



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PMND Date: September 17, 2010
Case No.: 2007.1238 E
Project Title: **Better Streets Plan Project**
BPA Nos.: NA
Zoning: Various
Block/Lot: Various
Lot Size: Various
Project Sponsor: Adam Varat – San Francisco Planning Department
(415) 558-6405
Lead Agency: San Francisco Planning Department
Staff Contact: Devyani Jain – (415) 575-9051, devyani.jain@sfgov.org
Monica Pereira – (415) 575-9107, monica.pereira@sfgov.org

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Suite 400
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415.558.6378

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Information:
415.558.6377

To Interested Parties Regarding the Attached Final Amended Programmatic Mitigated Negative Declaration (PMND):

A Final Mitigated Negative Declaration is being sent to you because you either submitted comments or have expressed an interest in the Better Streets Plan Draft PMND. Where applicable, edits have been incorporated to the PMND. New and revised text is presented as underlined text in the PMND. Deleted texts have been ~~stricked through~~. Please note that comments related to the merits of the project and/or to the City's processes are not part of the environmental review under CEQA and therefore not addressed in the PMND.

The preparation or finalization of a Mitigated Negative Declaration does not indicate a decision by the City to approve or to disapprove the proposed project. However, prior to making any such decision, the decision makers must review and consider the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

If you have any questions concerning the attached materials or this process, please contact the planner identified as the "Agency Contact Person" on the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration cover page.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Mitigated Negative Declaration

PMND Date: July 28, 2010
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Better Streets Plan (“Proposed Project”) describes a vision for the future of San Francisco’s pedestrian environment and would involve adoption of a set of citywide streetscape and pedestrian policies and guidelines to help accomplish this vision. The Planning Department, San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Department of Public Works (DPW), and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) are joint project sponsors of the proposed project, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco. The proposed project seeks to balance the needs of all City street users. The proposed project identifies goals, objectives, policies and design guidelines, as well as future strategies to improve the pedestrian realm in San Francisco. For the proposed project, pedestrian areas mainly include sidewalks and crosswalks, but in some instances also include portions of the roadway. The proposed project does not focus on roadway or vehicle travel characteristics. The project would involve implementation of the proposed standard and optional streetscape improvements. Major project concepts related to streetscape and pedestrian improvements include: (1) pedestrian safety and accessibility features, such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, corner or mid-block curb extensions, pedestrian countdown and priority signals, and traffic calming features; (2) universal pedestrian-oriented streetscape design incorporating street trees, sidewalk planting, furnishing, lighting, efficient utility location for unobstructed sidewalks, shared single-surface for small streets/alleys, sidewalk and median pocket parks, and temporary and permanent street closures to vehicles; (3) integrated pedestrian/transit functions using bus bulb-outs and boarding islands; (4) enhanced usability of streetscapes for social purposes with reuse of excess street area, creative use of parking lanes, and outdoor restaurant seating; and (5) improved ecological performance of streets and streetscape greening with incorporation of stormwater management techniques and urban forest maintenance. It is anticipated that the Plan-proposed pedestrian realm improvements would be included in future site-specific street improvement projects in San Francisco, as part of the City’s ongoing streetscape/pedestrian realm improvement efforts. However, the Better Streets Plan itself is a program-level policy document and does not identify site-specific projects in the City.

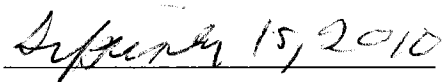
FINDING:

This project could not have a significant effect on the environment. This finding is based upon the criteria of the Guidelines of the State Secretary for Resources, Sections 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and 15070 (Decision to prepare a Negative Declaration), and the following reasons as documented in the Initial Evaluation (Initial Study) for the project, which is attached. Mitigation measures are included in this project to avoid potentially significant effects. See pages 171 through 180.

In the independent judgment of the Planning Department, there is no substantial evidence that the project could have a significant effect on the environment.



BILL WYCKO
Environmental Review Officer



Date of Adoption of Final Mitigated
Negative Declaration

cc: Adam Varat, Neighborhood Planner



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Notice of Availability of and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration

Date: July 28, 2010
Case No.: 2007.1238E
Project Address: San Francisco Better Streets Plan
Zoning: Various
Block/Lot: Not Applicable
Lot Size: Not Applicable
Staff Contact: Devyani Jain – (415) 575-9051, devyani.jain@sfgov.org
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To Whom It May Concern:

This notice is to inform you of the availability of the environmental review document concerning the proposed project as described below. The document is a Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration, containing information about the possible environmental effects of the proposed project. The Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration documents the determination of the Planning Department that the proposed project could not have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration does not indicate a decision by the City to carry out or not to carry out the proposed project.

