

# 25th Avenue Road Diet Project A One Year Evaluation



**Transportation Fund for Clean Air Project #05R07**

Submitted by:  
The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency  
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May 22, 2009

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On December 20, 2005, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) sent a letter to The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) notifying the SFMTA that project #05R07, the 25th Avenue Road Diet project, had been approved for Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) funding. After an extensive planning process, 25th Avenue was re-striped in April of 2008, changing the street from four-lanes to two-lanes with a median lane for left turns.

This one-year report to the BAAQMD has been prepared as a requirement of the grant agreement.

A summary of the report's findings shows:

- Automobile traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue decreased during the PM peak hour
- Sidewalk parking, a frequent complaint of residents and an impediment to pedestrians before the project, has disappeared and allowed for many trees to be planted through the project area.
- Transit travel times improved and the numbers of passengers getting on and off the buses within the project limits increased
- Bicycle usage on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue increased during the PM peak hour
- The number of pedestrians increased during the PM peak hour
- Public response has been overwhelmingly positive about this project

## BACKGROUND

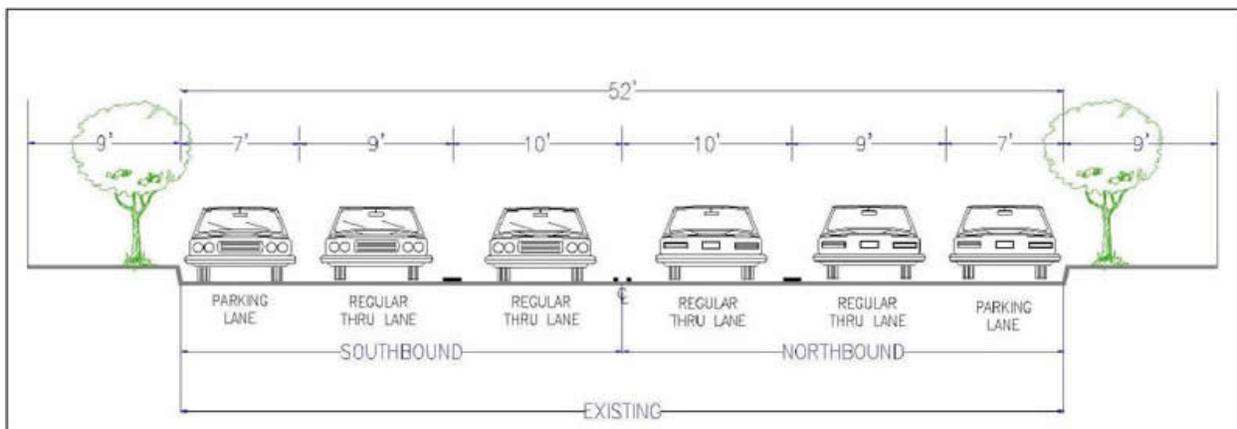
A group of residents on 25th Avenue approached the SFMTA regarding their speeding and safety concerns on 25th Avenue, between Fulton and Lake Streets (see Appendix A for a map of the project area). There were also concerns associated with rushed left turn movements and travel lanes as narrow as 9 feet. The lane widths forced the #29 Line Muni buses and other large vehicles to take up both of the travel lanes in order to maintain adequate clearance from parked vehicles. There were further concerns about pedestrian safety at several locations, including cars parked on the sidewalks in order to avoid sideswipes.

Observations showed that while 25th Avenue was striped as a 4 lane road, it often did not operate like one because of the lane widths and the delays caused by left turning vehicles.

