

Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

Columbus Avenue Revitalization Master Plan

- **Grant Amount:** \$144,000
- **Grant Recipient:** City of San Francisco
- **County:** San Francisco

Project Area – Northeast portion of San Francisco

Project Focus - Columbus Avenue stretches 1.2 miles northwest from the Transamerica Building at the intersection of Montgomery and Washington Streets in downtown San Francisco to Beach Street in The Cannery neighborhood. Originating in the horse drawn cart era, Columbus Avenue was designed to present the lowest gradient roadway between adjacent hillside residential neighborhoods on Telegraph and Russian Hills. Columbus intercepts the City's street grid as a "collector-diagonal" and provided a direct route through the city's northeast sector and is a major link in the city's transportation network with significant through traffic and frequent transit service. The area is a draw to both tourists and residents alike and experiences heavy auto and pedestrian traffic on an uneven alignment with many oddly configured intersections. The potential for auto-pedestrian conflicts is high, especially at night when both the streets and sidewalks are busy with restaurant and bar patrons.

Project Goals - For example, a number of residential and large mixed use land uses are being planned in the northeast part of the city – which Columbus Avenue traverses – that will generate additional commute and tourism based transportation demand in an already congested part of the street network. In addition, the many local neighborhoods in the area wish to make their communities and streets more livable so that they may be enjoyed as neighborhood civic and open spaces. Thus, each district along the corridor has a range of transportation, economic and recreational assets and challenges. This collaborative planning process will take advantage of the positive characteristics of the separate but proximate neighborhoods and coordinate them to function in concert with each other. A comprehensive set of recommendations including enhanced transit connections, streetscape improvements and economic growth initiatives will be developed with the participation of residents, merchants, local organizations and government agencies.



Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

Community Outreach - The Study included two rounds of public outreach, extensive data collection, development of three conceptual design alternatives, and extensive official review. The initial alternatives were developed during a two-day workshop that took place in late June 2008. Day one of the workshop included a review of work to date, including the public workshops and parking evaluation, a walking tour of the corridor, and initial design development. On day two, members of the project Technical Advisory Committee met to review and propose refinements to the preliminary concepts. Plan-view drawings of the designs were then developed, and a series of meetings was held with the TAC to further discuss details. A second series of public meetings was then held, after which further refinements were made, including addition of a major new

element developed by community members to one of the alternatives. A final series of meetings was then held with staff from city agencies.

Project Outcome - The final report largely consists of description and evaluation of three final alternatives. The report does not recommend a single alternative; rather, it recommends that elements of two alternatives be implemented based on block-specific context according to community preferences, as well as a phasing strategy that includes elements of the third alternative. The final recommendations and implementation plan are provided in the report as well as next steps in the process, including remaining decision points, are also identified in the final chapter of the report.

Challenges

- Along with Market Street, Columbus Avenue is one of two diagonal arteries bisecting San Francisco's street grid. Unlike Market, Columbus is relatively narrow. Nonetheless, this constrained artery enjoys (or rather suffers from) relatively heavy use by motorists, delivery trucks, tour buses, transit vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Successes

- Three specific alternatives were produced that identify changes to transportation infrastructure and policies that could enhance the livability and economic viability of the Columbus Avenue corridor, benefit residents, merchants and visitors, and enjoy broad community support.