

C. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Round 1 meetings: APRIL-JUNE 2007

During the first round of public outreach for the Better Streets Plan, the City held over 35 public meetings to gather public input, including:

- A Citywide kick-off event held at City Hall on April 5, 2007
- Four neighborhood meetings in different neighborhoods around the City
- Three meetings targeted for populations specifically affected by the pedestrian environment, such as seniors and people with mobility or visual impairments
- Four focus groups in neighborhoods to get directed community input
- Over 25 meetings with neighborhood and advocacy organizations, held by request of the organization

The first round of outreach provided residents the opportunity to comment on the vision and goals of the Better Streets Plan, as well as to provide input into what issues are of greatest concern in their neighborhood. At each of these meetings, there were multiple ways for the public to give its input into the Better Streets Plan goals and objectives, including:

- Facilitated small group exercises
- Comment boards
- Questions and answers periods for City staff from multiple departments
- Surveys
- Comment sheets
- Informal discussion and correspondence

Survey Results

Nearly 1,000 people from across the city filled out the Round 1 Better Streets Plan survey, both in print and online. The surveys asked respondents to rank on a scale of 1 to 7 the most important street improvements to them.

The five most highly rated improvements in order of priority were:

- Street trees
- Greenery (landscaping other than trees)
- Sidewalk maintenance
- Clear sidewalks (free from obstructions)
- Slower traffic

Table 1:

AVERAGE SCORE FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS (SCALE OF 1 TO 7)

Trees	5.6
Greenery	5.4
Sidewalk Maintenance	5.3
Blocked Sidewalks	5.3
Slower Traffic	5.3
Pedestrian Lighting	5.1
Places to Sit	5.0
Crosswalk Conditions	5.0
Sidewalk Materials	4.8
Countdown Signals	4.8
Wider Sidewalks	4.6
Narrow Street Crossings	4.1
Curb Ramps	4.0

The survey also asked respondents to describe how frequently they walk in the city to various destinations. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2:

FREQUENCY OF WALKING TRIPS FROM HOME

	At least several times per week	Once per week or less
Transit	64%	36%
Café or Restaurant	61%	39%
Buy Groceries	54%	46%
Visit a Friend	39%	61%

Key Issues

The key issues raised by the public during the community workshops can be divided into five categories:

1. Aesthetics and landscaping
2. Community space
3. Ecological design
4. Pedestrian safety
5. Universal access

Many comments overlap among categories and are listed more than once.

1) *Aesthetics and landscaping*

Community participants in the Better Streets Plan process indicated that they value aesthetics and greening of the City's streets and sidewalks. Participants felt that San Francisco could do much more to improve the attractiveness of its pedestrian spaces by paying more attention to the design of landscaping, lighting, choice of materials, and street furnishings. Participants also emphasized the importance of keeping streets and sidewalks clean and in good repair.

The main aesthetics and landscaping improvements discussed by participants were:

- Add and improve landscaping
- Better maintain streets and sidewalks
- Use attractive paving materials
- Provide more street furniture and amenities
- Provide more active and transparent building front-ages

2) *Community space*

Community participants also expressed a desire to see more and better spaces for community interaction. Participants felt that there are too many cars, moving too fast, and not enough safe and attractive spaces for pedestrians. Overall, participants' comments either were directed at creating better conditions for pedestrians, mostly by mitigating the negative effect of traffic, or at creating new or better spaces for pedestrians, such as by creating new public plazas that have pedestrian amenities.

The main community space improvements discussed by participants were:

- Implement more traffic calming to improve pedestrian safety
- Provide more street furniture and amenities
- Add sidewalk vendors and café seating
- Add and improve public spaces
- Create streets that encourage activity and promote safety

3) *Ecological design*

Participants were also interested in ecological design of streets, despite often not being familiar with the technical details. Tree planting and green landscaping were viewed as two of the most important elements in building more enjoyable and more attractive sidewalks and streets. Participants also expressed interest in ecological design for stormwater management.

The main ecological design improvements discussed by participants were:

- Add and improve landscaping
- Use more permeable materials

4) *Pedestrian Safety*

Many community participants highlighted pedestrian safety as a primary concern. Participants frequently mentioned calming auto traffic and increasing pedestrian visibility as two means to achieve a higher level of pedestrian safety. Participants also frequently mentioned better enforcement of existing laws, such as the prohibition of parking on the sidewalk, as a key priority. The main pedestrian safety improvements discussed by participants were:

- Implement more traffic calming to improve pedestrian safety
- Allow fewer curb cuts
- Provide more pedestrian-level lighting
- Enforce policy on parked cars on the sidewalk

- Remove parking spaces and replace with non-automobile uses
- Improve wayfinding and signage
- Provide safer streets in terms of personal security (safety from crime and violence)

5) *Universal Access*

Lastly, participants highlighted a need for street design to be accessible for all. Universal access focused on removing barriers to moving about, such as narrow, broken and/or cluttered sidewalks, cars parked on the sidewalk, and inadequate lighting for pedestrians. Many participants also highlighted that transit service and bicycling are intimately linked to the quality of the pedestrian environment, and mentioned the need for better conditions around transit stops and bikeways.