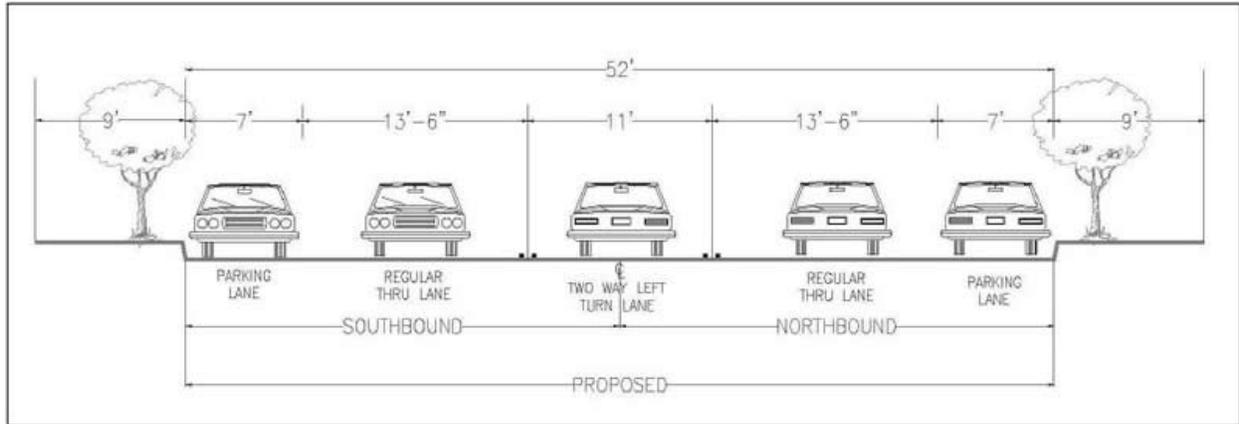
After a few meetings with the community and Supervisor McGoldrick, it was determined that the SFMTA would use a BAAQMD TFCA grant to explore the possibility of converting 25th Avenue from four lanes (two in each direction) to three wider lanes (one in each direction with a center turn lane). This layout would do several things to improve 25th Avenue:

- Allow the #29 Line Muni buses to travel in a lane of standard width
- Reduce rushed left turning movements, which often intimidated pedestrians, by providing dedicated space for turning vehicles to wait
- Decrease the likelihood of sideswipe collisions
- Allow the most prudent driver to set the speed in the single through lane
- Discourage vehicles from parking on the sidewalks
- Plant trees along the curb line, where cars had previously parked
- Provide a wider curb lane for cyclists to use

In April of 2008, work on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue was completed resulting in the following lane changes:



**Figure 1.** Pre-Project Cross-Section



**Figure 2.** Post-Project Cross-Section

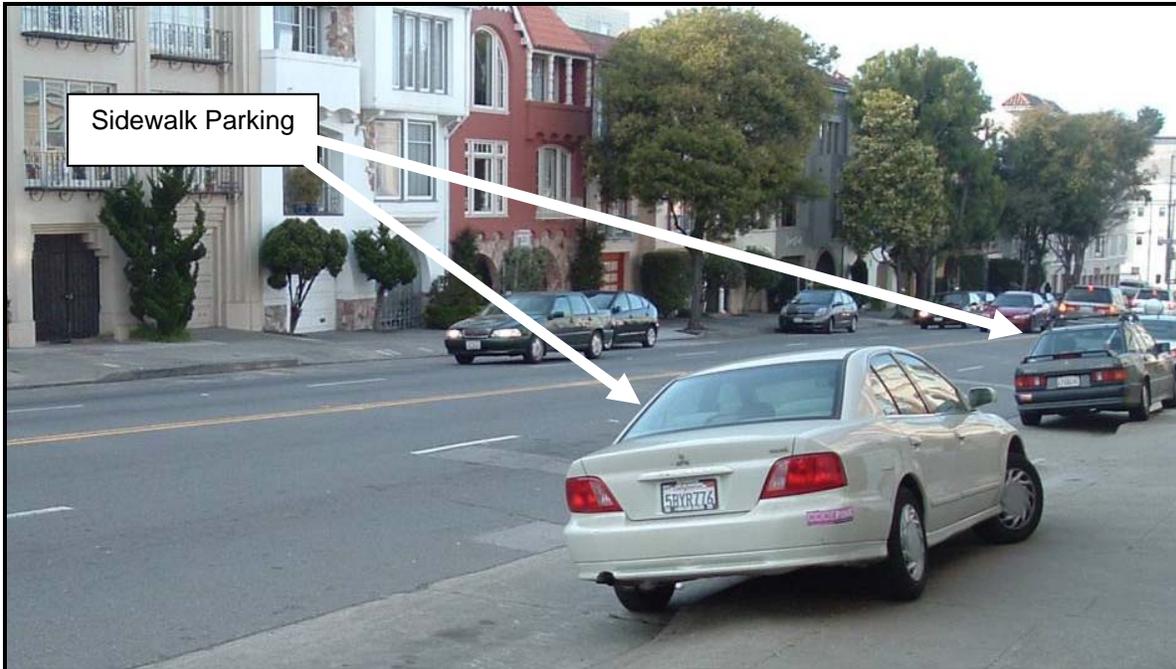
This report documents the changes that have occurred to motor vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic along 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a result of the redesign.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE VOLUMES**

