



# San Francisco Tomorrow

*Since 1970, Working to Protect the Urban Environment*

**Issue 369**

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

**Aug / Sep 2015**

## Endorsements

Proposition A Affordable Housing Bond Yes  
Proposition C Expenditure Lobbyists Yes  
Proposition D Mission Rock Development No  
Proposition E Requirements for Public Meetings No  
Proposition F Short Term Residential Rentals Yes  
Proposition G Disclosures Re: Renewable Energy No  
Proposition H Defining Clean, Green, Renewable Yes  
Proposition I Susp. of Market Rate Dev. in Mission Yes  
Proposition J Legacy Business Hist. Preserv. Fund Yes  
Proposition K Surplus Public Lands Yes  
Supervisor District 3 Aaron Peskin  
Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi

## Save the Date!

San Francisco Tomorrow is sponsoring some events to get our members more involved. Bring your ideas! email [info@sftomorrow.org](mailto:info@sftomorrow.org).

Sat., Sept. 12, 1pm: Waterfront Development, 44 Woodland

Tue., Oct. 6, 7pm: Panel discussion on drought, climate change, and the Bay Area. 953 De Haro.

Sat., Nov. 7, 1pm: Open Space Development, 44 Woodland

## No on D

In June of 2014 voters approved Proposition B, which gave voters the right and responsibility to approve changes to current height limits on the waterfront. The measure was tested immediately; in November of 2014, voters approved Proposition F, height limits for Pier 70, with a 72% yes vote. SFT supported this measure as part of its long effort to preserve the historic industrial buildings on the site.

This November, voters are being asked to approve Proposition D, which establishes height limits for the Giants' Mission Rock development. The 28-acre development site is made up of the 14-acre Seawall Lot 337 (currently used for surface parking), the current 2.5-acre open space along Mission Creek, the northern section of Terry Francois Boulevard, and Pier 48. SF Tomorrow opposes this measure.

Proposition D contains aspirational language about vibrant communities, affordable housing and new parks, but that language is not enforceable. Even the zoning map included in the measure is subject to change without a vote of the people. What is enforceable is Section 5, which specifies height limits and uses. That section tells us that the basic height limit on the site is 190 feet. Heights along Terry Francois Boulevard will be lower, but after a narrow 40-foot ledge, will reach 120 feet, dwarfing historic Pier 48. Three buildings somewhere in the development will be allowed to reach 240 feet.

The enforceable language in the measure provides no protection for current and new open space, no requirement for view corridors, no requirement to set back building heights at the water's edge.

We understand that both the Port and the Giants expect a profit from this site and so are trying to maximize the use of every square foot. That's why Proposition B was adopted: to ensure that the people provide the oversight needed to ensure that public property serves the public. In this case, the proposal needs to provide more certainty about building heights and massing on the site, and needs to prioritize the usability of the new open space. We look forward to a better proposal on a future ballot.

-- Jennifer Clary

## No on E

Proposition E is billed as a “good government” measure. In fact, it is not. Under the guise of good government, this proposal will reduce participation of San Franciscans in the policies that affect us.

By requiring all Boards and Commissions to take pre-recorded and live remote comment for every meeting, Proposition E exposes them to influence by interest groups and individuals from across, and even outside, the country. The measure's “privacy policy” shields lobbyists from identifying their clients or themselves as paid representatives. The voices of San Franciscans who provide public in-person comment will be deprioritized in favor of those outside San Francisco.

Proposition E will force Boards and Commissions to interrupt discussion and defer important actions in order to hear rigid time-set agenda items. Additionally, they will have to stop their meetings until time-set agenda items begin, creating lengthy delays.

Proposition E requires full implementation in six months, without new funds to do so. It will compel the City to quadruple its capacity to live-stream meetings and hire clerical, technology and translation staff for the City's 100+ Boards and Commissions. The City would be forced to pay for this from the general fund, risking cuts to other services.

We want open, transparent government and greater public participation, but Proposition E creates far more problems than it solves. Vote NO On E.

-- Lee Hepner (of Sunshine Task Force), et al.

## Yes on F

Residence-sharing services like VRBO and Airbnb seem like a great deal for homeowners; they allow you to make a little cash from the rental of your home while you're not using it. The problem that's arisen is that Airbnb has made the process so easy for owners that people are literally buying houses and running full-time hotels out of them, without any of the licensing and regulation normally involved. This in a city with a severe housing crunch.

San Francisco already has a 90-day limit on unhosted (owner absent) short term rentals, but the administration is doing nothing to enforce it. There is no current limit for hosted rentals. Prop F would establish 75-day limits for both, make hosting companies cease to list them after that point, ensure that short term properties are clearly identified to the public, and make hosting companies answerable to “interested parties” (neighbors, housing organizations) for infractions.

The anti-F campaign, San Francisco for Everyone but Renters, claims that the proposition will hurt homeowners who make a living from the short term rental of part of their residence; in fact, an owner who is operating a bed and breakfast can and should obtain a license. They say it will encourage neighbors to sue neighbors, but what it actually does is allow them to sue the hosting company (neighbors can already sue neighbors). Finally, they argue that the city will lose “millions” in revenue if it shuts down illegal short term rentals, which brings to mind the pile of cash I keep depriving myself of by not selling my sister's vital organs on the black market. The city is flush, and even if it weren't, it has no business making illegal money at the expense of struggling renters.

-- Jeff Whittington

## Mirkarimi for Sheriff

San Francisco Tomorrow endorses Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi for re-election. While we are aware of the issues surrounding Ross, and the Sheriff's Department in general, we join former Sheriff Mike Hennessey in the belief that his contributions far outweigh any mistakes he may have made, and that he should have another term.

Ross has worked hard to improve and strengthen Five Keys, the first high school in a municipal jail in the United States. He made the SF Sheriff's Department the first in the country to enroll inmates in the Affordable Care Act upon release, and the first in California to adopt body cameras to increase transparency and accountability of deputies and staff. He fought telecoms to reduce inmate phone costs by up to 70%. Believing that communication between children and incarcerated parents is important for both, he increased visiting hours and was the first sheriff in the U.S. to lower the visiting age to 16. He runs the only Eviction Assistance Unit in a California Sheriff's department. This year he has been nominated by Harvard University's Kennedy School for Innovation in Government for his considerable reductions in recidivism.

As District 5 Supervisor, Ross legislated the City's plan for State Prisoner Realignment, and authored many laws about improving community policing. He voted against the Parkmerced project.

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Mirkarimi (continued) He is the first legislator in the United States to ban plastic bags and establish Land-Use and Public Health regulations for medical marijuana dispensaries - over 12 states have adopted his template.

Ross was on the SFT board for five years, so we know him and trust him. We ask that you give him your vote.

-- Glenn Rogers / Jeff Whittington

## Invasion of Giants

Like lumbering giants, the "Corporate Commuter Buses" (generically known as Google Buses) weighing in at about 55,000 pounds or more, are wreaking havoc. Not only are these behemoths weakening our roadways, some also scrape the pavement on steep streets. One bus recently, while turning, crashed into a disabled Muni ramp at Church and 24th.

These so-called buses also trudge up and down narrow streets requiring the opposing traffic lanes to slow and cautiously pass. They also ignore weight restrictions on certain streets such as Guerrero Street between 18th and 26th Street.

Constant vigilance is necessary. Reporting could provide an immediate solution. However, the violators only lapse into another violation. It is well known that these buses park in Muni stops forcing delay for regular Muni passengers in their daily pursuits. These slow-turning vehicles compound traffic congestion, delaying workers using Muni and those who need their cars to get to work on time.

These free buses operate empty half the time to pick up another load of employees, thus diminishing the much-touted benefit to the environment. Employers dedicate a bus for fear of losing an employee to a competitor if the buses were shared.

In the works are more "Corporate Commuter Buses" to accommodate peninsula commuters. All this at cost to regular non-Peninsula commuters in terms of higher maintenance costs, taxes and unconscionable delays.

Some have suggested that these buses should consolidate worker pickups to reduce pollution and street maintenance costs, although this may be unacceptable to these hi-tech companies for fear of talent being hired away. The companies' other consideration would be that various stops at different offices would take away from productive work time.

SaveMuni.org, an organization devoted to improving San Francisco's transit system, is embarking on a project to document some of the abuses of these giants. To get involved in the effort, or to simply file a report, send an email to [commuterbus@savemuni.org](mailto:commuterbus@savemuni.org). Send a photo if you can!

-- Denise D'Anne

## Yes on I

Gentrification is essentially the process of replacing the affordable with the unaffordable; it drives up the price of everything in the neighborhood, incentivizes property owners to raise rents, and destroys local blue-collar businesses. It drives out a non-wealthy population and replaces it with a wealthy one, the modern version of 18th-century Enclosure Acts.

Our current government sheds a mock tear and tells us that "nothing can be done" about the wild-west building boom that is not only displacing people, but wiping out many of the businesses that used to make San Francisco fun and interesting. Of course something can be done! We are the city, the government belongs to us, and we do not have to let invaders turn the place into yet another sterile playground for the rich, many of whom will never even live here.

Capitalism has always had to be tempered with a bit of sense to make it viable. We need to lay down the law that whatever else happens in the Mission, space must be retained for current residents, and for some of the non-wealthy people who actually work in our shops and hospitals and schools. Prop I would impose an 18-month suspension of city permits for large-scale demolition and high-end development in the Mission, with a 12-month extension available via Supervisor vote. The purpose of the moratorium is to develop a "Neighborhood Stabilization Plan" (and there are a lot of good ideas out there) by January 2017, that will ensure that at least 50% of all new development in the neighborhood is affordable to low, moderate, and middle-income households, with priority of occupancy given to current residents.

The first thing to do is stop digging the hole deeper.

-- Jeff Whittington



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## No on G; Yes on H

PG&E has actually withdrawn support from its own measure (Prop G) and is asking folks to vote for the city's Prop H instead, which merely defines some terms used in our Community Choice Aggregation program. Nobody objects to it.

-- Jeff Whittington

## Yes on J

As we mention elsewhere, many of the city's iconic businesses are disappearing because of skyrocketing rents; Prop J would establish a Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund which will provide grants to enable businesses recorded in a Legacy Registry to remain in their premises. A business is eligible for the registry if it has either operated for 30 continuous years, or operated for 20 years while contributing significantly to the character of the neighborhood. Businesses going on the registry must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, and there will be no more than 300 of them per fiscal year. The program would grow between \$2.1 and \$3.7 million each year, to a total cost of between \$51 and \$94 million per annum in 25 years, if fully funded.

-- Jeff Whittington

## Yes on K

Proposition K is a long-overdue effort to ensure that city-owned property that is no longer needed for city purposes is allocated to our most urgent need: affordable housing. The measure establishes an annual process for declaring property surplus and assigns identified property to the Mayor's office of Housing and Community Development for development of affordable housing. It also sets restrictions on land use and affordability for development of those sites. San Francisco Tomorrow thinks this measure makes sense. Publicly-owned land should be placed to its highest and best use in the service of the people of the City; we think that this measure accomplishes that goal.

-- Jennifer Clary