



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

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Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

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Existing funds are available to save Muni NOW.

MTA Should Divert CENTRAL SUBWAY Funds to SAVE MUNI

In good economic times, wasteful transportation expenditures might be shrugged off as habitual pork-barreling. But in an economic calamity, like today's multi-year budget deficits, transit agencies can't focus only on service cuts and raising riders' fares. Like anyone declaring bankruptcy, one can't take financial assistance while concealing vast bank accounts and assets. Look at these numbers: The Central Subway Project has already been allocated \$384 million in existing State and Local funds, including \$124 million of our own Prop K Sales Tax Funds. City Officials and MTA management must prioritize riders' needs and reallocate these funds to save the Muni System.

If this reallocation of existing funds were to occur, Muni would have ten years of budget surpluses while fixing the existing system, instead of ten years of ravaging deficits. Like the reallocation of funds from the equally bad Oakland Airport Connector and Alaska's "Bridge to No Where", existing monies can solve immediate and persistent needs. Ultimately, the Central Subway's projected \$636 million in State/ Local funds and \$942 million in future Federal funds could revolutionize the Muni System. Economic crisis gives good reason to reevaluate transit priorities.

Even if built, the short 1.7 mile Central Subway does not solve Muni's citywide problems. The Central Subway's own EIR projects large reductions in surface buses to offset higher operating costs. Tens of thousands of riders, north of the Washington Street Subway Station, will have reduced service. Few riders will benefit from the one-half mile subway ride from Washington Street to Union Square. Far worse, from Stockton & Pacific Avenue, the total travel time to Market Street **by bus** is faster than the total travel time by subway.

Furthermore, the Federal Transit Administrator (FTA) deems the Central Subway a high risk project. In its letter to the SFMTA, January 7, 2010, the FTA requires that local funding cover all project cost increases, thus

placing San Franciscans in the path of extreme fiscal jeopardy. The letter specifically states, "The Central Subway Project is a high risk project located in a densely populated urban center. It is the largest, most complex project ever undertaken by SFMTA." Like most large public projects throughout the country, the Central Subway's cost estimates have already doubled from original estimates.

Before approving federal funds, the FTA is demanding that the MTA secure \$164 million more in local funding and \$88 million more in state funding. The MTA states that they are "turning over every rock" to find these funds. If such large transit funds are found, they must be used to save the Muni System. Meanwhile, Muni teeters on a multiyear death spiral of deficits.

The FTA explicitly requires proof that the Central Subway's operating costs will not diminish the existing Muni System! But even the construction of the T-Line's operating and maintenance costs cut back surface bus service, with more funds being sought to operate the new Metro East Maintenance Facility. Underground subway stations incur much higher operating costs.

Like a living organism, the rerouting of major blood vessel circulation away from major organs is nonsensical---as is the elimination of public transit to major urban nodes. South of Market Street, the proposed rerouted T-Line/ Central Subway will eliminate direct service to the Embarcadero Station (Ferry Building and ferry services), Montgomery Station (financial district, TransBay Terminal and future High Speed Rail), Powell Station, Civic Center Station and the entire Market Street Corridor---for perpetuity. From northerly Washington Street, the proposed subway goes to a new Union Square Station---requiring that riders walk up 8 stories and 1,000 feet to the existing Powell Station. The Central Subway would decrease connectivity to BART, Muni Metro, Ferry, High Speed Rail, crossing bus lines and major employment and commercial centers.

The annual Awards Dinner was huge success! Thank you for coming and for donating to SFT. Watch this space in the July issue for the August Picnic announcement when we'll visit an environmentally sensitive area, learn the issues there, schmooze, eat and have fun.

Winter storms and neglect devour The Great Highway at Ocean Beach

In January, Mayor Gavin Newsom declared a state of local emergency due to severe erosion which was causing parts of the Great Highway to slip into the ocean.

