

# RESCUE MUNI

# Transfer

No. 6,  
Fall 1998

## Saving the \$35 Fast Pass

RESCUE MUNI fought to preserve the single \$35 Fast Pass for Muni and BART users this summer. Mayor Brown listened to the riders and put the kibosh on the proposed \$45 "Fast Pass Plus" for SF BART users. Read about it on *Page 3*.

## Fall 1998 Metro and Traffic Surveys

Is Muni Metro getting better, now that the Advanced Train Control System is operational? Are the bugs getting fixed? Are there critical traffic problems slowing your bus ride? We have two **surveys** to find out on *Page 9-10*.

## Also Inside This Issue:

**Rescue Your Own Muni Ride:** Do your part to fight delays. Muni operator Robert Parks has some tips on *Page 4*.

**Steering Committee Digest:** The RESCUE MUNI leadership reports on its policy decisions on *Page 5*.

**Membership Update:** We now have over 400 members! Find out how you can help spread the word and recruit new members on *Page 7*.

**RESCUE MUNI Calendar:** For hard-core transithead and concerned commuter alike, this fall has more meetings than ever. Make space on your fridge for *Page 8*.

Board of Supervisors  
**Candidates' Forum**  
and RM **General Meeting**  
**October 1 (Thu), 6 pm**  
Sierra Club, 85 2nd St.  
*Details on page 2*



RESCUE MUNI

P.O. Box 190966  
San Francisco, CA 94119-0966  
415-273-1558 • [www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)

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Here

Fall 1998  
**Transfer**

The Newsletter of  
RESCUE MUNI

Saving the Fast Pass  
Metro and Traffic Surveys  
Rescue Your Muni Ride  
Membership Update  
Candidates' Forum

# 1998 Candidates' Forum

Ken Niemi invites you to a lively discussion of Muni policy with Supervisor candidates

RESCUE MUNI will hold its first candidates' night on **October 1** (Thursday) from 6 to 9 PM. The location is the Sierra Club Board Room, 3rd Floor, on 85 Second Street between Market and Mission Streets. This location is easily accessed from all parts of San Francisco via Muni and BART.

The following Supervisor candidates have been invited (*incumbents in italics*):

- Tom Ammiano
- Amos Brown
- Donna Casey
- Denise d'Anne
- Mark Leno
- Gavin Newsom
- Victor Marquez
- Mabel Teng
- Rose Tsai

This event is open to members and non-members of RESCUE MUNI. Only Muni issues will be considered. How-

ever, the candidates have been invited to make general campaign literature available. Candidates will appear one at a time.

If we have candidates that score well on Muni issues, this may be the first time that we actually endorse a candidate. If members stay after the candidates speak, and we choose to, we will be able to meet our Bylaw requirements and endorse candidates.

Members of the Board of Supervisors have the power to approve or cut Muni's budget as proposed by the Mayor, to approve fare levels and Muni routes changes proposed by Muni and the Public Transportation Commission, and to approve or reject contracts with Muni unions as agreed to by the Mayor. Much of what they do impacts our Muni service directly or indirectly. ★

## Transfer

the newsletter of RESCUE MUNI  
Fall 1998 - No. 6

Editor: Howard Strassner  
Assistant Editor: Eric Carlson  
Designer: Andrew Sullivan  
Contributing writers: Ken Niemi, Robert Parks, Daniel Murphy

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RESCUE MUNI (Riders for an Efficient, Safe, Consistent, Utilized, and Expedient Muni), founded 1996, is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit transit riders' association.

Hot line: **415-273-1558**  
[www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)  
[transit1@rescuemuni.org](mailto:transit1@rescuemuni.org)

# Membership Form

**We need YOU to help us Rescue Muni.**

Join us by mailing this form to P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119-0966.

