



Creating, Enhancing and Protecting the Unique Beauty and Livability of San Francisco

VOL. 21 NUMBER 2

THE CABLE

SUMMER 2007



From the Executive Director

Dee Dee Workman

2007 SPECIAL YEAR FOR SFB

As you may already know, 2007 is an important year for San Francisco Beautiful, marking 60 years since Friedel Klussmann started our venerable organization when she launched her campaign to save the cable cars in 1947. But that isn't the only milestone we are celebrating – this is a significant year for us in several ways.

In addition to our anniversary, which we will commemorate on October 18 in City Hall at our annual Beautification Awards Dinner, we are also thrilled to announce that our Friedel Klussmann Grants Program just passed the one-million-dollar mark in grant making! The deserving recipients of our millionth-dollar were the students at James Lick Middle School for their new garden that runs the entire front of the school in Noe Valley. The Carlos Santana Peace Garden, named for one of the school's better-known alumni and a San Francisco icon, opened to the public with a celebration attended by

Mr. Santana himself! Lovely, low-maintenance plantings and mosaic-covered seating walls created by the students add color and vibrancy to this long, concrete stretch of Noe Street. We gave this project \$5,400 for landscaping supplies.

We also gave grants to two other worthy projects in the first grant cycle of 2007: The Trust for Public Land's Potrero Hill Park Playground Revitalization Project received \$10,000 to create a natural seating area, and the Women's Building received \$2,000 to restore the magnificent mural, "Maestrapeace" that adorns its exterior.

This is also a big year for me personally, because it marks my 10th anniversary as SFB's Executive Director. It's amazing to think how quickly that time has passed. When I started here, my son Charlie was three years old and in preschool in Glen Canyon Park – now he's a strapping teenager about to enter his last year of middle school. Sheila and I were SFB's only staff and the board had 12 or 13 members (today we have three staff members and a board of 23).

I am proud of the good and important work we've carried out together during this decade and I look forward to the future as SFB continues its charge to ensure that San Francisco remains one of the world's most beautiful and livable cities.



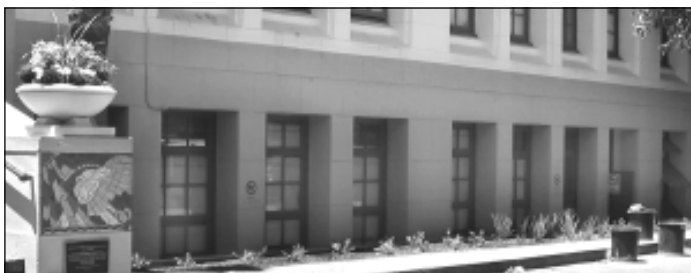
Bus shelter and kiosk advertising could increase under new city contract.

Photo by Sheila Kolenc

San Francisco Entering the Advertising Business?

San Francisco may soon have 360 new structures (many double sided) with general advertising and San Francisco Beautiful is not happy about it. The Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), which runs San Francisco MUNI, is considering a new 15-20 year contract to replace the city's 1120 bus shelters and approximately 40 kiosks (the triangular street furniture with advertising on Market Street). Currently, two-thirds, about 750, of the city's bus shelters and all of the kiosks contain general advertising. MTA proposes to increase the number of bus shelters to 1,500 and kiosks to approximately 150 leading to the possibility of 1,150 structures displaying advertising in the city. Under the proposed contract, the MTA will receive a portion of the proceeds from the advertising revenue. In essence, the

continued on p. 4



One-millionth Dollar Friedel Klussmann Grant went to the James Lick Middle School Peace Garden.

Photo by Sheila Kolenc

**SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 18, 2007**

San Francisco Beautiful's 60th Anniversary Celebration and Beautification Awards Dinner and Silent Auction

REPORT ON THE SAN FRANCISCO CABLE CARS



Many think of San Francisco's famed cable cars more as a tourist attraction than as a regular means of public transportation. This may be understandable given that the cable car now costs a family of four \$40 roundtrip to ride. But cable cars have always been an integral part of the city's transportation system, are one of the country's only moving historic landmarks, and are arguably San Francisco's signature asset.

San Francisco Beautiful feels a unique responsibility for the ongoing viability of the cable car system because of the exceptional advocacy of SFB's founder, Friedel Klussmann. In 1947, Klussmann organized the Citizens' Committee to Save the Cable Cars, through the years fought back many threats to curtail or abolish the system, and in 1971 led the successful Proposition Q ballot initiative freezing the minimum cable car service at July 1971 levels.

