

Draft for Public Review

# The Market and Octavia Neighborhood Plan

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San Francisco Planning Department  
As Part of the Better Neighborhoods Program  
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San Francisco Planning Department

**BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS**  
**2002**



## 4

## Streets and Open Spaces

**OBJECTIVE 4.1**

**SAFE AND COMFORTABLE PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR PEDESTRIAN USE AND FOR THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.**

**OBJECTIVE 4.2**

**REGIONAL THROUGH-TRAFFIC ACCOMMODATED ON SURFACE STREETS THAT ALSO SERVE LOCAL NEEDS, THEREBY REPAIRING AREAS DISRUPTED BY LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.**

**OBJECTIVE 4.3**

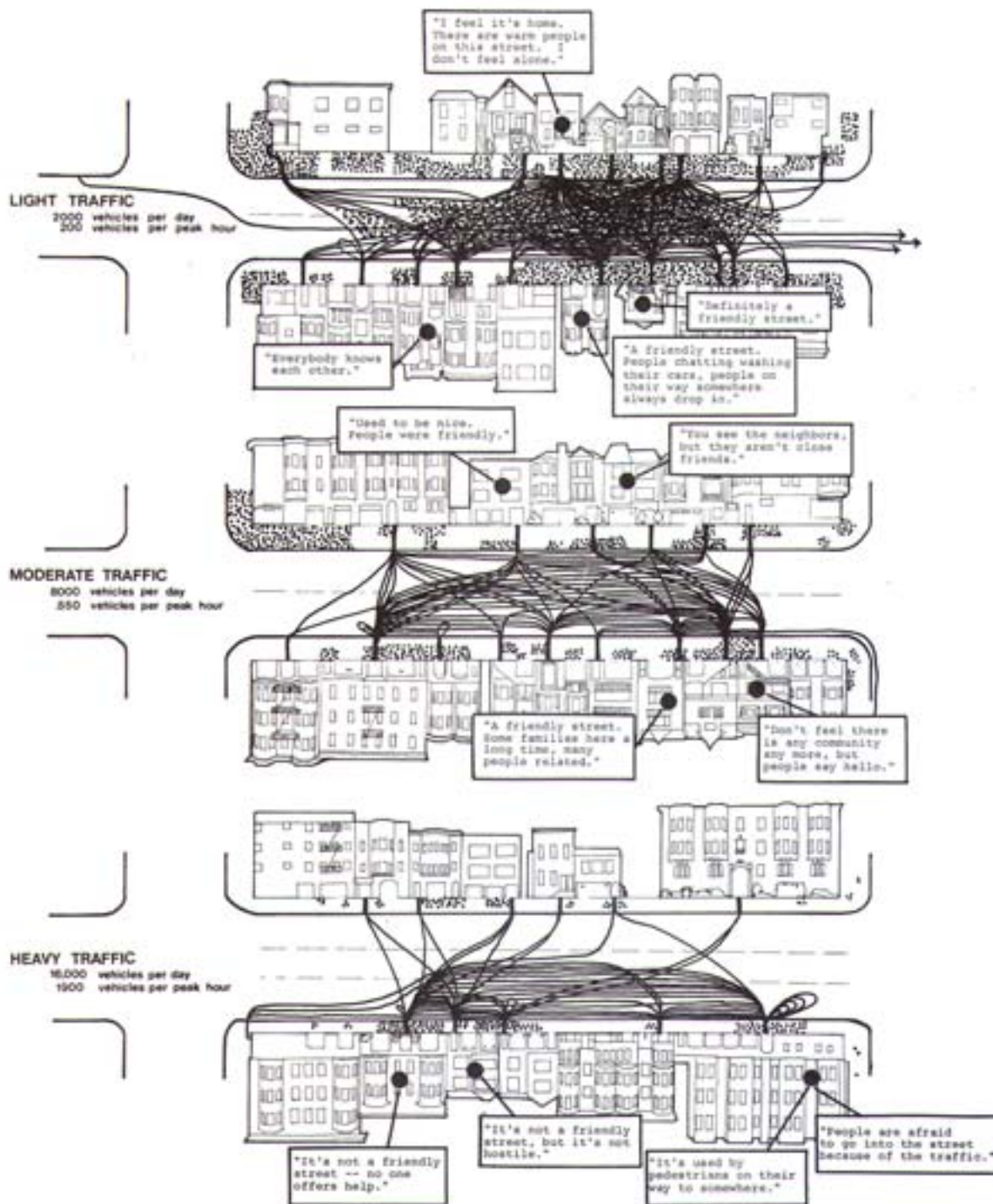
**A STREETScape FOR MARKET STREET THAT RECOGNIZES ITS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CELEBRATES ITS PROMINENCE AS SAN FRANCISCO'S SYMBOLIC "MAIN STREET."**

*The System of Public Streets and Alleys*

In San Francisco as a whole and in the Market and Octavia neighborhood, streets are the public realm. We travel along public ways, to get from here to there, close or far away, and to gain access to where we live, work, and shop. Public service—police, fire, deliveries of all sorts—depend on them. We locate our municipal hardware—water, sewage and electric lines, cables, and more—on them, above them, and mostly under them. But the public way system is much more than a utilitarian system of connections. It is where people walk, where they meet each other, where they socialize, where they take in the views, where they see what merchants have to offer, where they get to know, first hand, their city, their neighborhood, and their fellow citizens. Streets, then, connect us socially and economically. And they are either safe or dangerous, places to be or to stay away from. Of critical importance, streets are owned and controlled by the public, and are designed, developed, and maintained by the public. Do all of these things well and we will have designed and set the character and quality of the city or neighborhood. Streets are there for the designing, a most wonderful prospect.

- i. Areawide Improvements
- ii. Octavia Boulevard and Hayes Valley
- iii. Market Street





Traffic volumes and speeds have a clear effect on the quality of streets as places for people. The more calm the traffic, the more people take advantage of streets as an invaluable part of everyday life. *Street Livability Study*, San Francisco Planning Dept., 1970



Mini-plazas like this one in Duboce Triangle help to calm the street as well as provide much-needed public space.

Within walking distance of Downtown, adjacent to Civic Center, the home of San Francisco's most important main street, located where three of the oldest of the grids come together and with a topography that is reasonably level (for San Francisco), the Market and Octavia neighborhood is one of those urban areas that "everyone," it sometimes seems, wants to or has to get through in order to get to where they want to go. Whether by streetcar, bus, trolley, rapid transit, auto, bicycle, or on foot, many of the City's movement systems pass through the area. They do it on the neighborhood's system of public ways. The challenge is to accommodate the legitimate travel needs of the people using the many modes of movement through the area, while at the same time respecting and achieving the neighborhood's legitimate desires for and expectations of safe, moderate-paced, attractive streets on which to move, socialize, walk, and lead an urban, face-to-face lifestyle, at least the equal to any in San Francisco.

A first step to meeting that challenge is to restore a balance between the movement needs of competing travel modes, and to ensure that there is a balanced mix of travel modes with special attention to pedestrians and street life.

The plan recognizes that road capacity in San Francisco is a highly constrained resource, with decision-makers required to balance the requirements of cars, transit vehicles, freight, cyclists, and pedestrians. A common fear is that reducing the capacity available for cars will result in major increases in congestion. Research shows this is not always the case.<sup>1</sup> This plan prioritizes the safe and effective movement of people. What follows are specific proposals for a myriad of pedestrian improvements to streets.

*Principle:*

*Streets that support and invite multiple uses, including safe and ample space for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit, are a more conducive setting for the public life of an urban neighborhood than streets designed primarily to move vehicles.*



More than a conduit for traffic movement, streets in urban places serve a variety of uses and ways of getting around.

This element of the plan outlines ways to reclaim street space for the use of pedestrians where possible and to restore balance between all travel modes. Local, non-major traffic streets should be configured to encourage slow traffic and should take advantage of unneeded right-of-way space to create usable open space for residents, pedestrians, visitors, and employees of adjacent uses.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 3.

The past 20 years have seen wonderful advances in ways to improve the livability of streets, be they major traffic carriers or local public ways. Closely planted street trees, pedestrian-scaled lights, well marked crosswalks, widened sidewalks at corners, and creative parking arrangements are but a few of the methods used with success to achieve the kind of neighborhood that residents say they want. They are all addressed in the objectives and policies that follow.

### *Parks, Plazas and Open Spaces*



Parks, plazas and open spaces provide vital 'breathing room' for the neighborhood and a setting for community life.

Public open space is necessary for a vital urban neighborhood, especially one where new housing is to be added to an already dense urban fabric. This is especially so given the hard reality that there are few public parks or plazas worthy of mention in the Market and Octavia neighborhood. To be sure, there are public spaces nearby: Jefferson Square between Gough Street and Laguna Street, at Turk Street; Civic Center Plaza (with its children's play areas) east of Polk Street; Dolores Park some blocks south of Market Street; Duboce Park, west of Steiner Street; and Koshland Park, which perhaps comes closest to what one thinks of as a local park, up on the hill, at Buchanan Street and Page Street. But all of these spaces are either "nearby," close but not a part of, or are city oriented rather than neighborhood oriented. There is no central public square, park, or plaza that marks and helps give identity to this neighborhood.

At the same time that the neighborhood is without identifying, community-focusing open space, it is also largely built out, without significant or appropriate undeveloped land, except for that laid bare by the demolition of the Central Freeway, land that is earmarked for much-needed housing for a wide range of people.

No matter that open space of significant size will be hard to come by in the Market and Octavia neighborhood: this is an intensely urban community where, for the most part, small, intimate, building-defined spaces will be prized and used, and watched by residents and visitors alike. Residents will know where friends or acquaintances are likely to be, and when, in any of a number of small, urban hang-out spaces, or where they may go to simply "watch the action" while being alone. Large spaces, for active recreation, will be found elsewhere, as they are now, at the edges or somewhat further a field.

It is the streets that afford the greatest opportunity for new public parks and plazas, and that is why streets are included in the discussion of public open spaces. This plan takes advantage of opportunities within the public right-of-way. Most noteworthy, Octavia Boulevard





A portion of the street reclaimed to create a corner plaza.

itself is conceived in part as a linear open space, as with all great boulevards, that will draw walkers, sitters, and cyclists. In addition, modest but gracious public open spaces are designated within former street rights-of-way that are availed through major infrastructure changes, along with a series of smaller open spaces, for the most part occurring within widened sidewalks areas. As well, housing development along the former freeway lands will create open spaces within private developments, contributing to the neighborhood as a whole.

