



# San Francisco Tomorrow

## Working to Protect the Urban Environment

Issue 376

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

Aug / Sep 2017

### Coming in September...



San Francisco Tomorrow presents a panel discussion with Q&A:

### Climate Action in The City

in the face of federal hostility and state inadequacy

*The Governor produced a bill behind closed doors with oil & energy industry reps which the California Legislature quickly passed, extending for decades his cap & trade policy and its negative impact on the most vulnerable communities. And on the federal level, we have chaos, lies and malicious obstruction.*

What plans does The City itself have in place? What are local non-governmental organizations doing around climate change? How do these different approaches mesh with each other - or not? How can SF residents join the fight? Participants:

**Debbie Raphael**, Director, SF Department of the Environment

**David Shearn**, volunteer, 350 SF

**Sue Vaughan**, Vice Chair, Sierra Club SF Group

Moderator: **Claire Lau**, Co-Chair, SF Berniecrats

**Wednesday, September 13th, 7 to 9pm**

Richmond District Police Station Community Room

461 - 6th Avenue between Geary & Anza

Muni 38, 5, 31, 44

For more info: [sftomorrow.org](http://sftomorrow.org) and Facebook page  
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### Reduce Congestion

*Cut Back on City Department Vehicles*

There is heightened concern in the City and County of San Francisco about global warming trends. One possibility is for the City to re-assess its use of City-owned vehicles. According to the Fleet Management Department, the vehicle fleet numbers a total of 1,586 vehicles, not including trucks

and other mobile equipment. Of these, 252 are San Francisco Police Patrol Vehicles and none of those would be eliminated under the following proposal.

The City could save considerable amounts of money and also reduce pollution that causes global warming by eliminating the use of those vehicles sit idle in leased parking facilities. For instance, social workers in the Department of Human Service visit clients but not before making an appointment. The same holds true for visiting nurses.

Use of automobiles in some city departments is minimal. The City could purchase vans for these departments to use as shuttles and hire drivers, eliminating car use altogether for certain workers. A shuttle van could drive six to eight of these workers to their appointment sites when they are generally in the same geographic area. Each worker would have a cell phone to use when ready to be picked up. This would lessen the burden on those employees having to find parking and in some cases, increase their personal safety. Other options would be for some workers to use commercial taxi services.

A recent San Francisco Examiner article points out that there are as many as 45,000 Uber and Lyft drivers active in San Francisco. The traffic standstill caused by these additional drivers makes it even more difficult for City workers to use the department cars. Riding in a shuttle is preferable to wending one's way through traffic, allowing workers to use their laptops while being driven to a site or a client appointment.

Not only does the City have to fund the maintenance of the present fleet of cars but also every year it purchases new cars. In the past year (from 3/16 to 2/17) the City spent \$3,266,767 buying 118 cars.

The cost saving on the maintenance of little used vehicles is another factor. Each city vehicle requires an average of \$1,732 maintenance per vehicle per year. Reducing the size of the fleet would save millions of dollars which the City could use for other vital services. We should not hold hostage human needs for the sake of owning metal and rubber. This is another area where San Francisco could be a leader in reducing global warming and also a model for other cities to emulate.

-- Denise D'Anne

## SFT Annual Awards Dinner

After more than 30 years and many millions of tax dollars, San Francisco has not made a dent in the homeless problem. In fact, the lack of housing for thousands of San Franciscans continues to worsen. But this has not deterred some of our compassionate citizens from attempting to rectify the problem. The three honors recipients at San Francisco Tomorrow's annual awards dinner provide a shining example.

### *Unsung Heroes*

**DONIECE SANDOVAL** of Lava Mae was awarded the Unsung Hero recognition for her unique approach to helping homeless people bathe.

After pondering the idea for three years, Doniece was ultimately able to obtain collaboration from City Hall and various non-profits to convert transportation buses into mobile showers and toilets. At present, 50,000 showers are being provided per year in the city. The idea has caught on globally as a model to provide comfort and dignity to marginalized populations.

