

FILE NO. 051715

ORDINANCE NO.

1 [Better Streets Policy.]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to add Chapter 98, the Better Streets**
4 **Policy; making environmental findings; authorizing and urging official acts in**
5 **furtherance of this Ordinance; and requesting General Plan amendments to incorporate**
6 **the Better Streets Policy and its supporting principles.**

7 Note: Additions are *single-underline italics Times New Roman*;
8 deletions are *strikethrough italics Times New Roman*.
9 Board amendment additions are double underlined.
Board amendment deletions are ~~strikethrough normal~~.

10 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

11 Section 1. Findings.

12 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
13 Ordinance are in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public
14 Resources Code sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the
15 Board of Supervisors in File No. 051715 and is incorporated herein by reference.

16 (b) The Board finds that the authority of the City in articulating its vision for its streets
17 and public right-of-ways in its Municipal Codes and in General Plan is hereby affirmed. All
18 departments shall coordinate their various decisions regarding the planning, design, and use
19 of public right-of-ways so as to fully carry out the vision for streets contained in this Better
20 Streets Policy, so that all actions balance the needs of all street users, and so that all actions
21 of City government work in unison toward the creation of streets and publicly-accessible right-
22 of-ways that contain the characteristics and objectives of good street design and sound
23 environmental planning. In furtherance of this approach, City departments also shall
24 coordinate, to the extent feasible, financing decisions for public right-of-way improvements.

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1 Section 2. The San Francisco Administrative Code is hereby amended by adding
2 Chapter 98 to read as follows:

3 **CHAPTER 98 - THE BETTER STREETS POLICY.**

4 **Section 98.1. Better Streets Policy; Governing Principles; Coordination of Departmental**
5 **Actions.**

6 (a) The Better Streets Policy is an official policy of the City and County of San Francisco and
7 shall read as follows: Design City streets in keeping with the Urban Design Element of the City's
8 General Plan, the City's Transit-First Policy, and best management practices in environmental
9 planning and pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal street design, and incorporation of sustainable
10 water management techniques ~~infrastructure design~~ to ensure continued quality of life, economic
11 well-being, and environmental health in San Francisco.

12 (b) In furtherance of the Better Streets Policy, the City recognizes that San Francisco's streets
13 constitute a large portion of the City's public space. Implementation of the Better Streets Policy will
14 ensure that such streets will continue to be:

15 (1) Corridors for all modes of transportation, with a particular emphasis on pedestrians and
16 transit priorities;

17 (2) Organizers of the City's development pattern and how individuals perceive such a pattern;
18 and

19 (3) An integral component of San Francisco's water management infrastructure.

20 (c) The Better Streets Policy also is intended to ensure that the City's public right-of-
21 ways become:

22 (1) Attractive, safe, and useable public open spaces ~~s corridors~~ with generous landscaping,
23 lighting, and greenery;

1 (42) Sustainable and healthy components of the City's ecology, taking advantage of available
2 technologies to reduce the environmental impact of our street systems and to better comprehensively
3 manage stormwater runoff based on established principles of watershed planning; and

4 (53) Providers of access to properties, public view corridors, light, and air; and

5 (4) Providers of habitat for urban wildlife.

6 (ed) As part of an approval or decision concerning any public and private project that impacts
7 or is adjacent to a publicly-accessible right-of-way, all City departments shall coordinate their various
8 determinations regarding the planning, design, and use of public right-of-ways in accordance with the
9 Better Streets Policy and the following supporting principles:

10 (1) Streets must be designed as a whole, cognizant of the facing buildings and uses within them,
11 such that the resulting street environment is of appropriate scale and character.

12 (2) Streets that support and invite multiple uses, including safe, active, and ample space for
13 pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit, are more conducive to the public life of an urban
14 neighborhood and efficient movement of people and goods than streets designed primarily to move
15 automobiles. Decisions regarding the design and use of the City's limited public street space shall
16 prioritize space for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit over space for automobiles.

17 (3) Street trees and landscaping in right-of-ways have been demonstrated to
18 ameliorate the negative effects of traffic on pedestrian areas and adjacent uses, enrich open
19 spaces, enhance property values, and increase the safety and attractiveness of
20 neighborhoods. Decisions regarding the design and use of the City's streets shall result in
21 replacing unnecessary paved areas with street trees and landscaping wherever possible, and
22 shall facilitate the health and maintenance of such landscaping. Drought-tolerant plantings,
23 passive rainwater retention systems, and other technologies shall be used to reduce the costs
24 associated with mechanical irrigation where possible. Streets should be appropriately
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1 designed and maintained to ameliorate negative effects of traffic on pedestrian areas and
2 adjacent uses, to provide usable on-street open spaces, to enhance property values, and to
3 increase the safety and attractiveness of neighborhoods.

4 (4) Streets should be appropriately designed and maintained to address the unique
5 characteristics and challenges of the watersheds in which they lie through design treatments
6 that reduce downstream flooding with untreated stormwater and combined sewer overflows
7 into the San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean. Decisions regarding City street design and
8 use shall include techniques that reduce impacts on the combined sewage and stormwater
9 system and increase permeable surface area through the planting of street trees and
10 landscaping and minimization of unnecessary pavement. Designs also shall incorporate
11 strategies that facilitate the health and maintenance of street trees and landscaping, such as
12 use of drought-tolerant plantings, passive rainwater retention systems, piping for recycled
13 water, and other water management technologies that minimize the need for potable irrigation
14 water.

15 (45) The design of the City's streets shall minimize visual clutter. This concern shall extend to
16 the number, design, and placement of signs, signals, utility structures, and elements oriented to
17 vehicular traffic. Decisions regarding signs and signals for the control of vehicles must consider and
18 balance the visual impact of the design of the street on all users and the image of the City.

19 (56) The control and signalization of vehicular traffic has significant impacts on the quality
20 and safety of the street experience for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit
21 users and operators. Decisions regarding the systems and signals for the control of vehicles, including,
22 but not limited to, changes to signal timing, speed limits, and allowable turning movements, must
23 consider and balance the impact on the street experience and safety of all users.

1 (67) The design of the right-of-way and adjacent development, including the maintenance and
2 removal of street trees and other landscaping, allowance of curb cuts, and placement of utilities, have
3 significant impact on the street environment. Decisions regarding street design must consider and
4 prioritize pedestrian safety, enjoyment, and comfort.

5 (78) Paved space on many of the City's streets is more than is needed for the safe and efficient
6 movement of transit, bicycles, and automobiles. The City will encourage innovative solutions to reuse
7 such excess street space as planted or open space areas. The City also will consider establishing a
8 program to encourage and make it possible for adjacent neighborhoods to replace paved areas with
9 usable open space, permeable surfaces, plantings, stormwater retention areas, and other public
10 amenities.

11 (89) New technologies and the rethinking of old techniques will provide opportunities for more
12 sustainable design of our public right-of-ways to increase opportunities for public use and enjoyment,
13 reduce pollution and water usage, better manage stormwater, and provide the opportunity for
14 environmental education where possible. The City will encourage and facilitate the use of innovative
15 solutions based on best management practices in environmental planning and pedestrian-oriented,
16 multi-modal design for its publicly-accessible rights-of-ways.

17 (910) Major new developments, both public and private, often include the rebuilding of
18 portions of public right-of-ways and should serve as models of the Better Streets Policy. Special efforts
19 should be made to ensure that such new developments lead by example. Public projects should
20 establish model street and open space designs and private projects should incorporate stronger street
21 design and landscaping standards. The City should encourage local residents, businesses, and other
22 stakeholders to collaboratively develop such designs and standards in order to foster the community's
23 active use and sense of ownership of these spaces over time.

1 Section 3. ~~The Mayor and Directors and General Managers of all City departments are~~
2 hereby authorized and directed to take any and all lawful actions which they or the City
3 Attorney may deem necessary or advisable in order to effectuate the purpose and intent of
4 this Ordinance.

5 Section 4. The Board urges the Mayor to report to the Board within 63 months of the
6 effective date of this legislation ~~on those actions undertaken pursuant to Section 3 above.~~
7 Such report ~~may~~ shall include proposed legislation; recommended actions or activities that
8 may involve the Board of Supervisors, or affected City departments, ~~or interested~~
9 stakeholders and their associated costs; a City-wide strategy for community input and
10 involvement; and proposals for the creation of public-private partnerships.

11 Section 54. The Board of Supervisors and Mayor hereby request the Planning
12 Commission, in accordance with Section 340 of the Planning Code, to initiate amendments to
13 the City's General Plan to incorporate the Better Streets Policy and its supporting principles.

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APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By: _____
John D. Malamut
Deputy City Attorney