

RESCUE MUNI

Transfer

No. 21,
Winter 2005

RESCUE MUNI'S PLAN FOR GEARY RAPID TRANSIT



ALSO: INNER GEARY BUS IMPROVEMENTS WATERED DOWN - BUT SUPERVISOR ELSBERND STANDS UP FOR MUNI RIDERS

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COME TO OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING!

**TOPIC: MUNI'S BUDGET
CRISIS**

WHEN: Wed., February 16th
WHERE: 312 Sutter, Room 402
TIME: 6:00 pm

**GUEST: Stuart Sunshine, Muni's
Deputy Executive Director**

**Come take part in a discussion
on how to deal with budget crisis
(see article on pg. 16 for details).**



RESCUE MUNI

P.O. Box 190966
San Francisco, CA 94119-0966
415-273-1558 • www.rescuemuni.org

Winter 2005

Transfer

The Newsletter of
RESCUE MUNI

Geary Rapid

Transit Vision

More 2004 Survey Results

Muni's Budget Crisis

Election Wins & Losses

T-Shirt Redesign Contest

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Place
Stamp
Here

Rescue Muni's Vision for Geary Corridor Rapid Transit - "Rail-Ready" BRT & Light Rail

By Dan Krause, Rescue Muni Steering Committee Member

The Geary Corridor is one of the busy transit corridors in the nation. Unfortunately, transit service is woefully inadequate. Now the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is studying ways to bring Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to Geary, which it hopes will improve service tremendously. The question is, what is the best way to implement BRT on Geary? Rescue Muni is a strong advocate for BRT on Geary, but we are also in support of light rail in the future as well. Therefore, we support a BRT project that is "Rail-Ready" or ready for easy conversion to rail when funding for that project can be secured. We also support aggressively pursuing rail along the Geary Corridor.

Rescue Muni's Strategy for Geary Corridor Transit Improvements - A Phased Approach

Due to budgetary concerns at all levels of government, Rescue Muni unfortunately has come to the conclusion that constructing a light-rail project straight away is not possible at this time, though desirable. A few years back San Francisco prioritized the 3rd Street Corridor (including the Central Subway) over Geary, North Beach and Van Ness corridors for new light-rail service. Unfortunately, since that decision, federal and state funds have become more scarce. Now there is only enough money to finish the 3rd St. Corridor light-rail project with no more money for other light-rail projects for a decade or more.

Transfer

The newsletter of RESCUE MUNI

Winter 2005 - No. 21

Editor: Dan Krause

Designers: Dan Krause, Andrew Sullivan

Contributing Writers: Daniel Murphy, Andrew Sullivan, Dan Krause

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

Hotline: **415-273-1558**

www.rescuemuni.org
transitl@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. You can also join online at www.rescuemuni.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Muni lines you ride: _____

riders in your household: _____

I would like to volunteer! Y N

Membership category: _____

___ \$5 Student / Limited Income

___ \$15 Basic

___ \$40 Sustaining

___ \$100 Contributing

___ Other: \$ _____

Rescue Muni may from time to time publish membership lists *with names only*. May we publish your name only as a member? Y N

Signature: _____

Steering Committee

Chair: Andrew Sullivan

Vice-Chair: Daniel Murphy

Other Members: Eric Carlson, Joan Downey, Dan Krause, Richard Mlynarik, David Pilpel, Howard Strassner, David Vasquez

661-8786, ruthow@juno.com)

Executive Committee

Chair: Andrew Sullivan (acting)

Vice-Chair: Richard Mlynarik

Membership Sec'y: Daniel Murphy
Recording Sec'y: Howard Strassner
Corresponding Sec'y: Eric Carlson
Treasurer: Dan Krause

Coordinators: David Pilpel, Andrew Sullivan, Dan Krause, David Vasquez

Service Expansion Committee:
Discusses ways Muni can add service. Meets first Wednesday of each month at SPUR, 6:30 PM; see calendar at left or contact the chair. (chair: Eric Carlson, 415-863-5578, ericrescue@yahoo.com)

Other Rescue Muni Initiatives
Membership (coordinator: Daniel Murphy, 665-4074, daniel@well.com)
Surveys - Coordinator needed! (interim coordinator: Andrew Sullivan, survey@rescuemuni.org)

Standing Committees

Muni Metro: Addresses scheduling and reliability of Muni's light rail lines. Meets second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m., at SPUR, 312 Sutter, 5th floor (chair: Howard Strassner, 415-

Form a committee! 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, Rescue Muni's policy-making body.

RESCUE MUNI Calendar

Mark your calendar now for these events! Updates are on www.rescuemuni.org.

date	event	location
JANUARY 2005		
1/27, 6:00PM	TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
FEBRUARY 2005		
2/1, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
2/2, 6:30PM	RM Service Expansion Committee	SPUR, 5th Floor
2/3, 5:30PM	MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street 5th Floor
2/14,	RM STEERING COMMITTEE CANCELLED FOR VALENTINE'S DAY	
2/15, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
2/16, 6:00PM	General Membership Meeting	SPUR, Rm 402
2/24, 6:00PM	TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
MARCH 2005		
3/1, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
3/2, 6:30PM	RM Service Expansion Committee	SPUR, 5th Floor
3/3, 5:30PM	MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street, 5th Floor
3/14, 6:00PM	RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR, 5th Floor
3/15, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
TBA, 6:00PM	TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
APRIL 2005		
4/1, Rescue Muni's Riders' Survey Begins - Watch for forms in the mail!		
4/5, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
4/6, 6:30PM	RM Service Expansion Committee	SPUR, 5th Floor
4/7, 5:30PM	MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street, 5th Floor
4/11, 6:00PM	RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR, 5th Floor
4/19, 4:00PM	Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
TBA, 6:00PM	TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
4/30, Rescue Muni's Riders' Survey ends.		

NOTE: All dates and times for meetings are subject to change. Check Muni and Rescue Muni websites for confirmation of schedules.

