



COLUMBUS AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Date: June 27, 2007
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Location: Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center

Purpose of the Meeting

The neighborhood transportation study planning process includes a series of meetings with community stakeholders to identify transportation priorities and develop solutions. The objective is to work with all stakeholders to develop solutions to address each of the priority areas. In addition to the stakeholder's meetings, the general public will be invited to provide input at several workshops to be scheduled at key points in the study process.

At this first meeting, stakeholders were invited to share and exchange views on transportation priorities and issues that should be included in the study. Based on the priorities identified, the study team will determine the necessary data to be collected and analysis conducted in the next phase.

Meeting Publicity

Announcements about the meeting were made through several mediums: stakeholders were individually invited and a letter was posted on the study website a month before the date. Additionally, calls were made to each of the invitees a few days before the event. Meeting information was also posted on the project's website.

Workshop Structure and Materials

Agenda

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| 6:30pm | 1. | Welcome |
| 6:31pm | 2. | About the Study & How to Participate |
| 6:45pm | 3. | Your Transportation Priorities |
| 7:15pm | 4. | Relevant Ideas from Past Studies, Parallel Efforts, and Other Cities |
| 7:30pm | 5. | Prioritization of Transportation Issues |
| 8:25pm | 6. | Next Steps |

Presentation and Exercise Boards

Jeff Tumlin of Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates facilitated the meeting, leading the discussion on transportation priorities. He also gave a presentation on street treatments that San Francisco as well as other cities in the Bay Area have implemented to improve pedestrian conditions and commercial enterprise. Examples of treatments mentioned in the presentation include situating trees in the parking lane, allowing merchants to rent parking spaces to place outdoor seating, landscaped medians and pedestrian amenities.

After the presentation, participants engaged in a trade-offs and mapping exercise. The exercises were mounted on boards on which dots could be placed to indicate transportation priorities and problem areas along the corridor.

Findings

About the Participants

Workshop participants represented stakeholder groups from the study area, including the National Park Service, SPUR, Chinatown Community Development Corporation, Community Educational Services and neighborhood groups. Fifteen stakeholders attended with an additional five participants representing RENEW SF.

Absent from the meeting were representatives of the North Beach Merchant's Association, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and the Chamber of Commerce of both Chinatown and North Beach. Input from these organizations is valuable in prioritizing the merchant's concerns in addition those of residents as their priorities and answers to the interactive exercises may differ. Additional strategies will be incorporated into the Outreach Plan to solicit input from the merchant organizations in the study area.

Concerns

To start off the meeting, each participant introduced themselves and presented their top three transportation priorities. **All participants listed pedestrian safety and circulation as one of their top priorities.** Other priorities repeated by the majority of participants include:

- Enhancing pedestrian culture
- Improving Muni access, quality and connectivity
- Connecting cultural and institutional centers to transit
- Developing wayfinding and placemaking features
- Incorporating the Central Subway project into the planning of Columbus Avenue

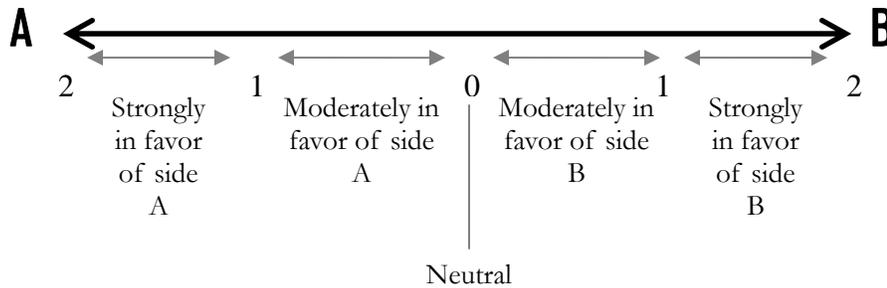
A summary of each participant's comments are given in Appendix A.

Exercise Outcomes

In addition to stating their top three priorities, the participants engaged in two interactive exercises that further identified the transportation priorities and concerns in the study area. The first exercise consisted of a series of trade-offs developed by the project team and the participants. The second exercise asked participants to place dots on aerial photographs of Columbus Avenue between the Transamerica Pyramid and the waterfront to indicate favorite places and problem areas. The results of the exercises are given in the following sections.

