



Department of Parking & Traffic

A Division of the Municipal Transportation Agency



FELL STREET AND MASONIC AVENUE INTERSECTION SURVEY REPORT

City and County of San Francisco
Municipal Transportation Agency
Bicycle Program
October 2005

Background

The intersection of Fell Street with Masonic Avenue includes the Panhandle Path, which carries a significant volume of bicyclists and pedestrians in the east-west direction. In response to concerns related to conflicts between path-users and westbound motor vehicle traffic turning left from Fell Street onto Masonic Avenue, several changes to the intersection were made in March 2005.

Figure 1 below details the striping changes that were made at the intersection. The 60' long buffer striping and red zone improves sightlines between left-turning motorists from Fell Street and those in the crosswalk, while the guideline is intended to encourage wider (and thus, slower) turning movements. The advanced stop bar provides a buffer between northbound Masonic Avenue traffic and those in the crosswalk, and the ladder-style striping improves visibility of the crosswalk. In addition to these striping changes, the intersection signal timing was adjusted to provide a pedestrian head-start phase, which gives the WALK indication to pedestrians crossing Masonic Avenue three seconds before Fell Street traffic receives a green indication. This pedestrian head-start is meant to establish pedestrians and cyclists in the crosswalk before left-turning traffic from Fell Street arrives.

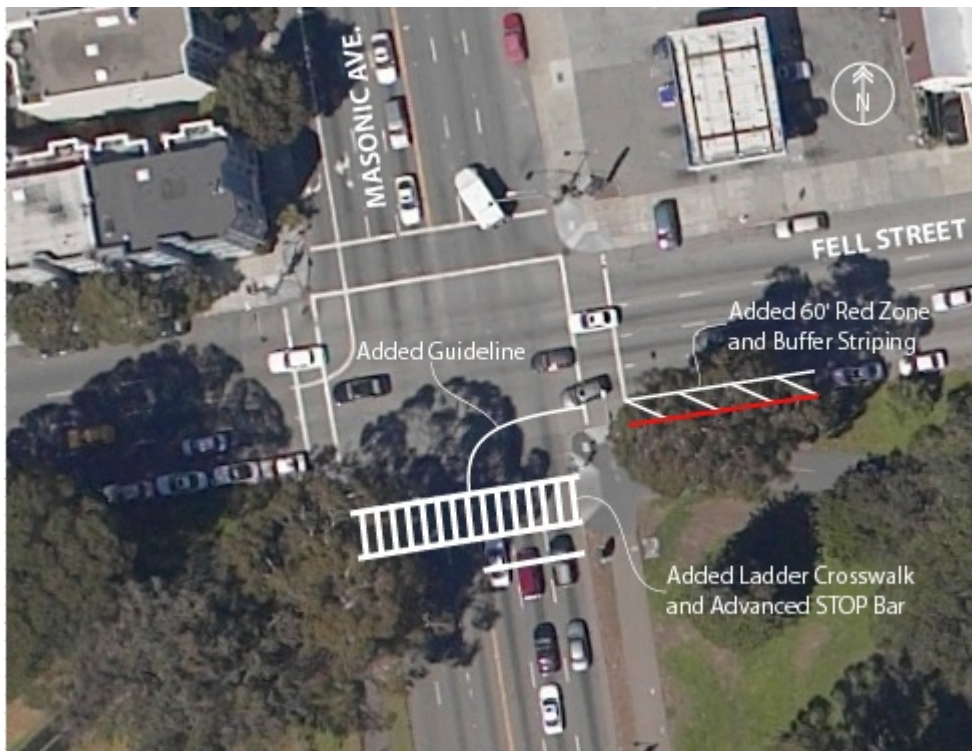


Figure 1 – Intersection Changes

Summary of Survey Responses

In order to assess the impact of the intersection changes, pathway users were surveyed by Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT) staff. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. A total of 100 surveys were conducted between April 26, 2005 and June 10, 2005 between 7:30 AM and 6:00 PM. The surveys included 56 bicyclists, 32 pedestrians, 9 cyclists or pedestrians with a baby or child, and 3 other user types (including roller-blade or roller-skate users), as shown in Figure 2 below.

