Oak Street Quick-Build Outreach Summary

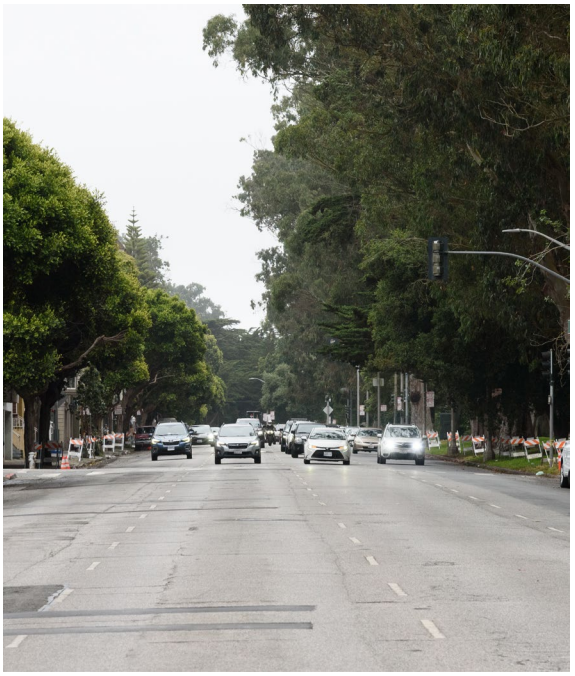
October 2024

Oak Street Quick-Build Project
SFMTA.com/OakQB

SFMTA

Project Background

The Oak Street Quick-Build Project aims to improve safety for people walking, bicycling, and driving on JFK Drive between Kezar Drive and Stanyan Street and on Oak Street between Stanyan Street and Baker Street. It seeks to reduce pressure on the Panhandle's shared-use path by providing an alternative bike route between Golden Gate Park and the Wiggle, and it would improve pedestrian access to the Panhandle across Oak Street.



The project will upgrade pedestrian crossings, add a parking-protected eastbound bikeway to complement the westbound one on Fell Street, and make upgrades at key intersections to improve safety. The project supports implementing goals and priorities identified in SFMTA's Vision Zero Program and community desires for a bikeway alternative to the Panhandle path.

Outreach Activity Summary

Public outreach for the Oak Street Quick-Build project took place over two phases. The first phase involved outreach to neighborhood stakeholders to introduce the project goals and hear initial feedback. The second phase of outreach was conducted to seek specific design feedback and included a two-week open house period on the specific designs developed for the project. It was broadened to the wider public through the project webpage, mailers, emails, physical postings, and a pop-up event. Stakeholder conversations continued through the second phase of outreach.

Stakeholder outreach

From late 2023 through fall 2024, SFMTA staff engaged Oak Street stakeholders by attending 22 virtual and in-person meetings, where community members provided in-depth feedback on the project. The groups and institutions engaged during the process included:

- **Neighborhood/community groups**
  - Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC)
  - Haight Ashbury Merchants Association (HAMA)
  - North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association (NOPNA)
  - San Francisco Bike Coalition
  - Walk SF
- **Institutions**
  - Urban School
  - FACES SF

  - French American International School (FAIS)
  - St. Agnes Church
  - Mt. Zion Baptist Church
- **Advisory groups**
  - Bicycle Advisory Committee
  - Multimodal Accessibility Advisory Committee

Two-week open house period

Over 2,400 mailers were sent to project-area residents and businesses to promote outreach events. Staff posted over 90 notices along Fell, Oak, and Page Streets and both paths in the Panhandle. Two social media posts were published, and two email updates and text messages were sent to disseminate information about the proposed project and open house period engagement opportunity.

On July 10th, 2024, SFMTA hosted an outdoor pop-up tabling event on the corner of Fell Street and Masonic Ave, adjacent to the walking/biking path on the Panhandle. Approximately 50 people attended, including many people using the Panhandle who hadn't heard of the project before. Many attendees were excited about safety improvements for people bicycling and walking along the corridor:

- Excitement was shared about the proposed protected bike lane on Baker Street as a better connection between existing facilities.
- Pedestrian safety at Oak and Masonic streets emerged as a key priority. While there was support for the absence of a vehicle/ bicycle mixing zone, some folks expressed concern regarding the safety of the proposed double left turn from Oak onto Masonic.
- Several community members expressed a desire for maximum daylighting, or red curb/ parking restrictions designed to increase pedestrian visibility.

Staff created an online open house using an ArcGIS Storymap and an online survey to capture feedback about the proposed design. Two online "office hour" sessions were held on Zoom on July 8th and 9th, 2024 to supplement the online open house. The online survey was open from July 1st through July 15th, 2024. 246 people responded to the survey, with most respondents providing comments supporting the project.

- 83% of survey respondents supported the project, with some suggesting that the project include concrete materials instead of flex posts.
- 10% of respondents opposed the project, with some citing concerns over increased traffic,

parking impacts, and a preference for allocating resources elsewhere.
- Another 7% were neutral or undecided about the project.

