BETTER MARKET STREET

Public Outreach — Round One Findings

Prepared by: Perkins+Will Consultant Team

7 December 2011
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Prepared for:
San Francisco Department of Public Works
San Francisco Planning Department
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
San Francisco County Transportation Authority
San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development

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Overview

Public Outreach efforts are an integral part of the Better Market Street project from start to finish. As such the project team seeks to engage the public to envision a revitalized Market Street—a place of vibrant public life, comfortable and reliable transportation and thriving commerce—and then to realize a physical plan for those improvements.

Over a period of one year, the first three rounds of active, substantive public engagement will be conducted providing a variety of places, times and platforms for people to learn together about the opportunities and challenges, and then develop and consider alternatives for action. The first round was completed in May 2011 and included a public workshop, the program for which was repeated on two dates and held along Market Street; Webinars held on two occasions to provide access to materials in tandem with the workshop; and the creation for the Better Market Street website of presentation materials and a framework wherein a wide range of participants could respond to all key questions raised at the workshops.

The substance of the workshop materials drew from the research and analysis being conducted by the City and consultant teams, and displayed preliminary findings for public view and comment. Components included a verbal presentation of key findings, display of findings and questions on twenty large presentation boards, and numerous stations for public comment—answering questions and providing notes and comments. The content and results of those public work sessions (workshops, webinars and online survey) are summarized in this document. A full record of all comments received will be available as part of Appendix materials.

In the document that follows findings are reported by area of public discussion including: an overview of public comment, graphics from workshops as appropriate, summary graphs and charts, and a selection of public comments covering primary topics. As noted, verbatim comments are also available. (See Appendix).

Round One Objectives

- Build momentum for the project
- Present updated information on project, purpose and need, and environmental planning process
- Begin to engage people in the substance of the work—providing an overview of existing conditions and best practices and sharing findings from the public life and public space surveys
- Solicit input on perceptions of Market Street
- Discuss vision/goals and how the public can effectively engage in this phase of the study

Desired Input from the Public

- Help define the vision/goals for the future of Market Street
- Identify the key issues, needs and opportunities along and adjacent to Market Street (feedback on existing conditions and best practices)
- Understand what the public would like to do and see on Market Street
- Understand how the public would like to arrive at and travel along Market Street
Outreach and Noticing

- Better Market Street website: www.bettermarketstreetsf.org
- E-blast to over 4,700 addresses
- Outreach to partners/stakeholders who committed to forward electronic announcement and flyer to email lists
- Flyer distribution in key public areas, including: Civic Center Lunch Trucks, Gray Area Foundation Opening, Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District Film Screening, Market Street 1st to 4th, Market Street Ferry Building to 4th, Civic Center BART and UN Plaza, Mission area, Market and Main, and Embarcadero BART
- Poster distribution to Market Street (and surrounding) businesses with storefronts
- Meeting announcements and updates posted to San Francisco Great Streets Project Facebook page and Twitter feed
- Press release distributed by the Mayor’s Office of Communications—May 2, 2011
- Small posters announcing meetings and webinars in transit areas:
  - 450 on transit vehicles
  - 25 on bus shelters along Market Street
  - 18 signs in Muni Metro Stations

Public Workshops and Webinars

Public Workshops

First public workshop was held on May 17, 2011 between 6:00 and 8:30 p.m. at the Warfield
- 77 people signed-in
- 33 Public Participation Surveys were returned

Second public workshop was held on May 24, 2011 between 6:00 and 8:30 p.m. at the Whitcomb Hotel
- 84 people signed-in
- 24 Public Participation Surveys were returned

Webinars

First webinar was held on May 19, 2011 between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.
- 28 people participated

Second webinar was held on May 25, 2011 between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.
- 32 people participated
These presentation boards were used at the workshops and are available for review on the Better Market Street website: www.bettermarketstreetsf.org
Market Street Stories

Best and Worst of Market Street  8
How do you typically travel on Market Street?  10
Priorities for Market Street  12
What areas of Market Street do you like best? Like least? Why?

