



SFMTA
Municipal
Transportation
Agency

**SAN FRANCISCO
MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND
PARKING AUTHORITY COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 3, 2017
Room 400, City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

**REGULAR MEETING AND CLOSED SESSION
1 P.M.**

SFMTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cheryl Brinkman, Chairman,
Malcolm Heinicke, Vice Chairman
Gwyneth Borden
Lee Hsu
Joél Ramos
Cristina Rubke
Art Torres

Edward D. Reiskin
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

Roberta Boomer
SECRETARY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order

Chairman Brinkman called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Cheryl Brinkman
Gwyneth Borden
Malcolm Heinicke
Lee Hsu
Joél Ramos
Cristina Rubke
Art Torres

3. Announcement of prohibition of sound producing devices during the meeting.

Chairman Brinkman announced that the ringing of and use of cell phones, pagers and similar sound-producing electronic devices are prohibited at the meeting. She advised that any person responsible for the ringing or use of a cell phone, pager, or other similar sound-producing electronic devices might be removed from the meeting. She also advised that cell phones that are set on “vibrate” cause microphone interference and requested that they be placed in the “off” position.

4. Approval of Minutes

No public comment.

On motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2017 Regular Meeting: unanimously approved.

5. Communications

None.

6. Introduction of New or Unfinished Business by Board Members

Director Board asked about the reduction in the cable car fare revenue. Director Reiskin stated that it would be discussed at the workshop.

7. Director’s Report (For discussion only)

- Special Recognition Award
- Update on Vision Zero
- Ongoing Activities

Candace Sue, Director, Communications and Marketing, recognized Deanna Desedas, Manager, Public Outreach and Engagement

Ed Reiskin, Director of Transportation, discussed state legislative actions; and the Cable Car Gearbox project.

Director Torres requested information about who was supporting the repeal initiative.

No public comment

8. Citizens' Advisory Council Report

No report.

9. Public Comment

Aleta Dupree discussed improving non cash fares. It would be good to get the new fareboxes installed as soon as possible. He has read articles about buses idling in some maintenance yards. It is important that Muni employees take ownership and not waste electricity and fuel. He wants to have a cashless system.

Mari Eliza stated that there is a lot of confusion about street construction. It looks like anybody can buy an orange cone and put it anywhere they want. The SFMTA needs to clean up its act and communicate to the public what is going on.

Howard Strassner expressed appreciation for the new format for the agenda and items, calling it a useful tool. Sometime next year, the City will see the new metro cars and wondered about coupling. The cars delay each other and there's a max number that can be accommodated in the subway. The SFMTA can't afford to have single car trains in the subway. It needs to make the subway work better.

Mark Gruberg stated that attention has to be called to a meeting of the Land Use and Transportation committee. There was a focus on the environmental impact that shows that Transportation Network Companies (TNC) represented about 25% of the traffic downtown and upwards of 60% of the violations. This is a startling figure and corroborates what taxi drivers have been saying. Something needs to be done. The police are not tracking TNC vehicles. This is essential information that the public needs to know about.

Tone Lee said that next year people will forget what happened in Las Vegas. This is what America is about. This generation has no passion or memory. Their mindset is "bicycles". The Board has been brainwashed by the Taxi Division. Mr. Lee said he was almost kicked out of a taxi brainstorming meeting. People are dependent on digital devices.

Tariq Mehmood said that they presented the idea of a set fee of \$30 for a ride from San Francisco to the airport at a recent meeting. It's a message to Uber and Lyft that the taxis are moving forward. They have signs for cabs. Mr. Mehmood asked for help to get signs for the taxicab doors. The taxi industry is running behind in many things and needs to get their market share back.

Herbert Weiner discussed clogged streets and the clogged thinking of the SFMTA. The SFMTA is widening the sidewalks, deleting driving lanes, and contributing to traffic congestion. It can be seen in planning for Van Ness and Geary. This is creating more of a traffic congestion problem. Creating space for bicycles isn't necessary. The SFMTA is supposed to solve traffic congestion which may be permanent. On public transportation, it is more difficult to get from one part of the city to another.

Tom Gilberti said that it shouldn't take months for elevators to be repaired. Elevators should be put in the stations and not up the street. He showed a rag that he had rubbed on an elevator doorway. It used to be white and is now filthy. He asked to have the platforms, passageways, and elevators steam cleaned. He congratulated the crew who put the tunnel together for the N Judah. They did a great job. The ride is smooth.

