

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Sustainable Streets

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving various bicycle and traffic modifications on Folsom Street between 11th Street and 4th Street as part of an 18 month pilot to test a traffic lane removal. The project should also improve the safety and comfort of walking and bicycling and encourage motorists to travel at a lower rate of speed through the project area.

SUMMARY:

- Staff has received several requests for bicycle safety and traffic calming improvements in the Folsom Street Pilot Project area (Folsom Street between 11th Street and 4th Street). The segment of Folsom Street where these improvements will be installed is in the South of Market area and adjacent to Victoria Manalo Draves Park, Bessie Carmichael Middle School, the SOMA Recreation Center, and a mix of residential and business land uses.
- The changes associated with the Pilot Project include removing a traffic lane by using existing striping as much as possible to keep the cost and amount of resources down.
- The proposed modifications will result in three travel lanes rather than four, designated right turn pockets where turns are allowed, and a wider buffered bike lane with green paint at the intersections to highlight the bikeway. No changes to parking or transit stops are proposed.
- The SFMTA Board of Directors has authority to adopt parking and traffic regulations changes.
- The Planning Department determined that the traffic modifications were categorically exempt, as a Class 6 exemption, from environmental review pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15306.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. Folsom Complete Street Pilot Project Cross-Section Graphic

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR _____ 11/13/13

SECRETARY _____ 11/13/13

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: November 19, 2013

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PURPOSE

Approving various bicycle and traffic modifications on Folsom Street between 11th Street and 4th Street as part of an 18 month pilot to test a traffic lane removal. The project should also improve the safety and comfort of walking and bicycling and encourage motorists to travel at a lower rate of speed through the pilot project area.

GOAL

This action supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan Goal and Objectives:

Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone

Objective 1.3: Improve the safety of the transportation system.

Goal 2: Make transit, walking, bicycling, taxi, ridesharing and carsharing the preferred means of travel

Objective 2.3: Increase use of all non-private auto modes.

DESCRIPTION

The SFMTA is proposing a pilot project to determine the impact of removing a traffic lane along Folsom Street between 4th and 11th Street. This section of Folsom Street currently includes four travel lanes and a bike lane. See Attachment A. The 18-month pilot program would remove a lane of traffic and would study what, if any, effects might arise from the removal of that traffic lane.

The intent of this pilot program is to allow City staff to collect data demonstrating how these actions affect traffic volumes and transit performance along Folsom Street and parallel streets. We anticipate starting this pilot program in late November/early December. The duration of the trial will allow traffic patterns to settle after the modifications are made and allow a full year's worth of seasonal data collection and observation, with an option for an additional season of data collection if that is deemed to be useful.

Traffic volume data will be collected at the locations listed below, before and after the initiation of the pilot. On Howard and Folsom, speed data will also be collected.

- Mission Street between 4th and 5th Street
- Mission Street between 9th and 10th Street
- Howard Street between 4th and 5th Street (speed also)
- Howard Street between 9th and 10th Street (speed also)
- Folsom Street between 4th and 5th Street (speed also)
- Folsom Street between 9th and 10th Street (speed also)
- Harrison Street between 4th and 5th Street
- Harrison Street between 9th and 10th Street
- Bryant Street between 4th and 5th Street
- Bryant Street between 9th and 10th Street

To determine any changes to transit performance, Automatic Passenger Count (APC) data will also be collected for the 12-Folsom before and after the changes are made. APC data provides transit travel time and transit delay information which will then be evaluated by SFMTA staff.

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Lastly, as supplemental information, bicycle counts will also be taken at Folsom Street and 8th Street before and after the changes are made.

“Before” volume and speed counts will be taken in November 2013. “After” counts will be taken in Spring 2014, Summer 2014, Fall 2014, and Winter 2015, with an option of Spring 2015 if an additional count is deemed useful or necessary. This will allow for ongoing data collection and capture any seasonal fluctuations in traffic volumes.

The changes on the street will be made with thermoplastic paint, which is relatively easy to remove or modify. This includes green paint in the bikeway, which will be used to improve visibility of the bikeway at intersections. Additional changes include the addition of 4-8 signs instructing that transit can travel straight along Folsom Street from the right turn lanes in order to access bus stops. Signs are easy to install and remove with minimal changes to existing infrastructure. Lastly, some 5’-10’ long sections of curb will be painted red where necessary to “daylight” crosswalks, a common technique for improving sightlines between pedestrians and motorists. All of the above is reversible and in line with a temporary installation.

Experiences from the installed 8th Street buffered bike lane were gathered from transit operators and staff used this information to assist with the design for Folsom Street. It was noted that transit will have a longer lateral move to get into and out of transit stops as a result of installing a buffered bike lane. To help address the longer lateral move, transit will be allowed to go through the intersection and access the stops from the right turn lanes, which is reflected in the proposed modifications. On some sections of Folsom Street, Golden Gate Transit (GGT) also travels on the street. Staff spoke with GGT staff and they are satisfied with the proposed modifications to allow transit to go through via right turn lanes.

