



Geary Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

6:00 pm

One South Van Ness, 7th floor, Union Square Conference Room

Geary CAC Member Attendees

Daniel Calamuci
Paul Epstein
Louis "Lou" Grosso
Fay Fua
Claude Imbault
Annie Lee
Charley Obermeyer
Marian Roth-Cramer
Kevin Stull
Andrei Svensson

Staff Attendees

Liz Brisson
Kate McCarthy
Kannu Balan
Dan Mackowski
Kim Le
Alex Snyder
Scott Su
Colin Dentel-Post

Minutes

1. Call to Order.
 - a. Liz Brisson, Project Manager for the Geary Rapid project, called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Liz noted that moving forward after tonight's chair and vice chair elections, the Geary CAC meetings would be facilitated by those positions.
2. Roll call.
 - a. The following eight Geary CAC members were present at the start of the meeting: Daniel Calamuci, Paul Epstein, Lou Grosso, Claude Imbault, Annie Lee, Charley Obermeyer, Kevin Stull, Andrei Svensson. Fay Fua arrived at approximately 6:15 p.m. and Marian Roth-Cramer arrived at approximately 6:25 p.m.
3. Presentation and discussion: Ice breaker.
 - a. Liz Brisson guided a short ice breaker exercise.
4. Approval of minutes — July 12, 2017.
 - a. Lou Grosso moved to accept the July 12th meeting minutes. Kevin Stull seconded. It was unanimously approved.
5. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding election of committee chair and vice chair.
 - a. Dan Calamuci asked if the chair and vice chair positions are permanent.
 - i. Kate McCarthy, Outreach Program Manager, explained that it is up to the committee to decide. The committee can motion to set a

- sunset date. The chair and vice chair can also resign at any point if they wish.
- b. Liz Brisson and Kate McCarthy facilitated the election of the committee chair and vice chair. Kate McCarthy explained the election rules.
 - c. Paul Epstein, Annie Lee, and Kevin Stull ran for the chair position. Annie Lee was elected chair.
 - d. Paul Epstein, Kevin Stull, and Andrei Svensson ran for the vice chair position. Paul Epstein was elected vice chair.
6. Public comment: Members of the public may address the Geary Community Advisory Committee on matters that are within its jurisdiction and are not on today's calendar.
- a. Annie Lee, acting as the newly elected chair, read aloud the public comment guidelines.
 - b. There was no public comment on this item.
7. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding Geary Rapid project updates including schedule and public outreach and engagement. Reference document attached.
- a. Liz Brisson and Kim Le, Project Planner for the Geary Rapid project, presented on this item. Powerpoint slides and accompanying handouts from all of the meeting's presentations are available at this link: <https://www.sfmta.com/calendar/meetings/geary-community-advisory-committee-meeting-%E2%80%93-october-25-2017>
 - b. Charley Obermeyer suggested that Roosevelt Middle School be added to the list of stakeholder organizations.
 - i. It was pointed out that Roosevelt is already on the list.
 - c. Claude Imbault asked if the "design showcase" is a new type of meeting.
 - i. Kate McCarthy explained that the SFMTA has heard from the public that SFMTA refers to too many community meetings as "open houses" when they are actually not open houses. So the term "design showcase" is an attempt to differentiate it from an open house and to convey to the public that this is where we will be showcasing the final detailed design rather than seeking input.
 - d. Lou Grosso asked how much of the corridor is the presentation referring to.
 - i. Liz Brisson explained that this is only for the Geary Rapid project, which goes from Market to Stanyan. The extent is about three miles.
 - e. Lou Grosso asked if the Geary Rapid project would be well under way as the second phase (the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project) begins implementation.
 - i. Liz Brisson concurred and added that every Geary CAC meeting will generally have presentations and updates about both phases of the project.
 - f. Paul Epstein commented that he was unable to print select pages from the document materials posted online.
 - i. Annie Lee said that she was able to print select pages and can help Paul with the printing.

- g. Dan Calamuci asked why the project is doing bus stop outreach if the bus stop changes are finalized.
 - i. Liz Brisson responded that while the bus stop changes have been approved as a part of the environmental phase approvals at the SFCTA and SFMTA board, the project team would like to hear from bus riders and build data about what people think of the proposed changes before a final hearing at the SFMTA Board later this year.
- h. Kevin Stull asked whether business outreach would include businesses on side streets near Geary and O'Farrell.
 - i. Liz Brisson explained that the loading survey is focused explicitly on merchants fronting Geary and O'Farrell because they are immediately adjacent to where street changes are proposed. While the loading survey is only focused on properties fronting the project area, businesses on nearby side streets will be included in other outreach activities including open houses along with all other interested stakeholders.
- i. Marian Roth-Cramer asked if the outreach is only for Geary Rapid as her business is on 23rd Ave.
 - i. Liz Brisson explained that the outreach described in this item is only for Geary Rapid, but the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project will also have similar outreach at a later date.
- j. Paul Epstein asked if bus bulb-outs going to be implemented all across the city, noting that where there are bus bulbs, buses stop in traffic. Paul asked whether there is any room for flexibility in thinking about such strategies. The Geary Rapid rendering of the O'Farrell/Leavenworth intersection was noted as an example.
 - i. Liz Brisson responded that bus bulb-outs are one of the tools that the SFMTA has in its toolkit to improve bus performance and is particularly common to propose for bus routes that are a part of the Muni Rapid network.
 - ii. Dan Mackowski, Project Engineer for the Geary Rapid project, further explained that at Leavenworth currently buses are already taking up a travel lane when they have to angle in to reach the bus stops. A bulb-out will allow the bus to stop without needing to merge in and out. Passengers can then easily board the buses without having to step into the street. The bulb-out lengths vary depending on each location, and in some instances this treatment may require a small amount of parking removal.
 - iii. Through additional discussion with Paul, Liz and Dan determined Paul thought the rendering was indicating that the entire parking lane would be removed, but it was clarified that this is a spot treatment only at bus stops and that this treatment only requires removing a few parking spaces.
- k. Fay Fua asked what decisions have been made about the transit-only lanes and whether this can only be changed now through the Board of Supervisors.
 - i. Kate McCarthy explained that certain major decisions have already been made when the project was environmentally cleared. The

location of the transit-only lanes is one such decision. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) Board of Commissioners, which is comprised of the Board of Supervisors, unanimously voted to adopt the CEQA findings, select the Locally Preferred Alternative, and approve the project earlier this year. However, there are still decisions to be made about the detailed design. Kate provided the analogy of building a house, whereby decisions such as whether the house is one or two stories has already been made, but design decisions such as how many windows or the color of the carpet, is yet to be finalized. Curb management on a block-by-block level is an example of a design detail that the project is still looking to gather feedback about.

- I. Fay Fua asked about what the other surveys are besides the pedestrian intercept survey and merchant loading survey.
 - i. Liz Brisson responded that there is also the bus stop campaign where people will be able to provide their comments via text or online on proposed bus stop changes.
 - m. Andrei asked whether removing travel lanes between Gough and Scott will cause more traffic congestion.
 - i. Liz said that the travel lane removal in this segment would match the amount of lane capacity east and west of there, making for smoother overall travel flow. She also added that the expressway segment creates hardships for people who live in the surrounding neighborhoods and the lane reduction will make it safer and more pleasant for people walking to cross the street. Colin Dentel-Post, SFCTA's project manager for environmental review, said that SFCTA used models to forecast future travel demand and patterns with the removal of these travel lanes as a part of the environmental analysis. He said the results found that the effect would vary by intersection but there would be fewer total intersections with high levels of delay with the project than without. Many people driving would continue to drive along Geary, while a small number of drivers may choose to divert to other parallel streets.
 - n. Charley Obermeyer commented that many youth travel on the Geary corridor and suggested that outreach be made to schools outside the project limits.
 - i. Liz Brisson thanked Charley for his comment and invited him to suggest other specific schools nearby as well as any specific staff contact points for the team to add to the stakeholder list.
 - o. A member of the public asked what the budget is for Geary Rapid.
 - i. Liz answered that there is approximately \$65 million total. \$35 million is for the SFMTA portion of the project and \$30 million for improvements by other city agencies that are being coordinated with the project, e.g. utility upgrades and roadway re-paving.
8. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding planned Geary Rapid Open House. Reference document attached.

- a. Kevin Stull motioned to table this item for the next meeting in the interest of time. Paul Epstein seconded. The decision was unanimously approved.
- 9. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding Geary Boulevard Improvement Project.
 - a. Kannu Balan, Project Manager for the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project, presented on this item. [Note: Kannu Balan prefers to be called Balan as his first name.]
 - b. Andrei Svensson asked about tree planting in the median and whether there are existing examples in the city. He also asked whether the trees planted will be mature.
 - i. Kannu Balan responded that the project will not be planting fully grown trees, but they would be grown to some height and maturity prior to planting in the median. The project team will be working with Public Works and once this landscape architect comes on board, the project will know more about issues such as the type of tree species to plant. This committee would be able to weigh in on the types of trees to plant. There would be eight to nine feet of buffer in the median for the trees. The median running bus lane and streetscape treatments would be similar to the Van Ness BRT project.
 - c. Fay Fua asked when the 35 percent design would be completed.
 - i. Kannu Balan responded that they are expecting this milestone in January 2019.
 - d. Fay Fua asked if the bus stop locations are fixed.
 - i. Kannu Balan responded that the rough location of the bus stops have been environmentally cleared, but they may move small amounts depending on design constraints that may be learned during more detailed design.
 - e. Kevin Stull asked if issues such as the light posts for the Van Ness BRT project would come up.
 - i. Kannu Balan answered that it is not likely to come up because Geary is not running through the Civic Center and therefore does not have the same level of historic preservation scrutiny as Van Ness.
 - ii. Colin Dentel-Post added that historic preservation issues were analyzed during the planning and environmental review process and there are historically significant light posts in Union Square and in Japantown. However, the Geary project proposals would not require the poles to be removed, although they could be moved slightly if needed. In contrast, the Van Ness poles were structurally unsound and needed to support overhead wires which led to the conversations about whether to replace with modern poles or new poles that are replicas of the historical ones.
 - f. Marian Roth-Cramer commented that many families want to know about the travel time savings that this project would bring.
 - i. Colin Dentel-Post noted that during the planning and environmental review stage, the projection was about ten minutes faster with the project, but that was the travel time savings relative to a future

baseline where the bus would get slower due to more congestion if we didn't do the project.

- ii. Liz Brisson said that the project team will follow-up with the travel time savings.
 - g. Paul Epstein asked about project budget management. He mentioned that the Doyle Drive project that he was involved with as a CAC member had a significant construction cost escalation. He is concerned that the budget for the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project would escalate because the detailed design isn't even at the 35 percent stage yet.
 - i. Liz Brisson said that there is a detailed cost estimate that was prepared for the environmental review, that was reviewed by SFMTA staff, and that was escalated to year of expenditure.
 - ii. Colin Dentel-Post added that the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project has the benefit of watching the Van Ness BRT project go first and took lessons learned to make better informed cost estimating assumptions. The current cost estimate is from the 10 percent design estimate of a few years ago.
 - iii. Balan further explained that as detailed design progresses, the project team will continue to monitor and update the budget.
 - h. Claude Imbault noted that San Francisco has a history of projects being intervened and disrupted. He asked what might be the probability of it happening to this project.
 - i. Kate McCarthy mentioned that the Board of Supervisors, in their capacity as the SFCTA Board of Commissioners, unanimously approved the project. This CAC body is one important way in which project staff is gathering feedback that helps us address any concerns before they become major issues. CAC members can talk to your neighbors and contacts and flag any issues you are hearing about that we can use the CAC as a forum to resolve. Liz Brisson noted that there are no further project approval actions at the SFCTA Board (BOS) but there will be future items regarding funding approval that will go before this body. In addition, the SFMTA Board of Directors still has to legislate the final detailed design which will include a parking and traffic change hearing which would be the last opportunity for public feedback before the project moves forward.
 - i. There was no public comment on this item.
10. Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding upcoming meeting agendas.
- a. Kate McCarthy proposed that the Geary CAC meet every other month and provided three possible meeting date options.
 - b. After member deliberations, Lou Grosso motioned to meet on the third Tuesday of every other month. Charley Obermeyer seconded. It was unanimously approved.
 - c. The next Geary CAC meeting would occur on Tuesday, January 16th.
 - d. Kate McCarthy noted that project staff would contact the absent members to confirm whether the recurrent dates would work for them.

- e. For future meeting agenda suggestions, Andrei Svensson suggested an update on the Van Ness BRT project.
 - i. Kate McCarthy concurred and also mentioned that there is a Van Ness BRT CAC meeting the following day. Similar to the Geary CAC, the meeting is open to the public and all are welcome to attend.
 - ii. It was noted that members are welcome to contact staff at any time to suggest meeting agenda topics.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