CONSENT CALENDAR

10. All matters listed hereunder constitute a Consent Calendar, are considered to be routine by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors and will be acted upon by a single vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Board of Directors or the public so requests, in which event the matter shall be removed from the Consent Calendar and considered as a separate item.

(10.1) Requesting the Controller to allot funds and to draw warrants against such funds available or will be available in payment of the following claims against the SFMTA:

- A. Liqun Zeng vs. CCSF, Superior Ct. #CGC15548568 filed on 10/21/15 for \$5,000
(Explanatory documents include a resolution.)

RESOLUTION 171003-121

(10.2) Approving the following traffic modifications:

- A. ESTABLISH – BLUE ZONE, DISABLED PARKING ONLY, AT ALL TIMES – “3495”
25th Street, south side, from 9 feet to 27 feet east of Valencia Street,.
- B. ESTABLISH – BLUE ZONE, DISABLED PARKING ONLY, AT ALL TIMES – “2026”
41st Avenue, east side, approximately from 128 feet to 150 feet south of Pacheco Street.
- C. ESTABLISH – STOP SIGN – Hawes Street, southbound, at Innes Avenue.
- D. ESTABLISH – PERPENDICULAR PARKING – Hawes Street, west side, between Hunters
Point Boulevard and Innes Avenue.
- E. ESTABLISH – STOP SIGN – Liberty Street, eastbound, at Noe Street.
- F. ESTABLISH – STOP SIGN – Rhode Island Street, northbound, at Division Street.
- G. ESTABLISH – RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING AREA Z, 2 HOUR PARKING, 8 AM
TO 6 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY EXCEPT VEHICLES WITH AREA Z
PERMIT – 24th Street, both sides, between Dolores and Chattanooga streets (3700 block).
- H. ESTABLISH – RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING AREA J ELIGIBILITY – 1548
through 1552 Haight Street.
- I. ESTABLISH – STOP SIGNS – Holly Park Circle, eastbound and westbound, at Murray
Street; and Holly Park Circle, eastbound and westbound, at Bocana Street.

- J. ESTABLISH – RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING ELIGIBILITY, AREA S – Guerrero Street, west side, between Liberty Street and 20th Street.
- K. ESTABLISH – RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING ELIGIBILITY, AREA I – Guerrero Street, east side, between Liberty Street and 20th Street.
- L. ESTABLISH – RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT BUFFER AREA S AND I, 2-HOUR PARKING, 8 AM TO 9 PM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY (SIGNS ONLY) – Guerrero Street, both sides, between Liberty Street and 20th Street (800 to 849 only).
- M. ESTABLISH – BUS ZONE – Union Street, south side, from 15 feet to 115 feet west of Columbus Avenue. (Explanatory documents include a staff report and resolution. For every parking and traffic modification that received a categorical exemption, the proposed action is the Approval Action as defined by Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code.)

RESOLUTION 171003-122

(10.3) Making environmental findings and approving parking and bus stop modifications on Noriega Street between 43rd and 47th avenues, as well as on 47th Avenue at Noriega Street to improve service on the 7 Haight-Noriega bus line as follows:

- A. RESCIND – BUS STOP - 47th Avenue, east side, south of Noriega Street; and Noriega Street, south side, west of 45th Avenue
- B. RESCIND – BUS ZONE - Noriega Street, north side, from 44th Avenue to 82 feet westerly
- C. ESTABLISH – BUS ZONE - Noriega Street, north side, from 44th Avenue to 120 feet easterly. (Explanatory documents include a staff report, environmental documents and resolution.)

RESOLUTION 171003-123

(10.4) Making environmental findings and adopting a Resolution of Local Support for the Geary Rapid Project (formerly known as the “Geary Bus Rapid Transit Phase I Project”), to be funded from a FY 2019 One Bay Area Grant in the amount of \$6,939,000 from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission under the STP/CMAQ programs of MAP-21, any extensions of MAP-21, or any successor legislation for continued funding. (Explanatory documents include a staff report, environmental document and resolution.)

RESOLUTION 171003-124

No public comment.

On motion to approve the Consent Calendar:

ADOPTED: AYES – Borden, Brinkman, Heinicke, Hsu, Ramos, Rubke, and Torres

REGULAR CALENDAR

11. Directing the Director to install a plaque in the Castro Street Station to commemorate and honor Tom Nolan’s significant and lasting contributions to public transportation in San Francisco and throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. (Explanatory documents include a staff report and resolution.)