SFB has explored the current challenges facing the cable car system including concerns about the increase in fares to \$5.00 and decreasing ridership. There are also concerns about the productivity of the system, including schedule unreliability and long layovers at terminal points while patrons wait to board. In addition, we have questioned whether riders would

see improvements in the system from the additional fare income. All of these issues reflect a general concern about whether and how the cable car system can continue to be a viable component of the city's transportation system.

SYSTEM PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE CAUSES

After review of MUNI data, recommendations from MUNI audits, and discussions with knowledgeable individuals, cable car system problems and possible causes for those problems are listed below.

◆ *Personnel Availability*

As of April 2007 the cable car division was staffed with a total of 159 operators (77 grip-persons and 82 conductors). MUNI states that the current recommended staffing level is 184 operators. Budget constraints, lack of training programs and operator attrition at MUNI continue to affect cable car division staffing.

◆ *Ridership Decline*

Over the last 10 years cable car ridership has decreased 22%. Additionally, systemwide MUNI ridership has declined. The decline in cable car schedule adherence is a definite contributor to the ridership decline. However, until more data is available there is not enough information to determine whether the fare increase has reduced ridership.



Passengers wait in long lines to board a cable car.

◆ *Unreliability of Schedule Adherence*

MUNI system reliability performance is measured using two indicators — on-time performance and vehicle/operator availability.

MUNI's goal for on-time performance is 85%. Cable car performance has hovered near 70% for the past three years. Although trends indicate that the cable car has increased its on-time performance, it continues to fall short of the 85% goal.

The performance goal for service hours delivered on time is 98.5%. While vehicle availability has remained at or near that goal, operator availability has varied in the past three years and has never reached the 98.5% goal. If operator availability increases, cable car service may be able to meet the goal in 2007.

Insufficient or ineffective line management continues to negatively affect cable car schedule adherence. Cable cars operate in the busiest part of the city with the least flexibility of any transit mode. Without supervision along the line, minor delays become major. Currently, there are only nine inspectors for the cable car system. MUNI states that fourteen inspectors or a chief inspector would allow for improved field oversight and problem solving. MUNI has committed to fully staffing fare booths at the terminal points to assist cable car conductors with fare collection to ease passenger and terminal crowding. However, it is evident that fare booths at terminal points are not fully staffed.

◆ *System Reliability and Revenue*

The cable car operation can never be as productive as other modes in the transit system since it has limited flexibility, lower speeds, and requires two operators per car. MTA and union representatives have asserted that cable cars are adhering to an 8-minute headway, which could address the issue of overall system reliability but is difficult to maintain without enough operators. Further, Prop. Q requires 6-minute headways. A 6-minute



Several crew members are needed to turn a cable car around at Powell Street.

headway would mean 10 cable cars on a line per hour. An 8-minute headway means fewer cable cars on the line and less frequent cable car service. If MUNI adhered to 6-minute headways rather than 8-minute headways, the system could generate more revenue. Reports also indicate that some cable car fares are not being collected due to overcrowding on the cars.

◆ *Crowding and Delay at Terminal Points*

While the MTA does not collect data to measure this problem, it is most visible on the Powell Street lines. What is most troubling to many is the sight of cable car crews sitting at the end of the line while passengers wait in long lines to board.

Photos: Sheila Kolenc

SFB CABLE CAR SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to maintain and improve the cable car system for all users, SFB makes the following recommendations:

- ◆ Increase cable car operating personnel to the number specified by MTA (currently 184 operators) required to maintain cable car level of service, or develop a plan for getting there. If cable car headway is decreased to 6 minutes, the number of operators will have to be increased accordingly.
- ◆ Increase inspectors to the number specified by MTA (currently 14) with possible use of Parking Control Officers and/or staff an inspector manager/deputy superintendent position in the cable car division, as requested by MTA.
- ◆ Make Next MUNI data available to all cable car inspectors and use data to report continuously on schedule adherence.
- ◆ Conduct a cable car travel demand study and revise cable car schedules in response to demand.
- ◆ Survey cable car riders both to determine what type of riders are taking the cable car, i.e., tourists, residents, regular riders, occasional riders, and what type of fare they are paying, i.e. cash, Fast Pass, Passport. The Transit Effectiveness Project currently underway at MUNI could be a vehicle for this survey.
- ◆ Include headway as a cable car performance measure in addition to schedule adherence to increase the data available to measure cable car level of service.
- ◆ Decrease cable car headways to Prop. Q mandated 6-minute headway levels or maintain 8-minute headways on all three cable car lines while planning for decreasing headway to 6 minutes when staffing numbers reach recommended levels. Alternatively, use the recommended travel demand study results to determine what headway is appropriate given the level of demand.
- ◆ Allow for a free cable car transfer between the Powell lines and the California line at the California Street & Powell Street intersection.
- ◆ Fully staff cable car terminal fare booths to assist with fare collection on the cable cars.
- ◆ Implement a formal fare collection policy for the cable car system, including provisions for more anonymous checks on cable car fare collection and review alternatives to the current fare collection system.



