

# Final Report SOMA Youth & Family Special Use District Community Engagement

SPECIAL THANKS to former Commissioner Jane Kim, current Commissioner Matt Haney, and the Commission and staff of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. This project was funded by a Neighborhood Transportation Improvement Program allocation of Proposition K Sales Tax funding.



San Francisco  
County Transportation  
Authority

THANKS for the great community work to SOMCAN leads Angelica Cabande and Lian Ladia and their staff, and WalkSF Staff, Cathy DeLuca, Josie Ahrens, Natasha Opfell, and Vernon Haney.

Thanks to Fehr & Peers' Andy Kozinski

Thanks also to Public Works' Kelli Rudnick, Fiona Cundy, and Jennifer Brooks, and to Paul Stanis and Bradley Dunn, Folsom-Howard Streetscape Project (SFMTA Livable Streets).

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SFMTA



## Introduction and Background

The Folsom-Howard Streetscape project is a collaborative community-based planning design and construction project that will remake Folsom (between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets) and Howard Streets (between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street), in San Francisco’s South Of Market (SOMA) neighborhood. These two streets, designed when SOMA streets served much different purposes, will be brought up to community standards and will reflect the vibrant local Filipino community in SOMA. This outreach contract was primarily for SOMCAN to reach out to SOMA residents and get their input on street changes and how to represent the local culture in the public realm of central SOMA. The Folsom Howard project held numerous open houses that focused on the street configuration. Many of SOMCAN’s community groups attended these open houses and provided input on the lane and sidewalk configurations.

The **SOMA Youth and Family Special Use District (SUD)** and the **Filipino Cultural Heritage District** are central to the local community south of Market Street. Long a light industrial area with single occupant hotels and streets designed primarily to move motor vehicle traffic, SOMA is home to a thriving Filipino community.

With business and housing development and street changes in the area, the streets, sidewalks and public spaces must be brought up to neighborhood standards for those who currently live, work and go to school in the area, and for those to come.

Further, the rich cultural fabric of the Filipino-American community must not only be preserved, but must be enhanced to reflect the culture of the area.

The community engagement conducted by SOMCAN, and the education done by WalkSF, will inform the construction of the Folsom-Howard Streetscape Project, and street changes in larger SOMA, providing recommendations for the enrichment of public spaces and a raising of cultural awareness among all the people who interact in Central SOMA.

The “Street Safety Explorers” education conducted at Bessie Carmichael Elementary School by WalkSF further ties the function and place-making opportunities in the Youth and Family SUD and Filipino Cultural District, creating awareness among students, families and school staff.



## The Project Team

### Collaborating with SFMTA Livable Streets and Public Works

#### The Consultants:

**Fehr & Peers** is a highly respected and longstanding city partner in transportation projects, transportation planning and community outreach.

**The South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN)** is a multi-racial, community-based organization, serving low-income immigrant youth and families in SOMA, Excelsior, and greater San Francisco since 2000. SOMCAN organizes, supports and informs the SOMA community through leadership development, advocacy, direct services, and referrals. SOMCAN believes in uplifting the voices of immigrant, people-of-color, and low-income communities, so they will be heard in local policy-making decisions and so civic offices are accountable to their needs.

**WalkSF**, established in 2000, is the citywide pedestrian advocacy organization for San Francisco. A prominent Safe Routes to School partner, WalkSF aims to conduct the *Street Safety Explorers Program* (formerly “City Street Investigators”) at Elementary Schools throughout the City.

## Project Scope -and Task Responsibility

SOMCAN was responsible for 5 Tasks and WalkSF was responsible for 2 Tasks:

- Task 2: Kick-Off Meetings and Work Plans – SOMCAN, WalkSF
- Task 3: Introductory Community Group Meetings – SOMCAN
- Task 4: Bessie Carmichael School Parent-Teacher Engagement - SOMCAN
- Task 5: Youth and Family Special Use District Walking Tour – SOMCAN
- Task 6: SOMA Pilipinas, Filipino Cultural Heritage District Community Design Charrette - SOMCAN
- Task 7: Bessie Carmichael “Street Safety Investigators” program delivery and Walking School Bus – WalkSF
  - \* Tasks 1 and 8 were SFMTA staff administrative Tasks

## Project Budget

SOMCAN Community Engagement	\$38,000
WalkSF Bessie Carmichael School Education and Engagement	<u>\$10,000</u>
<b>Total NTIP Budget</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>

## Youth & Family SUD Public Engagement

**Task 2:** In order to get started, SOMCAN and WalkSF staff attended Kick-Off Meetings with SFMTA Livable Streets staff. Work Plans were submitted, modified, and finalized from MTA staff feedback

**Task 3:** SOMCAN developed a community group presentation, then scheduled and conducted community meetings with larger groups within the Youth and Family SUD on June 1, 13, 22, and 25, 2018. There were 66 participants.