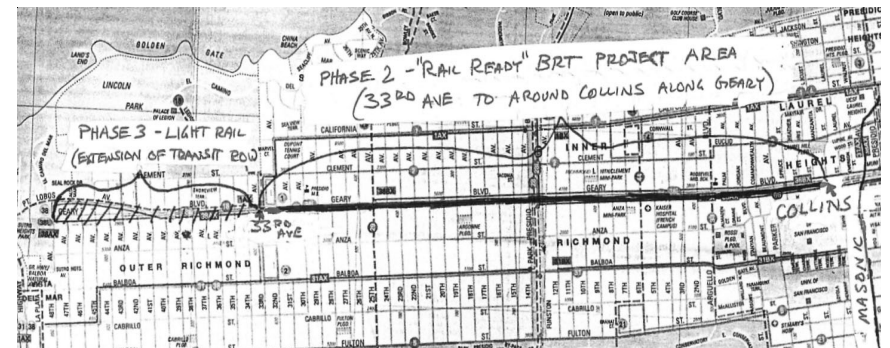
NOTE: Rescue Muni's Metro Committee is currently not meeting but will likely resume in the near future. Check the web site at www.rescuemuni.org for updates.

With decisions of the past and current funding constraints, the only way to get improvements to the Geary Corridor in a reasonable time is to develop a multi-phased approach. Rescue Muni's Steering Committee has recently approved a proposal for a three-phase upgrade program done in segments of the Corridor. Phase 1 will take place on Geary and O'Farrell along the Inner Geary segment (Van Ness to Market St.). Note the Geary Corridor includes Post, Geary and O'Farrell streets along the Inner Geary segment. Phase 2 will take place on Geary Blvd. between 33rd Ave. and around Collins (just west of Masonic). Phase 3 will run under Post St. from Montgomery to Van Ness and then cut

over to Geary and continue to around Collins. Exclusive transit lanes will also be extended from 33rd west to the end of the line.

Phase 1 - Inner Geary Transit Preferential Streets (TPS) Improvements to Existing Bus Lanes

This TPS project is already being planned by Muni and is close to completing the approvals process. The project will speed bus service along Geary & O'Farrell by widening the existing transit lane, building bus bulbs, adding right-turn pocket lanes for autos and eliminating some stops that are very close together. We anticipate the completion of this project (continue on following page)



PHASE 2 PROJECT AREA & WESTERN SEGMENT OF PHASE 3



PHASE 3 PROJECT AREA (SEGMENT FROM MASONIC AREA TO MONTGOMERY STATION)

sometime in the first half of 2005. Please see the article by Andrew Sullivan in September's issue of the Transfer and Daniel Murphy's article on Page 15 of this issue for more details.

Phase 2 - Outer Geary "Rail-Ready" BRT

Rescue Muni is advocating for a "Rail-Ready" BRT project along the 2.6 mile stretch of Geary Blvd. from 33rd to around Collins (just west of Masonic). This segment of Geary is being targeted due to high-level of cross traffic and congestion. A longer segment is not realistic for this phase because of funding constraints.

This project will upgrade the Corridor to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, a higher level of improvement compared

to the Transit Preferential Streets (TPS) project taking place in the Inner Geary. In addition, Rescue Muni is deeply committed to the concept of "Rail-Ready" BRT, which allows for an efficient conversion to light rail with minimal disruption to the street or to existing transit service. The philosophy being, tear up Geary only once. It will also be cheaper because there is no need to demolish the existing BRT system and start over - instead, Muni would make small changes to the existing infrastructure. Rescue Muni has a goal to complete the BRT project no later than 2010.

Elements of a "Rail-Ready" Geary BRT Project

1) Continuous exclusive transit lanes along the ENTIRE 2.6 mile segment. With the goal of converting

IMAGE OF HOW BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) WILL OPERATE IN EXCLUSIVE TRANSIT LANES ALONG GEARY BLVD.



Take Part in Contest to Redesign Rescue Muni's T-Shirt!

It is time for a new T-Shirt design. We love our current "Don't Be Late" T-shirts but we feel it is time for a change. We are asking any interested members to help in designing the new T-shirt as part of a design contest. We will keep our same logo, but all other design elements are up for grabs.

If your design is chosen or partially incorporated into the new design, you will win a free t-shirt as well as get honored in our newsletter.

Please send images of your design via a pdf file to [dankrause](mailto:dankrause@rescuemuni.org)

@rescuemuni.org or mail in your design to: Rescue Muni, P.O. Box 190966, San Francisco, CA 94119-0966.

Send an e-mail to address above or leave a message on our voice mail at 415-273-1558 if you have any questions.

Please send in no later than March 31st, 2005.

Good Luck!

Central Subway Update

(continue from page 15)

to three. Instead of having stations at Market and Post/Stockton, one station would be placed at O'Farrell/Stockton. Muni officials are suggesting that this station will be adequate to access both Union Square and the Powell St. Station due to the depth of the station platform. Deep stations require people to ascend up very long escalators, covering significant distances. With long escalators going both north and south from the station platform, people will be delivered to Powell St. on the southbound escalator and to Union Square on the northbound escalator. The other

benefit of eliminating a station is further cost savings.

If Muni decides to pursue a change in alignment to 4th St., a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Statement will be required. This study will delay the project by roughly one year. Rescue Muni members need to stay active in this process to make sure the changes we are advocating for actually happen. If you would like to get involved, please attend a Service Expansion Committee meeting, which are usually held the first Wednesday of each month.

November '04 Elections: Rescue Muni Wins and Losses

By Daniel Murphy

In the political arena, November's election represented a mix of wins and losses for Rescue Muni. Four of six Rescue Muni-supported candidates won seats on the Board of Supervisors. RM-backed candidates Jake McGoldrick, Aaron Peskin, Sean Elsbernd, and Tom Ammiano all won their races; Andrew Sullivan lost to Ross Mirkarimi in District 5, and Rebecca Silverberg lost to Gerardo Sandoval in District 11. Rescue Muni

made no endorsement in District 2. BART Director Tom Radulovich, endorsed by Rescue Muni for the third time, won re-election unopposed.

Many Rescue Muni members contributed to or volunteered for the Sullivan campaign; on behalf of Rescue Muni, Andrew pledged to work closely with Supervisor-elect Mirkarimi in promoting better mass transit in San Francisco.

Join The New Membership and Fundraising Committee

By Andrew Sullivan

At the last Steering Committee meeting on January 10th, it was decided to form a **Membership and Fundraising Committee**. The purpose of this committee will be to enlarge Rescue Muni's membership and to raise additional funds so we have the resources to expand the activities of the organization.

