Broadway Safety Improvement Project
Frequently Asked Questions

Project Summary

The primary goal of the Broadway Safety Improvement Project is to improve safety on Broadway for everyone who uses Broadway between Polk and Steiner streets. Between 2011 and 2016, 25 people have been injured on Broadway west of Van Ness Ave; injuries break down to 19 motorists, 5 pedestrians, and 1 bicyclist. 64% of these injuries (16) occurred west of Gough Street; this includes 3 pedestrian injuries at the intersection of Broadway and Octavia Street alone. Speed surveys indicate that the fastest drivers on Broadway regularly exceed 40mph and, occasionally, drive above 45mph on what should be 25 mph street.

Broadway changes in character from a high-volume arterial street east of Franklin Street to a low-volume neighborhood street west of Gough Street. In fact, traffic volumes on Broadway are 70% lower at Fillmore Street when compared to Broadway at Polk Street. As a result, the design approach of this project has been to reorient the layout of Broadway west of Gough Street to match its residential nature by reducing the number of travel lanes from four to three, adding bicycle lanes, and implementing pedestrian safety improvements at intersections. Together, these measures would encourage calmer and lower-speed traffic to make driving, walking and biking in the corridor a safer and more comfortable experience. East of Franklin, four lanes are maintained to accommodate the higher traffic volumes, with safety improvements focused on intersections.

School loading is a major use on the street. As such, on all blocks where school loading currently takes places, two travel lanes (in the direction of loading) would be maintained. This would allow all the schools in the corridor – the Hamlin School, Convent & Stuart Hall, and St. Brigid School – to conduct their loading operations exactly as they do today. The one difference would be the addition of a bike lane adjacent to curb-side loading, a setup that has been installed at numerous schools across the city without issue. In fact, the addition of a bike lane creates additional buffer room from faster-moving and higher-frequency vehicle traffic for loading vehicles leaving the curbside lane, and passengers exiting the left side of vehicles.

Why are you proposing changes on Broadway?

- In early 2019, SF Public Works (SFPW) and the SF Public Utilities Commission will be conducting a joint sewer replacement and repaving project on Broadway between Polk and Octavia streets. The repaving project provides an opportunity to consider different roadway configurations that could make Broadway safer for a broader cross-section of roadway users. Analysis of collision data demonstrates that there are preventable collisions on Broadway, some involving pedestrians, and lower than expected traffic volumes, which indicates the need to consider changes on the full corridor from Polk to Steiner streets. Coordination with SFPW will allow proposed changes between Polk and Octavia streets to be implemented at little cost, as the new striping can be installed at the completion of the utilities project.

Are there existing safety issues on Broadway?

- Between 2011 and 2016, 19 motorists, 5 pedestrians, and 1 bicyclist were injured on Broadway west of Van Ness, where the bulk of the safety improvements are being proposed.
- Injuries by location:
    - Franklin & Broadway: 6 motorist injuries
    - Midblock between Franklin and Gough Streets: 1 motorist injury
    - Gough & Broadway: 2 motorist injuries
    - Octavia & Broadway: 3 pedestrian injuries
    - Laguna & Broadway: 4 motorist injuries, 1 bicyclist injury, 1 pedestrian injury
    - Webster & Broadway: 6 motorist injuries, 1 pedestrian injury

- Not included in the above statistics, in March 2018 a woman was seriously injured while crossing Broadway in the crosswalk at Laguna.
- West of Franklin Street, the existing layout of Broadway is a wide, four lane street that encourages speeding. Speed surveys between Buchanan and Webster streets (in front of Hamlin School) show that the fastest drivers exceed 40 mph on a daily basis and, occasionally, drive above 45 mph; the speed limit on Broadway is 25 mph. The project proposes changing the roadway striping of Broadway in this area to match its neighborhood character, with low traffic volumes and school and residential land uses. The proposal would also create more predicable traffic movements at intersections.
- The blocks and intersections on Broadway between Franklin and Polk streets are on the city's "High Injury Network": the 13 percent of streets that account for 75 percent of traffic related injuries and fatalities. The Polk Streetscape Project and Van Ness Improvement Project are addressing the intersections at Polk Street and Van Ness Ave, respectively, while this project is considering a pedestrian signal head start and right-turn on red restriction at Franklin & Broadway to address safety in these areas.

Will this project address the kinds of collisions that are happening?

