



NEWS EVENT
Friday, January 16, 2009

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CYCLISTS, ELECTEDS RALLY TO SAVE BIKE LANE

Elected Officials Join Bicyclists to Oppose Plan to Remove Bicycle Safety Features at Market & Octavia Intersection

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA) — Cycling advocates and city leaders will rally at the Market and Octavia intersection this Friday, January 16th at 9am in an attempt to save a bike lane and protective barrier that the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) proposes to remove. Opponents, who believe the MTA plan will significantly lessen bike safety at the infamously dangerous intersection, are expected to express their shock and frustration that city transportation leaders would *remove* a bike lane when no new bike lanes have been added in more than two years.

“Removing a bike lane at the most dangerous intersection in the city would be a substantial step backwards for safety and calls into question the City’s commitment to sustainable, healthy transportation,” says Leah Shahum, Executive Director of the 10,000-member San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC), a nonprofit promoting bicycling for everyday transportation. “Rarely have I seen the bicycling community so frustrated that their rights and safety are being sold out.”

The SFBC is urging the city to instead implement the 2008 Planning Department proposal, the Upper Market Community Plan, which recommends safety improvements like raised bike lanes, colored pavement, and an extension of the concrete safety barrier. More about this plan is available at: www.sfbike.org/octavia.

The MTA proposal passed its Board of Directors last week and is scheduled to be presented to the Superior Court Judge on January 22nd as a request of relief from the injunction, barring the city from making any physical bike improvements since 2006. In contrast, New York city has completed over 150 miles of bike lanes in the same timeframe. The injunction will be lifted once a full Environmental Impact Report is completed, which is expected to be finalized in mid-2009.

Supervisors Bevan Dufty (8), Ross Mirkarimi (5), and Chris Daly (6) are expected to join the rally and continue their advocacy for a safer intersection that will protect cyclists, pedestrians and motorists alike. They will be joined by numerous cyclists who have been hit and injured at the intersection who will speak out against the MTA’s proposal at this Friday’s rally. One such victim is Michael Borden, a 57-year-old bicycle commuter who was hit by a car making the illegal right turn in December 2007.

“Removing the bike lane and barrier would be a huge step backwards and would really affect my decision to bicycle commute to work,” says Borden. “Right now, it feels like the safest part of my commute down Market Street, where I am separate from the faster moving cars.”

The intersection has been a concern for cyclists and city leaders since the Highway 101 ramp onto Market Street opened in 2005. After advocacy from bicycle and pedestrian groups, neighbors, and

elected officials, the City installed a concrete barrier island to protect cyclists and make it more difficult for drivers to make the illegal right turn in December 2007. Now, after just one year, the MTA wants to remove this barrier and the entire bike lane, forcing autos and cyclists to merge and share a narrow lane of traffic.

