

Minutes from Garfield-Holloway Kick-Off Meeting

May 15, 2007 at the OMI Senior Center, 1948 Ocean Avenue

Typed May 16, 2007. Revised May 18, 2007

The goal of this kick-off meeting was to describe traffic calming and the various pros/cons associated with it, and (most importantly) hear from the residents and stakeholders what traffic-related problems they see in the neighborhood. With this information, MTA can investigate concerns and draft up potential solutions.

Presentation:

Twenty six people attended the meeting, which began with a Powerpoint presentation describing Traffic Calming in general, the Traffic Calming Program in San Francisco, the conditions in the neighborhood, various traffic calming devices/designs and the associated pros and cons, and some related projects, namely the following:

- San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (www.sftep.com)
- Better Streets Plan (www.sfbetterstreets.org)
- SFSU Master Plan Update (<http://sfsumasterplan.org/masterplan.html>)

Note that the presentation can be found on the MTA (Municipal Transportation Agency) website at www.sfmta.com. Click on Livable Streets, then Traffic Calming, then Current Projects, then Holloway-Garfield Avenues.

Following the presentation, there was a little more than an hour of discussion of specific problems/concerns that residents had. Below is a paraphrased list of the various concerns voiced, with the MTA response shown in brackets []. This is not a complete reproduction of the conversation, but a quick list of key points.

Discussion:

'Garfield and Grafton is a continuous roadway with a lot of speeding, especially by people fleeing the police. STOP signs are ignored. We need speed humps.'

'The recent move of the bus stop on Grafton at Plymouth was a big mistake. It should go back onto Plymouth because motorists get impatient and try to pass the stopped bus on Grafton. Also, there was no notification of this bus stop move when it happened.'

'On Arch at Holloway, you cannot see traffic on Holloway.'
[sightline issues in the area were very common, and can be partially solved by painting curbs red at corners to prevent people from parking there and blocking the view of the street]

'On Garfield at Junipero Serra, trucks used to park there and completely block the view of traffic coming along J Serra. A sign was installed saying "No Vehicles Over 6 Feet Tall" which helped a lot.'

'While on Beverly at Holloway, traffic backs up on Holloway at the signal at Junipero Serra and blocks the intersection. Common to wait a few minutes before it is possible to turn onto Holloway. At the same intersection, sightlines are blocked by the garden.'

'Sightlines at Beverly/Garfield are often blocked by stopped buses and parked cars at corners.'

'Sightlines at Monticello/Holloway are blocked by parked cars at corners and tall hedge. Do not allow parking at corners.'

[this is an easy way to improve sightlines at corners, but sometimes people who live at the corner get upset if a parking space is lost and oppose a proposal. This is something to keep in mind.]

'Motorists leave "donuts" (skid marks from exhibition driving) on Grafton. Traffic circles seem to be a good way to prevent that.'

[traffic circles on Garfield/Grafton may be difficult given the size of the intersections and the presence of Muni, which requires more space given their size]

'Motorists passing cyclists often head into the other side of the street into oncoming traffic.'

'I submitted the traffic calming application that asked for a STOP on Holloway near Byxbee and Alviso, and I think it's great to see all these traffic calming examples in the presentation. When I submitted the application, I only thought of a STOP but now I see there are a lot of other great options.'

'Need KEEP CLEAR on Holloway at the J Serra frontage road/Beverly/Lunado so we can pull out onto the street even when there's a queue of traffic'

'An unmarked bus stop near that intersection is used more than a marked bus stop in the opposite direction.'

'Need more and bigger speed limit signs on Holloway.'

'Maybe the reason there are reported collisions all along Garfield is because that is where students park, due to the lack of Residential Permit Parking. They are less familiar with the area than residents. Also, the STOP sign patterns on Garfield are inconsistent, so some motorists seem to assume that there is a STOP on the cross street when there isn't. I'm not saying we should expand residential permit parking, just making an observation of why there are crashes on Garfield.'