- Yes, almost all the pedestrian injuries (including the one this past March) were caused by motorists violating pedestrians' right-of-way. With fewer lanes to cross, pedestrians would have less exposure to conflicts with vehicles. At Octavia & Broadway, where 3 of the 5 collisions involving pedestrians took place, the project proposes median islands to better protect and increase comfort for pedestrians. The other pedestrian injuries took place at Laguna & Broadway as well as Webster & Broadway; both are intersections where lane reductions would reduce pedestrian exposure to vehicles when crossing the street.
- Half the injuries to motorists (the bulk of the injuries) were related to speeding; 4 to 3 lanes reduction have been proven in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) studies to lower speeds, calm traffic, and reduce vehicle collisions by 19 to 47%.

Will this impact school loading?

- No. A major goal throughout the project has been to ensure that existing loading operations at the Hamlin School, Convent & Stuart Hall, and St. Brigid School are accommodated by the design. As such, on all the blocks that are currently used by the schools (Laguna to Fillmore streets for the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall; Franklin Street to Van Ness Ave for St. Brigid School), two traffic lanes are proposed to be maintained. Existing school loading operations would operate exactly as they do today and the operations directors at the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall, and co-principals at St. Brigid School do not have concerns that the design will impact their loading operations.

Can Broadway support a lane reduction? Will it increase my commute time?

- The FHWA recommends considering '4 to 3' lane road diets on streets with average daily traffic of 20,000 vehicles or less; between Webster and Buchanan streets, Broadway sees less than 5,000 vehicles a day. Traffic volumes increase on the blocks to the east, but this proposal will maintain a total of four lanes where traffic volumes are the highest.
- A traffic model of Broadway, created using existing traffic volumes (taken during the school year), shows that the proposed design would, over the entire 9 block segment, increase travel times by less than 45

seconds in the morning peak hour (eastbound) and by only 20 seconds in the evening peak hour (westbound).

- The model also shows that the block between Van Ness Ave and Franklin Street can support one through lane in the westbound direction (the second lane would become a right-turn only lane onto northbound Franklin Street) without backing up into Van Ness Ave.
- The Van Ness Improvement Project will be adding a dedicated westbound left turn traffic signal phase from westbound Broadway onto southbound Van Ness Ave; currently this movement is prohibited during peak hours. With this change we expect to see a decrease in westbound traffic past Van Ness Ave; currently more than 30% of westbound motorists heading past Franklin Street make a left onto southbound Gough Street.

Why is parking being reduced?

- In all, 11 parking spaces are proposed to be removed along the 9-block long project corridor, or about 1.2 spaces per block. 9 of these spaces are being removed for pedestrian visibility zones (also known as daylighting), one of the most basic safety improvements in the SFMTA's safety toolbox. Pedestrian visibility zones remove visual obstructions in advance of crosswalks, so pedestrians do not need to step into the street to see if a vehicle is approaching, and vehicles have a clear view of pedestrians at the crosswalk. This is especially important near schools, where children are more easily hidden by cars. The other 2 spaces are to accommodate right turn pockets.
- Based on the feedback received from the Pacific Heights Neighborhood Association, the project was modified to reduced parking loss by 6 spaces from what was originally proposed. After the Open House, parking loss was reduced by another 3 spaces to focus on those locations where pedestrian visibility zones are most needed.

What public outreach has been done so far?

- Outreach started in fall 2017 when the project team met with the operations directors at the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall, and co-principals at St. Brigid School, to gather information about their student drop-off and pick-up procedures. Conceptual designs were developed that took into account the schools' existing loading operations. These designs were presented in follow-up meetings where all parties agreed that loading operations would not be impacted by the proposed project. Outreach then continued in early spring 2018 when, in April, the project team presented the project details to the Pacific Heights Residents Association Board members and collected their feedback. A Public Open House was held in May 2018 and a Public Hearing was conducted in June. At the same time, the project team has been collecting feedback from residents and parents who did not have the opportunity to attend these events.

What is the proposed schedule for completing the project?

- The project is proposed to be implement in two phases, primarily to accommodate a request by each of the schools to avoid implementation during the school year. Phase 1 would restripe Steiner to Octavia streets during the upcoming school winter break in Dec 2018/Jan 2019. Phase 2 would be striped as soon as SF Public Works completes the repaving of Broadway between Octavia and Polk streets in early 2019. In addition, a possible Phase 3 would potentially convert the painted islands at Octavia and at Laguna to

raised concrete islands (with the opportunity for landscaping) in mid-2019, based on community feedback.