**Task 4:** on October 11, 2018 SOMCAN engaged the Bessie Carmichael School community. 80 students staff and parents participated.



*Bessie Carmichael School Engagement, October 11, 2018*

**Task 5:** SOMCAN recruited for and conducted a Walking Tour July 27, 2018 for local youth, and followed up with a meeting to discuss the Tour. 20 youth participated in the Walking Tour and meeting with SOMCAN and SFMTA staff.



*Youth Walking Tour July 27, 2018*

**Task 6:** SOMA Pilipinas, Filipino Cultural Heritage District Community Design Charrette - SOMCAN advertised, recruited for and held a Design Charrette on August 15, 2018. 85 members of the local community attended, ranging in age from teenagers to seniors.



*SOMCAN Design Charrette, August 18, 2018*

**Task 7: WalkSF** conducted Street Safety Explorers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes of Bessie Carmichael's after-school program on February 23, and 24, 2018; and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes on April 17, 2018. 75 Bessie Carmichael students participated in total.

**WalkSF** also worked with **Tenderloin Safe Passage** to develop Walking School Buses for Bessie Carmichael students and families. Continued effort paid off slowly, with as many as 20 people eventually walking with a group. Tenderloin Safe Passage also delivered two safety trainings to Bessie Carmichael



Beacon Staff (April 17, 2018) and the 12 member staff of the SOMA Youth Collaborative on April 22, 2018.



*Bessie Carmichael School Walking School bus photos, spring 2019*

## Community Public Realm Recommendations

The timeliness of this project was in getting feedback on how to reflect Filipino culture in the public realm spaces on the two corridors. The roadway and sidewalk configuration were slightly ahead of this project, and while SOMCAN members and constituents attended numerous open houses on lane and sidewalk configuration, this project did not focus on pedestrian safety measures. In general, SOMCAN and SFMTA did hear repeated calls for more and safer places to cross both Howard and Folsom.

SFMTA and SF Public Works Folsom-Howard Streetscape Project staff worked closely with SOMCAN to plan Tasks and provide background, mapping, and feasibility checks of proposals. Public Works will use community input from this effort to inform the design and construction of culturally appropriate spaces within the public realm that reflect the local Filipino Community and the local culture of family life in SOMA. Other efforts may be privately-funded.

Public Works and SFMTA will use the input from SOMCAN's outreach to inform design on public realm opportunities along the two corridors. Public Works will work with SOMCAN to employ design ideas at places that will engage and enliven the local community.

While the recommendations are lengthy, here are some highlights of the community recommendations:

## Murals and art, featuring Filipino Icons and cultural motifs



*One of the most common response from the community was the desire to see more art in the community and cultural icons remembered in the streets*

## Iconic images used in functional daily life



*Using Filipino cultural icons in common street installations both identifies and educates*

## Banners and Gateways



*Banners and Gateways are a common Filipino cultural expression, and could liven up SOMA alley entrances or denote celebrated public spaces in the neighborhood*

## Wrapping Utility Boxes



*Wrapping utility boxes can add art to SOMA sidewalks*



## Banig pattern Crosswalks



While painting an entire intersection on SOMA main streets is not feasible, Banig pattern crosswalk decorations could add a true Filipino flavor to crossing SOMA streets

## Manila-style Jitneys!



*Very popular in Manila, Mission Street once had less-fancy jitneys...*

Other recommendations, like bamboo light poles/gateways were not recommended for safety reasons.

## Next Steps

As the Folsom-Howard Streetscape Project moves into the Detailed (Engineering) Design phase, Public Works staff will work with SOMCAN and its community partners to incorporate Filipino cultural expressions in available public realm spaces to enrich and identify the Filipino Cultural Heritage District and the SOMA Youth and Family Special Use District. Not all ideas expressed by the community during this public engagement process are feasible or appropriate for public funding. Some ideas, such as Jitneys and utility box wrapping, will require private funding for implementation. Other ideas, such as gateways and overhead banners require case-by-case evaluation by SFMTA Muni Overhead Wire section. While intersection the murals recommended by the community may be feasible in smaller SOMA intersections, crosswalk decorations similar to those employed on Broadway in Chinatown (shown below) can be used at the larger intersections on Folsom and Howard.



## Conclusion

WalkSF provided education and outreach to the Bssiee Carmichael School Community and created walking school buses this spring. This challenging work was conducted in a timely and collaborative manner. SFMTA applauds WalkSF's on-going work in the school district, and throughout the community.