Vice Chairman Heinicke presented the item.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Members of the public expressing support: Bill Wilson

RESOLUTION 171003-125

On motion to approve:

ADOPTED: AYES – Borden, Brinkman, Heinicke, Hsu, Ramos, Rubke, and Torres

12. Amending Transportation Code Division II to (1) delete the defined term for “Institution” and add “Residential Area”; (2) limit the number of parking permits that may be issued to a single address to four and eliminate the request for waiver provision; (3) revise the procedure for designating a Residential Parking Permit Area; (4) change the period for the validity of Educational Institution parking permits from certain hours of the day to hours of enforcement and limit the number of parking permits that may be issued; (5) eliminate the petition process currently required for Childcare parking permits; (6) authorize the issuance of one transferable parking permit to a resident licensed to operate a family child care home for use by a child care provider working at the home; and (7) authorize the establishment of pilot Residential Parking Permit program areas by the SFMTA Board to limit the number of parking permits to two that may be issued to a single address (with no more than one parking permit issued per licensed driver), exempt a vehicle displaying a valid parking permit from payment at on-street Parking Meters located in the Residential Parking Permit Area where designated by the SFMTA with posted signs, and exempt Health Care Worker and Childcare parking permits from the limit of two permits that can be issued to a single address. (Explanatory documents include a staff report, amendment and resolution.)

Kathy Studwell, Senior Administrative Analyst, presented the item.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Members of the public expressing support: Howard Strassner

Members of the public expressing opposition: Leo Germano, Mari Eliza, and Nicky Jacobson,

Members of the public expressing neither support nor opposition: Allan Kessler and Tony Kelly

With the concurrence of the Board, Chairman Brinkman continued the item.

13. Amending Transportation Code, Division II, to create a private transit vehicle permit program, including application requirements, permit terms and conditions, fees, and administrative penalties. (Explanatory documents include a staff report, resolution and amendments.)

Item 13 was removed from the agenda at the request of staff.

14. Amending Transportation Code, Division II, Article 1100 to remove references to Non Standard Vehicles, to eliminate the requirement that vehicles have less than 100,000 miles, eliminate the model year limitation, and amend hearing procedures and make a correction in the numbering of Section 1116. (Explanatory documents include a staff report, resolution and amendments.)

Item 14 was removed from the agenda at the request of staff.

SPECIAL ORDER – 3:00 pm

15. Presentation and discussion regarding the Piazza Saint Francis. (Explanatory documents include a slide presentation.)

Mike Sallaberry, Senior Engineer, presented the item.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dennis Sullivan played a video of Lawrence Ferlinghetti describing his vision for the Piazza St. Francis. It is inspired by the piazzas in Italy. San Francisco is being hit by the biggest building boom since the gold rush and is being sacked by automobiles. The piazza should be welcomed by all residents. The opposition is shortsighted. Traffic can be altered to accommodate congestion issues.

Angela Alioto expressed support for the piazza. This is the committee's tenth year of trying to undo the redlining of rules and regulations. They have done everything every step of the way. In January, 2015, they got the go ahead from the Planning Commission. Then got a report that there were no repercussions. There have been multiple meetings and there are two MTA reports saying there is no impact. Ms. Alioto expressed appreciation that this discussion is on the agenda.

Dennis Sullivan expressed support. This is a community concept to bring people together. There would be stone pavers to replace asphalt, framed by beautiful olive trees. The concept is to preserve the legacy of Cafe Trieste. It will be a remarkable setting. On Mason St, there is a closed area that brought a remarkable transformation that became a community overnight. This will be a pedestrian oasis.

Nick Castillo discussed piazza site logistics and schedule. It will take several months to take care of utilities, curbs, gutters. Then the work would start on the street which would take another several months. Last would be the street and stone finishes. The committee takes the health and safety of the neighborhood very seriously. There are ten phases for the project. The committee has dealt with emergency and pedestrian access and they have a plan. He supports the piazza.

Guy Terotola expressed support and discussed the site from a physical perspective. This will accommodate police, fire and emergency vehicles. Those departments have reviewed the plan and support it. This piazza will have better lighting than what exists. The construction site will provide greater access for emergency vehicles. There are precedents for closing streets such as Mason and Belden that are loved by residents.

Bry Sarte is supportive of the piazza as it will bring beauty to reality. She has been involved in many successful street closings such as Jessie, Linden Court, and Davis Alley. This piazza will recharge the aquifer below it, showcase sustainability, and will provide adequate access for emergency vehicles.

