



## It's Time to Rebuild BART

Since 1972, billions of trips have been taken on BART. Our trains and stations are central to Bay Area culture, knitting together friends, family, businesses, employees, landmarks, and opportunities. When we first opened, BART was the envy of the world – the first to use computer-controlled trains.

However, what was cutting edge in 1972 no longer serves the complex needs of our region. Growth has been a bittersweet experience for everyone – and BART has not been spared from either the pressures of population change or the passage of time. We fit right into the middle of many of the most pressing questions of our day, on every issue from traffic, to housing, to environmental concerns.

We are now serving 430,000 passengers on an average weekday, the equivalent of the population of Atlanta, and facilitate tens of millions of dollars in daily economic productivity. The commute – which frankly is no fun no matter what the method – has become intolerable for many of the residents who find themselves so closely squeezed to their neighbor they can reasonably guess the type of shampoo they use. Stations and signage are dated and worn, and at times our platforms can be crowded.

Yet there is a silver lining to these growing pains, as greater demand for public transit is, generally speaking, a good problem for cities to have. As we have aged, the vibrancy of this community and the quality of the Bay Area's workforce has soothed the most pressing needs of our aching system. An army of BART engineers, welders, machinists, electronic technicians, mechanics and system workers have extended the life of our train cars and physical infrastructure in extraordinary ways, working ever harder to offset ever-increasing stresses.

*Cont. to page 2*

## Presidents Message

Many of us have heard of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force (SOFT).

A citizens' group called San Franciscans for Sunshine ([sanfranciscansforsunshine.org](http://sanfranciscansforsunshine.org), SF4S) intends to put an initiative to strengthen the city's Sunshine Ordinance on this November's local ballot.

The new Initiative will change SOFT's nomination process to have more citizen input and CSFN has been asked to select one of the eleven SOFT board members. The CSFN nominee can be from any part of San Francisco.

This new initiative will definitely give CSFN the ability to have a greater impact on the transparency of local government.

Currently, four Task Force members are nominated by public-interest organizations and the rest are directly appointed by the Board of Supervisors. This enables the Board to sabotage the ordinance and the Task Force, as was underscored in 2012 when certain Supervisors orchestrated a purge of Task Force incumbents who had voted to find that the Supervisors violated local and state open-meeting laws by ramming through a residential development contract with 14 pages of amendments that had been slipped in at the last minute.

The Board of Supervisors shall appoint CSFN's nominee unless it finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that a specific nominee is not qualified to serve on the Committee.

The Sunshine Ordinance Task Force was established by Chapter 67 of the San Francisco Administrative Code. The purpose of the Task Force is to protect the public's interest in open government and to carry out the duties enumerated in this code.

The Task Force advises the Board of Supervisors and provides information to other City Departments on appropriate ways in which to implement the Sunshine Ordinance to ensure that deliberations of Commissions, Boards, Councils and other Agencies of the City and County are conducted before the people and that City operations are open to the people's review.

Task Force terms last two years and there is no limit on the number of consecutive or total terms a member may serve. Task Force members serve without pay or expense reimbursement but are eligible for the excellent health coverage offered to city employees. Between meetings



*Cont. to page 2*

**Bart** *Cont. from p. 1*

Additionally, record ridership has enabled us to find the funding for many of the solutions needed to bring us into the 21st century, and we're truly grateful for that. This year alone we have hired more groundskeepers, more system maintenance workers, and more mechanics. We are building a new maintenance complex to ensure the downtime between car breakdowns stays at a minimum. We are modernizing our stations. And to top everything off, our new, larger fleet of train cars is right on the horizon – the first of which arrived in March.

However, there is a massive, looming problem that must be addressed separately from the work we've already been doing to improve. The bones of BART, the miles of power transmission cabling, rails, tunnels, and track components working quietly in the background, are decaying. BART's core was not built to last much past where we are now, and the cost of repairing and replacing what we have with what we need exceeds whatever monetary gains have come from increased ridership. Our power replacement requirements alone over the next decade have a price tag of \$1.2 billion.

To use an analogy: when building a home, every homeowner must choose a roof, and that roof has a specific lifespan. You can afford to patch here and there over the years and fix minor damage from weather, but eventually the whole roof must be replaced at great cost. That's where we are, and that's what we mean when we say much of the system is at the end of its useful life.

Part of BART's plan to rebuild is a \$3.5 billion general obligation bond measure, proposed to go before voters in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco voters this November. The measure is a no-frills package based on hard data—collected using international best practices and a strong internal accountability program (asset management software) which gives us the exact life span for all the different physical parts of BART.

This is about replacing 90 miles of worn rail, waterproofing our leaky tunnels below sea level in downtown San Francisco, modernizing the physical parts of our train control system, fighting fault line creep. This isn't about pet projects, and we're sensitive to the needs of our community. To that end, we've held over 200 meetings with diverse groups throughout the Bay Area to give our plan context, and to get an idea of how we can improve the lives of the people we serve.

At these meetings have been elected officials, businesses, labor groups, environmental organizations, seniors, disability advocacy groups, community organizers, social justice advocates, and individuals—and BART remains committed to having an open conversation about our future. We are here to listen and engage.