In the coming years, Rescue Muni is planning a very ambitious agenda, including advocacy for Geary BRT and Rail, numerous other BRT/TPS projects around San Francisco, as well as continuing our annual Rider's Survey and the monitoring of the day-to-day of Muni operations. To be effective in accomplishing all these priorities, Rescue Muni's Steering Committee is charging the new committee with the

task of raising the funds necessary to hire Dan Krause on as a half-time Managing Director. Currently, Dan is working 15 hours a month for the organization. By bring him on for 20 hours a week, Rescue Muni will have the resources to lobby more effectively for our priorities as well as reach out to the public much more extensively.

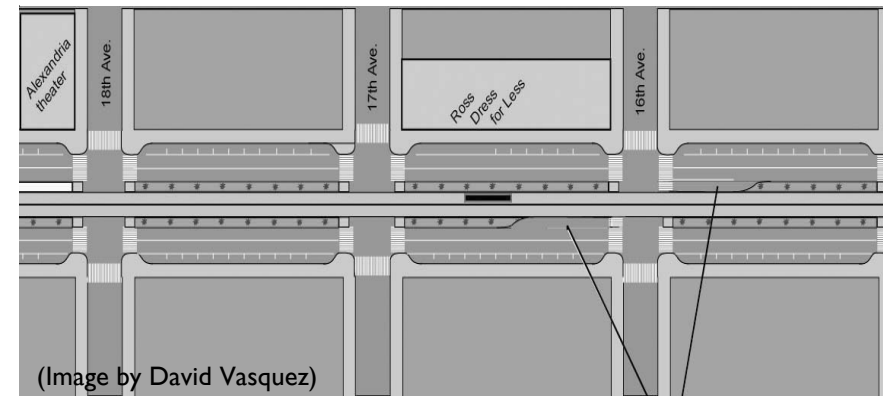
We need your help! If you are interested in helping Rescue Muni expand its membership and raise funds, please attend a Membership and Fundraising Committee Meeting. To start off, we will be meeting on the 4th Tuesday of every month, with our 1st meeting being Tuesday, January 25th at 6:30 pm. We will meet at 312 Sutter St., 5th floor at the SPUR offices.

to light rail in the near future, we must maintain complete separation of transit lanes from automobile lanes wherever BRT construction takes place. If we construct mix flow lanes (cars and buses sharing the same lane) on any blocks where BRT is constructed, a complete re-construction will be required for conversion to rail or there might be the temptation to run trains in mix flow. We are categorically opposed to running BRT or light rail in mixed flow because of detrimental effect on reliability and speed. We don't want a repeat of the 3rd Street Light Rail Project, where Muni is constructing 10 blocks of mixed-flow lanes right in the heart of the Bayview Commercial core. Muni will regret this decision when reliability on their brand new rail line is poor because trains will be stuck in heavy automobile traffic. To create the two exclusive bus-only lanes required for "Rail-Ready" BRT,

the elimination of one lane of automobile traffic in each direction is necessary as well as the elimination of angled parking on certain blocks. Automobile users will also benefit because most buses will be removed from car lanes, reducing traffic and other bus-auto conflicts caused by buses pulling in and out of stations and hogging two lanes at times because they are too wide.

2) Close access to cross traffic on lightly-used roads that currently cross through Geary. Currently there are a high number of intersections with cross traffic along Geary between 33th and Masonic. By blocking traffic from crossing Geary on selected streets, interference to transit vehicles will be reduced, improving speed and reliability.

(continued on following page)



(Image by David Vasquez)

Left turn lanes

- Left turn lanes substitute for landscaping

STREET LAYOUT FOR "RAIL-READY" BRT ALLOWS FOR TWO EXCLUSIVE TRANSIT LANES, TWO AUTO LANES IN EACH DIRECTION & PARALLEL PARKING ON BOTH SIDES OF GEARY.

3) Construct the concrete bed of the transit lanes with enough strength for Light Rail Vehicles (LRV). A “Rail-Ready” BRT project demands we pour a concrete substrate that can support full rail operations. Otherwise when we convert to rail, we will have to stop bus service for several years, jackhammer the bus lanes and redo the bed of the road to support rail. Not only would this be immensely more expensive, it would throw buses back into mixed flow traffic for several years. In other words it would be a complete mess.

4) Put the rails in now! Another requirement of “Rail-Ready” BRT is to lay the rails now. It is our understanding that rails can sit for many years without harm to their functionality. And when it comes to rapid transit projects, the rails aren’t the main cost of the project. Again, if we don’t put rails in now, the bus lanes will have to be torn out and reconstructed, creating a mess.

5) Construct stations with side platforms as oppose to center platforms. The main benefit of stations with side-platforms for BRT is we can use standard buses with right-side doors. If we construct center platforms, either buses have to run contra-flow to automobile traffic creating safety issues or we have to order special buses with left side doors, driving up the cost of the Phase 2 project. With an opening date of 2010 in Rescue Muni’s plan, we envision utilizing existing buses for a couple of years, until Muni’s scheduled replacement of the buses takes place in 2012. If Muni has to buy buses two

years early, they have to use local funds for the purchase without help from other funding sources. Side platforms also allows for two landscaped medians in the street which creates a more distinct and separate transit right-of-way from auto traffic as well as creating a more pleasant urban design. These two medians can then give way for left turn lanes for cars and station platforms.

6) Include station amenities such as quality shelters and real time information systems. Technology that allows people to know when the next bus is coming by displaying GPS information at the station and on the internet and mobile phones will encourage additional ridership. Comfortable stations that shelter people from the wind and noise of auto traffic will also encourage ridership.

Phase 3 – Convert Entire Geary Corridor to Light Rail

Converting the Geary Corridor to light rail will begin by constructing a subway tunnel under Post St. (Van Ness to Market) over a number of years while maintaining BRT service in Outer Geary and enhanced bus service along Geary and O’Farrell streets along the Inner Geary. See article in the September 2004 issue of *Transfer* titled “Rescue Muni’s Vision – Central Subway and Geary Rail” for a detailed description. Simultaneous to subway construction, Outer Geary grade separations will be constructed at key intersections, especially between Masonic and Laguna. As completion of the tunnel and grade separations nears, overhead electric wires suitable

(continue on following page 8)

not as reliable as those from previous years. Rescue Muni needs your help in 2005 to make the survey more accurate and useful for Muni riders and

service planners! Please email us at transitl@rescuemuni.org if you’d like to participate in 2005.

