

Chinatown Broadway Street Design Summary of Public Comment – Workshop #3

Workshop Details:

The third community workshop for the Broadway Street Design took place on November 16, 2011 at Gordon J. Lau Elementary school from 4:00-5:30pm. 45 participants were in attendance. A quarter of these participants were residents of Chinatown, with the majority living on Broadway in Bayside Elderly Housing, Ping Yuen Public Housing, and Broadway Family Apartments. Other stakeholders included the Community Tenants Association, Lady Shaw Senior Housing, Chinatown Adopt-An-Alleyway Youth Empowerment Project, Chinese Culture Center, RENEW SF, the San Francisco Fire Department, and Chinatown merchants.

The goal of the workshop was to present the details of the Preferred Design and gather additional community feedback to refine locations for corner and mid-block bulb-out, pedestrian crossing features, and streetscape amenities. The next event will be a public open house in early 2012 to present the final design.

The workshop began with a bilingual presentation of the project goals, project overview, and an update on the community planning process to date. The presenters gave an overview of the three design options that were presented in the previous workshop and summarized the public input gathered to this date. The presenters then gave an overview of the Preferred Design that evolved from the feedback received at Workshop #2 as well as merchant and stakeholder interviews. This Preferred Design consists of two eastbound and two westbound traffic lanes.. Additional improvements included the removal of the towaway lane in both directions, which increases the availability of all-day parking on both sides of the street while adding corner bulb-outs, a midblock bulb-out in front of Ping Yuen, and bus bulbs in front of the two existing bus stops on Broadway.

After the presentation, participants were asked to break up into four small groups to give feedback on the Preferred Design and the streetscape amenities including lighting, site furnishing, landscaping, pedestrian crossing features, public art, and wayfinding. Each group was led by facilitators speaking in Cantonese and/or English with bilingual materials.

Part I: Feedback on the Preferred Design

The purpose of this exercise was to explain the overall design in detail and gather feedback on what participants liked best and/or least and gather additional suggestions for improvements. Facilitators guided participants through the Preferred Design and explained the lane configuration, the location of each proposed bulb-out, the removal of parking space(s), the addition of parking availability with all-day parking on both sides, and the potential for a scramble signal at Stockton and Broadway with its associated positive and negative impacts. Participants were invited to ask questions and comment on the plan throughout the exercise. Some of the questions asked to guide the discussion included:

- Are there any additional places you would like to see mid-block bulb-outs?
- Are there any comments about passenger or commercial loading?

Preferred Design Draft



Grant/Columbus/Broadway Intersection

To improve pedestrian visibility, a raised crosswalk is proposed on Grant Avenue that would run flush to the sidewalk. Special paving would also mark the intersection on Grant, Columbus and Broadway as a pedestrian zone. Bus improvements such as a bus bulb-out with a bus shelter would be placed in front of New Sun Hong Kong restaurant.

Stockton/Broadway Intersection

Some of the concerns expressed at the previous workshop related to crossing Broadway included having enough time to cross and a short cross distance. To address this, bulb-outs are proposed at each corner to provide a shorter cross distance, provide additional space for pedestrians and make pedestrians more visible. While the total crossing time would remain unchanged, pedestrians would have a shorter distance to cross. A pedestrian lead time of three seconds for people crossing Stockton Street was proposed. Also, restricted right turns onto Broadway for cars traveling North or South on Stockton Street was proposed. There was some desire by participants to cross diagonally with a scramble signal. Facilitators explained that a scramble signal is often used when one or both streets are one-way. They also explained the possible negative impacts of adding a scramble such as a longer wait time (for pedestrians and drivers) and the potential increase in traffic congestion and delays to MUNI.

