

FELL STREET BIKE LANE (SCOTT TO BAKER) AND TOW-AWAY ZONE PROPOSAL

March 4, 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2003, a bike lane was striped on Fell Street between Scott and Baker Streets as part of a six month trial. Analysis of conditions in the project area indicated:

- The number of cyclists on Fell Street increased,
- The number of cyclists on Fell Street's sidewalks decreased, and
- Westbound traffic volumes on Fell, Hayes, and Page Streets in the project area dropped since a study was conducted in summer 2002.

The Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT) is now pursuing permanent legislation for the bike lane and changes associated with it. Additionally, DPT is pursuing legislation to rescind the existing tow-away on Fell Street from Laguna Street to the project area as there is diminished need for the tow-away with the lower volumes along the street and with the current bottleneck (4 to 3 lanes on weekdays, 4-6PM) at the bike lane. Some benefits of rescinding this tow-away include:

- Merging will no longer be needed as motorists approach the bike lane at Scott Street,
- Reduced inconvenience associated with towed vehicles for residents with cars,
- Parking provides buffer between sidewalk and roadway, improving the sidewalk environment for pedestrians, and
- Parking Control Officer resources can be diverted from enforcing an unnecessary tow-away.

Traffic volumes along the Fell Street corridor are significantly lower due to the demolition of the Central Freeway off-ramp. The reduced capacity of the Octavia Boulevard, due to open in 2006, makes it highly unlikely that volumes on Fell Street will reach levels seen during the operation of the off-ramp. Thus, DPT believes there is no longer need for the tow-away zone, though it will be revisited if volumes do increase beyond pre-demolition levels.

Below is the legislation presented and approved by DPT and approved by the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT), to be heard at the [DPT Public Hearing on March 12](#).

TOW-AWAY, MONDAY-FRIDAY, 4 PM - 6 PM - RESCIND
Fell Street, south side, from Laguna Street to Baker Street

TOW-AWAY, MONDAY-FRIDAY, 4 PM - 7 PM - ESTABLISH
Fell Street, south side, from Divisadero Street to 182 feet easterly

BICYCLE LANES - ESTABLISH
Fell Street, south side, from Scott Street to Baker Street

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As part of the process to evaluate a bike lane on Fell Street between Scott and Baker Streets, the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation (ISCOTT) asked that the bike lane, eventually striped in August 2003, be installed on a 6-month trial basis. Though a 3-day trial simulation of the project was performed in summer 2002, some people had concerns that a 3-day trial was insufficient. For background, the report written as part of this 3-day trial can be found at: [http://www.bicycle.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/dpt/bike/fellstreetreport\(1\).pdf](http://www.bicycle.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/dpt/bike/fellstreetreport(1).pdf)

Concerns about the bike lane revolved primarily around the decrease in capacity along Fell Street, a major crosstown arterial. However, as the figure below indicates, all traffic volumes are lower in the “after” period due to the demolition of the westbound off-ramp of the Central Freeway at Fell Street. Thus, to perform a detailed “after” analysis would be unnecessary as any changes to transit or motor vehicle travel time would be attributable to something other than the reduction in capacity related to the bike lane.

