

RESCUE MUNI

Transfer

No. 22,
Spring 2005

**LESS PARKING FINE & FEE INCREASES
= MORE MUNI SERVICE CUTS**



The MTA has proposed substantial increases in parking fees and fines to help close a major budget deficit for Muni. The Board of Supervisors needs to approve the proposed increases. If they don't pass, major service cuts like this could occur! See page 3 for details.

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RESCUE MUNI

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

Spring 2005

Transfer

The Newsletter of
RESCUE MUNI

**Muni's Budget
Crisis**

Updates on Geary/Van
Ness BRT, Central Subway
MLK Widening
Book Reviews

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Limited Solutions to Muni's Budget Crisis

Politicians Likely to Support Major Muni Service Cuts Over Increasing Parking Fines and Rates

By **Daniel Murphy**, *Rescue Muni Steering Committee Member*

News that an additional \$9.2 million was available to Muni, thanks to a higher than expected transfer from the city's general fund, set off a feeding frenzy; everyone had an idea how to spend it. Some wanted to use it to forestall the proposed fare increase; others wanted to offset proposed parking fine and fee increases; still others wanted the money used to prevent service cuts. By the end of the day, it seemed like everyone had a plan to spend the money twice over.

This is an extremely tight budget year for Muni. Costs—many of them, like spikes in health insurance and diesel fuel prices, beyond Muni's control—soared and revenues haven't kept pace.

In its budget, Muni proposes to increase fares, raising an additional \$13.1 million, and to increase parking fines, garage rates, and parking meter rates, raising \$30.0 million. They also propose a service cut, saving \$13.5 million. So an additional \$9.2 million won't fully offset any of these.

Muni is under intense pressure from politicians to give back some of the parking fine and meter rate increases, which raise \$7.6 million and \$7.3 million respectively. On May 12th, in response to demands from supervisors for a lower parking fine increase, MTA proposed a compromise by which some parking fines and meter rates would increase by a smaller amount,

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Contributing Writers: 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.

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. **Credit Cards are now accepted!**

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Muni lines you ride:

riders in your household:

I would like to volunteer! Y N

Membership category:

\$5 Student / Limited Income

\$20 Basic

\$50 Sustaining/Household

\$100 Contributing

\$250 Patron

\$500 Transit Champion

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/Executive Committee

Chair: Andrew Sullivan

Vice-Chair: Daniel Murphy

Membership Sec'y: Daniel Murphy

Recording Sec'y: Howard Strassner

Corresponding Sec'y: Eric Carlson

Treasurer: Dan Krause

Other Members: David Pilpel, David Vasquez, Joan Downey, Richard Mlynarik.

Standing Committees

Muni Metro: Currently not meeting.

Please call or e-mail the committee chair, Howard Strassner for schedule of future meetings (415-661-8786, ruthow@juno.com).

Service Expansion:

Discusses ways Muni can add service.

Meets first Wednesday of each month at SPUR, 6:30 PM (see calendar at left) To confirm meeting schedule, please contact committee chair, Dan Krause (415-826-1219 or at dankrause@rescuemuni.org).

Membership/Fundraising:

Active but no set meeting schedule. Contact the committee chair, Daniel Murphy for future meeting times (665-4074, daniel@well.com).

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.

<u>date</u>	<u>event</u>	<u>location</u>
JUNE 2005		
6/1,	6:30PM RM Service Expansion Committee - CANCELLED	
6/2,	5:30PM MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street 5th Floor
6/7,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
6/13,	6:00PM RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR, 5th Floor
6/21,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
6/23,	6:00PM TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
JULY 2005		
7/5,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
7/6,	6:30PM RM Service Expansion Committee - CANCELLED	
7/7,	5:30PM MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street, 5th Floor
7/11,	6:00PM RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR, 5th Floor
7/16,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
7/28,	6:00PM TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor
AUGUST 2005		
8/2,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
8/3,	6:30PM RM Service Expansion Committee	SPUR, 5th Floor
8/4,	5:30PM MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street, 5th Floor
8/8,	6:00PM RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR
8/16,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
TBA General Meeting to be scheduled sometime in August.		
SEPTEMBER 2005		
9/1,	5:30PM MTA Citizens' Advisory Council	1145 Market Street, 5th Floor
9/6,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
9/7,	6:30PM RM Service Expansion Committee	SPUR, 5th Floor
9/12,	6:00PM RM Executive & Steering Committees	SPUR
9/20,	2:00PM Municipal Transportation Agency Board	City Hall, Rm. 400
9/22,	6:00PM TA's Geary Corridor Transit Study CAC	100 Van Ness, 25th Floor