**Name:**

**Membership category:**

**Address:**

- \$5 Limited Income
- \$15 Basic
- \$40 Sustaining
- \$100 Contributing
- Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**

**Muni lines you ride:**

RESCUE MUNI may from time to time publish membership lists *with names only* (no phone numbers or addresses). May we publish your name only as a member? Y N

**# riders in your household:**

**I would like to volunteer! Y N**

**"Don't Be Late" T-Shirt (\$20)**

Send me one! Size:

**Signature:**

## Executive Committee

Chair: Ken Niemi  
Vice-Chair: Richard Mlynarik  
Membership Sec'y: Daniel Murphy  
Recording Sec'y: Howard Strassner  
Corresponding Sec'y: Eric Carlson  
Treasurer: Joan Downey  
Coordinators:  
Charlotte Breckenridge, David Pilpel, Andrew Sullivan

## Steering Committee

Chair: Andrew Sullivan  
Vice-Chair: Daniel Murphy  
Charlotte Breckenridge, Eric Carlson, Joan Downey, Richard Mlynarik, Ken Niemi, David Pilpel, Howard Strassner

## Standing Committees

**Muni Metro:** addresses scheduling and reliability of Muni's light rail lines. Meets second Wed. of every month, 6 p.m., at the Sierra Club, 85 Second St., 3d floor (chair: Howard Strassner, 661-8786, [ruthow@juno.com](mailto:ruthow@juno.com))

## Other Committees/Initiatives

**Bus Service** (chair: Luanne Schulte, 642-1969)

**Membership** (chair: Daniel Murphy, 665-4074, [daniel@well.com](mailto:daniel@well.com))

**Surveys** (chair: Andrew Sullivan, 673-0626, [andrew@sulli.org](mailto:andrew@sulli.org))

Any member may form a committee. If it meets at least four times per year, the committee may request appointment of a representative to the Steering Committee, the policy-making body of RESCUE MUNI.

# Traffic Conditions Survey

What delays your bus ride? *Ken Niemi* needs your data

Traffic congestion continues to be cited as a significant factor affecting the ability of Muni surface vehicles to maintain their schedule and avoid bunching. Though the Department of Parking and Traffic has reduced the impact of traffic congestion on Market Street, other areas continue to be plagued by traffic delays and other problems such as double-parking and violation of the diamond lanes.

We would like your help in compiling a list of key trouble spots where

more attention is needed. Please pay attention to your surface routes (bus and streetcar) and report back to us on areas you notice have continued problems. We will do our best to lobby the Department of Parking and Traffic and the Public Transportation Commission to come up with solutions. We are also trying to coordinate this survey with the Transport Workers Union, whose members face these conditions every day. ★

**Route:**

**Location:**

**Direction:**

**Day of Week:**

**Time of Day:**

**Type of Problem:**

- Double parking
- Congested traffic / Blocking intersection
- Need for diamond (transit-only) lane due to heavy traffic
- Frequent diamond lane violations / lack of enforcement
- Turns that are needlessly too sharp (parking too close to corner?)
- Road Surface is too rough; trolley poles frequently fall off wires
- Other (explain):

**Comments:**

Please return as soon as possible (preferably by 10/2/98) to:

RESCUE MUNI, attn: Ken Niemi, P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119

# Saving the \$35 Fast Pass

*Daniel Murphy* reports on our fight to maintain one fare for SF's transit riders

Since 1983, Fast Passes have been valid for BART rides within San Francisco. Each time a Fast Pass user exits a San Francisco BART fare gate, Muni pays BART a discounted fare, now 76¢. This arrangement represents the most successful integration of two mass transit systems' fares in the Bay Area. It allows Muni riders a pass that works anywhere within the City, and allows Muni riders living near the four neighborhood stations faster access to downtown than Muni could provide.

Earlier this year, Muni balked at renewing the agreement, saying 76¢ was too much. BART argued that this represented a deep discount on BART fares (now \$1.10-\$1.15) and they just couldn't go any lower. Muni posted signs throughout the system telling passengers that, effective in a few weeks, Fast Passes wouldn't work on BART. Meanwhile, the agencies crafted the "Fast Pass Plus" plan.

