



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

Issue 373

Will you want to live in San Francisco... Tomorrow?

Sep / Oct 2016

Awards Dinner

San Francisco Tomorrow's 2016 awards dinner featured an eclectic mix of awardees more generally dedicated to solving a range of community problems than to the specific pursuit of environmental issues. But then, community problems frequently intersect with the environment, as we see with the behemoth Google buses running rampant on our streets.

Ed Mason and Susan Vaughn were jointly awarded the Unsung Hero Award for their hound-dogging of the commuter buses. They made frequent reports to the appropriate powers at City Hall in pursuit of better control and fairer compensation to the City for the danger to pedestrians, inconvenience to motorists and muni passengers, and inevitable infrastructure damage these buses cause. Both Sue and Ed pledged to continue pursuing the issue until the commuter bus issue is satisfactorily resolved.

Michael Lyon is noted for the range of his involvement in community affairs. He is on the boards of several organizations that deal with Senior issues: health, transportation, pedestrian safety, and Social Security. Being heavily involved in San Francisco affairs forces Michaels to spend a lot of time away from his Berkeley home; he can often be found testifying at Board of Supervisors and various city Commission meetings. When asked if his wife minds his absence, he replied that she loves to watch basketball games. Michael was recently arrested for rallying with Black Lives Matter.

Michael accepted his Unsung Hero award with a rousing commitment to continue his pursuit of city policies he considers vital to the survival of local seniors.

Hene Kelly, another fierce community advocate, was awarded the Jack Morrison Lifetime Achievement Award. A lifetime union member and organizer, she is also involved in an array of community endeavors including, until recently, membership on the SFDCCC. Hene's is always a strong voice for the problems of underrepresented people in San Francisco. Her knowledge of political and worker issues is phenomenal, and she is a well respected

community leader.

Hene's acceptance of the Morrison award was funny and heartfelt. And we know she will continue in her dedication to community activism.

-- Denise D'Anne



Prop W – YES. Real Estate Transfer Tax on Properties Over \$5 Million – Ordinance

Prop W would increase the tax rate from 2% to 2.25% for properties valued at \$5 – 10 mil; from 2.5% to 2.75% for \$10 – 25 mil; from 2.5% to 3% for \$25 mil+. This includes as any acquisition or transfer of ownership of real estate owned by a corporation, partnership or LLC. Prop W will generate an average of \$44 million in new annual revenue for the City. The Board of Supervisors has voted to dedicate \$13 million of this annual revenue to make City College tuition-free for San Franciscans, like it was before 1984. The rest of the money goes to the General Fund.

Be sure to vote NO on Prop 65 and YES on prop 67!

Local Candidates

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 1: **Sandra Lee Fewer**
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 3: **Aaron Peskin**
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 5: **Dean Preston**
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 7: **Norman Yee**
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 9: **Hillary Ronen**
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT 11: **Kimberly Alvarenga**
STATE SENATE DISTRICT 11: **Jane Kim**
BART BOARD DISTRICT 9: **Bevan Dufty**

Local / Regional Ballot Measures

B City College Parcel Tax Extension and Increase / Don't like being asked for more money, but without it CCSF might not survive. Current problems largely caused by the ACCJC. **YES**

C Loans to Finance Acquisition and Rehabilitation of Affordable Housing (Bonds) / This merely expands the uses to which an existing bond measure may be put, to encourage more affordable housing. **YES**

D Vacancy Appointments / Currently the Mayor effectively takes over the BOS every time there is a mid-term vacancy. **YES**

E Responsibility for the Maintenance of Street Trees / Property owners often cannot afford this responsibility, and why should they? **YES**

H Public Advocate / Right now there is no unconflicted entity looking out for the public interest. Worked great in NYC. **YES**

J Funding Set-Asides for Homelessness and Transportation / Another set-aside! Haven't we asked them to stop doing this? About 1/3 of the money would go to... street resurfacing. If we made Muni work (which this measure will not do) and people could actually ride it, there would be more revenue, fare prices would come down, and we would not need to levy regressive sales taxes for subsidies. **NO**

K Sales Tax / K is the funding for Prop J. Let's raise the sales tax on homeless people to resurface streets! Will also hurt local businesses. **NO**

L MTA Appointments and Budget / Would offset the Mayor's control over MTA. **YES**

M Housing and Development Commission / Would set this up as a function independent of the Mayor's office. Not costly. **YES**

O Office Development in Candlestick Point and Hunters Point / Ridiculous give-away to Lennar, put on ballot by Lennar. **NO**

P Competitive bidding for affordable housing projects on City property / This measure was put on the ballot by realtors to literally prevent affordable housing from being built. **NO**

Q Prohibiting Tents on Public Sidewalks / The tents aren't hurting anyone; existing laws already prevent blocking sidewalks. Another mean-spirited attempt to criminalize

poverty. **NO**

R Neighborhood Crime Unit / Diverts police from investigating real crime; staffing decisions should be made by the police department. **NO**

S Allocation of Hotel Tax Funds / Will help preserve what little remains of SF's arts scene. **YES**

T Restricting Gifts and Campaign Contributions from Lobbyists, Lobbyist Contributions and Bundling / Will help reduce bribery of public officials. **YES**

U Affordable Housing Requirements for Market-Rate Development Projects / Put on by realtors to make "affordable" housing cost much more. **NO**

W Real Estate Transfer Tax on Properties Over \$5 Million / Would pay City College tuitions, make money for the general fund, AND discourage real estate speculation. **YES**

X Preserving Space for Neighborhood Arts, Small Businesses and Community Services in Certain Neighborhoods / Will help preserve what little remains of SF's arts scene. **YES**

RR BART Safety, Reliability and Traffic Relief (bond) / BART needs the upgrade. **YES**

State Ballot Measures

54 Requires bills to be in print for 72-hours before they are voted on unless overruled by a 2/3 vote; requires all proceedings (except closed sessions) to be recorded and available on the Internet / Will reduce last minute dirty tricks. **YES**

56 Increases cigarette tax by \$2.00 per pack, with funds going to existing healthcare programs; also for tobacco use prevention/control programs, tobacco-related disease research and law enforcement, University of California physician training, dental disease prevention programs, and administration / These taxes have been successful in getting people to quit smoking. **YES**

58 Repeals Prop 227, allowing bilingual education in schools / English-only education is unfair to kids who don't speak it yet. **YES**

59 Resolution asking legislature to work to overturn Citizens United / Put the pressure on Feds to do something. **YES**

62 Repeals CA death penalty / The death penalty is expensive and kills a lot of innocent people. **YES**

63 Prohibits possession of large capacity ammunition clips; requires DOJ approval and background check to purchase ammunition / There is no legitimate civilian use for these weapons. **YES**

65 Would make profits for single-use bag sales revert to environmental organizations / Whatever you think about the merits of this idea, vote No. If 65 gets more votes than 67, the single-use bag ban is overturned, making the whole exercise academic. **NO**

**** continued ****

"Google Bus" To-Date

The Court Decision:

After numerous delays by the defendant supporting the use of public bus stops being used by private carriers, on April 28, 2016, the San Francisco City Attorney, with the support of the law firm, Morrison and Foerster representing the real party in interest, Genentech, prevailed in the Google shuttle bus pilot case. Judge Garrett Wong ruled that the temporary bus program lawsuit was moot since the pilot program had ended and been replaced by a "permanent" program. Originally, the case against the pilot bus program in the City began in May 1, 2014. Plaintiffs were SEIU 1021 and a handful of local citizens. Representing SEIU 1021 were Richard Drury and Rebecca Davis of the law firm Lozeau Drury, LLP. After many delaying motions on the part of the defendants, the trial was finally held on November 13, 2015. The pilot program was scheduled to end on January 31, 2016. Judges are supposed to rule on cases within 90 days of the trial. But Judge Wong did not issue a ruling until April 28, well past the 90-day deadline and after the adoption of a "permanent" program, of sorts, to replace the pilot program. Besides the color of the placard, there is little distinction between the pilot program and the permanent program. The charge will go up to over \$7 per stop to pay for additional enforcement of the program. At the time of publication it is not known if plaintiffs will appeal.