SFMTA, and specifically the staff of the Livable Streets Section and the Folsom-Howard Streetscape Project, wish to thank SOMCAN and WalkSF for their diligent work in the community of the SOMA Youth and Family Special Use District and the Filipino Cultural Heritage District. Their work with the community brought numerous SOMA residents and stakeholders into the public participation process who may not ordinarily have participated, providing a deeper reach into areas of the community that SFMTA staff could not ordinarily gain access to. SOMCAN's unique and inclusive methods brought hard-to-reach parts of the community to the table, and elicited broad and vibrant input on creating a public-facing cultural identity in the Central SOMA and the SOMA Youth and Family Special Use District. The SFMTA and Public Works are deeply indebted to SOMCAN for their hard work and dedication to the community.



# Memorandum

## AGENDA ITEM 8

**DATE:** September 25, 2019  
**TO:** Transportation Authority Board  
**FROM:** Anna LaForte - Deputy Director for Policy and Programming  
**SUBJECT:** 10/08/19 Board Meeting: Adopt the SOMA Youth and Family Zone Community Engagement Final Report [NTIP Planning]

<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b>   <input type="checkbox"/> Information   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action</p> <p>Adopt the SOMA Youth and Family Zone Community Engagement Final Report [NTIP Planning].</p> <p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>In April 2016, the Transportation Authority allocated \$48,000 in District 6 Neighborhood Transportation Improvement Program (NTIP) planning funds to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) for the SOMA Youth and Family Zone Community Engagement project, as recommended by former Commissioner Jane Kim. SFMTA used the Prop K NTIP funds to work directly with the South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN) and Walk SF to obtain community input, particularly from youth, on street changes proposed in the Folsom and Howard re-designs and how to enhance public spaces in SOMA and along these two corridors with elements that represent Filipino culture. Outreach events included community meetings, design charrettes and a walking tour. The project’s draft final report is attached to this memorandum and describes recommendations and next steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Allocation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Programming</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Legislation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plan/Study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Capital Project Oversight/Delivery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Budget/Finance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Agreement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>
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## **DISCUSSION**

### **BACKGROUND**

The NTIP is intended to strengthen project pipelines and advance the delivery of community-supported neighborhood-scale projects, especially in Communities of Concern and other underserved neighborhoods and areas with at-risk populations (e.g. seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities).

The Folsom-Howard Streetscape project seeks to redesign Folsom Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and Howard Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets. The project's goals include improving bicycle and pedestrian safety and comfort, improving transit service, and preparing for future growth in the neighborhood. The purpose of the NTIP study was to create opportunities to gather input from the community, particularly from youth, on the proposed street changes and how to reflect the vibrant local Filipino culture in SOMA through the Folsom-Howard Streetscape project.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

SFMTA worked with SOMCAN as well as WalkSF to gather community feedback through a variety of forums, including: community meetings; a walking tour for local youth; a SOMA Pilipinas, Filipino Cultural Heritage District Community design charrette; and engaging the Bessie Carmichael Elementary School community to create awareness of the street safety and place-making opportunities in the SOMA Youth and Family Zone and Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District. The public feedback included repeated calls for more and safer places to cross both Howard and Folsom, feedback that SFMTA and SF Public Works are incorporating into the project design. However, this NTIP project, and the feedback received, was primarily focused on how to reflect Filipino culture in the public realm spaces on the Folsom and Howard corridors, and increasing cultural awareness among all the people who interact in Central SOMA.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

The recommendations generated through the public outreach include:

- Murals and art featuring Filipino icons and cultural motifs to enhance Filipino culture on SOMA streets;
- Use of Filipino cultural icons and images in street installations such as bike racks;
- Banners and gateways, which are a common Filipino cultural expression, at SOMA alley entrances and public spaces;
- Banig patterns crosswalks;
- Manila-style jitneys; and



- Wrapping sidewalk utility boxes with art elements.

As the Folsom-Howard Streetscape project moves into the detailed design phase, SFMTA and SF Public Works will continue working with SOMCAN and its community partners to incorporate Filipino cultural expressions in available public realm spaces to enrich and identify the SOMA Pilipino Filipino Cultural Heritage District and the SOMA Youth and Family Zone. The SFMTA anticipates that construction of Folsom-Howard Streetscape will start in winter 2022 and be completed by spring 2024. The SFMTA will request \$900,963 in Prop K construction funds to help fund the project.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

None. The recommended action would not have an impact on the adopted Fiscal Year 2019/20 budget.

### **CAC POSITION**

The CAC was briefed at its September 25, 2019 meeting and unanimously approved a motion of support.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS**

Attachment 1 - SOMA Youth and Family Special Use District Community Engagement Final Report