Fabbio Giotta expressed support, noting that his father had a vision of this magnificent open space. He has over 280 signatures of North Beach neighbors. This piazza is supported by Russian Hill, Fisherman's Wharf, and many elected officials. He would be proud to have a piazza outside Cafe Trieste. This needs to be built now.

Terry Hogan Johnson eagerly anticipates the realization of the piazza as it will be incomparably beautiful and cherished. People love to walk in San Francisco and nothing brings people together more than a beautiful open space. Piazza St. Francis honors the namesake of the entire Bay Area and celebrates the arts and the diversity of San Francisco. The Piazza is for everyone and reaches hearts and the love for the arts and nature.

Ann Cohen is opposed to the project. She talked to a lot of people about the Piazza and they really aren't for this. They have a huge homeless problem and a piazza would be a "homeless hotel." This isn't a time for putting money into a piazza. This will affect traffic. Often there are trucks on Grant Ave. so it wouldn't be easy for people to get out.

Larry Nibbi stated that this would be a great asset for the City. It would be built by union labor who needs the work. He asked the Board to accept this proposal and put union workers to work.

Tabitha Totah said that the committee conducted several outreach days in the community, going from business to business. They canvassed the neighborhood. The response was phenomenal. They received over 300 signatures and have over 1574 signatures from Change.Org. which they will send electronically. San Francisco Labor Unions have joined us in supporting the piazza.

Charles Yenson stated that he never used to go to North Beach but once he became a Knight, he started going there. It's a portion of land that is well thought out as a beautiful, calm pedestrian oasis. He added that he doesn't envy the position the Board is in trying to balance the concerns of individuals versus the big picture. This piazza is good for the long term.

Jenine Loughran stated that he has supported this idea for a decade. The piazza would be a space to relax, which is a crucial element for San Francisco. People are always rushing and filling the day with appointments. This piazza will be a place to slow down, develop new friendships and where children, grandparents and visitors can appreciate life. It will be an oasis for individuals, families and friends.

Susan Horsfall stated that the enhancement that the piazza brings is more than green space. It is a premium example of a public-private partnership that is economic, poetic, artistic, and spiritual. She urged the Board to give the piazza and the traffic study its' best consideration.

Sonia Giotta Pantaleo stated that she is opposed to the idea of tearing up the street. She doesn't recall her father giving his full support to the project. The only full support has come from one of three Cafe Trieste owners. She asked the Board to leave their block alone.

James Cha opposes the project, calling it a liability issue. There are some individuals who can't wait to slip and fall on the marble and sue the city. He wondered who would maintain the safety and cleanliness of the piazza. There's been a lack of democratic due process. This is an ill-conceived project. North Beach is a community that is united to face critical challenges.

Diane Shannon supports the piazza. There has been a lot of great information and studies have already been done. It would be beautiful to be able to show tourists this piazza in front of the church.

Romalyn Schmaltz stated that the sponsor offered a forum but it was a one way dialogue. There were over 100 in opposition at the forum who have been disrespected by the project sponsor. The neighbors need Vallejo Street. Residents are concerned about businesses, traffic, and access. The project sponsor has tremendous name recognition and is trying to silence the neighborhood and has never lived in the neighborhood. The neighbors would have to live with the impacts.

Mark Bittner thinks there are not enough public spaces in America but can't support this one. This one isn't coming from the people and its being shoved down the neighborhood's throat. It feels like a gentrification project. Something this divisive won't bring the community together and is driving people apart now.

Mukul Bakshi has spent years going to Cafe Trieste. The area is beautiful and the piazza would make it easier for people to enjoy themselves. Most car drivers stay away from that street. He is baffled that businesses would oppose this. It's economically best for the area.

Brian Frabl is opposed to the piazza. At first, he thought it would be lovely, but then realized that there is little pathway for traffic. Vallejo and Columbus is a four way intersection. No civil engineer would say that traffic wouldn't change if the street was closed. It would bottle up North Beach and there would be one outlet on Grant Street. Grant St. would become a parking lot with a sea of honking horns. He urged the Board to look at the alternatives.

Amelia Antonucci stated that she is in North Beach all the time. The City needs to go back to the Greek and the Romans to the idea of a square where everybody meets. North Beach needs a piazza. It's a wonderful concept. The piazzas in Italy is where people live.