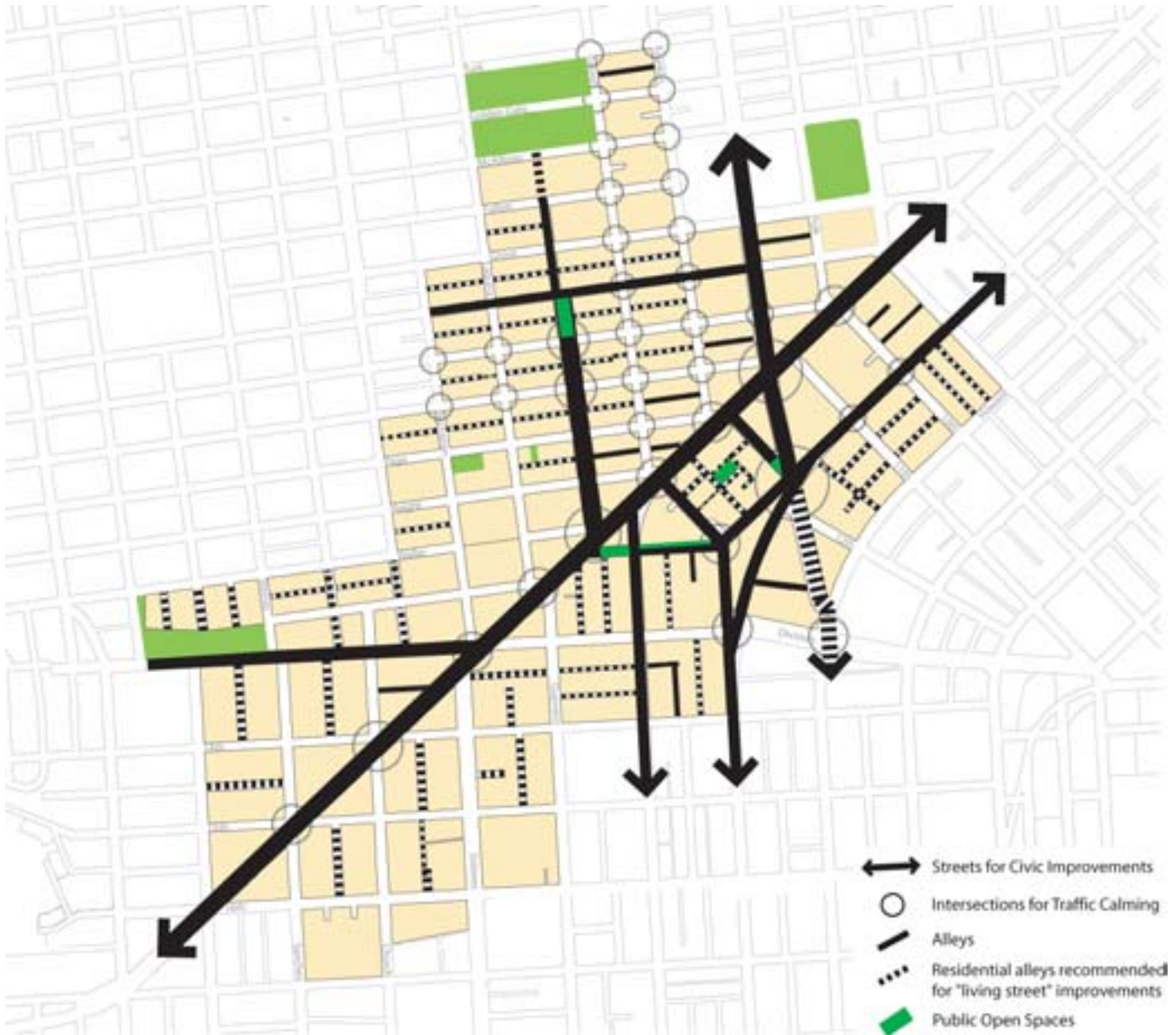
*Principle:*

*A successful open space system is carefully woven into the overall fabric of a neighborhood's public streets, taking advantage of opportunities, large and small, to create spaces both formal and informal.*

Public open spaces give a neighborhood its identity, a visual focus, and a center for activity. As the new Octavia Boulevard is completed, there are opportunities to create dramatic new open spaces within existing public rights-of-way. Along all of the local streets and the more major streets, widened sidewalks at intersections can go a long way toward providing small but useful open spaces and enhancing the quality of pedestrian travel. As part of a multi-use approach to streets, every opportunity to create small open spaces on streets should be captured.

While almost all of the Market and Octavia neighborhood is built out, there are a few opportunities to integrate new neighborhood open spaces into its existing physical fabric. There are significant sites for new open spaces. Widened sidewalk areas, when provided with benches that encourage lingering and trees that provide shade, can be effective small public spaces. Proposals for both kinds of open space are developed as part of this plan.

- A new public park, Hayes Green, will be created at the northern end of the new Octavia Boulevard, using street right-of-way provided as the boulevard transitions to local traffic.
- A much-widened sidewalk in the commercial section of Hayes Street will be a lineal open space for strolling under trees and for lingering, linking to the pedestrian promenade along Octavia Boulevard.
- Street intersections along Market Street—at Dolores Street and at the freeway “touchdown,” for example—provide the opportunity to create small public plazas, and this plan proposes to take advantage of them. Likewise, traffic-calming initiatives on local streets provide opportunities for corner plazas, similar to those in the Duboce Triangle area to the west.



The System of Civic Streets and Open Spaces

- A very intimate public square can be created in the new SoMa West neighborhood, along Brady Street, on land associated with a small BART utility building and adjacent surface parking lot. Here there is a wonderful area of small streets that almost cry out for new, modestly-scaled housing that can be part of a mixed-use neighborhood, a focal point of which can be this square.
- There is an opportunity for a significant new open space in the McCoppin Street right-of-way, where the street will no longer carry significant traffic flows and can be reclaimed as open space for the neighborhood. The triangular parcel immediately south of the McCoppin Street right-of-way, currently serving as a truck-rental office, could be part of a larger open space at this location, should it become available.

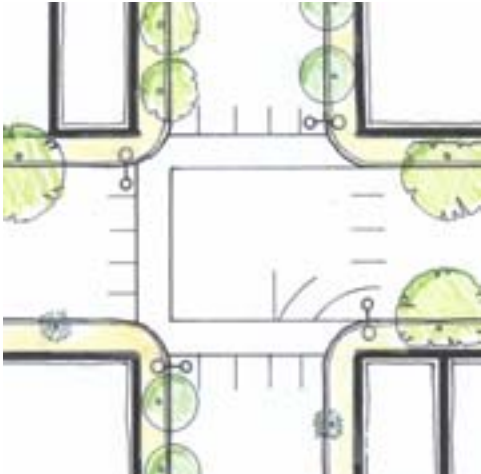
The new public spaces described above are as integral to the Market and Octavia neighborhood as Jefferson Square, Alamo Square, and Duboce Park were to William Eddy's plan for the Western Addition. San Franciscans cherish and use their open spaces and it is essential that the new residents and future generations living in the Market and Octavia neighborhood have these same privileges.





### i. Areawide Improvements

Local streets like Laguna, Hermann, Octavia north of Hayes, Buchanan, and others are enhanced and reconfigured where necessary to encourage walking and slow traffic movement. They are envisioned as gathering places that enhance neighborhood identity as well as public streets. The neighborhood's alleys are major assets to be protected and, in places, enhanced.



Fell Street at Gough Street, as it exists today.



Corner plazas on Fell Street would provide extra space for pedestrians and reduce the length of crossings.

#### OBJECTIVE 4.1

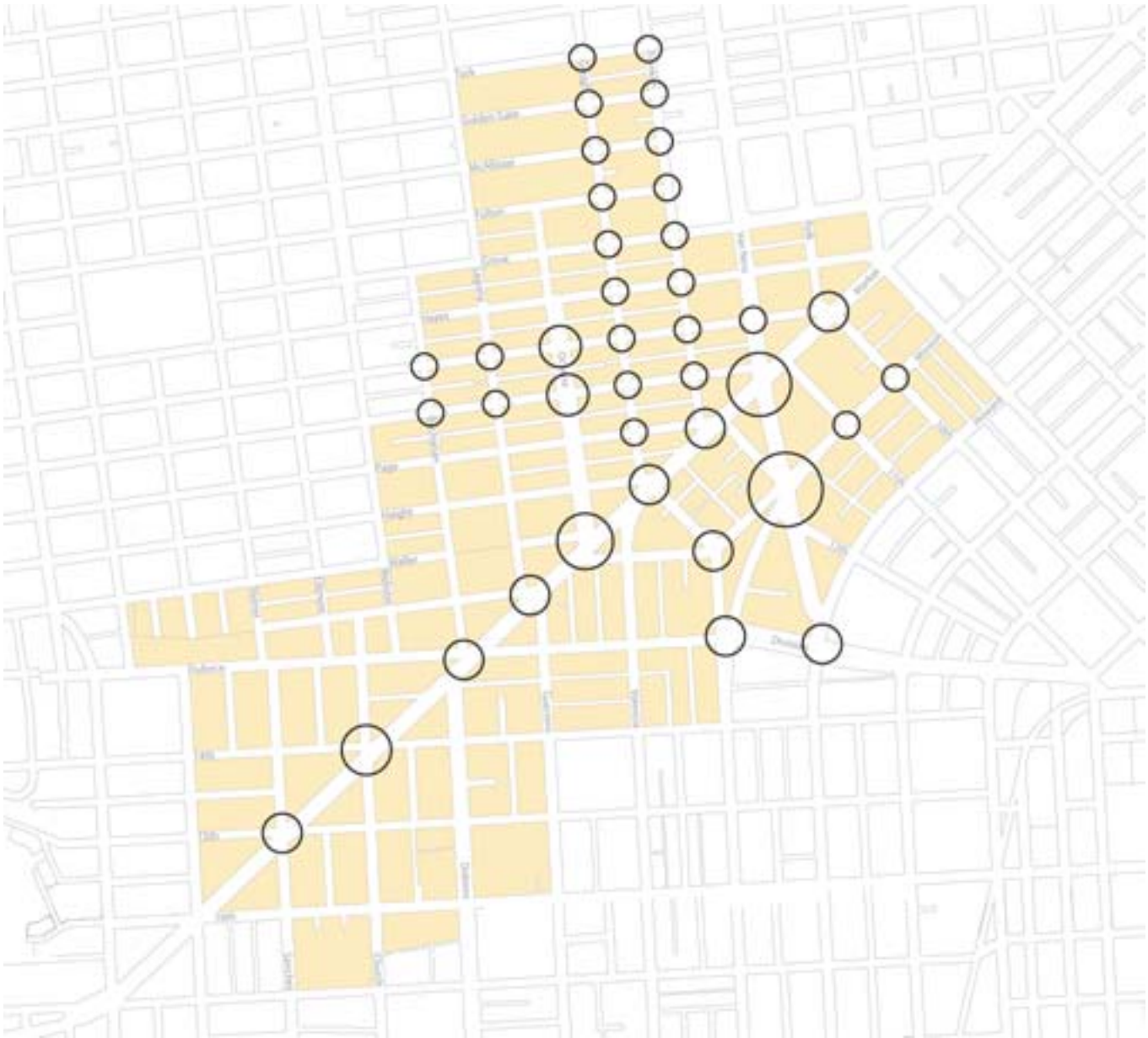
**SAFE AND COMFORTABLE PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR PEDESTRIAN USE AND FOR THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD.**

