



A Transit Riders' Association for San Francisco
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May 9, 2005

To:

Michael Burns, Director of Transportation;
Chair Cleopatra Vaughns and Members, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
Board of Directors;
President Aaron Peskin and Members, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Re: Muni Budget Crisis and Proposed Muni Service Cuts

Dear Members:

We are very concerned by the proposed Muni service cuts and fare increase as presented recently by MTA staff to the MTA board of directors. In particular, service cuts have the potential to drive riders off the transit system and increase automobile traffic, which will have significant negative implications for Muni riders and auto drivers alike. However, we also understand that Muni's cost increases require difficult choices to balance the budget. To this end, we have several specific recommendations for the Board of Supervisors and for Muni:

1. The Board of Supervisors must **pass the proposed parking fees and fines as proposed!** This is the most important thing that the Supervisors can do to prevent much deeper service cuts. Without the proposed parking fines in particular, Muni will be forced to make much deeper service cuts – for example, eliminating Owl and community service, and cutting one or more major lines – that would have a major impact on bus and streetcar riders.

Higher parking fines and fees will also help reduce auto traffic and speed transit service, as urged by San Francisco's Transit-First Policy.

2. Muni staff should take immediate action, backed by the MTA board, to improve transit efficiency via **stop consolidations, expanded bus lanes, and expanded limited-stop service.** Specific ideas in this area which will allow Muni to run more service with fewer service hours include:
 - Adding transit-only lanes in areas of heavy traffic, such as the 21-Hayes outbound from Market to Gough, the 5-Fulton and 19-Polk through Civic Center, Market

Street between Van Ness and the Ferry Building, Bayshore south of Cesar Chavez, Van Ness between Lombard and Market, Geary between Van Ness and Masonic, and various other places in town.

- Consolidating stops on lines where bus stops are closer together than required by policy, beginning with the stop consolidations not implemented on Geary and O'Farrell.
 - Converting motorcoach local to limited service at all hours when it is redundant with local trolley-coach service. 71-Haight/Noriega in the off-peak direction and 2-Clement are good candidates for such conversion.
3. Muni must improve public information by **posting schedules, not just headways**, at all stops when service frequency is less than policy and for all neighborhood and Owl service. Expanding NextBus is also a priority, but it is no substitute for actual schedules. AC Transit does this and Muni should too.
 4. If service cuts are required, we urge Muni not to reduce service below policy on Owl lines and elsewhere in the network. In particular, we urge Muni not to make cuts below the 30-minute policy for Owl service. We agree with the proposal to move the evening rush later to accommodate the later commute patterns of today's riders.

It is important to note that Rescue Muni does NOT recommend the rejection of this year's budget unless the Board of Supervisors can pass additional subsidies to make up for proposed service cuts or fare increases. In particular, **it is completely unacceptable to reject the budget or parking fine increases and force deeper service cuts**. We reiterate our strong support for longer-term funding sources for Muni, including proposed vehicle fees, parking taxes, and congestion charging, but we do not agree with some who would reject this year's budget without finding a way to close the gap.

Thanks for your time and your support of better transit in San Francisco.

Best regards,

Andrew Sullivan
Chair, Rescue Muni