Tactical Urbanism in San Francisco: A Critical Planning Analysis

By Erin Sparks

Supervised by Stefan Kipfer

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York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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Abstract

This paper discusses tactical urbanism, focusing on cycling infrastructure projects that are initiated by the City of San Francisco and the 'guerrilla' group SF Transformation. Tactical urbanism refers to the actions taken by groups, sometimes anonymously, to temporarily alter the built environment, often with the intention of commenting on how space is allocated.

This research is guided by questioning where tactical urbanism fits into San Francisco's neoliberal, auto-centric planning landscape. It is unlikely that tactical urbanism presents a strong challenge to neoliberalism – if it indeed challenges it at all – but what is its role? What happens when anonymous groups begin making physical changes to the street? What is the outcome when these groups attempt to address the lack of cycling infrastructure through targeted interventions?

This research employs a qualitative lens and consists of a review of the existing literature, as well as information gathered through semi-structured interviews, site visits and news articles published by local organizations, culminating in an examination of work done by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and SF Transformation. My research focuses on an aspect of urban planning that has connections to many ongoing conversations in the field, including those related to the Creative City, neoliberal planning, and the right to the city. I argue that the unofficial tactical urbanism in San Francisco ultimately represents an embodiment of privilege, rather than a democratic reclamation of space in a city where road space is increasingly contested.

Foreword

In my Plan of Study, my area of concentration is identified as "Planning Cycling Infrastructure for a Diverse Ridership." When I first began the MES program, my intention was to focus on how to create an inclusive cycling city, where the needs and abilities of those who ride bicycles are considered equally. This intention was born out of my experiences cycling in Toronto and Montreal, as well as a childhood spent in the suburbs of Vancouver, a place often held up as a North American example of cycling infrastructure done right. These three cities approach cycling infrastructure in separate ways, and through living in each I was exposed to the different attitudes towards and strategies for accommodating those who bike. Infrastructure is often cited as a critical component of growing the cycling mode share, and through MES I sought to understand how this could be achieved in a way that factors in the different ways people experience cycling.

Tactical urbanism quickly emerged as an important but niche aspect of how cycling infrastructure finds its place in the city (niche, because relatively few cities in the global North have anonymous actors painting their own bike lanes on the street, but important because the cities that do often find themselves embroiled in conversations on how to address the issues these individuals raise). In my Plan of Study, I stated my interest in examining the different strategies for creating more space for cyclists, while simultaneously applying a critical lens to how these strategies may impact discourses on cycling and cyclists.

One of my Learning Components is Citizen Perception and Engagement, with an accompanying Learning Objective to "study the role of tactical urbanism, in order to understand the role that more radical, direct citizen action might play in influencing policy and discourse on cycling infrastructure." This research aids in the fulfillment of

this Learning Objective, as well as in a second Learning Objective, to "examine the role of citizen involvement in discourses on cycling infrastructure, in order to assess its impact on altering the discourse on and implementation of inclusive infrastructure." Even when it is not initiated by citizens, tactical urbanism is driven by citizen involvement, and evidence from San Francisco indicates that it has influenced discourse on cycling infrastructure.

The completion of this paper also fulfills a second Learning Component: Current Cycling Infrastructure Design. Within this Component, I identify two Learning Objectives: "have a working knowledge of the barriers to cycling, in order to better understand how to dismantle them," and "be knowledgeable of the different dominant forms of cycling infrastructure, in order to assess the impact each type has on ridership in terms of safety, enjoyment and treatment of cyclists by other road users." The barriers to cycling and the limitations of certain types of infrastructure were both factors underpinning the work done by tactical urbanist groups in San Francisco. Through my research I develop a more holistic understanding of how these objectives inform current cycling infrastructure design.

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Introduction

In this paper, I examine how the City of San Francisco and SF Transformation use tactical urbanism to achieve different goals. Tactical urbanism, sometimes referred to as DIY urbanism or 'guerrilla' urbanism, is an umbrella term that describes interventions in the built environment, often led by individuals or activist organizations, though sometimes initiated by businesses or governments. These interventions are low-cost and temporary, employing quick fixes to problems and often drawing attention to the perceived failings of a government to provide for its citizens.

Tactical urbanism is framed by its proponents as reclamation of public space, where some measure of power is put back into the hands of citizens by encouraging them to assume responsibility for changing the space they inhabit. However, absent from much of the existing discourse on tactical urbanism is a critical examination of its limitations. Rather, it is more often depicted as a capacity building tool that democratises city building by providing people with mechanisms for altering the built environment. While this narrative is not wholly inaccurate, it fails to acknowledge that the actions of those who are not cisgendered, heterosexual, able-bodied white men are subject to a higher degree of scrutiny. As a result, tactical urbanism is presented as an activity that can be engaged in safely and easily by all.

LaFrombois (2017) draws attention to the fact that certain forms of tactical urbanism (such as using a vacant lot for public art) are celebrated as examples of creativity, while other reclamations of unused space are frowned upon (such as a homeless person creating space for themselves in the same vacant lot). This research builds on these findings, evaluating the actions of SF Transformation and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) in an effort to add to the growing body of critical literature on this 'guerrilla' practice.

The bulk of the analysis surrounding unsanctioned tactical urbanism focuses on SF Transformation, but the group People Protected Bike Lane (PPBL) is also included in the discussion. The two groups have participated in joint actions and are often discussed together by other cycling advocates, members of the public and interview subjects, and thus there are mentions of PPBL throughout.

This research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between San Francisco's neoliberal, auto-centric planning landscape and tactical urbanism projects, specifically related to those involving cycling infrastructure?
2. What is the outcome when anonymous groups attempt to address the lack of cycling infrastructure through targeted interventions?
3. What are the differences between state-initiated tactical urbanism projects and those carried out by anonymous actors?

Critical urban theory was selected as a framework for answering these questions, given its insistence that a more socially just method of urbanization can exist. Many of the loudest voices within tactical urbanism argue that such a method can be achieved through DIY actions, and thus it was deemed appropriate to engage with critical urban theory to evaluate these claims. Tactical urbanism's transformative abilities are context-specific, but the conditions within which it arises are not unique – many cities around the world experience a similar lack of investment in cycling infrastructure and are similarly subjected to neoliberal planning regimes that commodify common space and spark a desire among citizens to reclaim the public arena. Critical urban theory is used in this paper to examine the relationship between tactical urbanism in San Francisco and its implications for future development.

Writings by Neil Brenner and Peter Marcuse are particularly useful in providing a basis for this exploration. Brenner has previously examined the kind of relationship that

tactical urbanism could have with neoliberalism, interrogating whether the former can "provide tractable solutions, or at least open up some productive perspectives for actualizing urban futures" (2015, p. 1). Marcuse (2009; 2012) outlines a framework where critical urban theory can be operationalized in order to create a more just city. That framework forms the basis for this paper's evaluation of SF Transformation and the SFMTA.

The main argument of this paper is that tactical urbanism is a complicated, multi-faceted practice that is context-specific. At best, it can be a strategic and useful tool for organizations or groups to gain a clear understanding of a project before moving forward and to gather public feedback, and at worst an enactment of privilege that does little to challenge a neoliberal planning system.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative approach, with eight semi-structured interviews conducted in August and September 2018. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person, but due to time constraints some were conducted over Skype or FaceTime. Interview subjects were selected based on their knowledge of tactical urbanism in San Francisco, cycling advocacy, SFMTA projects, or a combination of all three.

The interviews were recorded using the mobile app VoiceRecorder, and were transcribed shortly after being conducted. The data was then coded based on four themes: 'the impact of tactical urbanism pursued by SF Transformation and the SFMTA,' 'the implications of tactical urbanism in San Francisco,' 'consultation issues' and 'equity concerns.' These themes were developed based on the research questions and patterns that emerged during the interview process. 'The impact of tactical urbanism by SF Transformation and the SFMTA' focuses on how the actions of these groups are

interpreted by people involved in cycling in San Francisco in various capacities, whether as an SFMTA employee, a cycling advocate, or a member of SF Transformation. 'Implications of tactical urbanism' relates to questions of how these actions impact city building, interrogating the complicated relationship tactical urbanism has with the formal planning process. 'Consultation issues' relates to both concerns surrounding a lack of consultation done by 'guerrilla' tactical urbanist groups and to the use of tactical urbanism as a tool for consultation. Finally, 'equity concerns' focuses on questions of representation and privilege within tactical urbanist groups, drawing on conversations about gentrification, resources and the uneven distribution of tactical urbanism projects in San Francisco.

Paper Structure

This paper is divided into three chapters. It begins with Chapter 1, a literature review that examines existing scholarly knowledge on politics of mobility, American cycling advocacy, neoliberal planning and tactical urbanism. For each topic in the literature review, a broader perspective is first established before examining how the factors discussed take shape in San Francisco. This chapter forms a foundation for understanding core concepts that underpin the research.

Chapter 2 explores the specifics of the work done by SF Transformation and the SFMTA. This chapter focuses SF Transformation's 'guerrilla' actions on Valencia Street and the SFMTA's Safer Taylor Street project, a City-sponsored tactical urbanist project in the Tenderloin district. These two examples show starkly different rationales for and interpretations of tactical urbanism.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of how tactical urbanism interacts with the formal planning process in light of the Safer Taylor Street and Valencia Street projects. This discussion also considers what those involved with each project view as a viable

relationship between the formal planning process and unsanctioned tactical urbanism. In this chapter, Marcuse's ideas on an operationalized critical urban theory are used to evaluate the work done by the SFMTA and SF Transformation. This paper ends with concluding remarks and possible research options to be explored in the future, as well as an overview of the research limitations.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature concerning the politics of mobility, American cycling advocacy, neoliberal planning and tactical urbanism. The first section discusses the politics of mobility, providing context and an overview of the ideological framework that prioritizes vehicular mobility over other types of mobility. The second section examines American cycling advocacy, discussing issues of equity and representation within the field. The following section discusses neoliberal planning, initiating the exploration of its relationship to tactical urbanism as well as highlighting key aspects of neoliberal planning system in San Francisco. The final section builds on the previous section and its discussion of neoliberal planning by continuing the examination of tactical urbanism, highlighting the different interpretations of this movement.

This literature review establishes a framework for understanding the research that is presented in subsequent chapters. Transportation planning in San Francisco has been informed by a politics of mobility that has historically neglected cycling, creating a modern city that is underserved by bicycle infrastructure. Understanding this political context is an important part of understanding why groups like SF Transformation feel compelled to take action. 'Guerrilla' tactical urbanism in San Francisco has been framed as a form of cycling advocacy, and thus existing literature on American cycling advocacy is examined in an effort to understand how tactical urbanism fits in. Further, San Francisco exists within a neoliberal planning regime, and thus planning decisions in the city must take this into account. Finally, tactical urbanism is explored in the literature review because, while cycling infrastructure installed through these unsanctioned means is different than other types of 'guerrilla' projects, an understanding of tactical urbanism's grounding principals and existing critiques must be established.

1.1 Politics of Mobility

Urry's (2004) concept of the 'system of automobility' is critical to understanding where the perceived right to drive stems from, which is in turn an important component of understanding why cycling in North America has been denigrated for decades. Within this system, Urry argues, there is a collection of socioeconomic, material, ideological and technological powers that normalize the idea of the automobile as a saviour. Cars are not just status symbols, they are held up as signifiers of a civilized society. This point is similarly made by Böhm, Jones, Land and Paterson, who write that automobility is one of the primary "socio-technical institutions through which modernity is organized" (2006, p. 3). Prioritizing autonomy also contributes to the privileged position cars hold; it is this understanding of self-determination and self-governance that, "combined with the ability to be mobile permits the rationale that combines privacy, movement and the perception of progress to flourish in the shape of the motor-car" (Fincham, 2006, p. 208).

Harvey (in Beckmann, 2001) argues that the automobile disrupts conventional understandings of time and space, leading to an overall acceleration in the pace of life and the distance people are required to travel in order to keep up with the demands of capitalism. This acceleration is echoed by Norcliffe, who cites John Adams's term 'hypermobility' in reference to so-called "extreme travel," where mobility, typically framed as a "creative and liberating activity," becomes something that is over-exercised to the point in which there are "negative consequences which increase the risks of contemporary global capitalism" (2015, p. 215).

Automobility is wrought with contradictions—cars simultaneously liberate and constrain us, and our mobility is regulated and controlled by so-called expert systems that expand as the number of cars on the road increases (Beckmann, 2001; Böhm et al., 2006). Walks refers to this as the "Janus-faced duality of automobility" (2015, p. 6).

Bound by the built environment, government regulations, laws and other systems, the system of automobility simply cannot provide the autonomy and freedom that it professes to deliver (Böhm et al, 2006), and thus it is presented as "both problem and solution to the issue of mobility in the contemporary city" (Walks, 2015, p. 6).

The car both fragmented space and facilitated the "parcelisation of the urban fringe," creating an urban landscape that ties specific activities to specific locations (Beckmann, 2001, p. 598). This division of space is evident in zoning by-laws that mandate sprawling parking lots, kilometre after kilometre of low-rise development, roads that are difficult or impossible to navigate without a vehicle, and in the otherwise hostile urban environments that many cyclists, pedestrians and transit users are faced with. As a result, cycling "is a form of mobility rendered virtually obsolete by the material infrastructure and dominant cultural norms in the United States" (Furness, 2006, p. 4). Sheller and Urry (2000) echo this, writing that government policies and the prioritization of automobiles destroyed networks that previously made other modes possible. In an effort to ensure that automobile travel remains as seamless as possible, other modes of travel suffer, becoming fragmented and appearing ineffective in comparison to the directness of a journey by car. Urry notes that the "structural holes" experienced by those travelling by other modes are particularly acute for those more likely to experience discrimination or violence due to their race, gender, age or ability (2006, p. 21), highlighting the need to consider different dimensions of automobility.

Burk (2017) posits that there are two main ways of interpreting the dissemination of transportation infrastructure – one can choose to view it as a demand-driven process, or as a politically-motivated process. Those who pursue the former argue that people have specific needs that must be fulfilled in order to survive, and that it is human nature to want those needs fulfilled as efficiently as possible. Therefore, infrastructure that complicates that process or does not provide an efficient travel experience is deemed a

failure. Further, infrastructure is built if there is a demonstrated demand for it, so cycling infrastructure will be developed if that demand exists. This position ignores those who would bike if there was infrastructure to support them, thus reducing the matter simply to a question of the market providing what is requested of it. Studies on the behaviours of cyclists and non-cyclists have indicated that the cycling mode share would increase if, among other things, cities built out their cycling infrastructure network (Nelson & Allen, 1997; Dill & Carr, 2007; Pucher, Buehler, & Seinen, 2011). To dismiss the absence of such a network as merely the result of a lack of demand is misleading. After all, as Brent Toderian, the former chief planner of the City of Vancouver pointed out, "it's hard to justify a bridge by the number of people swimming across a river" (2014).

The argument that the development of transportation infrastructure is politically-charged suggests that the relationship between human needs and behaviours is the result of ongoing social negotiations (Burk, 2017). As Burk writes, "technological development and infrastructure design [are] contingent results of political struggle and thus shaped by power" (2017, p. 1213). The built environment is shaped through the struggles of bureaucrats, investors, citizens, experts and many others. This perspective allows for the consideration of the role that motor vehicle industry lobbyists played in pushing for car-friendly landscapes at the expense of a strong public transit network. It also creates space for considering how embedded Urry's system of automobility has become in the collective consciousness.

In their examination of citizenship and mobility, Green, Steinbach and Datta (2012) suggest that cycling constitutes a "conscientious automobility," which can be contrasted with other forms of automobility that may be seen as less morally sound. Contemporary citizenship requires individuals to be ecologically-minded, to be independently mobile, and to take care of their own well-being in the most efficient way possible, the researchers posit. Cycling also requires that individuals know their way

around a city or particular area, which Green et al. argue allows cyclists to demonstrate that they don't simply exist in a city, they belong to it. Green et al. point out the equity issues that arise here, writing that "the 'autonomous' bicycle is only made possible by the considerable 'work' undertaken to enable cycling to provide independent mobility. What follows is that this work may be less available to some social bodies than others" (2006, p. 286).

Furness writes that drivers experience the city differently than others, writing that "habitual driving engenders an experience of cities that is not unlike tourism, inasmuch as urban spaces and landscapes are often abstracted into 'pure, rapid, superficial spectacles'" (2010, p. 88). Driving disconnects drivers and the outside world, allowing them to bypass the landscape and only take in what is necessary. Taylor argues that because driving a vehicle requires paying close attention to the road and others using it, everything else becomes secondary, and the outside world is diminished to something "blurred and fleeting" (2003, p. 1611). This can be contrasted to the view from the bicycle; while cyclists must be similarly aware of their surroundings, they experience the city with all of their senses.

As Sheller and Urry (2000) note, automobility dictates how both drivers and non-drivers alike are organized in space, creating road networks that are unequally distributed across various modes. In San Francisco, this has had far reaching consequences for the development of a comprehensive cycling network, and is evident in the politically complicated enactment of the city's 2005 Bicycle Plan. Despite unanimous approval by the Board of Supervisors (City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 2005), the Bicycle Plan was met with an injunction by those who opposed its contents, arguing that the City had not properly considered the environmental impact that the proposed infrastructure would have (Gordon, 2006). The Superior Court upheld the injunction, reasoning that one bike lane in isolation was likely

not going to cause substantial delay to motorists, but, when fully implemented, the plan would lead to significantly slower streets for cars, constituting a potentially significant environmental impact (Henderson, 2011). The injunction was fully lifted in 2010 and the City was able to move ahead with projects identified in the 2005 plan (Henderson, 2011; Gordon, 2006), but this concern over the potential negative impact on the vehicular level of service requires further examination.