The Tech Bus Problem:

According to California Vehicle Code 22500, it is illegal for private carriers to use public bus stops. Despite this, the City of San Francisco has decided to experiment with a private bus system "sharing" public bus stops in order to reduce congestion on the highways and provide a "greener" solution for commuters. Today, approximately 8,500 people take a round trip bus to their destination to Apple, Facebook, Yahoo, eBay, Youtube, Genentech, Google and other peninsula and South Bay companies. Employees can board their private buses at 125 different locations in San Francisco, with about 100 of those locations being at bus stops previously used exclusively by MUNI. These private buses, often with few passengers, normally get 3-10 miles per gallon. The large buses, some double deckers, weigh over 25 tons. Some buses freely operate illegally on narrow neighborhood streets clearly posted with a 3 ton weight restriction. Only diligent observation and continual reporting has minimized this problem and the associated traffic congestion. Other infractions include blocking bike lanes, obstructing traffic and blocking bus zones. NBC Bay Area has reported this past spring that the tech shuttles have racked up over 800 traffic violations since the start of the pilot program in 2014. Many of the violations were moving violations. The problem has gotten so bad that SFMTA has decided to hire 50% more

enforcement officers to police the problem.

Gentrification:

The tech buses may be at the root of another problem with our City, gentrification. Young, rich, tech workers, seeking to live in neighborhoods close to private bus stops, may be linked to the eviction and displacement of long-time residents, as property owners seek to charge more in rent. Property value in these areas has increased, for both home and business property, as "no fault evictions" have increased dramatically. Our City, faced with a ballooning budget, has been happy to accommodate the tech industry. After all, a real estate boom provides increased property taxes, a source of income for the City. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) could study the overall effect of local residents leaving San Francisco, then traveling great distances to return to work. This study could see if real environmental savings are occurring by tech workers replacing long-time San Francisco residents. Unfortunately, EIR's have no ability to demand change, only make suggestions.

The Solution:

In June and July, the SFMTA conducted a survey exploring a Shuttle Hub Program. One possible location for commuter pick-up would be the Cow Palace. It would be logical that smaller buses would be used to gather tech workers and deposit them at this location, where larger buses would take them to work.

Some say Google buses provide a "greener" solution than each tech worker riding a solo car to their destination. However, this analysis does not account for buses waiting long periods of time to be allowed to enter a MUNI bus stop, or the fact that the diesel engines used by the shuttle buses pollute more than regular cars. Also, the buses are not commuting at full capacity.

The ideal solution for those that work outside of San Francisco is for them to live closer to work. The shorter the commute to work, the easier it will be to commute on Highway 101. Unfortunately, housing closer to work outside of San Francisco may be even harder to find than housing here. South Peninsula municipalities need to be convinced of the value of providing more housing for those that work nearby.

Coda

Assemblyperson Travis Allen, a Republican from Orange County, sponsored Assembly Bill 61 (AB61) which would have amended the State Vehicle Code to allow private carriers to operate in public bus stops. This bill died on January 11, 2016, but Allen introduced two more bills with the same language that have not yet been heard in committee: AB 1641 and ABX1-25.

-- Glenn Rogers, PLA



State Ballot Measures (continued)

66 Makes changes to appeals process for death penalty cases; supersedes Prop 62 if both pass / We support banning the death penalty – vote for 62. **NO**

67 Asks vote confirmation of single-use plastic bag ban approved by the Legislature in 2014 / Put on by plastics manufacturers to confuse voters into repealing the ban. Single-use plastic bags are an environmental abomination. Vote yes to reaffirm the ban. **YES**

Prop M – YES. Housing and Development Commission – Charter Amendment

The city currently has an Office of Economic and Workforce Development and an Office of Housing and Community Development, both operating within the Mayor's office and headed by mayoral appointees, with no Commission to oversee either. Prop M would create such a seven-person Commission with specific experience requirements to oversee both functions. Three of its members would be appointed by the Mayor, three by the Supervisors, and one by the Controller.

The two mayoral Offices will be replaced by two new Departments overseen by the newly created HDC, which would select the department heads. The Commission would advise the Supervisors on matters concerning transfers of real property and development agreements negotiated by the DEWD. The Commission will develop a five-year-plan for affordable housing and community development, and how to achieve it, with emphasis on underserved neighborhoods. It will also make recommendations to the BOS regarding any potential inclusionary housing legislation.

Prop M appears to do two things: give the Supervisors more control over functions heretofore largely under Mayoral control, and put people with actual expertise in charge of housing and development policy.

You can find more detailed ballot measure analyses on our website

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