##### Policy 4.1.1

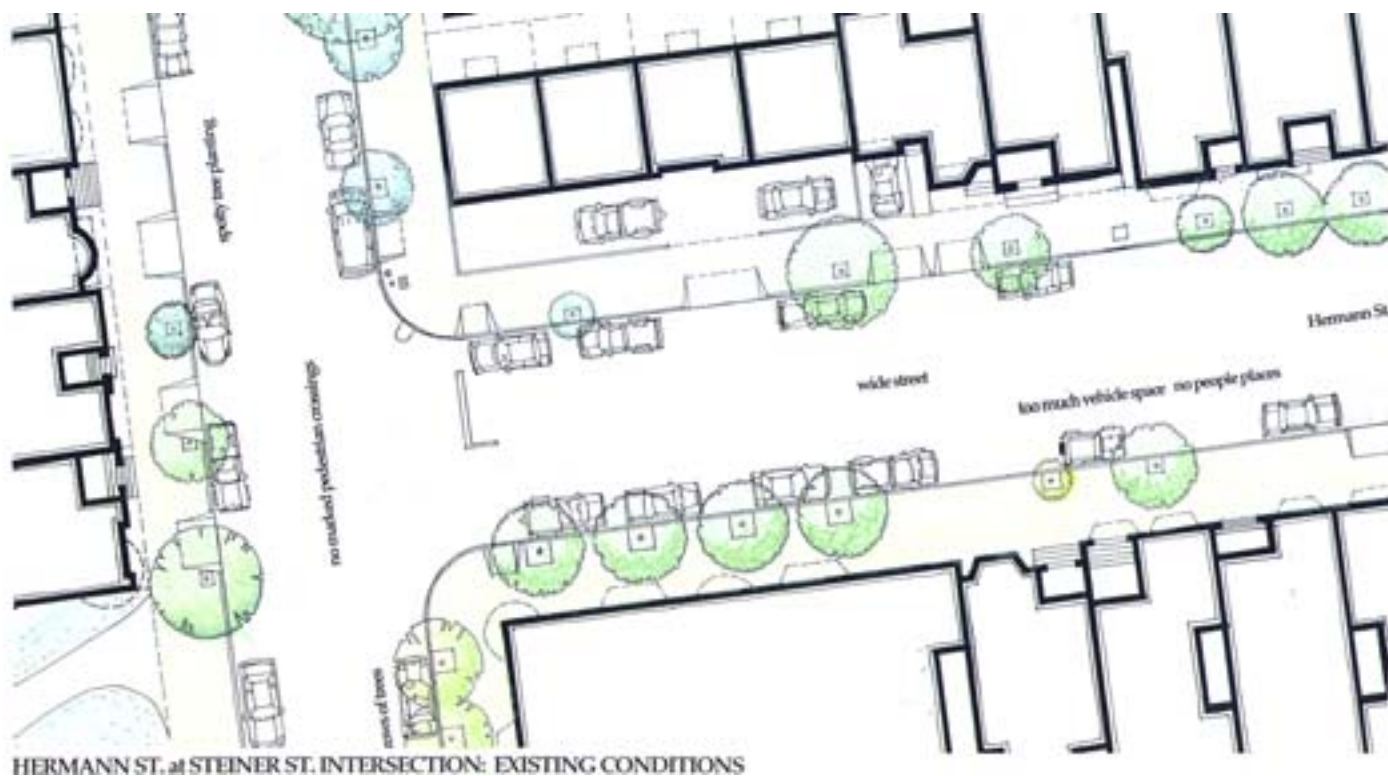
**Widen sidewalks and shorten pedestrian crossings with corner plazas and boldly marked crosswalks.**

On streets throughout the plan area, there is a limited amount of space on the street to serve a variety of competing users. Many streets have more vehicular capacity than is needed to carry peak vehicle loads. In accordance with the city's Transit-First Policy\*, street right-of-way should be allocated to make safe and attractive places for people and to prioritize reliable and effective transit service—even if it means reducing the street's car-carrying capacity. Where there is excessive vehicular capacity, traffic lanes should be reclaimed as civic space for widened sidewalks, plazas, and the like.

\*Discussed in detail in the introduction to Element 5.



Priority Intersections for Pedestrian Improvements





Though it may not be possible to widen sidewalks along major traffic streets such as Market, Franklin, Gough, Oak, and Fell Streets, it is both possible and desirable to widen the walks at corners along their intersecting streets. As well, boldly marked crosswalks make drivers aware that they are crossing paths where pedestrians are likely to be found. Sidewalk widening and improved pedestrian crossings should be implemented throughout the plan area as the most important means of improving pedestrian safety and comfort on the street.

#### Policy 4.1.2

**Enhance the pedestrian environment by planting trees along sidewalks, closely planted between pedestrians and vehicles.**

Closely spaced and sizeable trees parallel and close to curbs, progressing along the streets to intersections, create a visual and psychological barrier between sidewalks and vehicular traffic, like a tall but transparent picket fence. More than any other single element, healthy street trees can do more to humanize a street, even a major traffic street. On many streets within the Market and Octavia neighborhood, successful environments can be created through aggressive tree infill, for example on Otis, Mission, Franklin, and Gough Streets north of Market Street. On other streets, such as Gough Street south of Market, Fell, and Oak Streets, and Duboce Avenue, it will mean major new tree planting.

Consistent tree plantings make an important contribution to neighborhood identity. Different tree species can be used on different streets, or even different blocks of the same street, thereby achieving diversity on a broader basis. Rather than removing existing trees from any given street, the dominant tree species—or preferred tree species—on each block should be identified and future tree planting should be of that tree type.



Street trees create a sense of scale and enclosure on residential streets.



Streets without trees often feel harsh and exposed.



Priorities for Street Tree Plantings



An art panel by Colette Crutcher and Mark Roller, Ocean View Public Library, San Francisco.

#### Policy 4.1.4

**Encourage the inclusion of public art projects and programs in the design of streets and public spaces.**

Public art plays an essential role in the civic life of our city. In urban places like the Market and Octavia neighborhood, where streets, parks, and plazas are where civic life unfolds, public art takes on a broad range of meanings that enriches the overall quality of public space. Funding and space for public art should be integrated into all proposals for the physical improvement of streets and open spaces. Major projects such as the new Octavia Boulevard should support more dramatic public art investments throughout the area.

#### Policy 4.1.5

**Do not allow the vacation of public rights-of-way, especially alleys. Where new development creates the opportunity, extend the area's alley network.**

There are many existing alleys within the plan area, many of which are concentrated in Hayes Valley and in the larger blocks in the South of Market areas. In addition to being the location of considerable neighborhood housing, most of the alleys, by reason of their intimate scale, the diversity of buildings along them, in some cases their trees, and certainly their contrast with surrounding streets, are delightful, valuable urbane places. These alleys are an invaluable part of the neighborhood's system of public ways and, like any public resource, should be protected against proposals to privatize them.

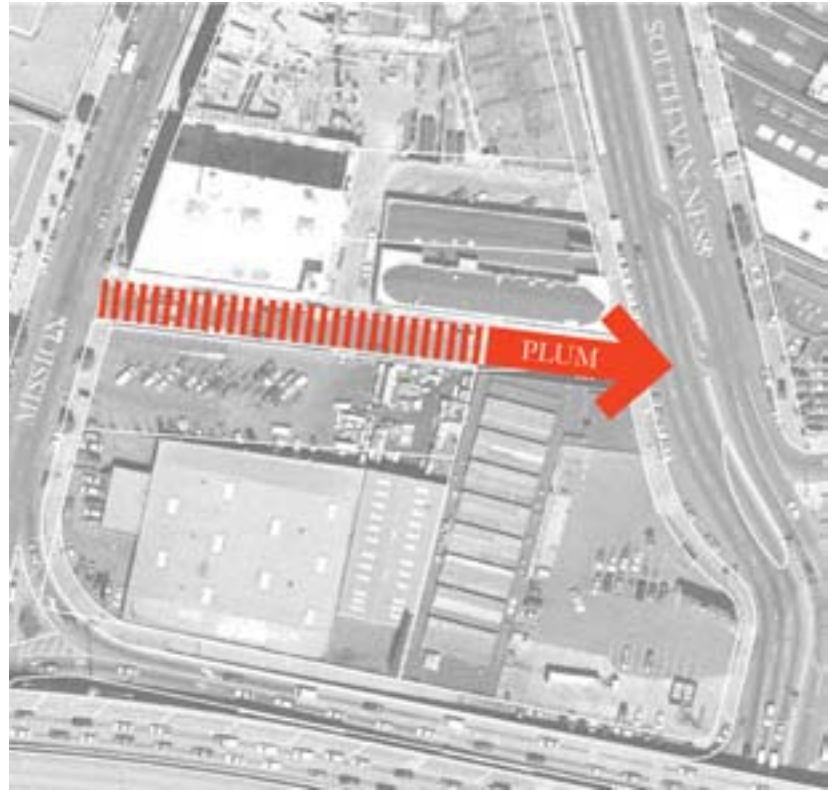
- Reaffirm the *General Plan* policy not to allow the vacation of public rights-of-way.
- Pursue the extension of alleys where it would enhance the existing network:
  - Purchase the easternmost portion of Plum Alley that is in private ownership.
  - Pursue the extension of Stevenson Alley from Gough Street to McCoppin Street as part of any proposal for demolition and new construction on parcel 3504030.



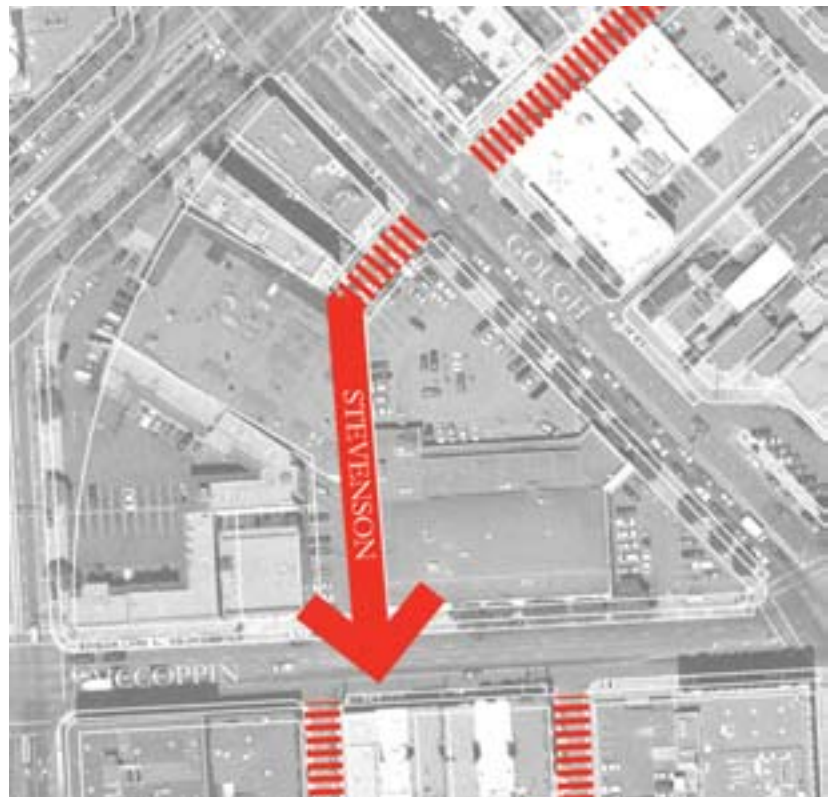
Alleys like this one south of Market Street provide an intimate scale and character that should be preserved and extended where possible.