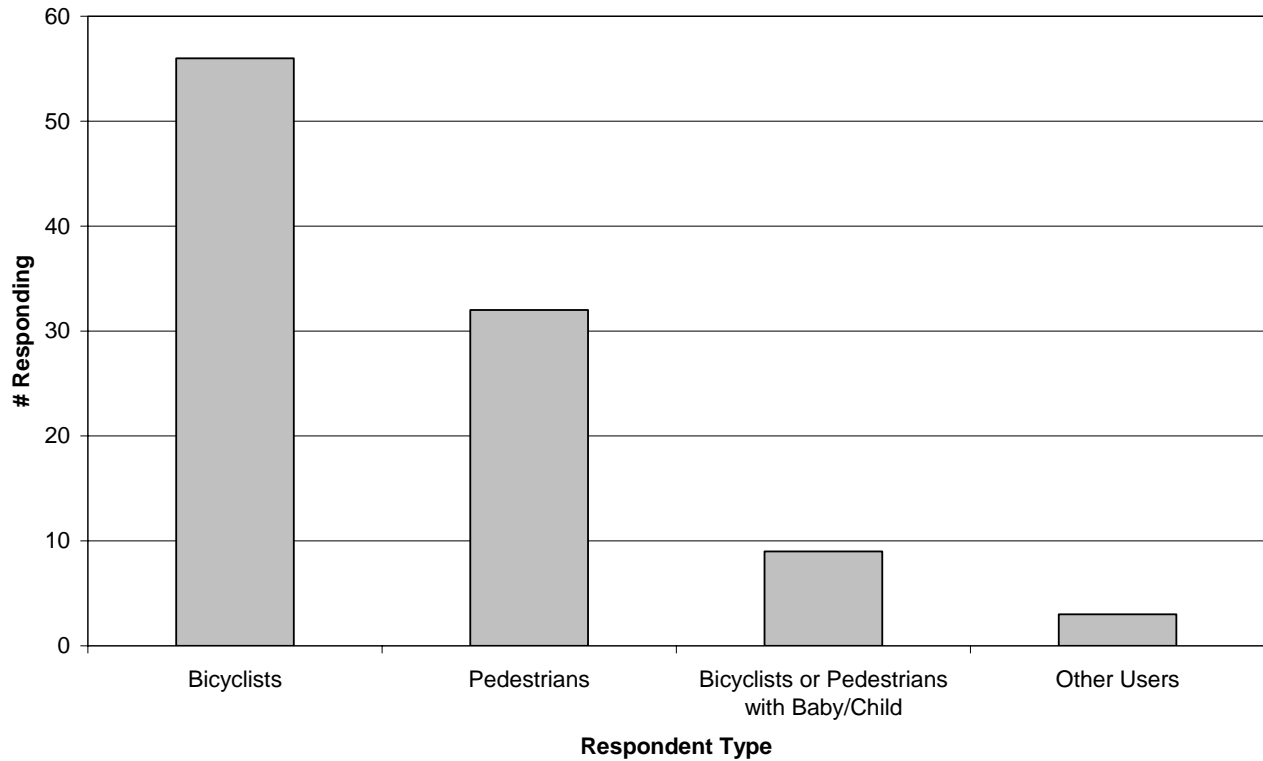


Figure 2 - Survey Respondents

Figure 3 below presents a summary of the responses to Questions 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Most pathway users reported using the route frequently (86% - Question 1) and having crossed the intersection before changes were made (92% - Question 4), but most reported not noticing the changes made at the crossing (56% - Question 3). A majority of pathway users felt that the crossing is not sufficiently safe (56% - Question 6), and were supportive of the concept of a separate pedestrian phase (88% - Question 7). Of those who favored the concept of a separate pedestrian phase, 60% still supported the concept if it reduced the pedestrian crossing time (Question 8). When Questions 7 and 8 were considered together, a total of 54% of respondents supported the concept of a separate pedestrian phase that reduces crossing time.