Results By Line

(Note: Fewer lines are listed than in previous years because of the lower response rate this year. We need you to help reverse this trend in 2005!)

Route	Total Data Pts.	% Late	Change in % late from '03	Late-ness Grade	Avg. Wait Time	Crowd Score	% Clean (Clean Grade)
I	39	13%	-30%	B	0:05	3.51	92% (A)
5	105	10%	-6.1%	A	0:03	2.73	90% (A)
6	21	5%	-8.7%	A	0:05	1.58	100% (A)
7	20	1%	-20.9%	A	0:05	2.70	100% (A)
14	86	30%	+14.8%	D	0:07	3.15	66% (D)
19	15	19%	+11.6%	B	0:09	2.80	60% (D)
21	73	19%	+4.0%	B	0:05	3.13	77% (C)
22	25	12%	+0.1%	B	0:04	3.10	79% (C)
24	39	16%	-5.1%	B	0:06	2.61	52% (F)
26	19	14%	-7.0%	B	0:16	2.00	50% (F)
30	15	4%	-27.9%	A	0:03	1.89	78% (C)
33	29	10%	-1.5%	B	0:05	1.78	56% (F)
37	38	5%	-2.6%	A	0:07	2.21	88% (B)
38	15	7%	0.0%	A	0:03	3.38	64% (D)
38L	12	25%	+25.0%	C	0:04	2.83	92% (A)
43	47	15%	-6.6%	B	0:11	2.17	60% (D)
44	17	18%	+2.3%	B	0:10	2.76	79% (C)
45	19	9%	+3.8%	A	0:09	2.33	67% (D)
47	59	9%	+3.2%	A	0:04	2.97	81% (B)
48	15	13%	+13.3%	B	0:09	2.21	92% (A)
49	36	8%	+7.6%	A	0:04	2.83	65% (D)
71	18	9%	+3.0%	A	0:05	2.92	92% (A)
F	29	24%	-1.7%	C	0:08	2.59	100% (A)
J	45	18%	-0.4%	B	0:07	2.71	96% (A)
JKLMN	34	3%	-10.0%	A	0:01	2.94	91% (A)
K	31	23%	+22.6%	C	0:07	2.48	61% (D)
KLM	104	8%	-14.1%	A	0:02	3.07	70% (C)
L	41	5%	-1.8%	A	0:05	3.23	64% (D)
N	92	9%	-3.3%	A	0:04	3.05	88% (B)
Grand Total	1234	12.29%	-1.5%	B	0:05	2.81	79% (C)

2004 Muni Riders' Survey Results-Part II

Compiled by Andrew Sullivan

In April 2004, Rescue Muni conducted its annual survey of Municipal Railway service reliability. This survey is done from the rider's perspective and attempts to show the chances that an individual rider will be delayed or riding an overcrowded or dirty bus or streetcar. In 2004, Muni continued along the path of improvement that began in 1999, reducing delays over 2003 substantially.

In 2004, volunteers submitted data for 1234 rides on Muni during the month of April. (1009 were taken by volunteers riding the bus; the remaining were vehicles observed going by a fixed point by volunteers.) Volunteers also recorded direction, destination, time of arrival, crowding, and cleanliness.

Our volunteers found that riders were delayed 12.3% of the time, a significant improvement over last year's score of 13.8% delayed, and continuing to reflect a major improvement over the worst years of 1997-99. Since the "Metro Meltdown" year of 1998, delays have been cut by well over half. As a percentage of advertised headway, waiting time also declined to 62% of posted frequency; this also reflects improved reliability. This year, service improved over 2003 for most modes (except diesel and limited-stop), but the low number of total responses may make this a less reliable figure.

Not all metrics improved. Systemwide cleanliness worsened this year from 84% to 79% clean, with diesel, electric, and light rail vehicles all reported dirty

more often. Average crowding also worsened for the second straight year, with an average crowding level of 2.8 on a scale of 1 to 5, up from 2.7 last year.

The best lines in this year's survey were the 7-Haight, JKLMN streetcar (from Embarcadero to Van Ness), 30-Stockton, 6-Parnassus, and 37-Corbett. All of these got "A" grades with fewer than 10% of riders delayed. In all, 13 lines with sufficient data (min. 15 responses) were graded "A."

Lines that performed poorly this year included the 14-Mission, graded "D" with 30% of riders delayed, and the 38L-Geary Limited, graded "C" with 25% of riders delayed. Other lines that did poorly included the F-Market historic streetcar, and K-Ingleside, both graded "C." It is notable that many fewer lines were graded poorly this year than in previous years. Most improved in 2004 was the I-California, which was the least improved in 2003.

This year's survey showed another improvement in service reliability. Muni is to be commended for continuing to reduce delays. Problems with cleanliness and crowding are continuing to get worse, however - this is probably due to budget cuts and service reductions, but it is important that Muni management keep the focus on maintaining a quality customer experience.

It's also worth noting that there was a sharp decline in participation in this year's survey. As a result, the data are



EXISTING STREET CONFIGURATION APPROACHING MASONIC HILL AUTO TUNNEL.

A VISION OF A RECONFIGURED MASONIC HILL. TRAINS WOULD OCCUPY THE CURRENT AUTO TUNNEL BY MOVING CARS TO THE SURFACE BY DECKING OVER AND NARROWING THE ENTRANCES TO TUNNEL.