Speaking at the dinner, Doniece acknowledged that her idea will not solve the homeless problem by itself, but said it provides a first step to moving forward and helping people re-integrate with society. Thanking the many incredible partners who helped bring this idea to fruition, she invited the public to witness this ongoing effort to provide not only showers but also haircuts, medical and dental care, and food, at an exhibition that took place on August 27 at the Main Public Library.

**AMY FARAH WEISS** is one of the newest stars in the firmament of San Francisco politics. She ran for Mayor as an unknown in 2015 with a \$15,000 war chest and garnered 12.1% (23,000 votes) of the total votes cast. Her focus on the homeless situation is in good measure a continuation of her 2015 platform. She believes we should treat displacement and housing affordability as the crisis it truly is.

In her SFT acceptance speech, Amy echoed the words of Saint Francis: "First do what is necessary then do what is possible and soon you will be doing the impossible." Her unique contribution was the idea to organize en-campers (homeless) together with neighbors and volunteers to provide safe, secure sleep, storage, and access to toilets. To accomplish this, she came up with the "St. Francis Homelessness Challenge," turning the city's unused parcels of land into "transitional Eco-villages" with small, modular units to house individuals, communal bathrooms and kitchens, and job training and community service opportunities woven in.

Amy feels that helping the en-camper is a priority. The Mayor, who set aside \$100 million for theoretical homeless

shelters with the results you see all around you, considers helping the en-campers a distraction.

One thing is for sure: Amy is not about to be distracted from her goal of ending homelessness.

### *Jack Morrison Lifetime Achievement Award*

**JENNIFER FRIEDENBACH** has spent 22 years as Executive Director for the Coalition on Homelessness, in which capacity she has helped many thousands of clients who found themselves in a homeless situation. She has also helped prevent many others from becoming homeless in the first place.

In her acceptance speech, Jennifer offered several examples of the untenable situations that homeless people find themselves in. She told about a pregnant woman who was in a shelter sleeping on a mat; when this woman gave birth to her child in a hospital setting she was sent back to the shelter to now sleep on the same mat with her newborn. Living in the same room with 55 other women, breathing in bad air and subject to all kinds of diseases, she had virtually no access to toilets or running water for bathing her child.

Jennifer re-emphasized that people who are homeless generally age 25 years as a result, are likely to have unchecked illnesses, and are subject to abusing alcohol and drugs because of their lack of adequate housing, mental health assessment and health care. In the Bayview, many homeless African Americans do not even have sleeping mats, but must sleep on chairs, causing their legs to swell, and then have to leave the shelter at 5 AM.

One of the richest cities in the world still fails to provide sufficient funding to alleviate the many easily resolvable homeless problems, never mind provide permanent housing.

*-- Denise D'Anne*



*Friedenbach, Sandoval, Weiss*

## John McLaren Park: enhancing public use while retaining nature's interest

San Francisco's parks and recreation space needs are constantly increasing with the growing population. One weekend at Dolores Park or Golden Gate Park, a visit to Stern Grove, the Presidio, Marina Green, or Ocean Beach, will quickly show how our heavily used green-ways and open areas need constant maintenance and care. Increased population has major impacts, and overuse may drastically affect the natural areas remaining; serious planning and effective controls are needed along with major infrastructure changes. SPUR hosted a discussion session with the SF Recreation and Parks Department recently to discuss the future of the second-largest recreational space in San Francisco, after Golden Gate Park and the Presidio: McLaren Park.

This meeting was noted in a SF Streetsblog article follow-up published by Roger Rudick on July 13, 2017. What was missing from the general summary, however, were the more pointed comments about how people moving to and working and living in the city and surrounding bi-county areas access this public park gem.

With all the major developments occurring in the D7/D10/D11 neighborhoods of San Francisco, including the bi-county Brisbane development, Sunnydale Hope SF, and Bay View / Candlestick and Excelsior, a larger population will be trying to get to these areas.

Public transit access becomes a key need to fend off the negative auto impacts of density on McLaren Park's natural spaces. The problem stems from trying to protect and preserve the wilderness areas of McLaren Park while "programming" improvements through the expenditure of bond money. The prior Parks Bond generated a stated \$12 million for McLaren Park. The McLaren Park Collaborative and other organizations have been hard at work trying to make sure that the money, including unspent prior monies, is used in areas and methods that support their collective park wisdom and their outreach to the community members.

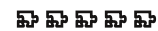
The recent horseback riding test run did generate concerns between user groups, dog-walkers, bike-trail riders, and hikers. Proposals to try to protect the Park's untrammelled natural areas indicate the use of fencing and more restrictive methods to ensure spaces do not become semi-inhabited by homeless. Enforcement of rules tend to penalize those groups adjacent who already use the park for many activities not always condoned by the Recreation and Parks Department.

One way to lessen the population impact on McLaren Park is to limit auto access, develop a double circle path and shuttle service for accessibility, and ensure people who

want to visit have ample options in getting to and from the park. The Geneva Harney proposed Bus Rapid Transit line would connect directly the high-speed-rail terminus at the Bayshore and Brisbane developments up to Balboa Park Station. Turning this sooner into a light-rail option that adequately plans for linking up to Balboa Park Station would also provide a better connection and access to the park, ensuring less auto-centric visits and lessening the auto-trips within. It is important that McLaren Park not become an international park that visitors throng to as a symbol of San Francisco, but retains a community and local scale and character, a hidden gem in San Francisco's park system.

Many people are concerned with natural areas planning and the presence of tree canopy in San Francisco but if we do not fix the mass-transit connectivity, the natural elements of McLaren may soon be overwhelmed with drive-in visitors not intent on protecting what a unique presence of nature lies within. (Go to McLaren Park Collaborative – [www.mclarenparksf.org](http://www.mclarenparksf.org))

~~ Aaron Goodman



## What's Up at Ethics? (continued)

This broad proposal also would adopt a Los Angeles law that prohibits commissioners from fundraising for elected officials and candidates. More than \$1 million was raised by commissioners for the mayor, board members and ballot measures they wanted in the last election. Raising money for officials with the power to appoint you are the heart of pay-to-play politics. A second Los Angeles law also will be considered for San Francisco that makes it possible for citizens to file suit against violators when city officials don't act. The same law exists at the state level.

The Ethics Commission also will increase transparency on money donated to campaigns, especially the last-minute contributions that otherwise aren't disclosed until months after the election has passed. It will add funding for a stronger electronic reporting that any person can search.

More is needed, and no law or laws will replace the vigilance of citizens who care that government is ethical, fair to all, without prejudice and without favoring donors and backers over the public interest. We can do what Washington won't and self-interested politicians at every level refuse to do.

-- Larry Bush



## What's Up At Ethics?

After more than a decade of backing away from the issue of corruption and the practice of pay-to-play, the San Francisco Ethics Commission is taking important steps, including legislation, that promise new transparency and accountability for City Hall deal-making.

On August 28, the Ethics Commission unanimously recommended prohibiting commissioners from voting if they have not filed their Statement of Economic Interest. That lets the public know about potential conflicts of interest. Some commissioners ignore the deadline for months, keeping the public in the dark about any investments or ownership that may present a conflict. Now this would take away their ability to vote until they comply with the law.

The Commission next expects to vote on its most far-reaching reform at its September 25 meeting. Currently city contractors may not contribute to officials who decide on their contracts. The Commission will decide to apply that same policy to developers and others seeking land use approvals from city officials. The same policy will be considered for others seeking a city benefit and who contribute to the officials who decide on their application. Records show millions are donated to candidates and the ballot measures they want passed, and the money crowds out the voice and votes of citizens.

Did you know that our elected officials could ask for contributions to their favored purposes, or even to programs run out of their offices? Over \$10 million came at the “behest” of elected city leaders over the past two years to pay for improvements to the office furniture, to a City Hall party to celebrate the City Hall Centennial, and to pay for the mayor to host a conference of mayors.

The record shows that none of the “behested payments” went for affordable housing, human services, or the most basic needs where money often falls short. In some cases, it came in checks for \$1 million or more. One notable exception was three billionaires who contributed a total of about \$3 million to Hamilton Family Services, but that’s the only exception. The basic fact is that all such contributions are welcome but having the same city officials ask for the money while being lobbied to approve the private interests of the donors opens the way to undue influence in deciding those requests. The public needs to see that any collusion is off limits and out of bounds. *(continued)*

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