Tory Hartmann thinks that the quality of life is an ephemeral thing and hard to enable. This piazza is an opportunity in the most noisy and polluted part of town. This has been carefully designed with public input and with North Beach businesses wanting it. Police and Fire have said "yes" to this design. It will allow the greatness of the City to come to life.

Mary Ann Scanlan stated that the developers stated that there were no objections by the community. The small businesses on Grant Street are afraid that they would have to close. The people trying to get to work don't need Carrera marble. They just need to get to work. The neighborhood objects to the ritzy piazza that will ruin their traffic patterns.

Nick Belloni said that it's hard to find free open space in San Francisco. San Francisco talks about building density but not about infrastructure. Adding a piazza-open space would be huge. It's been paid for and will be maintained. This piazza is also in an equity zone and will connect Portsmouth

Square to Washington Square. This is what makes the piazza so important to our city. We need to add this infrastructure.

Dan Stone said that this isn't a well-supported plan in the neighborhood. People in the neighborhood don't want it. She wondered how the fire department will get through Grant Street when there are hundreds of Uber drivers blocking the streets. There will be no egress and the traffic won't flow in the area.

George LaBar has lived in North Beach for decades. They were pleased when the Embarcadero Freeway came down but it isolated North Beach from the Bay Bridge. He has been going to Café Trieste since the 1960's. This will have a dramatic impact on residents, visitors and on many nearby streets. This has to do with traffic, not poetry.

Alicia Becerril stated that Busters and the Archdiocese are supporting the piazza. Cardinal Levada is supporting the project. Pappa Gianni has been quoted as supporting the piazza. This is for a good purpose. The piazza in Italy is one of the richest part of any city. San Francisco deserves that as a great place to gather and share the rich cultural diversity.

Adrienne Giotta and Ida Zoobi said that they make up the majority ownership of Café Trieste. The Piazza threatens the livelihood of the Cafe. Opposition to the piazza has been ignored and criticized.

Paul Webber expressed opposition to the street closing model. There are six two-way east-west tributary streets that guide cars to Telegraph hill from Columbus Street. Then there are single, one-way, north-south streets. The piazza would disrupt that by removing 1/6th of the tributary capacity and would create two further bottlenecks. Trucks and cars would converge onto one block of Grant Street. Project sponsors say that first responders will have access but they won't have the same access. It won't be that effective.

Judy Irving stated that the Telegraph Hill Dwellers (THD) is opposed. This is the wrong open space, and wrong design in the wrong space. There's a small piece of Powell across Columbus that might be nice for a piazza. The THD support residents who need to get out in the case of an emergency.

Marc Bruno stated that Café Trieste is self-sufficient, proactive and laid back. The cafe already provides what the proponents say this piazza would provide. The piazza isn't needed. People who are poor get help at the church. The piazza would be redundant and would be an embarrassment. Until the church and cafe, support the piazza, the project shouldn't proceed.

Richard Levine stated that there are horrible situations in North Beach. The current condition of Washington Square, which is only two blocks away, is seriously degraded because of the large and increasing homeless population that lives there. The Board should visit Washington Square and then consider what a piazza would look like with homeless people. This threatens the existence of the cafe and many businesses.

Dan Macchiarini has studied the traffic patterns in North beach. The North Beach Business Association is opposed. It will cause tremendous traffic congestion. The Board should be concerned with that. The area needs a break from construction after two decades of tearing up streets.

Cynthia Birmingham said that this two-way, signalized connector can't be eliminated. Many piazza supporters don't live in the neighborhood and don't get it. Residents are taxpayers and have every right to work with staff. She asked the SFMTA to leave their public street alone.

Roger Weinman stated that after the piazza was built there would be an up-street choke point where Ubers will block access for first responders. He wants to avoid the Oakland catastrophe where there was death and destruction. The piazza will be a late night party zone.

Lian Hennessy said that North Beach has many places for open space, art, and walking. There are places on Russian Hill for people to go. He has to clear the homeless from his garden every other day. It's getting worse in the neighborhood. He is also concerned about TNCs who block streets. There was a fire in North Beach last week and the area was a nightmare.

Jeremy Fish is opposed to the piazza mainly due to traffic. Vallejo Street is an artery to get through the neighborhood. This idea is coming from people who don't live in the neighborhood. The people pushing for this won't be impacted by this piazza.

Shafa Farnood stated that the intersection is pivotal for traffic being able to move through the neighborhood. There is space for artists already. This is gentrification. Traffic is already a mess.

