

THIS PRINT COVERS CALENDAR ITEM NO. : 12

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY**

DIVISION: Finance and Information Technology

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Approving a transit shelter removal policy for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

SUMMARY:

- The SFMTA provides transit shelters to ensure that transit customers have a comfortable area, protected from the elements, in which to wait for transit vehicles.
- Transit shelters fulfill an important way-finding function by making transit stops more visible and providing a hub for critical customer information and an environment in which senior customers and customers with disabilities can sit comfortably and wait for a transit vehicle.
- The SFMTA has, on occasion, received requests to remove transit shelters at certain locations.
- The proposed transit shelter removal policy states the preference of the SFMTA to keep in place all shelters that have been installed and to pursue the placement of transit shelters at bus stops that lack this amenity, but the proposed policy also provides a process to address problem locations, including enforcement and replacement with a newly designed, more open shelter.
- As part of the proposed policy, the SFMTA will only consider the removal of a transit shelter when either a hazardous situation or a disability access issue is identified and cannot be addressed through enforcement or an adjustment at the existing shelter site to improve access—and, under the proposed policy, a transit shelter will only be removed after a public hearing before a hearing officer and a final determination by the Director of Transportation after receiving the recommendation of the hearing officer and taking into consideration the needs of the community.

ENCLOSURES:

1. SFMTAB Resolution
2. Transit Shelter Removal Policy

APPROVALS:

DATE

DIRECTOR

1/9/12

SECRETARY

1/9/12

ASSIGNED SFMTAB CALENDAR DATE: January 17, 2012

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PURPOSE

This calendar item approves a transit shelter removal policy for the SFMTA.

GOAL

This item will meet the following goal and objectives of the SFMTA Strategic Plan:

- Goal 3, External Affairs – Community Relations: To improve the customer experience, community value, and enhance the image of the SFMTA, as well as ensure SFMTA is a leader in the industry.
- Goal 4, Financial Capacity: To ensure financial stability and effective resource utilization.

DESCRIPTION

The SFMTA, through its transit shelter contractor, provides transit shelters throughout San Francisco to ensure that transit customers have a comfortable area, protected from the elements, in which to wait for transit vehicles. Transit shelters fulfill an important way finding function by making transit stops more visible and providing a hub for critical customer information, such as a system map, real-time vehicle arrival information, specific route/line information and service hours. These transit shelters serve a broad section of the City's population and provide SFMTA's senior customers and customers with disabilities with an environment in which they can sit comfortably and wait for a transit vehicle.

Elected officials and members of the public have, on occasion, requested that the SFMTA remove transit shelters at certain locations. The most common reasons are a hazardous situation due to illegal activity in a shelter or a disability access issue in or around a shelter. These complaints have generally centered on the Tenderloin, although there have been some concerns elsewhere in the City.

In the recent past, the SFMTA has removed three shelters in the Tenderloin, from Hyde/Turk, Geary/Taylor and Turk/Hyde, due to drug activity. Some seniors and disabled persons opposed these removals. Subsequent to removal, there have been some requests to return shelters to these locations.

SFMTA Accessible Services, Operations Planning and Finance (which manages the transit shelter program) oppose the removal of transit shelters as a general policy because the shelters are a convenience for customers, particularly those customers who cannot stand and wait for transit vehicles for long periods of time. Lack of seating at transit stops can be a barrier to the use of public transit. In addition, information panels in the shelters supply needed transit information to customers, including a map, a NextMuni sign and Push-to-Talk buttons for the sight-impaired.

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Members of the Muni Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) have expressed their concern about the removal of transit shelters and its adverse effect on seniors and disabled customers. The MAAC strongly supported an early draft of the proposed transit shelter removal policy, with some MAAC members specifically requesting that the SFMTA not remove any more shelters, and endorsed the final version of the transit shelter removal policy at its December 15, 2011 meeting. The Citizens' Advisory Council also unanimously recommended this policy for adoption by the Board at its January 5, 2012 meeting.

The attached policy on transit shelter removals is intended to address proactively these challenging situations and the problems that lead to them. It states that it is the policy of the SFMTA to keep in place all shelters that have been installed and to pursue the placement of transit shelters at bus stops that lack this amenity, but it provides for a process to address problem locations.

A series of steps to manage the problems that may arise at transit shelters is recommended in conjunction with this proposed policy. The first step is enforcement of City laws through the SFMTA Safety, Training, Security and Enforcement Division and the San Francisco Police Department; the second step (which can be taken simultaneously) is early replacement of an existing, older-style shelter with a newly designed shelter that has a more open design which should assist in deterring unwanted activity.

The policy further states that the SFMTA will only consider the removal of a transit shelter when either a hazardous situation or a disability access issue is identified and cannot be addressed through enforcement or an adjustment at the existing shelter site to improve access. The SFMTA will also take into consideration the impact of removal of the shelter on the needs of low-income and minority communities. Transit shelter removal will only be pursued after a public hearing; where appropriate, the SFMTA may also hold a community meeting prior to the public hearing to collect more information about community concerns and to discuss possible solutions. The Director of Transportation will make the final determination as to the removal of any transit shelter after receiving the recommendation of the hearing officer.

