

February 17, 2022

Supervisor Dean Preston  
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl.  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Tom Maguire, Director  
Streets Division, SFMTA  
Tom.Maguire@sfmta.com

Re: Traffic Safety Mitigations in Hayes Valley

Dear Supervisor Preston and Director Maguire:

The Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association urges the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to prioritize traffic safety and act immediately to mitigate increased traffic in and around Hayes Valley as post-pandemic traffic surges.

Hayes Valley and Western Addition absorb a disproportionate amount of through traffic from other parts of the city and beyond. Because of historically inequitable policies regarding the placement of freeways and other major thoroughfares, this area experiences chronic congestion, excessive speeding and aggressive driving. This produces extremely unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, impedes transit, and generates noise and air pollution impacting thousands of households.

HVNA has worked with SFMTA on some traffic calming measures, including the Page Slow Street and the changes to access to Octavia Street from the side streets, and while these measures have had some effect, it is simply not enough. Too many high-speed vehicles continue to careen through the neighborhood, and we've had a rash of collisions, such as the one recently at Fell and Laguna, where a car ended up on the sidewalk.

We constantly hear from neighbors and see for ourselves that these are the intersections with the greatest immediate need due to aggressive and dangerous driving:

- Fell Street at Octavia and Laguna
- Oak Street at Webster during school arrival and departure hours for the John Muir Elementary School
- Oak Street at Buchanan, Laguna and Octavia
- Haight St. at Buchanan and Laguna

Additionally, Hayes Valley has also absorbed thousands of new transit-oriented housing units with the promise that livability would improve. But instead the traffic and public safety are steadily getting worse.

We provide a package of proposed mitigations below. Many items in this package of mitigations were adopted by the Market and Octavia Community Advisory Committee on July 20th, 2020, and the HVNA Board of directors in August 2020.

The following are mitigations adopted by the HVNA Board and Market and Octavia CAC in 2020:

- Immediate deployment of non-police parking control officers at intersections with chronic crosswalk blockage and congestion such as Oak and Buchanan, Oak and Laguna, Oak and Octavia, Fell and Octavia, Haight and Octavia, Gough and Market, and Franklin and Market.
- Restricting freeway-bound traffic on Haight Street to protect the important 7-Haight/Noriega and 6-Parnassus buses from congestion and delay and mitigate the chronic crosswalk blockage on Haight and Octavia, and mitigate a constant noise and air pollution hotspot.
- Converting up to three blocks of Hayes Street between Laguna and Franklin to city-approved outdoor seating and open spaces, as well as adjacent segments of Octavia and Laguna Streets.

- Traffic calmed “Slow Streets” on Buchanan, Grove, and Laguna Streets; discourage the use of these streets by speeding cut-thru drivers. Extending the car free Market westward to Gough Street and providing safe connectivity for cyclists between Valencia Street and proposed Gough-Franklin cycle tracks (see below). Northbound car traffic on Market would be permitted in one lane to Franklin Street.
- Building the long-promised “Living Alleys” including sections of Ivy, Hickory, Linden, Lily and Rose providing recreation and outdoor dining space.
- Building protected cycle tracks on Franklin and Gough Streets between Market Street and as far north as Hayward Playground/Jefferson Park (Golden Gate or Turk Streets) to enable safe access by bike to parks and neighborhood commercial corridors like Hayes Street. There is an immediate need to provide cycling and pedestrian access for economic recovery of small businesses in Hayes Valley. Access to business in this part of the city cannot rely on private cars or TNCs due to limited parking or curbs space and competing efforts to open streets for outdoor eating and other public uses. Moreover, new forms of delivery by bicycle, e-bike, and cargo bikes are very promising and can provide more economic opportunity in this dense part of the city.
- Expanded pedestrian areas for walking with safe physical distancing on Franklin and Gough Streets between Market Street and Golden Gate or Turk Streets.

The following are additional mitigations we ask to be implemented:

- Immediate deployment of signage at Market and Octavia street warning drivers exiting the Central Freeway that they should expect delay and to watch for pedestrians, cyclists, and respect the neighborhood. Additional signage should recommend transit, carpools, walking or cycling.
- Removal of the traffic signal recently deployed at Haight and Buchanan, restoring to a traffic-calmed four-way stop. The signals have been accompanied by speeding and aggression making this intersection extremely unsafe. With Haight Street no longer usable for freeway access, the rationale for the signal is obsolete.
- Using metering techniques, manage inbound car traffic on Oak Street. Using digital technology the city could meter car traffic on Oak Street between Stanyan/Kezar and Octavia. Too many single-occupant cars (and now Uber & Lyft) overwhelm Oak and Octavia leading to vehicles spilling over to Haight Street and other side streets. Metering upstream would avoid the jamming-up in Hayes Valley, and make it easier to prevent vehicles from spilling over to side streets. Geofencing can also block navigation apps from recommending side streets as shortcuts to the freeway.
- Right turn off Market Street onto the 101 ramp.

Combined, these mitigations will make accessibility and mobility in Hayes Valley and surrounding communities safer, more equitable, and more convenient and attractive for everyone. We believe it’s important that the city address this immediately, so that people of all ages and abilities can get around our neighborhood without risking their lives, health and safety from traffic.

We need your help now to prioritize traffic safety and pedestrian safety in Hayes Valley.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Laska, President  
The Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association

cc: Captain Derrick Jackson, SFPD, Northern Station  
Mark Stephenson, HVNA Vice President  
Barbara Early, HVNA Corresponding Secretary  
Jason Henderson, HVNA Transportation and Planning Committee  
HVNA Board