Ashley Ray Smith said that the thought of an emergency situation at the top of Telegraph hill with the TNCs who don't know the streets is frightening. Let North Beach keep its' street.

Stan Hayes said that the THD strongly supports public open space if it's done the right way. Shutting down Vallejo Street isn't the right way. This will lock down the entire neighborhood and all the businesses on Grant Street. The THD doesn't support the closure of Vallejo Street and neither should the SFMTA Board. There's a good alternative without closing the street. He called for more meaningful outreach and get a new traffic study.

Tony Lee expressed support for the piazza project. This will allow carpenters to work and make a decent living in San Francisco. Pass the project and allow the responsible contractors to build it.

Timothy Reyff supports the piazza as it is good for the environment, will reduce cars and create more open space. It will be good for the community and will be a space for events. It will be a future city landmark honoring San Francisco poets. This is privately funded and will be a gift to the city. Nibbi Brothers is a responsible business.

Brian Cassidy objects to the project on the basis of its goals and implementation. Neighbors have to get off Telegraph Hill to get children to school and to medical appointments. Vallejo Street is a vital artery for the neighborhood. The piazza billboard is full of hyperbole and lies.

Patricia Cady expressed support for the piazza. The church of St. Francis is the first parish church in California and occupies its original site. It's a state and local landmark. People come from all over the world to visit. They have no place to sit. This can be solved without all of this conflict. She would like to see a piazza that allows traffic.

John Christian stated that the Archdiocese is the sole owner of the St. Francis shrine. The Archdiocese owns the entire north side of the street and would be affected by the proposal. The proposal has changed over the years and he doesn't know which plan is being discussed. The Archdiocese has been and remains neutral with the proviso that any plan must ensure full access to its property. It is essential to have adequate funding to build, maintain, and enforce the piazza.

Kathleen Bertolani said that the neighborhood welcomes having events now and then but this would make it difficult for emergency vehicles who need to get up the hill several times a month. There is a growing homeless population. The piazza will make the area unsafe.

Theresa Flandrich stated that Washington Square has been known as "La Piazza" and is where the neighbors always went during times of trouble. It does need cleaning up. She asked the Board to listen to what the immediate neighbors are saying as they will be impacted. North Beach already has a piazza.

Kathleen Dooley said that the North Beach Business Association doesn't support the piazza as planned. She understands the SFMTA's policy is to prevent private vehicles from moving. People already think poorly of North Beach due to parking issues.

David Vila-Lobos stated that in many towns in Italy, piazzas stimulate the economy and the community. It will become a cherished San Francisco landmark and North Beach's crowning jewel. He has reached out city-wide without opposition to the Piazza.

Angela Gerano opposes the piazza as he couldn't get out of his house or garage.

Marrianna Maxwell read a letter from the fourth poet laureate of San Francisco, expressing his opposition to the piazza. His fear is that if Vallejo Street is turned into a mall-like plaza and thus will be guarded and certain characters will be banned. The title of the piazza references the church and he doubts that religion is a major part of the project.

Myron Miu owns a saloon close to the piazza. He has driven in the traffic and has had to look for parking forever. This piazza will be detrimental to his ability to park and drive. As a business owner, he has music every day. Musicians have to double park and park wherever they can to bring in equipment. This will make their live more difficult.

Don Raichle supports open space but it needs to be appropriate to the needs of the neighborhood and serve the rest of the city as well. It's ludicrous to close the key street to get off of Telegraph Hill. There are ways to create great open spaces yet maintain access to garages and deliveries. There are totally safe spaces that would be great.

Rob Birmingham wondered who owns the piazza and who is paying for it. There are excellent facilities for poets in North Beach. Travertine marble in the rain is slippery. A slip and fall can be very costly. He asked who would be responsible for that or would the city have to write a check. He wants to know how the city is being protected.

Phil Chin stated that Chinatown TRIP is opposed to the project as proposed.

Jason Carroll stated that the piazza is an idealistic but unrealistic proposal. It would not make North Beach conducive to families and would be a detriment to residents' safety and quality of life. At least, a new traffic study should be conducted. The proposal would increase congestion and would restrict options for getting in and out of the area. Traffic in the area has greatly increased since the last study.

Jeremy Lee works in North Beach and grew up a block and a half from the project. He opposes the project because he doesn't believe the closure of a public street is reasonable. This is a densely populated area and shouldn't be made more difficult to access. The sidewalk is already quite wide and can be enhanced by landscaping and seating.