(Image by David Vasquez)

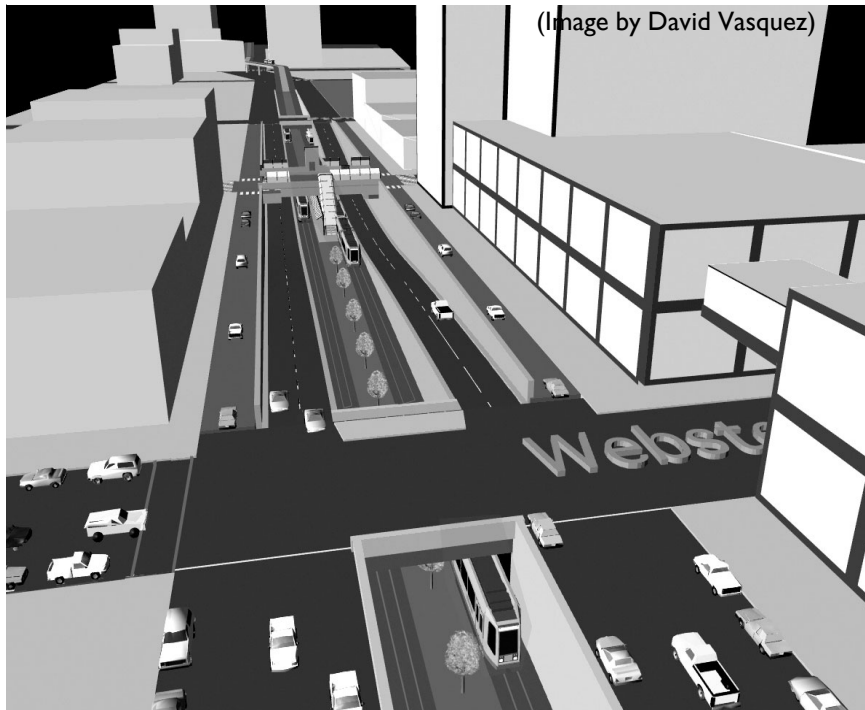


for light-rail vehicles will be installed along the entire length of the Corridor. Once the tunnel and electric wires are complete, conversion to light rail will be relatively fast. Some small modifications may be needed to Outer Geary, but the large infrastructure work will have already been completed during construction of the Rail-Ready BRT phase. The goal will be to have minimum disruption of rapid-transit service during the conversion process. Rescue Muni has a goal of completing the light-rail project by 2020.

Elements of a Geary Corridor Light-Rail Project

1) Take over the Masonic auto tunnel for Light Rail. We are proposing to reconfigure the Masonic/Geary intersection to allow for light-

rail vehicles to be the sole occupant of the tunnel under Geary and Masonic. To accomplish this, we are advocating for a design which adds two auto lanes at the street level by decking over the entrances to the tunnel, causing them to narrow so that just enough space remains for light-rail vehicles to enter the tunnel in both directions. This scenario will allow for four auto lanes of through traffic at the surface on the west side of the tunnel and potentially six auto lanes on the east side of the tunnel at rush hour (see before & after images on page 7). Rescue Muni is totally committed to keeping transit lanes grade separated at this intersection; otherwise service will be slow and unreliable. A viaduct over the Masonic/Geary intersection is not



FILLMORE TRENCH EXTENSION FOR TRANSIT UNDER WEBSTER

people. A \$100 per parcel tax could bring in \$1.8 million annually. It's possible to base parcel taxes on the size of a parcel, but not on the value of the parcel, so some might argue that this constitutes a somewhat regressive tax, falling disproportionately on small property owners and, possibly, renters.

Local gasoline tax. State law permits a local tax of 1¢ per gallon of gas, but limits its use to the construction and maintenance of public transit guideways, not operating costs. Such a tax would raise \$2 million per year and require a two-thirds vote of the people. One potential problem with such a tax is that some people might simply choose to buy gas in San Mateo County, thus creating some additional traffic and pollution, and cutting into San Francisco's gas tax revenue.

Local vehicle environmental impact fee. A fee charged against registered vehicles in San Francisco would require authorization from the state legislature and the governor, and would take at least two years to implement. How much money such a fee could raise is still unknown, and would depend both on how much was authorized by the state and how lawmakers split the revenue between MTA and the City.

Discontinuing Fast Pass use on BART. Currently, Muni Fast Passes are good on BART for trips that begin

and end within San Francisco; Muni reimburses BART 87¢ for each Fast Pass ride. Ending this practice would save Muni about \$9 million per year, but that would be offset in two ways: first, some Fast Pass users would stop buying passes and pay BART directly for their ride; second, Muni might have to provide new service, particularly in the Mission corridor, to people who switched from BART to Muni. Currently, the marginal cost of new Muni service is well above 87¢ per ride. Rescue Muni opposes ending Fast Pass use on BART, and believes the current policy is good for Muni riders (because it provides them more choices), for Muni (because it's a relatively inexpensive way to provide service), and for BART (because many commuters ride trains that are less than full, allowing BART to collect revenue without the cost of additional service).

While not all of these proposals are equally good or equally viable, this year MTA is making a much greater effort than before to expand the debate over revenue and present options other than the usual litany of fare increases and service cuts. The projected deficit for the next eighteen months is so large that it's very likely MTA will put forward a package containing a mix of fare increases, service cuts, and other revenue options. Rescue Muni will fight to ensure that other revenue options are maximized before any fare increases or service cuts are considered.

Tough Budget Year Ahead for Muni

By Daniel Murphy

The defeat of two tax measures on the November ballot—Propositions J and K—along with soaring health care and retirement costs mean that Muni is facing a budget deficit of between \$49 million and \$70 million over the next eighteen months. Fare increases and service reductions are among the options contemplated for closing this unusually wide gap.

This year, however, the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), which runs both Muni and the Department of Parking and Traffic, included other options in their budget presentation to the MTA Board. These include:

Parking taxes. Right now, the tax on commercial parking spaces is 25%; an increase to 35% could raise an additional \$8.6 million per year, half of which would go to Muni. This would require a two-thirds vote of the people, but other cities have voted to raise parking taxes to pay for transit, and revenue measures for transit have fared well in the last several election cycles, so this seems viable. The next scheduled election is November 2005, however, meaning the change couldn't go into effect until early 2006.