Project Description: The Better Streets Plan (“Proposed Project”) describes a vision for the future of San Francisco’s pedestrian environment and would involve adoption of a set of citywide streetscape and pedestrian policies and guidelines to help accomplish this vision. The Planning Department, San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Department of Public Works (DPW), and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) are joint project sponsors of the proposed project, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco. The proposed project seeks to balance the needs of all City street users. The proposed project identifies goals, objectives, policies and design guidelines, as well as future strategies to improve the pedestrian realm in San Francisco. For the proposed project, pedestrian areas mainly include sidewalks and crosswalks, but in some instances also include portions of the roadway. The proposed project does not focus on roadway or vehicle travel characteristics. The project would involve implementation of the proposed standard and optional streetscape improvements. Major project concepts related to streetscape and pedestrian improvements include: (1) pedestrian safety and accessibility features, such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, corner or mid-block curb extensions, pedestrian countdown and priority signals, and traffic calming features; (2) universal pedestrian-oriented streetscape design incorporating street trees, sidewalk planting, furnishing, lighting, efficient utility location for unobstructed sidewalks, shared single-surface for small streets/alleys, sidewalk and median pocket parks, and temporary and permanent street closures to vehicles; (3) integrated pedestrian/transit functions using bus bulb-outs and boarding islands; (4) enhanced usability of streetscapes for social purposes with reuse of excess street area, creative use of parking lanes, and outdoor restaurant seating; and (5) improved ecological performance of streets and streetscape greening with incorporation of stormwater management techniques and urban forest maintenance. It is anticipated that the Plan-proposed pedestrian realm improvements would be included in future site-specific street improvement projects in San Francisco, as part of the City’s ongoing streetscape/pedestrian realm improvement efforts. However, the Better Streets Plan itself is a program-level policy document and does not identify site-specific projects in the City.

If you would like a copy of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration or have question concerning environmental review of the proposed project, contact the Planning Department staff contact listed above. Within 20 calendar days following publication of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration (i.e., by close of business on August 17, 2010 any person may:

- 1) Review the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration as an informational item and take no action.
- 2) Make recommendations for amending the text of the document. The text of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration may be amended to clarify or correct statements and/or expanded to include additional relevant issues or cover issues in greater depth. One may recommend amending the text without the appeal described below. -OR-
- 3) Appeal the determination of no significant effect on the environment to the Planning Commission in a letter which specifies the grounds for such appeal, accompanied by a check for \$500 payable to the San Francisco Planning Department.¹ An appeal requires the Planning Commission to determine whether or not an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared based upon whether or not the proposed project could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Send the appeal letter to the Planning Department, Attention: Bill Wycko, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103. **The letter must be accompanied by a check in the amount of \$500.00 payable to the San Francisco Planning Department, and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on August 17, 2010** The appeal letter and check may also be presented in person at the Planning Information Counter on the first floor at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco.

In the absence of an appeal, the Mitigated Negative Declaration shall be made final, subject to necessary modifications, after 20 days from the date of publication of the Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration.

¹ Upon review by the Planning Department, the appeal fee may be reimbursed for neighborhood organizations that have been in existence for a minimum of 24 months.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration

Date: July 28, 2010
Case No.: 2007.1238E
Project Address: San Francisco Better Streets Plan
Zoning: Various
Block/Lot: Not Applicable
Lot Size: Not Applicable
Staff Contact: Devyani Jain – (415) 575-9051, devyani.jain@sfgov.org
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FINDING:

This project could not have a significant effect on the environment. This finding is based upon the criteria of the Guidelines of the State Secretary for Resources, Sections 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance), and 15070 (Decision to prepare a Negative Declaration), and the following reasons as documented in the Initial Evaluation (Initial Study) for the project, which is attached.

Mitigation measures are included in this project to avoid potentially significant effects. See pp. 169-174.

cc: Distribution List
Master Decision File
Sue Hestor

INITIAL STUDY
SAN FRANCISCO BETTER STREETS PLAN
PLANNING DEPARTMENT CASE NO. 2007.1238E

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GLOSSARY

Bioretention: A soil and plant-based retention practice that captures and biologically degrades pollutants as water infiltrates through subsurface layers containing microbes that treat pollutants. Treated runoff is then slowly infiltrated and recharges the groundwater.

Bollard: Short post or vertical element designed to separate or buffer pedestrians from vehicle areas.

Infiltration Boardwalk: Area of infiltration in the sidewalk that is covered with durable surface material to serve as clear pedestrian thoroughways.

Bulb-out: See **curb extension**.

Bus bulb: Curb extension housing a transit stop to allow transit vehicles to board without pulling in and out of traffic.

Channels and runnels: Concrete or stone lined pathway used to convey rainwater runoff along the surface to other stormwater control measures or the city collection system.

Civic boulevard: A street with significant design treatment that relates to the overall city pattern.

Chicane: A traffic calming measure that slows traffic by visually narrowing the roadway and causing vehicles to laterally shift from side to side.