Tony Robles wondered if this project was honoring poetry or just benefiting a few people. There will be poetry in North Beach without the piazza. It's an attitude and is inclusive of the community. This piazza is being imposed and poetry is lost in the discussion. He expressed opposition because of the impacts on traffic, families, and the elders. Neighbors already have Washington Square Park.

Jerri Diep stated that the Chinatown Community Development Center is not a supporter but was listed as supporting the project. They were never approached by the sponsor and had asked to be removed from the list of supporters but they have been ignored. They are concerned about the lack of community outreach. Transparency and true outreach must be conducted with those who will be immediately impacted. She urged the Board to reject the proposal as it currently is and work on an alternative.

David Willey is opposed to the plan. Two way traffic on Vallejo Street is needed. There are other plans offered, any of which would be excellent. He doesn't see that the current plan is necessary.

Debbie Wilson stated that her children must be driven to and from school. She never received any notice about the permanent closure of a public right of way. She routinely receives notices for driveways and parking spots being eliminated. One would think the same would have happened for this. Neighbors weren't invited to participate in the process.

Momo noted that traffic and the homeless are obvious. Businesses are closing in North Beach. The project will take longer than the sponsor says it will and the café will be in danger of losing business. Neighbors want to protect Café Trieste.

Connie Brandon is attending the meeting to represent the views of her neighbor. Her family has a business on Grant Street and knows the neighborhood streets. The City can't eliminate the signalized block without impacting the entire neighborhood. She asked the SFMTA to be open-minded and fair. She is opposed to the project sponsor's "my way or the highway" attitude. She asked the SFMTA to find a new plan that works for everybody.

Zach Ruta stated that he has spent much of his life at the Café Trieste. He invited the Board to his house to have lasagna and see the problems.

GianPaolo Veronese stated that this process has been slow. Cardinal Levada is a big supporter. The whole idea was to bring peace. He hopes this can get built. A maintenance plan does exist. The outreach was extensive. Many used to support it but don't now. Hopefully people can come together and get this done.

Derek Remski goes to North Beach a lot. This “neighborhood-ism” is a little strange. This will get people out of their cars and onto the streets. People should walk more and talk to their communities. San Francisco is seeing “mom and pop” businesses dry up. The City should support businesses that are competing with on-line businesses.

Shelley Bradford-Bell stated that the Transit First Policy is important. The City has to look at alternatives for open space. The traffic study would not be here if Planning Dept. staff didn't feel that it was viable to move forward. People have to be able to sit in the piazza and visit the restaurants and shops. This would be a viable and positive plan for the City. She asked the SFMTA to find a way to make it happen.

Don Carmignani stated that having a piazza would be wonderful. Many historic places are changing. There is a great park but having coffee in a great piazza would be wonderful.

Joseph Bergeron stated that he understands the effort and time that the Board puts in to the work that it does. Most of the concerns have been dealt with at the department level. The departmental reports have been outstanding. The information is as it should be. He is supporting the piazza. Residents and local businesses support the piazza. The Archbishop is excited. There is a signed agreement for construction and maintenance. He urged the Board to approve the project.

Rob Kain is in complete support for the Piazza. This project creates a unique outdoor venue and celebrates San Francisco. It will be welcomed by residents and visitors. He urged the Board not to pass up the opportunity to take private money to create a public open space. It is right for San Francisco. Two traffic studies show that there is not significant impact to traffic. This project has been studied for a long time. It will be a great new treasure.

Joan Wood said that she has always admired the church but it's inappropriate that the residents of Russian Hill haven't been given a voice in this. The signatures in support are all from people who live out of town. There's a separate of church and state and this gets close to the border with this decision. People who live on Russian Hill are being shortchanged.

Corey Smith supports the piazza. Every research paper shows that a majority of San Franciscans shop by foot or by using public transportation. There's a car-centric attitude in the City. More than a quarter of California's pollution comes from private car use. When the City thinks about preparing for the future, it has to be bold and innovative so it can build a better future for its children.

Joe Alioto Veronese expressed support. The City has resources to address issues such as traffic, safety and homelessness. These resources should be relied on. There are two things that are important to do. The City needs to look forward and understand that this is a neighborhood living on life support. The piazza will be here for longer than we will.

Nicole Nabulsi is supportive of the piazza. She and her friends collected signatures and knocked on doors. In a few hours, people signed their petition in support. Thinking that San Francisco is planning our communities around cars is ridiculous.

