PAR Board Supports Board of Supervisors Resolution Delaying Extension of Parking Meter Hours

In early May of this year, the SFMTA Board of Directors voted to extend metered parking hours in the City until 10 p.m. from Monday through Saturday and enforce parking meters from noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays. According to the agency’s plan, SFMTA would make the changes in six phases through the end of 2024. Not surprisingly, this decision met with a great deal of opposition from many residents, businesspeople and tourists in San Francisco. In response, the Board of Supervisors proposed a Resolution (Resolution 230587) urging SFMTA to delay implementing meter hour extension until the completion of an independent economic impact report that would analyze the projected impact to San Francisco small businesses, City revenues, and the City’s overall economic recovery. PAR sent the letter below to the Board supporting its resolution. The Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the resolution on May 23, 2023. PAR will continue to follow this issue.

Dear President Peskin and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I am writing on behalf of the Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR) to oppose the MTA’s plan to extend parking meter hours and to support the Board of Supervisors’ Resolution 230587.

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The park hosts 17 million visitors each year and is considered a local treasure by the 7 million people who call the Bay Area home.

“I am thrilled to work with the staff and partners at Golden Gate to help visitors and families in the Bay Area and beyond enjoy one of America’s greatest and most unique park sites,” Smith said. “It is especially gratifying to return to the park after two decades and see the incredibly positive changes made by staff and partners. I’m anxious to get my feet on the ground in the park’s 50th anniversary year.”

At Joshua Tree, one of Southern California’s premier desert parks, Smith led a team of 140 park staff serving 3.1 million visitors annually. Previously, Smith served as Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site superintendent in Topeka, Kansas, and as a legislative staffer on the House Natural Resources Committee as part of the NPS Bevinetto Fellowship program in Washington, DC. Smith has also worked as a district naturalist at Grand Canyon National Park, an interpretive specialist at the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and as a law enforcement park ranger at Cabrillo National Monument, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. He has worked at many parks and trails in Utah, California, and Arizona.

Smith is a national winner of the Freeman Tilden Award for excellence in interpretation. He was featured in a 2013 TEDx talk on civic engagement and national parks called “Why Community Matters: The Case for Civic Engagement and Parks.”

He holds a Master of Science in Resource Interpretation from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas and a Bachelor of Arts in Forestry/Developmental Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

Born in Oceanside, California, Smith grew up in northern San Diego. He and his husband, John, are recent empty nesters. One of their adult children is in college, and another is looking forward to entering the military. They enjoy hiking, rock climbing, and running on local trails.
Extending meter hours will hurt local businesses, discourage out-of-town visitors, and add financial stress to local residents who already feel the impact of inflation and an impending recession.

PAR appreciates the need to maintain full Muni Railway service. However, the impacts of changes to parking meter hours, and questions of how the MTA manages its revenue, calls for increased oversight.

San Franciscans and tourists visit neighborhood business districts in the evenings and on weekends to relax, unwind, and share a meal with their loved ones. Expanded parking meter hours will burden potential customers (especially seniors, the disabled, and families) with an additional cost, detract from their overall enjoyment, and discourage them from enjoyable neighborhood activities. At a time when many boarded up store fronts and vacant buildings, the proposal to increase parking meter hours should be rejected.

Parking meters until 10 p.m. will materially impact restaurant and retail workers who will be feeding meters and spending more on parking. Many service employees live outside San Francisco, and public transportation is frequently not an option.

If we want to boost our local economy and revitalize restaurants and tourist areas, we need to incentivize evening and Sunday customers, take care of workers, and not pile on additional costs at a time when rents and the price of food and necessary items are already so high.

This action by the MTA shows that it is out of touch with needs of San Francisco residents, visitors, and businesses. In addition to analyzing the impacts of increasing meter hours and days, we recommend that the Board consider that the array of City services nested within the MTA are too diverse for any one department to handle, and that a reorganization is needed. Countless times, the MTA has given our communities pause to question whether or not it has the competence necessary to handle the full range of functions within its span of responsibility.

Lastly, the public has a right to see where public dollars are spent by the MTA. Currently, the public’s view of such information is, at best, opaque.
Will there be beach access?
Yes, beach access will be maintained throughout, with the possibility of an occasional temporary closure due to construction and to ensure visitor safety.

What improvements will this project provide?
There will be a refreshed bathhouse, with separate women’s and men’s bathrooms and sinks. Right outside the bathrooms, there will be overhead rinse stations. By the beach and lower public plaza, there will be exterior low foot rinse stations and picnic facilities.

Are there impacts to parking?
Yes. Parking is limited, with much of the China Beach parking lot used for construction staging — to store equipment, supplies and other materials.

Letter from the President

Happy Summer! I hope everyone is excited for a wonderful summer with some good trips planned and quality time with friends and family.

Summer is always interesting here in the Richmond. The weather can be unpredictable, but it’s always nice to have longer days to walk around Geary and visit some of the great merchants, or take an evening stroll on Clement and grab a relaxing dinner at one of the many nice restaurants. Then there is always the nice early Sunday morning at the farmers market.

So I hope you all have a wonderful summer! Remember, at the end of the day there is nothing better than sitting in Golden Gate Park with a small group of friends around a BBQ, and sharing some good food and great memories. Nothing better for a summer evening.

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