Yes, recent wind and rain storms eroded Ocean Beach, but this “emergency” was actually caused by years of City-deferred maintenance, inaction, and neglect. San Francisco has long known that parts of the Great Highway — especially the 3,000-foot section between Sloat Boulevard and Fort Funston — face being permanently washed away. It’s embarrassing that City officials have once again been caught off guard by a known and often recurring problem. Isn’t this “déjà vu”?

San Francisco’s problems with Ocean Beach are man-made problems. San Francisco caused Ocean Beach’s beach-erosion problem by repeatedly increasing its size using landfill, and then building on the landfill. The current shoreline is a man-made extension. Between 1895 and the 1930’s the Ocean Beach shoreline was pushed at least two hundred feet seaward to promote urban development. Between the 1940’s and 1960’s, concrete debris, bricks, soil, and sand were used to increase the width of the beach and to form artificial bluffs. The City continued to increase the size of the beach through the 1980’s. The Pacific Ocean is now simply reclaiming the man-made beach and in-fill that has been extended into the Ocean.

The Real Problem

The City built the massive 16-year-old Lake Merced Sewage Pipe directly underneath (40 feet below) the Great Highway; it was completed in 1994 as part of the San Francisco PUC’s \$200 million Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant. The Highway and parking lots were built on landfill the Ocean is now reclaiming. While the 14-foot-diameter pipe was tunneled in harder native materials at elevations below the adjacent beach, it was located very close to the Ocean, below the southbound lanes of the highway. After ocean waves tore into the bluff that supports the Great Highway, the sewage pipe was just 10 yards — barely 30 feet! — from the ocean’s edge. Over 10 million gallons of Westside raw sewage and wastewater flow through this pipe following rainy conditions. The pipe takes sewage to the Oceanside Treatment Plant where it is partially treated and then pumped through an underwater pipe for release four miles out into the sea. As the shoreline recedes, there is a very good chance that the Lake Merced Sewage Pipe will either end up buried under the ocean floor, or exposed to the ocean. Now the southbound lanes are closed, but Department of Public Works (DPW) hopes to re-open them sometime this summer.

Any rupture of the sewage pipe could cause a huge ecological disaster, involving millions of gallons of



treated and effluent (partially-treated sewage) and liquid waste pouring into the ocean and onto the fragile coastline. Earthquake-induced liquefaction to the area would pose another distinct threat.

According to DPW, some sections of ocean bluffs south of Sloat Boulevard have eroded by up to 70 feet just within the last year. The rock crown of the Southwest Ocean Outfall Pipe — part of the plant that discharges partially-treated wastewater four miles off shore into the Pacific Ocean — is also threatened by erosion. A 2009 report filed by the Pacific Institute shows San Francisco’s sea level rose eight inches during the last 100 years, but is expected to rise an additional four-and-a-half feet — yes, *feet* — by 2100 due to increases in ocean temperatures and melting ice sheets. Report calculations project that Northern California’s sandy dunes could retreat an average of 558 feet (186 yards) and cliffs could recede an average of 217 feet by 2100. Higher sea levels, coupled with high tides and fierce storms, will cause storm waves to make increasingly deeper inroads into the receding shoreline.

The City has responded to the latest Ocean Beach emergency by placing a 425-foot-long rock wall — approximately 12,000 tons of rock — south of Sloat Boulevard below the San Francisco Zoo. This rock wall or revetment starts at the base of the eroded beach area and extends up the cliff’s face. Ideally, sand will be added on top of the rock to increase the width of the Bluff. The Army Corps of Engineers — the same folks involved with the New Orleans levees — is continuing to dump sand near the revetment changing the ocean’s littoral (sand transport) current, hoping to create a beach, but the “beach nourishment” approach is limited at this location because the Ocean’s littoral current is taking sand away from this section of shore. As the surrounding edge recedes, this divergent zone is aimed directly at the Great Highway and the Lake Merced Sewage Pipe. The effect is the same as aiming water from a hose directly onto pavement, 24/7.

This emergency Ocean Beach coastal armoring is a short-term, Band-Aid approach that will gradually fail. Coastal armoring can only be engineered to accommodate a certain storm size or rise in sea level,

and at Ocean Beach would require regular monitoring and constant, expensive maintenance. Besides, armoring the edge is not as effective as a natural shoreline at dissipating the energy from waves and tides. As a result, armored shorelines are **more vulnerable** and cause increased erosion of adjacent beaches.

In July 1999, the unanimous Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 698-99, prohibiting the expenditure of funds on the use of hard rock structures (such as rock revetment or seawalls) to stabilize conditions at Ocean Beach. The City's emergency action this winter circumvented this Resolution and began expending funds on coastal armoring of Ocean Beach. The 1999 Board Resolution also called for a long-term plan to address erosion at Ocean Beach.

In 2002, Mayor Willie Brown's Ocean Beach Task Force issued a Resolution supporting long-term solutions "through the planning partnership process." The Mayor took three years before establishing, in 2005, the Ocean Beach Vision Council charged with developing a 30- to 50-year plan for Ocean Beach. The Vision Council must be wearing very dark sunglasses, since it hasn't even issued a draft report in the five years since being created. DPW and the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) are currently working on a plan with the Army Corps of Engineers. No one knows how much of the RPD budget is funding the coastal armoring to protect City recreation and park land.

On April 19, 2010, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, with the support of Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, drafted a new Board Resolution requesting a "comprehensive planning process be re-established to develop long-term solutions to the erosion problems at Ocean Beach." All these

Thanks to George Wooding, President of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council

All About History at the PRESIDIO

Still not getting it right at the Main Post

Still smarting from its loss of the Fisher Museum, but undaunted in its pursuit of profitable proposals for the historic Main Post, the Presidio Trust has now proposed that all the organizations that are trying to work with the Trust under the federal Historic Preservation Act must sign an agreement that the Trust has not violated Historic Preservation law. This new "Programmatic Agreement" (PA) would require that the groups that oppose or have reservations about the construction of a fourteen-building hotel on the Main Post, and the removal or demolition of Herbst Hall and the demolition of two WWII Army Barracks just north of the Officers Club agree with the Trust that all this in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). In order to "participate" with the Trust in future NHPA proceedings, the signer must agree beforehand that the Trust has not violated NHPA or its implementing regulations. So far, all the neighborhood and history organizations have refused to sign the document with this threatening clause. At this time, the Trust is redrafting its proposed agreement, in an attempt to

attempts at long-term plans are either not drafted, completed, followed or implemented. Nothing changes except the eroding shoreline's increased risk to the 14-foot-diameter Lake Merced Sewage Pipe and the Great Highway above it, and risks to the Southwest Ocean Outfall Pipe.

Coastal experts are recommending a gradual surrender of the coastline to the Ocean. They believe that: 1) Infrastructure such as the Great Highway and the Lake Merced Sewage Pipe may have to be moved away from coastal erosion hazard zones; 2) Coastal armoring and structural measures should be minimized, with all armoring and rubble to be removed as soon as practical; 3) A sand management plan needs to be developed where sand is placed to maintain the beach and dunes; 4) The natural ecology of Ocean Beach's flora and fauna needs to be re-established; and 5) There should be extensive Ocean Beach monitoring and adaptive management. This should become the template for the City's long overdue Ocean Beach management plan.

As the sea rises, San Franciscans will be forced to decide: Should we adapt to the changing environment, or should we try to make it adapt to us? No matter what we do, there will be consequences down the line. It's time to decide the fate of Ocean Beach and San Francisco's endangered infrastructure. San Francisco needs to immediately develop a realistic, long-term Ocean Beach management plan, before the 14-foot-diameter sewage pipe and the Great Highway only 40 feet above it collapse under the weight of inaction.

But by the time the City actually develops a long-term plan for Ocean Beach, we may all be up to our knees in sea water filled with effluvium (odorous waste matter).

satisfy the "Big 3" agencies (Council on Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service). Then, the local organizations will decide how best to deal with what is expected to be the **Trust's continuing refusal to honor its obligations to history** and to the National Historic Landmark District at the Main Post.

Wayne Donaldson, new California State Historic Preservation Officer, has been appointed to the top national "history" position, Chairman of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Donaldson has said that his state office has been forced to spend 90% of its time trying to deal with the Presidio Trust on history-related issues. The Main Post of the Presidio of San Francisco is the Plymouth Rock of the West, he said, the place where Europeans entered and from which they spread throughout the West. The one best place to memorialize and from which to teach the history of the Spanish and Mexican eras in California, Donaldson said, is the Main Post of the Presidio.

Parkmerced A Case study in un-sustainable "green-\$-greed".

After being purchased by speculators during the real estate boom, Parkmerced's owners, Stellar Management and the Rockpoint Group, admitted recently that they would default on their \$550 million loan which comes due in October. Where does that leave the development plan and the DEIR that was recently published? Hopefully, there will be more reason to scale back the proposed new development to a more reasonable level, consider the preservation of the most affordable units and the significant landscaping, look seriously at the future financial costs and evaluate the feasibility of their promise to pay for the proposed re-routing of the "M-Line" into Parkmerced.

In 2006 Parkmerced residents participated in the preparation of an EIR on the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Master Plan. Residents of Parkmerced felt that their comments went un-heeded and an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) was struck that downplayed the impacts of SFSU on the adjacent Stonestown and Parkmerced rental housing complex. They are now seeing the same effort repeated regarding the Parkmerced DEIR issued on May 12th. Michael Yarne of the Mayor's Office and many public agencies including SFMTA, SFDPW, SFPUC, and others, have been negotiating an MOU and Developer Agreement on the Parkmerced "Vision" project which was also issued on May 12th. This proposal is a developer give-away disguised as an "ultra-green-environmental-rebuild".

Parkmerced's owners propose to demolish 1,538 rent controlled dwelling units in the two-story garden apartments and their replacement plus an additional 5,679 units in mid- and high-rises; this would be phased over 20 years.. Such a loss of viable, existing dwelling units has not been seen in San Francisco since the Western Addition Redevelopment. The proposal would also re-route public transit through a residential neighborhood and reduce the current open space by two-thirds, cut down 1500 trees adjacent to Lake Merced and destroy the thoughtfully planned, two-story garden apartment portion of the housing complex, leaving intact the eleven high-rise towers that are there today. The landscape plan by Thomas Church would be devoured entirely in order to construct the 5,679 new units in mid- and high-rise residential towers to be for sale as market-rate condominiums and the rental units with rents out of reach for many in the district.

Parkmerced was built by Metropolitan Life at a time when housing demand was at a critical level, and affordability was high, at a level San Francisco has not seen since. Met Life was proud of Parkmerced, as an ad asked, "Why-rent-when-you-can-own?" Now, the bankruptcy filing notwithstanding, the current developer-owners of Parkmerced should adopt an alternative that would achieve their sustainable concepts, maintain the garden areas, allow new water-conscious plantings and make the improvements to areas which they claim are otherwise un-fixable. The Historical Resources Survey done by the owner shows that Parkmerced is eligible for the National and State Register of Historic Places.

Too often in the rush to find money and accede to anything that developers put forward "if it creates housing", the City negotiates away both the current needs of the community and its future, in agreements and MOU's that give away the store. Many in the preservation community support a preservation-backed alternative utilizing the Mills Act and allowing "equitable density" of development on the multiple owned sites in the overall district. Such a development would align more with current and past proposals, such as Stonestown, SFSU-CSU, Parkmerced, 800 Brotherhood Way, 700 Font and Cambon Drive, with possible development rights and exchanges of "land to parks" at 800 Brotherhood Way. Pairing rental housing with strategic and sustainable preservation would be the most environmental solution for Parkmerced.

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