Why are you proposing bike lanes on Broadway? Why not put bikes on Vallejo Street or Pacific Ave (the east-west streets to the north and south, respectively)?

- Broadway is on the San Francisco Bicycle Network but has no existing bicycle facilities. The proposed lane reduction results in excess roadway space, which creates space for dedicated bicycle facilities. However, this is not a plan to shoehorn bike lanes where they don't belong; if the project team did not feel they could be accommodated safely and harmoniously with current school loading operations based on experience and similar designs elsewhere in the city, this design would not have been proposed.
- Adjacent Vallejo Street and Pacific Ave are 39' wide curb-to-curb which is too narrow for dedicated bicycle facilities; Broadway, in comparison, is 60.5' wide curb-to-curb. Dedicated bicycle lanes are proven to be safer and more comfortable for bicyclists than riding with vehicle traffic, which would be the case on Vallejo Street and Pacific Ave.
- When construction of the Polk Street project is complete, we would expect increased demand for cycling through the neighborhood on routes that connect to Polk Street.

Is it safe to have a bike lane next to a school loading zone?

- Yes, bike lanes next to school loading zones already exists at several schools across the city, including:
  - Sunset Elementary and Giannini Middle School on Ortega Street
  - Diane Feinstein and Ulloa elementary schools on Vicente Street
  - San Francisco Friends School on Valencia Street
- There have been no issues with school loading and bicyclist interaction at the above schools. The project team would not be proposing this design if experience did not demonstrate that it works.
- The loading operations at the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall are some of the most organized in the city, with crossing guards helping students cross and private staff helping to direct traffic. This will help to further control interactions between bicyclists and parents entering the loading zones.
- The approach to the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall is uphill, so bicyclists will be moving relatively slowly as they travel through the loading zones.
- At St. Brigid School and Convent & Stuart Hall, the bicycle lane will push faster-moving and higher-frequency through vehicle traffic further away from loading vehicles. This adds additional buffer space both for passengers getting out of the left side of the car, and vehicles pulling out of the curb-side loading areas.
- School loading only occurs for a small fraction of the day during only part of the year. At all other times, the bike lane will be free from school loading activity.
- This will be an improvement over existing conditions, where bicyclists either have to ride between the loading zones and parked cars without a bike lane or buffer, or in the shared through lane. Bicyclists will still have the option to ride in the shared lane after the project, and less confident or experienced cyclists will now have the added comfort and safety of a bike lane with a buffer.
- Based on feedback from the Hamlin School, up to 20 teachers from the school regularly bike to work. Eight of these attended a winter 2017 group meeting to talk about the project, and were "enthusiastic" about the proposal. Some of the feedback from the teachers:
  - Having an official bike lane does raise the level of awareness from car drivers, even if they need to cross the bike lane to get to the white zone.

    - Reducing the number of lanes on Broadway will make cars to go slower on a street that by virtue of its width makes people go on "highway" mode when driving through (a lot of speeding!).
- More generally, the SFMTA has loading zones next to bike lanes across the city, and have not seen any common or recurrent problems as a result.

How is this project different from the one in the 2009 San Francisco Bicycle Plan?

- The 2009 San Francisco Bicycle Plan included a bike lane and roadway configuration proposal on Broadway (Project 1-1: Broadway Bicycle Lanes, Polk Street to Webster Street). That project proposed a standard 4 lane to 3 lane conversion (one lane in each direction, with a center turn lane and bike lanes) for the entire corridor from Webster to Van Ness. One travel lane in each direction at both the Hamlin School and St. Brigid School would have impacted school loading procedures; the bike plan's environmental impact report identified 'significant impacts' to school loading by reducing the number of lanes where both those schools load.
- With the renewed focus on improving safety on Broadway, the SFMTA's approach from the beginning was to work with the operations directors at the Hamlin School and Convent & Stuart Hall, and co-principals at St. Brigid School to ensure any proposed design could accommodate existing loading procedures. This is why the project proposal maintains two lanes in all school loading areas. Unlike the original project, the Hamlin School, Convent & Stuart Hall, and St. Brigid School did not express that the project proposal would impact their loading procedures.
- The current project proposes less than half the parking reduction than the 2009 project proposed, and maintains two lanes in each direction where there are higher vehicle volumes to avoid increases in congestion.