Note that the following comment was mistakenly misrepresented in the first version of the minutes, and was corrected May 18:

'STOP is required at intersection of Holloway & Byxbee due to current unsafe situation for pedestrians and limited visibility of cars turning to and from both streets. Since the first STOP after intersection of Holloway & Junipero Serra is 5 blocks away, cars are usually traveling at high speed and not allowing pedestrians to cross Holloway. Therefore STOP is necessary for pedestrian and car safety.'

[STOPS are not to be used as traffic calming devices to slow vehicles, but we will look at that intersection and see if it warrants a STOP for collision or Right of Way designation reasons. We acknowledge that speeding is an issue on Holloway and will do our best to find a way to reduce speeding]

'Holloway needs more lighting. Difficult to see pedestrians and cyclists at night.'

'There needs to be a street light at Garfield at Junipero Serra so it is easier to see and find from J Serra.'

[MTA is not charged with installing street lights, but will check with other departments to see if they can assist]

'Maybe for sight line issues, mirrors can be used.'

[mirrors are sometimes used, but other measures are tried first to minimize the number of mirrors installed as they require ongoing maintenance]

'I support the idea of making Holloway a bicycle boulevard. It is also a great opportunity to landscape and beautify the street.'

'Is it possible to use photo enforcement of speeding, such as they use for red light running?'

[such enforcement is not allowed yet by law in California, but MTA will check with other cities to determine if there are any developments with changing the law to allow this type of enforcement]

'Is there an effect on speeds when there is a canopy of trees?'

[yes, trees do have some traffic calming effect as it makes the street seem less like a wide open freeway. MTA has been talking to the Bureau of Urban Forestry (BUF) about how to get a strip of trees on a street when neighbors request it. For now they have mentioned that residents can call 311 and to contact BUF for a tree in front of their house or business]

'I support the use of traffic calming elements rather than STOP signs. STOP signs cause people to accelerate and decelerate constantly, increase noise, and people don't stop for STOP signs anyway.'

'Holloway should be made a bicycle boulevard.'

'It is very dark on Holloway. Need more lighting.'

'Are there going to be left turn lanes on Holloway at Junipero Serra?'

[after asking around the MTA office, there doesn't seem to be plans to repaint or add any left turn lanes on the street, but MTA will include such work with the traffic calming work]

'Can we have a sign that shows people's speeds?'

[we will consider that, though evidence so far doesn't seem to show much effect on slowing people down. They can be pricey too - \$10,000 to \$15,000 each]

'We need SFPD enforcement, especially since many people are regular users of Holloway and will be deterred if they get a ticket or see other people getting tickets.'

[we work with the SFPD for enforcement requests. Sounds like enforcement is most needed when SFSU is in session, not so much during the summer. Though the goal of traffic calming is to create a street that is self-enforcing of a particular speed, ie that it encourages people to not speed by design so less police enforcement is needed]

'Take out all the parking on Holloway and stripe bike lanes. People who live on Holloway have garages or other places on the street to park.'

'Sightline issues at Ashton/Holloway.'

Next Steps:

MTA will take all of these comments and begin drafting various designs for the area for stakeholders to discuss at the next meeting. The next meeting will probably be in 2 to 3 months. In the meantime, updates will be sent out via email (or phone calls for those who do not have email) and posted on the MTA website.

Meeting ended approximately 8:45pm after starting just after 7pm.

Other Comments/Concerns:

The following comments and concerns were submitted outside the meeting by those unable to attend the meeting.

'I live on Ramsell St. between Garfield and Holloway. The cars parked on Holloway make it impossible for me to see traffic coming from Junipero Serra toward Ashton when I want to turn onto Holloway. Parked cars on Holloway make it difficult, but not impossible to see traffic coming from Ashton toward Junipero Serra. I have to get way into the intersection to see what I can do and

this upsets the cars on Holloway because they do not know that I can't see unless I poke out onto Holloway.

I have lived here since 1968 and this is a recent problem. Nobody used to park there and there didn't used to be so much traffic.'