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

raising an additional \$25.4 million from parking rather than \$30.0 million. The rest of the \$9.2 million was applied to keeping owl service at present levels (\$0.8 million), hiring some service critical personnel (\$1.2 million), and filling gaps in service and maintenance in the current fiscal year (\$2.7 million).

Obviously, we'd prefer to see no fare increases and no service cuts, but there's no realistic way to achieve that. Doing so would require raising nearly every parking ticket to \$100; this might be defensible on policy grounds, but given the resistance to a \$40 street cleaning ticket, we cannot imagine local officials signing on to \$100. And there are good reasons to believe such an increase still wouldn't be enough.

Raising taxes is difficult too. Proposition 218 effectively precludes many sources of revenue for Muni, including the oft-proposed Downtown Transit Assessment District. Most proposals for tax increases raise relatively small amounts of revenue—less than \$10 million per year—or face overwhelming obstacles. Most tax increases would require a vote of the people, too, which couldn't happen any sooner than November, meaning a tax increase, if approved, wouldn't be in effect for most of the coming fiscal year, which runs from July 2005 through June 2006. And, of course, there's no guarantee the public would approve such an increase.

Reasonable arguments can be made for preferring fare increases to service cuts or vice versa. But Rescue Muni **strongly** urges supervisors to **approve the proposed parking**

fine and meter rate increases intact, or even to **raise them above levels proposed** by the MTA. Rescue Muni also urges that some of the \$9.2 million be applied to offset deferred maintenance. Maintenance isn't sexy, but it's critical to system reliability to keep vehicles, overhead wires, and so on in good working order.

Muni faces a serious structural deficit which won't be resolved by one-time fixes; it's crucial that the city do as much as possible, in the long run, to shift the cost of parking and driving a private automobile in our city onto those who choose to do so. And Muni should prioritize programs to increase operational efficiency, like Bus Rapid Transit.

Most of all, it's important that this year's budget not be balanced with smoke and mirrors. \$9.2 million isn't \$57 million, and this year's budget demands hard choices. We hope the supervisors will make the right choice, and approve serious increases in parking fines and meter rates. It's time for supervisors who say they support transit to stand up for making automobile users—especially those who break the law—pay their fair share.

TAKE ACTION AND CALL YOUR SUPERVISOR TODAY!

TELL THEM TO **REDUCE CUTS TO SERVICE AND DEFERRED MAINTENANCE WITH THE EXTRA \$9.2M AND NOT TO SUBSIDIZE AUTOMOBILE USAGE ON THE BACKS OF TRANSIT RIDERS.**

2005 Riders' Survey Wraps Up

By *Andrew Sullivan, Chair of Rescue Muni*

Rescue Muni's 2005 Riders' Survey is now completed. Thanks to all the dedicated members who took the time to participate in our annual survey! The survey officially took place in the month of April, but if you have data from first week of May, we will be more than happy to take that as well.

If possible, please submit the results online! It's easy - just go to <http://www.rescuemuni.org/2005survey/form.cgi> and submit your data. Submitting your data online **saves us**

a lot of time in analyzing the results. If you don't have web access, you can submit your data by mailing your results to the address printed on the forms.

Finally, we need volunteers to help us with compiling data. If you have a few hours to help with data entry or analysis, please email us at transit1@rescuemuni.org and let us know how you can help. We hope to publish the results in June. Thanks for your help!

Updates: Central Subway, Geary & Van Ness BRT

By *Daniel Krause, Rescue Muni Steering Committee Member*

Central Subway

As described in the last Transfer, Muni officials are hoping to eliminate one of the four stations originally planned for the Central Subway by consolidating the Market and Post/Stockton stations into one at O'Farrell/Stockton. Rescue Muni is supportive of this move but it does make it more difficult to transfer between a future metro line under Post Street to the Central Subway. Rescue Muni was proposing to have the lines intersect right at Post & Stockton with a very quick transfer. With Muni's stop consolidation, the distance to transfer becomes more cumbersome.

