



## COLUMBUS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION STUDY

### Public Workshop Summary

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**Date:** December 4, 2008  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
**Location:** San Francisco Italian Athletic Club

#### **Purpose of the Workshop**

The Columbus Avenue Neighborhood Transportation Study includes workshops with the community to share information and obtain input at key points in the process, including identifying transportation priorities and developing solutions.

The second Public Workshop was held on December 4th. At this second meeting, community members were invited to comment on three alternative designs for Columbus Avenue as well as tradeoffs posed by specific design elements. The meeting is a follow up to the first stakeholder meeting held on June 27, 2007, and the first public workshop held on September 20, 2007.

#### **Meeting Publicity**

The Workshop was publicized by contacting the members of the study mailing list a month before the event, followed by a reminder email sent one week prior to the event and telephone calls to neighborhood organizations. The Authority issued a Media Advisory the week before the event. In addition, the Chinatown Community Development Center notified its member groups and stakeholders about the event. Meeting information was also posted on the project's website.

#### **Workshop Structure and Materials**

##### **Agenda**

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|--------|----|---|
| 6:00pm | 1. | <b>Sign In and Open House</b>               |
| 6:15pm | 2. | <b>Welcome and Introduction</b>             |
| 6:20pm | 3. | <b>Large Group Presentation</b>             |
| 6:55pm | 4. | <b>Large Group Q&amp;A</b>                  |
| 7:05pm | 5. | <b>Introduction of Small Group Sessions</b> |

7:10pm          6.          **Small Group Sessions**

### **Presentation and Exercise Boards**

As workshop participants arrived, they browsed a series of informational boards describing the findings of the Study to date and depicting the transportation design alternatives, as well as a summary of benefits and impacts (see **Attachment A**).

RENEW SF welcomed the evening's participants and described how this study relates to other projects going on in North Beach. Rachel Hiatt and Jose Luis Moscovich of the Authority described the purpose and agenda for the workshop. Jeff Tumlin of Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates presented the elements of each design alternative as well as a benefits and impacts evaluation (see **Attachment B**). These alternatives include a four lane design with curb and bus bulbs, a two lane design with a flexible use parking lane, and a two lane design which expands the sidewalk to encompass the parking lane, creating a raised flexible use space.

After the presentation, participants split into two groups to provide feedback on their likes and concerns, as well as opinions on a number of tradeoffs posed by the individual design elements including: bus bulbs, trees in the parking lane, the number of travel lanes, the inclusion of a median plaza, and the provision of parking.

### **Findings**

This section summarizes the comments received from the Workshop participants.

### **The Participants**

Workshop participants represented community members living and working in the study area. Two dozen community members and members of neighborhood groups attended, plus two representatives of city agencies. A handful of Chinese language speakers and members of Chinese press attended the event.

### **Likes & Concerns**

The small group session participants were first asked to list their likes and concerns about each alternative.

Regarding Alternative 1, a number of participants liked that Alternative 1 would likely reduce instances of speeding.

Regarding Alternative 2, a participant noted that the expansion of sidewalks would “finally make North Beach normal”. Residents commented that this alternative would increase the appeal of the street for locals who currently avoid it because businesses cater to tourists. Some participants liked the median plaza idea. Concerns about removing traffic lanes included the inevitability of double parking and the fear that cars would be unable to get around buses. Some participants urged the study team to take a more system-wide approach and look at diversions onto other streets.

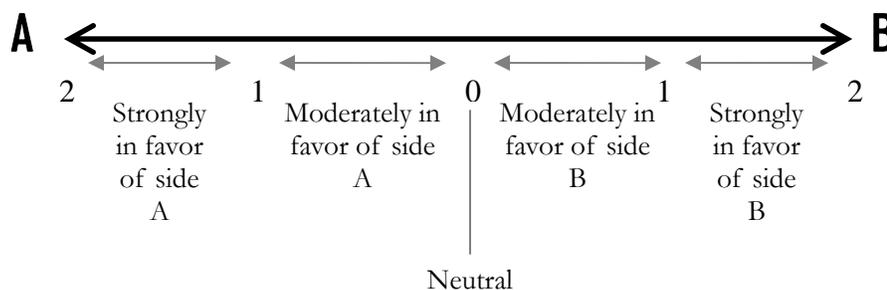
A number of participants expressed their preference for Alternative 3 because of its wide sidewalks. Many were unfazed by the proposal to eliminate parking on Columbus Avenue,

saying, “Who cares about parking? This isn’t a suburb”. However, participants did express concerns about making parking alternatives clear.

