

The Richmond is talking . . .

Fire pits on Ocean Beach to require permits? The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing changes to the recreational fire program at Ocean Beach to create a sustainable program addressing environmental impacts and public safety concerns while creating a high-quality user experience. Key elements of the proposed program include a permit system, winter restrictions to promote better air quality, more durable fire rings and a maintenance and educational partnership with the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. More information is at parkplanning.nps.gov/oceanbeachfires.

Sycamore trees on California are sprouting new growth in the late fall and early winter even as they are shedding some leaves. Is it climate change; is it drought? Doug Wildman of the Friends of the Urban Forest explains, "We see this in several species. They leaf out again because various leaf diseases (mildew and anthracnose) defoliate the tree early then, with spring-like conditions and enough energy in the tree to support a whole new crop of leaves, another set of leaves come out in the fall."

Blue Danube, the iconic coffee shop on Clement Street, had locals worried as months passed with little evidence of construction after its closure in early 2015. The reopening was expected last June, but the popular spot remained closed. However, construction has resumed, and we're hoping for a happy new year for the Blue Danube instead of a "see you latte."

continued on page 2



PAR supports no-build option

Bus rapid transit reports released

PAR submitted its two-part response on the Geary Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) on November 30.

The first part reiterated PAR's stated position on the BRT development process when the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) released its feasibility study for the project in 2007. At that time, PAR recommended that the project be divided into two phases.

In Phase One, PAR recommended that, before constructing the BRT, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) improve all three versions (i.e., "local," "rapid" and "express") of the current bus system on Geary Boulevard.

For Phase Two, PAR recommended that performance in Phase One be used as baseline data for comparison with the expected performance of the BRT before deciding on what further steps were justified.

PAR's comments on the EIR/EIS are consistent with its earlier position, though updated in accordance with the more specific information contained in the EIR/EIS. Specifically, PAR's response recommended that the "no-build" option become the locally preferred alternative.

The basis for this recommendation was that the staff-recommended alternative did not provide significantly better service than the no-build option and that the staff-recommended,

continued on page 3

Affordable housing incentives include relaxed height limits

On December 9, PAR hosted a community forum on the Affordable Housing Bonus Program. This well-attended meeting, organized by PAR president Richard Corriea, drew residents from across the city.

According to the San Francisco Planning Department, "the Affordable Housing Bonus Program (AHBP) provides incentives for developers to include more affordable housing for very low, low, moderate, and middle-income households."

Development bonuses, such as increased density, would be offered on a graduated scale based on the percentage of affordable units provided. This proposed program is one of the tools put

forward to address the planning department's housing goals, which are:

- Increase the numbers of on-site affordable units,
- Improve feasibility of underutilized sites,
- Increase availability of middle-income housing, and
- Expedite entitlement of 100 percent affordable housing units.

The proposed AHBP includes two options: the local program and the state program."

The local AHBP will offer incentives to project sponsors that elect to provide 30 percent or more affordable housing units on site.

continued on page 3

Winter 2016 PAR Meeting

Affordable Bonus Housing Program discussion continued

Wednesday, January 13
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: 1 California and 38 Geary

In April:

PAR Board and Officer elections

Letter from the President

Dear PAR Members,
I often remind folks that PAR's mission is to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Richmond District. Because such a mission could pull the organization in many directions, PAR's board has recommitted the organization to focusing on those most urgent issues affecting the district and those which engender the greatest concern for our members and folks enjoying life in the Richmond.

Currently topping our list of issues are the Affordable Housing Bonus Program (AHBP), the "old Fireman's Fund" property development project and the Geary BRT. We continue to stay engaged on issues related to the Veterans Administration's use of the Fort Miley property. Board members are also involved in the development of policy that affects the GGNRA, Parks and the Presidio. In the case of issues that affect particular neighborhoods, we collaborate with many neighborhood groups and issue-oriented collectives to support their work.

So what is PAR doing to accomplish its strategic focus?

PAR does not shy away from controversy. PAR's intention is to see that the interests and concerns of Richmond District residents are known to our elected representatives and considered early in the planning process by city departments and commissions. Candidates for elective office can expect an invitation to attend a PAR-sponsored meeting. In October, PAR hosted a well-attended a community forum for the candidates running for sheriff.

At PAR's December General Membership Meeting, we focused on the Affordable Housing Bonus Program. An informative recap of the program is on page 1, but I want to add a bit of perspective here. There were about 80 folks at the meeting. The three AHBP presentations were followed by a lengthy, written question and oral answer period. So everyone could comment and ask questions, the last half hour of the event was reserved for questions and comments from the audience. We did not end the meeting until everyone had a chance to speak. The presentations were diverse and informative and generated many cogent questions.

The AHBP, a complicated bit of legislation calling for significant changes to city housing policy, was discussed. The quality of the planning department's presentation was appreciated, even by some who object to the AHBP. The program portends significant changes to types of buildings built in our communities as well as to streetscapes and the environment. As such, it calls for more public scrutiny and

stakeholder input, which thus far has been insufficient to meet the public's needs.

Residents have mixed reactions to the AHBP as presented. Some support the AHBP; others need specifics on impact and nature of the incentives, or bonuses, offered to developers. Rent-controlled residents are concerned that incentives for new construction may result in the demolition of rent-controlled apartments, while others are concerned with continual, ongoing construction issues.

Will the program significantly increase affordable housing? Could we do better? How will changes affect the quality of life in the Richmond and other districts? Are the goals too broad and unmanageable? These are basic questions that need to be addressed. The topic will continue to inspire public involvement because we all share an interest in how to best provide housing and infrastructure for future San Franciscans.

At PAR's General Membership Meeting on January 13, 2016, at the Richmond Recreation Center, we will continue the discussion and provide an opportunity for public comment about the AHBP. PAR will see that your concerns and questions are documented and brought to the attention of our government leaders. I hope you will be able to attend this important PAR event and participate in the development of policy that will affect our communities for generations.

Happy 2016 to all

Richard Correia
sfparpresident@gmail.

Officers & Directors

Officers

Richard Correia, President
Nicholas Belloni, Vice President
Brenda Altman, Secretary
Christopher Wright, Treasurer

Directors

Dan Baroni	Sharon Gadberry
Mary Dee Beall	Jason Jungreis
Margie Hom-Brown	Brian Larkin
Julie Burns	Kate Lazarus
Eliote Durham	Claire Myers
Herb Elliott	Marjan Philhour
Paul Epstein	Bill Shepard
Robert Fries	Andy Thornley
Peter Winkelstein	

Emeritus Directors

Lynn Altshuler • Jim Lazarus • Ron Miguel
Paul Rosenberg • Michele Stratton

PAR Representatives in Other Organizations:

Friends of Mountain Lake Park Playground:
Claire Myers
Housing Action Coalition: Dan Baroni
Kaiser Permanente Citizens Task Force:
Peter Winkelstein
Neighborhood Associations for Presidio
Planning: Paul Epstein, Sharon Gadberry,
Ocean Beach Master Planning Committee:
Julie Burns
Richmond Community Coalition: Ray Holland,
Nick Belloni

Richmond is talking . . .

continued from page 1

Is there a Mountain Lake monster sending up bubbles from the depths? Good news—those bubbles are from an aeration device used to keep the algae growth down.



The newly reintroduced native aquatic life at Mountain Lake depend on a healthy lake, and algae bloom, if left unchecked, can cause a dead zone where fish and other aquatic life cannot survive.

Mountain Lake Park Playground is under construction. The old wooden structure is down along with swings and benches.

Although recent rains are slowing construction, progress is being made. You can help keep by donating to Friends of Mountain Lake Park Playground at fmlpp.org.

The SFPUC is giving away free 50-gallon rain barrels and downspout diverter kits to eligible single-family and two-unit homes in the city. To apply, go to sfwater.org and look for "rain water harvesting." Barrels are available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. In early 2016, the program will expand to include discounts on larger capacity cisterns as well as modifying the rain barrel program to provide up to two rain barrels per home. Want to be notified? Email landscape@sfwater.org.

continued on back page

Affordable housing could entail higher density

continued from page 1

Of this 30 percent, 12 percent must be permanently affordable to low- and moderate-income households and 18 percent permanently affordable to middle-income households.

If a project has nine or fewer housing units, it is not subject to inclusionary housing requirements. Therefore, it must include a minimum of 30 percent of units affordable to middle-income households.

Projects that include 30 percent or more affordable units for low and middle-income households will be able to build more residential units and up to an additional two stories more than currently allowed under existing zoning regulations.

Two-bedroom units must make up a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of housing units in the building. The local AHBP does not have a minimum housing-unit threshold.

Projects with 100-percent affordable units will be able to build more residential units and up to three additional stories of resi-

dential development more than currently allowed under existing of zoning regulations.

The AHBP is not without controversy, and among the questions raised are whether relaxed zoning height and parking requirements are too much of a concession to builders and how such concessions might change the character of the Richmond.

The full ordinance and stated goals can be reviewed at sfplanning.org. Below are names of people involved in the project and general contact information.

General contact email:
CPC.AHBP@sfgov.org

Program Manager
Kearstin Dischinger
Kearstin.Dischinger@sfgov.org
415-558-6284

Planning Team
Menaka Mohan, Lead Planner
Menaka.Mohan@sfgov.org
415-575-9141
Paolo Ikezoe, Planner
Paolo.Ikezoe@sfgov.org
415-575-9137

PAR responds to Geary Boulevard BRT report

continued from page 1

center-running hybrid alternative did not provide an increase in passenger carrying capacity.

In light of those facts, PAR prefers the near-term benefits offered by the no-build option and the more robust benefits of an extension of the Muni Metro underground to the Richmond District in the longer term.

The second part of the response was a list of comments on the specifics in the EIR/EIS. Among these were concerns about the effects of project construction on Geary Boulevard businesses, the effect of BRT operations on existing vehicle traffic caused by the elimination of left turn lanes, and the lack of flexibility in the center-running design, which does not allow for buses to pass one another.

New bike/foot path to Golden Gate Bridge opens

A new pathway (with bicycle/pedestrian bridge) now connects cyclists, joggers and strollers to the Golden Gate Bridge from the south and west, making Richmond District bridge access even smoother. The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy has facilitated dramatic improvements to the Presidio Coastal Trail since 2010, including new bike lanes on Lincoln Boulevard, a new multi-use trail that runs adjacent to Lincoln Boulevard and two marvelous new overlooks.

The new pathway is reached from Merchant Road and Lincoln Boulevard. It's wide and smooth and ADA compliant, so it's a nice wheelchair approach as well.

This project was made possible by a generous challenge grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, donors to Presidio Trails and Overlooks and the members of the Parks Conservancy.

Our deep gratitude goes to all who help support work in the Presidio.



Two-wheeling safely through wet, winter weather

More and more people are getting around San Francisco by bicycle as a healthy, cheaper choice, good for the rider and for the planet. It's important to pay attention to the rules of the road, whether biking, driving or walking, and, during the dark wet days of winter, it's important to pay extra attention to some key things.

• **Light up**—Make sure the bike has working lights (white in front, red in back) and side reflectors, and make sure to use

those lights as soon as it starts getting dark. Bright, strobing blinkers are best for visibility, and their batteries last longer. (Check out new USB-chargeable lights.)

• **Mind the puddles**—Rain-slick roads are extra slippery, and puddles can hide hazards. Avoid splashing through potholes that can be deeper than they look and may hide sharp things. Check brakes and brake early; wet rims don't grip as well as dry ones.

• **Ride predictably, ride respectfully**—In every season, in any kind of weather, the best bet for safe cycling is to ride straight and give way as appropriate. Ride so that others can reasonably guess what you're going to do: Signal turns, merge safely and wait your turn at intersections and crosswalks. Erratic, pushy biking leads to hard feelings and sometimes to crashes.

Here's to rolling safely in the new year!

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
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
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 online!
sfpar.org/site/join-par-via-paypal.html
to join, contribute or pay your dues the easy, electronic way!

The Richmond is talking . . . *continued from page 2*

El Niño is here and residents are urged to clean out gutters and patch roof leaks as soon as they can. You can help the water department by keeping storm drains clear of debris. It only takes a little bit of excess leaves, plastic bags and other trash to create flooded streets that endanger pedestrians, bicyclists and even cars.

The First Annual BalBOOa Fright Fest was a success! More than 1,000 neighbors and families came to the Outer Richmond on Halloween to trick or treat, enjoy games, or participate in a costume contest.

St. Thomas the Apostle School hosted a festival, and local organizations staffed informational tables. Balboa Produce Market hosted a "guess the pumpkin's weight" contest, and the Balboa Theater hosted free, family-friendly movies. Supervisors Eric Mar, Katy Tang, and Scott Wiener also attended to judge the costume contest.

Thank you to the merchants, volunteers and sponsors who made this event possible.

SFPAR.ORG

Don't miss a meeting in 2016!
 Wednesdays • 7 to 9 p.m.
 January 13 • April 13
 July 20 • September 14
 (9/14 is District 1 candidates
 for supervisor night)
 October 16
 Richmond Recreation Center
 251 18th Avenue

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