David Vartanoff, member of the Rescue Muni's Service Expansion

Committee, proposed a new design for a junction between the Central Subway and future Geary/Post metro line which would create a two branch Geary/Post line, reducing the importance of the transfer. For one branch, it would no longer be necessary to transfer to a southbound central subway train from the Geary/Post line (the other branch would continue on to a terminal station at Montgomery). If you are transferring from the Geary/Post line and want to go northbound on the Central Subway, you would take the branch that takes you directly to the Stockton/O'Farrell station, walk across the platform and take the next northbound Central Subway train.

to design a dedicated access route to that entrance that itself begins at a locations outside of the Park. "

Following Warren's ruling the CA presented the widening of Martin Luther King (MLK) at 9th and Lincoln to accommodate a four lane road into and out of the park as the solution for a dedicated garage entrance. The outside lanes would be "dedicated" access into and out of the garage but would share the lanes with Muni and bicyclists. The plan calls for eliminating all parking on MLK from Lincoln to the Concourse. Widening roadways and increasing vehicular traffic in Golden Gate Park violates the Golden Gate Park Master Plan.

Ten other options were also formulated in response to Warren's ruling but only the widening MLK option was seriously considered even though the Concourse Authority Board instructed Director Michael Ellzey to prepare two additional options for their consideration. When time came to vote on the options, the Planning Department presented the Concourse Authority with an Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report during the meeting. The directors approved the option with only Commissioner John Rizzo (Cole Valley resident) dissenting after requesting more time to review the document.

One option that many dissenters would have liked to see studied more seriously was the option that eliminates the southern entrance altogether. With the one northern garage entrance, the traffic would be

increased at 10th and Fulton by a small percentage only on Sundays. Since Fulton carries about 1/3 fewer cars than Lincoln and is not a commercial corridor, the added cars would have little impact.

Adding the southern entrance to the park would greatly impact the commercial district south of the Park; make it more dangerous for pedestrians entering the Park; slow down Muni lines 44, 71, N-Judah, 66, and 6; and bring unacceptable levels of traffic into the neighborhood south of the Park. It will also increase traffic IN THE PARK. The City Charter requires that every City agency implement polices that make transit and walking an attractive alternate to driving. The Concourse Authority is ignoring the City's Transit First policy by promoting this plan.

Coalition activists are challenging the approval process on the grounds that further environmental analysis is needed; the presenters of the plan did not adhere to Sunshine Ordinance regulations; and that the process may not move forward without proper CEQA review.

The Rescue Muni board objects to widening MLK and asks for a **solution — one that is does not adversely affect Muni.**

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and (2) take steps to reduce the impact of automobiles in the Park while still providing long-term assurance of safe, reliable and convenient access for visitors to the Park, including its cultural institutions.

“An underground public parking facility within or near the Concourse with a dedicated entrance and exit (or entrances and exits) outside of the Park will enhance such public access. It will also minimize the potential conflict between recreational enthusiasts and automobile traffic within the Park, including John F. Kennedy Drive and abutting roads.”

Prop J passed by a simple majority and required that no funding by the city and county of San Francisco would be used, and already taxpayer funds have been used. State Prop 40 funds were used to pay for the EIR, and over \$300,000 in engineering contracts directly related to the garage design. Also, the Lease Agreement by the CA is to have the City and County of San Francisco underwrite revenue bonds to construct the underground parking facility. Again, this violates the spirit of Prop J, which would have required a 2/3 majority at the polls were it to be funded by a general bond.

We all knew that the purpose of Prop J and the CA was to build a garage for Museum and Academy patrons, and that's what they got busy with. What we didn't know is that they would violate the spirit and letter of the Prop J, disregard important Golden Gate Park Master Plan elements, and ignore the City's Transit First Policy and neighborhood input.