Level of service (LOS) refers to the delays and overall quality of service experienced by drivers (Federal Highway Administration, 2004). Letter grades ranging from A to F are assigned to an intersection based on the delay drivers experience when trying to cross, where an A is equal to or less than 10 seconds, and an F is equal to or less than 80 seconds (Federal Highway Administration, 2004). When the delay increases, measures are often introduced to try and maintain a certain LOS, such as additional turning lanes, or the widening of the road, something that has consistently been shown to have little long-term impact on reducing congestion (Handy, 2015; Cervero, 2003; Hansen & Huang, 1997).

Relying on LOS to gauge road performance is troubling for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that it is measured during peak hours, and is therefore not fully representative of the road's true conditions (Henderson, 2011). What is viewed as a 'good' LOS makes it easier to drive, leading to more vehicle miles travelled overall, the negative consequences of which are clear and well-documented. Concern over a reduced LOS (a metric that has traditionally excluded pedestrians and cyclists) has put an end to or substantially delayed cycling projects in San Francisco, even when public support is clearly demonstrated (Henderson, 2011). The system of automobility has convinced drivers that they have the right to travel seamlessly and quickly from destination to destination, framing vehicle ownership (and driving) as a marker of success. This expectation requires "streets designed for maximizing traffic flow of cars,

and that coupled with the lower densities, makes walking and cycling dangerous, and transit impractical" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1140).

The former director of San Francisco's bicycle program has admitted that the City's heavy reliance on LOS measurements has slowed down the implementation of the bicycle network, noting that heavier emphasis has been placed on "'low hanging fruit,' or bike lanes that did not significantly impact automobile LOS" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1139). Reforming the LOS metric would arguably help to address this issue, largely because it could be revised to include—or prioritize—the movement of those using sustainable modes of travel such as transit, walking or cycling. The City of Ottawa, for example, recently revised their level of service performance measures and now has multi-modal LOS guidelines for planning professionals in the public and private sector.

Neoliberal developers are generally on board with reforming LOS for two reasons (Henderson, 2011). First, these developers recognize that ease of mobility increases the financial value of a place and second, there is the desire to expedite the development process, which can be slowed down as studies are conducted to assess a project's LOS impact. However, they are also generally uninterested in pursuing a multi-modal LOS model, because this could both slow down the development process and increase its associated costs, due to the need to conduct impact studies for each mode. Thus, the LOS reform process in San Francisco has been hindered as progressive planning authorities are required to "work within the parameters of a neoliberal political economy in order to produce socially good outcomes" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1143).

As San Francisco's less affluent residents are pushed out into the suburbs, their ability to access the rest of the city by bike becomes more challenging. As in many North American cities, cycling infrastructure in San Francisco is largely restricted to central areas, and limited transit options in the city's peripheries make it difficult for those with bikes to make a multimodal journey. As Stehlin writes:

> […] the real gains in bicycle space in select areas of core cities must be seen in the context of a vast, intensely car-dependent region in which the possibility of replacing car trips by bicycle or mass transit is supremely uneven in distribution. (2015a, p. 124)

It is challenging from a political standpoint to introduce changes these more car-dependent areas that would make them walkable and cyclable, because San Francisco's government pursues strategies to increase density that rely heavily on developer incentives, which are largely focused on other areas of the city (Stehlin, 2015a). As Biggar and Ardoin (2017) write in their essay on transportation choices of Bay Area residents, the ability to choose a sustainable mode varies from community to community, and is further influenced by physical or sociocultural conditions. If communities were designed to be more supportive of things like cycling, they argue, more San Franciscans would be inclined to choose that over their vehicles, even if travelling by car was the more convenient option.

In San Francisco, the slow rollout of cycling infrastructure and resistance to change has contributed to a lower than expected cycling mode share, and a higher than expected number of traffic deaths annually. As of 2017, San Francisco's cycling mode share was 4.3 percent (Ruddick, 2017a), a far cry from the anticipated 8-10 percent that was deemed reasonable by 2018-2020 in the City's Bicycle Strategy (SFMTA, 2013). Under the 2014 Vision Zero strategy, San Francisco has the stated goal of eliminating traffic deaths by 2024, a reduction from the approximately thirty deaths currently recorded annually (SFMTA, 2017)[1]. Through Vision Zero, the City takes a data-driven approach to changes to the street, using the High Injury Network (HIN) dataset to identify corridors and intersections with particularly high levels of serious or fatal

[1] These deaths are divided amongst cyclists, pedestrians and vehicle occupants, and do not represent the number of cyclists killed each year.

incidents. According to the 2017-2018 Vision Zero action plan, the HIN "helps prioritize City efforts and funds, and ensures Vision Zero initiatives support the people and places most in need" (SFMTA, 2017, p. 6). It is important to note that HIN data is compiled based on information from the police and medical examiner, so it is possible that the number of incidents is much higher in reality (San Francisco Department of Public Health, 2017).

As evidence from San Francisco indicates, the system of automobility impacts more than those who drive or intend to. The system is self-reproducing, so challenging one aspect of it is not enough to disrupt the system as a whole (Burk, 2017). Moving beyond automobility requires recognizing it as a pervasive system that infiltrates how identities, statuses and the built environment are constructed (Burk, 2017). All of the challenges to automobility have forced the system to restructure, and make itself more resilient, argues Beckmann (2001), citing toll roads, route guidance systems and the various other forms of technology that are embedded into modern cars as evidence of this. These changes are meant to contend with the dwindling capacity of the existing road network, which declines as the number of vehicles on the road rises, and as automobility becomes more embedded in our collective consciousness. As Kuhm describes it:

> The dominance of the automobile-based transport system in industrialized countries can be regarded as the result of a spiral and self-organized process. In this process, the automobile turns into a structural prerequisite for the organisation of everyday life, while at the same time the variety of forms of everyday action becomes the structural prerequisite for the expansion of the automobile. (in Beckmann, 2001, p. 595)

Böhm et al. (2006) write that moving beyond automobility means exposing its paradoxical nature, suggesting that this process could begin with highlighting the clear

downfalls of such a regime – "pollution, death and injury, specific formations of geopolitics, the transformation of the urban landscape and modern mindscape" (2006, p. 9). Lomasky, conversely, writes that the more critics of automobility draw attention to its costs, the "more these critics underscore, often unwittingly, the extent of the benefits" (1997, p. 16), highlighting the fact that many are able to justify car travel by recalling its positive aspects.

Tactical urbanism is discussed more fully in the sections that follow, but it should be mentioned here that it can play a role in encouraging the move beyond automobility if it engages more fully with history. As noted in Section 1.4, some critics of the rhetoric on tactical urbanism argue that its proponents tend to present it as an ahistorical, apolitical movement, which dilutes its impact and does not sufficiently problematize the issues it tries to address. This is not to suggest that a politicized tactical urbanism is the only solution to decades of car-centric planning, but rather to say that it could more productively grapple with the outcomes of this type of planning.

1.2 American Cycling Advocacy

This section examines how cycling advocacy has developed in America, beginning with a broader discussion of advocacy across the country before focusing specifically on San Francisco. However, in order to understand the landscape advocates are facing today, it is necessary to begin by providing a brief historical perspective on cycling. Americans have embraced the motor vehicle to the point where, according to Furness, driving has become a "de facto expression of citizenship in the United States" (2010, p. 8). As a result, cycling advocates have much work to do.

Beginning in the 1890s, the bicycle was a luxury item marketed to Americans. However, by the end of the Victorian period, prices had dropped, and bicycles were more widely available to the less affluent in America and abroad (Furness, 2010).

However, rather than becoming an egalitarian form of transportation, the bicycle "has been the opposite of a leveler by making visible a host of inequalities," including race, gender, class and age (Norcliffe, 2015, p. 5). Horton, Cox and Rosen (2007) echo this, adding that the status ascribed to cyclists is never static, and that as people they are read differently depending on a number of factors.

Norcliffe argues that, apart from the gun, the bicycle is the artefact that most accurately captures the "economic and social geographies of the modern age," in part because it has been positioned variously as a tool that brings freedom, a sign of modernity and civilization for those that rode, and more recently as a utilitarian tool" (2015, p. 2). Like Horton et al. (2007), Norcliffe stresses that the view of the bicycle is relative and depends on the context. For example, in China and other Asian countries, cycling may be widespread but not necessarily because the bicycle is the preferred mode of travel. Rather, it is seen as the less desirable—but only—option for many who are unable to own a car.

The decline of cycling rates in post-WWI Europe can be attributed largely to political decisions that prioritized cars over other forms of mobility. As in the United States, the dwindling number of bicycles on the road in Europe was not inevitable, but rather the result of the pursuit of a planning regime that "recalibrated a new city in which [social actors like politicians, planners and government officials] erased many 'old features,' including cycling, which they deemed old fashioned or out of place" (de la Bruheze & Emanuel, 2012, p. 64). Therefore, while "the most mobile and affluent societies today appear increasingly willing to re-embrace the bicycle" (Horton et al., 2007, p. 4), the damage caused by this planning regime must be undone.

In theory, I believe that cycling should be one of the most democratic forms of mobility. Compared to car ownership, the cost of owning a bike is much lower, it allows a user to travel further than if they were on foot, and with numerous types of bicycles

available, there are many options for those with mobility issues or those needing to pick up children or groceries on the way home from work. However, in reality, cycling is rife with inequalities, many of which have not been explored as fully as they should be, and many of which surface within cycling advocacy itself.

Lugo writes that it is not sufficient to assume that working as a cycling advocate means other existing biases will be washed away, noting that "advocates may overlook cycling practiced by marginalized groups such as immigrants and the poor because they do not imagine themselves to belong to a shared community with these others" (2013, p. 205). These biases can become particularly acute when advocates fail to acknowledge the impact an altered street can have on property values or the existing sense of place (such changes may also be acknowledged but viewed positively). "When advocates talk about bike-friendly cities, they rarely mention social equity issues such as affordable housing," writes Lugo (2013, p. 205), citing the League of American Bicyclists' 'bicycling means business' summit, where cycling infrastructure was positioned as an economic development strategy, as an example.

According to Lubitow, Zinschlag and Rochester (2016), cycling advocates regularly fail to reflect the diversity of the cities they represent and, more often than not, tend to more closely resemble the same people who displace those living in gentrifying areas. In their examination of the consultation and implementation process for bicycle lanes in a historically Puerto Rican neighbourhood in Chicago, Lubitow et al. found that cycling infrastructure was viewed by residents as a facilitator of gentrification, an appropriation of space by those who were seen as not belonging in the community (in this case, white 'hipsters' in an area largely inhabited by Puerto Ricans). The researchers also note that in framing cycling as a tool for economic development, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel does little to dissuade concerns voiced by those who fear that cycling infrastructure will bring displacement and gentrification to the city.

Wild, Woodward, Field and Macmillan write that, while the relationship between cycling infrastructure and gentrification is a complicated one, it is "often unproblematically celebrated by politicians and cycling advocates who remain ignorant or insensitive to the fact that for low-income communities of colour, 'urban revitalisation' represents an eviction from their home" (2018, p. 513). In an investigation of opposition to bike lanes in an African American neighbourhood in Philadelphia, Sheller (2015) highlights the fact that residents in some communities are justifiably quicker to object to city planning initiatives due to their history of forced evictions in the pursuit of 'revitalization.' Some research has suggested that bike lanes play a role in gentrification but are far from the only factor (Flanagan, Lachapelle, & El-Geneidy, 2016; Stehlin, 2015a; Lugo, 2014), or conversely, that bike lanes emerge as a result of gentrification but do not contribute to gentrification to begin with (Geoghegan, 2015). Pucher and Buehler (2011) note that gentrifying areas tend to have higher cycling rates than other neighbourhoods, but these areas are also typically closer to employment areas, universities, and tend to have a mix of land uses. However, cycling infrastructure nonetheless becomes entangled with much larger issues and associated with a history of being subjugated through the planning process, even though it is a symptom of a bigger system of gentrification and displacement.

A second argument to come out of the research by Lubitow et al. (2016) suggests that the cycling infrastructure itself is not cause for concern, but that the true issue is a consultation process that caters to the needs of some groups and not others. This is echoed in concerns regarding the placement of bike sharing docking stations along 24th Street in San Francisco's Mission district, a historically Latinx neighbourhood immediately east of the city centre. Oscar Grande, a community organizer with People Organizing to Demand Environmental Justice (PODER), says that the issue with the docking stations being placed along 24th Street is not the bikes themselves, but rather

the fact that Mission residents felt the bike sharing system did not address their needs—needs that, Grande points out, are much different than those residents in other neighbourhoods (Small, 2017). For example, Grande says that cargo bikes, which could accommodate adults and their children at the same time, would be more appropriate, because that would allow parents to drop their children off at school before continuing on with their day (Small, 2017).

Prioritizing certain types of knowledge and input over others is another issue that surfaces within cycling advocacy circles. In discussing cycling advocates in Los Angeles, Lugo (2013) notes that there was a concerted effort on behalf of the advocates to avoid embodied knowledge, and instead rely more heavily on expert knowledge, documents detailing best practices, and other, more normative types of knowledge. These advocates, Lugo writes, "wanted the city to take cycling seriously, so they framed their expertise as cyclists in as technical a format as possible" (2013, p. 205). Stehlin (2014) points to the 2011 California Bike Summit as a critical moment in this shift, where bicycle advocates, including the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC), began to focus more on norms and standards for cycling infrastructure.

Cycling infrastructure is technical and its design relies on standards approved by governments and regulating bodies, so it is easy to see how so-called expert knowledge is prioritized over the specific, lived experiences of individual cyclists or community members. Lugo's (2013) findings point out that, for many cycling advocacy organizations in North America, lived experience is not sufficient in demonstrating why a certain type of infrastructure might be preferred over another, or why what may seem entirely appropriate from a technical standpoint is quite the opposite for the users of a facility. In many instances, it simply is not enough to frame things in terms of experiences when the planning system prioritizes experienced-based decision making that is grounded in data. While this approach may be legitimate in many cases, it also

has the consequence of excluding certain voices, however valid or knowledgeable they may be.

Organizations like Critical Mass, on the other hand, eschew the technical format adopted by some cycling advocacy organizations. Critical Mass participants level critiques similar to the cycling advocates studied by Lugo (2013), but choose to make their case through direct action, taking over streets in an effort to highlight how cyclists are marginalized (Furness, 2007). Streets are constructed to prioritize specific types of mobility while restricting others, and Furness argues that this makes them the natural place for staging a conversation about equity. By temporarily reclaiming the street, Critical Mass rides critique designs that promote the fastest forms of mobility instead of building spaces with all users and communities in mind (Furness, 2007).

In an article on the origins of Critical Mass, co-founder Chris Carlsson writes that the rides aim to create a "new kind of mobile, temporary public space" (2011, p. 82). Through Critical Mass, Carlsson says that participants "were producing a new kind of commons, […] "inhabiting [the street] in a creative and open-ended way that ended up changing the feeling of what it meant to be in the city" (personal communication, 2018). In essence, Critical Mass creates temporary autonomous zones, a term championed by writer Hakim Bey to refer to spaces temporarily outside of the formal control of the state that are purposefully dismantled by their creators before action can be taken against them (Furness, 2010). These zones rely on the collective mobility of those who show up to ride, rather than prioritizing participants who have day jobs as city planners, engineers or otherwise possess any technical understanding of the specifics of cycling infrastructure. Despite this, Critical Mass should not be placed in the same category as groups that make physical changes to the road. Rather, Critical Mass and similar organizations should be interpreted as attempts to reorganize socioeconomic and political power at the street level (Furness, 2010).

Critical Mass originated in San Francisco, and without it, Carlsson argues, there would not be much mainstream cycling advocacy in the city at all (personal communication, 2018). Indeed, Critical Mass has played an interesting role in aiding other, more centrist organizations, such as the SFBC, gain momentum. Furness (2007) highlights the 1997 Critical Mass riot, where participants were confronted by armed riot police, as a catalyzing moment for the SFBC. In this moment, Furness argues, Critical Mass helped to create a platform that normalized the actions and demands of the SFBC in the eyes of the public. According to Janice Li, the SFBC's current advocacy director, the group became the liaison between the mayor's office and Critical Mass participants following the riot, and by extension, the voice of mainstream cycling activism in San Francisco (personal communication, 2018).

The SFBC has played a critical role in advocating for cycling infrastructure in San Francisco, but it must be acknowledged that the membership of groups like the SFBC consists mainly of residents of gentrified and gentrifying areas of the city, and there is substantially less representation in lower income or less central neighbourhoods (Stehlin, 2015a). As dues-paying members, these individuals hold more power to influence the politics and direction of the organization, without necessarily considering those in other neighbourhoods that may not have a cycling population that is as vocal or visible. The SFBC's membership may artificially skew where cycling advocacy is needed or obscure the actions of those in lower income neighbourhoods who advocate for cycling through other channels. Even as a heavier emphasis is being placed on equity and inclusivity within cycling, "gentrification is rapidly pushing these populations from the spaces where bicycle advocates have concentrated their efforts, in the Bay Area and elsewhere" (Stehlin, 2015a, p. 133). However, in fairness to the SFBC, executive director Brian Wiedenmeier has expressed an interest in increasing the

diversity of the membership base (Ruddick, 2016a), and Li says that there are members across the city (personal communication, 2018).

While cycling advocacy is naturally location-specific to a certain degree, Stehlin and Tarr (2017) argue that advocates often tend to place too much weight on the local, overlooking many of the historical and geographical conditions that have given rise to the issues that advocates address in their work. Echoing Lugo's (2013) discussion of equity, Stehlin and Tarr maintain that cycling advocacy that is not housed within a broader pursuit of equity will become exclusionary and prioritize the needs of middle- and upper-class individuals. Hyper-specific, location-based advocacy leads to cycling infrastructure networks that are "unevenly developed, and based on the patterns of the office commuter" (Stehlin & Tarr, 2017, p. 1339). As a result, cities like San Francisco possess an "archipelago of bicycle-scale urban spaces, reinforced by individual locational choices and nestled within car-dominated regions," which then "renders the progressive politics of place convergent with, rather than disruptive of, the scale produced by the gentrification processes that are remaking cities across the country" (Stehlin & Tarr, 2017, p. 1339).

1.3 Neoliberal Planning

According to Brenner and Theodore, the central idea of neoliberalism is the "belief that open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development" (2002, p. 350). Under this system, the market, rather than the government, is positioned as the solver of public problems (Grengs, 2005). Critically, however, there is a disconnect between the theory and practice of neoliberalism. Although neoliberalism attempts to establish a free market utopia where state interference is nonexistent, in reality it has led to a "dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in

order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 352).

A significant aspect of American neoliberalism involves dismantling the welfare state and replacing it with welfare management programs that reduce government spending on social programs and state involvement in regulating labour markets (Murphy, 2009), because these are seen as incompatible with market progress (Peck, 2012). Positioning cities as friendly to international investment is another important aspect of American neoliberalism. To do this, cities like San Francisco have worked to create sterile spaces, "transforming downtown real estate into revitalized spaces of leisure and consumption, aimed at boosting land values, attracting tourism, and offering up consumer-friendly spaces for capitalist expansion" (Murphy, 2009, p. 310). Evidence of this can be found in the introduction (or increased enforcement) of bylaws that criminalize loitering, sleeping in public and other behaviours seen as undesirable (Murphy, 2009), as well as the proliferation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs, also known as Community Benefit Districts or CBDs), where property and business owners in a certain area agree to contribute to the "maintenance, development, marketing and promotion of their commercial district" (Wee, 2016, p. 265). Through BIDs, private entities exert significant influence on how a space is designed and, therefore, experienced by users.

Neoliberalism has also pushed transit planning away from its social goal; instead of pursuing the goal of providing mobility to those who do not drive, public transit in America now largely pursues the "economic goal of reducing congestion" (Grengs, 2005, p. 53). Though the number of transit riders is small compared to the number of people who drive, Grengs argues that transit's social goals were generally understood and accepted, and found support amongst public officials. However, these goals become increasingly challenging to advocate for under neoliberalism, because the

decline of the welfare state means that things with redistributive goals (like transit) are required to adopt profit-focused goals.

Elwood (2002) argues that a neoliberal planning regime is capable of doing two things at once: it contributes to the downsizing of city government through an increasingly heavy reliance on the private sector to provide public services, while simultaneously giving citizens a voice in deciding how their cities look, albeit in this new, reduced form. It is critical to note here that, despite the expanding role that non-profits or community groups have in shouldering more of the load, their influence or resources have not similarly increased (Elwood, 2002). Further, because neoliberalism has become so deeply embedded in urban processes, it becomes legitimate to question how democratic the planning process is, even when public participation occurs (Tulumello, 2016).

Neoliberalism is presented as a requirement of modern governments (Blokker, 2014), and like many other places, San Francisco is the site of a neoliberal planning regime that has been shaping city development for decades. Schafran (2013) writes that the neoliberal hold on San Francisco began with Proposition 13, which emerged out of a 1978 property-tax referendum. Proposition 13 capped property taxes at one percent per year regardless of the land use, and "created a two-thirds majority standard for new property taxes, along with a similarly difficult standard for all budgetary matters at the state level" (Schafran, 2013, p. 674). Through this, Proposition 13 helped create a system where planning decisions were made based on the amount of revenue a piece of land could generate. Within this system, retail is considered to be the highest and best use for land, while affordable housing is seen as the lowest. As a result, it became easier to make a fiscal argument in favour of commercial development and avoid making planning decisions based on factors like a site's proximity to existing or planned transit or the needs of the community (Schafran, 2013).

In addition to Proposition 13, changes in city revenue sources impacted how Californian cities in the early 2000s funded projects. Cities began to receive less money from property taxes and the federal and state governments, and instead started receiving much more from development fees and charges. While more established, wealthier towns were not severely impacted, places like eastern Contra Costa, a county across the San Francisco Bay, had to rely heavily on private development in order to finance transit and road improvements (Schafran, 2013).

Brenner and Theodore write that cities are the sites of particularly intense creative destruction under neoliberalism, where many local governments have been forced to adapt to a higher level of economic uncertainty, and have grappled with this by "engaging in short-termist forms of interspatial competition, place-marketing, and regulatory undercutting to attract investments and jobs" (2002, p. 367). This occurs simultaneously with the weakening of the welfare state, economic restructuring that exacerbates existing social problems and efforts to "rejuvenate local economies through a shock treatment of deregulation, privatization, liberalization and enhanced fiscal austerity" (2002, p. 368). As a result, cities have become the staging ground for a host of policy experiments, including place-marketing efforts and property redevelopment schemes. There are moments of creative destruction evident in San Francisco, such as the increase in surveillance of public spaces and the creation of private spaces for elite consumption (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Public spaces in San Francisco are being altered in favour of the "creation of privatized, customized, and networked urban infrastructures intended to (re)position cities within supranational capital flows" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 370).

Henderson (2015) argues that while San Francisco generally possesses a politics of mobility that is ideologically progressive, there are contradictions that can be attributed to neoliberal and conservative transit and labour politics, citing as an example the

private shuttles that ferry Silicon Valley staff to their workplaces (and, as discussed in Section 2.2, have led to protests in the Mission district). Much of San Francisco's funding for roads, bridges and transit is already designated and will be directed towards maintaining existing infrastructure, rather than boosting train and bus capacity to accommodate the exponential growth the city is experiencing. Without more funding, one can expect to see more private transit vehicles on the road, while Bay Area transit agencies "strain under declining revenues, deferred maintenance and deep federal and state cuts" (Henderson, 2015, p. 112).

San Francisco's neoliberal planning tendencies are also evident in the way parking policies are determined, though this too is not without its contradictions. That some developers would support the elimination of parking minimums is consistent with aspects of neoliberal ideology, given that parking takes away space that would otherwise be used for housing (and therefore profit generation), and that the deregulation of parking would reduce the government's role in the development process (Henderson, 2009). However, some developers support "allowing (not requiring) more parking, at least one space per residential unit, because adding parking to housing units can increase the overall sales value of the housing unit if the market is targeted at wealthier households" (Henderson, 2009, p. 80). This redevelopment trend can be seen across the city, where new rental units are scarce and upscale condominiums for affluent San Franciscans dominate the housing market. Referred to as the "new urban bourgeoisie," this resident group has a "profound mobility regime" that allows them to live in a walkable, dense city but still own a car, commuting from the Mission to Silicon Valley and minimizing the "negative aesthetics and more extreme externalities of automobility," while not significantly disrupting its hold on their lives (Henderson, 2009, p. 81).

The relationship between neoliberalism and tactical urbanism has been explored in various ways. Brenner (2015) and Haydn and Temel (2006) voice their doubts about whether tactical urbanism represents any meaningful challenge to a neoliberal regime. Brenner proposes several ways that tactical urbanism can interact with neoliberal urbanism, but ultimately concludes that because tactical urbanism does not propose changing tax regimes so they are more equitable, and does not call for greater transparency in government, it is difficult to imagine how these projects translate into broader shifts in planning discourse. He ends his discussion with a damning statement on tactical urbanism, writing that:

> To the degree that advocates of tactical urbanism frame their agenda as an alternative to an activist role for public institutions in the production of urban space, they are at risk of reinforcing the very neoliberal rule-regimes they ostensibly oppose. (2015)

Haydn and Temel (2006) offer another critique of the relationship between neoliberal planning and tactical urbanism, framing tactical urbanism as existing within, and likely enforcing, a neoliberal system. They write that, "the new [neoliberal] regime responds to growing demands for individual creative space by 'offering' individuals an opportunity to participate in actively solving problems hitherto regulated by state institutions" (2006, p. 50). This is echoed in Stehlin and Tarr's (2017) assessment of cycling advocacy in San Francisco. They note that, within the contexts of scarcity produced under neoliberalism, tactical urbanism initiatives are often celebrated as "'authentic' expressions of urban vitality," and that these celebrations often fail to consider the power and privilege possessed by many of tactical urbanism's practitioners (2017, p. 1342).

Mould writes that tactical urbanism represents "the latest cycle of the urban 'strategy' to co-opt moments of creativity and alternative urban practices to the urban

hegemony," and actually constitutes the new so-called Creative City (2014, p. 537). Finally, Mayer, in a discussion of the right to the city in urban social movements, notes that neoliberal urban policies have successfully co-opted "rebellious claims and action repertoires," absorbing them into larger marketing strategies intended to "enhance the competitive value of locational assets" (2012, p. 77).

1.4 Tactical Urbanism

Tactical urbanism, also referred to as DIY urbanism, pop-up urbanism or guerrilla urbanism, is framed by its advocates as small, targeted interventions that allow "a host of local actors to test new concepts before making substantial political and financial commitments" (Lydon, Bartman, Garcia, Preston, & Woudstra, 2012, p. 1). These interventions are opportunistic, capitalizing on what is perceived as wasted or underused space (Silva, 2016, p. 1048). According to Lydon et al., when it comes to determining whether an intervention constitutes tactical urbanism, whether it is sanctioned or not is less important than whether an intervention fulfills the five fundamental qualities they identify. Interventions must:

1. Be deliberate and phased
2. Offer local ideas for local challenges
3. Be short-term in nature, and with realistic expectations
4. Be low risk, with the potential for significant reward
5. Facilitate the development of "social capital between citizens, and the building of organizational capacity between public/private institutions, non-profit/NGOs, and their constituents" (Lydon et al., 2012, p. 2).

Important to note is that what constitutes low risk is not defined, and the fact that this term is highly subjective and relies on numerous other factors is not discussed in

the document produced by Lydon et al., which is framed as a resource for anyone looking to carry out "short-term actions inspiring long-term change" (2012, p. v).

Examples of tactical urbanism exist across the world, and are framed differently depending on their context. In Moscow, tactical urbanism emerged out of participatory research projects initiated by activists, and has been used to "support local collective actions," such as MicroAct, a virtual platform where residents can connect and collaborate on interventions (Sawhney, de Klerk, & Malhotra, p. 352). In cities like Berlin, Dublin and Christchurch, temporary uses are embraced when they are viewed as having potential to redirect capital towards blighted areas (Till & McArdle, 2015), while in parts the global South, urban informalities arise where government services are limited due to a host of reasons, creating informal settlements, networks and entire economies. Roy (2005) writes that informalities in the global South are viewed either as the product of crisis – be it a crisis of affordability, a housing crisis, or some other form entirely – or as embodiments of the entrepreneurial spirit. When writing about Nairobi, Brugmann (2009) suggests that these informal arrangements are so deeply embedded in Kenyan society that they may control how the country functions more than the actual government itself does.

Deslandes frames tactical urbanism as a type of "locally driven renovation" (2013, p. 217), while Courage (2012) suggests it is a core component of creating a convivial city, where everyone is able to exercise their creativity and play an important role in restoring life and character to an urban space. Lydon and the other members of the urban planning and advocacy firm Street Plans Collaborative frame tactical urbanism as wholly positive, arguing that it is a viable way to create social capital and build community capacity overall (2012). However, others are less optimistic about the ability of tactical urbanism to transform communities, and point to issues of privilege (LaFrombois, 2017; Stehlin & Tarr, 2017; Pugalis & Giddings, 2011; Henneberry, 2017,

Sankalia, 2014), potential to spur on gentrification (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017; Mould, 2014; Finn, 2014), and potential complicity in the deepening of a neoliberal planning regime (Brenner, 2015; Haydn & Temels, 2006; Farias & Gonçalves, n.d.).

Proponents of tactical urbanism argue that it creates a more participatory city, one where citizens feel emboldened to make the changes that they feel would enrich the city for themselves and others (Lydon, Garcia, Flynn, Murriente, Wall, & Simpson, 2016), which ties into Henri Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city and the power to remake urban spaces. However, it is necessary to push further here and ask: whose city? Who actually has that right, and the ability to exercise it? To that end, LaFrombois (2017) argues that tactical urbanism involves leveraging privilege in order to dictate which spaces are created and how, and that this undermines its capacity to be radical. Which activities are deemed appropriate relies heavily on the groups of people (defined in terms of class, race and gender) who define tactical urbanist practice. Unfortunately, this issue is noticeably absent from much of the discourse surrounding tactical urbanism (see: Zeiger, 2012; Finn, 2014; Lydon; Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2017).

Stehlin and Tarr (2017) launch a similar argument to LaFrombois, writing that the individuals who are permitted to make changes to the built environment are so permitted based on their race or class. Similarly, Henneberry (2017) draws parallels between the actions of some tactical urbanists and those of the urban middle class, where the reinvigoration of space is seen as permissible when done by those with capital, both social and otherwise, but is not similarly received when done by graffiti artists or the homeless. As Pugalis and Giddings put it, tactical urbanists bring "'deserving' groups, like tourists, back to the city" (2011, cited in Henneberry, 2017, p. 10). Harvey inadvertently touches on the issue of privilege in tactical urbanism, noting that through these temporary spaces, tactical urbanists and other activists have a

"collective right not only to that which they produce, but also to decide what kind of urbanism is to be produced where, and how" (2012, cited in Henneberry, 2017, p. 51).

Spataro (2016) argues against the type of tactical urbanism preached by Lydon and the Street Plans Collaborative, writing that this iteration devalues the more radical, politicized tactical urbanism practiced by groups like Food Not Bombs. The Street Plans Collaborative fails to acknowledge that space is contested, and instead whitewashes the history of certain tactical urbanist projects, such as guerrilla gardening or chair bombing, framing them as playful interventions rather than responses to discriminatory government policies that regulate who may use a space. According to Spataro, "romanticizing local action as a panacea to large-scale development […] presents an ahistorical and apolitical version of the role the DIY ethic has played in urban tactics" (2016, p. 187). Instead of the tactical urbanism that "glosses over and devalues many vibrant citizen tactics to reclaim public space," Spataro advocates for a tactical urbanism that includes direct action in its definition (2016, p. 198). Under this definition, more activities could reasonably be seen as fitting under the umbrella of tactical urbanism, including protests carried out by People Protected Bike Lane (PPBL), who advocate for protected cycling infrastructure by using their bodies as barriers between cyclists and drivers.

Further questions about the goals of tactical urbanism arise when discussing whether a formal, codified process is ideal or necessary. Mould argues that tactical urbanism is only the latest in a series of efforts on behalf of city governments to capitalize on creative, grassroots initiatives (2014, p. 537). Sawhney et al. (2015) posit that some governments may be reluctant to encourage tactical urbanism through a formal program, given that its intention is often to expose a city's failings and push for greater accountability. A continuation of this argument is that governments would likely only be willing to support the least obtrusive forms of tactical urbanism, such as yarn

bombing, and would not encourage things like cycling infrastructure or other, larger changes to the public realm.

According to Till and McArdle (2015), tactical urbanism that has been adopted by the state is often done so as part of an economic development strategy, and once the economy shows signs of recovery the enthusiasm for tactical urbanism all but disappears. Overall, they write, "[...] planners, urban designers, and policy makers are heavily invested in finding short-term 'solutions' to solve what they perceive to be the larger 'problem' of vacant spaces," but once there are opportunities for these spaces to resume making profits through traditional means there is the tendency to end support for temporary interventions (2015, p. 44). Similarly, Stehlin and Tarr argue that the gains made through tactical urbanism (such as temporary interventions being made permanent) are largely the result of the ability of those interventions to align with other city goals, dismissing the idea that these successes represent the "unfolding of a strategy to transform life by using automobility or the food system as an entry point" (2017, p. 1341). The findings of Till, McArdle, Stehlin and Tarr suggest that the forms of tactical urbanism taken up by the state are not the radical, politicized efforts Spataro (2016) argued for, but rather a more digestible, de-politicized form.

San Francisco's parklet program (Figure 1) is a clear example of what state-adopted tactical urbanism could look like. The first San Francisco parklet was quietly unveiled in September 2005 by John Bela, Matthew Passmore and Blaine Merker. It consisted of a swath of grass, a bench and a potted tree, and was intended as a statement against the proliferation of parking spaces across the city (Schneider, 2017). By the following September, the group had received backing from the Trust for Public Land. In 2008, the City took inspiration from the work being done locally, as well as in New York and Copenhagen, and created the Pavement to Parks program. Pavement to Parks was then rebranded as Groundplay, which describes itself as an agency that

"works with ordinary San Franciscans to build temporary installations that turn underused public spaces into joyful community places" (Groundplay, n.d.).

Figure 1: A parklet on Folsom Street in San Francisco's SoMa neighbourhood, installed in 2013 after the program was formalized. September 3, 2018.

With the formalization of the parklet project in San Francisco, Littke (2016) argues that the lines between tactical urbanism, activism, and urban design processes were blurred. Littke writes, "[...] Parklets have also been criticized as a 'think-piece protest' turned into a neoliberal planning project" (2016, p. 165). Framing these interventions as temporary, as Groundplay does, suggests that they are placeholders until a "'real' development project" takes their place (Till & McArdle, 2015, p. 39). Under a neoliberal planning structure, place-marketing becomes a way for governments to position a particular neighbourhood as a hub of creative activity, framing these initiatives as cool, interesting examples of how engaged the local population is. This is done regardless of

the fact that these projects may be borne out of the very contexts of scarcity created by neoliberalism, or may represent, as in the case of the original parklets of San Francisco, a statement against existing land uses and the policies that require so much space to be dedicated to parking. Place-marketing also ignores the fact that tactical urbanism practitioners do not necessarily have any ties to the community they are working in.

Through Groundplay, the City aims to involve business owners, community organizations and local residents in project implementation. There is a manual that must be consulted prior to applying, which notes that applications lacking evidence of strong community support will not be considered (Littke, 2016, p. 168). Applicants (referred to as sponsors) have to design, pay for and cover the liability for projects, as well as notify nearby businesses of the parklet. They are also required to pay a permit fee and application fee. According to Littke, fees associated with putting together an application range from $1500 to $2000 USD, and do not factor in the cost to construct or design the parklet.

Formalizing the parklet program could lower barriers to participation for some, but there remain legitimate concerns. Those deterred by the questionable legality of paying for a parking space for a few hours only to roll out artificial grass and put down benches may be more inclined to participate in a City-sanctioned program. However, formalization not only introduces potentially onerous financial barriers to interested applicants, but also eliminates the possibility for spontaneity. The process can take more than eight months from the time an application is submitted to when a project is implemented. Further, having businesses sponsor the parklet allows for its commodification, turning public space into a site for advertising. Indeed, 37 of 51 San Francisco parklets were visibly sponsored, in the sense that the parklet could be seen as a "direct extension of the sponsor's business" (Littke, 2016, p. 169). This is unsurprising, as one of the main purposes of the parklet program is to support local businesses.

However, it does beg the question of why the City does not instead simply allow many of these businesses to open up patios of their own, as most of these spaces appear to function as de facto outdoor spaces for the cafes and restaurants that overwhelmingly sponsor the parklets.

Equity issues must also be examined, especially given Stroman's 2014 report on San Francisco parklets, which indicates that they are largely concentrated in certain neighbourhoods, like the Mission, South of Market or the downtown core. If, as Groundplay's website states, the overarching intention of this program is to temporarily transform "underused public spaces into joyful community places," it is troubling to see that these transformations are generally limited to areas that have already experienced higher levels of investment. Stroman's finding gives additional traction to Stehlin's assertion that tactical urbanism in San Francisco "represents the gentrification of insurgent urbanism," (2015b, p. 183) rather than something more radical and grassroots.

This literature review has provided a base for understanding the empirical research that follows. Based on the existing literature surrounding politics of mobility, it is evident that there is a system of automobility that positions the car as a saviour, instilling many with the perceived right to drive. In San Francisco, this has hindered the development of a well-connected, comprehensive cycling infrastructure network. Further, in San Francisco, as elsewhere, there are contradictions that arise between efforts to implement a more well-rounded way of measuring a road's performance and a development perspective that prioritizes efficiency and profit.

The literature on American cycling advocacy suggests that many advocates do not necessarily represent the diversity of communities they work in. Additionally, there are contrasting views within advocacy circles surrounding the type of knowledge that should be prioritized; some argue that it is more beneficial to emphasize technical knowledge, while others eschew this in favour of direct action. Finally, on the topic of

cycling advocacy in San Francisco, this review outlined the rise of Critical Mass and its contribution to normalizing the SFBC in the eyes of the public.

On neoliberalism, this literature review examined key tenets of the American iteration, including the efforts to dismantle the welfare state (and the subsequent shift in priorities for transit planning), and the proliferation of BIDs as a way to sanitize and regulate public spaces. In San Francisco, a neoliberal planning regime has shaped conversations on mobility, facilitating the rise of a class of city-dwellers who live in a dense, walkable area but are not required to sacrifice their vehicles. This literature review has also identified existing research connecting tactical urbanism and neoliberalism, including Brenner's (2015) writing on the ways in which the two could interact.

Lastly, this literature review explored existing research on tactical urbanism, and concluded with a discussion of San Francisco's parklet program. There are disparate views on what the relationship between tactical urbanism and the state should be. Some, like Spataro (2016), argue that it should be a radical, politicized practice, while others, like Lydon and Garcia, advocate for professionalizing it (Webb, 2018). Research from Till and McArdle (2015) and Stehlin and Tarr (2017) suggests that tactical urbanism is typically adopted by the state only when it has been shown to align with established strategic goals and when there is evidence to suggest such projects will contribute to the economy. There are also ongoing disputes regarding whether tactical urbanism is a democratic, collaborative process or if it is dominated by individuals exercising their privilege to determine what is created and how. The next chapter of this paper expands on the literature review by exploring how the topics discussed above take shape in San Francisco.

Chapter 2: Transportation and Transformation in San Francisco

This chapter examines two specific types of cycling-related tactical urbanism in San Francisco: the anonymous actions of citizen group SF Transformation, and the City-initiated, sanctioned demonstration organized for the Safer Taylor Street project. This chapter consists of original research conducted in San Francisco in August and September 2018, with additional supporting materials drawn from news reports and academic texts.

There are three subsections in this chapter. Section 2.1 outlines the rise and impact of SF Transformation (and, by extension, People Protected Bike Lane, or PPBL). Section 2.2 focuses specifically on Valencia Street, a major road in the Mission district and site of many of SF Transformation and PPBL's actions. In order to understand the conflicts that arose from the anonymous work done on Valencia, this section also has a brief history of pushback against transit projects from the neighbourhood's Latinx community. The intention of this is to emphasize the importance of consulting with the community prior to initiating work (and to subsequently highlight SF Transformation and PPBL's failings in that respect). Section 2.3 focuses on the SFMTA's Safer Taylor Street project, a City-led tactical urbanism initiative that saw one block of Taylor Street temporarily turned into a more cyclist- and pedestrian-friendly street as a way of gathering feedback on the proposed redesign.

2.1 Simple Transformations for Safer Streets?

SF Transformation is an anonymous group in San Francisco that engages in direct action to convey its message about the state of cycling in the city. SF Transformation makes physical changes to the roadway, including gluing bollards to the painted lines

that constitute many of San Francisco's bike lanes, creating DIY bulb-outs at intersections where cyclists have been hit by cars and, in a few instances, painting bike lanes on streets that otherwise lack cycling infrastructure. The group first emerged in October 2016 and has since quieted down, while a second group, People Protected Bike Lane (PPBL), has maintained its presence along unprotected bike lanes since May 2017. PPBL employs a different tactic for making its stance on cycling infrastructure known: physically protecting cyclists from vehicle traffic by forming human chains along unprotected bike lanes. As stated previously, this paper focuses primarily on SF Transformation and the SFMTA, but due to the connections between SF Transformation and PPBL, there is also some discussion of this additional group.

According to SF Transformation member Sam Shaw[2], the group began making changes to San Francisco streets for three reasons. First, Shaw says there was a desire amongst SF Transformation members to "make a real impact on the streets" by implementing changes faster than the SFMTA was able to. Second, members wanted to "point out to the City that they can and should be doing better, [be] a thorn in their side," and third, the group wanted to educate San Franciscans, "teaching other people by showing them this is what street design should be like," says Shaw (personal communication, 2018). The first intervention, according to Shaw, was spontaneous in nature:

> I was walking down the street and saw a couple free cones and I was like, 'well, I've been thinking in my head for months that somebody is going to do this here eventually and nobody's done it yet, so I guess I'll do it,' so I stuck a couple cones in the bike lane and took a picture. (personal communication, 2018)

The initiative quickly took off, and the group soon began receiving unsolicited donations from people who appreciated the work they were doing. From there, SF

[2] Name has been changed.

Transformation began "improving [their] strategies by using more resilient tools like white safe-hit pots, and making things closer to how a city, a real city agency, might design something on the street" (personal communication, 2018). Shaw says SF Transformation benefited from the ability to make quick, targeted interventions:

> Without all the [SFMTA's] bureaucratic processes and, of course, those processes are in place for a reason, but pop-ups and pilots are extremely important, and that's where we saw our niche. We could do a pop-up pilot installation in a matter of hours, and even if it was only there for 24-hours, hundreds of people would see it, and would have a real physical conception of what that could look like on a larger scale, in a more formalized way. (personal communication, 2018)

SF Transformation consists of approximately six core members and between 15 and 20 individuals who participated in at least one intervention and, like Critical Mass, does not have a formal leader. According to Shaw, remaining leaderless allowed for members to further conceal themselves, because there was no clear individual upon whom to pin these interventions. Further, because no single person was claiming responsibility for group actions, Shaw says the hope was that SF Transformation would be "representative of the collective cycling and walking ethos" (personal communication, 2018). Part of this representation involved setting up an online map where people could identify locations that they felt SF Transformation could improve upon. Recommendations were also taken via email or Twitter, but most of the interventions were determined based on discussions amongst group members, concerning issues they had themselves experienced or heard directly from others (personal communication, 2018).

SF Transformation was primarily active between October 2016 through to early 2018. According to Shaw, the group wound down due to the lack of internal structure, rather than any internal conflict or falling out. While the group's fluidity meant that

anyone who was interested could get involved, it was "inevitably a really hard organizational structure to manage, because its whole point is that nobody's managing it" (personal communication, 2018). Shaw says SF Transformation also struggled to find a way to convey the message that, though they were putting in plastic bollards and painting new bike lanes, the group really wanted the City to invest in a higher level of separation between cyclists and vehicles. Group members wanted more sidewalk-level protected bike lanes or cycle tracks with concrete curbs, but Shaw says that they were limited in what they could do. SF Transformation "could only put in safe-hit posts or put some white paint on the street," and they "wanted to make it seem like this is a big deal and this is important, and kind of talk it up on social media and get people's attention, but with the caveat that this isn't what we really want" (personal communication, 2018). There were plans for larger, more substantial interventions involving paint, but they did not materialize.

SF Transformation had been active for several months when PPBL made its first appearance, starting with a human chain along Golden Gate Avenue in May 2017 (Ruddick, 2017b). The initial PPBL protest was organized by SF Transformation, and the protests that followed were motivated by what PPBL co-founder Maureen Persico sees as a lack of safety for cyclists. Persico says that people will only be motivated to choose cycling over driving if they feel safe doing so, and that protected infrastructure is a critical component of increasing safety (personal communication, 2018). Persico cites the 2017 election of Donald Trump as a catalyzing moment for her activism – it was a moment where she realized that "I cannot rely on our city government. I can only rely on ourselves [sic]," which meant connecting with fellow San Franciscan Matt Brezina and starting PPBL (personal communication, 2018). The sentiment that the government cannot be relied on to provide the necessary infrastructure or services is echoed by many of the tactical urbanists interviewed by Douglas (2016). Persico's comments also

reinforce Henderson's (2015) point that much of the City's funding for infrastructure is directed towards maintenance rather than growing the sustainable transportation network and, therefore, that one can reasonably expect to see more private transit vehicles on city streets.

While the identities of SF Transformation's members are largely secret, Li says that both it and PPBL are made up entirely of SFBC members (though PPBL has been much less tight-lipped about its membership). In fact, Li is not aware of "any non-Bike Coalition advocacy that isn't led by Bike Coalition members," though she says the SFBC does not hold a "monopoly on bike advocacy in San Francisco" (personal communication, 2018). That members of SF Transformation and PPBL are involved in other forms of cycling advocacy aligns with Furness's assertion that activists who participate in more "creative forms of dissent" do not do so in lieu of participating in more mainstream forms of advocacy and protest (2010, p. 91), such as involvement with the SFBC.

Generally speaking, the SFMTA removes SF Transformation's interventions shortly after they are discovered, but there are instances where the unsanctioned infrastructure has been made permanent by the City (though not before removing the bollards used by the anonymous group and replacing them with SFMTA-approved ones). One of the earliest interventions that SF Transformation implemented, at the intersection of Kezar Drive and John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park, was acknowledged by the SFMTA and remained in place until the transportation agency replaced the bollards with their own (Morse, 2016). According to SFMTA chief spokesperson Paul Rose, the City had been planning to install bollards at this location, but was waiting until they had acquired smaller street sweepers, as the ones they had at the time were too large to fit between the bollards and curb (Morse, 2016).

The SFMTA chose to maintain another SF Transformation intervention, just east of the bollards in Golden Gate Park. Less than 48 hours after a pedestrian was struck and killed by a driver at the intersection of Fell and Baker streets, SF Transformation installed bollards on the northwest corner of the intersection. The bollards narrowed the turning radius and forced drivers to make a wider turn instead of one that would bring them closer to the curb (Sawyer, 2017). In response, the SFMTA removed SF Transformation's bollards and replaced them with their own, though not as many bollards were re-installed and the configuration was different than the original SF Transformation design (Figure 2). A similar situation played out on 7th Avenue, where SF Transformation installed bollards between Folsom and Howard Streets (Figure 3).

Figure 2: The intersection of Fell and Baker streets, showing the SFMTA-installed bollards that replaced the SF Transformation bollards, which were closer together and more numerous. September 3, 2018.

Figure 3: 7th Avenue, looking south from Howard Street to Folsom Street. SF Transformation installed bollards along this stretch in June 2017. The SFMTA removed the bollards, and later replaced them with new ones. September 3, 2018.

According to the SFMTA, SF Transformation's interventions must be removed as quickly as possible due to liability concerns (Vohra, personal communication, 2018). Activists like Persico understand the need for the SFMTA to be more cautious about the kinds of changes it allows on San Francisco streets, recognizing that "we can't have people coming out in the middle of the night and pouring cement, and making their own speed humps and stuff like that, because they probably aren't safe" (personal communication, 2018). However, Persico also says that "if [the SFMTA] were smart, they'd look the other way, because these posts are exactly the same as what they're using" (personal communication, 2018), a sentiment that echoes threads of what Douglas (2016) encountered when interviewing tactical urbanists in America. According to Douglas, one interviewee said that "the City should just allow improvements to be made by people like him, following official standards," something that Douglas

identifies as an example of the "considerable confidence (not to mention, arguably, hubris) of tactical urbanists" (2016, p. 126).

This confidence is evident within SF Transformation, with Shaw commenting that "a lot of this basic street design stuff is not complicated," though it is accompanied with the feeling that the group could go too far, and could end up doing more harm than good (personal communication, 2018). While Shaw expressed the belief that cycling infrastructure design is "not rocket science," they also acknowledged the possibility that "if we make a mistake, if something bad happens on our watch, that could make the whole movement look really bad," saying that the actions of one group could negatively impact how San Franciscans view cyclists as a whole (personal communication, 2018). As Shaw sees it:

> We don't want to put cycling as a whole in a position of being like, 'oh, you know, it's those rogues who illegally put crap on our streets.' We don't want to make everyone else look bad because of a couple people doing something, so that is, I think, kind of a danger of going too far. (personal communication, 2018)

Part of managing public perception meant meeting with the SFBC. Shaw describes the relationship between the two groups as an "interesting" one; the SFBC "knew who we were, we know who they are, and we had conversations with various people in the Bike Coalition about what we were doing," Shaw says, continuing that:

> The most positive thing that came out of that is we all had a mutual understanding that the world of bike advocacy is an ecosystem with many, many different players, and [SF Transformation was] filling a little void in the ecosystem. (personal communication, 2018)

Li says that the SFBC works with PPBL and SF Transformation "as much as possible," but also made it clear that, with an organization as large as the SFBC, there is a need to be accountable to its membership. "When you have ten members, you can

do whatever you want. When you have 10,000 members, you can't do whatever the hell you want," Li says (personal communication, 2018). This sentiment echoes elements of Shaw's comment that perhaps, back in the early days of the SFBC, "they could have and may have done things [like tactical urbanism]," but now that the group must represent the desires of its membership there is less space for that work (personal communication, 2018). Ultimately, Shaw says SF Transformation made sure to check in with the SFBC to ensure that whatever actions were taken by the anonymous group did not harm the SFBC's ability to continue with their work.

Critical Mass co-founder Chris Carlsson is dismissive of the idea that SF Transformation's type of advocacy can negatively impact how people view cyclists, saying that "people already hate bicyclists. They don't need any help." Carlsson says that when other cyclists turn on those choosing direct action, it only serves to "reinforce the scapegoating mentality that already exists," where cyclists and cycling infrastructure are demonized due to the view that they slow down vehicle traffic (personal communication, 2018).

While soliciting feedback from Mission residents for the ongoing Valencia Bikeway Improvements project, Kimberly Leung, the SFMTA project manager in charge of the efforts, says that a woman she spoke with had been booed by PPBL members as she skateboarded in a bike lane during a PPBL action, despite this not being an illegal activity under California state law. Leung says the woman "wasn't thrilled about the [Valencia Bikeway Improvements] project because of that poor interaction," and did not want to speak to Leung as a result, saying that the encounter with PPBL "left a bad taste in her mouth" (personal communication, 2018). Leung has heard from other San Franciscans who are frustrated with what PPBL has done, citing comments from residents about how PPBL is "kind of annoying," or about how they are consistently protesting along bike lanes. However, Leung also notes that during consultation efforts

along Valencia there were residents who said they appreciated the actions being taken by PPBL and SF Transformation, saying it made them feel safer (personal communication, 2018).

While SF Transformation may not challenge the SFMTA from a legal perspective, Shivam Vohra, an SFMTA project manager in charge of the Safer Taylor Street efforts, says the group presents a political challenge (personal communication, 2018). "The fact that these things are happening kind of does raise questions and skepticism of [the SFMTA's] communication or capabilities," Vohra says, continuing that whenever SF Transformation or PPBL stage a protest or install more bollards, it snowballs with other, ongoing issues within the SFMTA, forcing the agency to question itself. "Are we controlling this narrative, or are we always playing defense?" asks Vohra, arguing that it is the latter, saying that the SFMTA does spend time worrying about the political ramifications of issues like tactical urbanism (personal communication, 2018). Ultimately, Vohra says that the SFTMA's job is to validate citizen's concerns, regardless of how they are expressed – "we can't just ignore it. Ignoring it means we are ceding power to the unknown" (personal communication, 2018).

According to Shaw, an alternative to ceding power was in development – two members of SF Transformation had met with the SFMTA to discuss collaborating. As Shaw recounts, the SFTMA approached SF Transformation, saying the SFMTA could provide the group a list of short-term projects, and "if you guys can talk with your people and your community and figure out which of these things are a priority, we can put them on our short list" (personal communication, 2018). SF Transformation was interested in some form of partnership, says Shaw, viewing it as a way to "crowdsource from people actually using this infrastructure out on the streets, who know what it's like, and then collaborate with the City on some quick fixes while they're working on some long-term designs" (personal communication, 2018). Because these talks did not lead to

any such collaboration, it is impossible to say what form it would have taken. However, it is important to note that consideration was given to such a relationship, in part because it aligns with Finn's (2014) suggestion that this is a viable way for cities to absorb tactical urbanism into their planning systems, and in part because it supports Vohra's assertion that SF Transformation's actions forced the SFMTA to re-evaluate whether or not they control the narrative (personal communication, 2018). Partnering with SF Transformation would also allow the SFMTA to guide the narrative in a way that suits their strategic goals, which is in line with a neoliberal planning regime's proclivity for pushing organizations towards a form of participation that is easier for the state to control (Elwood, 2002).

Perhaps one of the most pressing questions when examining the activities of anonymous tactical urbanist groups is whether these groups feel compelled to consult with the local communities prior to making changes to their neighbourhoods and, if so, precisely how this consultation is structured. According to Shaw, the absence of formal community outreach processes like those carried out by the SFMTA was one of the main benefits to SF Transformation. Shaw says that because SF Transformation was not required to consult with a community before implementing one of their interventions, they were able to act much more quickly than the transportation agency was able to (personal communication, 2018). However, they stress that SF Transformation did solicit feedback from cyclists after putting in various interventions, saying that "we would obviously post pictures to social media and let people know 'let us know what you think, ride through it, let us know,'" (personal communication, 2018). As a result of this method, it is unclear how those who are not following the group on social media could be expected to provide feedback on the interventions. Interestingly, Shaw notes that consultation "is a real concern," saying that while they do not advocate for completely eliminating the City's consultation process completely, "there's a better balance to be

struck between what we did and what the City currently does" (personal communication, 2018).

Through SF Transformation's ad hoc consultation, Shaw says that the most common concerns the group received were levelled by vehicular cyclists, where cyclists are deemed to "fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles" (Forester, 1993, p. xi). The concerns from these cyclists centred on the idea that the infrastructure being provided by SF Transformation constrained their movements, when what they wanted was the freedom to move between vehicles and other cyclists. However, Shaw says that the vehicular cyclists are "not the kind of people we're talking to," which arguably undercuts their efforts to solicit feedback on interventions, in that it suggests feedback is sought only from those who may support the interventions.

San Francisco senior planner Blair Collins[3] says that it may be the case that groups like SF Transformation help to develop social capital, but argues it is undercut by their lack of transparency (personal communication, 2018). "The argument that the outside, community agencies bring is that you can very clearly demonstrate that people different than the regular suspects are participating and having their voices heard," Collins says, continuing that it is entirely possible that SF Transformation is made up of SFMTA employees. In Collins' view, this would not invalidate the work SF Transformation does, but "hopefully other tactical urbanism is expressly about including people in decision making" (personal communication, 2018).

LaFrombois' (2017) examination of tactical urbanist discourses raises essential questions about the role that privilege plays in this type of direct action. In mid-July 2018, Viktor Stevenson, the Black owner of a lemonade shop in the Mission district, was approached by four police officers, one of whom had his hand on his gun. The officers were responding to a call from someone who suspected Stevenson of trying to break

[3] Name has been changed.

into his own store (Miller, 2018). Stevenson's experience with the police while he was acting within his rights, initiated by a neighbour who called the police on him, stands in stark contrast with Shaw's experience with the police during an illegal act. Shaw described a situation where they were approached by the police in the middle of an action, saying that they "just calmly explained, 'oh, we're just installing a street safety pilot installation,'" and that the police, without asking any further questions or requesting that Shaw or others present produce identification or permits for what they were doing, left them to their work (personal communication, 2018). Stevenson's store is located at Valencia and 20th streets, just three blocks from where SF Transformation installed bollards on multiple occasions, and his encounter with the police serves as a particularly acute reminder of how those racialized as non-white in San Francisco, as elsewhere, are criminalized and read differently than those racialized as white.

LaFrombois (2017) writes that the existing literature on tactical urbanism focuses on how urban space is regulated, rather than including a discussion of how certain bodies are also regulated. This is a significant oversight, LaFrombois argues, because it ignores that this type of regulation informs how someone may assert their right to occupy a certain space. Paraphrasing Sankalia (2014), LaFrombois writes that many types of tactical urbanism rely heavily on social privilege:

> […] City authorities choose to ignore, but also may adopt/adapt into policy and practice, more 'creative' forms of DIY urbanism, despite its illegality, because it aligns with desired images of a liberal and creative city and the actors are seen as non-threatening. (2017, p. 428)

For Li, privilege within PPBL is evident in the leader's ability to dedicate time and resources during the day towards actions, which she argues is because they are "well-resourced and privileged" (personal communication, 2018). Li stresses that this level of privilege is reflected in other examples of tactical urbanism, even sanctioned ones.

"Even legal tactical urbanism like parklets…they're done by white people. They're done by well-resourced white people," Li says, continuing that while those efforts may have the best of intentions, it is problematic that they tend to be implemented by one group of people. Particularly troubling, Li says, is "when these improvements are occurring in communities of colour, or low-income communities" (personal communication, 2018), which is the case for work done by both PPBL and SF Transformation. Ultimately, Li suspects the heart of the issue lies in the lack of diversity in urban planning schools, saying that "this is probably a really big pipeline issue. It's like, how do you get more black and brown people in urban planning school? Like, that's probably what will really shift everything, right?" (personal communication, 2018).

Shaw says that people across the globe have reached out to SF Transformation requesting guidance as they set up their own groups. When this happens, Shaw warns people that "you don't know how your city and your city leaders and your city agencies are going to respond to this, you don't know how your police force is going to respond to this" (personal communication, 2018). Shaw attributes the tolerance of the San Francisco police is related to the city's history with the counterculture movement, saying that this history explains why their group was successful and why others may not experience similar successes. According to Shaw:

> There's so much history of this kind of stuff going on where people took things into their own hands, and at first the City was literally putting people in jail for doing this kind of stuff, but then eventually so many people flocked to San Francisco because they cared about that kind of mentality that the City became overwhelmed and they started embracing it more. (personal communication, 2018)

This suggests that Shaw attributes SF Transformation's ability to install bollards without penalty to the City's history tolerating direct action, rather than to any privileges any members of the group may possess.

There are conflicting views on how a group like SF Transformation can maintain its presence. Carlsson, speaking from experiences with Critical Mass, says that the first three to five years of a direct action organization are its heyday, a time creativity and enthusiasm. After half a decade of activity however, Carlsson says that actions become normalized, and the "routinization of it begins to erode the spontaneity" (personal communication, 2018). For Critical Mass, this meant losing members to the SFBC after the 1997 riot, as some people realized they preferred a more mainstream form of cycling advocacy.

Collins suspects that SF Transformation will undergo an evolution similar to that experienced by the Groundplay program. He thinks that the group's anonymous members will ultimately determine that "being a provocateur is great and you can advance certain ideas that way, but at some point, if you actually want them to be permanent you have to play this more fine-grain role of partner" (personal communication, 2018). Shaw says the idea of a partnership between SF Transformation and the SFMTA is a great one, and that if SF Transformation "had an outlet for that, we would be doing that, because you can get a lot more done when you have the oomph of the City behind you" (personal communication, 2018). However, it is not clear if this type of partnership would look any different from the work done by the SFBC, who already has street campaigns and a team of community organizers who gather feedback from stakeholders for their various projects.

Ultimately, SF Transformation has slowed down in recent months, and it is unclear if the group will resurface or if it has ceased operations permanently. Shaw says that as things within the group were slowing down, and as "people were moving onto different things and trying different strategies," they received an email from an SFMTA employee "just pleading with us to not do this anymore." While they did not respond to the message, and Shaw does not credit it with the group's dissolution, it weighed on them.

"It's a real thing that we're doing, and we should be conscious of how it affects everyone involved," they say (personal communication, 2018).

2.2 Valencia Street

Valencia Street, a busy arterial that runs through the eastern part of San Francisco's central area, stretches for two kilometres. The road's cross section is generally consistent: one lane in either direction, with left turn lanes dispersed along the corridor. These lane reductions are the results of the 1999 road diet, which saw the number of lanes reduced from four to two, and the introduction of painted bike lanes. Valencia was already a high-volume corridor for cyclists, but following the implementation of the road diet, the number of cyclists on the road increased roughly 140 percent in the first year, according to SFMTA transportation engineer Mike Sallaberry (Streetfilms, 2011). From Valencia's northernmost point, where it branches off from Market Street, to its southernmost point, where it terminates at Mission Street, a bike lane snakes alongside vehicles, entirely unprotected save for bollards in certain locations between 15th and 19th streets. According to Li and Persico, the fight to have this line of paint drawn on the street was a difficult one.

Stehlin refers to the Valencia road diet project as a "proving ground for the bicycle's integration into the capitalist city," writing that the project served as a catalyzing moment in what is viewed as the SFBC's ideological shift towards aligning cycling with economic growth objectives (2015a, p. 125). While Sallaberry's finding that bicycle traffic soared after the road diet was implemented is important, Stehlin argues that the ability to link cycling to economic growth was a more critical part of how the road diet was perceived, framing Valencia as the city's "patient zero" for economics-based arguments to support investments in cycling infrastructure (2015b, p. 154). Within a neoliberal planning regime, capital accumulation is prioritized above most other

things, and thus being able to tie economic growth directly to cycling infrastructure is an essential part of the city's acceptance of the redesigned road. A report issued following the implementation of the road diet included statements that business owners "often benefit from increased business that bike lanes bring to their neighbourhood," and according to Stehlin, "the next logical step was to more straightforwardly claim a positive causal relationship between the improvements and the business climate of the corridor" (2015b, p. 166). As a result of this report (as well as work done by the SFBC to encourage cyclists to patronize Valencia businesses), Stehlin argues that "bike culture was an intrinsic element of the culture of early gentrification in the Mission," even though cyclists overall were still considered outsiders (2015b, p. 168).

As time wore on, rents along Valencia continued to rise, and alongside them so did the number of white residents with yearly household earnings above $200,000 USD and those with university degrees (Stehlin, 2015a). Crucially, Stehlin notes that it was only white residents whose earnings increased. The median household income for non-white racialized groups did not experience a similar increase, which only furthered the divide between the Latinx people who originally inhabited the Mission and newcomers, who have contributed to the Mission's status as the "hottest location" in San Francisco, and the "preferred bedroom community of Silicon Valley" (Pogash, 2015). Between 2000 and 2009-2013, the Latinx population in the Mission declined by 27 percent[4], despite the city itself experiencing a growth in the Latinx population overall (City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2015). During the same time period, the Mission also saw a 13 percent decrease in the number of middle-income households (defined as those reporting annual earnings between $35,000 and $99,000 USD) and a 65 percent increase in households reporting an annual

[4] The 2009-2013 time period is based on the five-year average from the U.S. Census Bureau, while 2000 data is derived from the 2000 decennial Census.

income of over $150,000 USD (City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2015). Based on the available data, the report prepared by the Budget and Legislative Analyst projected that these demographic trends would only continue intensifying. The correlation between gentrification and increasing racial segregation is not limited to the Mission, but is an observable relationship across San Francisco as a whole (Mirabal, 2009, p. 16).

As discussed previously, the relationship between cycling and gentrification is a complicated one, but its complexity has not stopped some of the Mission's residents from pushing back against the introduction of bike sharing services in the neighbourhood, particularly along 24th Street. Citing the belief that bike sharing systems "cater to newcomers with means," Erick Arguello, the founder of the neighbourhood advocacy group Calle 24, says the organization and others in the Mission rejected the request from Ford GoBike to place bike docks along 24th Street and other nearby streets (Fitzgerald Rodriguez, 2017). Most recently, after significant pushback from Mission residents, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) board agreed to move a Ford GoBike docking station from its originally planned location in front of the 24th Street BART station to a new location in front of a library (Swan, 2018). According to BART board director Bevan Duffy, the decision to move the station spawned from the feeling that Motivate, the company that manages Ford GoBike, "has not effectively or respectfully worked with the Latino community" in the Mission (Swan, 2018).

Bike sharing is a relatively new system in North America, and issues of equity have been documented across the continent, with researchers finding that users tend to hold a higher socioeconomic status (Ricci, 2015; McNeil, Broach and Dill, 2017; Shaheen, Martin, Chan, Cohen, & Pogodzinski, 2014) and are generally white, male and more educated than the general population (McNeil et al., 2017; Shaheen et al., 2014). These demographics are reflected in a report from the University of California, Berkeley, where

researchers found that San Franciscans who used bike sharing on both a casual and annual basis were more likely to be well-educated white men with annual earnings of over $100,000 USD (Shaheen, Christensen, & Viegas de Lima, 2015), findings that give credence to Arguello's concerns about the target audience of bike sharing in the Mission.

In addition to the animosity towards bike sharing, some Mission residents and organizations have expressed frustration regarding the transit priority lanes along Mission Street. Carlsson describes the pushback as part of the "endless political protests" against the transit priority measure, saying that the Mission's Latinx residents have also "totally opposed parklets," which he believes is due to resident perceptions that they are for "rich white people" (personal communication, 2018).

Carlsson attributes much of this opposition to the "Latino defense of the car," saying that "a lot of folks in that group are really into their cars," to the point where there are "a fair number of people that are extremely obese and think they can't walk three blocks and so they need to drive everywhere they go" (personal communication, 2018). It is important to note here that, according to a statement by the Mission Merchants Association (MMA), business owners along Mission were upset with the loss of parking that the parking lanes necessitated, but that they did not oppose the lanes themselves, because they wanted speedier bus service along the corridor so that customers would have an easier time patronizing their businesses (Cabanatuan, 2016).

The SFMTA has yet to assess the economic impact of the transit priority lanes, but in a survey conducted by the MMA, the organization found that 301 of the 350 businesses who participated had lost revenue, which they attributed to the introduction of the priority lanes (Sawyer, 2018). However, there is little to suggest that the lost revenue was truly the result of the red transit lanes, and while assessing the impact of such lanes on existing businesses is still an emerging field of study, data from other

cities with transit priority lanes has suggested that such lanes typically have a neutral (and sometimes positive) impact on local businesses (McGillivray, 2018; Morrison, Fuller, Muhajarine, & Bell, 2018).

Another source of opposition to the red transit lanes in the Mission stems from the SFMTA's failure to properly address the fact that private transportation companies often use the lanes to shuttle employees of, among other things, technology companies to and from their workplaces (Sawyer, 2018). Due to the definition of 'bus' in the California vehicle code, a vehicle used to transport more than ten people for profit may legally use the transit priority lanes, which has led to what SFMTA Citizen Advisory Council member Sue Vaughan referred to as a "corporate giveaway" (Kukura, 2018). During a meeting on the issue, Carlos Bocanegra of the United to Save the Mission coalition, a group that has been a vocal opponent of both bike sharing stations and the transit priority lanes, connected the SFMTA's unwillingness to close this loophole to the agency's tendency to ignore lower income San Franciscans in favour of prioritizing the needs of more affluent residents (Sawyer, 2018). Other Mission residents made similar connections, arguing that the shuttles are yet another example of the technology industry assuming control of previously public spaces and introducing their own exclusionary transportation services (Maharawal, 2017).

According to the 2017 SFMTA Travel Decision Survey, the residential zone that contains the Mission has the second highest transit mode share in the city at 26 percent, as well as one of the highest cycling mode shares at four percent (SFMTA, 2017b, p. 20). Further, the zone's private automobile mode share is the second lowest in the city at 31 percent, compared to 44 percent in San Francisco overall (SFMTA, 2017b, p. 20). Neighbourhood-specific data that examine travel mode in relation to race was not available, and thus it is challenging to delve further into the more nuanced travel patterns of Mission residents.

2.2.1 SF Transformation Strikes on Valencia Street

According to 2017 ridership data, Valencia Street has one of the highest cyclist volumes of any corridor in the city (SFMTA 2017b), but the bike lane is also plagued by double parked vehicles, Uber and Lyft drivers that pull over to pick up or drop off passengers, and trucks that stop to unload cargo. For Persico, that the bike lane is now "just another parking lane" is particularly frustrating given the lengthy fight over its installation (personal communication, 2018).

According to Li, the SFBC had long been advocating for a higher level of protection along Valencia after the bike lane was first installed in 1999, but there was little indication that these concerns were being met with action from the City. Li suspects this was due to the need to remove on-street parking if greater separation were to be pursued (personal communication, 2018). Leung says that the bike lane installed in 1999 had actually been approved many years prior, but it was delayed due to a lack of political will, largely from the Director of Parking and Traffic (a department the SFMTA has since phased out). Further, Leung says that the practice of providing physically separated bike lanes was still a new one for San Francisco, so even when the sidewalks on Valencia were widened in 2010, SFMTA staff did not pursue or even consider providing a higher degree of separation for cyclists (personal communication, 2018).

Valencia was the site of some of SF Transformation's earliest interventions. Actions began with filming drivers who had parked in the bike lane, but the group quickly moved beyond that, placing orange traffic cones along the bike lane in September 2016 between 16th and 17th streets, and then installing bollards one early morning in October 2016 between 14th and 17th streets (Ruddick, 2016b). Shaw says that the motivation for SF Transformation's work on Valencia was in large part due to the proliferation of Uber and Lyft vehicles double parking along the corridor. Despite being a popular street for

cyclists, Shaw says it is "one of the most annoying streets to bike on because it's constantly blocked by vehicles" (personal communication, 2018), echoing comments made by Persico and Li. Over time, and with the combined actions of SF Transformation and PPBL, as well as the eventual involvement of district supervisors, things began to move forward. "The ball is rolling, and it wasn't two years ago," says Shaw (personal communication, 2018).

Shaw says that both walking advocates and cyclists along Valencia were supportive of the bollards SF Transformation installed, save for some individuals who felt constrained by cycling infrastructure and adhered to a vehicular-style of cycling. Despite this support however, during the Valencia intervention some pedestrians stopped and asked group members questions, like "'Why are you doing this? You're not the City, you know. What if somebody gets hurt?'" (personal communication, 2018). That someone might be hurt on a piece of infrastructure installed by SF Transformation was a common refrain throughout many of the interviews conducted for this research; liability was brought up consistently as a justification for removing the bollards.

Valencia has also been the site of multiple bike lane interventions by PPBL, beginning in May 2017 (Ruddick, 2017c). Li cites PPBL's involvement as both a positive and negative example of how tactical urbanism can influence how people view cycling advocacy in San Francisco. Li credits the ongoing SFMTA study of possible improvements to the existing bike lane design with the work done by PPBL. After PPBL began physically separating vehicle traffic from cyclists, the increased media attention and involvement of elected officials sparked a renewed conversation regarding a higher degree of separation for the lane, ultimately leading to $145,000 USD in funding being allocated towards an ongoing study examining potential bike lane modifications, an enforcement strategy and "traffic flow and safety recommendations" (SFMTA, 2018b). During the study's early stages, Li says that the SFBC worked directly with PPBL to

ensure that the messaging between the two groups was consistent, and that cycling advocates attended consultations and other meetings (personal communication, 2018).

Leung says that there was a growing desire to see a higher level of separation between cyclists and vehicle traffic on Valencia, citing actions by both SF Transformation and PPBL along the corridor. According to both Leung and Li, the protests organized by PPBL drew the attention of former District 8 Supervisor Jeff Sheehy, who previously represented the Mission (personal communications, 2018). Leung credits a PPBL organizer's close relationship with Sheehy as a contributing factor to the decision to allocate funding for the Valencia Bikeway Improvements project, which Leung now manages. The organizer was "really pushing for this study, and for a project on Valencia [and they have] a good relationship with Supervisor Sheehy, so through all of that, Supervisor Sheehy came to [the SFMTA] and wanted to really start this planning process," says Leung (personal communication, 2018).

However, PPBL's tactics also come with challenges, Li says, remarking that the group "can really rub people the wrong way, whether it's city planners [or] elected officials" (personal communication, 2018). Because of this, the SFBC has worked to mitigate the actions undertaken by PPBL, leveraging the close relationships the SFBC has with city staff to prepare them for interventions PPBL may be planning, or give staff advance notice on positions the 'guerrilla' group may be taking on certain issues. This means the SFBC is able to maintain their relationship with city staff, but also, as Li notes, it means the cycling advocacy organization can exercise its influence and push for specific projects. As Li describes it:

> [The SFBC has] gotten to the point where we have such strong relationships with city staff on certain projects that we've been able to co-strategize so, we're like 'hey, [PPBL is] going to do this, they're going to push you to do more near-term projects. Can we work together to figure out what those near-term improvements

are going to be? If we like them, we'll tell you, if we don't, we'll tell you we won't like them.' (personal communication, 2018)

Li also cites the work done by PPBL on Valencia as emblematic of larger issues of tactical urbanism. In Li's view, these kinds of interventions require strong personalities; people must be comfortable putting themselves on the line in the most literal sense, something that would attract certain people over others. Threads of this are echoed in LaFrombois' (2017) research on the intersections of tactical urbanism and privilege, where it is written that the types of activities that are deemed appropriate largely hinge on the race, class and gender of the person initiating them. Further, Li says that the kinds of people who are involved in PPBL are very well-resourced, and that while she does "appreciate and respect the fact that [the PPBL organizer] spends his time during the day doing bike advocacy, […] his experience and his ability to do that is because he's well-resourced and he's privileged" (personal communication, 2018). Li points out that the organizer is white and lives in the Mission, which she describes as a "rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood, where Latino community-based organizations are really fighting very visibly and very hard against gentrification, and are fighting to preserve Latino culture and history against, honestly, people like [him]."

Persico is resistant to the idea that there is a relationship between cycling and gentrification, calling it a "red herring," but also says that if there is a relationship between the two it would not be entirely bad, because "if gentrification means white people who own homes are bicycling, well, for good or for bad, those are the people that politicians listen to" (personal communication, 2018). Persico continues that:

> When bicycling was seen as just for poor people, or people who got DUIs or renters, well then a politician doesn't have to pay attention to these marginalized people, right? Because they don't gather, they're too busy working three jobs, they don't have a voice. (personal communication, 2018)

In other words, in Persico's view, as cycling becomes more mainstream across various income levels, politicians who cater to the interests of white property owners will be more likely to advocate on their behalf for cycling infrastructure. When this happens, Persico says it will mean more separated bike lanes, and "everyone can enjoy the benefits of saving that money, getting the exercise, avoiding traffic…the benefits are for all" (personal communication, 2018).

Li says that people of all backgrounds bike on Valencia, and that "any kind of bike infrastructure, if in a vacuum, would benefit everyone who's riding, but campaigns and politics are not in a vacuum" (personal communication, 2018). The political nature of cycling advocacy came to the forefront for Li in the summer of 2018, when the SFBC received word that PPBL had organized a bike ride intended to gain political buy-in for protected cycling infrastructure on Valencia. Li says there were a number of concerns, chiefly that attendees were expected to be "overwhelmingly white, and overwhelmingly not representative of the broader community." Further, Li says she was also aware that PPBL organizers "don't have those connections [to the broader community], so if they did reach out it would look bad for them," perhaps due to the feelings of tokenisation. Finally, Li says that the elected officials who were invited were left of centre, and she suspected that their political leanings would lead them to prioritize representation at the event (personal communication, 2018). Thus, there was concern that excluding non-white racialized community members would harm the cause for protected infrastructure along Valencia, because it could suggest that such infrastructure was catering to the needs of white residents, something that would only feed the fears voiced by community advocates. Ironically, Li suspects that the fallout from the bike ride strengthened the relationship the SFBC has with both elected officials and Mission residents, saying that community organizers within the SFBC have been working

diligently to ensure they are connecting with neighbourhood organizations, including those focusing specifically on queer and Latinx issues (personal communication, 2018).

Leung voiced similar concerns about what the PPBL bike ride might represent to those not participating in it, saying that those who attended tended to be avid cyclists who are already a part of PPBL actions. In lieu of the PPBL-organized bike ride, Leung suggested this alternative:

> One of the things that I would like to see is having that ride, but having it with other people, maybe a parent from a school and their kid. […] Like, I'm not trying to say, 'oh, they're all the same people' but it's the avid cyclists that were a part of this ride, and I wanted it to be something where we had different representation and different perspectives. (personal communication, 2018)

Leung expressed the desire to see different people participating in the ride, saying that "even though [PPBL is] the most vocal, we want to make sure the correct information is getting out there about the project," referencing the SFMTA's Bikeway Improvements project.

Ultimately, the concerns voiced by Li and Leung boil down to questions of whether PPBL and SF Transformation represent the community they work in, and it is not evident that they do. Shaw candidly discussed how SF Transformation's "main benefit," its nimbleness, was because they did not have to engage in the same outreach processes that the SFMTA must, but acknowledged that this can be problematic at times (personal communication, 2018). There was some pushback against the Valencia intervention, but Shaw argues that the main value of SF Transformation's changes was in drawing attention to the issues along the corridor, like the lack of separation that lead to cars parking in the bike lane. The SFMTA's current consultation process is "so, so long and so extensive that it does more harm than good by the amount of time it

takes," (personal communication, 2018) but it is challenging to argue that the alternative is no consultation at all.

2.2.2 The SFMTA and the Valencia Bikeway Improvements Study

The SFMTA installed bollards along certain stretches of Valencia in March 2018 as part of their initial work examining possible improvements to the street's cycling infrastructure. After the posts were installed, Leung says that the agency "got some flak from people, [saying] you know, 'MTrA [an alternate name for SF Transformation] did it two years ago, what took you so long?" (personal communication, 2018). The posts installed by the SFMTA represent the first in what will ultimately be a series of improvements made to the corridor, with Leung saying that the city agency wanted to avoid "taking out parking or completely redoing the street […] but we did want to start providing that level of protection and safety, whatever little bit we can right now to help that situation out there" (personal communication, 2018). While the move is a welcome one, it must be noted that the bollards installed between 15th and 19th streets are a Band-Aid solution, and that there is nothing to prevent drivers from parking between the sparsely distributed posts (Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4: A JUMP bike user passes two vehicles parked in the Valencia Street bike lane. The SFMTA installed bollards in selected areas along the corridor, but they have done little to prevent drivers from parking in the bike lane. September 3, 2018.

Figure 5: Three bollards installed on Valencia Street by the SFMTA, next to a bike counter monitoring cyclist activity on the corridor. September 3, 2018.

The bollards installed in the spring of 2018 were one of the early steps in the ongoing Valencia Bikeway Improvements project, headed by the SFMTA with Leung as the project manager. Leung acknowledges that there are some who felt the project should have been initiated earlier, but says that there were other projects on the docket and finite resources to work with. The project began with the outreach process, a decision that Leung says stemmed from pushback that the SFMTA had received following the introduction of the Mission red transit priority lanes. According to Leung, because the red transit lane project "didn't go very well with the community, [the SFMTA] wanted to make sure [they] had a really robust and comprehensive outreach process," which is why work on Valencia began with assembling stakeholder groups and going door to door to determine the community's needs (personal communication, 2018).

There are currently no plans to incorporate any tactical urbanism into the project's consultation, but, depending on timing, the SFMTA project team has considered sketching out the preferred design on a few blocks (or perhaps just one) so that people could experience it before substantial changes are made, but Leung says this initiative would not be on the same level as what was done on Taylor Street (personal communication, 2018). "Admittedly, we haven't always had the best outreach," says Leung, noting that the Taylor project, discussed in the next section, set the bar quite high for what could be done. Leung says she consulted with that project team prior to initiating the Valencia consultation process to get advice on how to ensure that "everyone who wants to get heard can be heard, and can get to the table" (personal communication, 2018). According to Leung, the tactic of beginning with outreach has "gone over really well" in the community, citing feedback from those consulted that they are glad to be involved from the very start.

Leung acknowledges that some have raised concerns regarding the ongoing gentrification of the area, and says that the project team has had ongoing conversations about their role in changing the neighbourhood. These conversations are complicated by the fact that, according to Leung:

> If you come to our workshops, or see who the most vocal people [are], what you're seeing is a lot of people that are wealthier, that work in the tech industry, that are the ones that are the most vocal about what's going on. (personal communication, 2018)

In an effort to address these concerns, Leung says the outreach team has worked to "make people aware of different resources when it comes to biking," like the bike sharing payment scheme for low-income residents (personal communication, 2018). Under this payment option, qualifying users receive a steeply discounted membership, paying $5 USD for the first year and then $5 USD monthly after. This membership stream also does not require users to register using a debit or credit card, removing another potential barrier (Small, 2017). However, as discussed previously, bike sharing has been met with pushback in the Mission, and Motivate, the company that manages Ford GoBike, has been criticized for failing to properly publicize the low-income payment option (Singh, 2017).

Ultimately, Leung says that the SFMTA is "not trying to change the Mission," but rather make cycling accessible to everyone by not designing a facility geared towards commuters. The intention is to "design a facility that someone who's really young could be using as well," and that in order to do this the SFMTA has reached out to schools, PTA groups, parents and principals, to understand how their students get to school. Leung says many people she's spoken with have told her that "'there's no way I'm going to let my child bike on Valencia right now, with all this dooring, there's a lot of traffic,'" and that the solution is to install a protected facility. "I think people think of

biking as that kind of tech-bro culture in San Francisco, but we're trying to design a facility that everyone would feel comfortable riding on," Leung says (personal communication, 2018). Furness makes a similar observation about cycling culture, writing that "there is a palatable boys' club mentality associated with cycling that marginalizes many women" (2010, p. 181). Garlick writes that men are the "main bearers of the neoliberal ideology of competition," and thus stand to gain the most from its maintenance (2013, p. 235), an assertion supported by Lindisfarne and Neale's (2016) acknowledgement that gendered relations and differences have become more pronounced under neoliberalism. Further, in San Francisco, a place where the technology industry has been roundly critiqued for its contribution to the city's growing inequality, and where there is a near fetishization of the neoliberal ideal of the self-entrepreneur (in this case, one who works in tech), the connection between cycling and "tech-bro culture" is particularly telling of attitudes towards cycling in the Mission.

2.3 Safer Taylor Street

Taylor Street runs through the eastern portion of the Tenderloin, one of San Francisco's poorest neighbourhoods, sandwiched between some of the city's most expensive neighbourhoods (Robinson, 1995; Carter, 2015; Vohra, 2018). The Tenderloin is a neighbourhood grounded in community resistance and organizing, with a history of action going back more than one hundred years (Chang, 2017).

Prior to the 1980s, the Tenderloin was a neighbourhood that was simultaneously neglected by city agencies and service providers and criticized by those who saw its residents as a blight. Waters and Hudson characterize it as a neighbourhood lacking both in social cohesion and services – the things that "allow a community to define itself" (1998, p. 304). However, following an influx in Southeast Asian immigrants and a dramatic increase in community organizing, the Tenderloin's residents began to

understand that there was a need to work to ensure the neighbourhood remained affordable, something that was put at risk as tourism became a more central part of San Francisco's economy (Waters & Hudson, 1998). While the city around it has gentrified, the Tenderloin has managed to maintain some semblance of affordability, largely due to resident efforts to squash redevelopment plans (Robinson, 1996) and the preservation of affordable housing stock by non-profits (O'Mara, 2018), both of which contribute to the Tenderloin's status as one of the "few neighbourhoods with viable housing options for people with low or no incomes" (Chang, 2017, p. 169).

Steve Gibson, the former interim executive director of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, says that when he first started working in the neighbourhood, he was told he "could never use the word gentrification, because it was one of the worst words in the world to use in the Tenderloin. They're paranoid about the whole concept" (personal communication, 2018). However, while roughly 30 percent of the property in the Tenderloin is owned by non-profits that provide services to low-income residents, that does not mean the neighbourhood is immune to gentrification. Gibson acknowledged that the area has changed over the years, particularly along Market Street, a corridor that houses the offices of giants like Twitter, Uber and Square (personal communication, 2018). According to McNeill, the 2011 arrival of Twitter on Market saw commercial rents in the area rise 60 percent. Upon arrival, the company introduced a slew of "barely quantifiable community contributions," including a plan to "inform employees about Project Homeless Connect's service days," and "provide social media training to at least two community based housing organizations in the community so their residents and employees may better access social media" (McNeill, 2016, p. 504).

Watson and Hudson point to a number of moments in the Tenderloin's history where it became clear that the area was not immune to the forces changing the rest of

the city. As some non-profit agencies working in the neighbourhood became more powerful and "essentially unaccountable to anyone," organizations like the North of Market Planning Coalition, a residents group that had successfully lobbied for more restrictive zoning, were forced to pursue funding wherever they could and, as a result, more closely align their goals with those of their new funders (Watson & Hudson, 1998, p. 313). This included establishing a friendlier relationship with newly built luxury hotels, seeking members who owned condominiums and, crucially, a refusal to oppose the establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the Tenderloin. As noted in Section 1.3, BIDs are often used by cities to position themselves as investment-friendly by giving property and business owners greater control over how a commercial district is designed, policed and experienced (Wee, 2016; Watson & Hudson, 1998). They are a hallmark of the American neoliberal city, and the introduction of one to the Tenderloin marked a distinct shift in how the neighbourhood's space was managed.

2.3.1 The SFMTA on Taylor Street

Launched in the spring of 2017, Safer Taylor Street is an SFMTA project that seeks to improve "transportation safety and livability for all users of [the] corridor" (SFMTA, 2018c). The project involves a review of the existing conditions, extensive community consultation, and a one-day pop-up that saw the City install temporary bike lanes and wider sidewalks, using tactical urbanism as a way to gauge public sentiments (SFMTA, 2018c). While the street itself spans close to three kilometres, the Taylor project focuses on the 750 metre stretch from Market to Sutter streets, a portion of the street that includes historic buildings like the Warfield Theatre as well as single-room occupancy residences, churches, community organizations and rehabilitation centres (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Taylor Street at Turk Street, looking north. The SFMTA's tactical urbanism demonstration took place on this block in August 2017. September 1, 2018.

Roughly 1.7 kilometres of Taylor Street is on the City's High Injury Network, including the 750 metres that the project addresses. According to the SFMTA (2018c), this 750 metre stretch sees a higher collision rate than the rest of the city, with an average of one cyclist or pedestrian injured each month. The street's cross section is consistent through the entire corridor – three travel lanes, with parking lanes on both sides. There is also no transit on Taylor, which is a benefit according to project manager Shivam Vohra; fewer types of road users means there are fewer needs to consider, and there is no chance that reducing travel lanes would cause delays for transit users, because there are none. The project has so far largely flown under the radar according to Vohra, something he attributes to its lack of political relevancy (personal

communication, 2018), which arguably speaks to how projects that impact the city's less socioeconomically developed areas are not viewed by the public as important.

The tactical urbanism elements of the project were implemented on August 30th, 2017 and constituted a significant part of the outreach efforts. What was previously a three lane street with parking on both sides was temporarily turned into a two lane street with parking on a single side. The closed lanes were replaced with wider sidewalks (made from tape laid down on the asphalt), a protected bike lane (made out of tar paper that was painted green and separated from the live traffic lanes by planters borrowed from the City's Recreation and Parks department), dedicated activity spaces, seating and floating loading bays and crosswalks to allow for safe crossing from the loading bays to the sidewalk. As with unsanctioned tactical urbanist work, all of the pop-up elements needed to be engineered so that they could be installed quickly and with relative ease – in this case, everything had to be in place in approximately two hours, and then uninstalled in a similarly short period of time. The intention behind the project was to show what could be implemented permanently on Taylor, to allow road users of all kinds to experience a different kind of street, if only for a block and only for a day. At the time, there were no protected bike lanes in the Tenderloin, so providing a venue for residents and passersby to understand how one could fit into the neighbourhood was another important part of the demonstration (Vohra, personal communication, 2018).

Gibson echoes Vohra's comments on the impact that the demonstration had, saying that the project team knew going in that lane reductions would not negatively impact vehicle traffic and that there was an understanding that the Tenderloin lacked public spaces. However, Gibson says that the one-day event allowed residents to experience the changes firsthand, "it got more people's eyes open, you know, 'yeah, this is what we've been talking about'" (personal communication, 2018). According to Vohra, the Safer Taylor Street project is a first for the SFMTA, providing an

unprecedented level of community outreach and consultation. Gibson, who now works as an urban planning consultant, says that over the course of his career he has yet to encounter a project like Safer Taylor Street, describing typical consultation efforts as:

> Most of the time, a city agency or state or federal…it doesn't matter, like the MTA, they meet with the community, they've already decided what they're going to do, it's a 'check the box, we met with the community, we're going to do whatever we want anyway.' (personal communication, 2018)

While this is the first time the SFMTA has been so experimental in its outreach, Vohra is optimistic that a model like this could be applied to future projects, especially those in the Tenderloin. "We've heard from the community that this is exactly what they wanted. They want this to be repeated in any other project in the Tenderloin," Vohra says (personal communication, 2018). However, the issue of how to finance such efforts could be a sticking point. While Safer Taylor Street has been fully funded through to construction, other initiatives may run up against opposition, and Vohra notes that while SFMTA staff had the time and resources to dedicate themselves to this project, that is not always the case for transportation projects (personal communication, 2018). Shaw voiced similar concerns about funding for SFMTA projects, saying that this is not something SF Transformation faults the City for; "it's other people who don't have cycling infrastructure as a priority in their minds, it's their fault for not assigning the funding to those issues" (personal communication, 2018). The one-day demonstration cost between $60,000 and $70,000 USD (Vohra, personal communication, 2018), and while this is not necessarily a significant amount for agencies that deal with multi-million dollar capital budgets, it is not an insignificant amount either, and one could reasonably expect that similar outreach efforts could be quashed due to financial constraints, perceived or otherwise.

In the end, the design that was approved by the SFMTA Board of Directors in October 2018 does not include the protected bike lane that was piloted in August 2017, something Vohra says is due to the strong pushback related to potential physical and conceptual conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians (personal communication, 2018). "Some of those fears, I would say, are unfounded, and due to a lack of familiarity with this kind of facility, and some of them were legitimate concerns," says Vohra. For example, due to the high number of seniors in the area, mobility issues and accessible parking became an issue. Gibson added that the grade and persistent headwinds along Taylor were additional reasons why the bike lane was seen as inappropriate for the project.

One of the central concerns voiced by community members was the fear that the bike lane would mean the sidewalks could not be widened as much. According to Gibson, during consultation the project team learned that many Tenderloin residents felt they lacked places to gather and socialize. "There's no public space for them," says Gibson, continuing that:

> We got a lot of input from those people on that particular block [of Taylor, between Turk and Eddy] and the neighbourhood around it, saying 'this is cool, we'd like to have a place like this so when we come out of our senior living [facility], or our houses, to get some air and talk to our friends we don't have to just sit on the sidewalk and look like we're homeless or vagrants.' (personal communication, 2018)

As a result of this feedback, both parking lanes are being maintained, and sidewalks are being widened from 4.5 metres to 7.6 metres, but no cycling facilities are being provided (personal communication, 2018). However, due to the provision of a buffer between the parking lane and live lane, Vohra argues that the redesign actually allows for a "halfway decent Class 2 bike lane," on what will be a significantly traffic-

calmed street (personal communication, 2018). While Vohra says it may be possible to revise the design to include a bike lane once the road has been surveyed, "to respect the trust that we built with the community, we killed the bike lane," and there are no concrete plans to reintroduce one (personal communication, 2018).

This chapter has outlined the relationship between the anonymous tactical urbanist group SF Transformation, PPBL, the SFMTA, cycling advocates and residents, examining sources of conflict and tension that, in many cases, existed prior to the changes SF Transformation made to the street. This chapter has also touched on the substantial concerns Mission residents have raised regarding transit and cycling infrastructure in their neighbourhood, as a way of providing proper context for the response to the proposed cycling infrastructure changes brought forward by the SFMTA.

The outcome of the targeted interventions done by SF Transformation has been a hodgepodge of successes and failures, celebration and pushback. Overall, it is not clear that the work they have done has led to any broader shifts in how the City prioritizes cycling infrastructure projects and, as discussed in the next section, it has in some cases exacerbated existing tensions between the Mission community and cycling advocates. With respect to the SFMTA's Safer Taylor Street Project, the tactical urbanism elements were met with more positivity from the community, but it is again not evident that this will translate into more widespread change. In the following chapter of this paper, these challenges are discussed more fully, and a framework for evaluating tactical urbanism in San Francisco is explored.

Chapter 3: Discussion

In this chapter, key differences and similarities between the tactical urbanism employed by SF Transformation and the SFMTA are examined. Through this, a framework is established for the following part of the chapter, where Marcuse's thoughts on an operationalized critical urban theory are employed as a way of analyzing tactical urbanism in San Francisco. Through this lens, it is possible to more critically examine if SF Transformation is carving out a space for a more socially just form of urbanism, as well as assess how the SFMTA's work on Taylor fits into how cycling is prioritized—or not—by the City. Finally, it is determined that unsanctioned tactical urbanism in San Francisco has, at best, a relationship with the city's planning regime that is highly contingent upon factors outside an activist group's control.

While there are several immediately evident differences between the SFMTA-operated Safer Taylor Street project and anything executed by SF Transformation, key parallels can be drawn between City-initiated projects and the actions of anonymous groups. The most noteworthy similarity is that, in all scenarios, the actions of the SFMTA and SF Transformation push San Franciscans to envision their streets as if they were designed to prioritize the needs of vulnerable road users. Tactical urbanism, regardless of who is heading the charge, is a method of pushing people to shift the way they imagine a place, whether it is a road, a parking space or an empty plot of land.

Vohra says the goal of the one-day demonstration on Taylor Street was to show people what the street could look like, allowing them to experience the bike lane or the wider sidewalks. Similar comments were made by Shaw, who said SF Transformation's goal was partially to educate people "by showing them this is what street design should be like" (personal communications, 2018). Those who need educating are not just citizens or community members, but also those within city agencies, those who work for

the SFMTA or in the Mayor's office. Gibson says that even though interventions carried out by groups like SF Transformation are illegal acts in public spaces, "sometimes you just have to do it, to show the City" (personal communication, 2018).

Tactical urbanism's ability to present alternatives to the existing landscape is not necessarily undercut by a project's often short-lived existence. Installations, according to Shaw, were put in place in a matter of hours, and even if they only lasted for a day, "hundreds of people would see it, and would have a real, physical conception of what it could look like on a larger scale, in a more formalized way" (personal communication, 2018). Instances where the City allows an intervention to remain in place for longer (either in a display of tolerance, or simply because nobody has noticed) help the cause of SF Transformation, Gibson says, because tactical urbanist groups can gather data and feedback, strengthening their arguments for cycling infrastructure (personal communication, 2018). According to Vohra, at the time of the Safer Taylor Street demonstration there were no protected bike lanes in the Tenderloin, so showcasing what one might look like on Taylor was critical. The intention was to help people understand the scale of the project, as well as the changes being proposed (personal communication, 2018).

Tactical urbanism, in both its sanctioned and unsanctioned forms, allows for experimentation and modification. Shaw says that while ideas for interventions were never dismissed outright, some were adjusted based on what was observed when SF Transformation arrived at a proposed location. "A lot has to do with when you get to the site and observe what's going on, and then you kind of decide a different way of doing things," Shaw says, continuing that "there's only so much planning you can do without actually being there." Because of this, Shaw says they tended to prefer using orange cones rather than bollards, because they allow for maximum flexibility. With cones, SF Transformation could place them in the street, "stand on the sidewalk for

three light cycles and watch how it's changed traffic flows, and then move them around a couple feet and watch again," creating a more dynamic, flexible situation (personal communication, 2018). While the SFMTA was not able to make modifications to the project layout during the Safer Taylor Street demonstration, testing the design over a one-day period did allow the project team to get feedback from residents that would have been otherwise impossible.

Other than the most obvious difference – that the SFMTA's Safer Taylor Project was sanctioned and SF Transformation's work on Valencia was not – there are contrasting aspects of these interventions that bear highlighting.

According to Vohra, the cost of the one-day demonstration on Taylor was between $60,000 and $70,000 USD, making it much more expensive than anything SF Transformation ever implemented. By SF Transformation's estimates, the cost of the intervention at Fell and Baker cost roughly $300 USD, which went towards the purchase of ten bollards from an online distributor and some spray paint (SF Transformation, 2017), and interventions along Valencia were similarly low cost.

Vohra says that while the Taylor demonstration was quite expensive to execute, the SFMTA is "still reaping the benefits of what happened last summer," when the demonstration was active. However, funding and staffing constraints could prevent something as ambitious from being implemented in the future. The Safer Taylor Street project has its funding secured, but Vohra says that other projects could be limited in scope, and that while SFMTA staff were able to dedicate themselves to this project, that is not always the case (personal communication, 2018). The Taylor Street demonstration may have helped build trust in the Tenderloin, but at a time when city departments are operating with austere budgets it is difficult to say whether or not it is realistic to anticipate similar outreach efforts in the near future.

Shaw expressed a high degree of confidence when discussing the infrastructure put in place by SF Transformation, saying that "it's not rocket science, it doesn't require Master's degrees and PhDs to be able to really…to put a couple posts in the ground," but feedback from Vohra and Collins suggests otherwise (personal communications, 2018). Conversely, while the engineering minutiae of the Taylor bike lane were not finalized at the time of the demonstration, it was still necessary to ensure that service vehicles, like fire trucks, were able to safely drive down Taylor with the temporarily narrowed street, and modelling was done beforehand to confirm that there was enough space to accommodate vehicle movements. A more fleshed-out discussion of whether or not the urban planning profession has gatekept and prevented involvement of those without specialized degrees or extensive experience is outside of the scope of this paper, but statements from Collins, Shaw and Vohra clearly indicate that there are divergent views on how complicated cycling infrastructure is.

Critical to highlight is the fact that the SFMTA is held accountable for the infrastructure it lays on city streets, and thus there is a higher burden placed upon the agency to ensure that, even if a design is being piloted, it still adheres to accepted standards and is installed safely. As Collins points out, "at the end of the day, [the SFMTA are] traffic engineers whose names literally have to be next to street designs, and then they are held responsible for anything that happens there as a result of those designs" (personal communication, 2018), which is not the case for an anonymous group that installs its designs covertly. As discussed in previous sections, SF Transformation was aware that there were liability issues for the work they were doing, and Shaw recalled a conversation they had with a lawyer who noted that the City could pursue legal action "should something terrible happen" (personal communication, 2018). This suggests that, if the City were to establish a formal relationship with a group

like SF Transformation, there would need to be a clearly defined role for each group to play so that the project's legal ramifications could be more easily navigated.

The intention behind each project is another significant difference between what the SFMTA implemented and the work done by SF Transformation and, by extension, PPBL. The intention behind the Safer Taylor Street demonstration was to capture feedback from groups normally left out of the consultation process, and to allow those who had perhaps never ridden in a protected bike lane to experience such a facility.

Conversely, the tactical urbanism carried out by SF Transformation and PPBL is an embodiment of frustration with the city's lack of protected bike lanes, rather than an attempt to include new voices in the planning process. SF Transformation engages in tactical urbanism as an act of protest against a City that they feel has paid little heed to the needs of cyclists despite having policy documents that suggest a desire to increase the cycling mode share and reduce cyclist injuries and fatalities. The SFMTA, on the other hand, is engaging in tactical urbanism as a way to increase its consultation footprint, drawing attention to a specific project and creating a tangible way for people to experience what Taylor could look and feel like with the proposed changes.

The timeframe established by the SFMTA for their own project versus those forced upon SF Transformation due to circumstances beyond their control is a final difference that should be highlighted. All interview subjects recognized that the liability risks faced by the City were too great to allow unsanctioned interventions to remain on the street for too long. Once the City is made aware of an intervention, they work quickly to remove it because, as Vohra puts it, the SFMTA has "not just the legal obligation but also the ethical obligation to make sure that whatever is out there on the street is safe for the people using it" (personal communication, 2018). As a result, even if the bollards laid out by SF Transformation are almost a carbon copy of those used by the SFMTA,

they will still be removed and replaced with SFMTA-approved posts—or simply not replaced at all.

As stated in the introduction to this paper, part of the intention of this research is to engage with critical urban theory as a way to evaluate the work being done by SF Transformation. Tactical urbanism has been held up by practitioners and proponents as a way to create stronger, more democratic communities. In many ways, tactical urbanists enact certain principles of critical urban theory when they make changes, sanctioned or not, to the built environment in an effort to address a city's perceived shortcomings. What follows below is an analysis of the actions of the SFMTA and SF Transformation using a critical theory lens drawn from ideas put forward by Marcuse (2009; 2012) surrounding post-Hurricane Katrina planning. As before, PPBL is included in this analysis where relevant because their work was frequently discussed alongside SF Transformation by interview subjects.

Critical urban theory proposes that urbanization may occur in a more socially just, democratic way. However, if the members of SF Transformation are not consulting with their fellow citizens, can it be argued that tactical urbanism represents this more democratic, socially just type of urbanization? And further, if there is recognition by individuals like Shaw that the group could do more harm than good and yet this did not lead them to solicit feedback prior to installing bollards, it could be argued that the group is actually quite anti-democratic, despite their good intentions.

In the case of SF Transformation, consultation is sacrificed in favour of speedy implementation, and those who oppose what the group is doing are left with two options: voice their frustrations through social media or confront its members mid-intervention. In both instances, Shaw has indicated that SF Transformation is less concerned with criticism from certain groups of cyclists, as well as drivers (personal communication, 2018). Shaw's statement that "we're not talking to those people" is

difficult to swallow. If a central tenet of tactical urbanism is its ability to create social capital amongst citizens, can it be argued that that is being done when dissenting voices are ignored? It is unreasonable to expect a citizen group like SF Transformation to undergo the same level of consultation that a city planning department does, but there is a balance that can be struck between a month's long community engagement process and no prior engagement at all.

The SFMTA is engaged in a more socially just form of urbanization with the Safer Taylor Street project, in that they have undergone an extensive consultation process that has captured concerns from groups who are often excluded from the planning process. The intention behind using tactical urbanism in this project was to gather feedback on the proposed changes to Taylor, and thus it is evident why the process appears to be more democratic than something done by SF Transformation. SF Transformation does not claim to be using tactical urbanism purely to gauge public support for bike lanes, and their goals are significantly different than the SFMTA, but it is nevertheless challenging to accept that what SF Transformation are doing are democratic expressions of their right to reshape space, in part because they work in corridors that have so obviously been contested for so long. It seems utterly wrongheaded to not attempt to establish connections with the community prior to doing work. Groups attempting to alter the built environment must value concerns from local community members, rather than seek to validate a pre-existing belief by relying on selected voices within the cycling community.

In writing about post-Hurricane Katrina planning, Marcuse (2009; 2012) proposes three ways to make critical urban theory actionable, calling for an approach that exposes, proposes and politicizes an issue, all while considering what could have been and what could still be. Critical Planning, as Marcuse calls it, builds on the essential quality of critical urban theory, which "systematically, logically, and even dramatically

shows that alternatives to the undesired present are indeed possible" (2012, p. 37). Exposing involves analyzing the root of the problem, and ensuring that the analysis is clear and accessible to those who need it. As Brenner (2015) notes, in the absence of an "aggressively reasserted role for government institutions," including an "equitable and fair tax regime," it is challenging to see how tactical urbanism will have an impact on a large scale. Indeed, neither SF Transformation nor PPBL address the larger, more systemic issues that arise out of ideologies of automobility, and they seem to only contribute to the mounting tension in the Mission. The SFMTA is similarly silent on these issues with the Safer Taylor Street project.

Carlsson alludes to this in his examination of cycling advocacy in San Francisco, saying that advocates tend to be unwilling to connect cycling to other issues, and that if there is an effort to "bring in questions of housing, or equity or race they get really uncomfortable" (personal communication, 2018). Similarly, Mayer in a discussion of the right to the city as demanded by various NGOs, writes that these organizations only target certain aspects of neoliberal policy, rather than focusing on the "underlying economic policies, which systematically produce poverty and exclusion" (2012, p. 75). While these critiques are levelled against other streams of advocacy, they can also be extended to tactical urbanist groups like SF Transformation, who push for their right to the city through these unsanctioned projects.

Short of acknowledging that San Francisco, like other cities across the United States, has historically prioritized vehicular mobility over other types of mobility, SF Transformation and PPBL do not appear to be addressing larger issues. The SFMTA similarly avoids making any significant critique of automobility through the Taylor Street project. This is evident in two respects: the SFMTA's final design does not include a bike lane in part due to resident and merchant concerns about parking, and the one-day demonstration was deemed feasible partially because it was determined that it

would not disrupt traffic operations. Accommodation of the perceived right to drive (and subsequently to park) only deepens the idea of the automobile as a saviour, and does nothing to challenge the status quo.

As discussed previously, the history of location-based cycling advocacy in San Francisco has led to what Stehlin and Tarr refer to as an "archipelago of bicycle-scale urban places," (2015, p. 1339). This is only being repeated through the work of SF Transformation and PPBL, as they do not pursue opportunities outside of the city's central area. Important to note here is that the map created by SF Transformation, where citizens can identify areas in need of improvement, is not limited to downtown locations, but identifies many in the outer parts of the city. This is not to suggest that San Francisco's central area is a haven for cyclists already, where advocacy efforts are no longer needed (the map also identifies many central locations that would appear to require improvements), but rather to point out that there are many areas of the city that are severely underserved by cycling infrastructure and are being ignored by groups like SF Transformation and PPBL.

These 'guerrilla' groups also abstain from levelling any critiques against the way the built environment acts as a barrier to cycling for those in certain areas of the city. Biggar and Ardoin (2017) point out that residents in some Bay Area communities are able to ride their bikes with greater ease than others, due to differences in the built form and physical or sociocultural circumstances. None of these factors surface in SF Transformation or PPBL's critique of the city's lack of infrastructure, and none are addressed in their activism.

Marcuse writes that those seeking to operationalize critical urban theory must also work with those affected by a given problem to produce "actual proposals, programs, targets, strategies, to achieve the desired results" (2009, p. 194). The Safer Taylor Street project was developed with a substantial level of community consultation; the SFMTA

worked with numerous community groups to gather feedback on the proposal, and Vohra says that the response from Tenderloin residents was that "they want this [level of consultation] to be repeated in any other projects in the Tenderloin" (personal communication, 2018). Thus, the problem that the SFMTA was addressing with the Taylor Street project, the lack of transportation safety and public space, was tackled with those most affected by the issue. Though the desired results—a stretch of Taylor with wider sidewalks, street furniture and reduced vehicular space—represent a drop in the bucket when it comes to improved livability in the Tenderloin, it is still an important step.

SF Transformation and PPBL aim to address the lack of sufficient cycling infrastructure in the city, and so they too are working with some of those affected by that problem, in that they themselves are cyclists who wish to see more protected bike lanes in San Francisco. Further, the fact that some of SF Transformation's work has been made permanent, such as the bollards in Golden Gate Park and those at the intersection of Fell and Baker, can reasonably be interpreted as the group achieving their desired results. For PPBL, while the Valencia Street Bikeway Improvements project was not explicitly borne out of their actions along the corridor, the group's work in other areas of the city, such as on Townsend Street, has pushed the SFMTA to reverse its decision to significantly postpone the installation of bike lanes.

Whether these decisions have led to a shift in the way the SFMTA prioritizes cycling infrastructure projects overall is less evident. Despite their best efforts, it is unlikely that the actions of a handful of anonymous individuals will create lasting change in a planning system that, despite having supporting policy documents, has historically struggled to implement cycling infrastructure. Tactical urbanism can play a role in creating necessary change, but it will not be the only factor involved. That this strain of tactical urbanism lacks an overall strategy also inhibits its ability to achieve established

goals. It is unclear what would have happened had SF Transformation maintained its pace, but during its most active period there was no clear strategy to the work that was being done.

Finally, Marcuse argues that one must politicize the problem, clarifying the "political action implications of what was exposed and proposed, and supporting organizing around the proposals by informing action" (2009, p. 194). SF Transformation and PPBL undeniably politicize the problems they tackle with their work, with Shaw noting that some of their interventions were "mostly, if not purely political" (personal communication, 2018). As stated previously, the tactical urbanism of these groups is motivated by the overall lack of protected cycling facilities in San Francisco, something that stems from the desire to preserve the feasibility automobile travel as much as possible. This desire is clearly political; the system of automobility frames cars as a signifier of a civilized society and, subsequently, drivers as civilized members of that society. Through the automobile's dominance of the North American landscape, cyclists are faced with a built form that renders their chosen type of mobility "virtually obsolete," (Furness, 2006, p. 4), diminishing opportunities for those without a car.

At the same time, SF Transformation and PPBL are seemingly only willing to engage with certain aspects of this issue. However founded or unfounded concerns about cycling's relationship to gentrification in the Mission are, the point is that some residents are fearful and see their neighbourhood changing as a new wave of affluent San Franciscans move in. This fear, evident in pushback against bike sharing stations, has the potential to impact how people view cycling more broadly, and thus for SF Transformation to dismiss them outright or refuse to confront them in any meaningful way only serves to strengthen that fear and potential resistance.

Leung argues that SF Transformation and PPBL are focusing on the immediately obvious issue of a lack of protected infrastructure on streets like Valencia, but that they

fail to consider larger, more systemic issues. "If PPBL were standing out there every day, it doesn't fully address all the other problems that we're seeing when it comes to how our curb space is used. I think that's another big piece of this puzzle," Leung says. She continues that:

> Even if you put in a protected facility that makes the cyclists feel a lot more comfortable, […] you're still going to have this problem with not enough space for people to load or to pull over, which then you may have double parking, [and] your travel lanes can't be used. (personal communication, 2018).

While some may pin the lack of space on the individual choices (and therefore problems) of people who decide to drive a car along Valencia, Leung says the needs of all road users must be balanced (personal communication, 2018). "There's just a lot of review that has to happen, and proper installation, and proper materials [that have to be used]," Leung says. SF Transformation and PPBL's interventions are "the right thought…not the correct execution" (personal communication, 2018).

Politics are absent from the SFMTA's discourse on the Taylor project, which is expected, given that the goal of the project's tactical urbanism elements was not to politicize the lack of protected cycling infrastructure or public space in the Tenderloin, but instead to provide a more immersive consultation experience. By Vohra's own admission, Safer Taylor Street is "still flying under the radar, and one of the reasons why is that it's not politically relevant" (personal communication, 2018). Transportation planning is inherently political, and thus it is difficult to extract politics from a discussion about cycling infrastructure, particularly when the infrastructure in question is installed anonymously, often under cover of darkness. However, SF Transformation and PPBL place their politics at the forefront of the activism they engage in, while the SFMTA positions their project as a way to improve the lives of Tenderloin residents, without interrogating why public realm improvements were not made to the area earlier.

The relationship between tactical urbanism initiated by citizen groups and neoliberal planning systems can reasonably be interpreted as essentially symbiotic – tactical urbanism is borne out of the contexts of scarcity produced by neoliberalism, and to recall Haydn and Temel's perspective, a neoliberal planning regime responds to these actions by "'offering' individuals an opportunity to participate in actively solving problems hitherto regulated by state institutions" (2006, p. 50). Indeed, Collins suggests that the relationship between SF Transformation and the SFMTA could be a symbiotic one, saying that such an arrangement would "work as long as SF Transformation continues to do reasonable projects […] like things that pass muster from a traffic engineering perspective" (personal communication, 2018).

At the same time, Collins acknowledges that this kind of relationship would be challenging from a liability perspective:

> You could never have any formal conversation between [the SFMTA and SF Transformation] if someone is going and doing something without a permit. The whole thing falls apart at that point, because then it'd be an endorsement of [illegal work], so you can't do that. But you wouldn't want to lose the opportunities that SF Transformation affords. (personal communication, 2018)

With this in mind, Collins wonders if it would even be worthwhile to attempt to establish some sort of relationship, saying that:

> It would take a lot to convince the City attorney's office and the risk management office that this is something that is worth the trade-off of citizen empowerment. We're talking really about the grassroots organization of, and crowdsourcing of, city design, which is a powerful idea. We support it, but then what are the barriers to doing it? (personal communication, 2018)

Absent from Collins' musings on what this relationship could look like is the issue of cost, apart from the price of obtaining permits. If one of the main components of a

neoliberal city is the requirement that private entities finance things previously provided by the state, creating a system where cycling infrastructure projects are funded and installed by citizens establishes a dangerous precedent, while likely contributing to an even more unevenly distributed network of bike lanes.

Vohra says that, because of SF Transformation's anonymity, it is possible that the City already engages with them in the consultation process for cycling projects (personal communication, 2018). This theory is reinforced by Shaw's comments that SF Transformation members first began using tactical urbanism in part because members had been advocating for cycling infrastructure through "official channels for years" (personal communication, 2018). As with Collins, Vohra indicated that SF Transformation could be invited to the table to discuss issues, but that the legal ramifications for a group of anonymous citizens putting in their own cycling infrastructure would be too burdensome, as would the issue of funding (personal communication, 2018).

Tactical urbanism, writes Stehlin, "absorbs the neoliberal logic of flexibility and reframes it as a virtue" (2015b, p. 183), and it is clear from almost every interview conducted that this is the case. Embedding tactical urbanism within official city planning policy "merely forestalls the real thoroughgoing changes that a just city would require," (Stehlin, 2015b, p. 183) and is emblematic of broader hostility towards large scale changes, no matter how necessary they may be.

Brenner (2015) posits that tactical urbanism can interact with neoliberalism in at least five different ways, and in the case of these 'guerrilla' cycling projects, it is likely that the relationship is contingent, relying on external factors to determine the precise nature of the relationship. A consistent theme throughout the interviews was the issue of liability; the City is ultimately responsible for what is placed on their streets, and thus any sort of relationship the City could have with SF Transformation or other anonymous groups would likely require a significant degree of regulation on behalf of the former.

Not only would this undermine tactical urbanism's capacity for nimbleness (in terms of the ability to install a project in a matter of hours), but one could reasonably expect a formal relationship to be framed similarly to the Groundplay program, which has been criticized for its entrenchment of neoliberalism. Echoing Haydn and Temel (2006), it is likely that such a relationship would simply be an example of the City providing citizens with 'opportunities' to address problems that are traditionally in the state's domain.

Tactical urbanism is framed by its proponents as a fast, low-cost way to test projects or swiftly implement change, and as an activity that creates community and social capacity (Lydon et al., 2012), which suggests that citizens feel included and represented in a given project. While it is likely that SF Transformation's actions along Valencia increased capacity within its ranks, the same cannot be said for the residents who were not consulted or given the opportunity to participate in a conversation about what this work may signify.

Through tactical urbanism, groups like SF Transformation and PPBL are exercising their right to the city, arguing that they have the right to reclaim space that has either been reserved for or is being encroached on by automobiles. However, if this is being done without considering the right that others have to the city, the right to live in a community and to be consulted before changes are made, it is challenging to view these actions as democratic. This challenge is particularly acute when one considers the unequal balance of power that exists between the activists, who are largely white and well-resourced, and those in the community these actions are taking place, who are watching their neighbourhood undergo rapid change at the hands of those who resemble these activists. Thus, while SF Transformation and PPBL are pursuing their right to the city, expressing their vision for the kind of city they want San Francisco to be through direct action, it is critical to interrogate their actions rather than to accept them as unambiguously noble or positive.

Conclusion

The two research questions guiding this work were:

What are the implications for the reinterpretation and reclamation of public space, particularly when those executing these interventions are anonymous actors who are not accountable to a broader public? In efforts to address the unequal distribution of infrastructure through targeted interventions that seek to create a more inclusive, accessible network of cycling infrastructure, what is the outcome?

As this research indicates, the implications of tactical urbanism are complex and lack a single, unified narrative. It is clear from the evidence from San Francisco that tactical urbanism can both increase community capacity and hinder it, that it can spark a conversation about how space on a street is allocated while simultaneously failing to launch any meaningful challenge the dominant, car-centric narrative, and that it can, in some cases, lead to City-sanctioned infrastructure being implemented following 'guerrilla' actions.

The outcome of tactical urbanist attempts to create a more well-rounded network of cycling infrastructure are similarly uneven. The vast majority of SF Transformation's interventions were focused on high-volume cycling corridors close to the centre of the city, despite requests from citizens for work in more peripheral areas. However, the group also pushed the SFMTA to install plastic bollards along a handful of previously unprotected bike lanes, making the lanes more accessible to cyclists of different skill levels. There is immense value in ensuring that the cycling network in a city core consists of high quality, separated facilities, but the fact that SF Transformation did not stray from the central city should not be ignored.

As Brenner (2015) notes, it is "unrealistic to expect any single approach to urban intervention to resolve the 'wicked problems' that confront contemporary urbanizing

territories, especially in an era in which inherited templates for shaping urban conditions are so widely being called into question," and indeed, tactical urbanism should not be viewed as the solution, or even necessarily part of it at all. There are ways in which tactical urbanism can contribute to solving urban ills, but not if it is carried out by white, well-resourced, mostly male citizens without considering what others may want to see in their communities, and not if it comes with a price tag that hovers just below $100,000 CAD. Cycling infrastructure projects implemented through anonymous tactical urbanist action do draw attention to the lack of proper facilities, but in the absence of any larger challenge of auto-centric city planning, they will not translate into larger, systemic change.

LaFrombois (2017) argues that the current framing of tactical urbanism as a way to democratize the planning process and create cityscapes that exist for all is much too narrow. Given that PPBL and SF Transformation do scarcely any outreach, and do not consult with the communities they work in, can it truly be argued that this is a more democratic planning approach? While their actions may be motivated by the genuine lack of quality cycling infrastructure in San Francisco, their methods make it challenging to view this as a legitimate response to an exclusionary planning process.

The intention of this paper is not to declare SF Transformation, PPBL or tactical urbanism to be a harmful practice that does not have a place within cycling—or civic—advocacy, nor is it to suggest that direct action is an inappropriate way to push cities to make changes. Rather, it is to add to the critique levelled by LaFrombois (2017) and others, who caution that tactical urbanism is in many respects an embodiment of privilege, and thus should be viewed with a critical lens. Tactical urbanism's usefulness is evident in instances where SF Transformation and PPBL were able to push the SFMTA to implement projects more swiftly or revive shelved projects, but its limitations are felt when the actions of these groups, anonymous or not, are done without consideration to

how local communities may respond. Foth advocates for overcoming the top-down versus bottom-up dichotomy, proposing that tactical urbanism instead be carried out using a "middle-out approach" (2017, p. 3). This would still have what Foth refers to as "boundary-crossing dialogue," (2017, p. 3) but would also place local voices at the forefront rather than treating their inclusion as an afterthought.

All told, this paper has reached three concluding points. First, while it is recognized that there is no universal narrative for tactical urbanism, the thorny issue of privilege is evident throughout. SF Transformation members leverage their position as well-resourced, mostly white individuals to finance their projects and avoid scrutiny from law enforcement, and the SFMTA relies on its legitimacy as a government organization to carry out the temporary installation on Taylor.

A second concluding point is that tactical urbanism, when it is used as consultation tactic, can be a useful way of engaging people whose voices may not be captured otherwise. Issues with traditional methods of consultation are well-documented, and evidence from the Safer Taylor Street consultation process suggests that the day long demonstration was successful in gathering input from a more diverse group of people. Tactical urbanism is clearly a useful tool to use in the consultation process, given that it allows people to experience proposed changes and give better, more informed feedback. While design charrettes, community forums and other types of consultation are useful mechanisms for gauging support for a project, creating a space where people can see and feel a proposed change allows for a more immersive consultation process.

Finally, it is critical to note that this does not mean consultation will abandon dominant ideologies of mobility, such as those related to road capacity, fears stoked by the loss of parking, or the overarching desire to prioritize automobile movement. While many of the outcomes of the Safer Taylor Street demonstration are clearly positive, such

as the trust it built between residents and the SFMTA and the demonstration's accessibility, that the project is moving forward without the bike lane indicates that cars on Taylor will continue to dominate. This prioritization highlights how deep-seated and far-reaching specific ideologies of mobility are; untangling them will take a long time and significant resources.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite my best efforts, there are limitations to this Major Paper. The first, and perhaps most significant, limitation is the number of participants. Given the illegal nature of SF Transformation's work, I was not surprised to face significant challenges in identifying interested participants. I contacted several other individuals, but due to time constraints and the fear of being identified as a member of the group (despite the explicit promise of anonymity) they were unable to contribute their insights. Future research should include a diversity of perspectives from within SF Transformation to ensure that their motivations are represented as holistically as possible.

A second limitation stems from the limited time and resources allocated to this research, which narrowed the scope of work. I would have liked to have expanded this research to include a more robust discussion of cycling and gentrification, Creative City marketing and equity in urban planning. However, there was neither the time nor the word count to permit this.

Much research remains to be done on tactical urbanism. While the topic has been explored in some length by others, there remains a dearth of critical research focusing specifically on cycling infrastructure projects. Future studies could examine tactical urbanism narratives within places that have adopted Creative City policy agendas, focusing on how these cities adopt tactical urbanism policies or sanction grassroots initiatives that include cycling infrastructure projects.

Another avenue for future study could involve examining the relationship between different types of knowledge embodied and expert knowledge on cycling infrastructure. As noted in the literature review, there is an ongoing discussion amongst cycling advocates whether it is beneficial to rely more on lived experiences, or if greater success lies in becoming well-versed in cycling infrastructure's technical aspects and best practices. Examining tactical urbanist efforts—both sanctioned and unsanctioned—across North America to identify trends or common tactics would also benefit this field of research. Similar to mainstream cycling advocacy efforts, the lasting power of these more radical efforts depends on a host of factors, and thus another area of future study could involve surveying those who participate in tactical urbanism to determine what these factors are. Finally, in order to determine if there is a relationship between infrastructure spending and the existence of tactical urbanist groups constructing cycling infrastructure, future research could more closely examine government budgets and attempt to determine if there is any correlation.

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Appendix 1: List of interview subjects

Interview subject #1: Shivam Vohra. Vohra is a project manager with the SFMTA. The interview was held at the SFMTA office at 1 South Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, on August 21st, 2018.

Interview subject #2: Janice Li. Li is the Advocacy Director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. The interview was held at the SFBC office at 1720 Market Street, San Francisco, on August 22nd, 2018.

Interview subject #3: Maureen Persico. Persico is one of the founders of People Protected Bike Lane. The interview was conducted over Skype on August 28th, 2018.

Interview subject #4: Blair Collins*. Collins is a senior urban planner with the City of San Francisco. The interview was held at the San Francisco Planning Department building at 1650 Mission Street, on August 29th, 2018.

Interview subject #5: Kimberly Leung. Leung is a project manager with the SFMTA. The interview was held at the SFMTA office at 1 South Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, on September 6th, 2018.

Interview subject #6: Sam Shaw*. Shaw is a member of SF Transformation. The interview was conducted over Skype on September 11th, 2018.

Interview subject #7: Steve Gibson. Gibson is the president of Urban Place Consulting, and the former Executive Director of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District. The interview was conducted over FaceTime on September 18th, 2018.

Interview subject #8: Chris Carlsson. Carlsson is one of the founding members of Critical Mass. The interview was conducted over Skype on September 25th, 2018.

*name has been changed

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

BART: Bay Area Rapid Transit

BID: Business Improvement District

CBD: Community Benefit District. Note that this term is used more often than Business Improvement District in San Francisco.

HIN: High Injury Network

LOS: Level of service

MMA: Mission Merchant's Association

PODER: People Organizing to Demand Environmental Justice

PPBL: People Protected Bike Lane

SF Transformation/SFMTrA: The San Francisco Municipal Transformation Agency

SFBC: San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

SFMTA: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency