

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO. : 11

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Sustainable Streets Division

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Recommend that the SFMTA Board of Directors adopt the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Street Design Guide (2013)* for use as an additional reference in transportation planning and design projects and programs. In some situations, these guidelines provide a more appropriate context compared to existing conventional design guidelines since conventional state and federal guidelines may not provide the main principles, flexibility, or creativity to accommodate all transportation modes within a complex urban streetscape. As a NACTO member city that helped to develop the contents of the *Urban Street Design Guide*, the SFMTA would benefit from incorporating these additional guidelines into agency transportation planning and engineering practice.

SUMMARY:

- San Francisco is a member city of NACTO, which enables the SFMTA to work cooperatively by sharing and learning from the best practices on urban transportation issues with 17 other major U.S. cities.
- The SFMTA has helped develop the recently released *Urban Street Design Guide*.
- The challenge for San Francisco's streets to safely accommodate current and future residents, workers and visitors within limited space requires a unique approach.
- The NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* provides a progressive and growing toolkit to create safer, more multi-modal streets through low cost, adaptable, people-oriented active and economically vibrant street design.
- Adopting NACTO's *Urban Street Design Guide* for use in San Francisco will help fulfill the SFMTA's Strategic Plan goals and lend support to the most current practices in urban street design.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide*: <http://nacto.org/usdg/>

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR _____ 1/13/14

SECRETARY _____ 1/13/14

PAGE 2.

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: January 21, 2014

PAGE 3.

PAGE 2.

PURPOSE

Recommending that the SFMTA Board of Directors adopt the NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide (2013)* for use as an additional reference in transportation planning and design projects and programs. In some situations, these guidelines provide a more appropriate context compared to existing conventional design guidelines since conventional state and federal guidelines may not provide the flexibility or creativity to accommodate all transportation modes within a complex urban streetscape. As a NACTO member city that helped to develop the contents of the *Urban Street Design Guide*, the SFMTA would benefit from incorporating these additional guidelines into agency transportation planning and engineering practice.

GOAL

This action is consistent with the SFMTA 2013-2018 Strategic Plan's goals.

Goal 1: Create a safer transportation experience for everyone.

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

Goal 3: Improve the environment and quality of life in San Francisco

DESCRIPTION

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is a cooperative of 18 major U.S member cities formed to exchange transportation ideas, insights, and practices on national transportation issues. In addition to San Francisco, the other member cities include: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, San Diego, Seattle and Washington, D.C.

In March 2011, NACTO released the *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, a document summarizing principles of bicycle facility design and case studies that did not exist in any other national guide. In October 2013, NACTO released their second report, the *Urban Street Design Guide*, a toolkit for cities to create safer, more multi-modal streets that meet the needs of all users. The *Urban Street Design Guide* is an unprecedented collaboration between major city transportation departments across the United States. It provides an alternative to existing conventional design guidelines that currently do not embody the main principles, flexibility, or creativity to accommodate all transportation modes within a complex urban streetscape. The *Urban Street Design Guide* is organized into the following 6 chapters: Streets, Street Design Elements, Interim Design Strategies, Intersections, Intersection Design Elements, and Design Controls.

The first chapter, “**Streets**”, defines a design approach that offers flexibility to the multifaceted roles streets play in cities. Recommendations for streets are discussed within the context of downtown, neighborhood, boulevard, transit, alley, and shared streets. Specific

PAGE 4.

recommendations include opportunities to re-use right of way to accommodate transit lanes, dedicated bicycle facilities, enhanced pedestrian crossings, and streetscape improvements.

The second chapter, “**Street Design**”, provides a detailed toolbox of design opportunities to optimize lane width, sidewalks, curbs, speed control, transit streets, and storm water management, all playing crucial aspects of street design. The toolbox provides case studies and recommendations to enhance street design for all modes.

Chapter 3, “**Interim Design Strategies**”, provides tools to deliver results quickly when complex approval and regulatory processes is a barrier. Interim solutions include sidewalk widening, traffic calming, bike parking, and public seating areas. These solutions are not intended to replace long term capital improvements but rather offer methods to improve the streetscape without waiting through lengthy conventional project development processes. The toolbox provides recommendations for the use of paint and removable seating, planters, and buffers to help redesign street space.

