

The Richmond is talking . . .

Mountain Lake Park Playground: Fundraising is ongoing, and the remaining \$550,000 is needed now. To date, Friends of Mountain Lake Park Playground has secured more than 80 percent of the project budget. The Recreation and Park Commission has approved the new playground project offered by Friends of Mountain Lake Park Playground, but Claire Meyers of FMLPP stresses that "Construction cannot start until FMLPP completes its fundraising." Construction of the new playground, which will complement the restoration of Mountain Lake, is scheduled to start this year, and you can help by contacting fmlpp.org for details on donating to help build this state-of-the-art playground.

Balboa Street Improvements: This project, begun in 2006, continues despite some delays, and completion is scheduled for April of this year with 80 percent of the funding coming from the federal government and 20 percent from the city. The pedestrian crossings at 34th and 39th Avenues are now only two traffic lanes wide, which shortens the walk to cross Balboa. There are raised planters running parallel to the street on both sides of Balboa Street from 34th to 39th Avenues. In response to community input, twelve additional four-foot breaks between the planting box areas have been added for access between the curb and the main side-

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Spring 2014 PAR Meeting

...

Representatives from the SF Public Utilities Commission will talk about proposed water & sewer rates hikes.

**Wednesday, April 16, 2013
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, 2 Clement and 38 Geary



City tree upkeep and liability costs being transferred to homeowners

A tree at 4740 California Street has a notice on it that it is in good health and is being turned over to the adjacent property owner for maintenance, under section 805 (e) of the San Francisco Public Works Code.

Once that transfer takes place, the property owner is responsible for future tree maintenance and sidewalk repair if the roots damage the concrete. According to Carla Short, an urban forester with the SF Department of Public Works, 3,669 city-maintained trees have been transferred to property owners. Another 3,052 trees are expected to be transferred this year. Other locations in the Richmond that have city-maintained trees are Geary Boulevard and Lake Street.

Friends of the Urban Forest is opposed to the wholesale transfer of trees. Dan Flanagan, executive director of FUF, believes that homeowners may not properly maintain these trees, resulting in compromised tree health and shortened longevity. Costs for pruning could cost a property owner from \$400 to \$1,000 every two years.

According to Flanagan, FUF would like the city to pay for city street tree maintenance with a parcel tax and is trying to get such a measure on the ballot. The city is in better position to provide these trees with regular uniform care.

Before a tree can be transferred from the city to the property owner, an assessment of tree health by a certified arborist from the DPW must be done. Once a tree is certified, a transfer notice is placed on the tree. A more detailed notice is mailed to the property owner, who can then appeal the transfer. Owners should check

the sidewalk for cracks and uplifting if they get a transfer notice because they could be responsible for sidewalk repair if the tree roots cause the sidewalk to buckle or crack.

Property owners who have had a tree planted by the city in the last ten to fifteen years and receive a transfer notice should check the city-issued paperwork for a clause stating that the city will care for the tree. It is more likely, however, that the city has the authority to transfer maintenance to the property owner.

The tree on California Street is a London Plane sycamore tree that has been pollarded, a pruning technique that cuts the new growth from a major branch. Once pollarded, trees have to be repruned every one to two years for the life of the tree. The cuts are made every year at the same location, giving the tree a knuckle effect. Pruning these trees correctly can be expensive.

"Unfortunately people see this pruning technique and think that every tree can be pruned this way," says Flanagan.

Pollarding may look like topping, but it is not the same pruning technique, and improper pruning can result in a hefty fine. When 10 trees were topped at Valencia and 14th Streets last year, almost 90 percent of the vegetation was



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Letter from the President

Dear PAR Members,

Thank you for your continued support. Your membership is important to us. Please come to the next general membership meeting on Wednesday, April 16, when we will be voting on PAR board members and officers, and hearing from SFPUC representatives, who will talk about proposed water and sewage rate hikes.

PAR has been very active this year in dealing with Richmond community issues on private and public land use, transportation, and economic development.

PAR's land use committee continues to regularly review applications to the SF Planning Department for building and conditional use permits, at times, PAR is asked to comment on them. Recently PAR was unable to request a last-minute discretionary review and a waiver of fees regarding

a remodel project for affected neighbors who were never invited to a pre-application meeting. Please be aware that timely appeal is necessary to file for discretionary reviews, and the timing for them is tight.

Joining with the Neighborhood Association for Presidio Planning, PAR has actively commented on the plans for the future use of the Presidio's former commissary site where the Sports Basement is currently located.

Given the facts that the specific topography and landscaping of the new open space from the Main Post to Crissy Field will not be completely evident until after the tunnels of the Presidio Parkway have been completed, and the new land covering them has been designed and installed, the Trust's decision to postpone any action on the adjoining site of the former commissary seems to be in the public interest. The Trust has just issued a solicitation of bids for those designs.

As a consequence of the removal of trees on the western and northern shores of Mountain Lake for its dredging and restoration, PAR is requesting noise abatement measures be installed on Veterans Drive to compensate for the loss of those buffering trees. PAR continues to monitor the cleanup and restoration of the lake.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, PAR continues to remind the SF Veterans Administration Medical Center of its legal obligation to mitigate or eliminate impacts from its proposed building expansion on the environment and historic characteristics of its neighbors' properties. PAR is also working to reduce the impact on SFVAMC neighbors caused by vehicles that cannot be accommodated within their grounds.

PAR continues to provide information on how to respond for residents and businesses that have received notices from the DPW of proposed installations of sidewalk electronic cabinets on public sidewalks adjacent to their properties. Additionally, PAR has requested that, once installed, the electronic cabinets be properly maintained and graffiti be promptly removed.

PAR continues to be an active participant in the People for Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Presidio (or People for the Park and the Presidio) activities.

Regarding transportation issues, PAR invited representatives from SF Municipal Transportation Agency and the SF Municipal Transportation Authority to discuss the latest proposals for Geary Bus Rapid Transit system and other bus lines in the Richmond.

With respect to the increasing number of street closures in the Richmond District (including Golden Gate Park), due to races and special events, PAR continues to urge the SFMTA's Interdepartmental Staff Committee of Traffic and Transportation, the Rec and Park department or both to ensure that public notices for the events, a map of the route or event location and the specific streets that are closed will be published in advance.

PAR has been asked to comment in the process for planning and installation of street enhancements on Balboa Street.

PAR continues with its participation in the Economic Development of the Richmond workshops.

Please let us know if you have any comments, questions or suggestions about any of these activities of your neighborhood association.

Ray Holland
president@sfpark.org

Officers & Directors

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Kaiser Permanente Citizens Task Force:
Peter Winkelstein
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Planning: Paul Epstein, Sharon Gadberry,
Ray Holland
Neighborhood Working Group for Presidio
Master Plan: Ray Holland
Ocean Beach Master Planning Committee:
Julie Burns
Presidio Restoration Advisory Board:
Julie Cheever
Richmond Community Coalition: Ray Holland,
Nick Belloni

Approved slate of PAR Board candidates

The PAR board unanimously approved the following slate of officers and board of directors to be voted upon by PAR membership at the April 16 General Membership Meeting.

Officers

Ray Holland, president; Nick Belloni, co-vice president; Richard Corriea, co-vice president; Brenda Altman, secretary; and Christopher Wright, treasurer.

Board of Directors

Fred Altshuler, with alternate Julie Cheever; Dan Baroni; Gene Brodsky; Julie Burns; Eliote Durham; Herb Elliott; Paul Epstein; Bob Fries; Sharon Gadberry; Margie Hom-Brown; Jason Jungreis; Brian Larkin; Claire Myers; Marjan Philhour; Cheryl Schultz; Bill Shepard; Andy Thornley; and Peter Winkelstein.

Thank you

Our donors' generosity is essential to PAR's ongoing ability to advocate on behalf of the residents and businesses of the Richmond District. We appreciate the support of every PAR member.

To maintain its independence, PAR does not accept government funding or grants. Our only income is our members' tax-deductible dues and contributions.

We gratefully acknowledge those members who contributed from April 2013 through February 2014.

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Paul Angelo
Leonard F. Armstrong
Daniel & Kathryn Baroni
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City tree transfers bring costs for homeowners

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improperly removed. The property owner was fined \$17,540.

"Don't compare tree service companies on price alone," says Ellyn Shea, a local certified arborist and garden coach. "Topping, lion tailing and over-pruning are common poor practices. Reputable

arborists should explain to the client why they will not prune this way."

According to Flanagan, "FUF is not equipped to prune mature trees. We do have reliable arborists on our website who can advise property owners about maintaining trees."

For more information on FUF's efforts go to www.fuf.net. Details of the tree maintenance transfer plan can be found at www.sfdpw.org; search using the key words "tree maintenance transfer plan." Referrals to certified arborists are available at www.treesaregood.com.

Geary Bus Rapid Transit project still rolling along

The project began with a feasibility study that identified four alternatives for future transit service on the Geary corridor. As reported in the last issue of the PAR newsletter, these included a no-build option, one side-running BRT option and two center-running BRT options. In early 2013, the SF Municipal Transit Authority (TA) developed a fifth alternative in response to community concerns about loss of parking. This fifth or “consolidated option” will have more space between stops than the current local but less than for the current limited service. With only one type of service on the center-running part of the alignment, there is no need for the buses to pass one

another and thus no need for the passing lanes and the associated loss of parking.

Current Status

On February 3, the TA made a presentation to the PAR Board on the status of the project and its recommended locally preferred alternative. As explained in the last PAR newsletter, a center-running system would be difficult to implement in the intersections at Masonic Avenue and at Fillmore Street due to problems with having bus stops located in the underpasses at those intersections. Therefore, the design that the TA is now proposing for the section of the corridor east of the Palm/Jordan and Geary area will all be side-running, on the surface above the tunnels.

The staff-recommended design for the corridor, starting from the western terminus at 48th Avenue and heading east, runs as it currently does with no bus lanes until 33rd Avenue. The corridor then transitions to side-running lanes until about 27th Avenue, at which point it transitions to center-running, dedicated bus lanes. The buses stay in these lanes until the Palm/Jordan area where the corridor transitions back to side-running. East of Gough Street, eastbound buses move to the O’Farrell Street part of the Geary/O’Farrell one-way couplet. The recommendations for Geary Street (east of Van Ness Avenue) include colorizing
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The Richmond is talking . . .

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walk. Despite assurances that Americans with Disabilities Act standards have been met, some neighborhood complaints persist. As of early March, planting boxes remained empty, but tree and foliage planting is slated to begin shortly. Another nice feature is a new parklet being built in front of the Simple Pleasures Café.



U-verse is coming. AT&T is posting notices throughout the Richmond on streetlamp poles in areas where U-verse boxes are proposed. Instructions to protest the placement of a box are on the flyer.

Golden Gate Park road closures:

Thanks to Dana Ketchum of the Rec and Park Department, roads closed for special events are now posted online at <http://sfrecpark.org/golden-gate-park-road-closures>.

Total lunar eclipse: On April 20, a solar eclipse will begin at 10:58 p.m., reach totality at 12:06 a.m., and end at 2:33 a.m.

LaPlaya Safeway update: Natalie Mattei, a Safeway representative, writes:

“With the recent press about Safeway’s potential sale to Cerberus, a private equity firm, I have received many inquiries about the future of the La Playa Safeway redevelopment.

“Safeway is continuing with its Northern California projects on a business as usual basis. We remain very committed to San Francisco. Before proceeding with any construction, we always check budgets and evaluate return on investment. New investors in Safeway would become involved in this process, but we are confident that they will continue to consider San Francisco an important place for Safeway to invest.

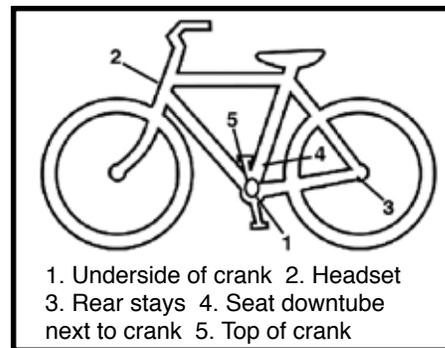
“I will keep you posted as to our progress with the City application, and all things Safeway.”

Go to safewayonlaplaya.com for updates.

Richmond historical bicycle tour:

On May 3, PAR board member Andy Thornley leads a non-athletic tour focusing on past efforts to create “protected neighborhoods” by reshaping streets that work well for cars, pedestrians and bicyclists. The ride begins at 1:30 p.m. at the Velo Rouge Café, 798 Arguello Blvd. Learn how to make real changes for better neighborhoods.

Citywide bicycle registration: You can now register your bike(s) with Safety Awareness for Everyone at safebike.org. Registration requires a photo of the bike and its registration number. If your bike is recovered, SAFE will contact you and check your identification before returning the bike. The diagram below shows where the registration number should be. If there isn’t one, contact the manufacturer for the number or engrave an ID number such as your driver’s license number on your bike and register that.



Safety tips for bicyclists: Invest in a good U-lock. Remember to lock the frame and both front and rear tires. Seats and lights are items that are often stolen. Cable locks for seats are available, and lights should be removed if you are in an unfamiliar place or will be parked for an extended period of time. Remember that public parking garages often provide bicycle parking.

Join PAR now and make your voice heard.

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
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E-Mail <i>PAR respects your privacy and will not share your email.</i>			
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Please complete and cut out this form and mail it together with your check (payable to the *Planning Association of the Richmond*) to

PAR
5758 Geary Boulevard, Box 356
San Francisco, CA 94121-2112

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

Pay Your PAR dues on online!

www.sfpar.org/site/join-par-via-paypal.html

to join, contribute or pay your dues the easy, electronic way!

BRT status report

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the bus lanes, bus bulbs at high-ridership stops and corner bulbs at so-called strategic locations.

The TA predicts that its current BRT design would result in at 25 percent average travel time-savings and as much as 30 percent in time savings in the center-running area.

Next Steps

The current schedule is still to release the environmental impact report and statement in summer 2014. The complete locally preferred alternative will be released then as well. Public comment would follow, with release of the final environmental document this coming winter.

For more information and meeting schedules, go to www.sfmta.com and search "Geary BRT."

—Brian Larkin

Don't miss a single
PAR meeting in 2014
April 16
July 16
October 15
Wednesdays • 7 to 9 p.m.
Richmond Recreation Center
251 18th Avenue

WWW.SFPAR.ORG

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