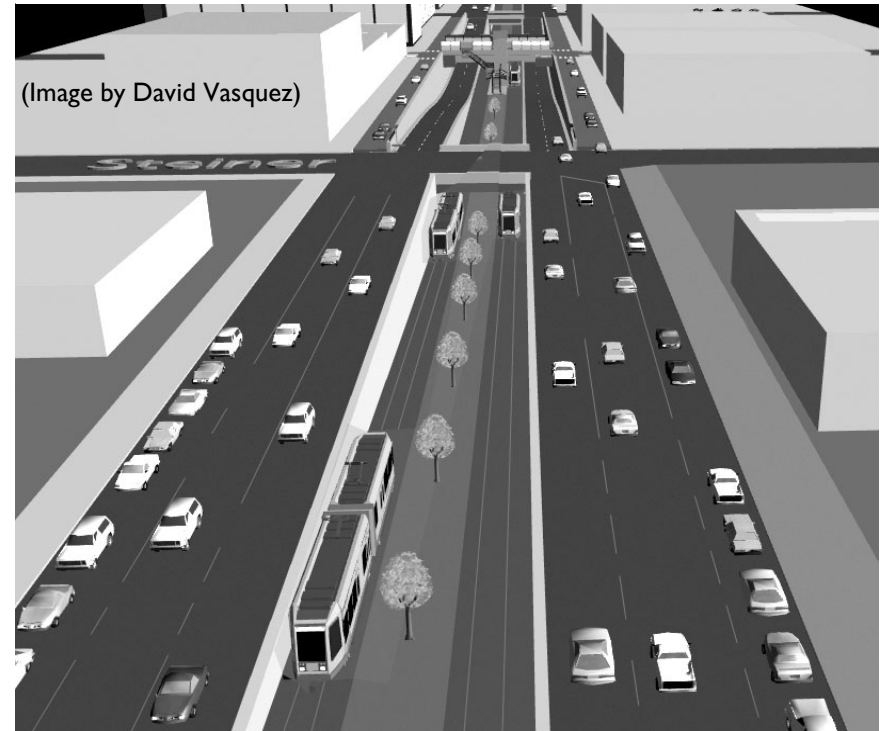
Parking meter increases. Meter rate increases would require only a vote of the Board of Supervisors, and could go into effect a few months after approval. MTA estimates that an increase could bring in \$2-4 million annually. The MTA Citizens Advisory

Council also recommended expanding meter hours in selected locations.

Parking fine increases. Parking fine increases are another revenue measure which requires only a vote of the Board of Supervisors, and could raise an additional \$2-10 million per year, half of which would effectively go to the MTA. One problem with fine increases is that, in the long run, they change behavior—far fewer people violate the law when the fines get sufficiently steep—so it's difficult to raise fines in way that maximizes revenue. But many parking offenses—particularly sidewalk and bus stop parking—interfere with Muni riders and should, for that alone, be penalized heavily.

Parking garage rate increases. The MTA Board can raise parking garage rates by itself, and implementation would take just a few months. Market rates limit how high parking garage rates can go, however, since the city competes with private garages which can adjust their rates to meet market demand. Rescue Muni supports raising all garage rates to market level, however, and it's possible the market rate would increase if the voters also approve a higher parking tax, some of which would be passed on to private garage customers.

Parcel tax. Because of state law, raising property taxes is difficult, but a flat parcel tax for transit could be approved by a two-thirds vote of the



(Image by David Vasquez)

FILLMORE TRENCH EXTENSION FOR TRANSIT UNDER STEINER

desirable because of urban design issues and certain strong opposition from residents and merchants in the area.

2) Construct other key grade separation projects at the following streets that intersect Geary:

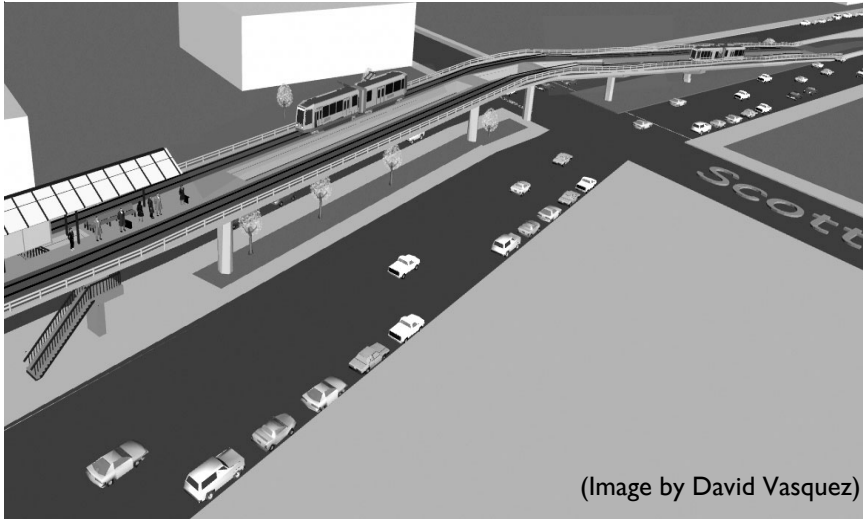
–Webster, Fillmore & Steiner (by extending the center portion of the trench under Fillmore for light-rail vehicles, allowing them to go under Webster to the east and Steiner to the west).

–Scott & Divisadero (by constructing a short viaduct over the two streets - see images on page 10).

–Park Presidio (most likely by dipping Park Presidio under Geary).

There is no point in investing large sums of money in rapid transit projects if they are not very “rapid.” Grade separations at congested intersections can really speed up service. If we complete the grade separations described above as well as closing the Baker/Geary intersection, we lay the groundwork for a faster light-rail line, which will encounter no cross traffic whatsoever all the way from the terminal station at Post and Montgomery to a few blocks west of Masonic. In addition, the trains won't be slowed at the intersection of Geary and Park Presidio.

3) Construct stations with side platforms as oppose to center platforms. With an upgrade to rail, (continued on following page)



(Image by David Vasquez)

A SHORT VIADUCT OVER SCOTT AND DIVISADERO ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR TRAINS TO CROSS TWO BUSY INTERSECTIONS



(Image by David Vasquez)

additional stations will be constructed to the Outer Geary. These stations should have side platforms to match the BRT stations built in Phase 2. The exception to this rule are grade-separated stations, where center platforms will be required because of spatial constraints related to stairs, elevators, and escalators. Divisadero and Fillmore stations are likely to have center platforms.