Broadway Tunnel Entrance

To slow traffic coming in and out of the tunnel, new medians and greening was proposed. Landscaping on the center median could help to slow traffic coming in and out of the tunnel by creating a distinct barrier and providing a pedestrian refuge. Side medians have been added to clearly separate the tunnel traffic from local traffic. To improve safety for school pick-up and drop-off, a defined loading pocket has been added in front of Jean Parker Elementary School. Lastly, the double right turn at Powell is proposed to be eliminated to help protect pedestrians crossing Broadway and reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

Part II: Streetscape Amenities

The goal of this exercise was to discuss the type and placement of various streetscape amenities and better understand the community's preferences for these elements. A representative from the Department of Public Works or the Planning Department led the discussion and described the following amenities: lighting, site furnishing, landscaping, pedestrian crossing features, public art, and wayfinding/signage. Participants were asked to give input on the functional and aesthetic qualities of each, as well as feedback on specific locations.

Streetscape Amenities Board



Part III: Summary of Public Input

Overall, participants expressed general approval for the Preferred Design and streetscape amenities. Most groups were highly supportive of placing a bulb-out at each street corner as well as the midblock bulb-out in front of North Ping Yuen. There were concerns expressed over merchants taking over the increased sidewalk space with their merchandise. Some asked if there would be enforcement to prevent such cases from occurring. The right turn restrictions from Stockton and the removal of some parking space(s) prompted a few participants to share slight concerns about the impacts on traffic flow. Many participants throughout the process have expressed an interest in having a scramble signal at Stockton and Broadway. While a scramble signal was not recommended, participants were generally supportive of the other tools that were recommended at this intersection to improve pedestrian safety. Participants approved of the bulb-outs and pedestrian lead time as positive efforts to increase pedestrian safety and their ability to cross the streets.

For the second exercise, participants were eager to discuss the street amenities. There were discrepancies on the types of trees and landscaping that should be planted, as well as seating. Overall, participants suggested more seating, lighting, and landscaping to be placed along Broadway. Particularly important was the area from Stockton Street to the Broadway Tunnel, due to the prevalence of residential units and community institutions. Also, there was a desire to see improved bus shelters including a Next Bus digital reader informing passengers about bus arrival time. Many enjoyed the landscaping efforts and said that it would greatly benefit Broadway by beautifying the street and signaling to drivers that Broadway is more than a commuter transportation corridor, but also a public space for pedestrians and community uses.

Appendix: Small Group Workshop Feedback

Group #1 Input

Part I: Present Preferred Community Option

- Overall positive approval of proposals
- Enforce penalty for sidewalk encroachment by merchants
- Concern that sidewalk expansions will allow merchants to take advantage and put more merchandise out
- Ensure that “the sidewalk be for pedestrians”, not additional merchandise display
- The area is especially congested in front of Hing Lung. There are newstands and chessplayer who “take up valuable sidewalk space.” This negatively impacts flow. “Sometimes I can’t even walk through that area.”
- Ensure that bulb-out remains a pedestrian zone, not a chess zone.
- Can we develop a mini park at Wayne Alley to benefit the area and Wu Yee? Greening opportunity?
- Currently there is no need for a dedicated bike lane, but it is worth revisiting in years once we evaluate how the changes on Broadway are working
- Questions about the current crossing time (25 seconds)
- Questions about the lead time given to pedestrians, with no change to the total crossing time (25 seconds)
- Concerns about the placement of garbage bins on bulb-outs and a desire to prevent that
- Will the bulb outs cause/increase traffic congestion on Broadway and Stockton? If so, would one bulb out per block be better than the current proposed two?

Part II: Streetscape Amenities

- More public restrooms since restaurants do not typically offer public usage of theirs
- What to do about pets defecating on Broadway?

Group #2 Input

Part I: Present Preferred Community Option

- Cars at the tunnel are traveling very fast
- No opposition to the sidewalk reduction in front of Jean Parker
- General approval for bulb-outs
- Concern over the dumpsters on Broadway and method to divert the smell and sight
- Greening on Pacific Ave might be problematic. It might hinder the sight of drivers and pedestrians.
- The street needs more lighting.
- Hanging green wall will cover the stairway at Wayne Alley.
- People can run up and out of view - fear of robbers
- Stairs might be hidden. Much better to plant small flowers and greenery.
- Steep here. Consider a ramp?
- Would this affect drivers and their line of sight?
- Short height garden with plantings such as vegetables
- Bulb-out at each intersection is good
- However, concern it may slow down cars? Facilitator comments that it may not necessarily, since the bulb-outs remove parking space(s) and not traffic lanes.

