

G Street Undercrossing

City Council

Meeting Date: November 3, 2008



Introduction

G Street undercrossing

- **Long-term goal of the City**
- **In General Plan since 1997**
- **In City's Public Facilities Financing Plan since 1997**

Purpose

- **Asking for Council approval of the Baseline Agreement**
- **Asking Council to address key issues regarding the design**
- **Final design will take a year with many more chances for public input**

Current Concerns

- **Hospital access**
- **Increased train traffic over last 10 years**
- **Primary emergency vehicle route**
- **Two (2) hours of delays each day**
- **Driver frustration = frequent unsafe crossings**

Past Actions

- **Advocates for the Project Include:**
 - **Dennis Cardoza (U.S. Congressman)**
 - **Jeff Denham (State Senator, 12th District)**
 - **Cathleen Galgiani (Assembly Member, 17th District)**
 - **Kathleen Crookham (Board of Supervisor District #2)**
 - **Riggs Ambulance Service**

Past Actions and Publicity

- Over 30 Articles in the Merced Sun-Star since 2006
- 3 Sales Tax Measures specifically addressed the G Street project
- 2 prior grant applications

All with public Council actions



City awarded \$9 million state grant for G St. RR crossing
Underpass will eliminate stopping for trains

It took a lot of staff time to fine-tune the application and it took a number of trips to advocate for the project, but last month the effort paid off for the City of Merced.

The California Transportation Commission unanimously approved funding for the G Street underpass at the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad tracks.

The Commission approved a \$9 million grant for G Street, which will fund half of the project.

The other half will be paid for using impact fees, Redevelopment Agency bonds and funds from the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad.

The vote was the result of a collaborative effort between the City, Merced County, UC Merced and Assembly Member Cathleen Galgiani.

The G Street project also has the backing of the Merced-Mariposa Asthma Coalition and many other members of the community.

In its application to the CTC, the City noted that the underpass would help improve air quality by reducing the number of cars waiting at the rail crossing.

The City already has an engineering firm drawing up plans for the undercrossing.

Construction is expected to begin by March 2010 and work is projected to be completed by September 2011.

There are more than 70 passenger and freight trains traveling along the BNSF tracks each day.

Police, fire and other public safety personnel spend approximately two hours each day waiting for the tracks to clear.

The funds come from the Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Account Program.

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Every day, more than 70 trains tie up traffic in Merced.

Campus Parkway also gets funding

The California Transportation Commission also approved \$12 million for Campus Parkway to pay for construction of the stretch of expressway from the Mission Interchange to Childs Avenue.

Those funds, subject to approval of the state budget, will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

The City and Merced County worked with UC Merced and Assembly member Cathleen Galgiani to obtain the funds.

The Parkway will improve north-south access for Merced and also serve as a link to the campus.