Like Best
The places people enjoy most along Market Street are the places where most people are—active, sunny areas where there are places to eat, sit, and be in the midst of beautiful buildings and lots of other people. These places include Civic Center, Yerba Buena, and Justin Herman Plaza and the Ferry Building.

Like Least
Many of the noted areas that people least liked were major intersections, where there are many conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Many of these locations are also perceived as unsafe and are “dead zones,” particularly at night.

Overall Comments
Market Street functions as the central spine for San Francisco and, for better or worse, is well-used by every mode of travel. Conflicts between modes are an important concern, as well as making the street a safer, more comfortable place to stop and linger along. As a potential iconic street for the city, the streetlife needs to be more active between Octavia and Embarcadero, at all hours of the day and into the night.

Record of all public comments in Appendices B and C.

- Van Ness and Market—forlorn intersection, yet major gateway
- On Market and Van Ness there are too many beggars—Homeless, drugs, sketchy people who hang out between Van Ness and Franklin to sell food stamps and drugs
- People sneak on the Muni bus at this big transfer point in the city
- The City cannot accommodate all the transit. The bus stop is always crowded.
- Freeway/pedestrian/bike intersection is not good at Octavia and Market—cars from highway don’t see pedestrians and vice versa and cars are going fast
- Love the farmers market every Wednesday
- Green separated bike lanes are awesome—please extend them the entire length of Market
- Extend sustainable resource district from Civic Center to Mid-Market to create an eco-district
- A wind tunnel at Fox Plaza and Van Ness
- At the intersection of Tenth and Market, car traffic is very close to pedestrians and is not safe
- Food trucks and cafes nearby would help to draw people
- The library is a great attraction but can be unpleasant due to the number of homeless people inside and around
• I love the decorative crosswalks at Golden Gate and Market
• The Warfield is a great facility and attracts such great varied acts—can be the anchor, along with Grey Area Arts Foundation for arts and cultural activities
• Great possibilities for cheaper rents and new small businesses. Affordable publicly accessible space for creative business incubators and cultural arts centers
• Sixth Street is the most deadly pedestrian corridor in San Francisco. Slow the cars down!
• I wish the street felt safer for walking home after a late night.

• I like the cafes with outdoor seating around Third and Second Street. It encourages great street life
• Sparkly sidewalks make me happy and a happy place to spend time—music people
• Sidewalks are wide but there are almost no benches to sit on. Almost too successful—more space should be given to pedestrians
• Great space for cultural site and local art. Love the busy streets—lots to see and do
• Provide historical markers along market as a way for people to stop and learn about San Francisco history and break up the monotony of the street

• This is probably the best part of Market Street. I’d love to see creative use of green space. Meeting areas, benches, art.
• Should be vehicle restricted and made pedestrian friendly. Pedestrian only spaces are wonderful relaxing and calm
• Needs life on the weekends—it’s a dead zone
• Get more nightlife activity on the ground floor—less lobbies, more bars, restaurants, and lively street fronts
• Montgomery and Market—open area to BART station—great stepped seating—people watching, sunny, hanging out. Mixed crowd—art, bike, business
How do you typically travel on Market Street? How would you characterize your experience?

**Walk Only**

18% of Respondents

**Walk-On Street Transit**

15% of Respondents

**Walk-Underground Transit**

25% of Respondents

A key goal of the workshop interactive materials was to learn how people were typically traveling along Market Street and how they would characterize the experience.

These were discussed as “Market Street Stories” and a number of such stories were shared with the group to stimulate their thinking about their own trip.

The breakdown of respondent choices as to their most typical trip along Market Street is indicated by the percentage shown. The total number of respondents to this is 292.

Whether I travel above or below ground depends upon the time of day due to the frequency of transit.

Issues persist around loading and boarding for paratransit users.

Underground transit stations are ugly.

Can we move all mass transit underground?
Attractive | Safe | Enjoyable | Convenient
--- | --- | --- | ---
Bike Only | Bike-Transit | Car or Taxi-Walk

I must admit that I get a certain kick out of riding down the madly hectic leapfrogging lanes. It’s an adrenaline rush, but it’s certainly dangerous.

The potholes in the pavement make it extremely uncomfortable and unpleasant to bike down Market Street, but the green bike lanes are great!

