

MARKET STREET STUDY TECHNICAL REPORT



WAYFINDING and TRAFFIC ISLAND SIGNING



This technical report is one of over a dozen reports prepared to support the Market Street Study. The purpose of the technical reports was to identify key issues and evaluate potential solutions. The technical reports were developed in consultation with the Market Street Study Technical Working Group, which consisted of representatives from the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic, Municipal Railway, Planning Department, and Redevelopment Agency.

Supplemental assessments may be required prior to the implementation of some specific recommendations contained in the Market Street Study Action Plan.





Market Street Study

Wayfinding and Transit Island Signing Technical Report

Purpose

This memorandum summarizes an inventory of automobile wayfinding signage on Market Street between Justin Herman Plaza and Van Ness Avenue. Wayfinding signage includes signs that direct the way to parking, freeways and other major traffic generators. A survey was also conducted of existing transit island gore point signage.

In addition, recommendations are made on means to improve Market Street's wayfinding signage and transit gore signs. Suggestions include placement of new signs, removal of existing signs, and sign consolidation. While this memorandum focuses on wayfinding and gore signing, general recommendations are also made regarding regulatory and warning signing and pavement markings.

Existing Signage

A photographic inventory was conducted to document the locations and legends of existing wayfinding signage. The photos were consolidated into an interactive photographic library of wayfinding signs (see "Wayfinding Signage Digital Library"). Fifty-five signs were inventoried. These ranged from 18 freeway guide signs; six neighborhood, tourism and destination-based signs ("icon signs"); three parking wayfinding signs; and 28 street or directional signs.

An inventory was also conducted to document the location and legends of transit island gore point signing. An interactive photographic library was also created for these signs (see "Transit Island Gore Point Signage"). Twenty-one transit islands were inventoried; most included signing and others did not.

Based on the inventory of existing wayfinding and gore area signing, the following general observations were made:

- The freeway wayfinding signs on the traffic signal mast arm poles consist of the word FREEWAY within a white arrow with a green background. The word FREEWAY is small and may be difficult for infrequent Market Street motorists to see.
- Other freeway wayfinding signs are on metal plates and include the appropriate interstate shield symbol. Most of these type of signs are mounted on vertical poles and located on cross-streets approaching Market Street.



- Only six neighborhood, tourism and destination-based signs (“icon signs”) are located in the Market Street Corridor. Most of these type of signs are mounted on vertical poles and located on cross-streets approaching Market Street.
- Only three parking wayfinding signs were observed: on O’Farrell Street’s approach to Market Street, on Fifth Street’s approach to Market Street, and on Larkin Street’s departure from Market Street.
- Many street signs exist along Market Street, but these are primarily to serve motorists. Few pedestrian-level signs are provided.
- Three different signs, and in several instances no signs, are provided on the transit island gore points (i.e., on the near-side of the transit boarding islands). LEFT LANE, BUSES ONLY AT ALL TIMES is provided in five locations, SPEED LIMIT 10 is provided in one location, a yellow-black chevron sign is provided in six locations, both speed limit and chevron signs are provided in two locations, and seven locations are missing signs. Several of the existing signs appear to be in poor condition.



In addition, the following observations were made regarding other signs and pavement markings along Market Street:

- There are no signs instructing eastbound motorists that left-turns are prohibited between Franklin and Steuart Streets or informing westbound motorists that left-turns are prohibited between Steuart and Valencia Streets.
- Similarly, there are no signs instructing eastbound motorists on how to reach streets north of Market Street or informing westbound motorists on how to reach streets south of Market Street.
- Many signs appear to be unnecessarily wordy and therefore may be ineffective, e.g., SPEED LIMIT 10 IF BUS OR STREETCAR IS STOPPED AT SAFETY ZONE and LEFT LANE BUSES ONLY AT ALL TIMES. In several cases, the fonts used on signs (due to too many words) are too small to be legible to passing motorists.
- There appears to be an abundance of regulatory signing. Several intersection approaches contain well over a dozen, and in some cases over 20, regulatory signs alone. Various regulatory signs are used, including symbols only and words only. Regulatory signs are posted on near-side right-side, far-side right-side, near-side left-side and far-side left-side horizontal mast arms and on the vertical poles. Regulatory signs are also posted on stand-alone poles.