"Fast Pass Plus" would be a \$40 or \$45 pass valid on both Muni and BART within San Francisco. The old \$35 Fast Pass would remain, but wouldn't work on BART. RESCUE MUNI immediately stepped in and opposed the plan. "Fast Pass Plus" represented a fare increase on a very specific group of riders. If passengers refused to pay the extra \$5-10 and rode Muni instead, the cost of providing Muni service would far outstrip new revenues. Worse still, most of the "Fast Pass Plus" money went to BART, not Muni.

A delegation from RESCUE MUNI met with BART and Muni staff, as well as BART directors James Fang and Tom

Radulovich. We argued that the two agencies should not look to one group of passengers for more money, and we presented our own budget forecasts for Fast Pass Plus, saying, in effect, that BART and Muni overestimated how much money the plan would raise.

Each agency viewed fares through its own lens: BART sells its services on a per-ride basis only; Muni sells most of its rides with the all-you-can-eat Fast Pass. About the only thing both sides agreed on was the need for a formula that made budgeting more predictable. RESCUE MUNI developed several alternative schemes, and suggested that surveys be done to determine how many rides on BART and Muni Fast Pass users actually take.

RESCUE MUNI also argued that higher Fast Pass use and BART stemmed, in part, from poor Muni Metro performance. When the J-Church breaks down in the morning, for instance, it's common to see passengers walk down the hill to 24th Street Mission BART in order to get downtown. Also, increased frequency of BART trains within San Francisco because of service to the new Dublin/Pleasanton extension made BART more appealing to Fast Pass holders.

RESCUE MUNI agreed that 76¢ was too much for Muni to pay, especially considering the low marginal cost to BART, but we didn't think a two-tiered system was the answer. And we didn't think a fare increase on Fast Pass holders was fair considering Muni's rapidly deteriorating performance.

*Continued on Page 9*

# Rescue Your Own Muni Ride

22-Fillmore operator **Robert Parks** has some tips on how to speed Muni service

**1** Be at the stop, ready to board, to show or pay your fare when the bus pulls up. Don't stand in the middle of the street, around the corner or in a doorway. Waving a lit cigarette at the bus does not indicate that you intend to board. If you do *not* want the approaching bus, a signal is appreciated. Don't stand in the bus zone. Don't run for the bus or try to delay the bus (one or two seconds is service -ed.). Waiting longer for you may cause the bus and all the other passengers to be delayed 1-2 minutes (10 seconds for you, 90 seconds for the light). If a bunch of buses is approaching, take the second or third bus. Don't delay the first one even more.

**2** Your Fast Pass should be fully and clearly visible in/out of a clear holder, face toward the driver, and shown rather than flashed. Coins should be counted *before you board* and correct fare should be deposited into the fare box quickly but not jammed in all at once. Don't use too many pennies. A dollar bill should be found and un-dog-eared *before boarding*. Don't expect to break your 5, 10, 20, or 100 dollar bill on the bus. Transfers should be *in your hand before you board*, and fully and clearly visible, with the second ride coupon accessible for removal or the entire transfer for the third ride (this will have to change with proof-of-payment- ed.) Attempts at fare evasion are a pain, and delay the bus. Move away from the doorway quickly to let others board.

**3** Know when your stop is coming up, even if you ask the driver to call it when you board, keep your eyes open, ring the bell once...after the previous stop, but *at least 1/2 block before your stop*. Then stand up and move toward the rear door *after* the previous stop, and *at least 1/2 block before your stop*. Use the back door unless you are physically unable. Blocking the front door is the #2 time waster at Muni, right after fare problems. Have your belongings under control and get off the bus in an expeditious manner. Don't decide to get off *after* the bus has stopped and doors are open. If the driver misses your stop, speak up, be safe when exiting the bus, be aware and avoid putting yourself into danger.

**4** If you are carrying a pair of 8 foot long skis or an unmuzzled dog or a bicycle or futon, please walk or take a taxi. (Avoid peak hours - ed.) *Hold on! Sudden changes in speed and direction may be necessary*. There are situations where the most experienced bus-surfer will be put on the floor or into fixed objects.

