



BROADWAY TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT FEBRUARY 2009

PREPARED BY:

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PLANNING DIVISION
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CHAPTER 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Broadway Area Traffic Calming Project focuses on traffic circulation around two schools on Broadway between Fillmore and Buchanan. This report documents current congestion around the schools during pick-up and drop-off times. It recommends the striping of additional white zones as well as programs to increase the use of alternative modes to access the school.

CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION

In 2003, neighbors submitted a traffic calming application for Broadway between Fillmore and Buchanan Streets. The application stated that speeding was the main concern on the street. A speed survey was conducted and was found to support the speeding concern. The application was accepted and ranked by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA) Traffic Calming Program.

In 2008, the SFMTA was awarded a grant to make striping changes on Broadway, reducing the number of automobile lanes in each direction. In two community meetings, it became clear that speeding was not the main issue. Instead, the main concern was traffic circulation during the pick-up and drop-off times at both schools the Hamlin and Convent of Sacred Heart (CSH) schools which are both located on Broadway within a block of each other. Attendees at the meetings agreed that the focus of this effort should be improving the schools' pick-up and drop-off system.



Figure 1: Project Area Map

CHAPTER 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Broadway between Fillmore and Buchanan Streets is a four-lane road with two lanes in each direction. It is 50 feet wide with an average daily volume of 7600 vehicles. A speed survey conducted in 2004 shows the prevailing 85th percentile speed to be 30-31 MPH. No MUNI routes run along this street. All intersections of Broadway in this area are all-way STOP controlled. A No Right Turn restriction exists during pick-up and drop-off times on southbound Webster Street preventing turns onto westbound Broadway.

The following describes the schools' operations. During the schools' pick-up and drop-off times, the two westbound lanes of Broadway between Fillmore and Buchanan Streets are designated either for through traffic or for queuing vehicles. Between Fillmore and Webster Streets the left lane is for through traffic and the right lane is for parents to queue. Between Webster and Buchanan Streets, the left lane is a CSH

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queue and the right lane is a Hamlin queue. A sign near Hamlin School directs westbound Broadway traffic to follow this lane assignment (Figure 1). In addition, signs warning of congestion ahead on Webster Street at Pacific Street and on Fillmore Street at Vallejo Street help advise through traffic to avoid the area during the specified times (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Lane Assignment Sign on westbound Broadway between Buchanan and Webster Streets. Sign reads “SSH Left Lane / Hamlin Right Lane Must turn right on Webster”

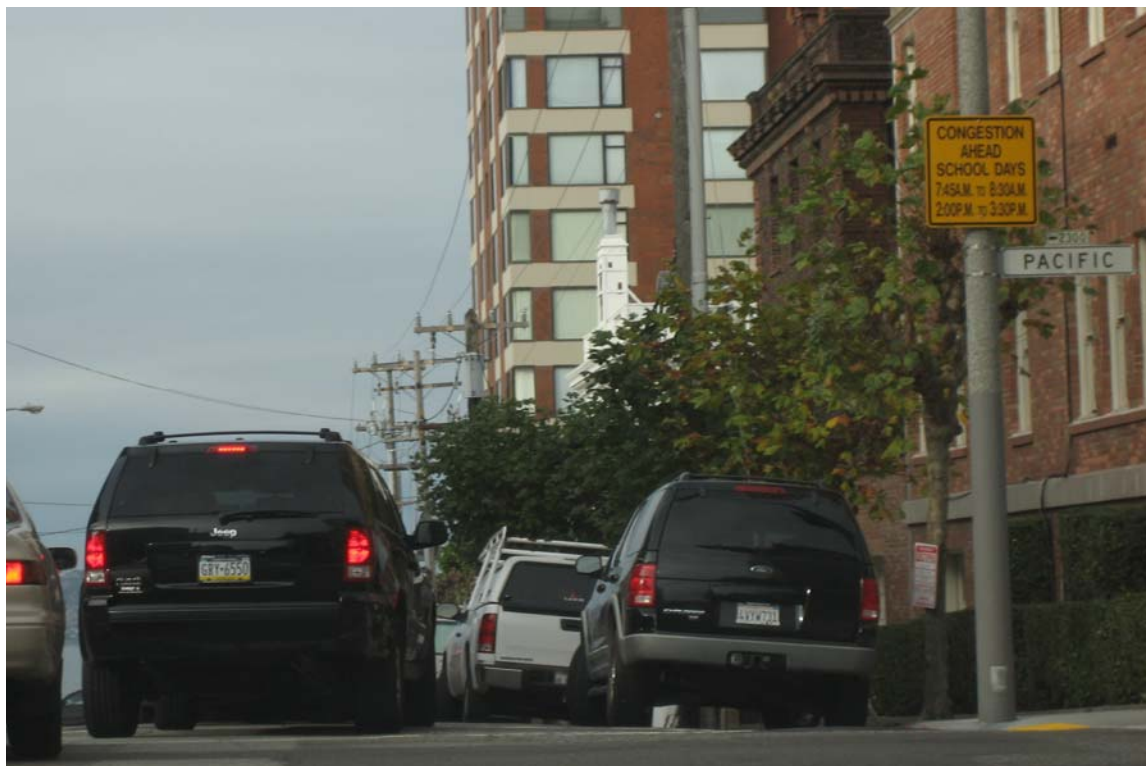


Figure 2: Sign Warn of Congestion Ahead on northbound Webster Street at Pacific Avenue.

Two separate queues form on Broadway (Figure 3) and Webster Street (Figure 4) approaching the CSH pick-up/drop-off area (Figure 5) while only one queue on Broadway (Figures 3 and 6) approaches the Hamlin School pick-up/drop-off area (Figure 7). Each queue is controlled by a parent or security guard who directs which car can enter the pick-up/drop-off lane first. Students are then helped in and out of their vehicles by the school's safety patrol. CSH parents then continue west on Broadway and Hamlin parents turn right onto northbound Webster Street. In addition, a crossing guard helps pedestrians cross the street at Broadway at Fillmore Street.

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Figure 3: Westbound Broadway between Buchanan and Webster Streets. The left lane queue is for CSH while the right lane queue is for Hamlin School. Both lanes are at a virtual standstill.



Figure 4: Webster Street between Broadway and Pacific Avenue. Northbound CSH queue extends the entire block.

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Figure 5: CSH School pick-up/drop-off area on the north side of Broadway between Webster and Fillmore. Note the guard in yellow vest managing the queue.



Figure 6: Hamlin School queue on westbound Broadway begins at Octavia Street.



Figure 7: Hamlin School pick-up/drop-off Area being laid out on the north side of Broadway between Buchanan and Fillmore. Note the lack of a white zone. Students must walk between parked cars in order to reach their parents' vehicles.

Both schools have rear entrances/exits facing Vallejo Street, a two-lane bidirectional 40 foot wide street with parking on both sides. This is another queuing area for pick-up/drop-off, but this is mainly used by Hamlin School (Figure 8). The double parking queue on eastbound Vallejo Street sometimes stretches for more than a block for each school (Figure 9). This narrows the street such that only small vehicles can pass each other. Observations show that school buses in one direction cannot pass vehicles going in the other direction, so it is up to the drivers to determine who goes first. At its busiest time, during the overlap between the two schools' pick-up times, the queue extends back to Pierce Street which is about 5 blocks of double parked vehicles. These pick-up/drop-off areas appear to be staffed in the morning, but not in the afternoon, so parents must decide on their own where to pick-up/drop-off their kids.

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Figure 8: Hamlin School on the south side of Vallejo Street between Buchanan and Webster. This entrance/exit is used as a pick-up/drop-off area. Note the two girls between cars who help open car doors to let kids out of their vehicles.



Figure 9: Vallejo Street at Webster Street looking west. The queue for Hamlin School pick-up/drop-off extends to two blocks to Fillmore Street.

A few white zones are scattered around the area, including one in front of the main entrance of CSH, allow parents to pick-up and drop-off students. In addition, there is a white zone in front of the Italian Consulate on the southeast corner of Broadway and Webster Street.

Each school's beginning and ending times are staggered so as not to overwhelm the area with cars all at one time. However, CSH parents seem to continue picking up their

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kids after Hamlin School starts their pick up time. This results in the two queues on Broadway and Vallejo Street mentioned earlier. Parents are given placards (Figure 10) to designate when they should enter the queues to pick-up/drop-off their kids, but observations show this is not consistent.



Figure 10: Example of a parent with a placard.

After the school pick-up and drop-off times pass, Broadway becomes a wide lightly traveled street with excess capacity (Figure 11). This condition may be contributing to the speeding that was recorded in the speed survey. However, this short period of time of congestion has been the source of community concern in the past and again recently.



Figure 11: Broadway between Buchanan and Laguna Streets looking eastbound, after pick-up/drop-off period.

CHAPTER 4. SCHOOL CIRCULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to improve traffic circulation around the two schools fall under two categories: traffic recommendations, and auto trip reduction.

TRAFFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. White Zones

Additional loading/unloading zones near the schools and the increased use of existing zones in remote locations would ease circulation around the schools. Currently, Hamlin School does not have a white zone. A white zone in front of the school would speed pick-ups and drop-offs and would allow through traffic to use the left lane now filled with queuing CSH parents. The white zone in front of CSH should be expanded westward to include the curb fronting the school's new extension. To extend the Convent of Sacred Heart queuing space further, extension of the white zone to the property of 2288 Broadway should be explored.

The back of the schools on Vallejo Street would be a difficult place to have more white zones since there are so many existing and proposed above in the front of the school already. In addition, the area looks unstaffed, so this may encourage more use of this area as a pick-up/drop-off zone. However, since this is where the main Hamlin School pick-up/drop-off area is, the white zone may be better here instead of Broadway.

We must be careful not to remove too much parking in the area as the neighborhood has a high parking demand. Loading zone times should be kept to a minimum to reduce the chance of opposition to these changes.

With the Italian Consulate's approval, the white zone on the southeast corner of Broadway and Webster Streets could be used as a pick-up/drop-off area.

Remote loading/unloading zones could be used to relieve congestion around the schools. With their permission, the white zones in front of St. Brigid's Church on Franklin Street near Broadway and Calvary Presbyterian Church on Fillmore Street at Jackson Street could be potential remote locations. Jackson Street in front of Alta Plaza Park and the Fillmore Street metered area could also serve as remote locations. The meters are free until 9AM, and parking becomes more available from 8AM to 9AM as residents drive to work and avoid paying to park.

2. One-Way Vallejo

Vallejo Street is another location that may cause neighborhood circulation problems. When the queuing begins here, the street narrows to the point where it should be a one-way street if it is to serve all vehicles. The neighborhood and residents on some or all of the five blocks where the queuing occurs will need to agree to the one-way street proposal. Concerns with this idea include (1) enforcement of a one-way street may be hard to do since this will only be in affect for two 30 minute blocks a day on weekdays, and (2) how will parked vehicles facing the wrong way during this block of time get out.

AUTO TRIP REDUCTION

1. Encourage walking

In addition to reducing traffic congestion during school start and end times, walking to school can:

- Help students stay active and healthy
- Teach students to care for the environment
- Provide an opportunity for parents to connect with their children
- Facilitate a connection between students and their neighborhoods

Hamlin and CSH could encourage students to walk by providing their school communities with information about the benefits of walking. This information could be integrated into the health curriculum, circulated in newsletters, or distributed in flyer format. The SFMTA could help by drafting “walk to school” fliers that could be distributed to both students and parents.

In addition, Hamlin and CSA could reduce traffic congestion and promote walking by creating a “walking school bus” program. A “walking school bus” is a group of students and parents or school staff who join together to walk to school, picking up other students along the route. The walking bus could pick up students individually, or designate neighborhood locations where students could meet to “catch the bus.”

2. Create a carpool program

A successful carpool program has the ability to significantly reduce traffic congestion; if every family carpooled with just one other family, the number of cars during drop off and pick up times would be cut in half. Carpooling is an especially great option for students who live too far to walk to school.

Several schools in San Francisco and the Bay Area have implemented effective carpool programs which can serve as models for Hamlin and CSH. The San Ramon Valley Unified School District created a website in which parents enter their home address and are automatically provided with a list of willing carpool participants in their area. Hamlin and CSH schools could create a similar program by mapping each student’s home address and facilitating carpool coordination between students who live near each other.

3. Provide incentives

To ensure that parents and students choose alternate modes of transportation, Hamlin, CSH, and the SFMTA need to make these modes as accessible and appealing as possible. Incentivizing walking and carpooling will energize the school community and provide momentum for people to change their transportation habits.

The SFMTA has proposed increasing the number of white zones at Hamlin and CSH. To encourage people to carpool, both Hamlin and CSH could designate a priority white

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zone for carpool drop off and pick up. These priority zones would have significantly less queue wait time. In addition, Hamlin and CSH are encouraged to think of further incentives that are appropriate within their curriculum and community. Examples of possible rewards include prioritized registration, pizza parties for students who walk or carpool, or walking school bus and carpool raffles.