Completion of Plum Alley Right-of-Way



Re-Establishment of Stevenson Alley Right-of-Way





By bringing plantings and seating into the street, this mini-plaza sends the message that this street is shared by autos and people.



The “living street” concept.

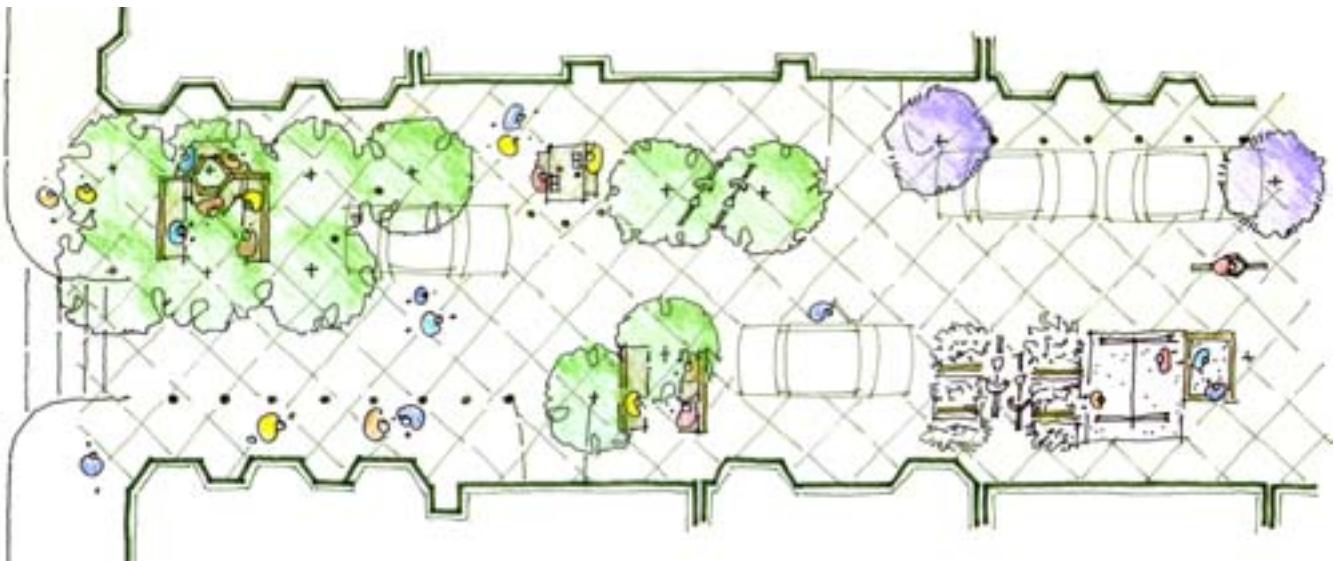
#### Policy 4.1.6

**Introduce traffic-calming measures for residential alleys. Consider improvements to alleys with a residential character to create shared, multipurpose public space for the use of residents.**

Traffic calming can improve residential streets and alleys in a number of ways. Parking can be concentrated along the curbside with the fewest driveway breaks; new pedestrian-scaled lighting can be added; trees can be planted (if residents desire trees), with agreement on a single tree species and a unified planting pattern. Narrow traffic lanes are more conducive to slow vehicular movement than are wide lanes. Because these alleys carry relatively little traffic, they can be designed to provide more public space for local residents—as a living street with corner plazas to calm traffic, seating and play areas for children, with space for community gardens and the like—where people and cars share space. By calming traffic and creating more space for public use, the street can become a common front yard for public use and enjoyment.

Working closely with DPT’s “Livable Streets” traffic-calming program, prototypes should be developed for more extensive improvements to residential alleys. And a process should be developed whereby local residents can propose living-street improvements and participate actively in the design for their alley.

- Develop prototypes for residential alley improvements, to be used as part of the “Livable Streets” traffic-calming initiative.
- Develop a process whereby local residents can propose living-street improvements and participate in the design and implementation of improvements to their alley.

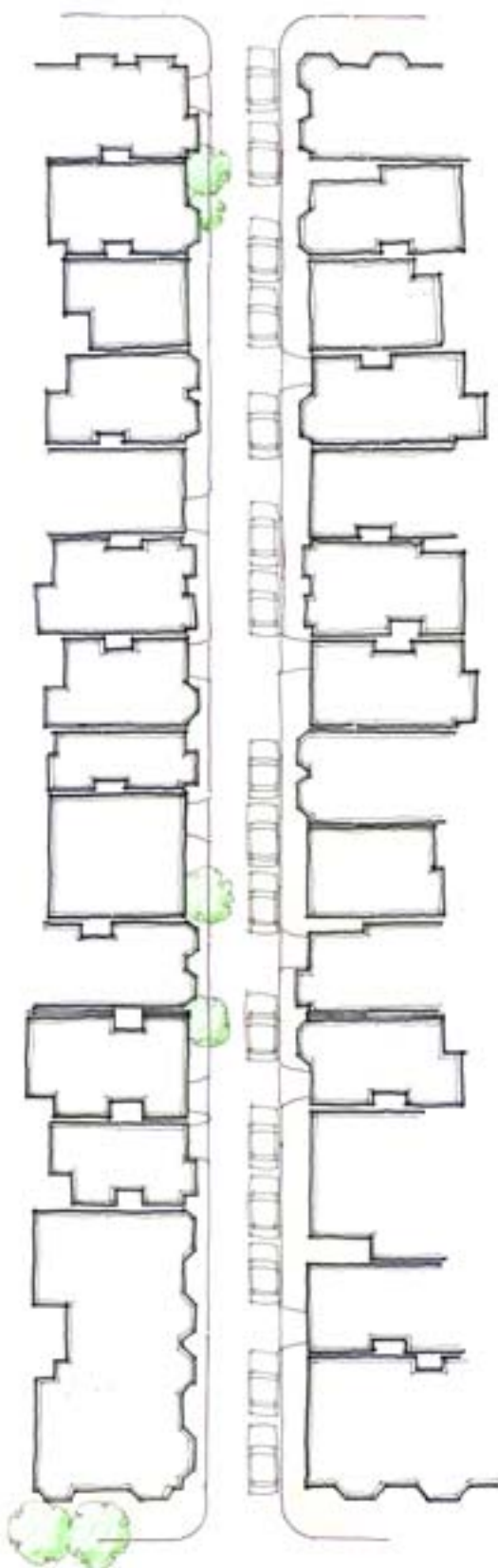


A residential alley designed as a “living street.”

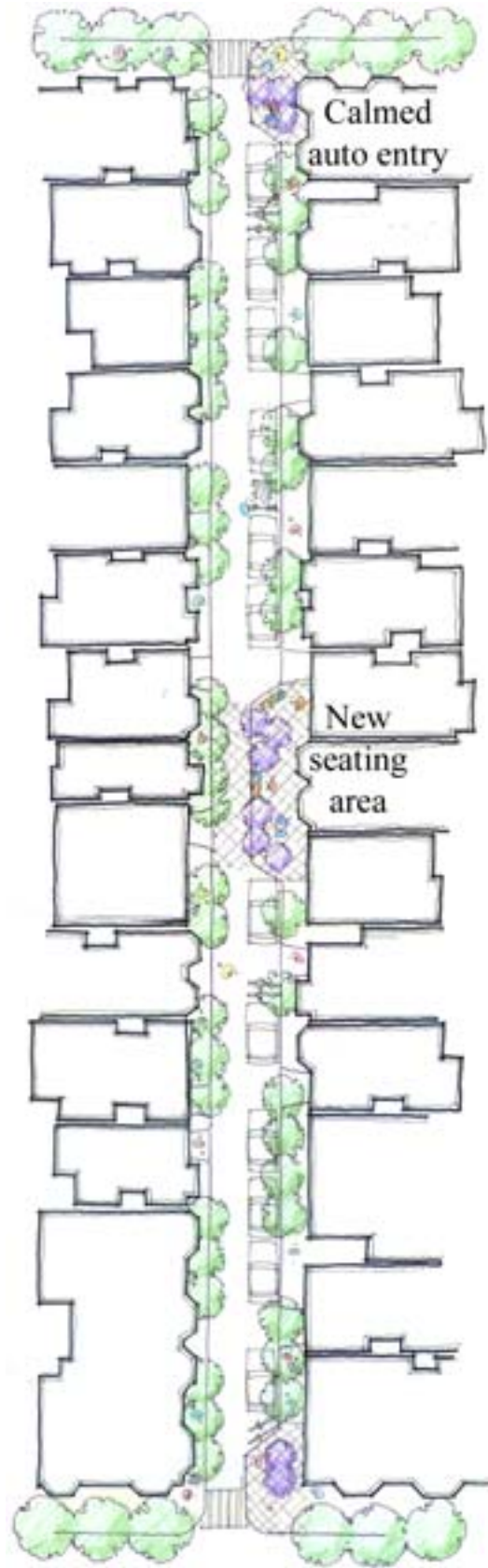


Alleys For “Living Street” Improvements

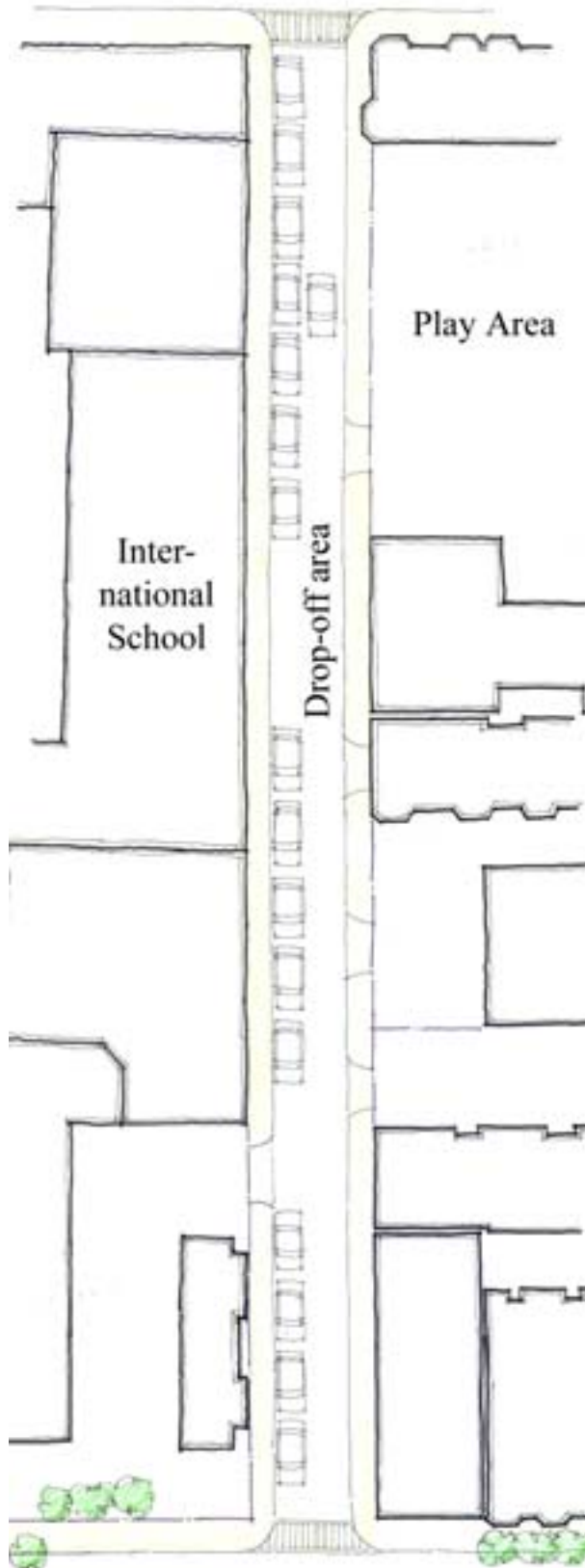




Linden Alley as it exists today.