Andy Katz expressed opposition to the project. He grew up in San Francisco and is aware of the difficulty of negotiating North Beach's narrow streets. This will create a traffic nightmare and will harm businesses. Please save the street.

Ben Matranga stated that he is in support of the Piazza St. Francis. There are always trade-offs in San Francisco. There's been a process that's been ten years in the making. There are two traffic studies and there has been dozens of community meetings. The City needs to honor the time investment of time, neighbors and staff and move this project forward as it will be an amazing space for families.

Lama Tenzin expressed belief in this piazza, the future environment and generations. It will be a good place for body, mind and soul.

Andrew Michael expressed support for the piazza. This will improve quality of life and mental health. It's important that it's in front of the shrine. It also supports our sanctity.

Milo Trauss expressed support for the piazza. It's a good idea for the same reason as mentioned earlier such as planning for the future and for walkability. San Francisco shouldn't be a car-centric city. People walking is not bad for commerce. This will increase the appeal of San Francisco and should move forward.

Barry Korengold stated that he's irritated that the Board is considering this idea. There's more traffic than ever and this will cut off an escape. He questioned how traffic would flow. Being stuck in traffic does not help the environment. Keeping traffic moving will be better for the air and will be less stressful. This hasn't been thought out well.

Howard Strassner stated that the piazza can be a beautify symbol for San Francisco. People have made these same concerns about piazzas all over the world. The cars will move around. People should be walking and smelling the roses. He expressed hope for one more plaza. The next thing should be working on closing lower Stockton Street.

Bill Wilson is supportive of the piazza. There were similar issues expressed about the acquisition of 701 Lombard, which resulted in the closing of Mason St. People will get used to the changes. When something new is conceived, people are frightened of change but in 20 years, people will be surprised by the controversy.

Ken Danz expressed support for the piazza, stating that a majority of people who come to the Porzunicola are from all over the world. The piazza is supported by the Mayor. People go to North Beach because of the feel of the neighborhood and to walk the neighborhood. It would be incredible to have a piazza. There are too many dogs in Washington Square.

Sunny Angulo, office of Supervisor Peskin, expressed appreciation for the hearing. A lot of the information disseminated is not new. Supervisor Peskins' office has fielded concerns from district residents, not just from North Beach but from Chinatown, who are facing congestion and safety issues. Many residents have been going to community meetings for ten years and have been clear about their concerns about the closure of Vallejo Street. The community has been portrayed in the press as divided and opposed. The proposal as it stands is not what the community can support.

Jackie Miller expressed support for the Piazza. This piazza represents peace of mind, and is in honor of our beautiful city. This will bring more beauty into San Francisco. She spoke with over 35 people who all love it. People are excited about the Piazza. There is a maintenance plan for the next twenty years.

With the concurrence of a majority of the Board, Chairman Brinkman directed that staff should not devote additional time to this matter nor bring the item back to the Board for consideration until there was significant local community consensus.

16. Discussion and vote pursuant to Administrative Code Section 67.10(d) as to whether to invoke the attorney-client privilege and conduct a closed session conference with legal counsel.

The closed session was cancelled.

ADJOURN - The meeting was adjourned at 6:14pm

A recording of the meeting is on file in the office of the Secretary to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors.



Roberta Boomer
Board Secretary

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Appeal Rights under S.F. Admin. Code Chapter 31:
For identified Approval Actions, the Planning Department or the SFMTA has issued a CEQA exemption determination or negative declaration, which may be viewed online at the Planning Department's website. Following approval of the item by the SFMTA Board, the CEQA determination is subject to appeal within the time frame specified in S.F. Administrative Code Section 31.16 which is typically within 30 calendar days. For information on filing a CEQA appeal, contact the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244, San Francisco, CA 94102, or call (415) 554-5184. Under CEQA, in a later court challenge, a litigant may be limited to raising only those issues previously raised at a hearing on the project or submitted in writing to the City prior to or at such hearing, or as part of the appeal hearing process on the CEQA decision.

The Ethics Commission of the City and County of San Francisco has asked us to remind individuals and entities that influence or attempt to influence local legislative or administrative action may be required by the San Francisco Lobbyist Ordinance [S.F. Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code section 2.100 et seq.] to register and report lobbying activity. For more information about the Lobbyist Ordinance, please contact the Ethics Commission at 415.581.2300; fax: 415.581.2317; 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 220, SF, CA 94102-6027 or the web site: sfgov.org/ethics.