Trade-Off Exercise

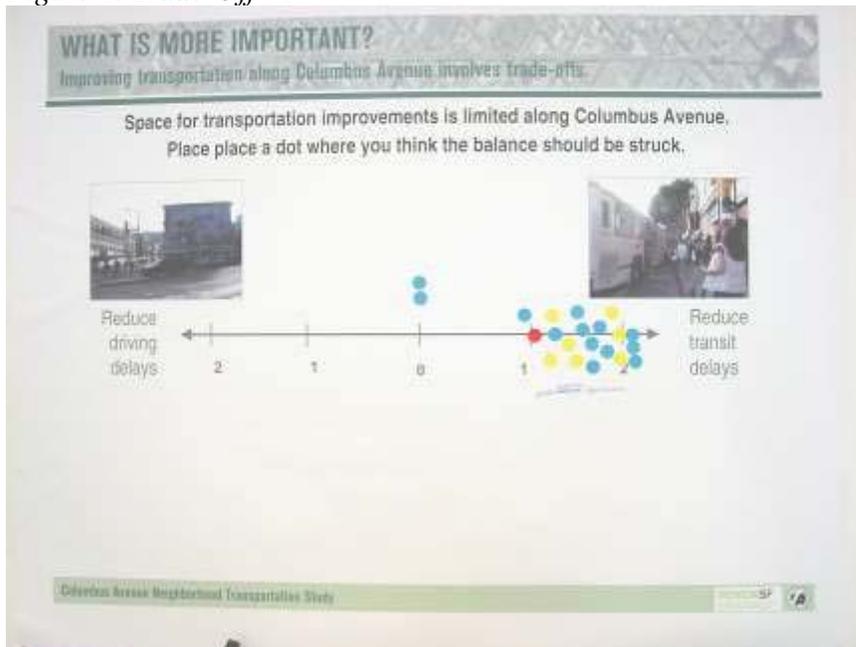
Since the number of transportation improvements that can be implemented along Columbus Avenue is limited due to physical constraints, the trade-off exercise was designed to determine where the balance should be achieved between two priorities. The trade-offs were compiled from findings of existing studies and input from the study team. Paired priorities were placed 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:



Trade-Off #1: Reduce Driving Delays vs. Reduce Transit Delays

Participants overwhelmingly favored reducing transit delays over driving delays. Close to 90 percent strongly favored reducing transit delays, with one participant specifying that Muni needs to increase frequencies and better space their vehicles. Two participants remained neutral between the two priorities.

Figure 1. Trade-Off #1



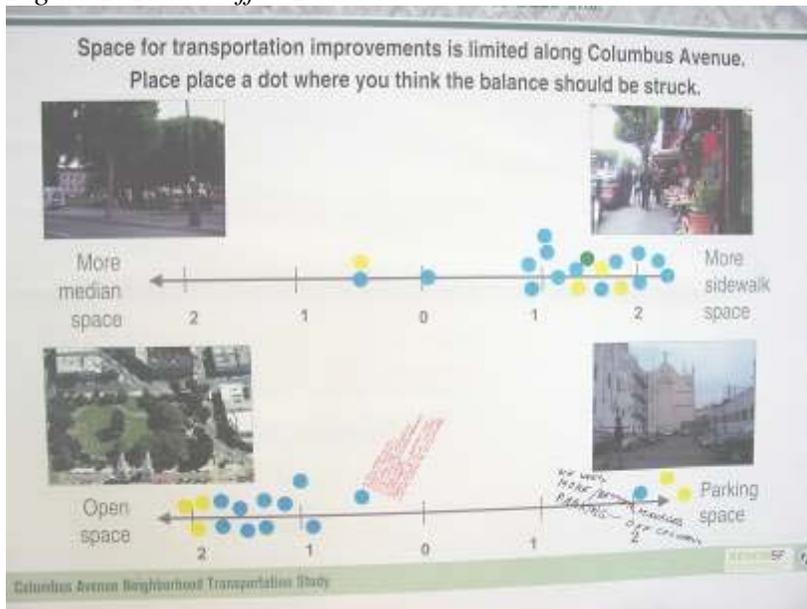
Trade-Off #2: More Median Space vs. More Sidewalk Space

With the majority of stakeholders expressing concern about pedestrian circulation and safety, it is not surprising that the results of this trade-off are **strongly in favor of more sidewalk space**. Close to 85 percent of participants favored more sidewalk space, though three participants were either neutral or moderately in favor of more median space.

Trade-Off #3: Open Space vs. Parking Space

The results of this trade-off **favored open space over parking**. Seventy-five percent of those who placed a dot on the trade-off bar favored open space while 17 percent preferred parking space. One of the participants who favored parking wrote directly on the board: “We need more/better managed parking off Columbus Ave.” Another comment was also written on the board from a participant who was moderately in favor of open space: “a few regional robotic parking garages for residents and valet/business parking would help. The northeast quadrant has heavy out-of-town visitors which should be encouraged.”

