

Muni director talks with PAR members

On Wednesday, Sept. 19, PAR hosted San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Director Ed Reiskin in a lively public meeting at the Richmond Recreation Center.

Director Reiskin, who lives in the Richmond and commutes on the 38R, was there to address serious Muni service disruptions that occurred throughout the Richmond District lines in August 2018. PAR had written to him, asking him to address complaints from neighbors when buses along California Street and Geary Boulevard unexpectedly began missing stops.

By the September 19 meeting, Muni had apologized and restored service. Director Reiskin explained that the Twin Peaks reconstruction and repairs had taken away buses and drivers from other routes across the City. All present agreed and were appreciative that service had improved greatly over the last ten years.

The neighbors also expressed concerns and suggested improvements on such issues as nonpaying passengers, dogs, strollers, seniors and bicycles. Then the discussion moved to the issue of the day: the Geary Rapid Project.

Director Reiskin brought an eight-page pamphlet, in four languages, titled “Construction is Coming” (sfmta.com/reports/geary-rapid-project-flyer). The \$300 million multi-year project rolls out next November. It is the SFMTA’s position that, even though service on the Geary corridor is reliable now, safety and

continued on last page

The Richmond is Talking can be found at www.sfpar.org.

Fall 2018 PAR Meeting Initiatives on the November ballot

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Wednesday, October 17

7 to 9 p.m.

Richmond Recreation Center
251 18th Avenue
(between Clement & California Streets)

Limited street parking is available.

Muni: 1 California and 38 Geary



Geary BRT plan changes trigger PAR’s project stance reevaluation

PAR has recently revised its position on the proposed Geary Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project for the first time since 2007.

One of the reasons for the update is the change in the details of the BRT project. Among the changes are in the operational scenario, most of which are west of Arguello Boulevard. A more recent change is the decision to separate the project into two parts—east of Palm Avenue (the Geary Rapid Project) and west of Palm Avenue (the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project). The eastern phase is less extensive and will be completed earlier.

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority completed the draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement last year. The next step is for the project to get those documents approved by

various public agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration, which can provide as much as \$100 million through its small starts program.

Another government agency that must approve the project is the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) board of directors. At its meeting on August 21, the board approved the first (east of Palm Avenue) proposed street changes on Geary Boulevard and O’Farrell Street between Stanyan and Market streets. The changes include eliminating Rapid service at Spruce Street, which will go into effect later this fall. According to its website, the SFMTA Board “asked staff to engage further with bus riders and merchants to explore whether there is an agreed-upon location to change parking and loading spaces to accommodate an

continued on page 3

ADU? What is that you ask . . .

In urban planning parlance, an “in-law” apartment in a home has a technical term—accessory dwelling unit or ADU—and an expanded meaning. It denotes a rental unit added to a residence providing all the requisites for independent living—a kitchen, bathroom and a separate entrance.

The state law regulating ADUs focuses exclusively on single-family homes. The San Francisco ordinance in contrast covers multi-unit buildings as well as single-family homes.

The key to understanding ADUs is that they are “accessory” units appended to a primary home or building. The part of the lot or building occupied by an ADU cannot be subdivided or sold sepa-

rately, and the ADU may be restricted to long-term rentals and limited in size and location on the lot where it is located.

In Portland, Oregon, ADUs now account for more than 10 percent of all housing permits; websites depicting these ADUs reveal that they are often small rental units that fit comfortably on the lots of single-family homes.

The California law adopted in 2016 was premised on a similar vision of allowing homeowners to transform little-used portions of their house or lot into small, but adequate, living units.

The law allows local governments to enact ordinances to avoid overcrowding and substandard conditions, but prohib-

continued on page 2

Letter from the President

Dear PAR Members,
I hope everyone is finally getting to enjoy some sunny days in the Richmond. Fog notwithstanding, it was a busy summer for PAR, and we're looking forward to the fall.

You may have seen our board members out and about at different community events this summer. We have been at the Clement Street Farmers Market, National Night Out with the San Francisco Police Department, and the Autumn Moon Festival on Clement Street. We even had canine representation at the Autumn Moon Festival, where former PAR President Rich Correia's dog Gigi entered the costume contest dressed as Wonder Woman. (She didn't win, but nonetheless made her PAR friends proud on this Year of the Dog!)

We greatly enjoy these opportunities to connect with members and prospective members and to hear about our neighbors' experiences, ideas and concerns.

PAR extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who organizes these great events. They help make the Richmond the vibrant and enjoyable neighborhood that it is.

One concern we heard a lot about over the summer was disruptions in Muni service. Without a light rail or underground option, Richmond residents depend on reliable and efficient bus service. Our neighbors were reporting significant delays and service reductions. We sent a letter from PAR to MTA Director Ed Reiskin about these problems and inviting Director Reiskin to speak in the Richmond. You can find the letter at sfpar.org.

Director Reiskin took us up on that invitation, and we hosted him at the Richmond Rec Center on September 19.

We appreciate Director Reiskin making the time, and appreciate our members who came out to hear the latest and share their ideas. One of PAR's goals is to facilitate these important conversations between neighbors and our city officials, and we will continue to host this kind of forum.

Another topic that's always front of mind for PAR is the green spaces throughout and around the Richmond. Earlier in the summer, I attended a neighborhood meeting that Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer's office hosted regarding the Park

Presidio Green Belt. The San Francisco Department of Public Works is working on improvements to the intersection of Geary Boulevard and Park Presidio, with anticipated completion this fall.

Supervisor Fewer also elicited other ideas from the community about the Green Belt as a whole, regarding how to make it cleaner, safer, and more inviting. We look forward to participating in that continuing conversation.

We are also closely following the development of Fort Scott in the Presidio. The Presidio Trust is currently considering proposals for this 30-acre site. Through our participation in the Neighborhood Associations for the Planning of the Presidio, we will be tracking the progress of the proposals and weighing in.

The arrival of fall this year also means an upcoming election. Our October 17 General Membership Meeting will focus on several initiatives on the November ballot, and we'll hear from speakers both for and against. We hope to see you there.

Kate Lazarus
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ADU? What is that you ask . . .

continued from front page

its restrictions that unreasonably burden construction of ADUs.

The San Francisco ADU program provides a kind of procedural shortcut to add an additional unit or units to apartment buildings undergoing seismic retrofitting.

From 2014 through the first quarter of this year, 54 percent of all filings for ADU permits have been for construction of an ADU concurrent with seismic retrofitting. Usually this involves apartments of five or more units subject to the mandatory soft-story retrofitting program.

On other fronts, the construction of ADUs has advanced slowly. During the same time period, the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection received 691 filings for permits to construct ADUs; 306 permits have actually been issued, but only 28 ADUs have been constructed and made available for rental. In particular, there has been relatively little activity in

adding ADUs to single-family homes. Owners of single-family homes account for only 12 percent of ADU permit filings. In San Francisco's District One, roughly coterminous with the Richmond District, there have been only two filings.

The ADU manual, which offers prototypes for construction of ADUs, illustrates some of the challenges for single-family homes.

Four prototypes are adaptable to single-family homes, but they raise a series of barriers—loss of parking, inadequate light and ventilation, cramped living space and restrictive backyard setbacks. Two prototypes involve structures that are seldom found in San Francisco.

Architects designing ADUs in single-family homes must borrow space from garages, storage rooms, play areas and unused bedrooms or design attached units extending into the back or side yards.

To read the full article, please go to www.sfpar.org.

Revisions to Geary BRT plan triggers reevaluation

continued from front page

efficient and accessible Rapid stop in the future.”

The longer-term Geary Boulevard Improvement project, which will include center-running, bus-only lanes from Palm Avenue to 27th–28th Avenue. Current work includes design and approvals, public outreach, preliminary engineering, detail design

and advertisement and award of the construction contracts. Construction is scheduled to start in 2020.

In the still-longer term, BART is conducting a \$10 million, Prop RR-funded study of a second transbay tunnel. Among the possible options for the San Francisco side of that project would be an extension out Geary Boulevard.

Updated PAR Position on a Geary Bus Rapid Transit System

In 2007, PAR prepared a detailed position paper concerning a proposal for implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on Geary. Soon after, some studies were undertaken, and several sets of BRT proposals were created. Subsequently, there have been series of improvements to the existing public transit system, and a finalized BRT proposal. Based upon these events, PAR now revises its position paper on the Geary BRT. This paper is to be read in conjunction with the original position paper.

Essentially unchanged from the time of the original paper are the following critical facts:

1. Geary would benefit from further transit improvements.
2. There are no well-assessed metrics to describe exactly how much functional improvement BRT would provide, and there are no well-assessed metrics to describe exactly how much detrimental effect BRT would have on all other elements of transit or the effect of BRT construction and its aftermath in its disruption to the community.
3. There is a shortfall of over \$100M in funding.

It is PAR’s present position that, prior to pursuing BRT, the following actions must be taken:

1. Study of the performance of the present public transit system.
2. Study of the performance of all other forms of transit, including private vehicles, ride-share vehicles, private mass-transit, and bicycle and other small-vehicle transit.

3. Study of the near-future advent of autonomous vehicles and their impact on transit.

4. Study of the effect of creating rush-hour-only mass-transit lanes on Geary.

5. Study of the effect of creating 24-hour mass-transit lanes on Geary.

6. Study of the performance of possible BRT compared to the present public transit system, including BRT transit stop reduction and the resultant increase in total door-to-door passenger commute time.

7. Study of the projected impact of possible BRT on the performance of all other forms of transit, including private vehicles, ride-share vehicles, private mass-transit, bicycle and other small-vehicle transit, and autonomous vehicles on Geary and surrounding streets.

8. Study of the impact of possible central-running BRT on pedestrian safety.

9. Study of the impact of possible BRT construction on disruption to the community.

10. Study of the impact of possible BRT aftermath (ex: loss of parking) to the community.

PAR remains supportive of rush-hour-only mass-transit lanes on Geary as the most expeditious, lowest-cost, most effective, and least disruptive means to improve public transit and mass transit.

Public safety community resources active in SF

The July 18 General Membership Meeting was a great forum to pick up some advice from San Francisco organizations on How You Can Help with Public Safety.

Alice Xavier of Stop Crime SF urged attendees to get involved with her group, which strives to hold public officials—police, district attorney, judges, criminal justice and political leaders—accountable for crime prevention and reduction. SCSF volunteers monitor trials, track performance of judges, advocate for victims, advocate increased resources for police and prosecutors and lobby for legislation to reduce crime. Sign up and get more info at stopcrimesf.com.

SF SAFE (Safety Awareness for Everyone), represented by Jorge Parra, offers assistance in organizing neighborhood watch groups for crime prevention on a local level—including many that are already in the Richmond District. SAFE also conducts security surveys for residences and businesses, helps individuals install child seats in cars and promotes bicycle registration to

facilitate tracking of stolen bikes. SF SAFE is also a great way to connect with local police as they can act as a liaison between residents and the police. Learn more about everything SF SAFE does at sfsafe.org.

SF Fire Department Lt. Hashim Anderson discussed the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) programs that help SF residents prepare for, and respond to, the inevitable earthquake. Some of the tips, such as maintaining a three-day emergency supply of food and water, were familiar. Others, such as closing all doors for fire suppression when leaving your home, less so. Maintaining working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in every bedroom and hallway is always an essential part of home safety, but many in the audience were surprised by his recommendation to leave outside doors unlocked so firefighters can readily enter a house that is burning.

More info about joining NERT can be found at sf-fire.org/neighborhood-emergency-response-team-nerf.

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	
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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

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

Reiskin addresses PAR

continued from front page

reliability will lessen in the future, which is why the street needs to be reconfigured, allowing buses to travel in dedicated, red lanes that will extend for most of the length of the Geary corridor.

PAR's position is that SFMTA has not offered enough evidence to justify a need for the project, since cost-effective and minimally disruptive improvements have already had a positive effect on reliability. Moreover, PAR's position (available at www.sfpar.org) has been that the SFMTA has not produced studies to show its effectiveness in the future transportation environment.

Later in the program Robert Starzel of San Franciscans for Sensible Transit (www.sf4st.org) spoke. Their legal case to prevent the project from going forward will be decided next month. Details of the case can be found at sfrichmondreview.com/2018/06/01/lawsuit-claims-transit-agencies-misled-public/

Many thanks to PAR Vice President Nick Belloni, who led the meeting and kept the discussion moving. Thanks, also, to Sandra Fewer, District 2 Supervisor, for participating in the forum. She announced that she is holding a hearing to address community objections to allowing private transit to use the new red lanes along with SFMTA's public buses. More information about that can be found at www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Muni-approves-bus-lanes-on-Geary-as-critics-see-13174910.php.

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