Linden Alley as a "living street."



Hickory Alley as it exists today, the focal point for the comings and goings of the International School.



Hickory Alley, with improvements that integrate the school with its adjacent play areas.

## ii. Octavia Boulevard and Hayes Valley



Plans for the new Octavia Boulevard, now close to fruition, are the most dramatic indication of the improvements underway for the Market and Octavia area. San Francisco voters approved a proposition, the product of a public initiative, to demolish the existing elevated freeway and replace it with a surface boulevard that will serve the needs of both regional and local traffic. To realize its full potential as a major new public resource, the new boulevard needs to be executed as specified in the voter-approved design. The new freeway touchdown also needs to be designed in a way that its arrival in the heart of the neighborhood is elegant and graceful.

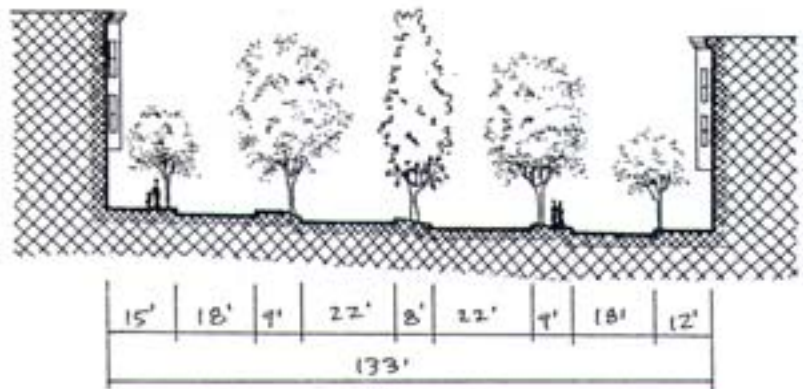
### OBJECTIVE 4.2

**REGIONAL THROUGH-TRAFFIC ACCOMMODATED ON SURFACE STREETS THAT ALSO SERVE LOCAL NEEDS, THEREBY REPAIRING AREAS DISRUPTED BY LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.**

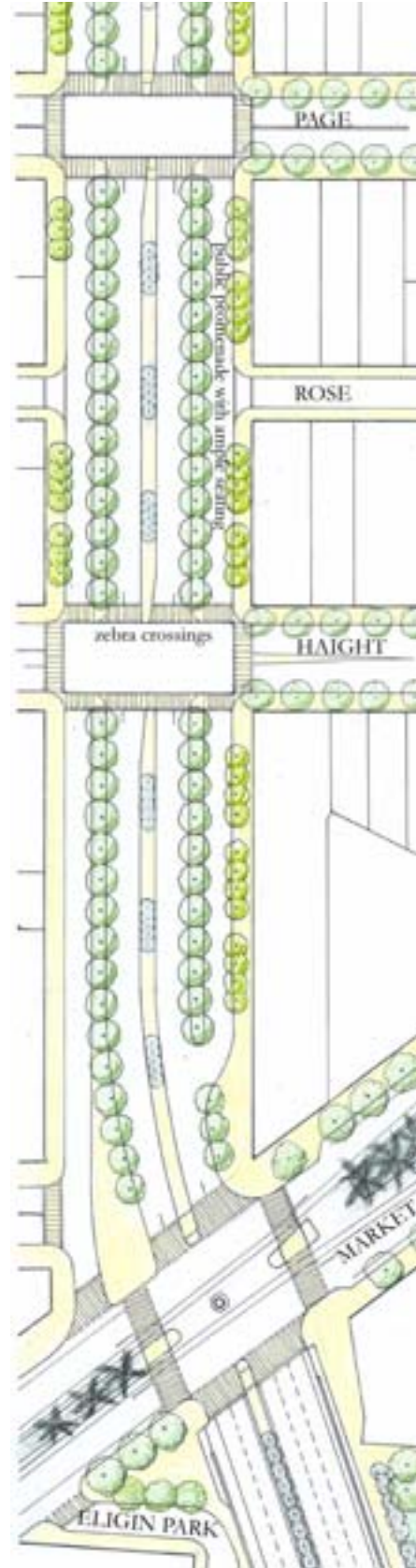
#### Policy 4.2.1

**Construct Octavia Boulevard as called for in the approved schematic design.**

Crucial to the reknitting of the neighborhood is the removal of the remainders of the Central Freeway and the construction of Octavia Boulevard as designed and endorsed by the voters of the city. It is critical as well that moneys allocated for this project not be siphoned off to other projects, as worthy as they may seem.







The schematic design for the new Octavia Boulevard, as approved by Proposition E in 1998.



The new freeway touchdown will be at Market Street, where the elevated structure passes overhead today.

#### Policy 4.2.2

**Design the freeway touchdown to be as far south of Market Street as possible, to create an entry to the city and a gracious transition to Octavia Boulevard, and to avoid negative effects on pedestrians, bicycles, and transit vehicles on Market Street and the surrounding area.**

The new freeway touchdown will be a major entrance to the city and should express the values that are embodied in the Octavia Boulevard design: modest but appropriate speed, a pause, trees, space, an understanding that this is an entry point to a very urbane city. The touchdown will meet the surface at Market Street, San Francisco's most important pedestrian, bicycle, and transit street. The new touchdown should be designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles and transit, to acknowledge the freeway's termination in the midst of an active urban neighborhood, and to alleviate problems in south of Market associated with 'leftover' freeway spaces.

Key factors include:

- *The location of the touchdown.* The freeway structure should not meet Market Street on a downhill grade. Ideally, the touchdown will be on flat ground for some distance before Market Street, or reach Market Street on an uphill grade. By coming to earth at the existing McCoppin Street alignment, further south if possible, there can be a safer and more appropriate entrance to the city than if the freeway "touches down" literally at Market Street, spilling freeway traffic down onto the city's streets.
- *The interface with Market Street.* The freeway will bring large traffic flows, traveling at highway speeds, to earth at Market Street – the city's premiere pedestrian and transit spine. Traffic on the touchdown should be slowed to avoid disrupting the physical and functional integrity of Market Street. To this end:
  - The boulevard treatments—tree plantings, lighting, and surface materials—should be extended onto the touchdown, including the median and shoulders. These will express its civic importance as an entry point to the city and make it clear to motorists that they are approaching an environment that is shared with pedestrians and transit vehicles.
  - Where the touchdown meets Market Street, the width of traffic lanes should be kept to an absolute minimum, so as not to encourage excessive speed that would detract from the character of Market Street and the experience of its users.



## Recommended Design for the Freeway Touchdown and Environs





- Ideally, a slender sculpture or column of light will be located in the middle of the intersection where the touchdown meets Market Street will mark the location and provide a visual point of orientation.
  - Tree plantings are equally important along the shoulders of the touchdown structure to buffer adjacent uses and provide some relief from the monotony of the structure.
  - No right-turn lane onto Market Street should be provided if at all possible without disrupting the Octavia Boulevard project.
  - The tracks of Muni's F-line should be relocated to avoid potential conflicts with traffic turning right from the freeway, and left onto Franklin Street from Market Street.
  - A plaza should be created using the entire triangular open space created on the west side of the touchdown along Market Street, using street furniture, plantings, and brick pavings in keeping with the Market Street paving to the east.
- *The bikepath.* A bikepath should extend along the east side of the touchdown structure, linking the Valencia Street bike lanes with Octavia Boulevard. This path should be constructed concurrently with the new touchdown structure. Adequate space for bicycle turning movements from Valencia Street should be provided.
  - *The freeway approach over Valencia Street.* Like all elevated freeway structures, this one will have an imposing and inevitably negative effect on the surface streets below it. The freeway approach should be made as narrow as possible from the east side of Valencia Street to the touchdown. Shoulders should be kept to an absolute minimum or eliminated and new columns supporting the freeway structure should not block nor occupy public sidewalks or otherwise create conflicts with traffic movement. The space underneath the elevated structure on the west side of Valencia Street should be enclosed with a curtain wall or similar means and made a public art opportunity unless an active, secure use can be found for it.
  - *Pedestrian crossings.* The arrival of large traffic flows at Market Street—the city's premiere pedestrian space—will be disastrous unless the touchdown slows traffic and the shortest, most direct crossings for pedestrians are provided. Boldly-marked "zebra"-style crosswalks and pedestrian refuges should be provided at the touchdown and along Octavia Boulevard.



Dark and uninviting spaces should be avoided where the freeway structure passes over Valencia Street.

- City agencies, Caltrans, and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) should work with the city's appointed Citizen's Advisory Committee for this project to provide the most elegant and safe freeway touchdown possible at the beginning of the new Octavia Boulevard.

#### Policy 4.2.3

**Construct Hayes Green at the northern end of Octavia Boulevard in accordance with the approved schematic design.**

At its northern end, Octavia Boulevard must transition back into the narrower neighborhood street grid. In the approved schematic design for Octavia Boulevard, this transition is accomplished with the insertion of a new neighborhood park within the boulevard right-of-way, between Fell Street and Hayes Street. This new public square and park, Hayes Green, will be at the heart of the neighborhood, surrounded by new and old housing and by commercial uses at the neighborhood's main shopping focus, Hayes Street. A community process should be initiated to finalize planning and design of the green, in keeping with its basic components as outlined the conceptual design:

- The park should be lined with trees that continue the line of trees on the boulevard, and contain a central open green space.
  - At its southern end, a small plaza should face the end of the boulevard, and at its northern end another small plaza should face the commercial activity of Hayes Street.
- City agencies should work with the SFCTA and the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that funds for design and construction of Hayes Green are included in the scope of work for the new Octavia Boulevard.



The schematic design for Hayes Green, as approved through Proposition E.



Once the portion of McCoppin Street west of Valencia Street becomes a dead-end with the new touchdown structure, it should be reused as public space for the community.



A concept for the McCoppin Street public space.