Many comments were general or applied to multiple alternatives. Most participants liked the added sidewalk space provided by bulbs and moving trees to the parking lane. One participant expressed a desire for aesthetic sidewalk treatments and another proposed putting all sidewalk space on one side of the street. Two participants proposed making Grant a pedestrian street. Garage access and high rates were a concern, and participants listed a need for a larger parking management system such as a central valet. One participant proposed working with merchants to publicize parking garages for clients. A number of participants were interested in further expanding this study to consider future mode shifts away from driving. While some participants called for bike lanes to be striped, other cyclists would rather not have striped lanes as they feel safer riding in the vehicle lane, especially as many bike conflicts are with Muni buses. A couple participants expressed a preference for expanded sidewalks over a median plaza. Two participants wanted the median extended. One participant was opposed to bus bulbs because of the potential delay imposed on vehicles. On the other hand, another participant wrote that bus priority is a must.

### Tradeoffs

Since the available street and sidewalk space – as well as funding - for transportation along Columbus Avenue is limited, the trade-off exercise was designed to help understand where the Columbus community would strike a balance among competing priorities. For a number of design elements a tradeoff was presented on either side of a continuum, with numerical values along the continuum being 2, 1, 0, 1, 2, from left to right. A generic continuum is diagrammed below:



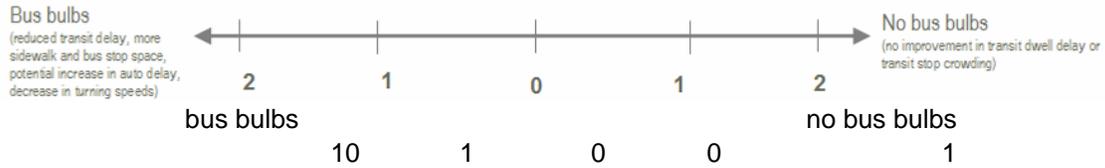
The majority of people were in support of bus bulbs, widening sidewalks, moving trees to the parking lane, creating a plaza, and removing parking.

#### Trade-Off A: Bus Bulbs

Almost all participants were strongly in favor of bus bulbs.



A. All Alternatives propose bus bulbs for Columbus Avenue. At bus bulbs, buses remain in the travel lane while loading and unloading passengers. Cars must wait behind the bus, but bus delay is reduced. Currently there are no bus bulbs along Columbus Avenue. Would you rather have:

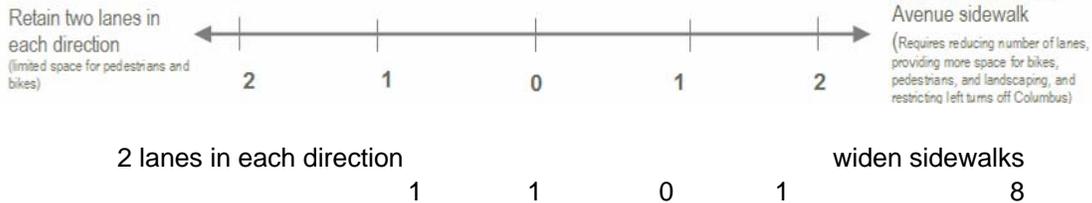
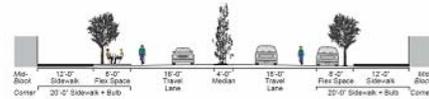


**Trade-Off B: Lanes**

Almost all participants were strongly in favor of widening sidewalks, while a few preferred maintaining that space in a second vehicle lane.



B. Initial traffic analysis suggests that auto volumes on Columbus Avenue can be carried on one lane in each direction, allowing for wider sidewalks and bus bulbs. Auto turn restrictions need to be introduced to prevent unacceptable delay at intersections. Would you rather:

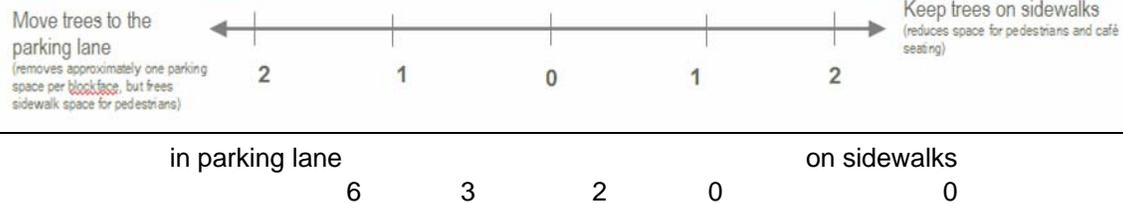


**Trade-Off C: Trees**

All participants were in favor of moving trees to the parking lane (or neutral).



C. It is possible to gradually remove trees from the sidewalk and plant them in the parking lane, between parking spaces. This creates more space on the sidewalks for pedestrians and café seating, but requires community assistance with maintaining the tree beds. Would you rather:



**Trade-Off D: Median Plaza**

A majority of participants were in favor of using the extra road space to provide a median plaza, while a few participants were opposed.