A survey of other local and Northern California jurisdictions, including the City of Oakland, an East Bay consortium among AC Transit and participating cities, Santa Clara/Valley Transportation Agency, the University of California at Berkeley and the City of Sacramento, has indicated that none has a transit shelter removal policy. In addition, aside from one shelter location in Oakland (which was not removed due to high ridership), none of them has had any requests for transit shelter removals. Each of these localities is much smaller and less densely populated than San Francisco and each transit agency has a fraction of the SFMTA's ridership. In addition, the SFMTA's transit shelter program is much larger than the others, with approximately 1,100 transit shelters, compared to approximately 250 shelters in Oakland, 300 for the East Bay consortium and 470 in Santa Clara. A history of requests for transit shelter removals seems unique to San Francisco.

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On occasion, community groups have requested that the SFMTA substitute a bench for an existing transit shelter at a problem location. The transit shelter contract does not include benches and the SFMTA does not have a separate program for placing benches at bus stops. This is, therefore, not an option that the SFMTA can offer. In the case of Hyde/Turk, where a bench was installed after the removal of the transit shelter, the local Community Benefit District undertook the purchase, installation and maintenance of the bench. This Community Benefit District may also place a bench at Turk/Hyde to take the place of the transit shelter that has been removed.

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative to approving this resolution is to continue without a transit shelter removal policy.

FUNDING IMPACT

None with the adoption of this policy, although any future removal of shelters with advertising panels may have an adverse financial impact to the SFMTA.

OTHER APPROVALS RECEIVED OR STILL REQUIRED

None.

RECOMMENDATION

That the SFMTA Board of Directors approve the proposed transit shelter removal policy.

SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, The SFMTA provides transit shelters to ensure that transit customers have a comfortable area, protected from the elements, in which to wait for transit vehicles; and,

WHEREAS, Transit shelters fulfill an important way-finding function by making transit stops more visible and providing a hub for critical customer information and an environment in which senior customers and customers with disabilities can sit comfortably and wait for a transit vehicle; and,

WHEREAS, The SFMTA has, on occasion, received requests to remove transit shelters at certain locations; and

WHEREAS, The proposed transit shelter removal policy states the preference of the SFMTA to keep in place all shelters that have been installed and to pursue the placement of transit shelters at bus stops that lack this amenity, but the proposed policy also provides a process to address problem locations, including enforcement and replacement with a newly designed, more open shelter; and

WHEREAS, As part of the proposed policy, the SFMTA will only consider the removal of a transit shelter when either a hazardous situation or a disability access issue is identified and cannot be addressed through enforcement or an adjustment at the existing shelter site to improve access; and

WHEREAS, Under the proposed policy, a transit shelter will only be removed after a public hearing before a hearing officer and a final determination by the Director of Transportation after receiving the recommendation of the hearing officer and taking into consideration the needs of the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approves the proposed transit shelter removal policy.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors at its meeting of January 17, 2012.

Secretary to the Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

ENCLOSURE 2

SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY TRANSIT SHELTER REMOVAL POLICY

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) provides transit shelters throughout San Francisco to ensure that transit customers have a comfortable area, protected from the elements, in which to wait for transit vehicles. Transit shelters fulfill an important way finding function by making transit stops more visible and providing a hub for critical customer information, such as a system map, real-time vehicle arrival information, specific route/line information and service hours. These transit shelters serve a broad section of the City's population and provide our senior customers and customers with disabilities with an environment in which they can sit comfortably and wait for a transit vehicle. Lack of seating at transit stops can be a barrier to the use of public transit. **It is the policy of the SFMTA to keep in place all shelters that have been installed and to pursue the placement of transit shelters at bus stops that lack this amenity.**

Concerns regarding safety and security around transit shelters should be directed to SFMTA Operations Planning or Accessible Services, which will work with SFMTA Safety, Training, Security and Enforcement (in conjunction with the San Francisco Police Department) and transit shelter contract management to assess these concerns and to identify possible solutions. For example, the SFMTA may opt to accelerate the replacement of an existing, older-style transit shelter with a newly designed transit shelter that has a more open design that may be a deterrent to unwanted activity.

The SFMTA will only consider the removal of a transit shelter when either a hazardous situation or a disability access issue is identified and cannot be addressed through enforcement or an adjustment at the existing shelter site to improve access. The SFMTA will also take into consideration the needs of low-income and minority communities. Any transit shelter removal must be preceded by a public hearing held by the SFMTA. The SFMTA may also hold a community meeting prior to the public hearing to collect more information about community concerns and to discuss possible solutions. The Director of Transportation will make the final determination as to the removal of any transit shelter after receiving the recommendation of the hearing officer.