#### Policy 4.2.4

**Create new public open spaces around the freeway touchdown, including a plaza on Market Street and a plaza in the McCoppin Street right-of-way, west of Valencia Street.**

Bringing the freeway down to ground south of Market Street offers the opportunity to create two new small public open spaces: a plaza along Market Street west of the freeway touchdown, and a plaza or other form of small open space within the closed last block of McCoppin Street, west of Valencia Street. The plaza on Market Street will enhance the pedestrian experience of the street, and facilitate safer pedestrian crossings. Because of its prominent location at the end of the freeway and beginning of Octavia Boulevard, it should be designed with elements that signal an entry to the city, including seating, trees and other pedestrian amenities. The leftover space on McCoppin Street is an appropriate place for a community-serving open space, integrated into the overall “green street” treatments proposed for McCoppin Street east of Valencia Street, as well as the proposed bikepath on the east side of the touchdown. The triangular parcel immediately south of the McCoppin Street right-of-way, currently serving as a truck-rental office, could be part of a larger open space at this location.

- Work with DPW, DPT, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and Caltrans to facilitate a public design process for a new plaza in the McCoppin Street right-of-way, and to explore possibilities for the adjacent parcel 3502113 west of Valencia Street.





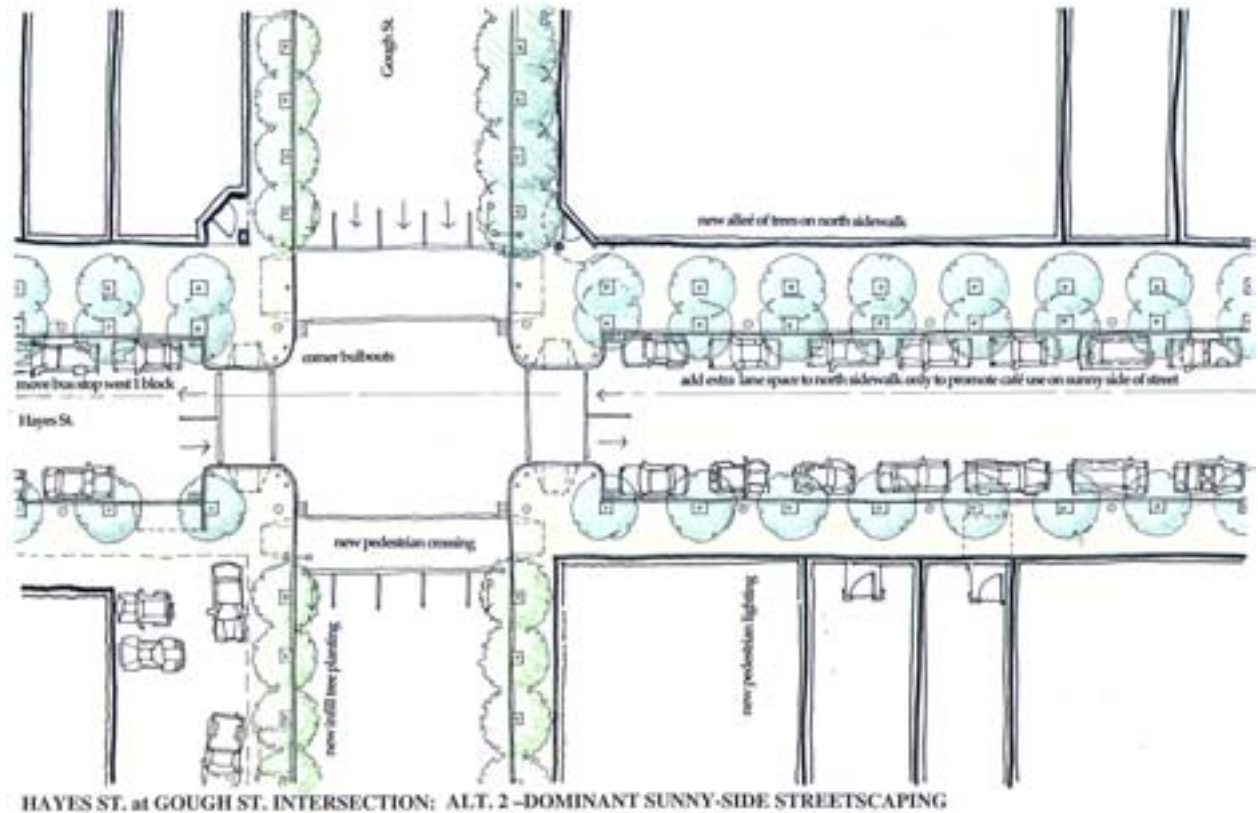
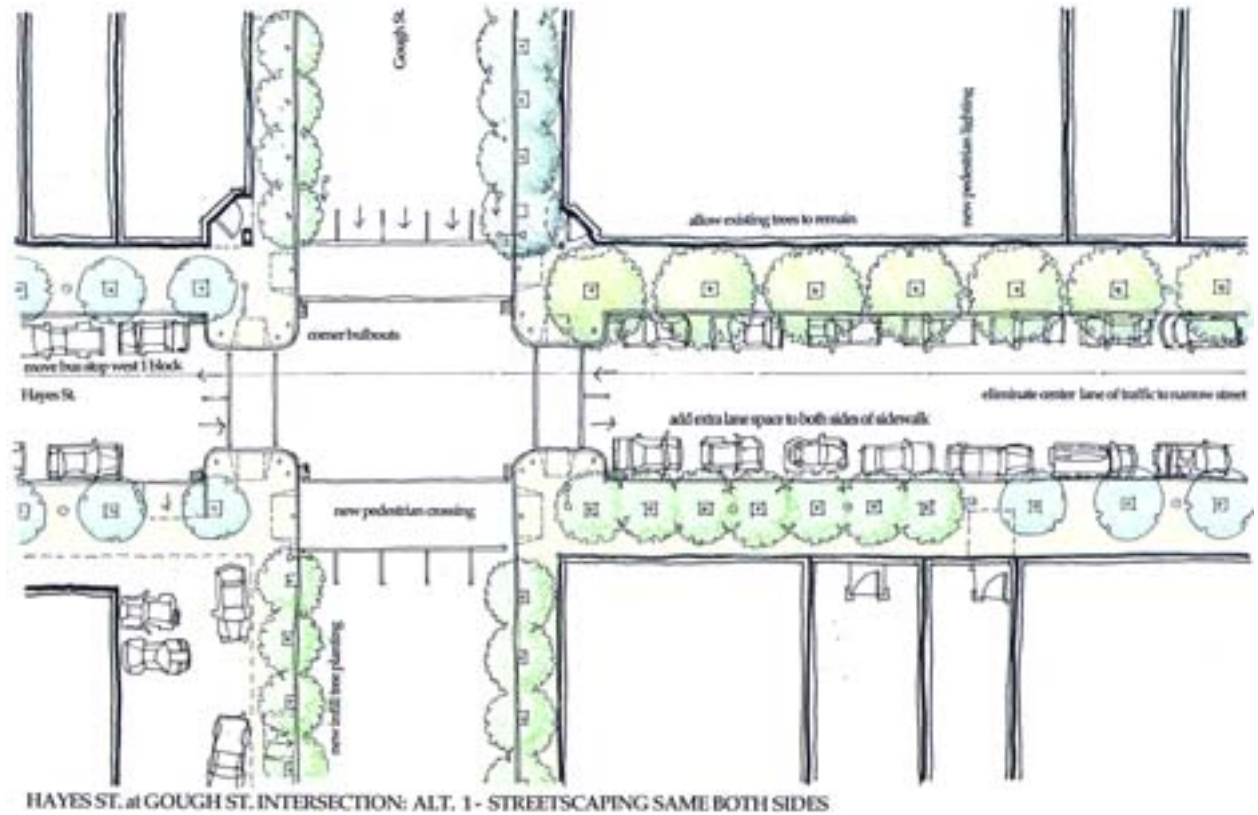
Additional sidewalk space along Hayes Street would be put to good use.

#### Policy 4.2.6

**Widen the sidewalk on the northern side of Hayes Street, between Franklin and Laguna Streets, to create a linear pedestrian thoroughfare linking commercial activities along Hayes Street to the new Octavia Boulevard.**

Hayes Street is a special commercial street within the neighborhood. It is at once locally-focused, with small cafes and restaurants, and citywide focused, with its numerous galleries and proximity to cultural institutions in the Civic Center. It is often alive with pedestrian activity. Between Franklin and Laguna Streets, where traffic rerouting policies suggested in Element 5 allow a return to two-way traffic, the roadway is wider than it needs to be. Widening the sidewalk on the north side of the street, planting new trees, and installing new pedestrian-scaled light fixtures and benches will create a much needed public open space and lend additional grace to the street. Café seating should be allowed to spill out onto the widened sidewalk. The sidewalk widening should not adversely affect turning movements for Muni buses.





**Policy 4.2.7**

**Re-introduce a public street along the former line of Octavia Street, between Fulton Street and Golden Gate Avenue.**

Damage done to the San Francisco grid by land-assembly projects of the 1960's and 1970's can be partially repaired through the reestablishment of Octavia Street as a public right-of-way from Fulton Street to Golden Gate Avenue, providing improved access to existing housing developments, helping to knit them back into the areas south of Fulton Street, and providing a "green connection" between the new Octavia Boulevard and Jefferson Park and Hayward Playground. Bicycle movement in a north-south direction would also be improved by this policy.





**Policy 4.2.8****Seek further dismantling of the Central Freeway.**

Just as the north of Market Street Central Freeway ramps dissected the Market and Octavia neighborhood, it does the same thing to the south, as experienced by the darkness and dankness of Division Street and its surrounds. While pulling the Central Freeway back to Market Street allows the repair of Hayes Valley with minimal negative impacts to crosstown automobile traffic, it does nothing to address the damage done to the Mission District or SoMa. As important, it will disgorge a large volume of high-speed automobile traffic onto Market Street, the most constrained street in the plan area, and the most important for transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The Mission Street and South Van Ness Avenue ramps are poorly placed as well, requiring motorists to make left turns through highly congested intersections to get to and from the Van Ness/Franklin/Gough corridor. These turning movements add delay in already constrained locations, particularly the Mission/Otis/Duboce/13th intersection.

To take better advantage of the SoMa and Mission grids – and particularly the extra capacity on Brannan, 11th, 12th and northeast Mission Streets – the city should study pulling the Central Freeway back to east of Bryant Street, and rebuilding Division Street as an extension of Octavia Boulevard.

It should be the long-term policy of the city to seek the ultimate removal of the Central Freeway west of Bryant Street, and to rebuild Division Street as an extension of Octavia Boulevard, should the opportunity present itself at some point in the future.

- Work with other city agencies, citizen groups, and Caltrans to develop a long-term strategy for dismantling the Central Freeway that takes it as far back as possible, as such future opportunity arises.



The replacement of the Central Freeway with a surface boulevard back to Bryant Street may provide comparable service to auto traffic and provide a significant new public space, repairing divisions created by the elevated freeway structure in areas south of Market Street.



Market Street is the spine that brings together many disparate parts of the city.

