



4 December 2013

To Whom It May Concern -

Folks for Polk is committed to seeing best practice in urban infrastructure implemented in San Francisco. Public projects must comprehensively address our current situation, powerful trends, and the urgency of our future needs.

Excellent public infrastructure is absolutely vital to our collective well-being and economic robustness. San Francisco is currently thriving and in order to maintain that momentum, funding should not present an obstacle to the best result for our city into the future. Therefore, Folks for Polk will work collaboratively with you and others as we explore new models for underwriting some of our more creative recommendations. We'll also continue to work to bolster the public's understanding and support for the best execution of this complicated project, such that it may serve as a template for future infrastructure initiatives in San Francisco.

It's our deeply held conviction that public consensus must be informed, cooperative, and productive and therefore must be guided by data and experience. After using various tools to facilitate the public's access to the current best design principles and information regarding the Polk Street redesign in particular, we solicited feedback. This document is a summary of the preferences voiced by the citizens of San Francisco.

Kindest regards,  
Madeleine Savit and the Folks for Polk



## Folks for Polk Recommendations for the Polk Street Improvement Project December 2, 2013

Folks for Polk hosted several neighborhood gatherings and leveraged innovative online tools to gather feedback about the current state of Polk Street and a vision for its future. Based on this input and a review of best practice in urban design, FFP offers the following recommendations for the Polk Street redesign (sequence does not reflect priority)

### PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

- **Bold crosswalk striping** at major intersections\* (e.g., zebra crossings, thermoplastic treatments similar to those in the Tenderloin); clearly defined crosswalks at other intersections.
- **Bulb-outs** as per [Working Group #2 Summary](#) and here under 'Water Infrastructure.'
- **Rapid Flash Beacons** in crosswalks at hazardous intersections\*
- **Signal additions/changes**; incl. Leading Pedestrian Intervals; countdown lights
- **Accommodation of longer crossing times**  
particularly at wide intersections w/o bulb-outs (required by many, incl. the young, the old, those w/ injuries, wheelchair users, the visually and hearing impaired)  
**Employ appropriate amenities** e.g. tactile striping, auditory signals, touch-activated signals in braille, sensors to detect movement in intersections to delay green lights.

### PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

- **Metering**
  - **Extend SFPark**; display availability incl. off-street within 2 blocks either side of Polk its entire length; plan for eventual transition to **SFPark kiosks**
  - **Where short ADA meters are installed**, provide post sleeves that allow use of short U-Locks for bikes
- **Limit loading times** to early am hours on days alternating with street cleaning
- **Disabled Parking** - design for adjustments as per recent revisions
- **Double parking** - minimize obstruction of Muni and other traffic flow; educate and enforce infractions, incl. those by taxis & ride-share services
- **Transit driver education** - incl. stopping completely curbside, etc.

### WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Permeable surfaces** under parking and other locations as subsurface soil conditions permit (as determined by existing SFPUC database of core samples)
- **Rain gardens** in bulbouts and other feasible locations.
- **Water fountains** that allow for refilling of bottles; at least two along the project length

## BICYCLING IMPROVEMENTS

### ***Right-of-Way Amenities***

- Road Markings
  - **Continuous bike lane striping**, super sharrows on both sides, the full length of Polk and north of Union St., south of McAllister, esp. new contraflow lane.
  - **Readily adaptable** to a permanent buffered or protected installation after the buffered bike lane pilot results are studied
  - **Uniform** in style throughout the corridor, distinct, solid green
  - Ample width to **minimize possibility of doorings**
  - **Bike boxes** (pockets) at all intersections, including for bike paths on streets crossing Polk, e.g. California and Pacific
  - **Through-intersection striping** at all intersections; clearly defined (e.g. dashed lines)
  - Other markings to **prevent motor vehicles from entering bike lanes** to circumvent others waiting to turn left\*
  - **Street infrastructure** placed away from cycle paths, e.g. manholes, grates
  