*Robert Parks has been driving a bus for over two years and is thankful that he finally has enough seniority to drive the 22 Fillmore, five days a week, with Monday/ Tuesday off. His long term goal at Muni is to operate historic streetcars on the Embarcadero, Market/Wharves or Golden Gate Park lines. Robert has repeatedly provided insight on Muni problems on the email list. He is willing to tour the 22 route with a rider or potential operator (safely) during his run. Contact rparks@linneaus.com for info. ★*

# Fall 1998 Muni Metro Survey

Is Muni Metro finally getting better? **Andrew Sullivan** writes of our survey to find out

**I**s Muni Metro getting better or worse? The press and RESCUE MUNI's web site have been full of anecdotal analysis of this question in recent weeks - most highly unfavorable to the "new" Muni Metro and Muni's \$70 million Advanced Train Control System. We've heard literally hundreds of tales of severe delays and system breakdowns, and Muni officials have admitted that ATCS has yet to live up to its promise.

But anecdotes are one thing; hard facts are another. You can help us assess **exactly** how Muni Metro is doing this fall, by participating in our special **Muni Metro Survey**. It's designed just like our annual Riders' Survey (with a few extra questions), so you will only need to record your actual experience and we'll do the rest.

Enclosed in your *Transfer* this month is a survey form. Between **September 20 and October 3**, just record for every streetcar (F, J, K, L, M, N) ride you take:

- route
- date
- time you arrive at your stop
- time the car/train arrives
- your destination
- time you arrive there
- crowding (on a 1-5 scale)

Submit your results at our web site ([www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)) or by mail; we will compile the data and publish our results as soon as possible after the survey is complete. Your help crunching numbers would also be greatly appreciated (let us know if you're interested on the form). Of course, you should feel free to distribute this form as widely as possible.

**Bus riders:** Don't feel left out! If you ride Muni Metro at all during these two weeks, please answer the survey. If not, give it to a friend who does - and please make sure to answer our **Traffic Conditions Survey**, also in this issue, about how traffic and other conditions affect your ride. ★

## SF Municipal Hotel?

**Howard Strassner** has doubts Muni is contemplating leasing the bus terminal area at Stuart and Mission as a hotel site. I am concerned that the lease revenue will not cover:

- Muni's capital costs to relocate many overhead power lines and build additional rest rooms;
- Muni's increased operating costs for additional route lengths; and
- rider inconvenience for additional walking distances for transit service. This has all of the appearances of a land giveaway and corporate subsidy at Muni expense. ★

# RESCUE MUNI Calendar

Mark your calendar now for these events concerning Muni and transit.  
**Eric Carlson** has read the websites and agendas so you don't have to

date	item	location
9/17, 7PM	3d Street Light Rail Community Meeting	SFSU, 425 Market
9/19, 10AM	Quentin Kopp's Muni Town Meeting <i>Panel discussion, recommend solutions</i>	Jefferson Elem School, 19th/Irving
9/28, 6PM	SF Transportation Authority Community Meeting - see below	Presidio Visitors' Center, Building 102
9/28, 6PM	RM Executive & Steering Committees	Sierra Club 85 Second St.
9/29, 5PM	Public Transportation Commission	401 Van Ness
<b>10/1, 6PM</b>	<b>RM General Membership Meeting and Candidates Night</b> <i>Member vote on endorsements of Props E and I, possible endorsement of Supervisor candidates</i>	<b>Sierra Club, 85 Second St.</b>
10/13, 5PM	Public Transportation Commission	401 Van Ness
10/14, 6PM	RM Metro Committee	Sierra Club
10/19, 6PM	RM Executive & Steering Committees	Sierra Club
10/27, 5PM	Public Transportation Commission	401 Van Ness
<b>11/3</b>	<b>Election Day - Don't forget to vote!</b>	
<b>11/5, 6PM</b>	<b>RM General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Planned topics:</i> 1. "G" line streetcars to Golden Gate Park 2. Progress report on Muni "improvements" to Metro: <i>ATCS, turnback, Breda cars, E line, POP, etc.</i>	<b>Sierra Club</b>
11/10, 5PM	Public Transportation Commission	401 Van Ness
11/11, 6PM	RM Metro Committee	Sierra Club
11/16, 6PM	RM Executive & Steering Committees	Sierra Club
11/24, 5PM	Public Transportation Commission	401 Van Ness

**SF Transportation Authority:** This little known agency is in charge of distributing S.F.'s half cent transportation sales tax money and certain federal and state monies following in its wake. The Authority, in accordance with State law, is controlled by the Board of Supervisors, who meet separately to consider relevant transportation issues. The agency has been conducting community meetings where citizens express opinions on what needs attention or funding: Muni, new subway lines, pedestrian infrastructure, parking, bike, car traffic, etc. For info, access their web site at [www.ci.sf.ca.us/sftalindex.htm](http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/sftalindex.htm) or telephone 557-6850.

