

Report of SOM PAC Crime & Safety Committee

December 15, 1997

6th Street Improvement Project

The regular Crime & Safety Committee meeting was held on 8 Dec, 6 pm, at the Edward Dela Cruz building, 175 7th St. The meeting notice and agenda was posted the week prior at every location between Market and Howard on 6th Street. One store owner/operator, one store operator, and one residential tenant attended in addition to the Committee members. Present to discuss the 6th Street Improvement Project were Lindbergh Low, consultant to the Agency, and John Thomas from the Department of Public Works.

There are two major aspects to the proposed project, both involving safety issues: earthquake mitigation and street life.

Earthquake Mitigation

There are 33 lots on 6th Street between Market and Howard, 28 of which have basement easements under the sidewalk (some have elevator shafts but none are now in use). Two have already done the work. Those 26, therefore, have inadequate (and aged) supports under their load-bearing front walls. Also the sidewalks over these basements are elevated beams and expensive to repair, which is needed both for age and the '89 earthquake. After the 1906 earthquake there was a one foot scarf at Mission and 6th, and a three foot sinking at Howard and 6th. The Project proposes to revoke the easements, require the owners to build a new load-bearing support under their front walls, move back any utilities, backfill the vacated basements, and replace the sidewalks on grade. Revoking the easements will require the Board of Supervisors approval.

The Agency intends to offer the owners the option of either having the City do the owners share with City loans to the owners, or doing it on their own. The 26 owner's cost were estimated (this year, based on the Rose Hotel experience) at from \$3,000 to \$63,700 with a mean of \$39,600. The estimates for each lot are available. The Project is estimated to take one and one-half years to complete after the owners take their option.

Benefits:

The work for un-reinforced masonry buildings is already mandated; improved earthquake protection at what is probably the weakest point; which can be built upon with future renovations; new utility lines from building to street, currently old and vulnerable; ease of future sidewalk repairs

Disadvantages:

reduced basement space; loss of even more basement space during construction; loss of any basement space is primarily borne by tenant; any independent contractor must co-ordinate work with City's prime contractor.

Street life

The sidewalks will be "bumped out" at Mission and Howard Streets (giving up parking spots) to lessen the crosswalk distance. No crosswalks at the alleys (where there are no stop lights) are intended. The street lighting will be at least doubled. London Plane trees will be planted at the curb, in line with parking meters and light poles. Examples of these mature trees can be seen around the

corner on Market Street. Also, the Rose Hotel has two trees this year, and the Knox Hotel has had two for several years, although both Hotels have different species. The trees will be maintained by Public Works. Each tree will cost about \$1,500. All of this work will be done at the City's expense. It was argued that the 6th Street improvement might better start with building renovations and then be followed with street renovations. But the Rose and 132/136 and 138/144 6th St have already been renovated and the street renovations must all be done at one time.

Benefits:

new sidewalks and better crosswalks; better lighting; better appearance with trees; improved quality of life on the Street.

Disadvantages:

trees might provide cover for street crimes; trees might be destroyed by vandals;

Recommendations

The Crime and Safety Committee has only two recommendations: begin as soon as possible the experiment of two proposed trees at locations where they can be monitored for function; and that the Agency offer some assistance or mitigation, where needed, to store or hotel operators whose basement operations are disturbed or disrupted during the construction cycle.

Crime Issues

Sgt. McEachern reported that the Traffic Code #60.5 forbids bus idling of motors for more than 5 minutes, except when loading and unloading. The Committee decided to ask a bus operator representative to speak at the January regular Committee meeting, 13 January.

Crime statistics were reported by Sgt McEachern for October and November, separately for the areas NE and SW of 6th Street. For NE (4th to 6th): October showed no homicides or rapes and decreases in all other major crimes over the prior October; November was the same except for a small increase in cocaine arrests. For SW (6th to 8th): October showed no homicides or rapes and decreases in all other major crimes over the prior October except an 18% increase in robbery arrests; November had decreases in all categories except 40% more burglaries, 68% more marijuana and 33% more cocaine and 40% more "other drugs" arrests. This latter increase was attributed to special drug programs operating in the area in November.

The major differences between NE and SW statistics were: more robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, auto boostings, and other larceny in the NE, and also more cocaine and "other drugs" in the NE. The increased auto boostings were attributed by Sgt McEachern to out-of-neighborhood parking for shopping at stores between 4th and 5th.

Regular Meetings

The regular meeting day was changed to the second Tuesday of the month.