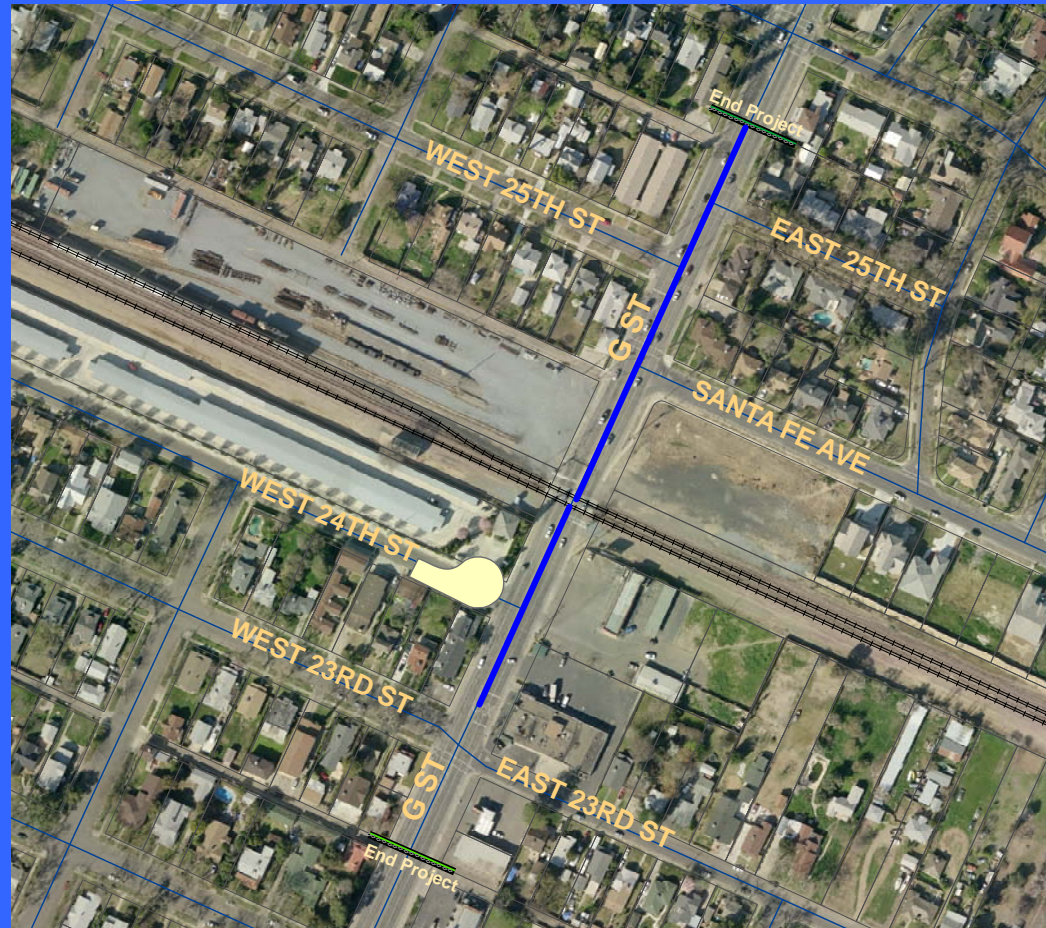
City Newsletter - Oct. 2008

Oct. 23rd Community Meeting

- **125 People Attended**
- **15 Written Comments Received & 4 Subsequent Letters Received**
- **Topics Raised by Citizens:**
 - **Closure of G Street**
 - **Different Options for Santa Fe**
 - **Detours through Neighborhoods**
 - **Congestion Around Schools**
 - **Impacts on Individual Properties**
 - **Timing of Other Regional Improvements**
 - **General Support for Project**

Project Description

- Railroad undercrossing
- Begins at 23rd St to south and ends at East 25th St to the north
- Improved roadway surface (4-lanes)



Proposition 1B Grant Budget

\$ 18 million total project:

\$ 9 million from State (Prop 1B)

\$ 9 million local match:

\$1,800,000

BNSF Match (10%)

\$1,331,963

City Impact Fee Funds

\$1,000,000

Other City Impact Fees

\$4,868,037

Redevelopment Agency

Timeline

	Action	Time Frame
1.	Aware of Grant Application	May 28, 2008
2.	Grant Application Submitted	June 16, 2008
3.	Grant Application Awarded	Aug 28, 2008
4.	Initial Project Plans Prepared	Oct 2008
5.	1 st Community Meeting	Oct 23, 2008
6.	Council Review and Action	Nov 3, 2008
7.	Baseline Agreement to Caltrans	Nov 30, 2008
Bold denotes target actions and dates set by terms of grant		

Timeline

	Action	Time
8.	Formation of Public Outreach Groups	Dec 2008
9.	Communication Plan Completed	Winter 08
10.	Traffic Reduction Plan Completed	Spring 09
11.	Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan	Spring 09
12.	Agreements with BNSF Finalized	Summer 09
13.	Contractors Bid Awarded	Spring 2010
14.	Construction Begins	June 2010
15.	Construction Ends	Fall 2011

Bold denotes target actions and dates set by terms of grant

Requested Council Actions

- **Approve the Project Baseline Agreement**
- **Determine whether to close G St during construction or provide detour**
- **Select an option for Santa Fe Ave**
- **Determine how 23rd, 24th and 25th Streets will or will not connect with G St**

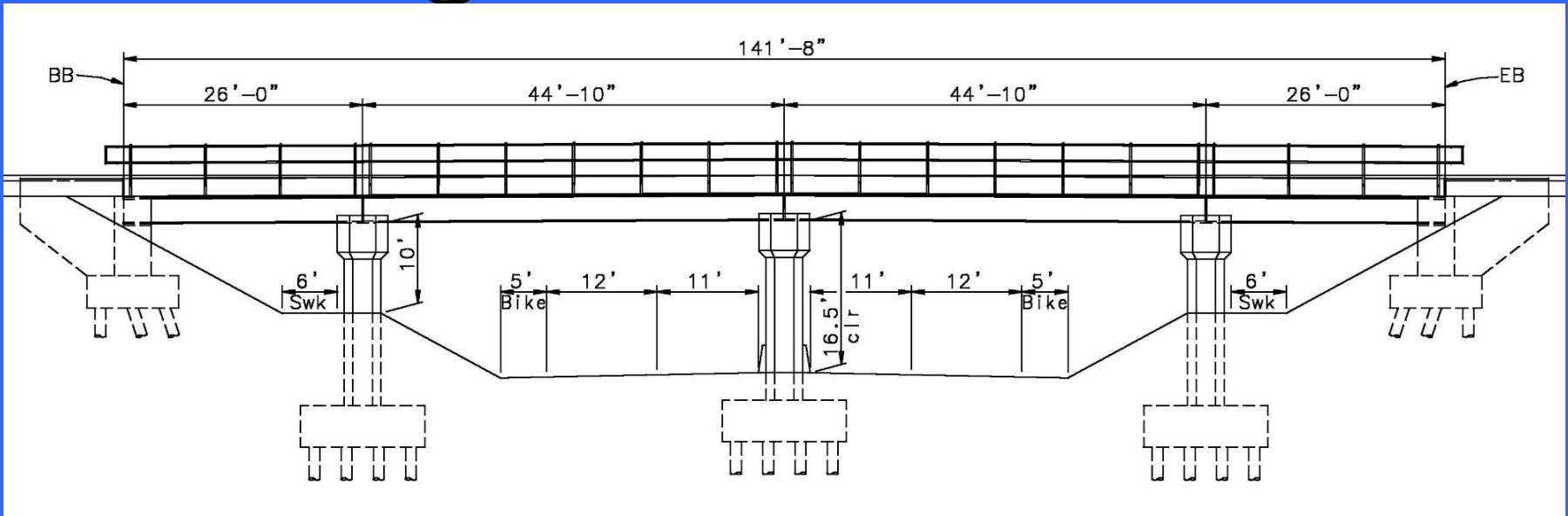
Requested Redevelopment Agency Actions

- **Approve matching funds**

Example



Design Considerations



- **Designed to handle 45 mph**
 - **Signs posted for 35 mph**
- **Adequate drainage design**
- **Adequate lighting**
- **6-foot separated pedestrian walkway**
- **A Class 2 on-street bike lane**

Design Considerations

- Landscaped Embankments
- Decorative Lighting
- Decorative Retaining Walls
- Addressing Concerns:
 - Drainage
 - Traffic
 - Street Closures (Full/Partial)
 - Emergency Access Points
 - Maintain Railroad Right of Way



Project Benefits

- **Improve public safety and emergency response**
- **Reduce traffic congestion and delays**
- **Improve air quality**
- **Train horn noise reduction**
- **Improved storm drainage for the intersections along G St**

Construction Detour: G St

Should G Street be open during part of construction?

- Option 1: Temporary G Street Detour with an At-grade Railroad Crossing
- Option 2: Full Closure of G Street

G Street Closed

Traveling Public Impacts:

- **Regional and Truck Traffic detoured**
- **Local Traffic diverted to other local streets**

Length of Construction:

- **Reduce construction by 6 months**
- **Eliminate construction delays**
- **G St could open before completion**

Options Compared

Time and Cost Factors

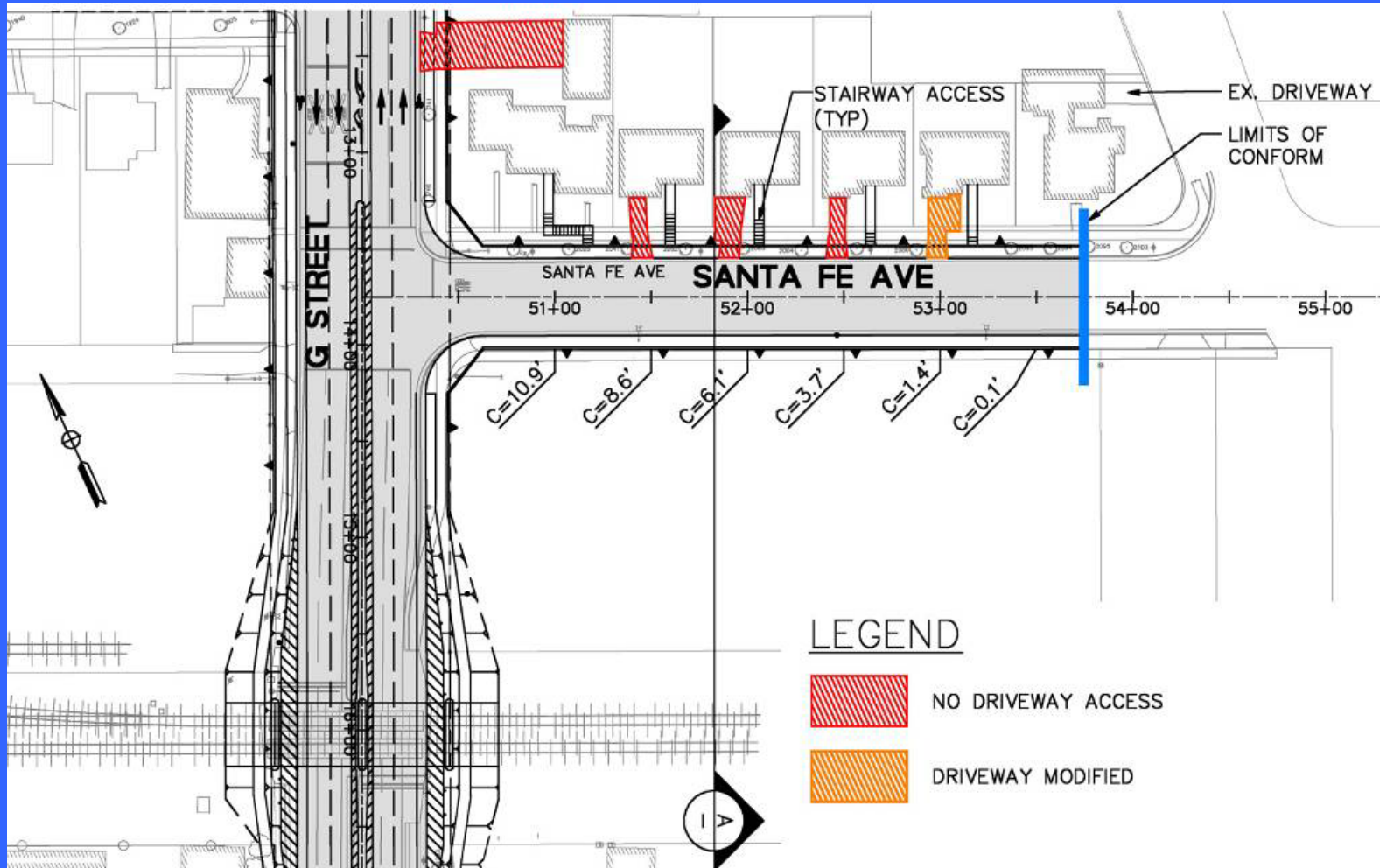
	<i>Option 1</i> Temporary Detour	<i>Option 2</i> Full Closure
Cost	\$3 million	\$150,000
Additional Time G St is Closed	6 months	0 months
Total Time	24 months	18 months

Santa Fe Connection

- **Three options:**
 - **Option 1: Direct Connection to G St with “Perched” Garages**
 - **Option 2: Curved Connection to G St with Common Drive**
 - **Option 3: No Connection to G St**

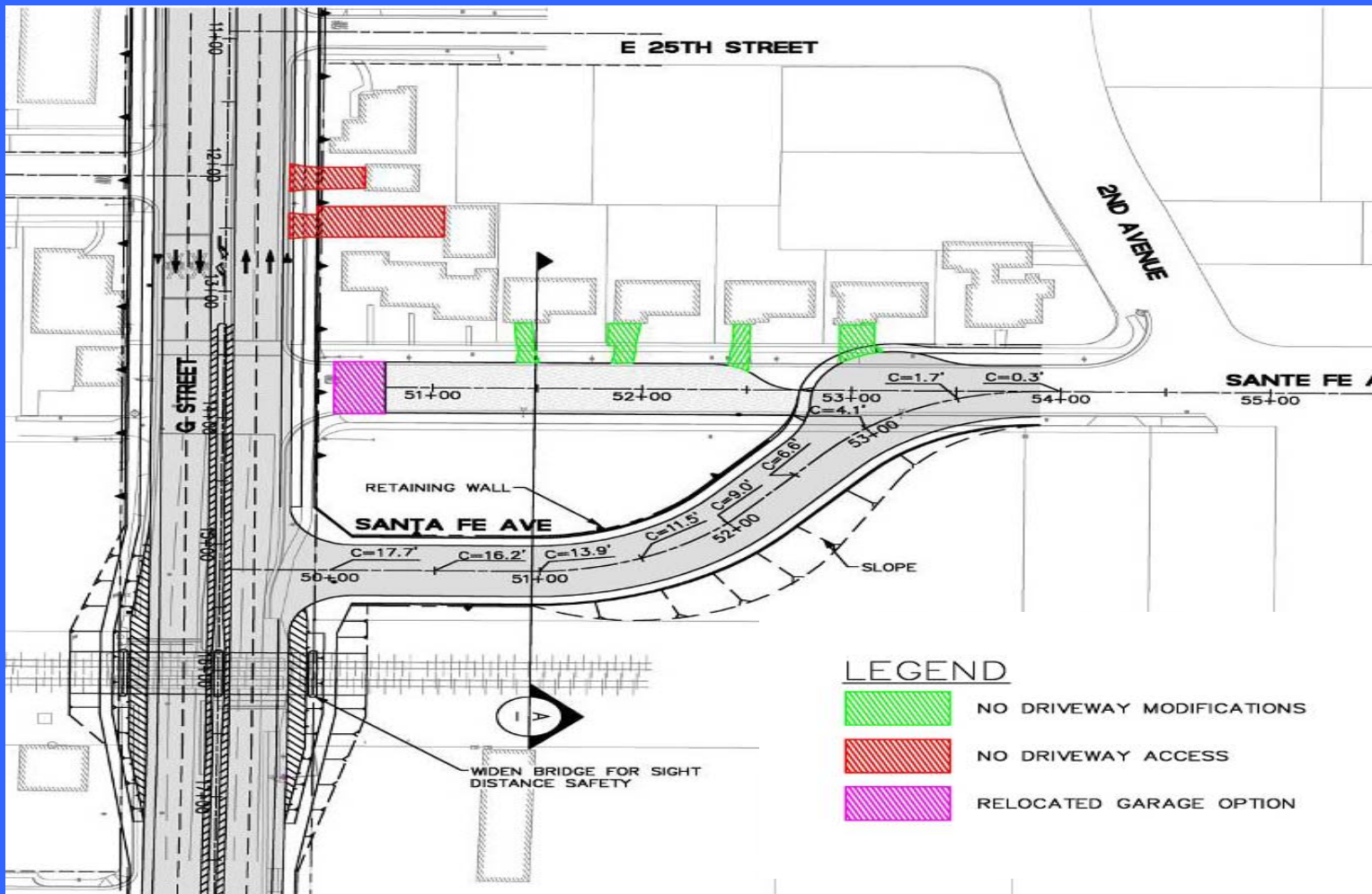
Santa Fe Connection

- Option 1: Direct Connection to G St with “Perched” Garages



Santa Fe Connection

Option 2: Curved Connection to G St with Common Drive



Options Compared

Santa Fe Ave / G St Connection Options

	Option 1 Direct	Option 2 Curved	Option 3 No
Garage Access	No	Yes	Yes
Potential Property Acquisition	No	Yes	Yes – partial
Construction Cost	\$600,000	\$400,000	\$40,000
Connection to G St	Yes	Yes	No
Increased Traffic in Neighborhoods	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate to Heavy

Side Streets

- Roads to remain connected to G St
 - East 23rd Street

- To be closed:
 - West 24th Street



- Stay open or closed:
 - West 23rd Street
 - West 25th Street
 - East 25th Street

25th Street



23rd and 24th Streets



Public Outreach

- Working with:
 - Neighborhood Residents
 - Local Employers
 - Emergency Services
 - Schools
- Communication
 - Mail
 - Newspaper
 - Radio & TV
 - Utility Bills
 - Website
 - Email



Construction Considerations

- Detour Routes
- Construction Schedules
- Provide Advertising Options for Local Businesses



Final Design Decisions

- **Traffic Calming**

- **Intersection upgrades**

- **Impact on Surrounding Neighborhoods**



Recommendations

Project Baseline Agreement

Approve the Baseline Agreement with Caltrans

Road Closures and Detours

Full closure of G Street without a temporary at-grade railroad crossing during construction

Recommendations

Connection of Santa Fe Ave and G St

Select an option for connecting (or not connecting) to G St

Connection of 23rd, 24th, and 25th with G St

Select appropriate connections (or no connections)

Redevelopment Funding Commitment

Approve use of Redevelopment bond funds.

Questions



Public Comment



26th St ~ Looking West



NOV 3 2008

26th St ~ Looking East

