

[Administrative Code - Better Streets Policy - Including the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Design Guides]

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**Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to include the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Street Design Guide and Urban Bikeway Design Guide as an additional reference in City transportation planning and design projects and programs.**

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
**Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
**Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.  
**Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
**Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.  
**Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

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

Section 1. The Administrative Code is hereby amended by revising Section 98.1, to read as follows:

**SEC. 98.1. THE BETTER STREETS POLICY; GOVERNING PRINCIPLES;  
COORDINATION OF DEPARTMENTAL ACTIONS**

(a) The Better Streets Policy is an official policy of the City and County of San Francisco and shall read as follows: Design City streets in keeping with the Urban Design Element of the City's General Plan; the City's Transit-First Policy; best practices in environmental planning and pedestrian-oriented; multi-modal street design, including the design guidelines set forth in the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide (2013) and the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide (20132014), and any subsequent editions of these Guides; and incorporation of sustainable water management techniques to ensure continued quality of life, economic well-being, and environmental health in San Francisco.

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

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

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

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

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

12 (1) Attractive, safe, and useable public open spaces corridors with generous  
13 landscaping, lighting, and greenery;

14 (2) Sustainable and healthy components of the City's ecology, taking  
15 advantage of available technologies to reduce the environmental impact of our street systems  
16 and to comprehensively manage stormwater based on established principles of watershed  
17 planning;

18 (3) Providers of access to properties, public view corridors, light, and air; and

19 (4) Providers of habitat for urban wildlife.

20 (d) As part of an approval or decision concerning any public and private project that  
21 impacts or is adjacent to a publicly-accessible right-of-way, all City departments shall  
22 coordinate their various determinations regarding the planning, design, and use of public  
23 right-s-of-ways in accordance with the Better Streets Policy and the following supporting  
24 principles:  
25

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

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

10          (3) Streets should be appropriately designed and maintained to ameliorate  
11 negative effects of traffic on pedestrian areas and adjacent uses, to provide usable on-street  
12 open spaces, to enhance property values, and to increase the safety and attractiveness of  
13 neighborhoods.

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

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

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

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

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

22          (9)    New technologies and the rethinking of old techniques will provide  
23 opportunities for more sustainable design of our public right-of-ways to increase opportunities  
24 for public use and enjoyment, reduce pollution and water usage, better manage stormwater,  
25 and provide the opportunity for environmental education where possible. The City will

1 encourage and facilitate the use of innovative solutions based on best practices in  
2 environmental planning and pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal design for its publicly-accessible  
3 rights-of-way.

4 (10) Major new developments, both public and private, often include the  
5 rebuilding of portions of public rights-of-way and should serve as models of the Better Streets  
6 Policy. Special efforts should be made to ensure that such new developments lead by  
7 example. Public projects should establish model street and open space designs and private  
8 projects should incorporate stronger street design and landscaping standards. The City  
9 should encourage local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to collaboratively  
10 develop such designs and standards in order to foster the community's active use and sense  
11 of ownership of these spaces over time.

12 (e) To carry out the intent of this Section, the City has developed, and the Board of  
13 Supervisors adopted in Ordinance No. 310-10, a citywide streetscape master plan and a  
14 comprehensive set of streetscape design guidelines, known as the "Better Streets Plan."

15 The Better Streets Plan identifies street types, and provides design guidelines for  
16 pedestrian and streetscape elements such as street trees and landscaping, street lighting,  
17 sidewalk widths, sidewalk extensions, sidewalk paving, and site furnishings.

18 (1) **Streetscape and pedestrian improvements on existing rights-of-**  
19 **way.**

20 (~~i~~A) The Better Streets Plan shall govern design and dimensions of all  
21 pedestrian and streetscape elements, including but not limited to those elements shown in  
22 Table 1 and defined in the Better Streets Plan, on any public right-of-way.

23 (~~ii~~B) All public and private sponsors that propose or are required to  
24 make changes to any such right-of-way shall:  
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1 (A*i*) Be consistent with the principles and guidelines for  
2 streetscape and pedestrian elements and overall streetscape design found in the Better  
3 Streets Plan.

4 (B*ii*) Select streetscape elements from a City-approved palette of  
5 materials and furnishings, where applicable.

6 (C*iii*) Select streetscape elements that are consistent with the  
7 overall character and materials of the corridor and district.

8 (iv) Follow, to the maximum extent possible, the street design guidelines  
9 set forth in the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013) and the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design  
10 Guide (20132014), and any subsequent editions of these Guides.

11 (iiiC) Street improvements shall be subject to approval by all applicable  
12 City agencies.

13 (2) **Streetscape and pedestrian improvements on new rights-of-way<sub>s</sub>.**

14 Any public and private projects that create or develop new public rights-of-way<sub>s</sub>, including  
15 streets, alleys and pedestrian pathways; or that bring unaccepted streets up to City standards  
16 for accepted streets, shall:

17 (iA) Meet or exceed recommended sidewalk widths for the appropriate  
18 street type as described in the Better Streets Plan; Where a consistent front building setback  
19 of 3 feet or greater extending for at least an entire block face is provided, the recommended  
20 sidewalk width may be reduced by up to 2 feet.

21 (iiB) Include all standard improvements for the appropriate street type  
22 as described in the Better Streets Plan;

23 (iiiC) Include stormwater facilities as required by Public Works Code  
24 Article 4.2.

1 (D) Follow, to the maximum extent possible, the street design guidelines set  
2 forth in the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013) and the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide  
3 (2013/2014), and any subsequent editions of these Guides.

4 (3) **Approvals.**

5 (iA) Any proposed changes to the public right-of-way shall be subject  
6 to approval by the applicable city bodies with permitting jurisdiction over streetscape and  
7 pedestrian improvements, and shall comply with all applicable ordinances.

8 (iiB) Permitting bodies shall review proposed changes to streetscape  
9 and pedestrian elements in the public right-of-way against the principles and guidelines of the  
10 Better Streets Plan.

11 (iiiC) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, any sponsor  
12 proposing to make changes to the public right-of-way shall apply for and obtain all required  
13 permits for street use; changes to the legislated sidewalk widths; and street improvements.

14 (4) **Amendments.** The Better Streets Plan may be amended from time to  
15 time by the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors hereby delegates authority for  
16 non-material amendments to the Directors of those agencies tasked with the design,  
17 construction, maintenance, and permitting of features in the public right-of-way, including the  
18 Municipal Transportation Agency, Department of Public Works, Planning Department, and  
19 Public Utilities Commission, in consultation with the Mayor's Office on Disability, provided,  
20 however, that no such amendment shall be effective until each affected agency approves the  
21 amendment after a public hearing.

22 (5) **Reporting.** All agencies approving projects subject to Administrative Code Section  
23 98.1, including the Department of Public Works, Municipal Transportation Agency, Public Utilities  
24 Commission, and the Planning Department shall produce an annual report documenting compliance  
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1 with the Better Streets Policy and the NACTO Guidelines. The affected agencies shall submit said  
 2 report(s) to the Board of Supervisors within sixty (60) days of the end of the City's fiscal year.

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 4 **Table 1. Pedestrian and Streetscape Elements per the Better Streets Plan**

#	PHYSICAL ELEMENT	BETTER STREETS PLAN SECTION
1	Curb ramps	5.1
2	Marked crosswalks	5.1
3	Pedestrian-priority signal devices and timings	5.1
4	High-visibility crosswalks	5.1
5	Special crosswalk treatments	5.1
6	Restrictions on vehicle turning movements at crosswalks	5.1
7	Removal or reduction of permanent crosswalk closures	5.1
8	Mid-block crosswalks	5.1
9	Raised crosswalks	5.1
10	Curb radius guidelines	5.2
11	Corner curb extensions or bulb-outs	5.3
12	Extended bulb-outs	5.3
13	Mid-block bulb-outs	5.3
14	Center or side medians	5.4
15	Pedestrian refuge islands	5.4
16	Transit bulb-outs	5.5
17	Transit boarding islands	5.5
18	Flexible use of the parking lane	5.6
29	Parking lane planters	5.6



1	20	Chicanes	5.7
2	21	Traffic calming circles	5.7
3	22	Modern roundabouts	5.7
4	23	Sidewalk or median pocket parks	5.8
5	24	Reuse of 'pork chops' and excess right-of-way	5.8
6	25	Multi-way boulevard treatments	5.8
7	26	Shared public ways	5.8
8	27	Pedestrian-only streets	5.8
9	28	Public stairs	5.8
10	29	Street trees	6.1
11	30	Tree basin furnishings	6.1
12	31	Sidewalk planters	6.1
13	32	Above-ground landscaping	6.1
14	33	Stormwater management tools	6.2
15	34	Street and pedestrian lighting	6.3
16	35	Special paving	6.4
17	36	Site furnishings	6.5

**Table 2. Recommended Sidewalk Widths by Street Type**

	Street Type (per Better Streets Plan)	Recommended Sidewalk Width (Minimum required for new streets)
Commercial	Downtown commercial	See Downtown Streetscape Plan
-	Commercial throughway	15
-	Neighborhood commercial	15
Residential	Downtown residential	15

1	-	Residential throughway	15
2	-	Neighborhood residential	12
3	Industrial/ Mixed-Use	Industrial	10
4	-	Mixed-use	15
5	Special	Parkway	17
6	-	Park edge (multi-use path)	25
7	-	Multi-way boulevard	15
8	-	Ceremonial	varies
9	Small	Alley	9
10	-	Shared public way	n/a
11	-	Paseo	varies
12	Commercial	Downtown commercial	See Downtown Streetscape Plan
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Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor’s veto of the ordinance.

Section 4. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles, numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment

1 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under  
2 the official title of the ordinance.

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

6 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
7 John D. Malamut  
8 Deputy City Attorney

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