### iii. Market Street

Market Street, the city’s “Grand Diagonal,” will continue to be honored and protected as San Francisco’s visual and functional spine. Market Street has been reconfigured twice in major ways since the 1967 bond issue was approved by San Franciscans to improve it from the Central Freeway to the Ferry Building. It is much more than a neighborhood street. This plan confines itself to a series of enhancements to make the street more pleasant to walk along, cross, and cycle upon in the plan area; improvements to the overall street configuration should be made as part of a comprehensive redesign of the street, from The Embarcadero to Castro Street.

#### OBJECTIVE 4.3

**A STREETScape FOR MARKET STREET THAT RECOGNIZES ITS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CELEBRATES ITS PROMINENCE AS SAN FRANCISCO’S SYMBOLIC “MAIN STREET.”**

##### Policy 4.3.1

**Recognize the importance of the entire Market Street corridor in any improvements to Market Street proposed for the plan area.**

Market Street is unquestionably the city’s most memorable street. It is our primary ceremonial space, the heart of our downtown, and our most important transportation corridor. There are more demands placed on Market Street than any other street in the city: streetcars, buses, trolleys, automobiles from and to seemingly every direction, bicycles, and pedestrians who use it as a major route to destinations and as a strolling street. Over the years, those demands have changed, and so has Market Street’s design. The design of Market Street as a whole, from the Ferry Building to Castro Street, is of paramount importance to the overall functioning and memorability of the city. Design improvements within the Market and Octavia neighborhood should recognize the primacy of the entire corridor and seek to enhance it.





Closely-spaced tree plantings buffer the Market Street sidewalk from traffic.

#### Policy 4.3.2

**Improve the visual appearance and integrity of Market Street within the plan area through more consistent tree planting, better tree maintenance, de-cluttering of sidewalks, and new pedestrian amenities.**

While an appropriate redesign of the whole of Market Street is outside of the scope of this plan, significant improvements of moderate cost are possible and desirable to enhance the street within the neighborhood. The very pleasant palm trees that march down the center of the street are spotty and noncontinuous in their spacing, and their impact is lost where they are experienced: on the street. There are many opportunities to infill these trees with new ones. Similarly, there are many opportunities for additional trees along the street, at times in double rows. Both existing and new trees should receive the highest level of on-going care. Sidewalks along the street are cluttered with a disarray of newspaper boxes, signs, refuse cans, and utility boxes, which could be clustered more attractively. Benches and pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures should be provided on the street, particularly at the widened corner plazas proposed elsewhere in this plan.

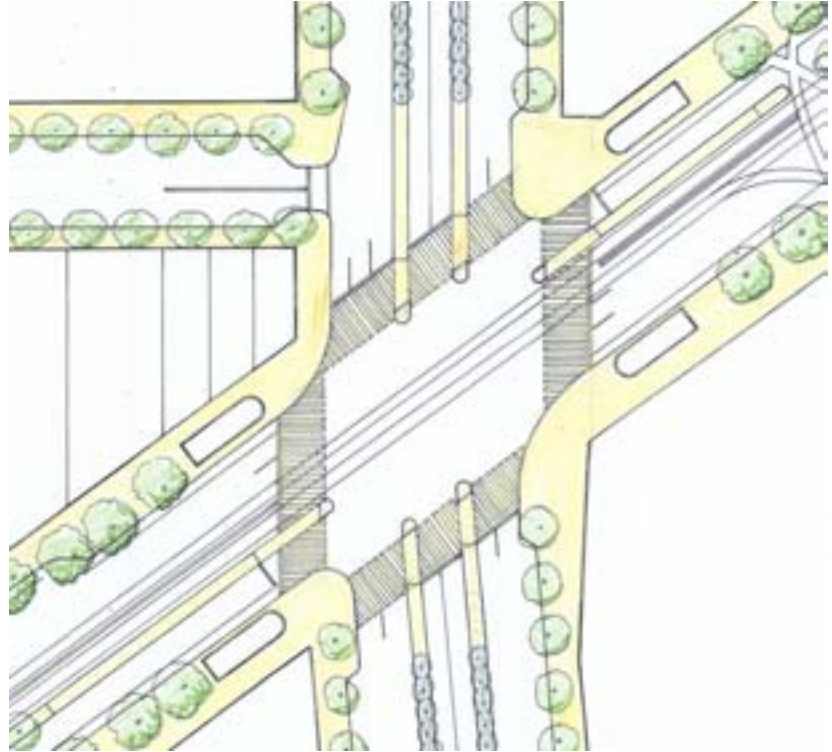
#### Policy 4.3.3

**Mark the intersections of Market Street with Van Ness Avenue, Octavia Boulevard, and Dolores Street with streetscape elements that celebrate their particular significance.**

These are three of the principal intersections along Market Street. The designs for these intersections should include streetscape elements—such as special light fixtures, gateways, and public art pieces—that emphasize and celebrate the special significance of each intersection.

***Market Street and Van Ness Avenue***

The Van Ness Avenue intersection will be provided with pedestrian-oriented additions on the north side and major improvements on the south, associated with the introduction of the Van Ness Avenue Transitway, as described in Element 5. The intersection should be designed with prominent streetscape elements that signify the crossing of two important streets. This will break up the width of the street into three separate sections, thereby humanizing it and permitting pedestrian refuges for people crossing Van Ness Avenue. Widened sidewalks can do the same at the corners, as can extended streetcar platforms on Market Street.



Proposed improvements to the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street.

***Market Street and Octavia Boulevard***

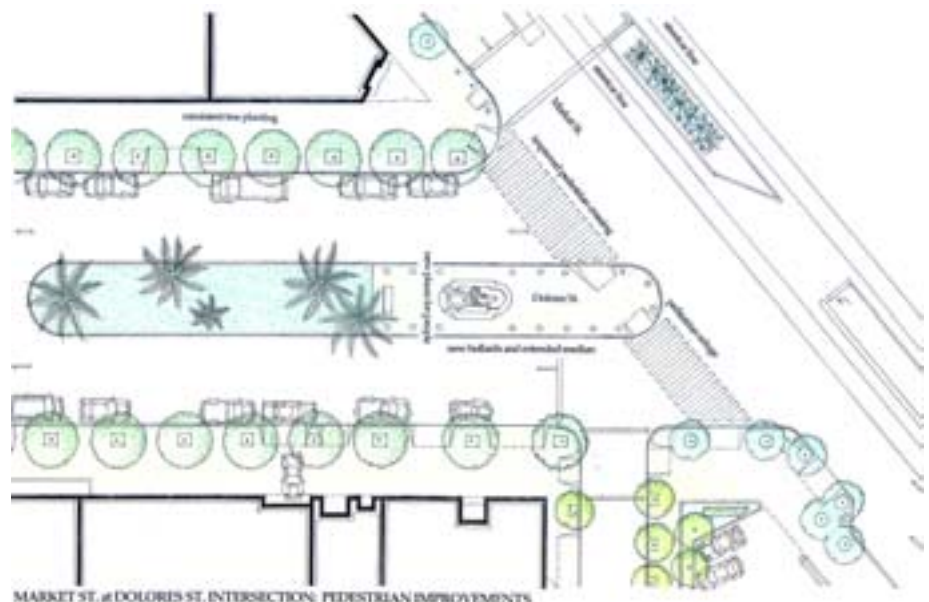
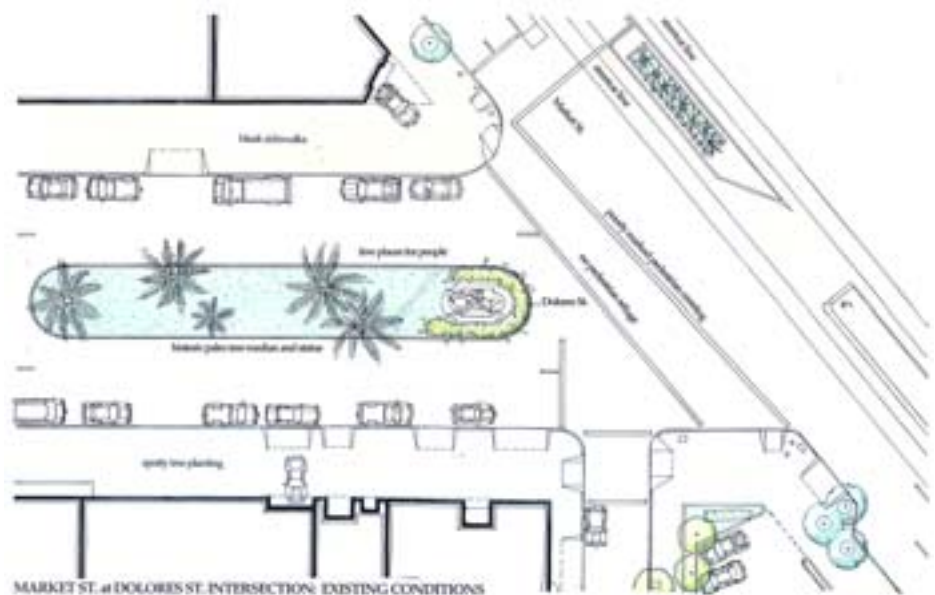
The freeway touchdown will have a new public plaza on its south side, west of the freeway touchdown, and wide sidewalk corners and medians on its north side. These spaces should be provided with prominent gateway elements that signify a major entry into the city. A statue, obelisk, light cannon, or other piece of public art should be considered for the center of this intersection.



Proposed improvements to the intersection of Octavia Boulevard and Market Street.

*Market and Dolores Streets*

Dolores Street has special historic significance to the people of San Francisco and is one of the most visually memorable streets in the city, because of its palm-tree-lined central median. The intersection of Dolores Street and Market Street should be celebrated by extending the median to Market Street and creating a small paved plaza in front of the statue for people to meet, talk, and sit, and by announcing this significant city street, the location of Mission Dolores. Over the years, it may be expected that the large property bordering the west side of this block of Dolores Street will be redeveloped, privately, with housing and commercial uses that will be made all the more attractive by this improvement.







The block of Church Street between Market Street and Duboce Avenue is an essential transit transfer point. It lacks most basic pedestrian amenities.