- Traffic Signals
  - **Leading Bike Intervals** in both directions\*
  - **Bicycle traffic lights** with green, amber, and red signals\* (reinforce cyclists' waiting for green light).
  - **Green wave** along full length of Polk, not just on major cross-streets, with consideration of average cyclists' speed on uphill side
  - **Disallow turns off Polk Street** (right turns on red and left turns) at particular intersections\* except for Muni buses; consider arrow turn traffic lights if appropriate

### ***Bay Area Bike Share*** (See attached Bay Area Bike Share considerations)

- **Stations along full length of Polk**; connect existing station at Golden Gate Ave. with points north
- **Station locations** - In alleys positioned perpendicular to Polk, and/or on Polk to daylight intersections

## TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

### ***Muni***

- **Bus bulb-outs** at key stops on Polk and on cross streets carrying Muni routes (e.g., Sutter/Post, Sacramento/Clay)
- **Ticket vending machines** at popular stops/transfer points (e.g. on Polk, at California cable car line terminus at Van Ness) to minimize delays
- **Coordinate light signal/timing** to prioritize transit, e.g. hold green lights longer to allow buses to pass through intersections.
- **Coordinate w/ TEP recommendations** as necessary for the 19-Polk (keeping bus on Polk to McAllister in favor of Larkin/Hyde couplet).
- **Transit screens\*\*** installed at key assembly points

(TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS, cont.)

**Taxis** - minimum 3 taxi stands (ranks) in the Polk Corridor

- o Minimize cruising, double parking, and delay of Muni vehicles
- o Locations can be informed by data on popular drop-off/pickup points; on cross streets where feasible
- o May be limited to certain times of day, freed for parking at other times

**Cycling** - Fully integrate into Corridor transit scheme (see 'Bicycling Improvements' & Bay Area Bike Share addendum)

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

**Parklets** - *Create more to activate street in a part of SF lacking open space:*

- More city-funded parklets or parklets that are otherwise actively promoted by city, in addition to parklets sponsored by neighborhood businesses
- Create mini-parklets under street trees
- Streamline existing permitting process & assist in funding; investigate crowd-funding
- Work with Polk St. businesses, esp. those on Polk who already want parklets

**Alleys** - *Improve safety, vitality and utility of alleys intersecting Polk St*

- **More/better lighting** in all alleys. Catenary lighting should be negotiated by neighborhood groups since ongoing maintenance will be left to them
- **Change one-way alley directions** and/or require turning so that vehicles cannot shoot straight across Polk between Larkin & Van Ness
- **Open to food trucks** selling artisanal deep-fried Twinkies to compensate for newly enhanced public health due to increased active transport
- **Selectively choose alleys for full redesign** similar to Linden St., Hayes Valley; Focus only on alleys that meet several of the following criteria:
  - Currently high collision rates
  - Wider than average
  - Exposed to more daylight
  - May at times function as interim public plazas, closed to vehicles
  - Existing or future potential for retail, business access, or for other activity in/ along their sides, e.g. Olive, Bonita
  - Additional seating and greening, as suggested in [Working Group #2 Summary](#), should be the province of neighborhood groups as those amenities alone will not alone transform unpleasant alleys into viable ones, absent neighborhood business sponsorship and support
  - **Daylight** alley intersections with Polk instead of installing costly features such as speed tables. Consider simpler options, e.g. convex mirrors

**Landscaping**

- **Plant Variety of native species** to prevent blight epidemics and enhance robustness to suboptimal conditions
- **Plant trees in street especially where paved with permeable material**; preserves footpath space, more room for roots and increases likelihood of survival
- **Proactive planning for street greenery**, coordinated with other project goals:
  - 1) preserve pedestrian right-of-way, 2) realistic planning for maintenance staff & budget
- FFP will approach **building owners** along the corridor to discuss tree planting

(PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS, cont.)

### **Landmarks and Public Art**

- **California cable car terminus** at Van Ness becomes a [functional gateway](#)
  - Develop as a **neighborhood info hub** with digital displays of real-time transit arrivals; area parking, car share, bike share, availability; local event, community, emergency info; walking map. Platforms that plug into this information already exist
  - **Increase size** of terminus Island for safety to peds and riders and to comfortably accommodate waiting passengers
  - **Add landscaping and trees**
  - **Increase safety** for embarking and disembarking cable car riders, e.g. flashing signal lights tripped when cable cars arrive at terminus
  - **Solar-powered charging station** for e-bikes, mobile devices (see ‘Other’); bicycle-powered recharge station for mobile devices as a fun amenity
- **‘Gateway’ elements** placed at ends of Polk St., e.g. McAllister and Bay Streets. Possibly large sculpture or landscaping designed via competition and executed by Bay Area students
- **Bike parking fixtures**, incl. secure bike corrals, possibly designed & fabricated by Bay Area students

### **Other**

- **Transit Screens\*\***
  - Display real-time transit and parking information
  - Serves as electronic community “bulletin board”
  - Part of infrastructure for disaster and emergency preparedness
- **Solar-powered charging stations\*\*\*** for e-bikes, laptops, mobile devices
  - May be fixed in place or periodically moved to different locations
  - Anticipates large growth in sales of e-bikes and the e-bike share pilot in cooperation w/ City Car Share
  - Powerful draw for patrons of cafes, restaurants and pubs
  - Alternative: bicycle-powered recharge stations as per Living Innovation Zone on Market at Yerba Buena

### **Non-priorities**

**Dog poop bag stands** as per the [Working Group #2 Summary](#) - Dog feces litter is not an overarching need along any stretch of Polk St

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### NOTES

**\*High-collision/high-volume intersections** prioritized. Include McAllister, Geary, Post, Pine, Bush, California, Broadway, Pacific, Union

**\*\*Transit Screens** - FFP has contacted supplier, potential funders and SFCTA staff with experience of the current installation at Parkmerced

**\*\*\*Solar-powered charging stations** - FFP has contacted supplier and potential funders

### SCOPE OF PROJECT AREA

**Evaluate how project can be extended** or coordinated with other efforts **north of Union and south of McAllister**, so that the full length of Polk Street is planned coherently and Polk is coherently, consistently connected to other major corridors.

REFERENCES include but not limited to:

*Urban Street Design Guide*, National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2013  
*Urban Bikeway Design Guide*, National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2013  
[SFpark: Pricing Parking by Demand](#) by Gregory Pierce and Donald Shoup

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## Bay Area Bike Share Addendum

*Polk Street is an ideal choice for expansion of Bay Area Bike Share (BABS) in the next rollout, Winter 2014:*

- **Polk St. traverses the most densely populated area of San Francisco** with the highest concentration of non-car-owning households
- **Polk is the major north/south cycling connector in the NE sector of SF between highly populated/popular destinations** for both locals and visitors, due to its relative flatness
- **Polk St. completes the burgeoning cycling loop around the NE sector of SF.**
- **A broad spectrum of key economic sectors are represented** amongst those who already bike commute north and south on Polk:

**Residents of the Corridor cycle south**, including to points outside SF already serviced by BABS (e.g., Caltrain corridor, BART)

**Residents south of market service the establishments all along Polk, into the Marina, Presidio, and Fisherman's Wharf**

**BABS presence on Polk would encourage more multi-modal transit** between these densely populated zones and relieve high-use Muni routes during peak hours.

- **Many Muni lines traverse/are proximal to Polk** (e.g. the 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 19, 30, 31, 38, 38L, 41, 45, 47, 49 buses and the California Street cable car line), which can be linked to a BABS trip, further encouraging multimodal transit.
- **The California Street cable car line would attract more riders** from the overcrowded Powell, Mason, and Hyde Lines, if serviced by BABS.
- **Proximity to existing network** makes Polk its natural extension to maintain optimal station density.
- **Increased vitality in the more intractably languishing neighborhoods** would result with more non-auto circulation.
- **With ongoing increases in density, new residents and workers** will embrace BABS as a convenient way to travel between SoMa, Mid-Market and Polk Street without reliance on private automobiles.