



Better Market Street

District Identity Working Group

October 27, 2014, 6:00pm - 7:30pm

City Hall, Room 201

Better Market Street (BMS) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) District Identity Working Group meeting convened at 6:07pm by Al Williams.

District Identity Working Group attendees:

Anne Arquit Niederberger
Baxter Denney
Daniel McArdle-Jaimes
Danny Sauter
Donald Savoie
Jennifer Hall
Jessica Cassella
Katherine Mattes
Melody Chen
Miriam Newcomer
Olof Hansen
Reed Martin
Robin Levitt
Susie McKinnon
Tessa Buckley
Tristan Randall
Virginia Grandi

District Identity Working Group absent:

Bryce Engen
Christophe Thomas
Dasha Barannik
Del Seymour
Jane Redmond
Jason Seifer
Julie Kim
Mahesh Khatwani
Mark Friend
Seth Rosenblatt
Tracy Everwine
Willim Racké
Zoe Hoster





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City Department attendees:

San Francisco Public Works

Simon Bertrang

Kelli Rudnick

John Thomas

Mindy Linetzky

Veronica Flores

San Francisco Planning Department

Nick Perry

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Britt Tanner

Alfred Williams Consultancy

Al Williams

1. Introduction by Al Williams

- Meeting convened 6:07PM
- Reviewed the CAC working group structure and meeting logistics

2. Better Market Street Project Update by Simon Bertrang

(see presentation)

- Reviewed the project limits: 2.2 miles along Market Street. Along this stretch, there are six districts with their own distinct identities.
- Presented project schedule. The project is currently in environmental review and about two years from design.
- NEPA Notice of Intent (NOI) and CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) documents are tentatively scheduled to be published in December 2014. CAC members will be notified when these documents become available. The NOI and NOP will be the first formal environmental review documents that will be presented to the public for review and comment.
- Presented overview of City goals (see slide).





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3. District Identity by Simon Bertrang

(see presentation)

- Presented the six BMS districts and a recap of the responses from past public workshop participants about the characteristics of the districts.
- Presented the “wordles” (word diagrams) for each district.
- Presented examples of projects expressing district identity on Market St and how space is used. Examples included were Mechanics Plaza, the LIZ at Yerba Buena Lane and the Friday Night Market.
- Asked Tristan Randall of Autodesk to say a few words about the Market Street Prototyping Event. Looking at 5 of the Market Street districts – each with a District Design Captain (Autodesk is the Embarcadero Captain). The Festival will select 10 teams in each district. In April 2015, these 50 teams will implement their ideas for 3-day period. The BMS team will be looking at these projects to see what works and what does not work so well on Market Street’s sidewalks.

4. Streetscape Elements by Simon Bertrang

(see presentation)

- Presented a description of the different zones/areas of the street.
- Presented ideas about the way different features have different impact on the feel of Market Street.

5. Design Features by Nicholas Perry

(see presentation)

- Presented an overview of the existing design of Market Street and the unifying elements.
- Highlighted which elements might be shared and which might be district specific.

6. Public Comment

From Working Group Members

- Robin Levitt – I am interested in up-lighting for the trees, this would be really good at night. Also would like to see manhole covers have designs. In Berlin there are decorative water department manhole covers.
- Katherine Mattes – I walked out of a restaurant on Market Street and noticed the green and red paint on the street. It’s very dominant visually! Are we going to continue it?

Yes, the proposed project includes similar treatments for the transit only lanes and cycle track/bicycle lanes.





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- Anne Arquit Niederberger – What is this working group’s purpose? Also, can we request a special briefing for the Prototyping Festival? Would like special presentation and get a preview for this group.

Yes, great idea on the Prototyping Festival. To respond to the first question: we are interested in comments on the presentation – on specific design elements and design features and on the nature of the districts themselves, but the goal of this meeting is to educate all District Identity Working Group members, many of whom have not been involved with the BMS project before. This meeting is an investment in you coming back and helping us. During the next meeting, we will break into small groups for a charrette, similar to the charrette we held in June 2013 before the public workshops in July. We want this working group to guide us on the direction of district identity so that later when we go out to public we’ve already vetted the ideas and have a strong basis for what we present to a wider audience. Additionally, I wanted to remind everyone to always hold the last Monday of each month for CAC meetings – although we will not have a CAC meeting every month. So tonight’s meeting is geared towards education!