#### Policy 4.3.4

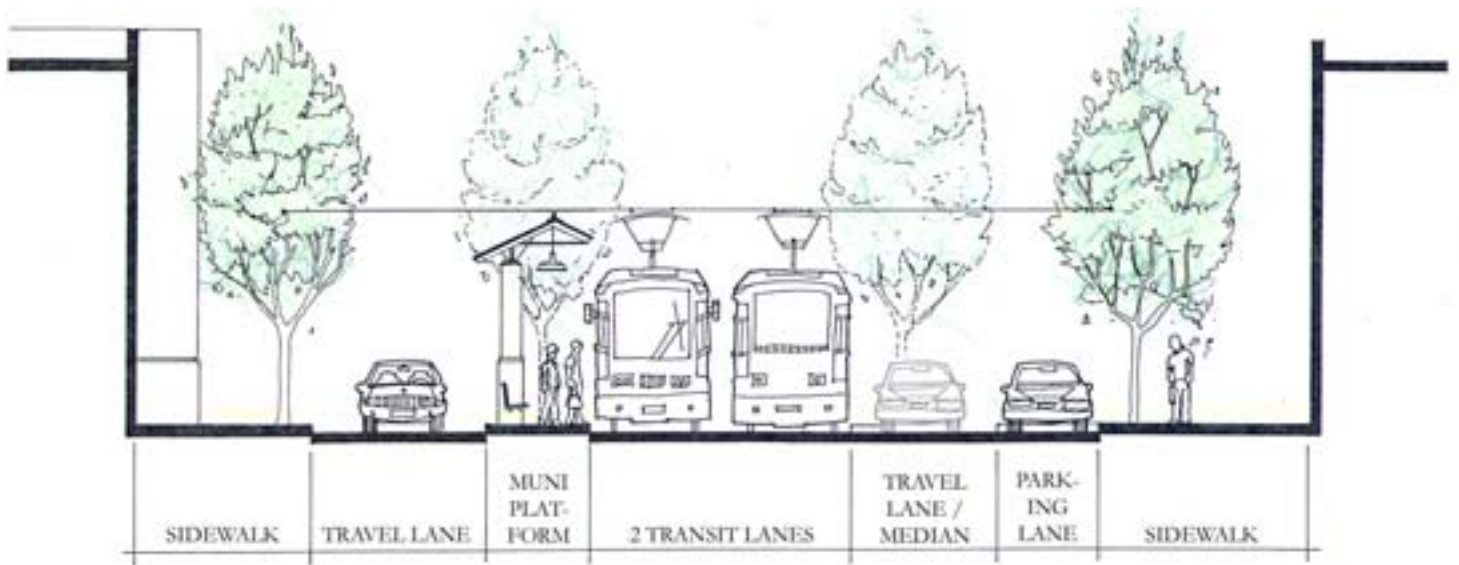
##### **Enhance the transit hub at Market and Church Street.**

The length of Church Street from Market Street to Duboce Avenue is one of the city's most important transit centers. It is the transfer point between the Muni Metro and several surface bus and streetcar lines. It is also a center of neighborhood activity, with large volumes of pedestrian and bicycle traffic at all times of the night and day. Despite its importance, the area lacks all but the most basic pedestrian amenities. Relatively simple improvements would dramatically enhance pedestrian and transit rider comfort in the area, making transit a more attractive travel option.

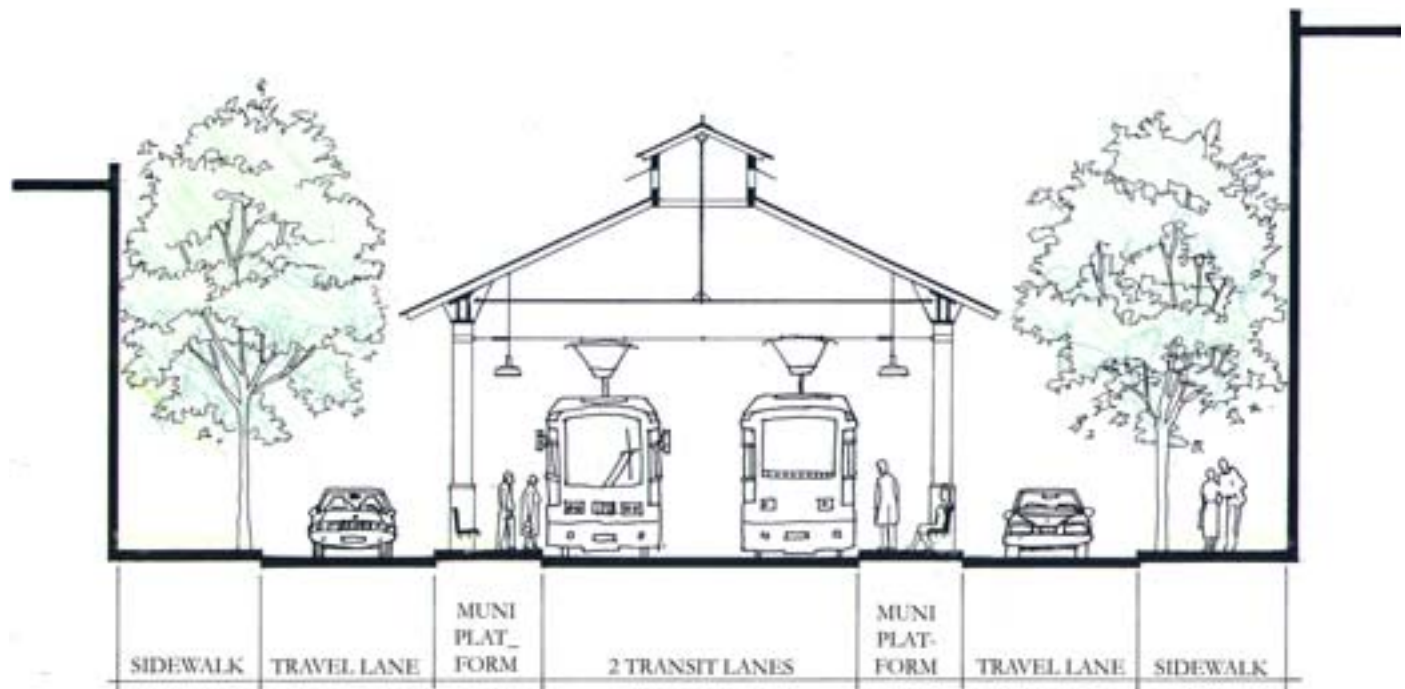
Church Street, north of Market Street, can be re-designed as a pedestrian-oriented transit boulevard with the center reserved for streetcars, but with auto travel still permitted to the right and left. The opportunity for an enhanced streetcar-loading platform on Duboce Street, west of Church Street, exists as well. When these transit-preferential treatments are installed, care should be taken to ensure safe and comfortable pedestrian connections to transit facilities and to accommodate bicycle traffic on Duboce Street.

Church Street, south of Market Street, features wide sidewalks. The intersection should receive special light fixtures, and the streetcar platform shelters could receive a special "Market Street" design.





Section of Church Street Transit Platforms

Section of Church Street Transit Platforms,  
with Enclosure





The Duboce Avenue Muni portal, where former street right-of-way is used to service historic streetcars, could be expanded to become a historic streetcar museum.

#### Policy 4.3.5

**Reclaim excess right-of-way around the Muni portal on Duboce Street, west of Market Street, to create a focal point museum that celebrates the reconstruction of historic streetcars.**

East of Church Street, beyond the Muni Portal and beneath the Mint, Duboce Street is presently not much more than a utility yard, albeit one where colorful old streetcars are kept and an important, well-used bike path passes through. This site can be transformed into a museum that celebrates San Francisco's streetcar history. An overhead shed-like structure would provide space for a working museum, while at the same time retaining a public path along its southern edge for bicycles and walkers. The new building would provide a much friendlier edge to this public right-of-way than currently exists.

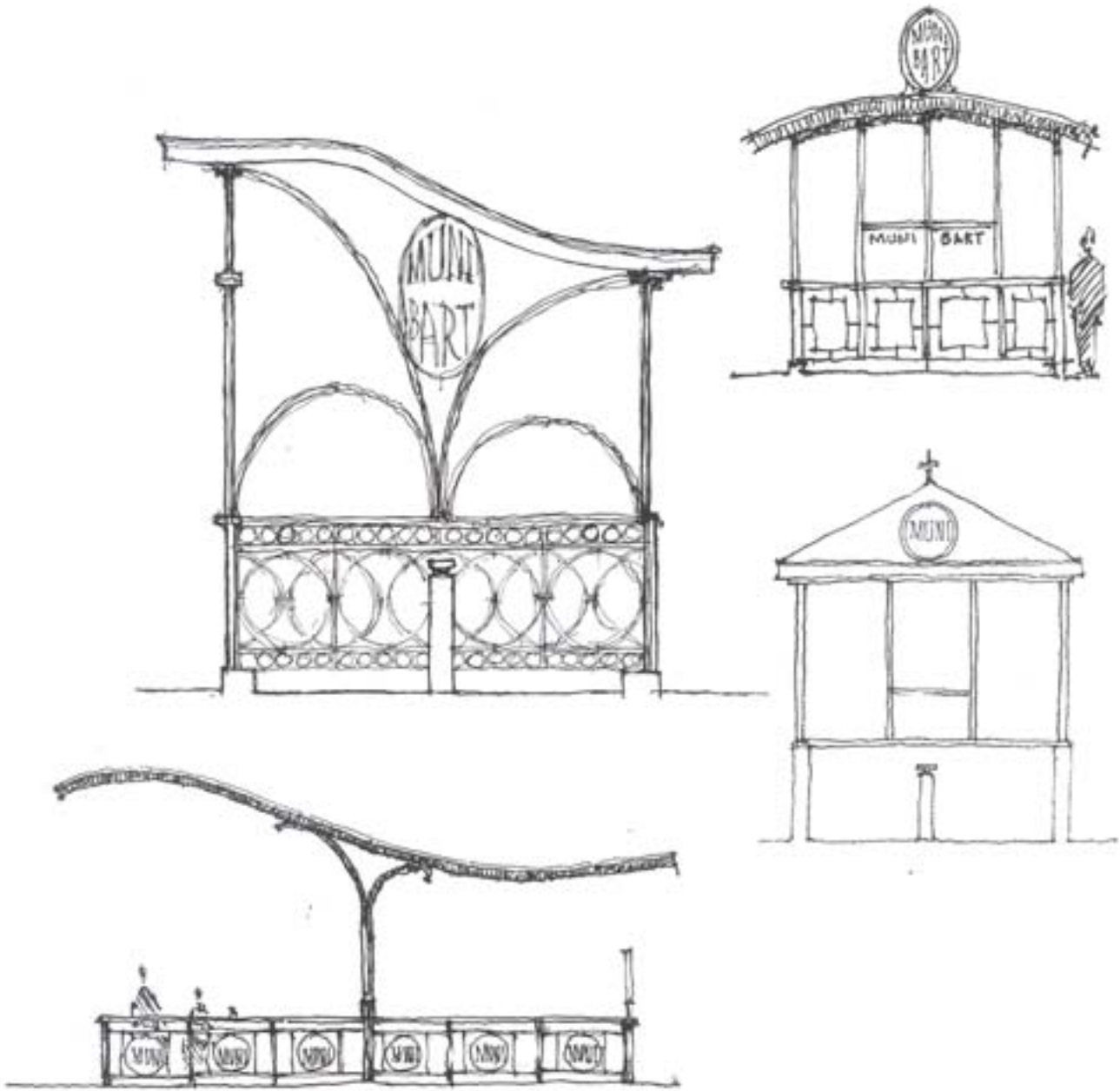
#### Policy 4.3.6

**Improve BART and Muni entrances and exits to give them a sense of identity and make them less intrusive on sidewalk space.**

The very wide BART and Muni entrances and the sidewalks behind them, presently somewhat moribund and hard to recognize, offer opportunities for Market Street: to create more visible entranceways with modest vertical elements and to create small open spaces with sitting areas, integrated news-vending boxes, pedestrian lighting, and information and sales kiosks.



An existing BART entry on Market Street.



Several concepts for new, more prominent BART and MUNI entries on Market Street.