MEMBERSHIPS/SALES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 Friedel Klusmann Circle | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Creator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 Protector | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Beautifier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Enhancer | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Cable Car Bell Ringer |

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ Email _____

State _____ Zip _____ Telephone () _____

Make checks payable to San Francisco Beautiful. For credit card payments:

Visa MasterCard Name on Card: _____

Card# _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____

- Logo Long Sleeve Shirt: \$22.50

_____ M _____ L _____ XL

- Logo Tote: \$16.50

- Rooftop Gardens: From Conception to Construction:* \$7.00

- Stairway Walks in San Francisco* by Adah Bakalinsky: \$20.00

San Francisco Beautiful
100 Bush Street, Suite 1580
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-421-2608; Fax: 415-421-4037
sfb@sfbeautiful.org
www.sfbeautiful.org
501(c)(3) Federal Tax ID #: 94-6106011

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



GILBERT H. CASTLE, III

WHAT CAN SFB DO FOR YOU?

SFB's Board of Directors will hold its annual retreat in July. An always-important item is the list of benefits we can offer to you, our members. The following are thoughts I've had on new potential benefits. Without making any promises, I'd like to hear from as many of you as possible on which of these activities interest you:

- ◆ Monthly meetings at SFB's offices in which an elected official, city department head, or other public or private sector professionals in

SFB's areas of interest discuss their activities and field your questions.

- ◆ Email alerts when an activity of interest to our members is happening, such as the highway billboard legislation alert that we sent out recently.
- ◆ A continually updated calendar of important coming events, such as deadlines for public comments on city legislation.
- ◆ Walking tours of "all things beautiful" in various parts of the City by SFB volunteers, similar in format to those conducted by the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society.
- ◆ Additional features posted on SFB's Web site, such as a community bulletin board where SFB's members can post comments on matters of interest to us all.
- ◆ Other types of benefits?

Please take the time to contact SFB (sfb@sfbeautiful.org) so we'll know what you'd like to see SFB do for you!

Advertising, con't from pg. 1

City is going into the advertising business even though five years ago nearly 80% of San Francisco voters passed Prop. G and said no to new general advertising. (Unfortunately, bus shelters and kiosks are on public property making them exempt from this law.) San Francisco Beautiful submitted comments to MTA on the new bus shelter contract stating that adding new

advertising to the city's street furniture would thwart the will of San Francisco voters by allowing new general advertising along commercial corridors across the City. The public will have the opportunity to weigh in on the new bus shelter contract when the MTA Board of Directors considers the issue in August.

SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL

100 BUSH STREET, SUITE 1580
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94104
telephone: 415-421-2608
fax: 415-421-4037
e-mail: sfb@sfbeautiful.org
website: www.sfbeautiful.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gilbert H. Castle, III - President
Rosabella Safont - Vice President
Edmond Hon - Treasurer
Linda Muir - Secretary
Michael Alexander, Robin Chiang,
Carmen C. Clark, Michael Dowling,
Scott Emblidge, Peter Fortune,
Robert C. Friese, Milo Hanke,
David Hayes, Amanda Hoenigman,
Tim Kochis, Ann Lanzerotti,
Meagan Levitan, Naomi Lempert Lopez,
Bruce Marcucci, Mona Masri, Tito Patri,
Byron Rodriguez, Mark Ryser

STAFF

Dee Dee Workman - Executive Director
Sheila Kolenc - Operations and
Communications Director
Marcie Keever - Program Director
Ron Wong - Dinner Consultant
David Perry - Marketing Consultant

VOLUNTEERS

Nan McGuire, Robert Passmore,
Ross Tibbits, Susanne Twomey,
Dan Weaver, Jane Winslow

San Francisco Beautiful, founded in 1947 by Friedel Klussmann, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to creating, enhancing and protecting the unique beauty and livability of San Francisco.

© 2007 THE CABLE NEWSLETTER
PRODUCTION: JEWEL GRAPHICS

SAN FRANCISCO BEAUTIFUL

100 BUSH STREET, SUITE 1580
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 494
SAN FRANCISCO, CA