Motor vehicle traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Balboa Street decreased 11% during the PM peak hour, from 1143 in 2008 to 1026 in 2009. A study of traffic on adjacent parallel streets was not conducted but the lack of congestion and steady flow of traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue after the re-striping and the STOP sign patterns on the adjacent parallel streets would make it unlikely that traffic would be diverted to those streets. To date, the SFMTA has not received any complaints about spillover traffic from adjacent streets.

## **PARKING ISSUES**

One frequent complaint about 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue before the project was about the number of vehicles parked partially on the sidewalk. The narrow lanes caused some residents to fear that their cars would be sideswiped so they would often park with two tires on the sidewalk. This practice detracted from the pedestrian experience and reduced the desirability of walking in this corridor. Since the road diet project has been completed, the SFMTA has not received any complaints nor seen any instances of this behavior. Several trees have been planted along 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where cars had parked in the past.



**Figure 3.** Vehicles often parked on the sidewalks to avoid sideswipes.

## MUNI

Before the lane changes, there were only a few bus stops located at the sidewalk edge, so the #29 Muni Line buses picked up and dropped off many passengers from the travel lane. With two through lanes in each direction, there was enough room for passenger vehicles to pass stopped buses. With the project, the second through lane has been eliminated with the new lane configuration. To accommodate through vehicles while buses are stopped and to make passenger boarding easier, curb side bus zones were added or extended where necessary. Also, two little used, in-lane bus stops were removed to help Muni improve its reliability.

Muni's automatic passenger counters keeps track of passenger boardings and alightings and travel time of buses between stops. The data comparing pre- and post-project conditions showed that travel time decreased an average of 32 seconds in the northbound direction and 9 seconds in the southbound direction for a total average improvement of 6% through the project area. Passenger counts showed that the number of people getting on and off within the project area increased from 37 to 50 on the average pass through the project area. This is a 35% gain in the number of people getting on and off in this area. Variations in travel time were also reduced, so the buses were more predictable and evenly spaced for passengers using them.



**Figure 4.** Large vehicles, including Muni, were previously forced to use both lanes of travel.

## **19TH AND LINCOLN PLANNING**

Before 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue was re-stripped, preliminary analysis showed that the improvements to the #29 Line Muni might not be as positive as originally hoped. While the actual results have been better than expected, an additional planning effort took place as part of the 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue project to include additional time savings for the #29 Line at the intersection of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Crossover Drive and Lincoln Way. Signal changes and a new bus zone in Golden Gate Park will allow the #29 Line to take a more direct route by making a left turn from Lincoln Way to Crossover Drive. This change will bypass an area with signal delays and frequent double parking and should save the #29 several minutes. Preliminary plans for this change have been approved by the necessary City agencies.

## **BICYCLE TRAFFIC**

In this area, 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (Bike Route #75) is a flatter bike route with less traffic than 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which is not on the official bike route system. However, 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a popular route among some cyclists because it is a more direct route between Golden Gate Park and the bike lanes just north of the project limit. The wider curb lanes that were a part of this project have been a benefit to cyclists who now have a wider area in which to ride.