- A mid-block bulb out on Ping Yuen will allow more open space for pedestrians and residents
- Worried about store owners overfilling the sidewalk with their merchandise, would there be enforcement for this?
- Pedestrian lead time is an improvement.

Part II: Streetscape Amenities

- More seating opportunities, especially outside restaurants that have a long wait
- Prefer seating with backs
- Especially good for seniors who get light-headed or dizzy, and need to rest
- Orientation of seating towards each other, rather than toward street or sidewalk
- Facilitator asked if it would socially awkward to have seats face each other? Participants disagreed because Broadway Street is a big street as opposed to a bus, which is much smaller and confined
- As a resting spot a seating is appreciated, regardless of its orientation
- Seating not intended for long-term stay, just short term and for resting
- General approval for trees and greening of Broadway street; provides fresh air
- Proposed cherry trees disliked by a few participants, who worry it clashes culturally with Japantown and their existent cherry trees
- Suggested Chinese trees: “mok meen” and “teen an,” also Canadian Maple tree
- Want trees that are vibrant in color and displays seasonal changes
- Participants request the trees be pretty, especially during Chinese New Year
- Trees should have small leaves
- Will the trees affect natural daylight in above ground floor SRO units along Broadway?
- Install digital bus-arrival times in the bus shelters

Group #3 Input

Part I: Present Preferred Community Option

- Pedestrian lead time could be used on Broadway Street rather than Stockton Street
- Cars are faster on Broadway, therefore pedestrians need it more for Broadway
- Traffic signal needed for Mason and Broadway
- At Mason, the cable car just slows down and does not always stop entirely when it is suppose to
- Residents currently cross in front of Jean Parker (recommended route) because they cannot cross on the side of Wu Yee
- No consensus about Wu Yee sidewalk
- Too narrow in front of Wu Yee, want to have more sidewalk extension (3 parking spots removed). Perhaps sidewalk widening in front of Wayne Alley

Part II: Streetscape Amenities

- Place benches in front of Jean Parker and Ping Yuen
- Individual chairs would be too bulky
- Long benches but not long enough for someone to sleep there
- Seating places outside Yuet Lee Restaurant
- Individual concerned about chess players taking over the space
- More lighting between Stockton Street and Powell, near Kum Luen Produce, Bayside Elderly Housing and North Ping Yuen

- More lighting from Powell to the Tunnel, near Kam PO Kitchen, Wu Yee, Wayne Alley
- Prevent garbage bins often left out by Wayne Alley
- Public art along Jean Parker School, perhaps a sculpture. Currently a blank wall.
- Public art would be great for students entering school
- Trees might not be good on Wu Yee because the sidewalk is narrow already

Group #4 Input

Part I: Present Preferred Community Option

- Strong concern/opposition to restricting right turn movements off of Stockton on to Broadway from two merchants.
- Concern that it will restrict access to businesses and cause traffic delays elsewhere.
- Concern/opposition to removing right turn pocket from Broadway to Columbus from one merchant. Concern that it will restrict access to businesses and cause traffic delays elsewhere.
- Concern from one merchant that putting bike sharrows on Broadway would encourage more bicyclists to use a dangerous street.
- Concern that mid-block bulb and seating area in front of Ping Yuen would not be a very nice place to sit and would be poorly used.
- The group was fine with other improvements/bulb-outs/medians.

Part II: Streetscape Amenities

- One person said that rather than spend money on new Dragon-light standards, money should be spent on newer modern art/light pieces that illustrate Chinatown's modern, evolving culture.
- Durability was a concern when it comes to public seating.