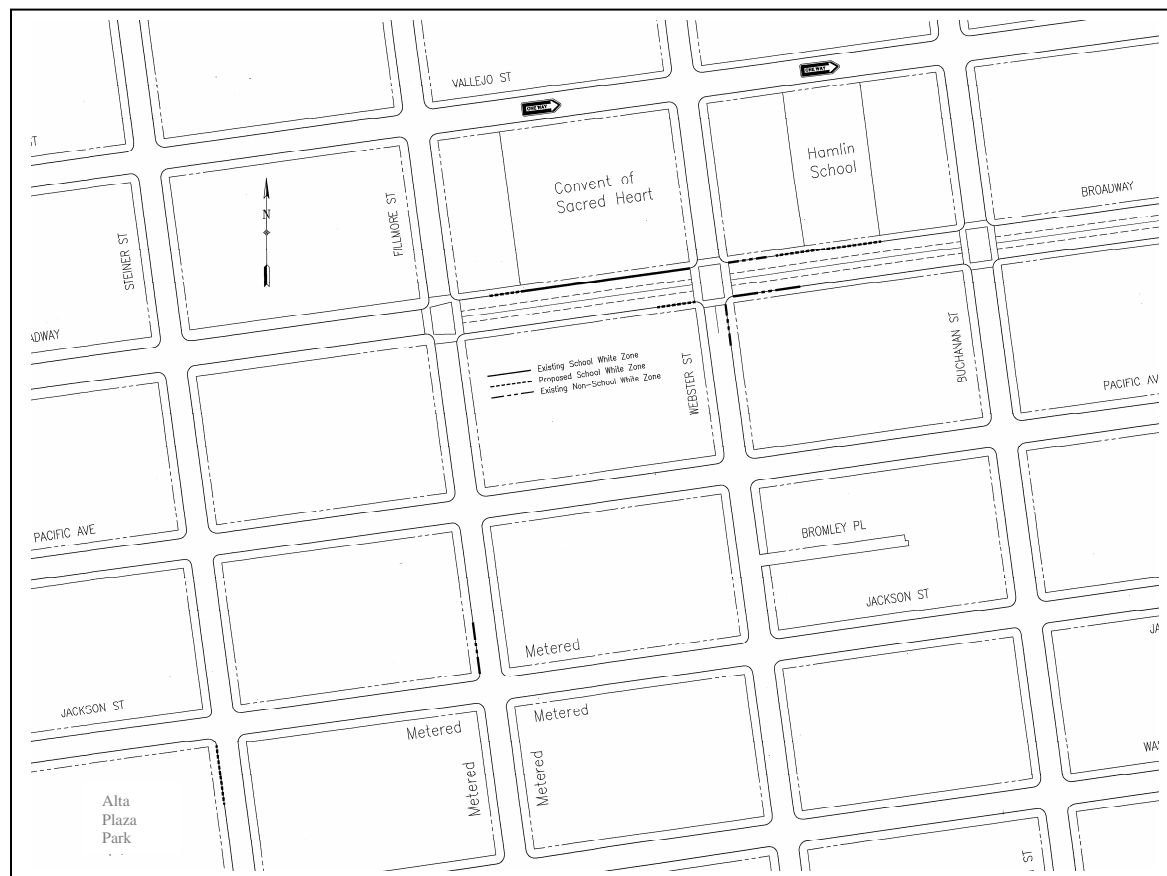


Figure 12: Map of Proposed Improvements showing Vallejo one-way eastbound between Fillmore and Buchanan, existing school white zones, proposed school white zones, and existing non-school white zones.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

The most attractive alternative is to encourage parents to have their kids arrive at and leave school without driving. Even starting with the remote drop-off/pick-up, the walking school bus and carpool/vanpooling programs mentioned above could help alleviate some of the congestion. Similar programs have been successfully implemented in two other schools, the San Francisco School and SF Friends School. These programs could be replicated by Hamlin and Convent of Sacred Heart Schools to improve traffic circulation.

The traffic circulation issue is going to take a concentrated effort between the community and the schools. The SFMTA can provide support and tools to make any

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improvements that are reasonable and within our powers. In the meantime, the SFMTA recommends focusing on reducing the number of cars by promoting alternative transportation means to get to and from the schools and the students' residences.