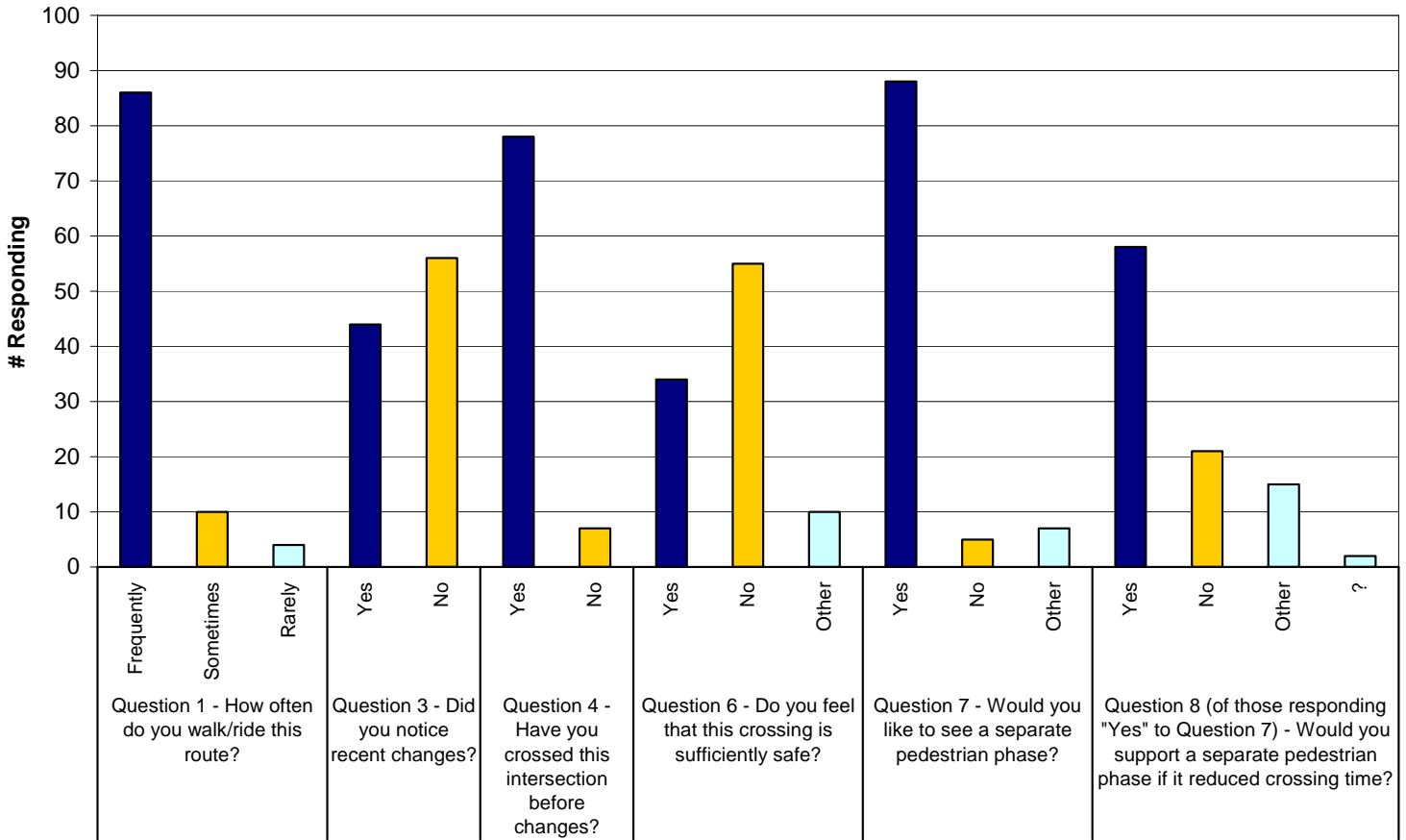


Figure 3 - Summary of Survey Responses

Figure 4 below summarizes the response to Question 5 of the survey, which asked “On the following scale, how do you feel crossing this street *with* the changes compared to when there were no changes and no crossing guards?” Only survey respondents answering “Yes” to Questions 3 and 4 were recorded under Question 5. Sixty nine percent of respondents reported feeling “More safe” or “Much more safe” after changes were made, while 21% felt the “Same,” and 10% felt “Less safe” or “Much less safe.”

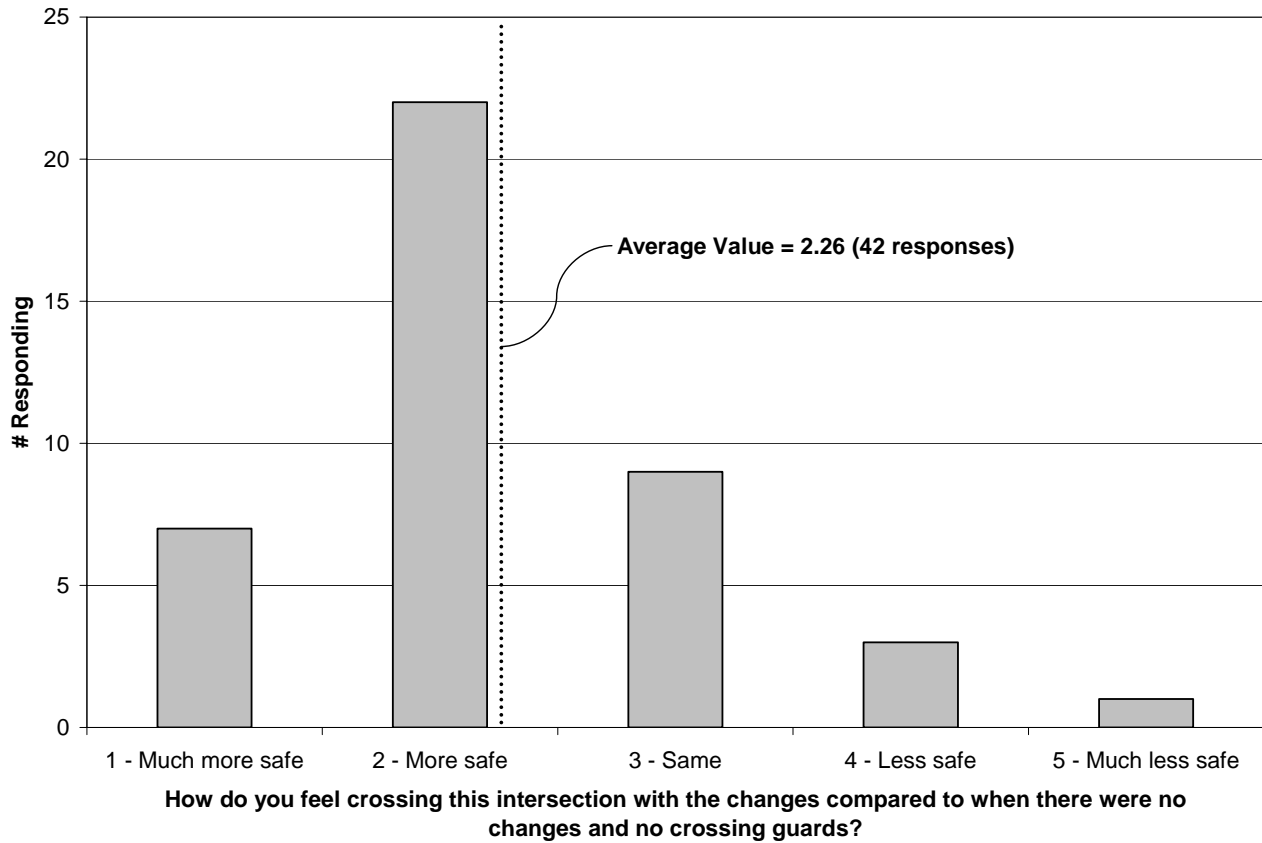


Figure 4 - Before/After Comparison

Next Steps

Sixty nine percent of survey respondents reported feeling “More safe” or “Much more safe” after changes were made to the intersection. However, 56% of survey respondents indicated that the intersection is still not sufficiently safe, and 54% supported the idea of a separate pedestrian crossing phase that would reduce the crossing time. As shown in Appendix B, many survey respondents would like to see more prominent signage, signage in advance of the intersection, and further striping changes.

The next steps are to consider additional improvements to the crossing, including shorter term suggestions made by survey respondents and longer term ideas such as a separate crossing phase for pathway users. To properly evaluate the latter, a cost estimate and evaluation of potential operational impacts to pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and motorists at Fell Street and Masonic Avenue should be completed. This proposed design should take into consideration other proposals that may affect the pathway crossing and the operation of this intersection, such as the possible removal of the double turn lane from Masonic Avenue onto Fell Street, and the possible reduction of capacity on Masonic Avenue to install bicycle lanes. Ideally, these proposals should be discussed and evaluated concurrently as the operational impacts of each particular proposal may be insignificant on their own but may become significant when added together. In addition, comments from survey respondents should be evaluated and further changes at this intersection should be considered.

Appendix A – Sample Survey



Survey Questions for Fell/Masonic Path Crossing

1. How often do you walk/ride this route? RARELY SOMETIMES FREQUENTLY

2. Have you answered this survey already? YES NO If YES, end of survey.

3. Some changes were made to this crossing earlier this year to aid pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Did you notice them?

YES NO If NO, skip to 6.

4. Have you crossed this intersection a few weeks ago when there were no crossing guards and before the changes had been made?

YES NO If NO, skip to 6.

5. On the following scale, how do you feel crossing this street *with* the changes compared to when there were no changes and no crossing guards?

1	2	3	4	5	If 4 or 5, why? _____
Much more safe	More safe	Same	Less safe	Much less safe	_____

6. Do you feel that this crossing is sufficiently safe?

YES NO OTHER _____

7. Would you like to see changes to the traffic signal so that you can cross the street while left turning cars have a red light and wait for their own green?

YES NO OTHER _____

8. (If "yes" to 7) Would you still support that traffic signal change if it will reduce the crossing time for you by about a half?

YES NO OTHER _____

Any comments or suggestions/observations about this crossing?

Survey taken by: _____ Location: Eastside or Westside Date: _____ Approx time: _____

Person surveyed was: ___ Cyclist ___ Pedestrian ___ Pedestrian w/ baby ___ Other _____

Appendix B – Summary of Comments

Question 3: Some changes were made to this crossing earlier this year to aid pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Did you notice them?

No - I noticed the crossing guards.

Yes - Like the changes made.

Question 6: Do you feel that this crossing is sufficiently safe?

Yes (5 of 28 Comments)

Yes - Most of the time.

Yes - Yes, but I'm extra careful.

Yes - Yes, but I'm vigilant when I cross.

Yes - If you're careful.

Yes - As long as drivers pay attention.

No (13 of 28 Comments)

No - I always get scared.

No - People drive too fast on Fell.

No - Sketchy.

No - Moderately dangerous.

No - The most dangerous around.

No - Always have to be careful.

No - Westbound is less safe.

No - Not for average folks or new riders.

No - Left turning traffic doesn't look.

No - Too much traffic.

No - You have to be very careful.

No - It's better, but I always feel like I'm going to die.

No - Not for cyclists, but for peds its fine.

Mixed (6 of 28 Comments)

Other - Safe on foot, but not on bike.

Other - You have to watch out.

Other - Somewhat.

Other - Somewhere in the middle.

Other - Neutral.

Other - Mostly yes.

Unsure (4 of 28 Comments)

Other - Don't know.

Other - Not sure.

Other - Unsure.

Other - No longer see crossing guard.

Question 7: Would you like to see changes to the traffic signal so that you can cross the street while left turning cars have a red light and wait for their own green?

Yes (5 of 15 Comments)

- Yes - They should do this everywhere
- Yes - I also drive so I don't know. I guess its okay
- Yes - It's a balance between cars and cyclists
- Yes - Need ped actuated button
- Yes - Add a big sign that says "Bikes have Right Of Way"

No (3 of 15 Comments)

- No - Left turning traffic is seeing you earlier
- No - No complaints with crossing as is
- No - Bikes would cross anyway, putting themselves in danger

Unsure (7 of 15 Comments)

- Other - Unsure
- Other - Make a green arrow for cars
- Other - Depends
- Other - I'll still try to go through it - Maybe!
- Other - Depends
- Other - Have to accommodate bikes and cars - neither should wait long
- Other - Yes, if it wasn't confusing to cars

Question 8: (If "yes" to 7) Would you still support that traffic signal change if it will reduce the crossing time for you by about a half?

Yes (10 of 30 Comments)

- Yes - Good compromise, lots of backups makes angry drivers which are no good for us!
- Yes - I always haul ass anyway
- Yes - More bike commuters would help
- Yes - I would sacrifice time for safety
- Yes - As long as there is enough time for an elderly person to cross
- Yes - Yes, if there's still enough time to cross
- Yes - As long as there was enough time
- Yes - What about older pedestrians?
- Yes - 10 seconds is the minimum
- Yes - But peds might feel differently

No (6 of 30 Comments)

- No - Add blinking crossing like near civic center
- No - Safety first!
- No - Preserve length of crossing time
- No - Bikes would cross anyway
- No - Bikes and peds would go anyway
- No - Need more time for kids and elderly

Other (14 of 30 Comments)

Other - Not sure
 Other - Unsure
 Other - Unsure, wants to consider what others need
 Other - Don't know
 Other - Maybe
 Other - Halfway support
 Other - Wouldn't want car wait time to increase much
 Other - 1/2 the time would be too short
 Other - 1/2 the time is too short
 Other - That's not enough time
 Other - Concerned about seniors and children with a shorter crossing time
 Other - Depends on the amount of wait time for the next phase
 Other - If there is enough time for seniors and kids to cross
 Other - Consider needs of kids and elderly

Any comments or suggestions/observations about this crossing?

Address Oak/Masonic (7 of 98 Comments)

Address Oak/Masonic!
 Please do something about Masonic/Oak.
 When will Oak/Masonic be addressed?
 Also address Oak/Masonic crossing.
 Oak/Masonic crossing is unsafe - so we walk on the bike path.
 Please address Oak/Masonic.
 Make improvements at Oak/Masonic.

Advanced Signage on Fell (11 of 98 Comments)

Add signage in advance of the signal.
 Add "Beware of bikes" on Fell in advance of light.
 If there was a reminder to cars that peds are ahead, like a flashing sign, it would give drivers notice.
 Get rid of unnecessary signage and banners (ie church banners).
 Add signage in advance of signal.
 Put a yellow flashing light that says "Watch for Cyclists" on Fell before the intersection.
 Warning sign on Fell before light.
 Add a "Look for Peds" sign 10' before intersection on Fell.
 Add large and colorful warning signs on Fell: "Left turning cars - watch for peds and bikes" or "Left turn - caution w/ picture of a bike."
 Put warning sign on Fell in advance of traffic light.

Trim Trees for Visibility (2 of 98 Comments)

Trim trees that block visibility.
 Prune tree near removed parking spaces.

Signage/Signal Improvements at Intersection (15 of 98 comments)

Existing sign "Left turn yield" could be more prominent on both sides.
 Can signal be adjusted to be day-specific to accommodate heavier ped/bike use?

More noticeable signage.
Sign is too high.
Keep countdown signal.
Ped crossing time should have sufficient time during peak hours.
Bigger warning signs.
Lower traffic light like a bike light.
Put in bike light.
The way it is now is pretty good - extending crossing time would be helpful.
Duplicate left turn sign at NE corner next to traffic light - motorists want to know how to do right thing too.
Keep countdown signal.
Dedicated ped/bike crossing light is a good idea.
Parent almost hit a cyclist while driving because she didn't know to look - put up a sign.
It wouldn't hurt to have a delay on the crosswalk on the west side of intersection.

In-Pavement Flashing Lights (1 of 98 comments)

Install flashing light on roadway like at Urban School.

Comments Thanking DPT (7 of 98 Comments)

I appreciate DPT's work.
Glad you are working on this.
I appreciate what's been done so far.
Keep up the good work.
Happy someone is trying to do something here.
Thanks for the help.
Glad DPT is paying attention to crossing.

Ban Left Turns (5 of 98 Comments)

Ban cars from turning left.
Don't let cars turn here!
Install a left-turn light.
Traffic is fast turning left - should be made a "No Left Turn."
Make left turns illegal.

Make Left-Turn Phase/Signal (3 of 98 comments)

Put in a L turn only light for cars.
Make a dedicated left turn lane with a left arrow for cars.
Make left turn only lane on Fell.

Crosswalk Improvements/Issues (9 of 98 comments)

Put STOP bar on Fell for turning cars further back
On path, make it legal to ride across intersection.
Cars stop in crosswalk - this is a hazard.
Stop bar should have reflective paint, or write "STOP."
Bikes/cars swerve to avoid puddles in street.
Curved white striping is helpful.

Better drainage.

Cars stopping in crosswalk are a hazard as well as the left-turning cars.

Add speed hump to elevate crosswalk or grade separation.

General Observations (38 of 98 comments)

Construct a bridge over the intersection.

Make sure people signal when turning left.

Just moved here 3 weeks ago - I can see why this intersection is questionable - traffic is fast and busy.

I always look over my shoulder.

I don't feel that safe.

People don't realize peds have right of way - motorists turn without looking.

We're moving in the right direction.

I've seen people get hit here. I'm glad the light is here now.

Left turning traffic doesn't see you.

I saw a near-accident between a bike and car here.

I appreciate the crossing guards.

Bring back crossing guards.

Traffic turns too fast, crossing guards make it safer.

Park/Rec trash trucks on the route are a hazard.

Left turning traffic doesn't slow down.

Cars in SF are sensitive to cyclists' issues.

Cars are going too fast - extend bike lane up this way.

This is one of the least safe crossings in SF.

Visitors don't realize traffic light is on "opposite" side of intersection.

Changes are working - I'm more visible.

Tourist drivers don't pay attention.

Most dangerous intersection for cyclists in City - almost get hit often.

Although I feel same crossing, others won't (new cyclists don't know to look).

Motorists should be made more aware of peds.

Would like to see signs in Panhandle (countdown) before crossing.

This is a commute route - if you have to wait, that's fine.

Left-turning cars don't look, despite me trying to make eye contact with them.

Very dangerous - cars turning at high speed.

Biggest problems happen during non-turning hours, motorists don't look then, it's worst at 4pm.

Reduce speed limit to 25.

Add bike lanes on Masonic: Haight to Geary.

Weekends have especially heavy ped use - including kids, seniors, and disabled people.

Regulate light further down by Fell/Divisadero to avoid backup at Masonic.

Biggest problem is when cars line up to turn left and the last in line can't see the crosswalk.

Helpful changes in timing were made.

So many cyclists at once make it dangerous - cars aren't expecting it.

Nearly hit by a left-turning car recently.

"Watch for Cars" stencil on bike path is helpful.