Next Steps

The Current Situation

Muni and the San Francisco County Transportation (SFCTA) are currently planning to construct Inner Geary TPS in 2005 and Outer Geary BRT within the next five to seven years. Currently,

they are not seriously planning to implement light-rail service. In addition, it is not clear what type of BRT project we are going to get because the SFCTA is heavily involved in the conceptual design of the BRT project. There may be philosophical differences between Muni and the SFCTA on how to design and construct BRT along Geary. Rescue Muni is very concerned about the potential to get a mediocre BRT project that is not “Rail-Ready”, or something done on the cheap.

The SFCTA, not Muni, is currently running a Geary Corridor Citizen’s Advisory Committee and producing a Geary Corridor Study. The Citizen’s

Supervisors Vote to Water Down Plan for Improvements to Inner Geary

By Daniel Murphy

Muni’s plans to speed up the 38-Geary line hit a major snag in December when supervisors voted to gut a key element of the plan: re-spacing stops along Geary and O’Farrell streets east of Van Ness. Despite support for the plan from Rescue Muni, the Bicycle Coalition, Transportation for a Livable City, and other pro-transit groups, the supervisors made funding for the plan contingent on Muni giving up part of the respacing plan. The vote, on an amendment from Supervisor Chris Daly, was 9-1, with **Supervisor Sean Elsbernd casting the lone vote on behalf of Muni riders and we thank him for that.**

Currently bus stops in the inner Geary corridor are spaced much closer together than is normal for Muni. At one point, there are even two stops on one short block. These force buses to slow down, pull into the bus zone, open the doors, and load and unload passengers at each stop. Muni’s proposal would space the stops about two blocks apart in each direction, well within the standard citywide. Rescue Muni supports the plan and argues that it provides faster and more reliable

service, not just for residents in the outer Geary corridor, but for Tenderloin residents as well.

Unfortunately, as a result of the Board of Supervisors’ vote, two bus stops that were to be eliminated in Muni’s plan will now remain. This fact will reduce effectiveness of the project by reducing time savings and reliability.

Rescue Muni chair Andrew Sullivan called the vote “just appalling” and said “Having the Board of Supervisors debate the specific location of stops—arbitrarily restoring and removing some—is exactly what Proposition E was intended to avoid. It’s a shame to see the supervisors leverage their control over money approved by the voters to kill good, low-cost, pro-transit planning initiatives from Muni.” He thanked Supervisor Elsbernd for having the guts to stand up for Muni riders.

Supervisors didn’t even bother to vote on a compromise proposal, backed by Supervisor Jake McGoldrick, which would have done less damage to Muni’s plan.

Central Subway Update

By Dan Krause

Rescue Muni’s ongoing efforts to convince Muni officials to re-think how to construct the Central Subway appears to be making progress. Muni officials have recently presented a new option for the alignment of the Central

Subway, which would move the current alignment from 3rd St. to 4th St., as advocated for by Rescue Muni. Under this option, Muni would also eliminate one station, bring the total
(continued on page 21)

the system we will need in the coming decades.

There are three main ways to raise additional local money for Geary as well as other capital transit expansion projects:

1) General Obligation Bonds – San Francisco residents frequently have passed local bonds for capital projects of all kinds such as Laguna Honda. San Francisco currently has some room to increase its bond debt and remain financially healthy. Rescue Muni is currently studying two bond proposals that could be allocated for transit improvements citywide, with the centerpiece of both being the Geary Rapid Transit Corridor. The first bond would be put on the ballot in the near future and provide funds for Phase 2 (BRT) and studies for Phase 3 (light rail) and the second bond would be placed on the ballot in 5-8 years and provide funds for the construction of Phase 3 (light rail).

2) Joint Development at the Presidio Maintenance Yard – This strategy involves taking Muni-owned land and working with a developer to construct a project there. Revenues from the sale or lease of the land or air rights can go to Muni, which can then use the money for light-rail work and operations along Geary. Due to the long lead time of such development, funds raised will go to Phase 3 (light rail), not BRT. Rescue Muni sees the Presidio yard at Masonic and Geary as a huge opportunity for joint development by selling the air rights of the site to construct a development over the existing bus yard while

continuing operations there. We would like to see this process begin immediately by having Muni and the Geary Corridor Citizen's Advisory Committee start planning for development of this site.

3) Redevelopment Tax-Increment Funding at the Masonic and Geary Area – Money can also be raised to fund a project by designating a Redevelopment Area. After the redevelopment as taken place, any additional property tax raised above today's current level can be applied directly to projects within the Project Area rather than going the City's general fund. These funds pay back bonds that are issued for construction. This process is called tax-increment financing. We see a huge opportunity around the Masonic and Geary intersection to intensify land-uses, especially the moribund shopping center and the Presidio Maintenance Yard sites just to the South and North of Geary respectively. Again, the money raised would be applied only to light rail, not BRT.

Conclusion

A significant upgrade of transit for the Geary Corridor is long overdue. Public officials have put it off before and it is likely that they will only pursue minor improvements this time around unless we the citizens demand higher standards. Yes it will take longer and cost more money. But doesn't one of the busy transit corridors in the entire nation deserve a major investment? Of course it does and now is the time to begin.

Advisory Committee will be creating recommendations on how to proceed with the development of a BRT (and potentially light rail) project along Outer Geary. After taking input from the community via this Citizen's Advisory Committee, the SFCTA will produce the Geary Corridor Study, which will likely produce the preferred project alternatives for inclusion in a future Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Phase 2 work only.

Proposal to Implement and Fund Rescue Muni's Vision for Geary

As described above, Rescue Muni has a much more ambitious agenda for the Corridor. Rescue Muni is very concerned about how the SFCTA and Muni are going about planning for Bus Rapid Transit along Geary and certainly are distressed that light rail has dropped out of all planning efforts. How can we achieve Rescue Muni's bold vision to construct both "Rail-Ready" BRT and light rail for the Geary Corridor in light of the current planning efforts and the fiscally constrained times we live in?

Below is a proposal for funding Rescue Muni's vision for Geary Rapid Transit. The this proposal has NOT yet been approved by the Rescue Muni Steering Committee, but it will be brought before the Service Expansion and Steering Committees in the near future. We need YOUR input on what we should ultimately recommend to Muni and the SFCTA on financing this crucial project.