- Virginia Grandi – There are so many Lyft and Uber drivers on Market St. Market St needs spaces where cars can pull over and drop off and pick up people. This is a concern especially because it creates conflicts for bicyclists.

This is a good point and it is a really great question for the transportation working group meeting. Our proposed project includes relocating the existing loading zones (and creating additional loading capacity) on the streets intersecting Market.

- Olaf Hansen – If you compare Market Street to other grand boulevards, we have a street that has Jeffersonian grids banging into each other and it is unique. I don’t see that fact reflected in any of these ideas. The SOMA grid brings in completely different districts than the ones on the north side. I see different elements on the north versus south side. This picture is showing Market Street, but it’s not showing the whole picture because there are two dominant elements coming together. This is unique for Market Street – if you compare with other grand avenues, they have similar atmosphere on both sides of street. There are triangular plazas that could be something unique.

In some ways the BMS proposal will try to counteract from what you are describing. For us, the intersection of the two grids creates issues for the transit system and makes it difficult to create safe and comfortable circulation for all users including pedestrians and cyclists. BMS is therefore aiming to rework the intersections on the north side to make them more orthogonal and reduce the north versus south differentiation – using Market Street to unify the two street grids as much as possible.

- Susie McKinnon – What about the JCDecaux and the bathrooms and news racks? Could JCDecaux be involved? These are icons on the street that are not well maintained.

These are a bit more complex because the JCDecaux kiosks are governed by existing contracts with the City. The proposal moving forward is to ask “Do we need these?” and “How do we engage them?” If something is on the street, it must be useful, functional and add to the overall quality of the public space.





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- Baxter Denney – This is all really great. I have one question on the division of the districts. Will there be smaller teams designing the districts?

Yes, we are looking to create smaller groups which will focus on each district. Within these smaller groups will be people with a specific connection to the district as well as people who have an interest in the integration and relationship of all the districts. The goal is to develop a vision for the district identities that we can take to the general public for their input.

- Robin Levitt – I understand the reasons for trying to unify the street. But there are climatic differences along Market Street – sun, wind, etc. Those are things I assume you’re going to be considering. I also talked about the lighting. None of the pictures shown included night shots. Lighting is very important. 1940s photos of neon lights along Market Street and what you can do to do with colored lights for districts. The lights strung up for Night Market are a great example of this. Also, I read The Good City by Allan Jacobs and it discussed putting up statues of notable people and you could use that to identify these districts – these do not have to be famous people, but it could unify the street and differentiate the districts.

Yes, that’s a really good point. We could certainly put “windy” near Van Ness! And yes, our list included Path of Gold, but didn’t include accent lighting. Really good idea.

- Miriam Newcomer – Another point to the lighting is safety at night. It is a really good idea to provide lighting that makes people feel safe. I have a question: where there are restaurants on the throughways are they able to provide table service?

There is a traditional model of café tables and chairs adjacent to the face of the building. Restaurants can provide table service in these areas. Once you’re in the right of way, in the Streetlife Zone, restaurants are not allowed to provide table service. The proposal for tables and chairs in the Streetlife Zone has to be treated like a parklet, where the space is open to the public.

- Katherine Mattes – The lowest common denominator is the flow of people. I think we need to make the flow of traffic really clear with signage in the through zones and the hangout area. The variable is how you stop and play and engage with businesses. Also, I do not like the Embarcadero district name. I like “Maritime” or “Waterfront”.

That is exactly the idea we are trying to present. That is the direction we’re going. Also, we can change the names of the districts. All input is welcome.

- Melody Chen– How is the spacing between bicycle racks being looked at? And lighting at bike racks for safety? Are we adding a lot more, especially for safety reasons? Also how to engage bicyclists and pedestrians together? If there are many bike racks together they are safer and if a large group is going to one destination there is enough bike parking. Maybe we should install more bike racks at the same location on each block to make it more useful.

The staff opinion is that it is not about the amount of light, it is about the quality of light. Instead, what if we bring LED lights to Market Street? The quality of light and the nature of the accent lighting is important. We need to engage with the nighttime on Market Street. Bicycle parking, including corrals and covered parking, should absolutely be a part of the Streetlife Zones.