Figure 2. Trade-Offs #2 and #3



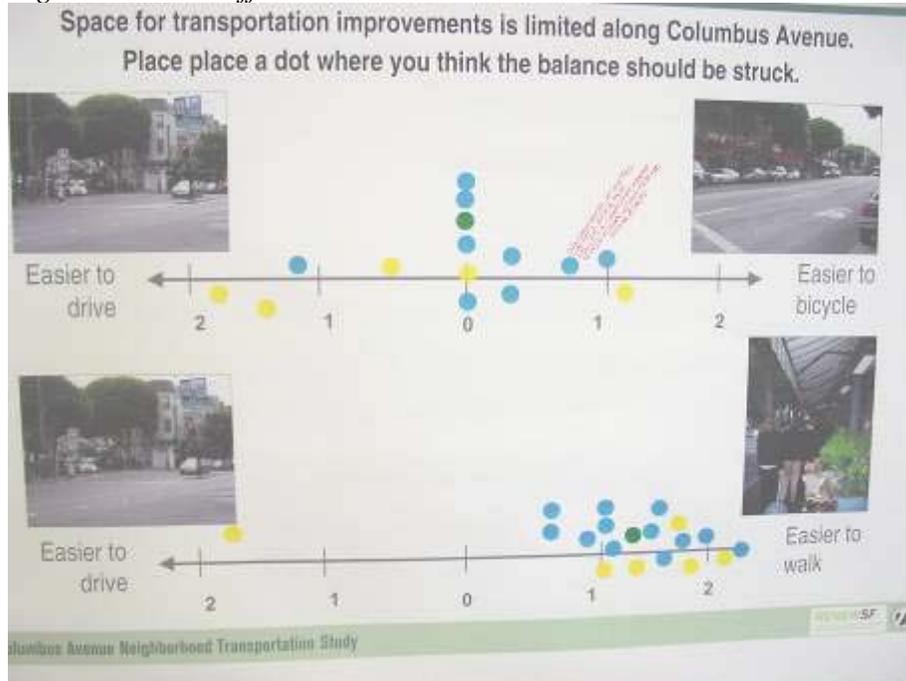
Trade-Off #4: Easier to Drive vs. Easier to Bicycle

For the most part, participants remained **neutral when asked to prioritize between driving and biking**. Three participants had strong convictions towards improving driving conditions over those for bicycles. One comment received from a participant who was moderately in favor for bicycling stated: “even Copenhagen at one time was not a bicycle town. Now there is a clearly delineated bicycle culture with well designed pedestrian realms.”

Trade-Off #5: Easier to Drive vs. Easier to Walk

Again, with the highest priority being pedestrian access and circulation, the participants chose **improvements to walking over driving**. Only one participant favored driving over walking.

Figure 3. Trade-Offs #4 and #5



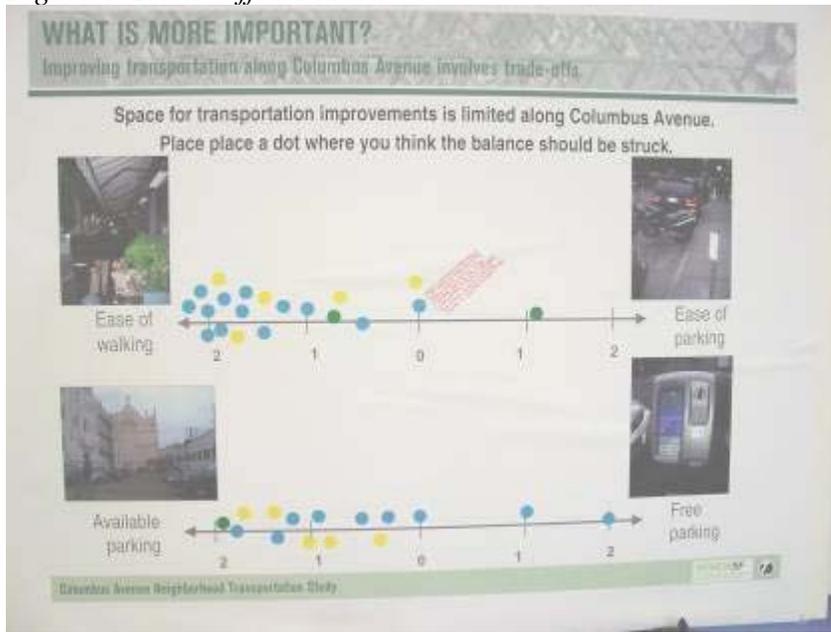
Trade-Off #6: Ease of Walking vs. Ease of Parking

Though participants are clearly in favor of pedestrian improvements, parking is still an important concern, as shown by the placement of dots along the trade-off bar. **Seventy percent favored better walking conditions while ten percent remained neutral on the subject.** Only one participant had a stronger position on improving parking conditions. One of the participants who remained neutral on the topic commented: “there are many residents who circle for hours to park their car on certain days of the week. For many, every parking space is of prime importance.”

Trade-Off #7: Available Parking vs. Free Parking

The dot placement for this trade-off was scattered along the trade-off bar showing the need for more focused parking solutions in the area. Just under half of the participants were strongly in favor of available parking while another third were moderately in favor of available parking. Only one participant indicated strong preference for free parking, while another participant showed moderate preference for free parking. Another participant remained neutral on the matter.

