

FUTURISTIC MUNI: CITYWIDE INTEGRATED TRANSIT SYSTEM

Throwing billions of dollars at bad Muni projects hasn't created a citywide/ integrated Muni system. The Central Subway has taken \$600 million of state/ local matching funds from Muni---and cut service in every neighborhood. Now, SFMTA wants \$500 million (\$850 million total debt load) in new bonds from property owners and renters (50% pass-through). Maybe it's time for a tax cut for everyone---not just for rich companies and the wealthy---while we plan a citywide/ integrated Muni system. Here's a glimpse at integrated planning.

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COLUMBUS AVENUE PLANNING: MIXING URBAN INGREDIENTS CORRECTLY

Columbus Avenue has the intrinsic ingredients to rival any great street in the world.

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"In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it."
---Michelangelo

Like Michelangelo freeing the statue of David trapped inside a marble block, a great Columbus Avenue streetscape already resides within the city's genetic code. On a map of San Francisco, the diagonal Columbus Avenue, part of the 1905 Burnham Plan and City Beautiful movement, connects the Financial District/ Downtown to Fisherman's Wharf---anchored by the Transamerica Pyramid to the south and the Cannery to the north. Along its entire length, this natural circulation spine meshes with vibrant neighborhoods, cafés, restaurants, shops, parks, historical landmarks, architectural variety, view corridors, cultural diverseness and human-scaled connectivity.

The distance from Downtown to Fisherman's Wharf is only 1½ miles. Columbus Avenue is 1 mile long. Washington Square is 1 mile from the Powell BART/Metro Station. Chinatown is half a mile from Market Street. These short distances are perfect for pedestrians, bicycling and surface transit---ingredients for a Mediterranean village-like realm.

SAN FRANCISCO'S TRANSPORTATION MODAL SPLITS

San Francisco's modal trip shares are 24 percent by walking, 20 percent by transit, 3 percent by bicycle, and 53 percent by automobile. Though the compact northeast quadrant has higher pedestrian/ transit trip shares, an integrated street and transit system is needed to upgrade the entire city. By good urban design, some European cities have set worthy and achievable modal goals. Paris has 52 percent walking for all trips. Zurich has 65 percent transit for work trips. Copenhagen has 26 percent bicycling for work trips.

NEED FOR LONG-TERM VISION

The City's Columbus Avenue Neighborhood Transportation Study (CANTS) and Transportation Effectiveness Project (TEP) are uncoordinated and insufficiently visionary. Short-term projects should incrementally build a long-term vision for the ultimate Columbus Boulevard. The Columbus Avenue diagonal is inherently multimodal and calls for a holistic transit/ pedestrian/ bicycle/ car integration.

Instead, at the south end of Columbus Avenue, CANTS calls for single traffic lanes in each direction---a logjam. Currently, traffic jams occur at rush hours, tourist season, July 4th, Fleet Week, Columbus Day, Chinese New Years, waterfront events, festivals, mishaps and happenstance.

Single traffic lanes are inconsistent with TEP's new bus line on Columbus to Montgomery/ Clay Streets. CANTS has minimal sidewalk widening---prolonging pedestrian bottlenecks. CANTS has minimal Transit-

only lanes---just a few blocks. Lastly, CANTS obfuscates clarity with new one-way streets and forced traffic turns---when simplicity and elegance suffice.

**What is the essence of Columbus Avenue?
How can competing modal shares be integrated?**



COLUMBUS AVENUE: A TRANSIT SPINE

Columbus Avenue needs to be a premier transit corridor---with robust bus lines and transit-only lanes for its entire length. Transit-only lanes can have flex-use for cars at peak hours. Bus lines 8X, 11 (former 15) and 41 should be restored to full service, reviving connectivity to the Montgomery and Embarcadero Stations. All 15 of the northeast quadrant's bus/ streetcar/ cable car lines should be prioritized for service upgrades---much cheaper and quicker than an expensive subway.

Since 2006, Muni cut service, eliminated six bus lines, shortened 22 routes, deferred maintenance, had increases in missed runs/ switchbacks/ late buses, raised fares/ fees/ fines/ meters. The Central Subway's Phase 1 (T-Line) eliminated the 15-Kearny Bus and 20-Columbus Bus and cut hours for the 41-Union line, cutting service to the Montgomery and Embarcadero stations. The 10-Townsend and 12-Folsom routes were shortened. The Central Subway's Phase 2 will cut 34,000 to 76,000 bus hours per year from the 8X, 30 and 45 lines. Phase 2 also eliminates the T-Line's Embarcadero loop to Market Street's BART/ Metro stations and the Transbay Terminal.

COLUMBUS AVENUE: A PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SPINE

With its Mediterranean-scale, geographic beauty and topographic character, San Francisco's northeast quadrant is already a natural pedestrian realm. The streams of tourists on Columbus Avenue are validation for wider sidewalks, landscaping, beautification and bicycle lanes along its entire length.

COLUMBUS AVENUE: A TRAFFIC SPINE

This grand diagonal road, linking major destinations, is an irreplaceable traffic corridor. Traffic volumes require sufficient lanes, traffic signal synchronization, intersection controls, regional harmonization with Montgomery Street and the Embarcadero.

THE VARIABLE: PARKING MANAGEMENT AND STREET PARKING

First, there should be no net loss of neighborhood parking---perhaps even increased parking. But to achieve Columbus Avenue's ultimate vision of wide pedestrian sidewalks, transit-only lanes, bicycle lanes and traffic lanes, parking needs to be relocated from Columbus Avenue---such as in many great boulevards around the world. A district-wide parking management plan must reexamine street parking, passenger zones, taxi/ valet zones, delivery zones, parking lots, public/ private garages, car-sharing, shuttle buses, free transit, robotic parking, public/ private funding mechanisms....

"Everything you can imagine is real."
—Pablo Picasso

Columbus Avenue's near-term projects must add up to a grand vision---because funding is scarce and greatness shouldn't be limited by the lack of imagination.

