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****PRESS RELEASE****

New Bike Lane Creates Key Link between Market Street and Civic Center

Two-block stretch of Southern Polk Street Made Safer for People Biking and Walking

San Francisco—On Friday, May 2, District 6 Supervisor Jane Kim, members of the public, and representatives from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Public Works and the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition will celebrate the makeover of a two-block section of southern Polk Street, from Market to Grove streets, to make riding a bike and walking safer and more convenient.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place at the northeast corner of Polk and Market streets at 11 a.m. tomorrow, followed by an inaugural bike ride up the new bikeway.

“This is a small street infrastructure improvement project with a large impact,” said Mayor Lee. “Not only are we creating one of the most accessible routes through the heart of San Francisco with these safety and accessibility improvements, but we are honoring the City’s commitment to keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe.”

The transformative Polk Street Bikeway Improvement Project provides a vital connection to the Civic Center and the City’s northern neighborhoods for the many people biking and walking from Market Street. This project is a key component of the San Francisco 2009 Bike Plan and is the 52nd Bike Plan project to be implemented, leaving just eight projects left.

The highlight of the project is a new separated northbound bike lane, also known as a contra-flow lane, because it allows people biking to safely travel against vehicle traffic on the one-way corridor. Prior to the makeover, many northbound bicyclists trying to reach Polk Street destinations from Market Street, such as City Hall, travelled on the sidewalks along Polk Street or on busy Van Ness Avenue one block to the west – a stressful ride among traffic, numerous bus routes and active loading zones.

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“We are pleased to expand our bike network to make getting to key city locations, like Civic Center, easier and safer,” said Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. “With more people getting on their bikes, the SFMTA is committed to providing safer and more direct bicycling connections throughout San Francisco. Potential transportation funding measures on the November 2014 ballot will empower us to deliver even more projects like these, building up to 30 miles of safer, better-defined bikeways that protect all road users.”

“The Polk Street project has provided us an opportunity to redesign and modernize this area to reflect the growing dynamism of the Civic Center district,” said San Francisco Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru. “We are using voter-approved taxpayer dollars to transform our streets into places that are safer and more pleasing to use.”

This project is part of the city’s initiative to create a safe, interconnected bicycle network project and was funded through the 2011 Road Repaving and Street Safety Bond Program, a \$248 million voter-approved general obligation bond. With it, the city is repaving streets in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco, and making traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements.

In addition to the new bike lane, the following changes and improvements have been made to Polk Street between Market to McAllister streets:

- Roadway repaving from Market to Grove streets to make the street smoother and safer for all road users;
- Pedestrian safety improvements, including sidewalk bulbouts to make crossings shorter, slow down turning vehicles and increase the visibility of people walking to motorists;
- Widening of the existing southbound bike lane, and the addition of green paint and a painted buffer, as well as flexible posts to create a safer, more organized roadway;
- Three sets of new bike traffic signals at Market, Hayes and Grove streets, as well as a bike waiting area to guide those turning from eastbound Market Street to northbound Polk Street;
- A reconfigured passenger loading zone at Fox Plaza;
- A redesigned pedestrian island at Market and Polk street;
- New American with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps to improve sidewalk access for seniors and people with disabilities;
- Widening of the southbound bike lane in front of City Hall between Grove and McAllister streets and the addition of green paint;
- The addition of a new, green northbound bike lane in front of City Hall between Grove and McAllister streets accompanied by the reconfiguration of parking to make parking back-in angled, which improves safety and visibility of people riding a bike, and;
- Landscaping and sidewalk upgrades, as well as sewer renovations

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The project is complete just in time for Bike Month and the 20th annual Bike-to-Work Day, which takes place on Thursday, May 8.

“The new Polk contraflow bikeway is a hallmark of complete streets that prioritizes comfort, connectivity and design. Though only a few blocks, this gorgeous bikeway offers a crucial connector between the business corridors of Market and Polk Streets, making it easier for people to get to work and shop at local businesses by bike,” said Leah Shahum, Executive Director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

The site of the ribbon-cutting is also the starting point of Public Works' Streetscape Bike Tour, which will be a on a leisurely ride for people interested in learning more about the city's most outstanding streetscape improvement projects. The tour caps a week of Public Works Week activities for the public and is available for registration at www.sfdpw.org/pww.

About the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency: The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, is responsible for the management of all ground transportation in the city. The SFMTA keeps people connected through the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni), the nation's seventh largest public transit system. The agency's additional responsibilities include managing parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and the regulation of taxis.

About San Francisco Public Works: The 24/7 city agency cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and nurtures city-maintained street trees; designs, constructs and maintains city-owned facilities; inspects streets and sidewalks; builds curb ramps; eradicates graffiti; partners with neighborhoods; trains people for jobs; greens the right of way; and educates our communities.

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Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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