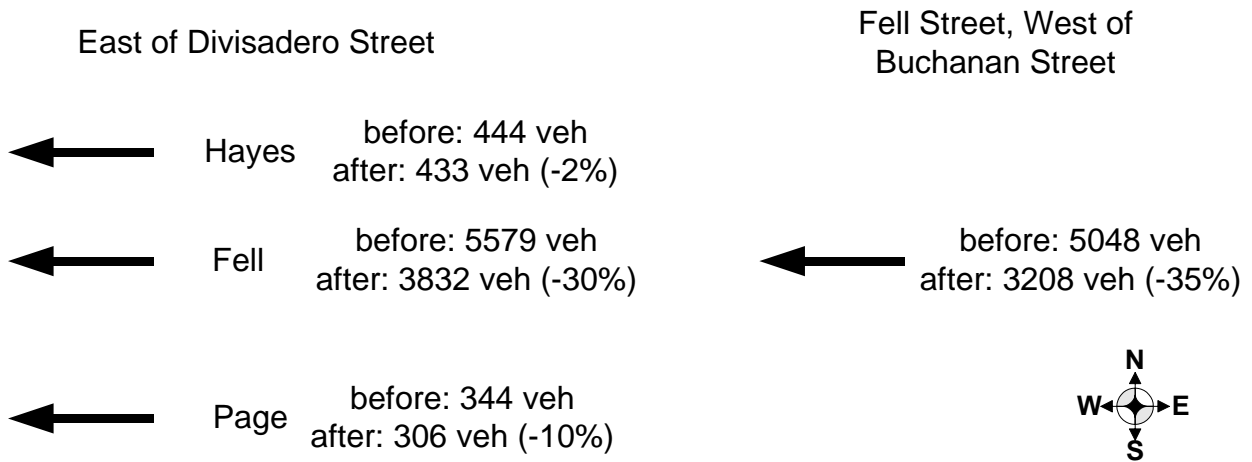


Figure 1. Comparison of Average Weekday Volumes, 4-6PM

“Before” and “after” screenline counts of bicyclists in this area were taken, and are shown below. There was an increase of cyclists on Fell Street (apparently diverted from Page Street) after the bike lane was installed, from 43 westbound cyclists an hour to 60 (~40% increase). Numbers from two-hour counts shown in Tables 1 and 2 also show an increase.