Bicycle volumes at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Balboa Street during the PM peak hour increased from 8 to 11 bicyclists. The “before” data was collected on a sunny, warm weekday in April 2008. In May 2009, 11 bicyclists were counted on a sunny but somewhat windy weekday.



**Figure 5.** Cyclists and motor vehicles share the same wider lane

## **PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS**

Pedestrian crossings at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Balboa Street during the PM peak hour increased 49 percent, from 73 to 109 people per hour. All pedestrian crossings were counted, so pedestrians who crossed two legs of the intersection were counted twice. Pedestrians who used a corner of the intersection but did not cross a street were not counted. The “before” and “after” data were collected on the same days as the bicycle data.

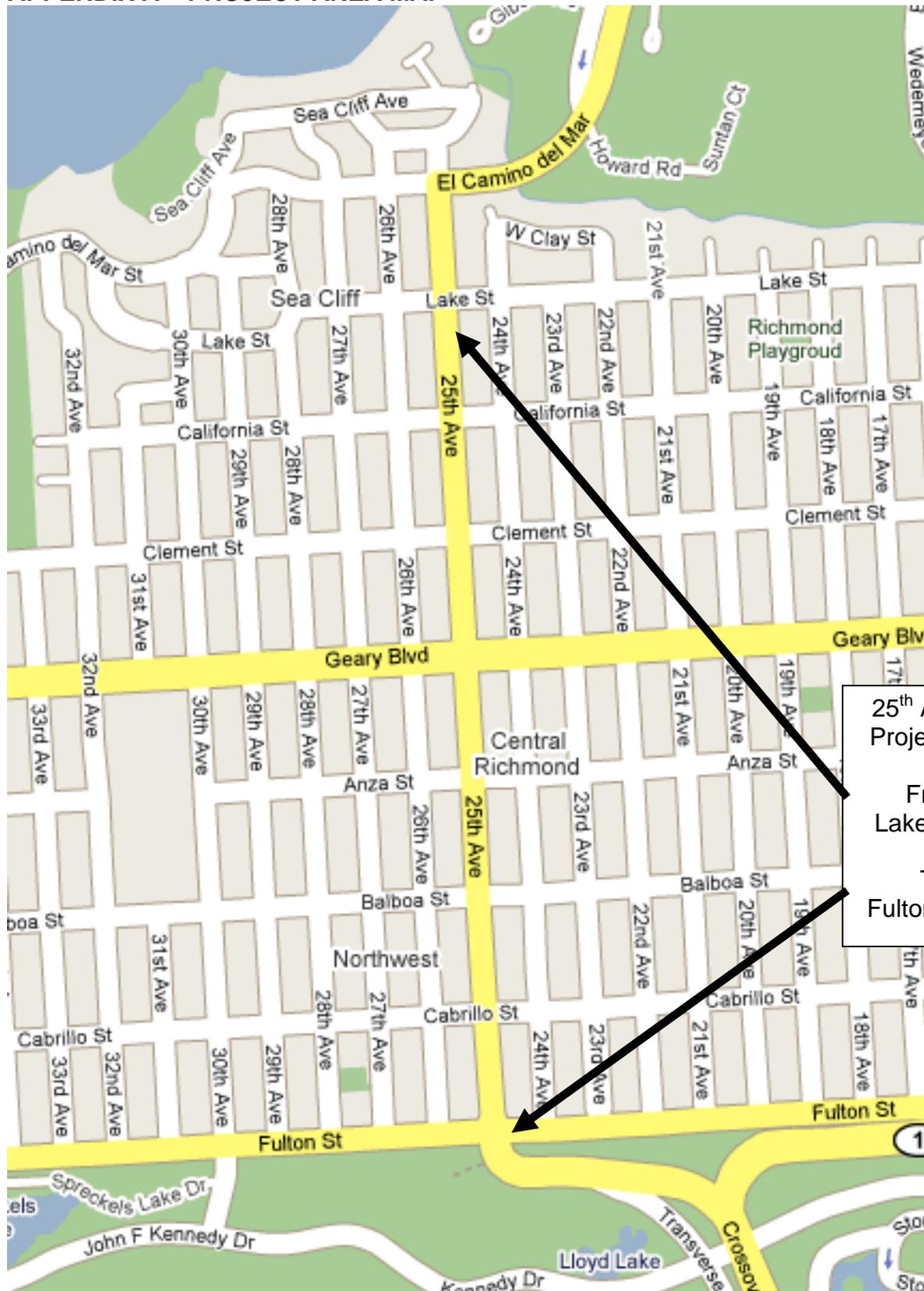
## **CONCLUSION**

This one-year evaluation yields the following results:

- Automobile traffic on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue decreased 11% during the PM peak hour
- Sidewalk parking, a frequent issue before the project, has disappeared, allowing for trees to be planted
- Transit travel times improved by 6% and the numbers of passengers getting on and off the buses within the project limits increased by 35%
- Bicycle usage on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue increased 37% during the PM peak hour
- The number of pedestrians increased 49% during the PM peak hour
- Public response has been overwhelmingly positive about this project

Based on the findings of this report, the SFMTA Traffic Calming Program declares that this has been a successful project on several fronts. Other opportunities for similar road diet projects should be explored.

**APPENDIX A – PROJECT AREA MAP**



25<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Project Area

From:  
Lake Street

To:  
Fulton Street

## APPENDIX B – MOTOR VEHICLE, PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE COUNTS

BEFORE Counts were taken April 2, 2008 from 4:45 to 5:45 PM at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Balboa Street

AFTER Counts were taken May 7, 2009 from 4:45 to 5:45 PM at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Balboa Street

### Motor Vehicle Counts

BEFORE

NB Lefts	NB Thru	NB Rights	SB Lefts	SB Thrus	SB Rights
72	496	20	2	544	9

AFTER

NB Lefts	NB Thru	NB Rights	SB Lefts	SB Thrus	SB Rights
46	458	18	6	472	26

From April 2, 2008 to May 7, 2009, motor vehicles on 25th Avenue decreased 11% during the PM Peak

### Pedestrian Counts

BEFORE

73
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AFTER

109
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From April 2, 2008 to May 7, 2009, pedestrian crossings at the intersection of 25th Ave & Balboa St increased 49% during the PM Peak

### Bike Counts

BEFORE

8
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AFTER

11
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From April 2, 2008 to May 7, 2009, bicycles using the intersection of 25th Ave & Balboa St increased 37% during the PM Peak

**APPENDIX C – TRANSIT DATA**

			<b>AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME BTWN FULTON &amp; CALIFORNIA</b>	<b>AVERAGE PASSENGER ACTIVITY BTWN FULTON &amp; CALIFORNIA</b>	
		<b>SAMPLES</b>	<b>h:mm:ss</b>	<b>on + off</b>	
<b>Before (3/24-4/4/08)</b>	<b>7:00AM to 7:00PM</b>	<b>NB</b>	71	0:07:29	19
		<b>SB</b>	81	0:05:27	18
<b>After (2/23-4/2/09)</b>	<b>7:00AM to 7:00PM</b>	<b>NB</b>	383	0:06:57	27
		<b>SB</b>	318	0:05:18	23
<b>Difference</b>		<b>NB</b>		32 seconds faster	8 more ons and offs per Muni run
		<b>SB</b>		9 seconds faster	5 more ons and offs per Muni run

## APPENDIX D – PUBLIC FEEDBACK

To allow people to provide input before the re-striping and to respond to the new conditions on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue after the re-striping, the SFMTA posted project signs with a telephone hotline people could call. Information about the project was available on the SFMTA website along with project manager contact information. People also voiced their opinion with letters, emails, and postcards.

Samples of feedback about the 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Road Diet Project:

“As a resident of 25th Ave. and therefore a frequent user, I can say that the re-striping has resulted in a significant improvement in the traffic flow and speed on this street and I am very grateful for the responsiveness of you and your department to the problems which the re-striping has resolved.”

“I believe it is one of the most positive changes to any street in San Francisco that I have seen since I have lived here - 43 years.”