Corner bulb, corner bulb-out: Curb extension at an intersection.

Crosswalk: Designated location for pedestrians to legally cross from one side of a roadway to the other; may be marked or unmarked.

Curb extension: Location where the sidewalk edge is extended from the prevailing curb line into the roadway at sidewalk grade, effectively increasing pedestrian space. Also called a bulb-out.

Curb radius: Sharpness of the curb edge as the sidewalk turns a corner.

Extended bulb-out: Curb extension that continues significantly beyond the typical corner area, to allow space for landscaping or public use.

Flexible parking zone: Parking lane that is used temporarily for other uses such as café or public sitting.

Green alley: An alley with substantial sidewalk landscaping.

Green connector: A street designed to significantly calm and/or divert traffic, prioritize pedestrian and bicycle travel, and connect to larger open spaces.

Green gutter: A narrow landscape system in the roadway adjacent to the curb to capture and slow stormwater flow.

Infiltration: The process by which water penetrates into soil from the ground surface.

Infiltration trench: Shallow subsurface linear stormwater facilities that provide on-site stormwater retention by collecting and recharging stormwater runoff into the ground.

Living alley: An alleyway designed to prioritize the entire right-of-way for pedestrian and public space use while retaining limited local vehicular circulation. Living alleys are limited to alleys (generally <40' wide).

Living street: Are treatments applied to streets' excess right-of-way (e.g. triangular plaza spaces) for public space use.

Median: The portion of the roadway separating opposing directions of the traveled way, or local lanes from through travel lanes. Medians are generally linear and continuous through a block, and may be depressed, raised, or flush with the road surface.

Median extension: An extension of an existing median towards an intersection along the axis of the existing median (the median is lengthened, rather than widened into the adjacent travel lanes.)

Median island: An area between traffic lanes used for control of traffic movements; differentiated from medians by being generally not linear or continuous throughout the block.

Mid-block crosswalk: Marked crosswalk at a mid-block (non-intersection) location.

Mixed-use street: A street that accommodates all modes of travel with particular emphasis on supporting pedestrian, bicycle and transit movements.

Multi-use path: Pathway that may be used for a variety of non-motorized, recreational uses, including walking, jogging, biking, and the like.

Paseo: A right-of-way closed to motorized vehicles, either permanently or at specific times of the day.

Permeable paving: Paving material that provides pervious surface for stormwater to drain to sub-surface materials. May infiltrate to soil and groundwater or provide an underdrain where infiltration is not possible.

Pedestrian signals: Traffic signals specifically aimed at directing pedestrian movement, such as 'walk/don't walk' or the international pedestrian symbol signal (red hand, walking man).

Pork chops: Excess paved areas where roadways come together at odd angles.

Rain garden: Landscaped detention or bio-retention features in a street designed to provide initial treatment of stormwater runoff.

Raised crosswalk or intersection: Area where the level of the crosswalk or intersection is raised to the sidewalk grade.

Road diet: Reduction of travel lanes.

Runoff: Water from rainfall that flows over the land surface that is not absorbed into the ground.

Right turn/bus queue jump lanes: Right-turn-only with physical configuration and signage that allow transit vehicles to use the lane for travelling forward. A transit vehicle using the lane to go forward can thus “jump” ahead of non-transit vehicles that may be queuing at the intersection in a non-turning lane.

Shared street¹: Public right-of-way that is designed as a single surface with no grade differentiation between street and sidewalk areas, and where roadway space is shared between pedestrians and slow-moving vehicles.

Stormwater treatment planters: See **rain garden**

Swales: Long narrow landscaped depressions primarily used to collect and convey stormwater and improve water quality.

Thumbnail: See **median extension**

Traffic calming: Practice of designing streets to encourage vehicles to proceed slowly through neighborhoods, by the use of visual or actual roadway narrowing, horizontal or vertical shifts in the roadway, or other features.

Traffic calming elements: Physical improvements to the roadway designed to encourage vehicles to proceed slowly through neighborhoods.

Traffic circle: Generally circular raised areas in the center of a standard intersection that provide space for landscaping, and slow traffic by visually shortening the roadway and forcing vehicles to slow to go around them.

Vegetated buffer strip: Sloping planted areas designed to treat and infiltrate sheet flow from adjacent impervious surfaces.

Vegetated gutter: Narrow landscape systems along street frontages that capture and slow stormwater flow.

¹ The BSP includes guidelines for shared public ways to address concerns for differentiation of a ‘pedestrian-only zone’ from a ‘shared roadway zone’ such that there is a pedestrian-only space; guidelines also address concerns for people with visual impairments, such as paving differentiation between the shared and pedestrian-only zones. Per the BSP, shared public ways would be implemented on low-traffic streets without transit, except at ‘transit malls’ where transit right-of-way would be clearly delineated.