Chapter 4, “**Intersections**” defines the principles of designing intersections to function safely and efficiently. Intersections account for the most serious conflicts between modes so it is critical to utilize intuitive and seamless design. The main principles underlying street design include designing intersections to be compact, evaluate them as part of a network and as shared spaces, integrate time and space, utilize excess right of way of public space, and account for future land uses.

Chapter 5, “**Intersection Design Elements**”, explores specific tools for the design and operation of intersections to improve safety and mobility. Design elements include best practice examples for crosswalks (intersection and midblock), corner radii, and sight distance. Furthermore, the principles behind traffic signals outline the importance to shortening cycle length to increase turnover, prioritizing walking, bicycling, and transit, minimizing signal phases, timing signals to control traffic speeds, adjusting for peak periods, and ensuring consistent crossing opportunities for pedestrians.

The final chapter, “**Design Controls**”, define the key parameters that help shape design decisions. The methods of intersection control and design speed are important safety factors. Moreover, defining the time of year, time of day, and vehicle type when making critical design decisions help account for the roadway users’ needs while accounting for street constraints.

The *Urban Street Design Guide* is consistent with the goals outlined in San Francisco’s *Better Streets Plan* and *Pedestrian Strategy*. The *Better Streets Plan*, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in December 2010, provides streetscape polices to guide street design while “balancing the needs of all street users, with a particular focus on the pedestrian environment and how streets can be used as public space.” Specific street design principles include crosswalk curb, median, and traffic calming treatments. Building on the *Better Streets Plan*, the *Pedestrian Strategy* was released by the SFMTA in April 2013 and is part of the City’s broader effort to make San Francisco the most walkable city in North America. NACTO’s *Urban Street Design*

PAGE 5.

Guide, provides guidelines which address unique urban challenges faced in San Francisco to re-orient streets of all sizes to prioritize transit, safe walking and biking, and public activity.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The SFMTA Board could elect not to adopt the NACTO *Urban Design Guidelines* for use in San Francisco. However, it would be difficult to improve existing street conditions using just conventional guidelines. In addition, not adopting the NACTO guidelines is inconsistent with our agency's role as a member city that worked directly on the development of the NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide*.

FUNDING IMPACT

None.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

The SFMTA, under the authority granted by the Planning Department, has determined that the adoption of the NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* is not a "project" for purposes of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15060(c)(2).

A copy of the environmental review 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.

RECOMMENDATION

SFMTA staff recommends that the SFMTA Board of Directors adopt the NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* for use as an additional reference in transportation planning and design projects and programs in San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, San Francisco is a member city of the *National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)*, which enables the SFMTA to work cooperatively by sharing and learning from the best practices on urban transportation issues with 17 other major U.S. cities; and,

WHEREAS, The SFMTA has demonstrated its commitment as a member city through multiple roles, including helping to develop the recently released NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide (2013)*; and,

WHEREAS, The SFMTA 2013-2018 Strategic Plan aims to support San Francisco with excellent transportation choices, and create a safer transportation experience for everyone by making transit, walking, bicycling, taxi, rideshare, and carshare the preferred means of travel; and,

WHEREAS, The challenge for San Francisco's streets to safely accommodate current and future residents, workers and visitors within limited space requires a unique approach; and,

WHEREAS, The NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* provides a progressive and growing toolkit to create safer, more multi-modal streets through low cost, adaptable, people-oriented active and economically vibrant street design; and,

WHEREAS, The SFMTA, under the authority granted by the Planning Department, has determined that the adoption of the NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* is not a "project" for purposes of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations Section 15060(c)(2); and,

WHEREAS, A copy of the environmental review 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; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors adopts the National Association of City Transportation Officials *Urban Street Design Guide* for use as an additional reference in transportation planning and design projects and programs in San Francisco.

PAGE 7.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of January 21, 2014.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency