

PAR Planning Association for the Richmond

Ask PAR

This column will answer PAR members' questions. This month, PAR President Ray Holland and Vice President Michele Stratton reply to questions about how PAR works.

• How do issues for comment or study get to PAR?

Ray: The most common way for an issue to reach us is a Richmond resident bringing something to our attention in a phone call or e-mail. Next would be government agencies and developers asking for our input on a project or proposal.

Michele: Our Board members are another source. Many of them are involved in other groups or have specific interests that they follow. PAR also is represented in other organizations, like NAPP (Neighbor Associations for Presidio Planning) and we have a formal relationship with the VAMC (Veterans Association Medical Center). This keeps us connected to a number of issues.

• What are some typical issues PAR might get involved in?

Michele: The issues fall into three broad categories: development, services and community outreach.

Ray: Development is really why PAR got started. We often comment on residential and commercial building permit applications to expand or change an existing facility.

Michele: We also speak out on necessary public services like MUNI, neighborhood parks, branch libraries and trash collection. For example, PAR worked with the 25th Avenue Neighbors to get trees planted along that street and we work with the Recreation & Park

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Seed money available to fund growth of neighborhood parks

Does your neighborhood playground need new benches or drinking fountains? Would you like to put in a new path or add a kiosk to a local park? Could you use some seed money to get the project started?

The Community Opportunity Fund will soon be making grants to support small-scale, community-nominated capital improvement projects in parks, playgrounds and open spaces in San Francisco.

The fund, managed by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department will support "custom projects that enhance the unique identity" of neighborhood parks, by leveraging local residents' creativity.

The application deadline for the first round of funding is Sept. 24, 2010. In addition to a good idea, applicants must be able to match the grant money received with sweat equity or independent fundraising. The first round of funding will award \$500,000 in grants. Subsequent rounds in 2011 and 2012, will each award up to \$250,000 in grants.



Residents enjoy a stroll through Sutro Park.

Applications will be reviewed by a seven-member selection committee, composed of representatives of the city's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Committee, the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Youth Commission, as well as four members-at-large.

For more information on the Community Opportunity Fund grant program, contact me at nbelloni@gmail.com.

*Nick Belloni, co-chair,
Parks & Recreation Committee*

• • • General Membership Meeting • • •

Wednesday, July 21, 2010,

7 to 9 p.m.

Richmond Recreation Center

251 18th Avenue

(between Clement & California Streets)

Paid parking is available one block away in the lot behind the Alexandria Theatre between Clement Street and Geary Boulevard.

Muni lines: 1 California and 38 Geary

Local concerns delay parking meter pilot program



Activating meters on Sundays may assist in traffic circulation, but residents have reservations about losing a day of free parking in the Clement Street corridor.

The influence of community and merchant organizations played a big role in delaying a pilot program to extend parking meter enforcement on Sundays in several San Francisco neighborhoods, including the Inner Richmond.

Originally due to start June 1, the San Francisco Metropolitan Transit Authority is now reconsidering its options. If the 12-Sunday pilot goes forward, it would be in operation no earlier than August. New parking meters will not be installed, but existing meters will be adjusted to allow for up to four hours of parking, paid for with parking cards or coins.

While Clement Street parking is the real target of the pilot,

meters also will be enforced on adjacent streets to prevent spill-over parking. The pilot zone will extend from California Street over to Anza Street, between Arguello Boulevard and Park Presidio Drive.

SFMTA officials say the benefits of charging for Sunday parking include encouraging higher turnover at high-demand curbside spaces, making it easier for people to find a parking space in the city's commercial corridors.

Supervisors Michela Alioto-Pier and Eric Mar, who represent neighborhoods where the pilot project is aimed, oppose the idea. Mayor Gavin Newsom has described free Sunday parking as "sacrosanct" in San Francisco.

Sonali Bose, SFMTA's chief financial officer, and staff member Bond Yee answered a storm of questions about the pilot at the April PAR meeting, ranging from the purpose of the pilot to how the SFMTA planned to roll it out.

In addition to concerns about the effect on shops and residents, PAR members expressed concerns about how the SFMTA planned to reach out to the neighborhood with information about the pilot. These concerns, along with a desire to sync up the pilot results with sales tax data, played a large part in the delay.

If the pilot goes ahead, the SFMTA plans a communication blitz in the weeks before the pilot starts. Plans include posters in store windows, brochures, media releases for neighborhood newspapers, and stickers on meters.

More information about the program is available on the SFMTA website, sfmta.org.

Letter from the President

Dear PAR Members,
Usually, this letter focuses on topics for discussion at the next general membership meeting. I will get to that, but I want to start with a look ahead to the October meeting.

With a general election on the calendar for November 2, the October 20 PAR meeting will feature presentations by supporters and opponents of selected ballot propositions and by candidates competing for local offices.

We already have one request from a group promoting a proposition and we encourage others. We are particularly interested in having both sides of a proposition represented, to help PAR members weigh the pros and cons.

While state and federal laws prohibit nonprofit organizations such as PAR from supporting or opposing candidates for office, we do invite them to speak. PAR does take positions and offer opinions on ballot propositions that would have a

direct impact or significant indirect impact on the Richmond district.

If you would like to see a specific issue discussed or to make a presentation on October 20, please contact Brenda Altman, chair of PAR's Membership Committee at brendalaw@earthlink.net or 415-305-1101, or me at president@sfpar.org or 415-668-8914.

On the July 21 agenda . . .

We will look at earthquake safety. The recent earthquake in Haiti reminds us of the damage an earthquake can cause, and the advantages that preparation—enforcement of rigorous building codes and training residents to respond to emergencies—can provide.

A representative of the Department of Building Inspection will talk about new city legislation offering incentives to residents who voluntarily retrofit soft-story, wood-frame buildings before retrofitting becomes mandatory.

In June, California voters approved a measure that exempts retrofits from property tax reassessment. These two pieces of legislation create a serendipitous opportunity for anyone considering a seismic retrofit. (See story on page 3.)

Also, a representative of the San Francisco Fire Department will join us to talk about the ongoing need for Neighborhood Emergency Response Team members in the Outer Richmond District. Together, NERT and retrofitting can help us all protect people and property.

The Recreation and Park Department and Another Planet Entertainment will also be on hand to make a joint presentation about plans for the Outside Lands Concert in Golden Gate Park on August 14 and 15.

We look forward to seeing you at our July 21 meeting.

Ray Holland
president@sfpar.org

Tax advantages and waived fees

Legislation benefits SF property owners who retrofit now

On April 19—104 years after the 1906 earthquake and fire—Mayor Gavin Newsom signed legislation that will support San Francisco property owners who choose to voluntarily retrofit and strengthen wood-framed, soft-story homes and multi-unit buildings, protecting them from collapse in a major earthquake.

A January 2009 study by the Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety projected that, without retrofitting, one out of four buildings of this type would collapse following a major earthquake.

With even minimal retrofitting, the collapse rate falls to 1 in 30—a substantial improvement in building structural safety and well worth the immediate attention of property owners.

The ordinance amends the Building, Planning, Fire and Public Works Codes to waive permit plan review fees. For example, property owners will save about \$355 on a retrofitting project for a one- or two-unit residential building with a construction cost of \$10,000. The same building with a retrofit cost of \$50,000 would save about \$1,120.

Equally important, property owners who voluntarily retrofit now will be exempt for 15 years from potentially stricter requirements that may be adopted in the future.

This incentive will save property owners money and provide an economic incentive to retrofit—an action that will save lives, reduce possibly debilitating injuries, and protect property.

To learn more:

• Technical information (Administrative Bulletin 094) is available on the Department of Building Inspection website, sfdbi.org.



Photo courtesy of USGS

In 1989, “soft-story” homes, those with large windows and garage door openings on the ground floor, were particularly vulnerable to collapse during the Loma Prieta earthquake.

- Read the CAPSS study on sfdbi.org, click on Highlights, then New Soft Story Legislation.
- Contact Willy Yau, DBI Technical Services, 415-558-6134 or William Strawn, DBI, 415-558-6250.

William Strawn,

DBI Legislative and Public Affairs Manager

The Richmond is talking about . . .

Outside Lands: This two-day concert will take place August 14–15 at the Polo Field, Speedway and Lindley Meadows in Golden Gate Park. For more information, go to sfoutsidelands.com for details.



Graffiti: Two new Department of Public Works programs help neighborhoods get a grip on graffiti. Graffiti Watch trains residents to spot, remove and report graffiti. The Graffiti Rewards program offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of graffiti vandals.

Go to sfdpw.org, click on Community One-Stop, then Graffiti.

Alexandria Theatre: The owners continue to work with the SF Planning Department on plans to remodel and use that property and the adjoining lot immediately to the north.

La Playa Safeway: Discussions continue between Safeway and its neighbors on both the La Playa and 48th Avenue sides of the store site. Safeway has a new architect and plans to create a website to encourage outreach and comment as the design phase continues.

Lease for Louis' Restaurant: PAR wrote a letter to the National Park Service supporting a lease extension for the Hontalas family, long-time operators of Louis' restaurant, on land owned by the NPS overlooking Seal Rock and the Sutro Bath ruins. The letter supported “a neighborhood institution and gathering place.”

Geary Bus Rapid Transit: Open seats on the BRT Citizens Advisory Committee have made it hard to get a quorum at recent meetings. The San Francisco County Transit Authority solicited applications from residents and is expected to fill the positions shortly.

Beach Chalet soccer fields: Renovation of the Beach Chalet soccer fields is on hold pending the completion of an environmental impact review. The City Fields Foundation, in partnership with the Recreation and Park Department, advocate replacing the fields with new, artificial turf and adding tower lights for late-night play.

Other planned upgrades include renovated restrooms and parking lots, areas for spectators and children's play, and landscaping. For more information, visit cityfieldsfoundation.org or home.earthlink.net/~sfoceanedge.

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Officers & Directors

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PAR Representatives to Other Organizations

Neighbors Association Presidio Planning (NAPP): Paul Epstein, Sharon Gadberry, Ray Holland, Ron Miguel
Housing Action Council (HAC): Dan Baroni
Neighborhood Working Group for Presidio Master Plan: Ray Holland
Kaiser Permanente Citizens Task Force: Peter Winkelstein
Presidio Restoration Advisory Board: Julie Cheever

*PAR
salutes
the*

Richmond District Neighborhood Center

*on 30 years of service to the
children, youth, families,
adults, and seniors
of our neighborhood!*

The Richmond is talking about . . .

continued from page 3



Chain link fencing surrounds the former Albertson's store at 32nd Avenue and Clement Street.

32nd Avenue & Clement: CVS, a nationwide pharmacy chain, will file for a conditional use permit for a store at this long-shuttered retail space. A CVS pharmacy would occupy nearly half (14,000 square feet) of the building.

Roughly 100 neighbors attended a CVS-hosted open house on June 24. The company shared its preliminary plans, answered neighbors' questions and listened to their concerns.

PAR, the largest neighborhood organization in San Francisco, has been the voice of the Richmond since 1970.

To maintain its independence, PAR does not accept government fund or grants. PAR's only income is members' tax-deductible dues and contributions. Members also may designate PAR to received funds from unitedWay.

We gratefully acknowledge those members who have contributed more than the basic \$15 membership dues since the Spring 2010 newsletter. Your generosity helps PAR thrive.

Patrons (\$100 and above)

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Summer means more bicycling and increased need for bike safety and awareness for cyclists and automobile drivers

What's better than a bike ride on a summer's day? What's worse than realizing that your bike has been stolen?

Starting in March, bicycle theft in the Richmond spiked. Many of the thefts were from apartment building garages. According to SFPD Captain Richard Corriea, "Burglars choose garages because it affords them some privacy for the time they need to cut the object that the bicycle is secured to or cut through a bicycle lock."

Secure Your Bike

Corriea recommends storing your bikes inside your house if possible. If not, remove the seat and front wheel, and keep those in the house. After all, he says, "Burglars have a tough time escaping on a seat-less, one-wheel bicycle!"



Here are some other tips:

- Avoid cable locks. They are easy to cut.
- Lock your frame with a high quality U-lock or a heavy NYC Chain and secure your wheels.
- Lock your bike to a sturdy, fixed object. If you lock the bike to a pole or post that is loose in the ground, it is easy to remove.
- Protect your bike by registering it. This can help recover a stolen bike.

If your bike has been stolen, report it to the police. Provide a simple description and include the bike's registration number. You also can list the bike as stolen on Craigslist.

Practice Safe Biking

Safety needs to be another priority for everyone on the road: drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. You can do your part to keep



Bike racks and strong locks help ensure that bikes will stay put while their riders take a break from cycling.

yourself and others safe by:

- Wearing a helmet that fits properly.
- Riding on the right in traffic.
- Obeying the rules of the road, including traffic signals and stop signs.
- Communicating with others using a bell, horn, your voice or polite hand gestures.
- Using bike lanes where available.
- Wearing reflective clothing at night.

Automobile drivers, too, can help ensure that the streets are safe for all wheeled vehicles by being alert to the presence of bicycles around them. Look for oncoming bikes before opening your car door, and, when pulling out of your driveway, be aware that there may be cyclists using the sidewalk.

Go to sfbike.org for more tips on bike safety and security or e-mail bicycle@sfgov.org for a copy of the *San Francisco Bicycle Guide*.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Charles & Yvonne Cannon | Jeanne F. Glennon | Dennis Kennedy | Rosa M. Schiessl |
| Judith Capellino | Dai Hoy Gong & Lyman Wong | Harumi Kishida | Louis B. Serratto |
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Department every year on summer activities planned for Golden Gate Park.

Ray: In the outreach category, I would include bringing neighbors and Safeway together over plans to renovate their stores, first on Eighth Avenue, and now at La Playa.

• **How do you decide whether to take a position?**

Ray: Our primary criterion is the relevance or impact on the Richmond district and the people who live here. Over the years, our Board members have developed a lot of expertise. We rely on them, and on the research that Board committees do, to inform our positions.

Michele: Philosophically, PAR favors a thoughtful, reasoned approach to public decision-making. We support an approach that lets many voices be heard.

Ray: But you won't hear PAR's voice endorsing individual candidates for office. We do however take positions on local ballot propositions—like the library bond issue—that will affect the quality of life here.

What do you want to know? Send your questions to newsletter@sfpar.org.

WWW.SFPAR.ORG

Join PAR

Membership is open to all persons living, working, or owning property in the Richmond District of San Francisco. PAR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Your contribution is tax-deductible as provided by law.

Yes! I/we want to support the Richmond District.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| First name(s) | | Last name | |
| Name of business (for business members) | | | |
| Address | | | |
| City | | State | Zip |
| Primary phone | | Cell/other phone | |
| E-Mail <i>PAR respects your privacy and will not share your email.</i> | | | |
| Membership | | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting membership, \$15.00/year and above | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subscribing membership, \$25.00/year and above | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor membership, \$50.00/year and above | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron membership, \$100.00/year and above | | | |

Please complete and cut out this form and mail it together with your check (payable to the *Planning Association of the Richmond*) to

PAR
3145 Geary Boulevard, #205
San Francisco CA 94118

THANKS for helping to support the quality of life in San Francisco's Richmond District.

The date code above your name on the mailing label indicates when your membership expires.