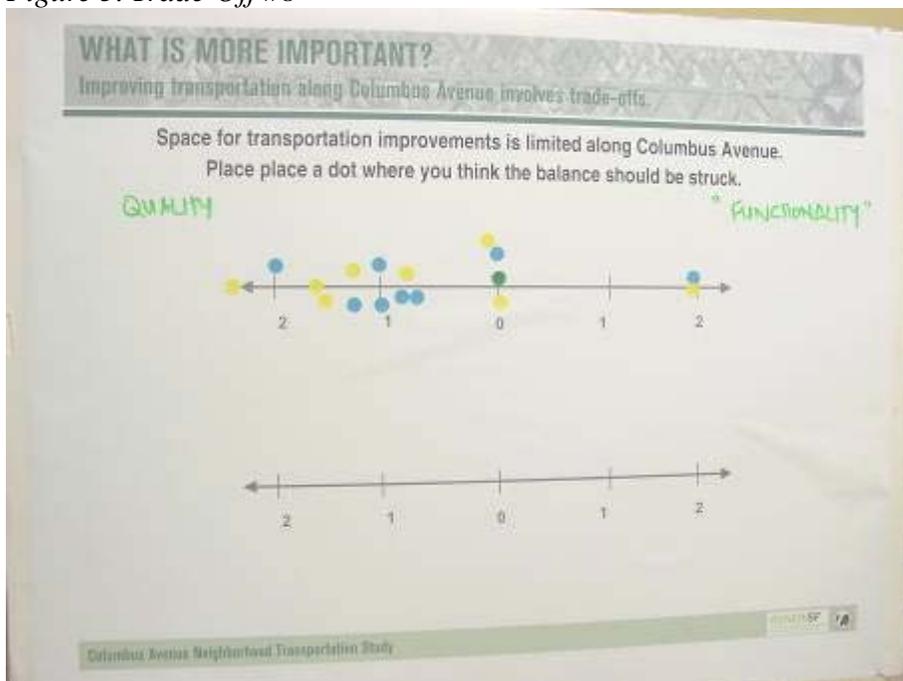
Figure 4. Trade-Offs #6 and #7



Trade-Off #8: Quality vs. Functionality

Trade-off #8 was suggested by John Sanger, a member of the San Francisco Art Institute Board of Trustees, who expressed concern over the trade-off exercise in general, stating that the choices are too limiting. He added a general trade-off, Quality vs. Functionality, to understand the type of improvements desired by the community. **Most participants, 65 percent, were either strongly or moderately in favor of quality over functionality, 23 percent remained neutral and another twelve percent were strongly in favor of functionality.**

Figure 5. Trade-Off #8



Mapping Exercise

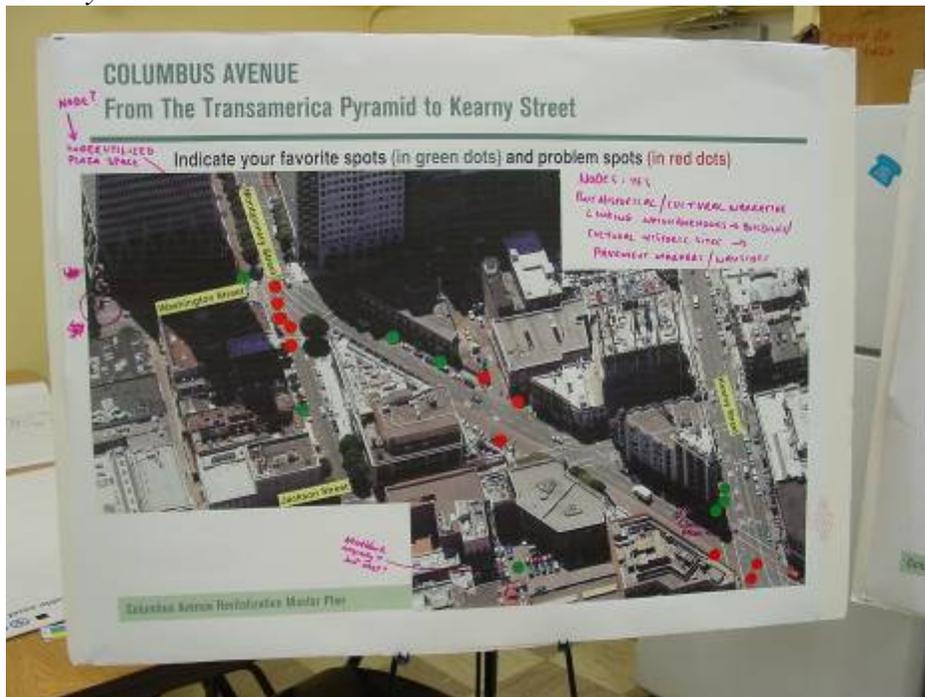
The second interactive exercise consisted of a set of aerial photographs stitched together to form the entire corridor. Participants were asked to place green dots on spots they favored and red dots on areas they considered to be problematic. Since some areas had both red and green dots, participants were asked to write comments on the maps to explain why they designated the area one way or the other. The results are presented below by Columbus Avenue segment.

Segment 1: From the Transamerica Pyramid to Kearny Street

At the base of the Transamerica Pyramid is the Jackson Square Historic District. Participants indicated that they liked the area but were concerned with the lack of information indicating that the area is part of the Barbary Coast, or any wayfinding or placemaking features to explain that the Transamerica Pyramid is the transition point between North Beach and the Financial District. Comments written on the maps included creating a historical or cultural narrative with pavement markers or signs to indicate the historic elements, perhaps locating some markers in the “underutilized” Transamerica Plaza. Three participants indicated that one of their favorite spots was Francis Ford Coppola’s restaurant, Cafe Zoetrope, in the historic Sentinel Building, but added that it needed a better presence as it indicates an entry point to North Beach for northbound Kearny traffic.

Intersection comments: Five red dots were placed on the three way intersection of Washington Street, Montgomery Street and Columbus Avenue. Three red dots were placed on the three way intersection of Kearny Street, Pacific Street and Columbus Avenue.

Figure 6. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from the Transamerica Pyramid to Kearny Street

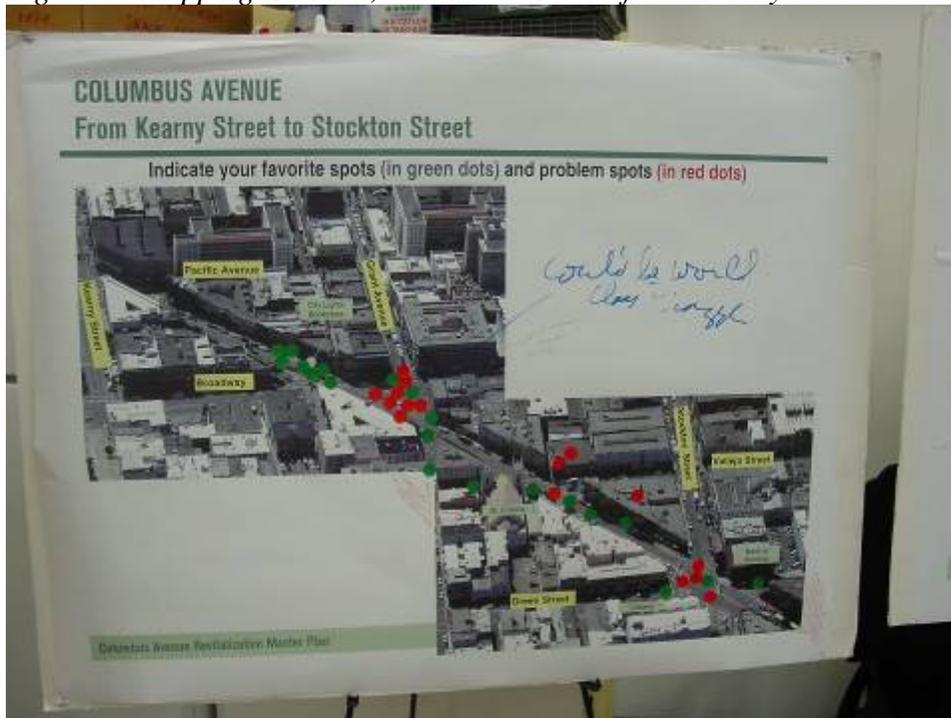


Segment 2: From Kearny Street to Stockton Street

The stretch between Kearny Street and Stockton Street is where the majority of the commercial and historical uses that define North Beach are located. City Lights Bookstore, the National Shrine of St. Francis de Assisi, the red light district, many restaurant and cafes and several banks are all situated along Columbus, within this segment. Seven participants indicated that one of their favorite places along this stretch was City Lights Bookstore. Other favorite places include restaurants and cafes and generally the atmosphere of Green Street and Grant Avenue.

Intersection comments: Seven red dots were placed on the Grant Avenue, Broadway and Columbus Avenue intersection. Throughout the meeting, participants repeatedly mentioned the lack of continuity of Grant Avenue from Chinatown to North Beach. The comments written on the board define it as the most confusing intersection but with potential in becoming a world class piazza. The Green Street, Stockton Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (see the following segment summary for more comments on this intersection) contained four red dots with a comment that read “disfunctioning intersection, maybe a fountain [roundabout] is needed?” The intersection of Broadway and Columbus Avenue did not have red dots placed on top of it but had a comment referring to its unsafe pedestrian conditions.

Figure 7. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from Kearny Street to Stockton Street

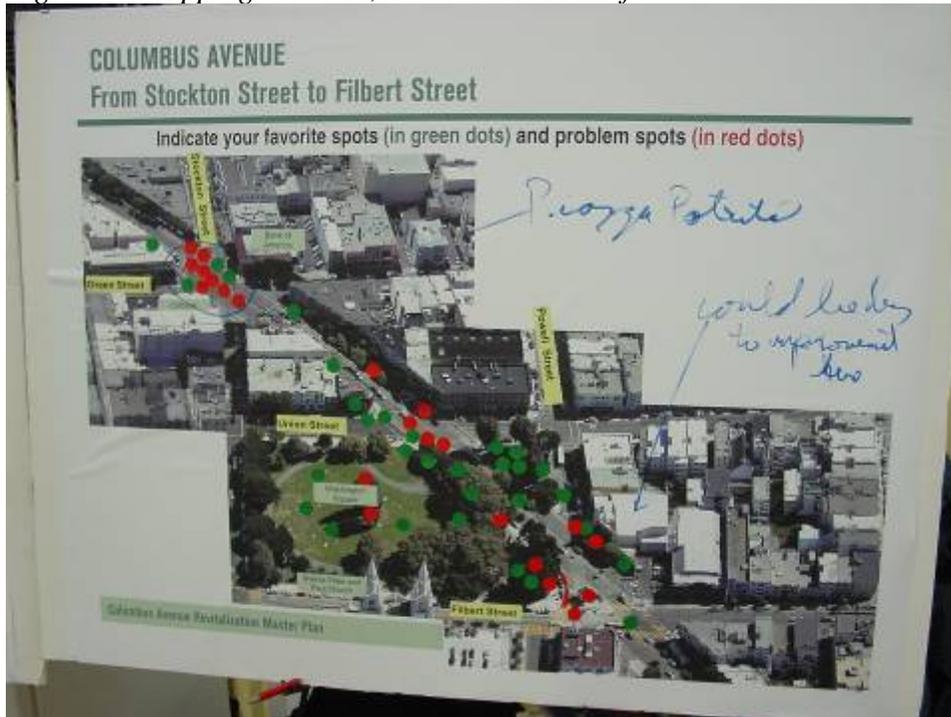


Segment 3: From Stockton Street to Filbert Street

This two block stretch contains Washington Square Park, numerous outdoor cafes and the Saints Peter and Paul Church. Participants covered the park with green dots and indicated which trees they favored. Other areas indicated in green were cafes and restaurants. The Pagoda Theater was well disliked by the participants.

Intersection comments: As this board also contained the Green Street, Stockton Street and Columbus Avenue intersection, eight more red dots indicated the problems with the intersection. A comment suggested incorporating a piazza into the intersection. The Union Street and Columbus Avenue intersection got four red dots and a comment stating that it “has no definition and is hard to cross.”

Figure 8. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from Stockton Street to Filbert Street

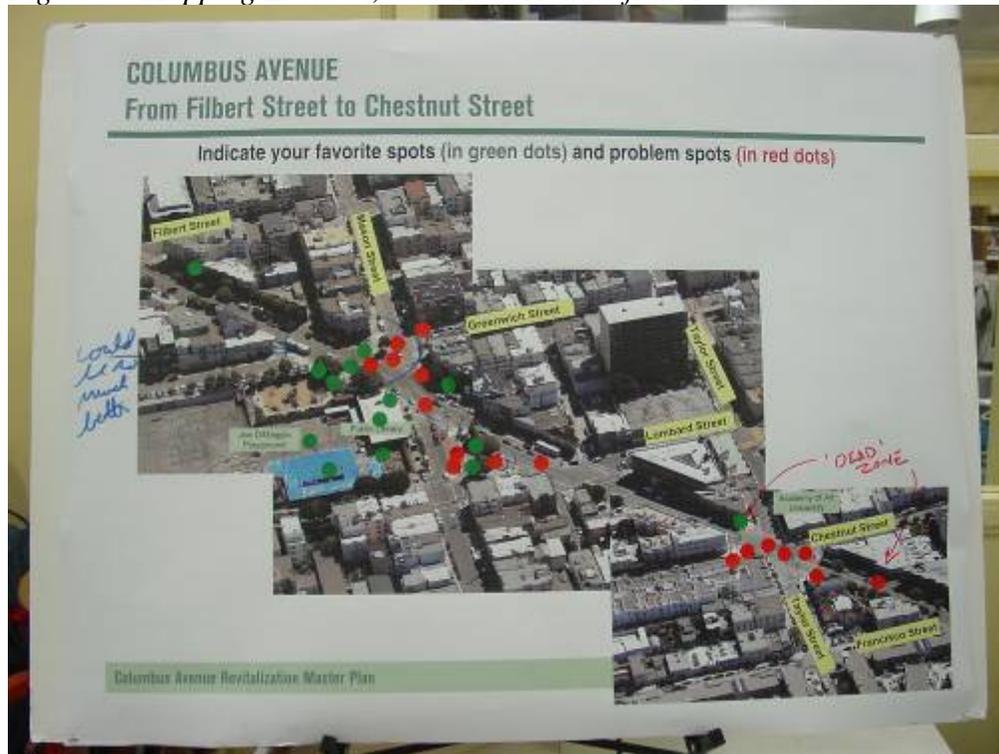


Segment 4: From Filbert Street to Chestnut Street

Between Filbert Street and Chestnut Street lies Joe DiMaggio Playground, a branch of the San Francisco Public Library and low income housing developments. Participants indicated a fondness for the playground and library as well as for the trees located in the triangle parking lot across from the library. The parking lot itself received three red dots. One participant indicated that the stretch from Taylor Street to Francisco Street is a “dead zone.”

Intersection comments: The intersection of Mason Street, Greenwich Street and Columbus Avenue received six red dots as did the intersection of Chestnut Street, Taylor Street and Columbus Avenue. One comment stated that the intersections could be greatly improved.

Figure 9. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from Filbert Street to Chestnut Street

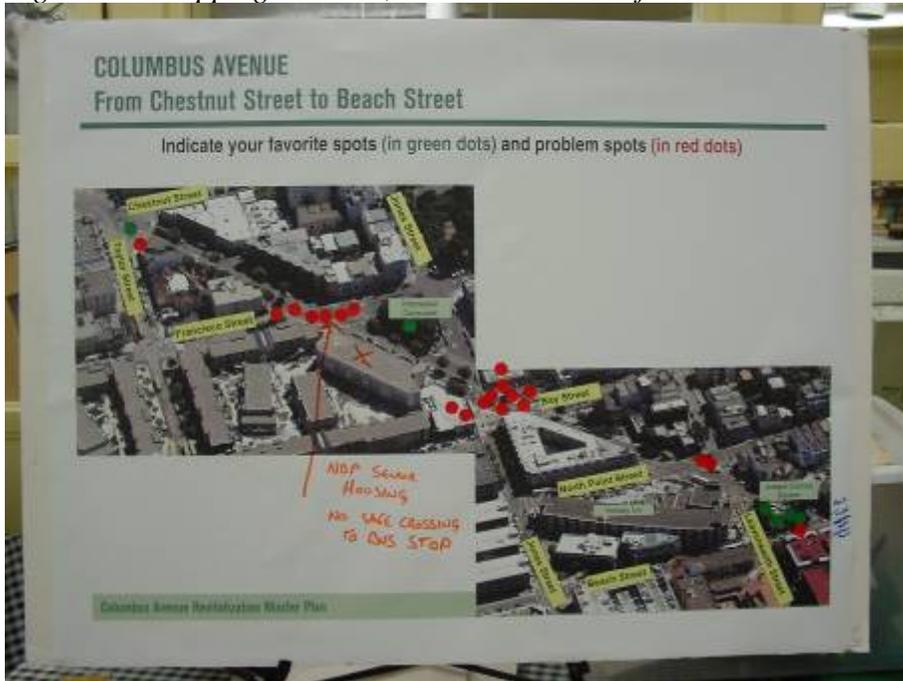


Segment 5: From Chestnut Street to Beach Street

Joseph Conrad Square and the Indonesian Consulate were well regarded among the participants though the comments written conveyed a desire to see the Square improved as it is not active enough.

Intersection comments: All the intersections between Chestnut Street and Beach Street were considered problematic, especially the Francisco Street/Columbus Avenue and Jones Street/Bay Street/Columbus Avenue crossings, both receiving six red dots. One participant highlighted the difficulties the residents of the senior housing complex have in crossing Columbus Avenue at Francisco to get to the 30-Stockton bus stop. Another participant called the intersection a “no man’s land” as the space is not defined.

Figure 10. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from Chestnut Street to Beach Street

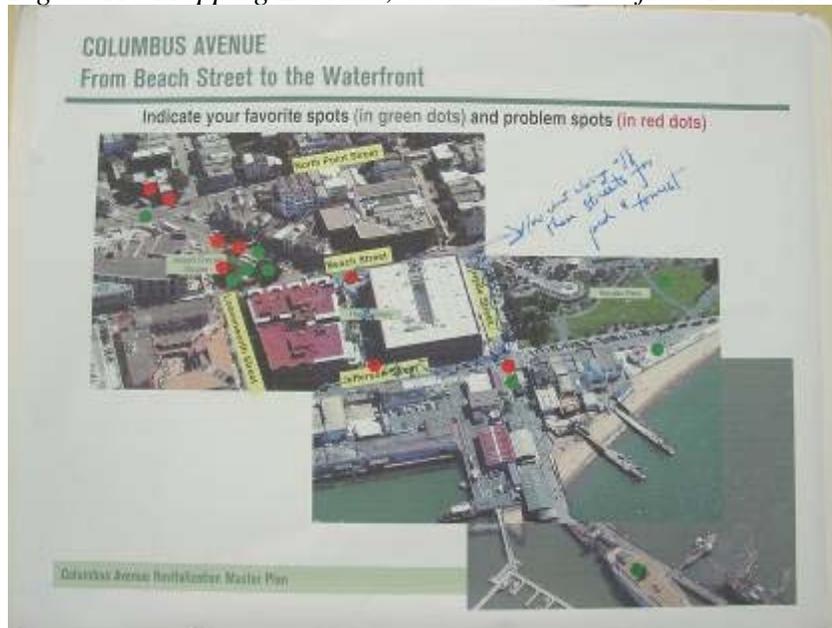


Segment 6: From Beach Street to the Waterfront

Participants indicated that the waterfront especially Aquatic Park and its attractions were some of their favorite spaces along the northern most stretch of the corridor. Spaces that were not favored included the empty office building at North Point Street and Columbus Avenue and the lack of connection from Joseph Conrad Square to the waterfront.

Intersection comments: The intersections in the area did not have many comments. Participants were mainly concerned with improving the connection between the end of Columbus Avenue and the waterfront. One participant suggested closing off Hyde Street between Beach Street and the waterfront and Jefferson Street between Leavenworth Street and Hyde Street to vehicles.

Figure 11. Mapping Exercise, Columbus Avenue from Beach Street to the Waterfront



Guidance for Development of Improvements

The feedback received from participants at the stakeholders meeting helps the study team identify the types of transportation improvements for Columbus as well as locations for improvements.

Types of Improvements:

- Pedestrian safety, circulation and culture
- Transit improvements:
 - Short term - Muni access, quality and connectivity
 - Long term - Inclusion of Central Subway into the planning of Columbus Avenue
- Intersection management and enhancement
- Streetscape improvements: use transportation improvements to enhance neighborhood characteristics and ambience

Potential Locations of Improvements (in order of number of red dots received):

- Green Street, Stockton Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (12 red dots)
- Grant Avenue, Broadway and Columbus Avenue intersection (including pedestrian continuity along Grant Avenue from Chinatown to North Beach) (7 red dots)
- Mason Street, Greenwich Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (6 red dots)
- Chestnut Street, Taylor Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (6 red dots)
- Francisco Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (6 red dots)
- Jones Street, Bay Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (6 red dots)
- Washington Street, Montgomery Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (5 red dots)
- Union Street and Columbus Avenue (4 red dots)

- Kearny Street, Pacific Street and Columbus Avenue intersection (3 red dots)
- Pedestrian connection from Joseph Conrad Square to the waterfront (3 red dots)

Next Steps

The priorities identified by the stakeholders will be documented to determine the type of analysis and technical data needed to develop potential solutions in the next phase of the study. Since the merchants were not well represented at the meeting, the study team will meet with them at their monthly meetings or may engage in door-to-door interviews to receive their input.

Demonstration projects may also help prioritize the type of improvements implemented if there is interest within the community. These projects may include partnering with a restaurant and taking a parking lane during the lunch hour to place outdoor seating.

Appendix A

Participant	Priorities
John Knoebber, Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transportation for low income seniors and children east of Columbus Ave. 2. Pedestrian safety (especially at Washington Square Park) 3. Pedestrian congestion in Fisherman's Wharf
Jennifer Cano, Community Education Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better transit options for children (the elimination of the 15-Third had a large effect on how children traveled to school) 2. Safe transportation for children home on transit
Cathie Lam, Chinatown CDC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pedestrian safety in Chinatown 2. Intersection improvements at Kearny St. and Grant Ave. in terms of safety and design improvements 3. Intersection improvements at Columbus Ave. Pacific Ave. and Kearny St. in terms of pedestrian safety
John Sanger, San Francisco Art Institute Board of Trustees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of transit access to Art Institute and north end of Columbus Ave. 2. Bike access along corridor (many students will be housed at the Hilton Hotel and some will be biking) 3. Visible link from the Art Institute to Columbus Ave.
Dana Merker, Patri-Merker Architects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urban design elements along Columbus 2. Street cleanliness 3. Ease of access to transit 4. Neighborhood design – architectural input on buildings
Steve Taber, SPUR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SPUR supports the Central Subway and would like to see its plans integrated into the neighborhood study and improvements 2. Plan improvements to Columbus Ave. keeping in mind that the Central Subway will daylight along the corridor
Howard Wong, A Better Chinatown Tomorrow (ABCT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Street and sidewalk improvements 2. Delineate bike, transit, pedestrian and vehicle realms 3. Clear identification of transit hubs 4. Cleaner, safer, more reliable public transit
Wilima Pany, A Better Chinatown Tomorrow (ABCT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better system of service to and within Chinatown 2. Connection of Grant Ave. across Broadway and Columbus to connect Chinatown and North Beach 3. Mitigate construction impacts of the

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	Central Subway on Chinatown merchants
Chuck Thomas, North Beach Neighbors	1. Central subway should be extended to Washington Square Park
Rod Freebairn-Smith, RENEW SF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pedestrian space on Columbus Ave. 2. revitalization of existing commerce and visitor commerce 3. Invest in street to make it a great world street with transit priority 4. Tree Placement 5. Better wayfinding and how to use transit 6. Create a place of celebration
Matthew Lee, SFMTA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better east/west connections 2. Pedestrian space
Eamon O'Byrne, SF Maritime National Park Association	1. Coherent connection to Fisherman's Wharf from Columbus Ave.
Russel Massmann, Aquatic Park Neighbors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wider sidewalks 2. Conrad Square as a centerpiece of the corridor, make area into a car-free piazza
Lynn Cullivan, National Park Service	1. Better connections to Aquatic Park from Columbus Ave. Park supposed to be a local park
Ann Halstead	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wider sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience 2. Better coordination of transit planning with better connections to the north of the city
Julie Christensen, Friends of Joe DiMaggio PG /Friends of Washington Square	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Philosophical improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian safety and primacy over all other transportation modes • Public life and improvements to open space (is a neighborhood where people live in the public space) • Enhance neighborhood character and recognize distinction of neighborhoods 2. Tactical improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better, wider streets • Safer crossings • Nodes, gateways, indication of different neighborhoods 3. Geographical improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbus Ave./Broadway/Grant Ave intersection • Columbus Ave/Union St. intersection • Columbus Ave/Lombard St. intersection
Wells Whitney, RENEW SF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transit vs. cars 2. Pedestrian experience 3. Making great spaces, nodes