

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2010

TO: SFMTA Board of Directors
Tom Nolan, Chairman
Jerry Lee, Vice-Chairman
Cameron Beach, Director
Malcolm Heinicke, Director
Bruce Oka, Director

FROM: Nathaniel P. Ford Sr.
Executive Director/CEO



SUBJECT: Masonic Avenue

As you are aware, on Friday, August 15, 2010 there was a fatal bicycle collision on Masonic Avenue at Turk Street. I know any fatality is of concern to all of us and raises questions about what can be done to prevent such incidents from reoccurring. The details of the collision are still being investigated by the San Francisco Police Department; however, I felt it was prudent to provide a briefing on the current planning process.

This year the SFMTA, the Department of Public Works and the Planning Department began a study of the portion of Masonic Avenue between the Panhandle and Geary Boulevard. The purpose of the study was to explore ways to improve the corridor for all users, including bicyclists. The team had its first community meeting on June 15, where existing conditions and issues were presented and approximately 50 community members discussed various design ideas for the avenue. Based on the input that was received from the community members in the first meeting; we designed five options and presented these options to the community members at the second community meeting which was held on August 10, 2010. At this time, all study options accommodate a bicycle lane or bicycle facility. Pedestrian and transit needs are also being considered. The City will hold a third community meeting during September or October, with the study expected to be completed by the end of the year. Implementation of the recommended design will be contingent upon the option chosen and the phasing plan. We hope that this collaborative process amongst city departments and the community will set a precedent for similar future safety improvement efforts of major streets.

The fatal collision has raised questions about what can be done in the immediate short-term to improve conditions on Masonic Avenue. Traffic signal timing will be reviewed with particular emphasis on controlling speeds on vehicles traveling in the southbound, downhill direction of Masonic Avenue. We will also review other interim measures that could be implemented in the short-term.

During the past few years, the Agency has reviewed conditions along Masonic Avenue and made changes that have included:

- Lowering the speed limit from 30 MPH to 25.
- Installing new pedestrian countdown signals on Masonic Avenue at Fulton Street, Hayes Street and Golden Gate Avenue using a combination of contract work and City forces.
- Allocation of Prop K signal funding to install pedestrian signals or other traffic light improvements on Masonic Avenue, Turk, Anza and Fell streets. The larger signal contract that includes these locations will begin design this fiscal year.
- The installation of larger improved visibility signals were on Masonic at Hayes and Turk streets. Signals have also been retimed to add all-red clearance phases to reduce collisions at various locations along the corridor and all yellow lights have been upgraded.
- Installation of a new traffic signal at Grove Street and Masonic Avenue, a previously unsignalized crossing of Masonic Avenue.
- Implementation of a major signal change to the intersection of Fell and Masonic to separate the Panhandle path movements from the westbound Fell Street vehicular turns. This location was one of the highest bicycle collision locations in San Francisco prior to these changes being implemented.
- Removal of the double left turn lanes from Oak Street eastbound into northbound Masonic to improve pedestrian safety and installation of "yield to pedestrians and bikes" signage for this turn.
- Installation of red zone at the corner of McAllister Street and Masonic Avenue to improve sight distances.
- Upgrading all area yellow school crosswalks and signage to high visibility.
- Installation of "BIKES ALLOWED FULL USE OF LANE" warning signs on Masonic Avenue.
- Clarification and expansion of "NO LEFT TURN" peak hour restrictions, such as the recent restriction for southbound left turns on Masonic Avenue at Golden Gate Avenue.

The SFMTA will continue to work with the community to improve Masonic Avenue.

Attachment