Nothing beats a good walk to see things one would otherwise miss if not on foot.

It is very scary to ride a bike on Market Street due to all the busses and traffic. I no longer ride my bike there and take Muni instead.

26% of Respondents

12% of Respondents

4% of Respondents

12.07.2011
Priorities for Market Street

Placemaking
Receiving the highest number of votes, both workshop and online participants felt that the character of Market Street and the quality of its spaces needed to be enhanced. Recurring comments and suggestions included: Closing the street to vehicular traffic to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists; Adding more comfortable seating areas to encourage social gathering and people-watching opportunities; and adding more monuments, public art, and landmarks to make Market Street a better attraction and destination.

Walking
The safety and enjoyment of the pedestrian realm is a key priority and participant comments offered repeated suggestions at the workshop to reduce cars, revitalize businesses, and better maintain the sidewalks along Market Street. These comments reflect the desire to make for a more attractive and interesting pedestrian experience.

Bicycling
Bicyclists seek a more bike friendly Market Street with requests for everything from better pavement and continuous bike lanes to a protected cyclepath and more cycling infrastructure such as timed signals for bicycles. Serious problems with safety, leapfrogging with buses and waiting in bus exhaust result in a reluctance to bike on Market Street.

Economic Vitality
Market Street is considered the central spine for commerce in downtown San Francisco and the quality and vitality of its businesses are crucial to the city. Many workshop participants commented on the need to promote more cafes, eateries, and shops that cater to people of all income levels and help restore the facades of existing vacant storefronts.
Priorities for Market Street

1. Placemaking
Enhance the quality of the public spaces along Market Street to invite people to stop and enjoy its diverse and urbane character.

2. Walking
Create an accessible pedestrian environment that promotes the central role of walking on Market Street for residents, visitors, and workers.

3. Bicycling
I want a street where biking is prioritized, safe, and convenient.

4. Economic Vitality
Support the economic vitality of businesses, particularly ground floor uses, along the Market Street corridor.
These presentation boards were used at the workshops and are available for review on the Better Market Street website: www.bettermarketstreetsf.org
Market Street Identity

What makes Market Street Special? 16
What would make Market Street more memorable? 18
What are aspects of your favorite street? 20
What makes Market Street special?

Issues of Market Street’s role in the City as a whole were uppermost on the minds of recipients to this question with a focus on Market Street as a Gateway to all of San Francisco and as a connector of many divergent neighborhoods and it passes through the heart of the City. Market Street’s rich history was cited along with requests for more ways to tell San Francisco’s stories along the street.

The diagonal orientation of Market Street was recognized for creating a hierarchy within the city street grid system. Its unique southwest-northeast direction also lies on a relatively flat plane, unique for an otherwise hilly city.

The wide sidewalks along Market Street were called out as a special feature along with the planting and lighting. And finally in the top tier of special characteristics were diversity and social space, recognizing the large gathering areas along the street and the diversity of people using and sharing the street—whether residents or visitors, commuters or theater-goers, or young and old of many backgrounds.
Top Elements That Make Market Street Special

1. Gateway
- It’s San Francisco’s “Main Street”
- It is the center of the city; it leads through the heart of downtown all the way to the water
- It is a hub of activity, a central corridor, a place for people to interact with the community

2. Connects Neighborhoods
- It’s the main connection between neighborhoods and downtown
- It cuts through the heart of the city and connects a lot of diverse neighborhoods along the way
- Market Street is special in that it connects so many divergent neighborhoods

3. Historic Roots
- It has history and landmarks
- It has a rich history and has seen much change over the years.
- I’d like to see more historical markers telling San Francisco’s diverse story

4. Diagonal Grid
- Important orientation element for the city
- Divides and unifies the city
- Cross-sectional views with unique flatiron buildings

5. Streetscapes
- It’s wide and has great wide sidewalks
- The wide and decorative sidewalks are wonderful
- I love the wide and well-paved sidewalks, as well as the beautiful trees and old-fashioned street lights

6. Diversity and Social Space
- Wide and diverse corridor for gathering and people-watching
- Intersection of people and ideas
- Has a lot of diversity, good, bad, and otherwise
What would make Market Street a more memorable place?