The main universal access improvements discussed by participants were:

- Widen sidewalks and remove clutter
- Better maintenance of sidewalks and streets
- Enforce policy on parked cars on the sidewalk
- Improve wayfinding and signage
- Improve walking conditions around transit stops
- Provide more bike lanes and bike parking

Round 2 meetings: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2007

Round 2 meetings consisted of a number of different types of community involvement spread across town, including:

- 4 tabling events at key pedestrian locations
- 2 key user group meetings
- 6 focus groups (stakeholder interviews with key organizations)
- Over 25 neighborhood meetings attended
- A walking tour
- A round 2 survey

Tabling events

Four tabling events were held, at Ferry Plaza (Embarcadero), at Vallejo and Grant Streets (outside Cafe Trieste, North Beach), at the West Portal Muni Station, and at the 24th Street BART station. Tabling events were designed to reach members of the public who might not generally come to a formal public meeting. At all tabling events, City staff was present to hand out information on the Better Streets Plan, distribute surveys, and discuss plan concepts with members of the public.

Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholder interviews were held with directors of the following organizations: Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Friends of the Urban Forest, Livable City, San Francisco Bike Coalition, Senior Action Network, SF Beautiful, Small Business Network, SPUR, Urban Land Institute, WalkSF, and Youth Leadership Institute. Meetings were held with two groups at a time, to encourage people to look beyond their organizations' particular mission.

Key priorities identified in the stakeholder interviews included:

1. Increase the public realm (i.e., all types of public space)
2. More attractive and inviting streets
3. More focus on safety, broadly conceived
4. Better maintenance
5. Reduce traffic volume and speed on more streets
6. Widen sidewalks
7. Citywide sustainability
8. Balance commercial needs and quality of life needs
9. Balance transit and parking needs
10. Increase coordination with merchant groups
11. Bike safety
12. Concerns of tourists
13. Public health connection

The Better Streets Team also held two meetings with key user groups who are disproportionately impacted by pedestrian conditions, including seniors and people with disabilities. Meetings were held with Senior Action Network, Lighthouse for the Blind

and Visually Impaired, and the Independent Living Resource Center. The latter two decided to combine into one meeting.

At each meeting, a brief presentation was followed by interactive small group exercises to discuss participants' priorities about streetscape and pedestrian design, and to get their feedback on initial plan concepts.

Key priorities discussed by participants included:

Physical improvements:

1. Improvements at high-volume traffic intersections – bulbouts, medians and curb ramps
2. Increased crossing times, especially for wide streets
3. Accessible wayfinding signage
4. Improved pedestrian-level lighting
5. Amenities at bus stops, especially seating

Enforcement:

1. Cars parked on sidewalks
2. Pedestrian right-of-way in intersections
3. Dogs on leashes
4. Bikes on sidewalks
5. Clear path of travel
6. Homelessness, street crimes and other social behaviors that undermine quality of life
7. Aggressive driving behavior

Neighborhood Meetings

Round 2 also included several presentations to community groups, including: Network for Elders, North Beach Neighbors, Quesada Gardens Initiative, and Taraval Merchants Association. Key feedback from these meetings included:

1. Let community identify best places for new community amenities
2. Better maintenance – sidewalks and trees, dumping and garbage
3. Prioritize pedestrian needs

4. Beautify retail streets to support businesses

5. Better interagency coordination

Youth Walking Tour

Finally, the Better Streets Team conducted a walking tour with BAYCAT, Literacy for Environmental Justice, and Youth Leadership Institute. The walking tour took 10 high school and college aged youth from the Bayview neighborhood on a tour of local streets. BAYCAT, a Bayview arts education organization, filmed the entire walking tour and prepared a video of the event.

Much of the tour was centered on the Third Street corridor, with the plaza at Third and Palou as the culminating point. Individual participants pointed out various notable streetscape elements. Participants also noted specific streetscape problems, the human consequences of those problems, and possible solutions through physical design. After the tour, participants gathered to discuss the tour and recommendations to provide input to the Better Streets Plan.

Tour participants identified the following priorities and observations:

1. The built environment influences behavior
2. Physical design was seen as more important than either enforcement or education
3. Community gathering places are very important
4. Community involvement is very important
5. Inconsistencies in sidewalks should be filled in

The list on the following page summarizes community meetings attended by Better Streets Plan staff to present and gather feedback on the plan development. The list does not include monthly Community Advisory Committee meetings.