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'One idea that I have had for years and years, is that the north side of Holloway has got to be made NO PARKING AT ANY TIME. The street is too narrow which in the older days might have worked ok, but with the plans for densification of Ocean Ave, Park Merced, SF State expansions etc we know that traffic will increase with alarm. Many of our neighbors are very concerned about this. Keeping that in mind I am not sure about making traffic move easier on Holloway is good. Currently there are parking restrictions during the day along the north side of Holloway, that are not enforced much of the time, cars are parked there frequently.'

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'I was pleased to see that the SFMTA recognizes that we have a traffic problem in our area. I will not be able to make the meeting, but I have several concerns.

I live on Beverly Street between Garfield and Sergeant.

As you may know, the intersection at Holloway and Beverly has become extremely busy and dangerous. One of the BIG problems is visibility EAST on Holloway when one is make a left turn from Beverly on to Holloway heading west. It is IMPOSSIBLE to see traffic on Holloway due to cars parked on Holloway. I think it is of the utmost importance to restrict parking near that intersection so that one has a clear view of oncoming traffic.

Traffic on Beverly has also increased and many people drive too fast. I think speed bumps are a good idea on Beverly.'

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'I feel that conditions for driving, and especially walking and bicycling, are very hazardous in our neighborhood. Even though there are many new families with children, students on bikes, as well as an unusually high population of retirees and seniors here, it seems there is very little in the way of pedestrian and bike safety features, as there are in most other neighborhoods in the city.

The following is a list of specific conditions that are of most concern:

- No crosswalks at the following intersections:

Byxbee at Holloway
Monticello at Holloway
Beverly at Holloway
Monticello at Garfield

- Holloway traffic not yielding to pedestrians
- Excessive speed on Holloway both west and eastbound at Monticello from Ashton to Junipero Serra.
- No Bicycle Route markers on traffic lanes or Share the Road signs on Holloway. With cars parked on both sides of Holloway from Byxbee to Ashton, bikes need to use the entire lane. Cars often refuse to yield or honk at cyclists. Despite being classified in the official San Francisco Bike Map as a "Wide Curb Lane Bike Route", there is actually no wide curb lane when cars are parked on both sides of Holloway.
- Hedge on private property obstructs safe view of westbound Holloway traffic from cars at the stop sign northbound on Monticello. Northbound traffic must pull out into eastbound lane of Holloway to be able to see westbound traffic
- Parked cars on south side of Holloway, west of Monticello obstruct safe view of eastbound Holloway traffic from cars at stop sign northbound on Monticello
- Cars turning left onto Monticello from westbound Holloway are unable to see northbound traffic on Monticello approaching the intersection due to the large hedge cited above
- Cars parked close to intersections on Monticello at Holloway restrict turning traffic from Holloway due to narrowness of Monticello and lack of lane markers at the intersection.
- Blind intersection northbound and southbound Monticello at Garfield. Parked cars obstruct safe view.
- Excessive speed on Garfield westbound at Monticello, traffic not yielding to pedestrians, including Muni line 29'

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'I am a resident of the area under consideration, and have been for 27 years. The issue of speeders has always terrified me and my neighbors, and is exacerbated by the fact of the proximity of SF State and students and other drivers using Holloway (especially) as a freeway between 19th Avenue and Hwy. 280.

Over the years we have seen stop signs added to EVERY SINGLE INTERSECTION on Holloway between Ashton and Lee (or so). However, the real danger is on Holloway between Junipero Serra and Ashton. There are only TWO stop signs; at Vernon and at Head Sts. In between them, despite the fact the speed limit is posted at 25 mph, people routinely go 40 mph and above. This is daunting, to say the least, for cross traffic and any pedestrians who dare to cross at points other than the meager number of 4-way stopping points. In fact, we have seen several serious accidents on Holloway; cross traffic drivers, because of student cars parked along Holloway, cannot see who is coming--speeding--at them, and we have to creep out and often slam on our brakes.

The same is true for Garfield, but it at least has a couple of additional stop signs, as well as the 29 Muni bus to hopefully slow people down. The danger there is, though, that people speed around the bus as it is letting off passengers.'