Summary of Public Feedback on the Proposed Changes

The following are the central themes of public feedback:

- **A desire for a safe, intuitive bikeway that is well-connected to the broader network**: There was a desire for a comfortable, seamless experience that would encourage people to bike in the proposed Oak Street bikeway. Community members supported connections to existing streets on the bike network. Some people wanted to see "cross-bike" paint markings and other wayfinding tools to help people bicycling navigate the bikeway, particularly at intersections with cross traffic, such as Stanyan Street and Baker Street.
- **A desire for separation and protection for people bicycling from motor vehicles:** Many people voiced support for more separation and protection for people bicycling from motor vehicles. There was support for concrete islands as protection on the sections of Oak Street where there is no parking between the bikeway and general traffic lanes. A desire was expressed for signal separation from vehicles when possible.
- **Support for improving pedestrian safety:** Many community members want to see safety improvements for pedestrians crossing Oak Street and walking along the Panhandle. Some commented that reducing the general travel lanes on Oak Street would help improve pedestrian crossings. Others expressed concerns about crossing the proposed on-street bikeway, citing that some people bicycling don't stop at red lights on Fell Street.
- **A mixture of support and concerns for the double-turn lane at the intersection of Masonic and Oak:** Some community members liked that the proposed design would accommodate left-turn traffic onto northbound Masonic. Other community members had concerns about creating an additional left-turn lane. A strong majority voiced support for signal separation between people walking and bicycling and left-turn traffic at Masonic to improve safety.
- **A desire to maintain on-street parking:** Some community members, merchants, and institutions indicated that finding on-street parking in the neighborhood is challenging, especially for teachers and other workers who commute into the neighborhood. They wished to see the most possible parking spaces retained in the design.
- **Concerns about congestion:** Some community members who drive on Oak expressed concerns about increased traffic congestion and long queues due to the removing a travel lane.
- **A range of opinions about bikes using the north path on the Panhandle:** Some community members suggested restricting bicycling on the north Panhandle path if the Oak Street bikeway is installed. Other community members supported keeping the north path open to bicycling to give people on bikes more options (e.g., for families and slower riders). Yet others would like to see the north path change to bikes only with no bike lane added to Oak Street.

- **A desire for a more seamless biking experience than the Fell Street bikeway:** Though the Fell Street bikeway is not part of the Oak Street Quick-Build Project, staff received feedback on community members' experiences with the Fell Street bikeway and how the Oak Street bikeway could improve upon the Fell Street bikeway design. Lessons learned from the Fell Street bikeway include improving bikeway sweeping, designing a wider bikeway lane, minimizing pavement drops around storm drains, and adding treatments to keep parked cars stay out of the bikeway. Some community members expressed that they did not like mixing zones for bikes and would prefer signal separation for navigating intersections.

Project Modifications and Considerations Based on Public Feedback

Concrete buffers
For the two blocks where the project does not include floating parking as physical protection (between Stanyan Street and Shrader Street and between Ashbury Street and Masonic Avenue), the project team added concrete islands in the buffer space. Concrete islands are not proposed for JFK Drive, as a larger capital project is planned for that segment following the implementation of the quick-build project.

Oak daylighting
Based on community comments supporting robust pedestrian safety improvements on Oak Street, staff adjusted the design to include concrete islands in daylighting zones on the north side of Oak Street to ensure these spaces are free of parked cars.

Oak and Baker intersection adjustments
Two key adjustments were made to the design at the intersection of Oak and Baker Streets per community feedback. A 'No Right Turn on Red' restriction was added for northbound Baker vehicles to prevent conflicts between northbound right-turning vehicles and people bicycling entering the existing protected bikeway on the south side of Oak Street east of Baker Street. Left-turn traffic calming was also added for eastbound left turns from Oak Street onto Baker Street, and the bike box on Baker Street was set back from the intersection slightly to address feedback that left-turning vehicles often encroached into the existing bike box.

Oak and Masonic parking
Staff analyzed opportunities to retain additional parking spaces on Oak Street between Ashbury Street and Masonic Avenue, where 18 parking spaces would need to be removed to accommodate the bikeway and space for the vehicular left-turn movement from Oak Street onto Masonic Avenue. However, staff found that retaining additional parking at either end of this block by shortening the vehicle left-turn pocket would lead to significant congestion and queuing during peak periods at this critical intersection for cross-city car travel. The project proposal is expected to slightly increase the performance of this intersection relative to existing conditions, but any reduction in left-turn capacity would quickly result in congestion.

Next Steps

The project will undergo formal approvals this fall, starting with an Engineering Public Hearing to receive public feedback, followed by consideration for approval by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board. To be notified of the dates of these meetings, sign up for project updates on the project webpage, SFMTA.com/OakQB. If approved, implementation is anticipated to begin starting in late winter 2025.