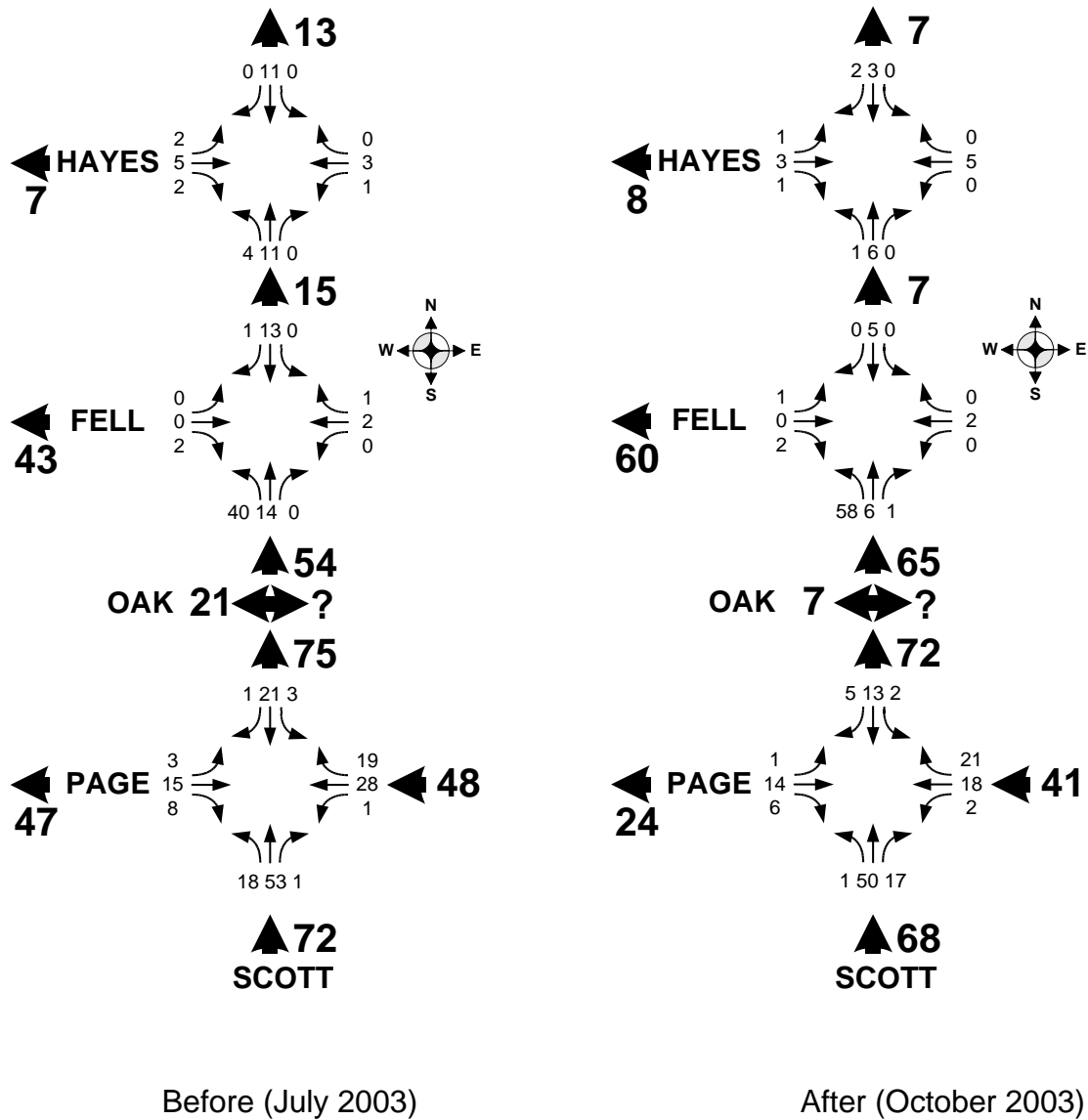


Figure 2. Screenline Count of Bicyclists taken 5-6pm, Before and After Installation of Fell Street Bike Lane

A 2-hour count of cyclists on Fell Street was taken before and after the bike lane was installed to determine where cyclists were riding. The number of westbound cyclists on Fell Street sidewalks dropped, from over 50% of westbound cyclists (37 of 71) prior to the bike lane to less than 10% of westbound cyclists (7 of 94) after the installation of the bike lane. Also, fewer cyclists were in the motor vehicle lane on the northside of the street. While not necessarily illegal to ride there, one goal of the bike lane was to encourage cyclists into one area on the roadway. See the tables below for a summary.

Table 1. Westbound Bike Counts along Fell Street, Before*

Southside of Street	Northside of Street	Sidewalks	TOTAL
25	9	37	71

* Based on 6 weekday counts (1 in 6/01, 3 in 6/02, 2 in 7/02)

Table 2. Westbound Bike Counts along Fell Street, After*

Southside of Street (bike lane)	Northside of Street	Sidewalks	TOTAL
82	5	7	94

* Based on 1 weekday count on 10/9/03

With regards to written or submitted comments to the DPT about the newly installed bike lane, only one minor complaint (about the location of a sign pole) has been received. Otherwise, there has been support for the changes, primarily but not exclusively by the cycling community. There are some potential improvements that will be explored such as reducing the negative effects of queuing that occurs at the Arco gas station at Divisadero Street.

Also, as stated in the Fell Street report referred to earlier in this memo, it is unlikely that traffic volumes after the Octavia Boulevard is operational will exceed those volumes recorded during the 3-day trial when the freeway off-ramp directly fed Fell Street. During that trial, where the tow-away lane was closed to model the effect of a bike lane, travel times along Fell Street were statistically the same before and after. Transit travel time along westbound Hayes Street had slightly increased, but green time has been added to Hayes Street at the Divisadero Street signal to mitigate this.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

As of March 4, 2004, legislation presented and approved by DPT has been approved by ISCOTT and will be heard at the [DPT Public Hearing on March 12](#). Assuming approval at each level, the legislative item will continue on to the MTA Board, the Land Use Committee, the full Board of Supervisors, and finally to the Mayor for his signature. The legislative process generally takes 4-6 months.