The Concourse Authority held a number of meetings to get community input about the garage design. One strong complaint came from the north of the Park neighbors about the original design that had only one entrance at 10th and Fulton. Mayor Brown intervened and a second entrance within the Concourse was added. Early in 2003 Rescue Muni, along with other transit advocacy groups, neighborhood, and environmental groups objected to not only the second garage entrance inside the Park that violated Prop J, but also the removal of the “green” elements of the original garage design and the destruction of the historic tunnels. But the objections were pushed aside and the construction of the garage proceeded without an approved design because of the time constraint of coordinating the new deYoung opening in October 2005.

When the City signed a Lease Agreement for the garage in the Concourse just over a year ago, the City also filed a blanket 'validation suite' to prevent legal challenges in order to start selling revenue bonds to fund the garage. Citizens protesting the agreement filed two lawsuits. The suites questioned the funding, the environmental impacts, and compliance with city and state law, including Prop J. The suites were combined and heard by Judge James Warren. On August 10, 2004 he made a provisional ruling that only found fault with the second, southern entrance located in the Concourse just off MLK Drive. The judgement stated that they “may not construct an entrance/exit inside the Park without first attempting

Currently, Rescue Muni is supporting a complete segregation of the two future metro lines, but based on Mr. Vartanoff's elegant design, the Steering Committee agreed to urge Muni to design the central subway in a way which leaves the option open to connect the two lines when Geary rail project finally moves forward.

Rescue Muni is also in discussions with Muni officials regarding the connection between the O'Farrell/Stockton station and the existing Powell Station under Market Street. Though we have not taken an official position yet, we are exploring designs for an efficient connection between an O'Farrell/Stockton station and the Powell Station which would avoid forcing people all the way up to the mezzanine level of the Powell Station from the O'Farrell/Stockton station and then back down again to BART or Muni Metro. This could potentially be accomplished by allowing direct access

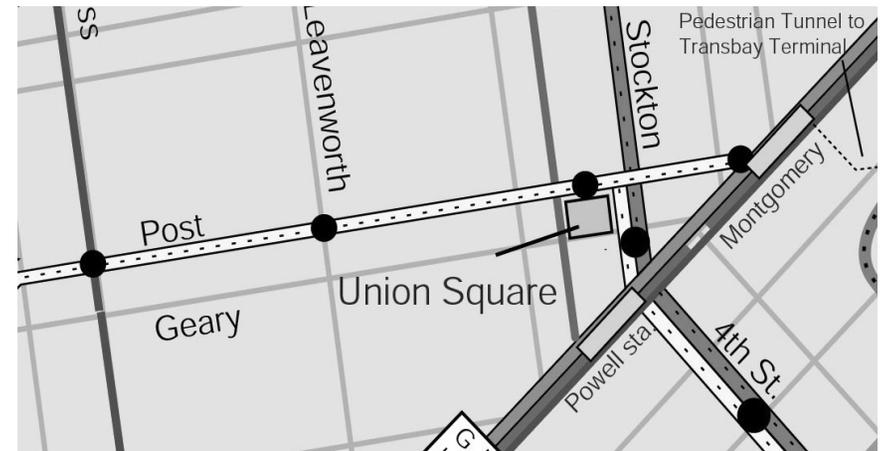
to the BART and Muni Metro station platforms from below (which is possible because of deeper depth of the O'Farrell/Stockton Station).

Stay tuned for a more in-depth article on the Central Subway redesign in the next Transfer.

Geary BRT

The San Francisco Transportation Authority (SFCTA) kicked off its public outreach process for the Geary Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project with three public workshops along the Geary Corridor in April. The purpose of these workshops were to update the public on what the project is about and then to get some feedback from citizens on their needs and desires for the corridor. Rescue Muni members attended these hearing to monitor the project as well as give direct input. No specific designs were presented at this stage, but we were concerned that SFCTA officials mentioned they are

(continued on following page)



RESCUE MUNI SUPPORTS A DESIGN FOR THE CENTRAL SUBWAY TRACKS WHICH RETAINS THE OPTION FOR A TWO BRANCH GEARY/POST RAIL SYSTEM AS SHOWN IN IMAGE.

considering spending a large sum of money on the Fillmore and Masonic intersections. Rescue Muni's current policy supports a Geary BRT project that focuses most resources from 33rd Ave. to Collins so we can complete center lanes along that portion with "rail-ready" features. We feel if Masonic and Fillmore were done for BRT, there would not be enough money left to constructing BRT along the more congested Outer Geary portion of the corridor. Rescue Muni's policy envisions the Masonic and Fillmore sections be rebuilt when we upgrade to rail.

