



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary General Plan Text Amendment

HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2016

Date: October 13, 2016
Case No.: **2014.0556GPA**
Project Name: Vision Zero: Proposed General Plan Amendments
Staff Contact: Lily Langlois – (415) 575-9083
lily.langlois@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Adam Varat– (415) 558-6405
adam.varat@sfgov.org
Recommendation: Recommend Approval

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

The proposed Ordinance amending the Transportation and Urban Design Elements of the San Francisco General Plan to implement the City's Vision Zero policy regarding pedestrian safety.

The Way It Is Now:

1. The Transportation Element of the General Plan does not directly reference the City's Vision Zero Policy.
2. Policies 19.1, 23.1, 23.8, 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6, and 27.8, and Objectives 23 and 25 are inconsistent with the City's Vision Zero policy.

The Way It Would Be:

1. Policies 18.1, 18.2, 18.3, 26.1, 26.2, 26.3, 26.4, 26.5, and Objectives 18 and 26 would be added to the Transportation Element and of the General Plan to reflect the City's Vision Zero policy.
2. Policies 23.1, 23.8, 23.10, 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6, and 27.8, and Objectives 23 and 25 would be amended to be consistent with the City's Vision Zero policy.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the City adopted a Vision Zero Policy to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2024 and called on City departments to identify specific actions which could help the City to achieve Vision Zero. In response, the Planning Commission passed Resolution 19174, which outlined specific actions the Department could take to achieve Vision Zero, including updating the policies and objectives of the General Plan. The

proposed Ordinance includes changes to the Transportation Element and the Urban Design Element to reflect the City's Vision Zero Policy.

The proposed amendments also support numerous projects and programs that were led or supported by the Planning Department to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety including the Better Streets Plan, WalkFirst, the Pedestrian Strategy, the Bicycle Strategy, Green Connections, the Vision Zero Two Year Action Strategy, and specific streetscape and public realm plans.

ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Vision Zero

Vision Zero is a commitment to eliminating traffic fatalities and creating a culture that prioritizes traffic safety. What began as an initiative in Sweden in 1997, cities across the world are working to achieve Vision Zero through the design of streets, education and outreach campaigns, enforcement programs, and policy changes.

San Francisco is consistently voted one of the best cities for walking in the country. However, San Francisco continues to experience a high loss of life each year. There are significant inequities and costs associated with injuries. More than 70% of severe and fatal injuries occur on just 12% of City streets, and these injuries are concentrated in communities with higher percentages of residents that are low-income, seniors, disabled, non- English speaking, and immigrants.

In 2014, the City adopted a Vision Zero policy to eliminate all traffic deaths by 2024. Through the coordinated effort of the Vision Zero Task Force, the City is working to achieve Vision Zero through a combination of engineering measures, education campaigns, targeted enforcement efforts, and policy changes.

Planning Department's Role in Vision Zero

The Planning Department plays a key role in developing plans, policies and designs which can improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and can help the City to achieve Vision Zero. In June 2014, the Planning Commission passed a resolution in support of Vision Zero. The resolution outlined specific actions the Department could take to achieve Vision Zero, including updating the policies and objectives of the General Plan.

Currently the General Plan does not reference Vision Zero nor does it reflect recent citywide efforts to improve safety for people walking and riding bikes. The proposed amendments are significant because the Planning Department through our review of development applications and capital improvements makes consistency findings with the General Plan, and other City agencies reference the General Plan when proposing street changes.

Interagency Collaboration

The General Plan amendments proposed for adoption (see Exhibit B) represents a close collaboration between numerous city agencies including the Municipal Transportation Agency and Department of Public Health, and incorporates feedback received from community members, City agencies and other

interested parties over the last six years as part of the WalkFirst project and through the work of the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee, the Pedestrian Safety Task Force and the Vision Zero Task Force.

Summary of Proposed Changes since Initiation

The attached ordinance incorporates changes to the ordinance initiated by the Commission on July 7, 2016. Changes have been made to address comments from members of the Planning Commission as well as the public.

- Policy 23.1, add a reference to the Better Streets Plan, add language about facilitating better access and mobility for pedestrians crossing the street, and add construction as one of the barriers to creating safe and continuous route for pedestrians
- Policy 23.3, add “When appropriate, unmarked crosswalks should be evaluated and improved where feasible”
- Policy 23.8, remove “on any well used pedestrian street”
- Policy 25.1, add “transit stops ”to the methodology of key walking streets
- Policy 25.4, add “and other adopted plans” to include a reference to pedestrian improvements that may be mentioned in area plans or streetscape plans.
- Policy 26.3, add “for the public and decision makers” to emphasize the importance of spreading knowledge and awareness about pedestrian safety to all stakeholders

Additional modifications were requested from Walk San Francisco including: specifying an ideal distance between marked crosswalks, adding a policy about directly addressing double turn lanes, adding a policy about turning one-way streets into two-way streets, and adding a policy about installing pedestrian-scale lighting anytime a streetscape project or development project takes place. While the City generally agrees with these recommendations, it was decided that these changes were not appropriate for the General Plan. The purpose of the general plan is to provide broad policy direction, rather than specific standards for street design or requiring streetscape elements that may be beyond the scope of a project. Furthermore, the SFMTA has guidelines in place to address some of the concerns that were raised, including limiting the use of double turn lanes and evaluating the conversation of one-way to two-way streets.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission recommend *approval* of the proposed Ordinance and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department supports the proposed amendments because they will ensure that the General Plan appropriately reflects the City’s Vision Zero policy. Vision Zero is a commitment to create a culture that prioritizes traffic safety and to ensure that mistakes on the roadway don’t result in serious injuries or death. The City and County of San Francisco adopted Vision Zero as a policy in 2014. Numerous city agencies and departments have adopted a resolution in support of Vision Zero and identified near and long term actions that could help the city achieve this goal. Further, the proposed amendments will fulfill

the direction outlined in the Planning Commission 2014 resolution to update the policies and objectives in the general plan to help achieve Vision Zero.

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may recommend adoption, rejection, or adoption with modifications to the Board of Supervisors

IMPLEMENTATION

The Department determined that this ordinance will not impact our current implementation procedures.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

An initiation hearing was held on July 7, 2016 and there were general public comments about pedestrian safety and specific comments about the proposed ordinance from Walk San Francisco. Following the initiation hearing the Planning Department and SFMTA met with Walk San Francisco regarding their comments and have incorporated some of their comments into the revised ordinance. Additional public comment will be taken at the Planning Commission hearing on October 20, 2016 and any subsequent adoption hearings that will be held relating to this amendment.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend Approval
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Attachments:

1. Exhibit A: Draft Planning Commission Resolution
2. Exhibit B: Ordinance Adopting General Plan Amendments