



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

General Plan Referral

Date: May 9, 2013

Case No. Case No. 2013.0305R
307 Octavia Boulevard – Major Encroachment Permit

Block/Lot No.: 0831/023

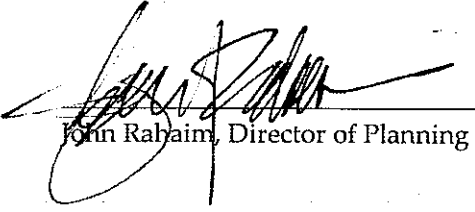
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Recommendation: Finding the project, on balance, **in conformity** with the General Plan, as described further in this Case Report.

*Recommended
By:*


John Rahaim, Director of Planning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project has two components: The first component is to construct bulb-outs at the southwest corner of Oak Street and Laguna Street and at the southeast corner of Oak Street and Octavia Street. The Oak / Laguna bulb-out would extend into Oak Street for a depth of approximately eight feet for a length of approximately 47 feet; the Oak/Octavia bulb-out would extend both into Oak Street and Octavia Street for a depth of eight feet for a length of approximately 42 feet and 48 feet respectively. The bulb-outs would feature pedestrian access ramps and ground landscaping.

The second component is to construct improvements along Hickory Street, a narrow 35 foot right-of-way that runs parallel to Oak Street between Laguna and Octavia; Hickory Street along this segment is

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generally unimproved except for a depth of approximately 90 feet off of Octavia Street. The project would include improving the right-of-way for its full 35-foot width and along the full length between Laguna and Octavia. At the intersections, the improvements would include installing new curb lines and typical intersection ADA access ramps. Further into the interior of the block, the improvements would include a flush shared street design between the walkway and roadway. The improvements would include a variety of surface treatments including integrated color concrete, concrete unit pavers, landscaped swales, and would feature pedestrian lighting and other related improvements.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE

The site at 307 Octavia Boulevard was the previous site of the Central Freeway on-ramp. It is currently vacant with various portions featuring asphalt paving. The site has most recently been used as an informal urban farm. A mixed-use development was recently approved for the site, which is associated with this General Plan Referral application.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On 4/19/2013, the Environmental Planning section of the San Francisco Planning Department determined that the Project (sidewalk corner extension) was cleared under case no. 2007.1238E; Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Better Streets Plan Project, dated September 15, 2010.

GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Project is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 as described in the body of this letter and is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

Note: General Plan Objectives and Policies are in **BOLD** Font; General Plan text is in regular font; Staff comments are in *italic* font.

MARKET OCTAVIA AREA PLAN

OBJECTIVE 4.1

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

POLICY 4.1.1

Widen sidewalks and shorten pedestrian crossings with corner plazas and boldly marked crosswalks here possible without affecting traffic lanes. Where such improvements may reduce lanes, the improvements should first be studied.

The sidewalk bulb-outs on Oak Street will improve the pedestrian environment by providing greater width at the corners, shortening crossing distances and making the sidewalks more comfortable for those on foot.

POLICY 4.1.5

Prohibit the vacation of public rights-of-way, especially alleys; where new development creates the opportunity, extend the area's alley network.

POLICY 4.1.6

Pursue the extension of alleys where it would enhance the existing network.

POLICY 4.1.7

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

The Hickory improvements will create a new pedestrian-focused right-of-way where one does not exist; it will provide a new shorter means to cross between Laguna and Octavia Streets, and will be designed to calm traffic and make those on foot feel comfortable and protected.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FOR SAFE, CONVENIENT AND INEXPENSIVE TRAVEL WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO AND BETWEEN THE CITY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGH QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THE BAY AREA.

POLICY 1.2

Ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout the city.

The bulb-outs will reduce pedestrian crossing distances, increase pedestrian visibility to motorists, and provide a more comfortable walking experience along Oak Street.

OBJECTIVE 2

USE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AS A MEANS FOR GUIDING DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT.

POLICY 2.4

Organize the transportation system to reinforce community identity, improve linkages among interrelated activities and provide focus for community activities.

The project will help to enhance the respective streets' roles as a key pedestrian link by providing a greatly improved crossing on Oak Street.

POLICY 18.4

Discourage high-speed through traffic on local streets in residential areas through traffic "calming" measures that are designed not to disrupt transit service or bicycle movement, including:

By extending the sidewalk, this project will discourage high-speed traffic by visually tightening the vehicular entrance to the residential neighborhood along Octavia, Laguna and Oak.

OBJECTIVE 23

IMPROVE THE CITY'S PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR EFFICIENT, PLEASANT, AND SAFE MOVEMENT.

POLICY 23.6

Ensure convenient and safe pedestrian crossings by minimizing the distance pedestrians must walk to cross a street.

POLICY 23.9

Implement the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the city's curb ramp program to improve pedestrian access for all people.

The subject improvements would include new curb ramps consistent with ADA standards at the Octavia /Hickory intersection where there currently are none. The bulb-outs would improve the overall pedestrian environment by making the sidewalks at their locations wider and more comfortable and welcoming for those using the public right-of-way. The improvements on Hickory would create a new pedestrian cross through between Octavia and Laguna making pedestrian travel distances generally shorter. Moreover, the Hickory improvements would create a safe and comfortable pedestrian realm and would feature high quality finishing materials and elements.

OBJECTIVE 24

IMPROVE THE AMBIENCE OF THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT.

POLICY 24.2

Maintain and expand the planting of street trees and the infrastructure to support them.

POLICY 24.3

Install pedestrian-serving street furniture where appropriate.

As noted above, the bulb-out and Hickory improvements will create a high quality pedestrian environment, enabling a choice for pedestrians crossing between Octavia and Laguna on the subject block.

OBJECTIVE 26

CONSIDER THE SIDEWALK AREA AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE CITYWIDE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM.

POLICY 26.3

Encourage pedestrian serving uses on the sidewalk.

The Project will bring additional pedestrian space and amenities to Oak, Laguna, Octavia, and Hickory Streets and will include planters with seating, and additional street trees.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

POLICY 1.5

Emphasize the special nature of each district through distinctive landscaping and other features.

The proposed sidewalk extension will include landscaping and special paving in the furnishing zone. The Hickory improvements will feature a wide variety of surface treatments including a vegetated swale planting, integrated color concrete paving, seat walls, and pedestrian-scale lighting. The inner portion of the Hickory will feature a shared flush condition between the pedestrian thoroughway and the vehicular roadway.

POLICY 4.11

Make use of street space and other unused public areas for recreation, particularly in dense neighborhoods, such as those close to downtown, where land for traditional open spaces is more difficult to assemble.

The pedestrian improvements, especially on Hickory Street will enable the public right-of-way to be used as public open space.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

POLICY 2.9

Maintain and expand the urban forest.

The proposed project includes numerous additional street trees.

PROPOSITION M FINDINGS – PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

Eight Priority Policies Findings

The subject project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced.

The Project would have no adverse effect on neighborhood serving retail uses or opportunities for employment in or ownership of such businesses.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhood.

The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's housing stock or on neighborhood character. The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.

The Project would have no adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The Project would not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI's transit service, overburdening the streets or altering current neighborhood parking.

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The Project would not affect the existing economic base in this area.

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

The Project would not adversely affect achieving the greatest possible preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

The project does not involve any historic buildings.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

The Project would have no adverse effect on parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vistas.

RECOMMENDATION:

Finding the Project, on balance, in-conformity with the General Plan.