This effort is related to the Central SOMA project which is proposing changes to streets in SOMA on Folsom and Howard streets as well as other streets. The Central SOMA project is currently undergoing environment review, and a draft EIR is expected by the end of 2014. Data collected from this pilot will help inform the Central SOMA project.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A number of alternatives were considered:

- Option 1: No project.
- Option 2: Option 2 removed a lane on the southside (rightside) of the one-way street using paint and leaving the parking, transit stops, and signals as they are.
- Option 3: Option 3 removed a lane on the southside (rightside) of the one-way street by moving the parking away from the curb to create a parking-protected bikeway along the curb. This would have necessitated redesign of the traffic signals and transit stops, and required parking loss.

Option 2 was selected because it results in a traffic lane removal and buffered bikeway at a reasonable cost without major changes to the roadway in a short period of time. It was not clear that Option 3 would be possible to effectively implement in a short or even medium-term timeline given the signal and transit work required. It was also more complex and would have required more intensive in-reach and outreach given the nature of a parking separated bikeway design. The cost was also significantly higher for Option 3 – approximately 4 to 5 times higher.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Over 80 people representing local business owners, commuters, and residents attended the October 23rd Folsom Complete Street Pilot Project Community Meeting. The vast majority of attendees were very supportive of the proposed near-term changes and many expressed gratitude for the SFMTA's accelerated timeline of the project. Some were opposed to any changes on the street or advocated for more large scale changes. Specific comments from the meeting have been tabulated and incorporated into the project design and trial as appropriate.

The Folsom item then passed the SFMTA Public Hearing on Friday November 1. There were a number of supporters and one opponent. Opposition heard so far is due to concerns of congestion while supporters appreciate the near term changes to improve the bikeway, calm traffic, and reduce the number of lanes that pedestrians must cross.

Throughout the process, staff has been working with Supervisor Kim and members of her office.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT:

- A. ESTABLISH: LANE REMOVAL (18 month trial) - Folsom Street, 4th-11th Street
- B. ESTABLISH: RIGHT LANE MUST TURN RIGHT EXCEPT TRANSIT (18 month trial)
Folsom Street at 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th Street

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The proposed bicycle and traffic modifications were reviewed by the San Francisco Planning Department. On November 1, 2013, the Planning Department determined the traffic modifications were categorically exempt, as a Class 6 exemption, from environmental review pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15306.

The Planning Department's determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors. The proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by the S. F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this calendar item.

FUNDING IMPACT

This project is fully funded by Interagency Plan Implementation Committee (IPIC) funds. The developer Impact Fees collected for various Community Area Plans are appropriated to various uses, including transportation. The SF Planning Department administers these funds through a committee whose members include Recreation and Park, SFMTA, Public Works, SF Library, and SF Planning. Through their annual capital process implement Area Plans, the Interagency Plan Implementation Committee recently completed their process, convened meetings and discussed project with Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) for final approval by the Board of Supervisors. Development Areas include Market and Octavia and Eastern Neighborhoods. The Folsom Trial Project has been included within the capital improvement list funded by IPIC funds for the Eastern Neighborhoods.

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RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff recommends approval of various bicycle and traffic modifications on Folsom Street between 11th Street and 4th Street, as set forth in Items A and B above, as part of an 18 month pilot to test a traffic lane removal.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has received a request, or identified a need for the following traffic modifications:

- A. ESTABLISH: LANE REMOVAL (18 month trial) -Folsom Street, 4th-11th Street
- B. ESTABLISH: RIGHT LANE MUST TURN RIGHT EXCEPT TRANSIT (18 month trial) Folsom Street at 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th Street

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Planning Department has reviewed the proposed bicycle and traffic modifications, set forth in items A through B, for the Folsom Street Pilot Project, and determined that the proposed modifications are categorically exempt, as a Class 6 exemption, from environmental review pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15306 (“CEQA guidelines”); and,

WHEREAS, A copy of the San Francisco Planning Department’s determination is on file with the Secretary to the SFMTA Board of Directors, and this approval is the Approval Action as defined by San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 31; and,

WHEREAS, The public has been notified about the proposed modifications and has been given the opportunity to comment on those modifications through the public hearing process; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves the proposed bicycle and traffic modifications on Folsom Street between 11th Street and 4th Street, as set forth in items A through B, as part of an 18 month pilot program to test a traffic lane removal to implement the Folsom Street Pilot Project.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of November 19, 2013.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Folsom Complete Street Pilot Project Cross-Section Graphic

