

- Minutes of May CAC meeting accepted. Question on reference to bike lane separation; Frank Markowitz explained MTA's Bike Program's reference to the Federal Transportation Manual which precludes grade-separated bike lanes. Additional comment that many believe that integrated bike lanes are safer. Additional comment that streetscape elements on corners are not only visual obstructions, but mobility obstructions as well.
- CAC working group report. Author of minutes missing. Discussed what final document produced should be and how best to maximize CAC member involvement. Comment was made that entire CAC should receive the URL to the online survey so as to distribute to contacts.
- Better Streets Plan update (Adam Varat, Planning).
 - Referencing documents distributed to committee members by email, suggestions for CAC involvement and a highlight of expected work products (schedule) was discussed.
 - Outreach update, including mention of the importance of the 2nd round of outreach.
 - Explanation of the upcoming Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
 - Suggestion by committee member that a listing of upcoming outreach meetings could be distributed to the CAC so that members could volunteer to attend based on interest and availability.

2. DESIGN ALTERNATIVES BY STREET TYPOLOGY

- Adam Varat (Planning) introduced Clark Wilson of Community Design and Architecture, consultants for the Streetscape Master Plan.
- Clark Wilson (CD+A) showed street concept plans by typology.
- Committee members offered the following comments:
 - How will motorcycle parking be addressed?
 - Sidewalk landscaping proposals must consider the need to provide space for trash pickup
 - Failures of Octavia Boulevard should be learned from, specifically:
 - Traffic signals should be prioritized for pedestrians
 - Design should make it clear to drivers what they ought and ought not to do
 - Usable space in medians is not used because of heavy traffic volume – space would be better dedicated to other ped areas
 - Important that alleys be designed to be more usable
 - Lighting levels and quality are key to a favorable pedestrian environment.
 - Question was raised as to the metrics used to assign space allocations between different modes – what is the minimum required vs. desired space allocation by mode by typology? Suggestion that this be part of the decision tree as well as shown on final plans as graphic iconography.
 - Suggestion that Berlin's BAF or Seattle's GreenFactor be applied in some way to street design. For example, parkways could be used as bioswales.
 - More specific mention of bicycle facilities should be mentioned.
 - How will tow-away lanes be considered? Peak-time, etc.
 - How will truck loading be accommodated? Should dedicated spaces be considered or perhaps dedicated times?
 - One way streets should be made two-way.
 - Maintenance, capital cost realities should play heavily in design.
 - Most of the plans suggest curb changes which are great, but costly. Greater emphasis should be paid to improvement of existing conditions with only minimal curb line changes and street re-grading.
 - Place-making should play heavily in design – materials, edging characteristics, dimensions, etc seem to be missing from proposals (Adam Varat explained that these elements were not included purposely, but will be at a later date and in other plans that tier-off from the Better Streets Plan).
 - Sub-surface treatments should be illustrated.

- How will walk-ways and stairs be addressed/treated?
- Medians should be limited and carefully considered, as they are not usable space by any mode.
- Frank Markowitz (MTA) gave a brief presentation asked Committee members for input on types of pedestrian safety elements to consider.
- Committee members offered the following comments:
 - A frame of reference was requested: what are the City's current policies?
 - Countdown timers should reflect, at least, the average walking-person's speed, which is 2.5 m/s and should allow sufficient time to cross based on this speed.
 - Are push-buttons a preferred policy? Shouldn't street lights always default to allow for pedestrian crossing?
 - Police enforcement needs to be addressed.
 - No-pedestrian-crossing locations should be carefully analyzed and new locations should not be avoided.
 - MUNI departures and arrivals should be linked, or should consider, pedestrian crossing and traffic lights.
 - How will pedestrian capital improvements be prioritized? Using pedestrian accident rates should be carefully considered, as many people avoid problem intersections and therefore accidents might be less, even though improvements are highly necessary.
 - Specific attention needs to be paid at uncontrolled intersections with three or more travel lanes.
 - The term 'high-visibility' is used a lot: what does it mean exactly?
 - Tourism and tourism travel paths should be considered – specific attention should be paid here especially because of language and/or cultural reasons (might be unaware of traffic laws).
 - A careful definition of the pedestrian realm needs to be studied and offered: what is a 'sidewalk,' a 'crosswalk,' etc.
 - Creative use of paint color – existing white and yellow, and perhaps more – should be considered
 - A scoring system for intersection safety should be defined. The most dangerous intersections, based on this scoring, should be identified.
 - It should be remembered that pedestrian countdown signals are not accessible for those with low visibility.
 - Prioritization scheme for intersection improvements should be guided by the community.

3. OVERVIEW OF ROUND 2 OUTREACH

- Jeremy Nelson (Nelson\Nygaard) and Julie Ortiz (CirclePoint) presented a synopsis of the proposed round 2 outreach strategy.
- Committee members offered the following comments:
 - A list of populations that are difficult to reach should be identified and passed to CAC members for help in outreach.
 - Affordable housing sites tend to be good places to reach underrepresented populations.
 - Flyering, especially to passers-by, should be carefully considered as it might send the wrong message (“annoying”)
 - Conflicts between uses of the street and the public realm should be identified and focused outreach to these constituents should be defined.
 - Alioto-Pier is aiming to place a ballot initiative that would increase parking requirements – make sure that this is considered.
 - An increased emphasis on advertising and developing a message is very important (vacant or underutilized city properties could be used for large-format banner advertising, for example).
 - The shift to a more focused strategy is a good departure.
 - Advertising should be multi-media.
 - Jargon needs to be identified and avoided in all advertising.
 - Images, graphics, and other mechanisms to communicate through means other than words is essential.
 - Target messaging to reflect local issues.
 - MTA should provide free advertising on busses.
 - The issue of language accessibility is key- extend advertising to non-English media
 - Perhaps PSAs, billboards (Comcast) could be available for use?
 - It’s important to incentivize participation – raffles, etc.