# Steering Committee Digest

**Howard Strassner** summarizes the actions and policy decisions of RESCUE MUNI

**New Officers:** Richard Mlynarik, Daniel Murphy and David Pilpel were the top vote-getters in our May election and were seated as Executive Committee (Excom) members in June. Charlotte Breckenridge and Eric Carlson tied for the fourth Excom position. This was an apparent problem because our Bylaw have no provisions to break ties. We decided to toss a token and Carlson won the two year fourth Excom seat. Breckenridge was then named as the Steercom representative from the Metro Committee and then named to fill the remaining term of George Musser.

The following were then elected as officers of the Excom: Ken Niemi - Chair; Richard Mlynarik - Vice-Chair; Howard Strassner - Recording Secretary; Eric Carlson - Corresponding Secretary; Joan Downey - Treasurer; Dan Murphy - Membership Chair; Andrew Sullivan - 1st Coordinator and Webmaster; Charlotte Breckenridge - 2d Coordinator and Telephone Chair; and David Pilpel - 3d Coordinator.

Our Steercom consists of the Excom plus members named by the Standing Committee. There are no additional Steercom members at this time. The following were elected as Steercom officers: Andrew Sullivan - Chair; Dan Murphy - Vice-Chair; Howard Strassner - Recording Secretary; and Eric Carlson - Corresponding Secretary.

We dissolved the Governance and Standards Committees because they completed their assigned tasks. We voted to thank John Rudolph for his efforts on the Governance Committee.

**Policy Decisions:** In accordance with RESCUE MUNI Bylaws none of the following are RM policy (A through H) unless consented to by a majority of the RM Membership present at a General Membership Meeting. Endorsement of the Ballot Initiatives require a two-thirds vote.

## *Muni Metro Operations*

A) Muni Metro should plan to use the flexibility of pockets and crossovers in the Embarcadero turn around to **correct the distribution/sequence of cars** leaving the Embarcadero in the outbound direction.

B) Muni Metro should run a trial of **turnbacks on the L-Taraval route** with the following requirements: a) Only turnback the second car of two car trains or turnback a single car when the second car is in sight. Operator adjustments should be made at pockets or at the turnback stop. b) Every car shall have correct sign destinations shown: on the car, on the overhead signs at Metro Stations, and by announcements in the cars and on the stations. c) Reasonable rest periods shall be provided for turnback drivers. d) Turnbacks should not be used to reduce service.

C) Muni Metro should **reactivate the sign showing the next train** to leave the Embarcadero Station and also show the train designation.

D) Metro should use their systems to make a series of **courtesy and rider-ship efficiency announcements.**

*Continued on next page*

**Steering Committee Digest** continued  
Fast Pass

A) As RESCUE MUNI is a transit riders association for San Francisco, and Rescue Muni is interested in the most expeditious, efficacious, and integrated use of San Francisco's tax supported transit systems and that the Muni Fast Pass on BART program has been a successful example of integrated transit use for San Franciscans for over a decade, it is RESOLVED that no changes involving the rider be effected in the current system wherein holders of the monthly fast pass can use it all month between the eight San Francisco BART stations. **We oppose the "Fast Pass Plus" proposal** as a denigration of integrated transit and a disguised fare hike.

B) RM urges Muni and BART to **continue the use of Muni Fast Passes on BART** within SF at no additional cost to the user. RM recommends that the agencies develop a new reimbursement formula based on actual usage patterns, as measured by surveys of Fast Pass buyers and their Muni/BART use.

