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Jose Luis Moscovich

Executive Director

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

100 Van Ness Avenue, 26th floor

San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mr. Moscovich:

I am writing to give advice on the Strategic Analysis Report the Transportation Authority is about to prepare regarding Market Street. We hope that the SAR can provide a roadmap to a new design for the corridor that better serves all its users.

Market Street is our city's preeminent thoroughfare. It is by far the most important transportation corridor for transit users and bicyclists. It serves as key open space, the gathering point for parades and protests. It's an extremely important street for walking. In just the downtown area it serves almost every use, from office, to retail, entertainment, hotels, and housing. It's a focal point for both the Ferry Building and Twin Peaks.

The design of Market Street speaks to our priorities as a city. SPUR has a long history in helping to shape the design of Market Street, including its advocacy for a \$27 million bond issue in 1968 to support the redesign of Market Street into the shape that it is today. SPUR strongly feels that cities are living places and that their public spaces should change in response to the changing needs of our city's people. Therefore, we are grateful for the attention to Market Street sparked by Commissioner Daly's request for a Strategic Analysis Report on a car-free Market Street.

SPUR and the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition have recently begun our own effort to look at Market Street and propose changes to make it work better for its users. While we understand that a substantial redesign of Market Street will require a detailed study beyond the scope of a Strategic Analysis Report, we do feel that the Report can and should provide a road map to that redesign.

The rest of this letter provides our idea of what that roadmap ought to look like.

1. The goal of a Market Street study should focus on how to make it work better for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, not on restricting car access.

Simply banning private cars from Market Street would not achieve significant benefits for most users. Bicycle riders would still compete for space with trains, four lanes of buses, delivery vehicles, and taxis; they need a path of travel protected from all motor

vehicles, not just private cars. Muni would benefit from a ban on cars on Market Street, at certain times of the day at certain intersections, but could enjoy the same benefits from expansion of the transit-only lanes and other interventions including improved stop placement, signal re-timing, and better traffic control. Pedestrians would hardly benefit from a ban on cars on Market Street; walkers need better traffic control to keep crosswalks clear, more places to sit and relax on the sidewalk, and reconfiguration of the “lamb chop” intersections on the north side of Market Street. At night, when traffic is light, cars on Market Street can provide a benefit to pedestrians by providing extra sets of “eyes on the street.”

Considering that simply banning private cars is not enough to really make Market Street work, SPUR suggests that the Market Street study will be most productive if it does not focus on the impacts of banning private cars but rather on the potential benefits and impacts of improvements to walking, bicycling, and transit.

A redesigned Market Street should, to the greatest extent possible, meet the following goals:

- **Provide a safe, segregated path of travel for bicyclists.** The path should be designed such that it is not likely to ever be obstructed by delivery vehicles, buses, cars parked illegally or to pick up or drop off passengers, or crowds of pedestrians. The path should be safe enough that most parents consider it safe enough to allow child bicyclists. It should be wide enough so that it can accommodate 1,500 bicyclists per hour, which is less than double the volumes recorded on the highest-volume days in the past year.
- **Increase the average speed of transit vehicles by at least 20%.** Because so many buses and trains use Market Street, small gains on Market Street yield large gains for the system as a whole. The study should consider consolidating bus stops, implementing transit-priority signaling systems (in addition to the transit-oriented timing already in place, and acknowledging the need for predictable and generous pedestrian crossing times), banning taxis from the transit lanes, extending transit lanes, and stricter enforcement of existing transit lanes.
- **Transform the bus stops into pleasant and comfortable places.** Bus stops should permit pre-paid boarding. They should have plenty of seating. They should provide real-time information about buses arriving at that station and trains arriving in the subway below. Certain stops should feel more like transit *stations* than bus *stops*.
- **Improve the walking experience on the north side of Market Street.** Pedestrians often have to cross two streets, waiting for two different signal changes, just to cross one intersection. Wherever possible, these intersections should be simplified by limiting traffic movements.
- **Provide more seating for pedestrians and encourage outdoor seating.** The redesigned street should easily accommodate more outdoor seating, and the planners should understand what it would take to get large numbers of businesses to take advantage of the sidewalk space for outdoor seating.

SPUR recognizes that achieving these goals may well require restrictions on car traffic on Market Street, including the mandatory right turns already recommended in the

Transportation Authority's previous Market Street study and which SPUR supports. Our point is not that car access must be preserved at all costs, but rather that limiting car access is not a worthy goal in its own right; in fact it should not be a goal at all. Instead, we encourage the planners to consider restrictions on car traffic only insofar as they are necessary to meet the above listed goals.

2. The Market Street study should include Mission Street and other adjacent streets in its scope.

Car traffic restrictions on Market Street will divert car traffic to Mission Street, increasing congestion on this transit-priority street. Improving the intersections on the north side of Market Street could reduce car traffic access to Market and increase congestion on some streets on the north side of Market Street. The Planning Department has proposed banning car traffic in the vicinity of the Transbay Transit Center on Mission Street. The study should consider moving some bus routes to Mission Street to provide better access to the Transbay Transit Center and to provide more space on Market Street for an exclusive bikeway.

3. The SAR should identify sources of funding available for redesigning Market Street.

The Transit Effectiveness Project has budgeted millions of dollars for capital improvements on Market Street. Proposition K has budget line items for bicycling and walking improvements that could certainly be dedicated to Market Street. The Regional Transportation Plan provides funding for safe routes to transit for which Market Street improvements would be eligible. The Department of Public Works has budgeted for repaving Market Street. Several community benefit districts exist in the vicinity of Market Street. The SAR should identify the sources of funding, and the range of total funding that could be made available so that the planners who redesign the street do so in the context of a realistic funding plan.

4. The SAR should recognize the distinct potential of short-term and long-term changes.

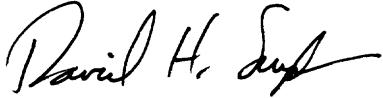
Some changes, such as the mandatory right turn at Eighth Street and the creation of a new parking control officer beat, can and should be implemented within a year and independently of this SAR. The SAR should propose some short-term actions beyond the ones identified in the existing Action Plan but implementable as early as 2010-11, when the DPW is planning to repave Market Street. The SAR should also consider changes that involve significant capital expenditure that could take from five to ten years, such as street and sidewalk reconstruction, tree removal and planting, and traffic rerouting. The SAR should provide some initial thoughts regarding the scope of changes that are possible in short term (two to three years) and long term (five to ten years).

Summary

In closing, we would like to reiterate our gratitude for the attention to Market Street and to assert our enthusiasm for both minor tweaks that improve Market Street in the short-term, and substantial changes that make it work well for the next generation of San Franciscans.

Please feel free to call me with any questions about this letter or if you would like to be involved in SPUR's ongoing efforts to make Market Street work better for all its users.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David H. Snyder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dave Snyder
Transportation Policy Director

cc: Commissioner Chris Daly
Leah Shahum, SFBC
Carolyn Diamond, Market Street Association