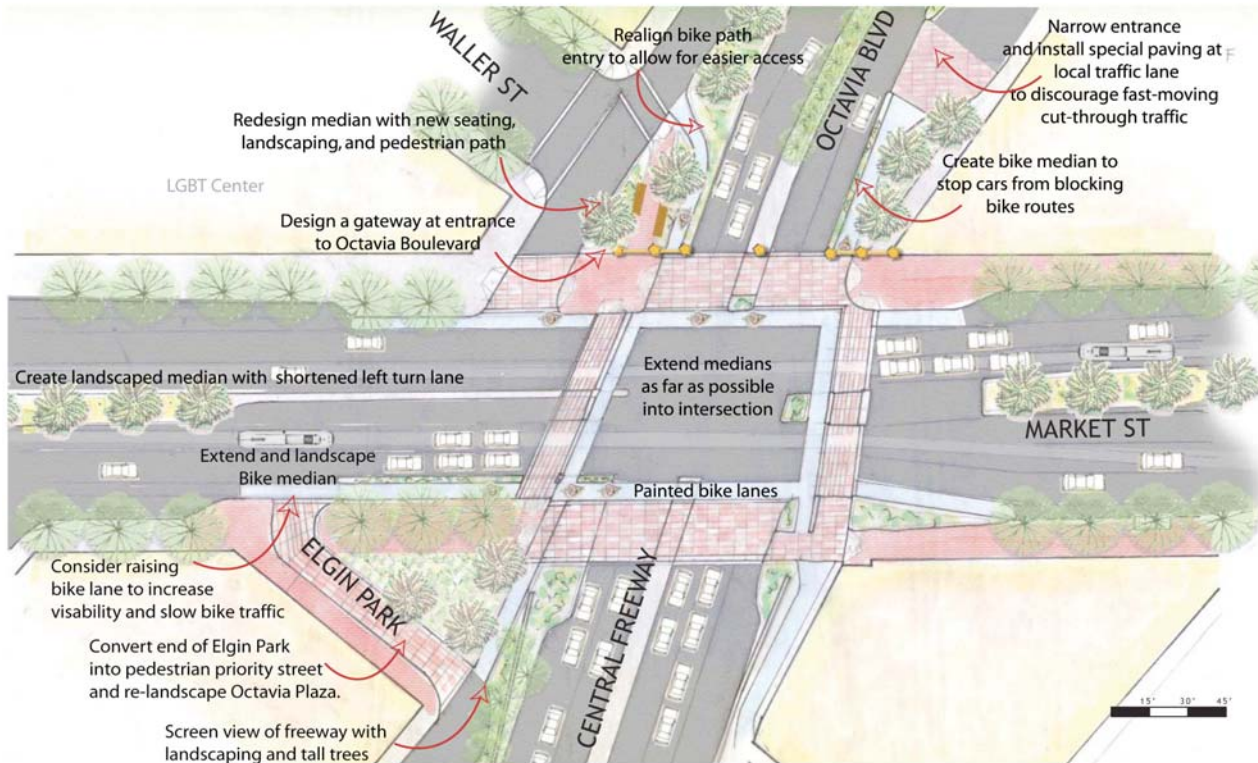
The SFBC is asking the MTA to abandon its request to remove the bike lane and concrete barrier and, instead, move forward with the Upper Market Community Plan, created by the SF Planning Department with significant community input over the past 3 years. This plan, available at sfbike.org/ctavia, recommends raised bike lanes with colored pavement, an enhanced safety barrier, larger pedestrian crossings and landscaping to reduce drivers impulse to turn illegally.

- WHAT:** Rally to protect the Market & Octavia Bike Lane and Press Conference
WHERE: Market & Octavia Street, Southwest Corner
WHEN: January 16, 2009, 9am
VISUALS: Protesters, Elected Officials, Cyclist Commuters riding through intersection, individuals who have been injured at intersection discussing their crash, volunteer crossing guards for cyclists and pedestrians
WHO: San Francisco Bicycle Coalition Members and cyclists
Residents and cyclists who have been in a collision at the intersection
Bevan Dufty, San Francisco Supervisor, District 8
Ross Mirkarimi, San Francisco Supervisor, District 5
Chris Daly, San Francisco Supervisor, District 6*
State Leaders and Elected Officials*
** Indicates tentative attendance*



Bike lane, soft-hit posts and concrete barrier island at Octavia and Market Street.

FIGURE 4.13B EXISTING MARKET STREET INTERSECTION AT OCTAVIA BOULEVARD



A VISION FOR UPPER MARKET STREET, SAN FRANCISCO | 83

The 2008 Planning Department proposal, the Upper Market Community Plan, which recommends safety improvements at Market and Octavia like raised bike lanes, colored pavement, and an extension of the concrete safety barrier. The SFBC supports this plan. More about this plan is available at: www.sfbike.org/octavia.

For more information on the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's years of advocacy on this issue, visit <http://www.sfbike.org/octavia>

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