INITIAL STUDY

Case No. 2007.1238E - Better Streets Plan

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A-1. Introduction

The Better Streets Plan (“Proposed Project”) presents a vision for improving San Francisco’s pedestrian environment in the future. The Plan would involve the adoption of a set of citywide streetscape and pedestrian policies and guidelines² to help accomplish this vision. The Proposed Project seeks to balance the needs of all City street users. Accordingly, the Proposed Project identifies goals, objectives, policies and design guidelines, as well as future strategies to improve the pedestrian environment in San Francisco. For purposes of the project, the pedestrian environment is generally defined as areas of the street where people walk, shop, sit, play, or interact. The pedestrian areas mainly include sidewalks and crosswalks, but in some instances also include portions of the roadway.³ The Proposed Project however does not focus on any particular roadway or section of roadway in the City. Nor does it focus on the reconfiguration of vehicular travel lanes of City roadways.

The Planning Department, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), Department of Public Works (DPW), and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) are joint project sponsors of the Proposed Project, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco.⁴ According to the project sponsors, if fully realized, the Proposed Project is anticipated to confer multiple benefits to San Francisco, including promotion of public safety; promotion of the City’s transit-first objectives (in particular supporting Muni and walking); reduction of sewer/stormwater overflows into the Bay; enhancement of day-to-day quality of life for San Francisco residents; and retention of families in the City due to increased livability for all street users. If the San Francisco Better Streets Plan were to be adopted, the standard and optional streetscape improvements outlined in the Plan are anticipated to be implemented as part of the City’s ongoing and future site-specific streetscape improvement efforts, as well as part of proposed private developments that include streetscape changes. Major project concepts related to envisioned streetscape and pedestrian improvements can be grouped under

² The BSP is a policy document that directs City departments in their plans, programs, and projects. BSP Policies will be implemented over time by various City agencies. The City goes through a public process to determine appropriate streetscape improvements on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, the City implements test pilots of proposed new ideas.

³ The public right-of-way includes sidewalk, curb, gutter, on-street parking area, roadway or vehicular travel lanes, and medians.

⁴ The Plan also involved collaboration with other City agencies, such as the Department of Public Health (DPH), Mayor’s Office on Disability (MOD), Mayor’s Office on City Greening, and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA). These agencies however are not considered sponsors for this project.

the following categories: (i) pedestrian safety and accessibility features, such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, corner or mid-block curb extensions, pedestrian countdown and accessible pedestrian signals, and traffic calming features; (ii) universal pedestrian-oriented streetscape design with incorporation of street trees, sidewalk planting, streetscape furnishing, street lighting, efficient utility location for unobstructed sidewalks, curb ramps suitable for all users, shared single-surface for small streets/alleys, temporary or permanent street closures to vehicles, and sidewalk/median pocket parks; (iii) improved access to transit using bus bulb-outs and boarding islands; (iv) enhanced usability of streetscapes for social purposes/neighborhood gatherings with the reuse of excess street area, generous curb extensions for seating and landscaping, creative use of parking lanes, and outdoor restaurant seating; and (v) improved ecological performance of streets and streetscape greening with incorporation of stormwater management techniques and urban forest maintenance. Implementation of the above-noted streetscape and pedestrian improvements is dependent upon street characteristics. It is anticipated that the above-mentioned Plan-proposed pedestrian realm improvements would be included in future site-specific street improvement projects in San Francisco, as part of the City's ongoing and future streetscape/pedestrian realm improvement efforts. However, the Better Streets Plan itself is a program-level policy document and does not identify site-specific projects for the City.

A-2 Project History

The San Francisco Better Streets Plan is an outgrowth of the Better Streets Policy, which was adopted on February 6, 2006 by the Board of Supervisors and Mayor.⁵ According to the Better Streets Policy, City streets are corridors for all types of transportation, walking and transit operations in particular. (See Figure 1: Street Map of San Francisco.) In addition, the Better Streets Policy establishes that City streets are meant to serve more than just transportation needs. The Better Streets Policy requires that City agencies coordinate their activities to promote more coherent street design throughout San Francisco, such that City streets serve a variety of roles, including safe and accessible movement of all travel modes (with an emphasis on pedestrians and transit operations), social and recreational purposes, as well as ecological functions.

The San Francisco Better Streets Plan (Proposed Project) was initiated in Fall 2006. The Proposed Project brought together two separate planning efforts that were simultaneously underway at that time: (1) the Pedestrian Master Plan led by SFMTA; and (2) the Streetscape Master Plan led by the Mayor's Office of Greening.⁶ These related efforts were combined to develop the Proposed Project, which has a broader focus of improving various aspects of the pedestrian environment. Development of the

⁵ See San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 98.

⁶ The Streetscape Master Plan also involved input of the Planning Department, DPW, and SFPUC.