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- Jessica Cassella – It would be great to echo the lighting and the Bay Bridge lights that have become icon now. The Night Market has been really successful and many Hastings students have been attracted to it. The focus has been on the ground and line of sight and I noticed there is a lot of happening above. One element above is the wires and large number of wires. Feels like some districts have more wires than others.

Your two comments have come together in a project called LightRail. The team who brought us the Bay Lights have proposed a lighting installation that would use the Muni overhead catenary wires and the Path of Gold to hang two strands of LED lights down Market Street. These strands would light up to reflect the movement of the BART and Muni trains underground. The project is far along in their approval process, and they are working on funding. In response to your second point, there are more wires further east because there are more bus lines further east requiring more power to run them.

- Daniel McArdle-Jaimes – I am very supportive of taking obstructions off of the sidewalk and making flower-beds above and utilizing California-native plants. This might provide more character.

Great idea. This could also include flowers that support the butterflies on Market Street.

- Baxter Denney – We talked about nightlife and I agree this is key for activating all the districts. How do you communicate with the businesses along Market Street? Getting them excited would contribute a lot.

We are trying to make connections on the street and there are a few proposals are moving forward now. We are partnering with Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) and the Business Improvement District (BID). We want more people to know about this, to get the message out more people and businesses.

From Members of the Public

- Wayfinding should be a tool for people to use and it should be consistent and integrated throughout the city.

Staff agrees. The districts would be identified within the signs, but the wayfinding system should be consistent throughout the city.

- Robin Levitt – I am a Hayes Valley resident. I was thinking about the identity of that area. Van Ness and Market is a forlorn intersection and very auto-dominant. This could be a gateway, maybe something from the automobile scale. Same for the Octavia and Market intersection. That is a gateway from the freeway to Hayes Valley and Market Street. We should think about doing something there and on that scale. There used to be a freeway and there is nothing commemorating that. Oak Street at Van Ness is dead end street and a great opportunity to create a community gathering place and plaza as well.

Good ideas. BMS is focused on making Market and Mission better. The architecture in Octavia has started responding to that. Maybe one of the elements in that district is the connection





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between Market St and the adjacent alleys and then the alleys become more expressive in that district.

- Olaf Hansen – I have ideas about district specific design elements. Is there potential to look at IT elements and more interactive features? For example, the bike counter on Market Street. Many tech companies are moving onto Market Street. Maybe even temporary installations.

Many of the proposals for the Market Street Prototyping Festival include the kind of technology that you are describing. We are looking forward to seeing how well they work.

- Anne Arquit Niederberger– I am happy to hear the comments about what happens above ground. We could use above ground features as unifying elements. Also, we could have elements above ground to make it safer for people to connect, sort of like above ground plazas like High Line. I think there’s lot of potential.
- Virginia Grandi – I am paying attention to the Moscone expansion which includes a lot of digital elements. This may tie into the district aspect of the project. It is important to tune into adjacent projects.
- Katherine Mattes – 4-6 years from now, Transbay will be the center point. After development is complete this will be the center of the city. This should inform our perspective right now.
- Natalie Burdick – What is going on in the short term that relates to activation? Walgreens along Market Street – is there a policy to remove the large posters and open up the ground floor windows to the street?

Building signage is not part of the BMS project and these items are things which the Planning Code would need to address. This would need to go to the Supervisors.

7. Next Steps & Announcements

- Hold the last Monday of each month for CAC Meetings. Most likely the next CAC meeting will be in January for the transportation working group.
- Wednesday, October 29th is the party for the Prototyping Festival winners. Attend if you are free and interested. It is at 6 pm at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.
- December is the target date to publish the NOI and NOP. You will get a notification. This will be the first real document to describe the project in its entirety.
- Holiday snowflakes are another element to identify the entirety of Market Street. These will be lit on November 25th. It is the intention that in coming years Market Street will be identified by these LED snowflakes.
- Safer Market Street is a Vision Zero project (separate from Better Market Street and with its own independent utility). Safer Market Street will implement vehicle restrictions mostly between 3rd and 8th. The second workshop for this project will be held on Tuesday, November 18th.