- At many intersections, three or more of the same regulatory signs are posted, e.g., international NO LEFT TURN signs can be found on three out of four horizontal mast arms, although ONE-WAY signs are also posted at two or more locations.
- Specific route number signing is provided on the MUNI boarding islands and at MUNI stops.
- There appears to be some signing that may be unnecessary, e.g., many NO LITTERING and NO PARKING appear to be ineffective and/or hard to see.
- While there are numerous signs along Market Street, there appears to be an under-reliance on the use of pavement markings, which could supplant many of the signs.



Recommended Signing Actions

Based on the inventory of existing wayfinding and transit island gore point signing, as well as observations of other signs and pavement markings along Market Street, the following actions are recommended (the actions are numbered for reference purposes only, not for priority of implementation):

1. A comprehensive inventory of regulatory and warning signs and pavement markings should be conducted along the Market Street corridor. Unnecessary and/or redundant signing should be removed or consolidated, as appropriate. Simple symbolized signing should be encouraged. Stand-alone signing, i.e., signs not on mast arm poles, should be given initial attention. DPT's traffic experts should be consulted for historic institutional perspectives. Regulatory signing should be packaged at locations, e.g., on the traffic signal mast arms. A signing master plan should be prepared.
2. Consideration should be given to using pavement markings in lieu of regulatory signing, where feasible. For instance, BUSES ONLY markings should be considered in the transit-only lane.
3. The FREEWAYS guide signs that are located on the traffic signal mast arm poles should be replaced with signs featuring the appropriate freeway shields and an arrow pointing to the travel route.
4. Additional freeway wayfinding signs on metal plates should be provided on cross-streets, where appropriate.
5. Additional neighborhood, tourism and destination-based signs ("icon signs") should be considered for installation on the north-south south of Market Street streets, particularly along Fremont, Third, Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Streets.
6. Parking garage signs should be installed to guide motorists to downtown garages. Only three parking wayfinding signs currently exist along the Market Street corridor. Signs should be installed to guide motorists to Portsmouth Square, Golden Gateway (e.g., Fremont approaching Market), St. Mary's Square (e.g., westbound Market at Kearney), Sutter-Stockton, Union Square, Ellis-O'Farrell, Fifth and Mission, Moscone Center, and Civic Center garages. Most of the signs

would be installed on Market's cross-streets, with all northbound streets served by highway ramps south of Market given initial attention.

7. Real-time parking information signs should be considered.
8. Pedestrian-level street name signs should be provided throughout the Market Street corridor.
9. Signs should be installed periodically along Market Street to inform drivers that left-turns are not permitted (for X miles or Y blocks). The signs should be located in prevalent locations, e.g., on the horizontal mast arms, and could say NO LEFT TURN 2 MILES.
10. Signs should be provided to encourage eastbound motorists destined to downtown to travel via other, potentially faster, routes. For instance, motorists could be informed to turn right at Tenth and/or at Eighth Street to access downtown. Additional signs would be posted at Folsom Street.
11. Transit island gore point signage should be made consistent. Alternative signing methods should be pursued, including potential use of the international KEEP RIGHT symbol.
12. The SPEED LIMIT 10 IF BUS OR STREETCAR IS STOPPED AT SAFETY ZONE sign should be replaced with a simpler SPEED LIMIT 10 sign. This would require legislation to permanently reduce the speed limit within the safety zone to 10 mph.
13. Due to the high use of bicycle travel along Market Street, shared roadway signs should be installed, as appropriate. Such signs should be considered within constrained locations.
14. Market Street bus services are currently organized so that routes going the same general direction stop at the same bus stop. To assist infrequent transit riders, signs at the inbound curbside shelters could read TO TRANSBAY TERMINAL BOARD HERE while another sign reads TO EMBARCADERO BOARD AT CENTER ISLAND. Similarly, signs at the outbound curbside shelters could read GOLDEN GATE PARK AND NORTH BOARD HERE and another sign reads HAIGHT, MARKET, SUNSET BOARD AT CENTER ISLAND.

A simulated photograph has been prepared to illustrate how some of the above improvements could improve safety and wayfinding at eastbound Market Street's approach to Fifth Street. See attached.

Conclusions

The Market Street corridor has an abundance of regulatory and warning signs, but a shortage of wayfinding and directional signage. It appears that some of the regulatory and warning signs are unnecessary and can be removed or consolidated with other signs and/or provided as pavement markings. Pavement markings and use of the existing horizontal mast arms, many of which are or could be available for improved signing, would provide the most visible means for informing and instructing motorists.

It is recommended that a signing master plan be prepared for Market Street. The master plan should consider all signing and pavement marking types and purposes and focus on creating a simplified guidance plan for Market Street.