Strong Vision

The reason to have a BRT phase is because we want faster and more re-

liable service as soon as possible, well before light rail can be completed. Therefore, we must avoid the typical federal funding process, which is very long and laborious. If we went through the federal funding process, the fastest we could have BRT would be 2015. Therefore, we strongly encourage the usage of Proposition K funds immediately to produce all environmental and engineering studies for the project. Construction of BRT should utilize both Proposition K BRT funds and bond money (if approved by voters). This strategy should get us a completed project by 2010. Other miscellaneous sources of funds should be explored regionally. State funding should be explored but not counted on due to the current budget crisis, but this could improve in a couple of years or so. There is a slight possibility of obtaining a federal earmark, but we don't to slow the project down, so this option is highly unlikely.

Begin Official Federal Process Now for Geary Corridor Light Rail

A significant level of federal funding will be required to construct light rail along the Geary Corridor. To receive this funding, projects have to follow a federal process. We are strongly advocating that the current planning going on at the Geary Corridor Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) and the SFCTA should result in the commencement of this federal process, which requires the following studies be undertaken: 1) Systems Planning Study; 2) Corridor Study; 3) Alternate Analysis Study; 4) Environmental Impact Report/

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Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS); 5) Preliminary Engineering.

Fortunately, Muni has a head start on this process because of previous studies. Muni has done much systems planning work which can be used in producing a "Systems Planning Study." Both the required "Corridor Study" and Alternate Analysis Study" can utilize detailed information from large study Muni produced named the "Geary Corridor System Planning Study", which was completed by Merrill and Associates in 1995. Of course parts the Merrill and Associates report are clearly out of date and need updating.

Muni should quickly produce the first three studies in the process and move onto an EIR/EIS and then Preliminary Engineering without hesitation. Again, funding these studies can be included in a transit bond. However, we urge Muni to begin some of the low-cost studies immediately.

Develop Two Separate Funding Plans & Begin Lobbying for Funds Now

The first step to developing a funding plan is to estimate the costs of the project first. We have done some research on potential costs of both Phases 2 and 3 (BRT and light rail) by extrapolating numbers from other similar transit projects. Please note the following items will have to be priced out in great detail and the numbers represent a ballpark for planning and advocacy purposes. On the revenue side, the numbers for joint development and redevelopment tax-increment financing are very rough and based on extrapolations from other

redevelopment projects such as the Transbay Terminal. In other words, please don't hold us to these numbers. These funding plans should be viewed a potential scenarios only, understanding that the numbers below may vary significantly and that there are other ways to creatively fund these projects.

Funding Scenario #1 – Phase 2: Rail-Ready" Bus Rapid Transit

Estimated (Rough) Costs of Phase 2 – "Rail Ready" BRT

1. \$200M – Construction of 2.6 miles of exclusive transit lanes, including tracks and stations from around Collins (just West of Masonic) to 33rd Ave.
2. TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR GEARY RAIL-READY BRT - \$200M

Funding Scenario for Phase 2 – "Rail Ready" BRT

1. \$50M – Prop K BRT/TPS Category Money
2. \$110M – Local Transit Bond #1
3. \$40M – Misc. Regional/State Sources (MTC Discretionary, Prop. 42, etc.)
4. TOTAL REVENUE PRODUCED BY FUNDING SCENARIO - \$200M

Funding Scenario #2 – Phase 3: Light Rail

Estimated (Rough) Costs of Phase 3 – Conversion of "Rail Ready" BRT to Light-Rail Service

1. \$1B – 1.7 miles of Subway Construction (Portal just West of Laguna to downtown, stub-end terminus station at Montgomery and Post); This cost estimate includes 4 subway stations (Van Ness/Post; Leavenworth/Post; Stockton/Post;

Montgomery/Post), the purchase of light-rail vehicles, the expansion of Metro East and engineering. This lump sum was extrapolated based on the current cost estimates of the Central Subway.

2. \$60M – Masonic/Geary Intersection reconfiguration to allow for BRT to take over the auto tunnel.
3. \$50M – Short viaduct going over Divisadero and Scott streets.
4. \$50M – Extension of trench under Fillmore to allow train to go under Steiner and Webster.
5. \$15M – Widen trench under Fillmore to allow for two auto lanes in each direction (in addition to one frontage lane in each direction).
6. \$50M – Grade separation of Park Presidio under Geary Blvd.
7. \$50M – Overhead electric wires on the Outer Geary portion of the corridor (from Laguna Portal to the ocean).
8. \$100M – Financing Costs (to pay for interest for cash flow shortfalls due to long schedule in receiving all Federal & State contributions).
9. TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR UPGRADE TO LIGHT RAIL FROM "RAIL-READY" BRT - \$1.35 BILLION

Funding Scenario for Phase 3 – Conversion of "Rail Ready" BRT to Light-Rail Service

1. \$25M – Joint Development at Muni's Presidio Maintenance Yard
2. \$75M – Regional Money (Flexible money from the Feds but run through MTC)
3. \$100M – Masonic Area Transit-Oriented Development
4. \$175M – Local Transit Bond #2
5. \$300M – State Funding (assuming a better economy, Prop 42 funds, &

possibly a statewide rail bond for various transit projects statewide)

6. \$675M – Federal New-Starts - 50/50 Matching.
7. TOTAL REVENUE PRODUCED BY FUNDING SCENARIO - \$1.35 BILLION

Description of Funding Sources

Due to underinvestment in transit projects both nationally and at the state level, all proposed projects are in high-level of competition with one another. If we are to be successful in obtaining matching funds from state and federal sources for both Phases 2 and 3, it requires a high level of local funding.

Currently we have very little local funding committed for Muni transit expansion projects after we complete the 3rd Street Light-Rail and the Central Subway. There is only one pot of money that is designated for other transit expansion projects. Proposition K, which passed in November of 2003 set aside \$110M for BRT and TPS (Transit Preferential Streets – things like bus bulbs which enhance regular bus service) projects citywide over the next 30 years. This is a deplorable amount of local money for Muni transit expansion projects for such a long period of time. Most of Proposition K's money for Muni was designated for maintenance and vehicle purchases. While Rescue Muni supports maintaining the system we have before we expand the system, the fact remains that the ½ cent sales tax extension that Proposition K provided was simply not enough money to build

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