Van Ness BRT

Muni and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) have been quietly studying a bus rapid transit (BRT) project for the Van Ness Corridor. Van Ness BRT is one of Rescue Muni's top transit expansion priorities.

Currently, the SFCTA is planning a BRT project along Van Ness/South Van Ness Ave. from Mission St. to Post. As we have concerns with the SFCTA's direction for Geary BRT, we are alarmed by the fact that a BRT

project along Van Ness would stop at Post St. We feel if we are going to do Van Ness BRT, the project should reach all the north to Lombard, otherwise we see the potential for an awkward and inefficient operating environment for the buses. With center BRT lanes ending at Post, the buses will likely bottleneck when they have to switch back to curbside lanes. This corridor is only about two miles. Why not just figure out how to finish it in one phase? We understand the budget limitations, but Rescue Muni is committed to helping with raising more money for this project, as we are for Geary BRT and the Central Subway. We hope that SFCTA and Muni officials will start working with us to raise more funds, rather than design projects that will not be very successful.

If you are interested in any of these issues or other Muni service expansion issues, please attend a Service Expansion Committee meeting, which are usually held the first Wednesday of each month. Call Dan Krause at 415.826.1219 for meeting details and to confirm the committee is meeting in a given month.

Two Book Reviews

By Eric Carlson, Rescue Muni Steering Committee Member

Those who appreciate subways and their infrastructure, architecture, and culture will enjoy two recent books on the topic.

Subway Style: 100 Years of Architecture & Design in the New York City Subway (NY Transit Museum / Robins / Garn)

This book is a richly illustrated look at 100 years of America's second oldest subway system. The book looks at the design of cars and of stations, with their elaborate systems of intricate tile-work and metalwork. Other portions of the book treat maps and subway advertising and publicity. The book is sumptuously illustrated, of course, in

color.

Metro: The Story of the Underground Railway by David Bennett.

This is a lavish book which directs its focus on a few metro systems around the world. The author is an engineer, yet the book is far from a compendium of technical material. His first focus is the rise of tunneling technologies, obviously beginning in London, and moving on to Berlin, Budapest, Glasgow, Boston and other early systems.

Then the book looks at the design and architecture of 15 systems around the world, such as the lavish Moscow Metro (on the cover of course) , Prague's metallic and colorful A line, and Los Angeles' red line. The quirky absorbing and , at times, unbelievable design and décor of Stockholm's T-bana ("the world's longest art gallery") will give some readers a desire to catch

one of the new Icelandic flights to the beautiful Swedish capital to see for themselves. This section is particularly impressive and the photos are a delight. A drawback is that our own Muni and BART systems will seem drab and insipid after perusing these pages.

Next Mr. Bennett writes about subway culture; posters, maps (an art and science unto themselves), tickets, graffiti, and the like. Of course, all other systems stand in the shadows of London's amazing Underground when it comes to the world of graphics, signage and publicity.

He concludes with a gazetteer summarizing many of the world's subway systems and basic facts about each, perfect for quick comparisons. While New York's MTA subways, PATH network and even Staten Island Rapid Transit are listed, our own Muni is shunned. BART is discussed however.

Widen a Road in Golden Gate Park?

By Joan Downey, Rescue Muni Steering Committee Member

Just before Christmas, the Concourse Authority and Recreation and Park Commission gave final approval for a plan to widen to four lanes Martin Luther King Drive in Golden Gate Park. WIDEN a road in Golden Gate Park? What's up?

In 1998, voters approved Proposition J, the Golden Gate Park Revitalization Act of 1998. This measure called for the creation of the Golden Gate Park

Concourse Authority (CA), to oversee plans for an 800-car underground parking garage and the creation of a pedestrian oasis in the Golden Gate Park Concourse.

Prop J says that "*The principal purposes of this ordinance are to (1) create a pedestrian oasis in the Music Concourse area of Golden Gate Park, situated between the de Young Museum and the Academy of Sciences (the "Concourse")*"

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