“I have noticed on occasion that some people use the center turn lane as a passing lane.”

“I used to be scared to step off the curb at Anza as people peeled on and off of 25th without looking. My neighbor was struck there and never fully recovered. Thank you for your help in making 25th Avenue a street that pedestrians need not fear.”

“I have not noticed a "back-up" of traffic during the morning or evening rush hour.”

“I was worried that there would be longer lines for the single lanes and people would need to sit through multiple stop light cycles. I have not found this to be the case and I am pleased with how well the traffic moves.”

“As homeowners on 25th Avenue for over 20 years, we must say that the re-striping has definitely been an improvement. It is much easier to get in and out of our garage and we no longer have cars speeding around us while we tried to turn into our garage. Unfortunately, cars and trucks continue to travel at high rates of speed both northbound and southbound at all hours.”

“It has been a great improvement. Traffic moves a lot slower and the street is more livable. There seem to be fewer accidents.”

“The project has been a huge success! Thanks for your help. The street is safer, calmer, and less of a racetrack. The street trees are nice also. The way it could be better, would be with some greenery (trees) in a median down the middle.”

“The center lane is huge safety improvement for ALL residents living on 25th Avenue trying to enter/exit their garages.”

“It has significantly slowed down traffic.”

“...it seems to work pretty well for everyone, bicycles, cars, buses, fire engines, pickup trucks.”

APPENDIX E – OUTREACH MATERIALS

**25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING  
LIVABLE STREETS  
TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT**

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**COMMUNITY MEETING**  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006  
7:00 PM

**LOCATION**  
CABRILLO SCHOOL  
735-24<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
(BETWEEN BALBOA & CABRILLO)

**Join Us!**

**POSSIBLE 25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
IMPROVEMENTS**

- LEFT TURN POCKETS
- PLANTED MEDIAN ISLAND
- BICYCLE LANE
- 2-WAY CENTER TURN LANE
- TREE LINED SIDEWALKS

Funds have been secured to change the traffic lanes on 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 2 narrow lanes in each direction to 1 wider lane in each direction. The re-striping includes street space for additional improvements. 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue residents are invited to help decide which improvements are made. City staff and the Friends of the Urban Forest will present options and answer questions about traffic and planting a tree in front of your home.

SF Municipal Transportation Agency  
Planning Division  
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103



**BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT**

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the Public's Health and the Environment*

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For more information concerning meeting access and accommodations, or if you wish to comment on the plan but are unable to attend our meetings, please contact us at (415) 554-2398 or e-mail us at [Livable.Streets@sfgov.org](mailto:Livable.Streets@sfgov.org)

**25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING**  
**JUNE 14, 2006 - 7:00 PM AT CABRILLO SCHOOL**  
**734 - 25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE (BETWEEN BALBOA AND ANZA)**

**25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Street Tree Selection and Discussion\***

- See photos of possible trees
- Vote on tree species for 25<sup>th</sup>
- Discuss planting day details
- Learn tree care basics

\*Please Attend if you signed up for a street tree. If you cannot attend, call 415-221-2072 or email: [balewis@cwnet.com](mailto:balewis@cwnet.com)

**Municipal Transportation Agency update on latest plans to reconfigure 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including impacts to Muni**

FRONT

**MEETING AGENDA**

**7:00 PM**  
**TREE SELECTION AND DISCUSSION**

**7:45 PM**  
**MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY UPDATE**

SF Municipal Transportation Agency  
 Planning Division  
 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 San Francisco, CA 94103



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BACK

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# 25<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

LIVABLE STREETS  
TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT

**COMMUNITY MEETING**  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2007  
7:00 PM

**LOCATION**  
CABRILLO SCHOOL  
735-24<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
(BETWEEN BALBOA & CABRILLO)  
**Join Us!**

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Please join the Municipal Transportation Agency for an update on the latest plans to reconfigure 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including impacts to Muni.

Topics include:

- Details about lane reduction re-striping
- Project timeline
- Bus stop changes
- Other changes to the #29

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1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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