C) We urge Senators Burton and Kopp and assembly members Migden and Shelley to use their authority to prevent Muni and BART from engaging in further disputes at the expense of passengers, and **revisit the allocation of funds** between BART and other transit agencies including Muni under the 3 county half cent sales tax authorized by AB 1170.

D) Whenever two or more transit agencies providing an integrated service reach an impasse in negotiations on

any fare or service issues then the **State Public Utilities Commission** should be called in to make the final decision.

*Ballot Initiatives*

A) RM recommends a **yes** vote on **Proposition E, Central Freeway rebuild**. Our reasons are: Prop E is the shorter version of the Central Freeway that was originally recommended by the Citizens Task Force appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This freeway will: not impact Metro under Market Street; be safer than a retrofitted seismically damaged elevated freeway; be cheaper and faster to build than the alternative; and preserve a historic neighborhood and create some additional housing sites. This freeway serves drivers just as well as the more expensive version and does no harm to Muni.

B) RM recommends a **yes** vote on **Proposition I**, the policy declaration measure to study **rail on the Bay Bridge**. Our reasons are: Rail on the Bridge will provide transit riders on both sides of the Bay with more options for convenient direct transit to and from downtown SF and more locations in the East Bay. This will help City residents using Muni, peninsular residents using Caltrain and ultimately travelers on High Speed Rail. Building a east span of the Bridge with rail capacity, same as the west span, will double the people moving capacity of the Bridge and reduce the number of cars that enter the City and slow down Muni. Rail on the Bridge will be cheaper overall than another BART tunnel or bridge over the Bay. ★

# Membership Update

RESCUE MUNI is growing fast! Membership Secretary **Daniel Murphy** has the latest

**R**ESCUE MUNI membership just keeps growing. The Muni Metro meltdown starting in late August swelled our ranks to over 400 members. Most new members come in through our web site ([www.rescuemuni.org](http://www.rescuemuni.org)) but many come in though our posters at Muni stops and flyers handed out by members.

We're looking to expand our membership recruitment efforts in a big way. We'd like to have tables, staffed by two RESCUE MUNI volunteers, at major high-traffic points throughout the city. We think frustrated passengers waiting at Muni stops will be in just the right mood to join RESCUE MUNI.

We need volunteers as soon as possible to help out with the following tasks:

- tables at major intersections
- handing out fliers at busy Muni stops
- putting up posters on major Muni lines

If you're interested in any of this, please e-mail me at [daniel@well.com](mailto:daniel@well.com) or call me at 415-665-4074. A Membership Committee meeting will be held in October to plan our fall/winter membership drive and assign specific tasks. If you call or e-mail, I'll make sure you're notified personally of the meeting date. The date will also be posted on our web site and the RESCUE MUNI discussion list.

We consistently hear that Muni passengers are very receptive to RESCUE MUNI volunteers. Turning frustration about Muni into action requires we build our membership base. Please consider joining this effort. ★

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## Briefly: RM Bus Committee

Bus riders have suggested that Rescue Muni pays too much attention to Metro problems. Now, the RESCUE MUNI **Bus Committee** is organizing. So far four individuals have volunteered to be coordinators for their lines: RM will copy fliers which the volunteers will use to gather together other riders who would like to get more involved in their line. Please contact the following people to help rescue your line:  
David Winzer / 48 line / 285-7070  
Carl Glover / 22 line / 252-8193  
Ray Saari / 33 line / 861-7972  
Luanne Schulte / 14 line and committee contact person / 642-1969 ★

## RM Email List

RESCUE MUNI has a news worthy chat list that many members are using to voice their problems with their line. Perhaps with a little monitoring and some coordination this list may be able to replace meetings as a way to rescue a particular Muni line.

To see who has a problem similar to yours, or to join our lively debates about Muni and transit policy in SF and the Bay Area, send an email with "subscribe" in the body to: [rescuemuni-request@lists.best.com](mailto:rescuemuni-request@lists.best.com). You will receive copies of all emails sent to the group. It's a great way to talk back to RESCUE MUNI and (sometimes) Muni itself. ★