Trees and plantings were by far the most important key feature that workshop participants wanted to change to make Market Street more memorable. Participants suggested adding not only more, but also larger and taller trees that are native to the area to become a landmark icon for the street corridor.

There was a tie between the four other features amongst participants, but all are elements that contribute to enlivening Market Street and making the street safer and more interesting as a place to walk along and also linger. By adding more food options, with outdoor seating, Market Street can become a dining destination that takes advantage of existing vacant storefronts and puts more eyes on the street and attracts more people downtown at night.

Public art and performances, particularly geared towards local artists, can transform Market Street into an outdoor amphitheater, attracting the general passerby as well as becoming an attraction that residents and tourists seek out as a destination.
Top Elements That Would Make Market Street More Memorable

1. Limited or No Car Access
   • Make it car-free! We can do it!
   • People in San Francisco know you don’t ever drive along Market. Let’s make that official.
   • Since Market is the most transit-accessible part of the city, I don’t think such restrictions would keep people away.
   • Taxis or delivery trucks are fine, but not commuters.
   • Cross traffic at key intersections could be allowed.
   • No one drives on Market to get to Market.

2. Social Gathering Spaces
   • Add plants, parklets, cafés, water fountains, and features that encourage people to linger.
   • Make it cleaner, make it safer, fewer businesses that attract crime.
   • Redesign plazas to make them more fun. Try small markets and dance parties.
   • Curate the street like an exhibit.
   • Pedestrians need to feel safe on Market Street at all times.

3. Streetscape: Paving, Furniture, Lighting
   • Places to sit, including flexible seating.
   • Façade lighting and consistent streetscaping.
   • Signage that looks less like it belongs on a highway.
   • Replace struggling trees with trees that will survive.
   • Enhanced transit islands, wider handicapped ramps.
   • Street facades that reflect the grandness of the street.

4. Restaurants, Cafés, Groceries
   • Market Street is a “food desert.”
   • Needs more groceries, restaurants, and cafés with outdoor seating.
   • Encourage local businesses that bring pedestrians and bicyclists.
   • Allow for areas for food carts and informal sidewalk cafés.
   • Have nighttime food options, such as bars, lounges, and cafés.
   • Offer more great quality food, not just fast food.
   • Have at least one day or night a week dedicated to a true market, that allows pedestrians the length of the street.

5. Trees and Planting
   • Big, beautiful trees would make this place more memorable.
   • Native trees and planting, with information on their ecology.
   • Be careful not to shade too much.
   • More permaculture garden nooks.
   • Need taller, landmark trees.
   • More greening.

6. Bike Lane
   • Better pavement and better separation between bikes and vehicles.
   • Add a continuous green bike lane all the way from Castro to the Ferry Building.
   • More cycling infrastructure, timed signals for bicycles.
   • Prevent the bike lane from being constantly blocked.
   • Add a cyclepath that is separated from motor vehicle traffic.
   • This will change how people arrive and engage with Market Street.
Thinking of your favorite streets here or elsewhere, what aspects could provide inspiration for Market Street?

It seems that food and shopping, with opportunities for sitting down, go hand-in-hand with peoples’ memories of their favorite streets.

The majority of responses included examples of other streets that are also wide, but offer places to stop and eat or shop for local goods.
Top Elements That Could Provide Inspiration for Market Street

1. Pedestrian and Bike Only
   - Lots of seating, preferably in a vehicle-free setting
   - Seating in front of restaurants and outdoor cafés, like on Columbus
   - A place to sit and read a book or relax
   - A good example is at Market and 16th, a vehicle-free place where you can sit and read

2. Retail and Shops
   - Interesting shops and retail with a local flavor
   - Stores and offices that are open for business
   - Like Las Ramblas and Champs Elysses, with lots of stores and art vendors

3. Food
   - Diverse food options and sidewalks cafés and restaurants with outdoor seating
   - Urban grocery stores, like Trader Joe’s
   - Like the Champs Elysses, where the wide street is lined with restaurants
   - Lots of restaurants and coffeeshops

Favorite streets elsewhere

A little over a quarter of the workshop participants pointed to favorite streets in San Francisco, while the majority were streets located elsewhere, particularly international cities.

- San Francisco: Columbus Ave and Valencia St were mentioned most frequently as favorite local streets. Other local favorite streets mentioned included Van Ness Ave, Market Street itself but around Hayes Valley and the Castro, Lombard Street, and Dolores in the Mission.

- In the U.S.: The single most-often mentioned street was Broadway in New York, because of its diagonal nature and the success in closing off portions of the street to become pedestrian only plazas. Other notable US streets mentioned were Newbury St in Boston, Main Street Mall in Charlottesville, Broad St in Philadelphia, Dupont Circle in DC, and 5th Ave in Brooklyn.

- International: Stroget in Copenhagen, streets in Berlin, and Las Ramblas in Barcelona were the three most often mentioned favorite streets because they had separated bike lanes, easy pedestrian environment, and interesting sidewalk activity. Others mentioned by several participants included Shimuya Hachiko in Tokyo, Champs Elysses in Paris, and Calle Florida in Buenos Aires.
These presentation boards were used at the workshops and are available for review on the Better Market Street website: www.bettermarketstreetsf.org
Streetlife

What plazas and sidewalks do you enjoy most/least? 24
What would make Market Street more appealing? 26
What plazas and sidewalks do you enjoy most? Least?

The responses were varied for where people enjoyed their time on Market Street, with many singular responses for several locations along Market Street.

In general, however, the more enjoyable sidewalks and plazas are located on the eastern end, surrounded by the financial district, and culminating at the most enjoyed location—the area surrounding the Ferry Building and Justin Herman Plaza.
Enjoy Most:
Embarcadero Area

Enjoy:
• Seating—places to relax
• Open space and green—open and sunny
• Views—things to see
• Safe—lots of people, clean
• Open line of sight—great photo opportunities
• Less congested—wide sidewalks

Mixed:
UN Plaza

Enjoy:
• So much happens here
• Farmers market
• Fountain
• Views
• Diversity of people

Do not enjoy:
• Too many homeless
• Feels dirty and unsafe
• Area is gross and attracts strange behavior
• Mostly barren, especially at night
• ‘Dead’ building faces on adjoining streets

Enjoy Least:
Civic Center

Do not enjoy:
• A great civic amenity ruined by criminal activity and hustlers
• Dead at night
• It’s a beautiful space, but needs activity.
• Slow food garden;
• There is no place to sit
• Too many homeless people
• Underground feels kind of dodgy
• Underutilized and too quiet

Photo courtesy of Flickr user JDNX
Photo credit: Perkins+Will
Photo credit: Perkins+Will
How could Market Street be changed to make it a more appealing place for you to spend time?

In this exercise, the highest number of responses were for adding amenities and creating an environment that makes Market Street a more appealing place to linger. The most responses were for adding outdoor café seating to make Market Street a more appealing place to be. But almost equal in importance was the need for a cleaner, safer setting for people to sit by removing more traffic off of Market and adding more garbage bins.
1 Outdoor Café Seating
- Multiple comments about cafés and seating.
  See page 19 for sample.

2 Fewer Cars
- Make it easier to walk through
- Allow for wider pedestrian sidewalk space for activities to take place rather than just a walkway
- Consolidate bus stops (may need to remove cars)
- Fewer buses, replace with rail (surface and subway)
- Possibly making Market a narrower thoroughfare to make it more pedestrian friendly

3 Cleaner
- Market Street is filthy
- Focus on getting rid of the dirt and smells, especially around Civic Center, but also all along Market Street.
- More garbage cans
- Clean the streets
- Provide places for disposal of cigarette butts – many on Market Street are smokers on cigarette break
- More recovery, less drugs

4 Public Seating
- Plaza spaces
- More places to sit

5 Landscaping
- More creative uses
- More grass, less brick
- Bioswales and stormwater management
- Healthy trees
These presentation boards were used at the workshops and are available for review on the Better Market Street website: www.bettermarketstreetsf.org
Which mode of travel offers you the best experience and why?

Despite concerns about pedestrian safety, particularly at heavy vehicular crossings, the overwhelming number of participants felt that walking was the best way to travel Market Street. The sidewalks are already wide to accommodate pedestrians and there are a lot of interesting people to watch and stores to see when one is on foot as opposed to other forms of mobility.

Public transit and bicycling both tied for second, because while there were many advantages to both—convenience, faster than walking—there are also several factors which make those options more dangerous (short boarding islands, broken pavement).
1 Bicycling
- Cheapest, funnest and fastest
- Best way to get around town
- Puts me in control of my commute (for the most part)
- Feels like a natural important link in the bicycle network and it’s flat
- Biking is the fastest way (and healthiest) to get downtown. Love the new plans
- I bike because it’s the quickest way to get there
- Fastest and least onerous
- Free, faster than bus, and healthy

2 Walking
- Interactions with other people—you see the city
- Best way to see what’s in the stores and watch people
- Nothing beats a good walk to see things, one would otherwise miss if not on foot
- Least conflict with vehicles that create a danger.
- People walk because public transit is bad—too full between 8:15 and 9:30 am
- Walking is the best mode but only where interesting
- Wide sidewalks and signage geared toward pedestrians
- Bus is slow and bikes are scary where there are no bike lanes.

3 Public Transit
- Muni is the fastest and easiest
- Not as slow as walking
- Get to see sights above ground
- Market Street between Embarcadero and Octavia isn’t pretty or pleasant
- Don’t have to worry about signage
- Transit is super convenient for me
- Love the streetcars—wires make it look romantic

4 Driving
- Very convenient, especially to park in the garages
- Business really need places to receive good and deliveries
What are the major obstacles you encounter along Market Street?

Based on exercise results, the largest obstacle on Market Street is crowded public transit vehicles. Many workshop participants complained about not being able to get onto their buses and even when able to board, the ride is often unpleasantly crowded. The second most recorded obstacle was that public transit traveled too slowly, making too many stops due to traffic with cars, trucks, and bicyclists.

Lack of the sense of security and the often uncomfortable winds along Market Street were the two largest obstacles for pedestrians, which was otherwise considered the most favored mode of travel along the street.

For bicyclists, the top two obstacles are directly related to each other. The lack of a continuous bike lane affects the conflicts that cyclists have with other cars, trucks, and buses which they must currently share lanes with.

The lack of good wayfinding is a major issue for those driving or taking cabs along Market Street. Better signage would improve drivers’ ability to navigate the one-way streets and help direct people to appropriate locations to catch a cab.

Walking

- Intersections Are Tough to Cross (16%)
- Don’t Feel Secure (33%)
- Too Windy/ Uncomfortable Microclimate (22%)
- Uninteresting Place to Walk (29%)

Public Transit

- Travels Too Slowly (37%)
- Don’t Feel Secure (33%)
- Vehicles Are Too Crowded (23%)
- Can’t Tell Which Line to Take (7%)
- Doesn’t Come Frequently Enough (23%)

- Often way too crowded to even board
- Waiting around watching trains go by
- On-street buses are unpleasant to ride and take longer than underground
- Don’t feel safe waiting above ground
- Eliminate all cars on Market Street heading east to speed bus and other public transit modes
- Buses stop too much, making bus travel aggravatingly slow
- Have a “free zone” downtown to speed up loading
- Need continuous clear straight bike lanes
- Conflicts with cars and buses are particularly bad on Market because it's narrow and there are so many vehicles (trains, buses, cars) as well as pedestrians.
- Need to separate bikes from buses and cars for everyone's safety
- Dangerous leap frogging
- Bad surface and pot holes, especially in bike lanes
- Bike lanes should be like in Europe, either down the middle of the street or on the sides safely.

- Confusing one and two way streets
- Poor signage leads to more distraction of drivers and more traffic accidents
- Have a dedicated taxi loading area other than at hotels. It is impossible to find a taxi on Market at any hour, Allow taxis to pick up and drop off mid-block, curbside
- Parking garages may be underused because of the high costs to park
- Need to keep lanes for commercial traffic – open flow for deliveries is the key to events and commerce