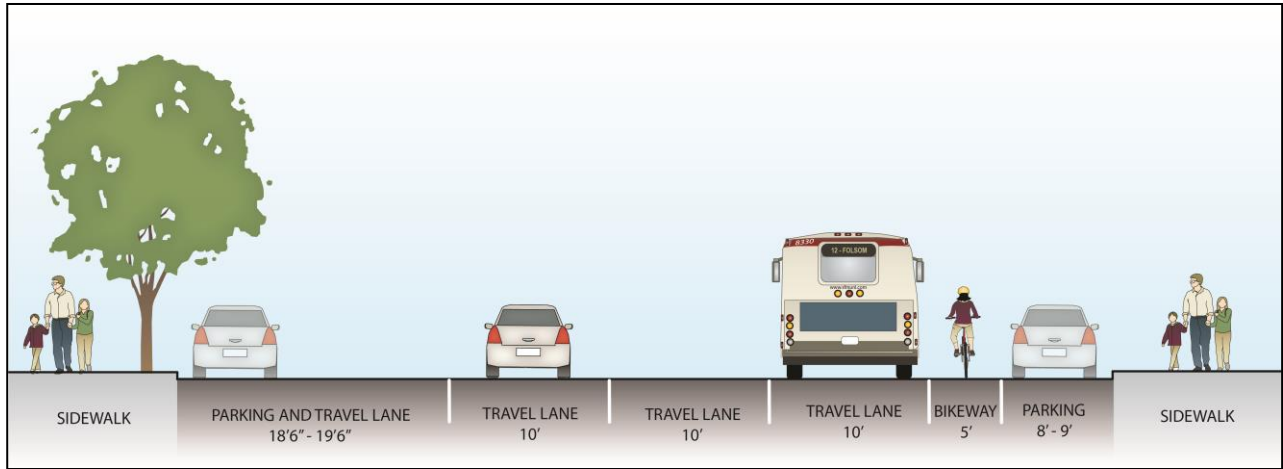


Figure 1. Existing, Folsom Street from 11th Street to 4th Street

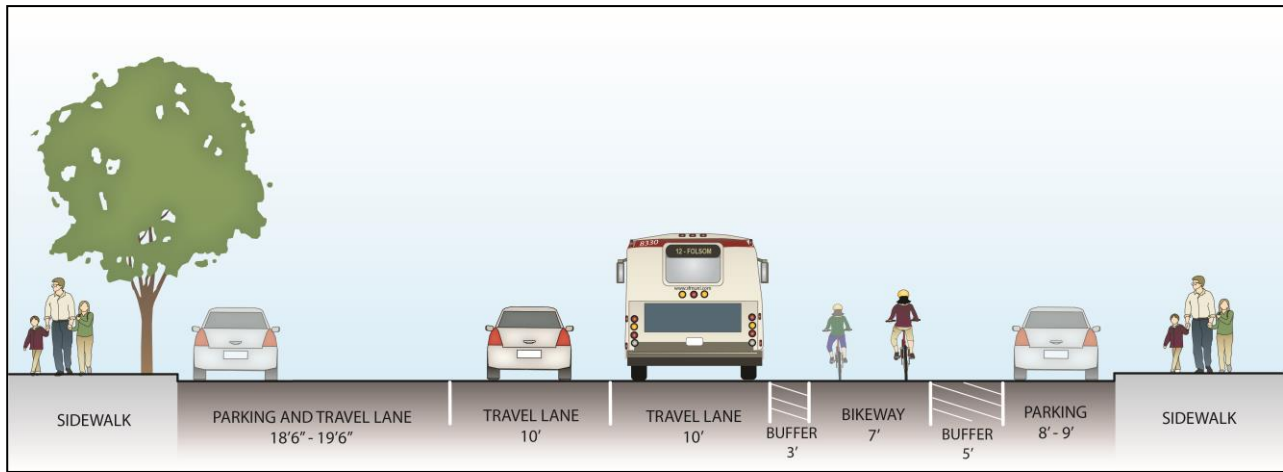


Figure 2. Proposed Pilot, Folsom Street from 11th Street to 4th Street

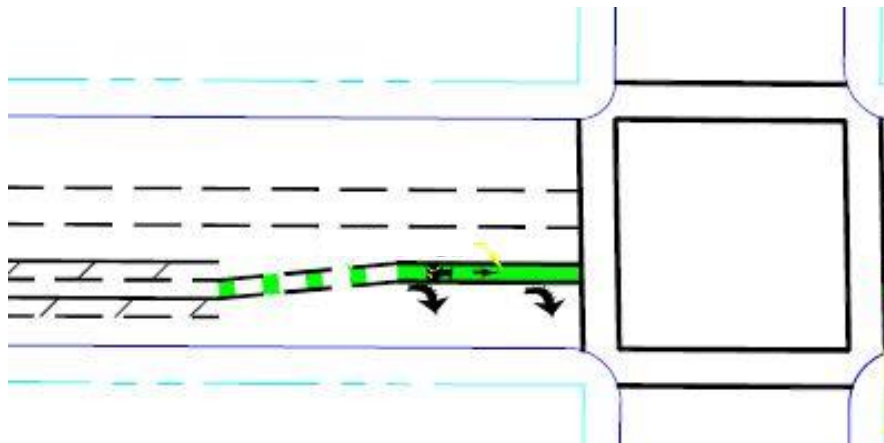


Figure 3. Typical Design where Right Turns are Allowed