Since the last earthquake protection bond measure in 2004, we've proven ourselves to be a responsible and trustworthy steward of public funds. We've reinforced parking

garages, strengthened maintenance facilities, fortified stations, and protected the Transbay Tube—guarding our riders against the threat of earthquakes while building trust and saving millions of dollars.

Furthermore, if the bond measure passes, part of BART's plan is to establish an Independent Oversight Committee to ensure your capital investments are carried out with an excess of transparency, accountability, and integrity. The Committee will be able to regularly audit BART, and will publish an annual, public, independent report outlining any concerns that could arise from how we carry out our rebuilding efforts.

Back in 1962, the Bay Area led the world in deciding to invest in its future – a future of safe travel, reliable transit, and reduced congestion. Ever since then, we have been a proud and enduring staple of this region's culture, its workforce, and its values. It's time to rebuild.

*Submitted by Taylor Huckaby  
BART Spokesperson / Communications Officer*

**President's Message** *Cont. from p. 2*

and meeting preparation, members can generally expect to spend 10-15 hours a month on Task Force business.

If CSFN accepts this role and the voters pass the initiative, it will become effective in 2017.

Let's support the passage of this initiative and make CSFN an integral part of local government transparency.

*George Wooding*

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Bylaws** Chair Claire Zvanski, [czvanski@hotmail.com](mailto:czvanski@hotmail.com). Ongoing meetings.

**Gov't & Elections** Chair Charles Head, [charleshead@hotmail.com](mailto:charleshead@hotmail.com). 6pm, second Friday, Taraval Police Station.

**Land Use & Housing** Chair, George Wooding, [gswooding@gmail.com](mailto:gswooding@gmail.com). Ongoing meetings

**Open Space** Chair Nancy Wuerfel, [nancenumber1@aol.com](mailto:nancenumber1@aol.com), 731-6432, Co-chair Ramona Albright, 621-9621. Ongoing meetings.

**Transportation** Chair Mari Eliza, [mari.eliza@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mari.eliza@sbcglobal.net) Ongoing meetings.

**Water Task Force** • Chair Joan Girardot, [csfnwatertaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:csfnwatertaskforce@gmail.com), 346-5525. Ongoing meetings.

**ExComm—How to Reach Us:**

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Member-at-Large: Lorraine Lucas • [wozopozo@pacbell.net](mailto:wozopozo@pacbell.net)

Parliamentarian: vacant Sergeant-At-Arms: vacant



## When city planners treat us like infants

The public gets dismissive events and sandbox games — instead of serious discussions that allow meaningful input from the communities impacted by land-use decisions

Wednesday, March 30 the Planning Department held a “Community Discussion” of the Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Feasibility Study (RAB) at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House. This is a re-do of the February 23 at the Potrero Hill Recreation Center, where an overflow crowd of more than 200 could not be fully accommodated.

The infrastructural changes under consideration, including a proposal to take down I-280 and re-route the former freeway traffic on a boulevard through the neighborhoods, are massive and controversial. What’s also controversial, but has received far less attention, is the Planning Department’s approach to public engagement.

Playing with strings: Is this how planners should solicit community input?

Though the \$1.7 million study has been underway for two years, the February 23 event was the first time the community had a chance to weigh in on the project—and the chance it had was paltry. That’s because the planners set up the meeting in a way that would dissipate the public’s authority and aggrandize their own. They chose the format I call Enhanced Science Fair: A ranking public official briefly introduces a complex topic and then directs members of the community to view poster boards arranged on easels or on the wall. A staffer assigned to each poster board chats with the small group huddled around the display.

On February 23, the program was introduced by Citywide Planning Director Gil Kelley, not to be confused with his boss, Planning Director John Rahaim. Kelley showed a PowerPoint (posted here under “Presentation”) and took questions from

attendees. Some queries were quite specific. Kelley’s repeated advice that people should ask “the experts” standing by the poster boards in the back of the room or write their questions on a survey that staffers had distributed indicated that he had but a passing familiarity with the RAB. The crowd grew restive. The last neighbor who spoke said, “For you to invite us here and then refuse to answer our questions is insulting.”

Agreed. Communications Director Gina Simi tells me that on March 30 Kelley will give the same presentation, and the meeting will have the same open house format as last time, but that a panel with Kelley, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Director Ed Reiskin, RAB Planning staffer Susan Gygi and Mayor Lee’s Director of Transportation Policy Gillian Gillett will also take questions.

That’s encouraging—but only slightly: What’s missing from the panel are representatives of the affected neighborhoods and members of the public who have expertise about transit and land use, and—more to the point—who can offer well-informed criticism of the RAB. This way, only official supporters of the project are appearing as the sole authorities in the room; members of the public are cast as supplicants.

Science Fair is one of the techniques that city planners are using to mute the public’s say in public policy—all the while purporting to enhance civic engagement. It’s one that the San Francisco Planning Department has employed, sans panel, on other occasions—for example, at “open houses” dealing with the Central SoMa Plan. Nor is this practice peculiar to San Francisco’s planners; it’s also been used by their professional colleagues in my own city of Berkeley and by the staff of the regional planning agencies, the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in connection with Plan Bay Area.

Last April I attended the Alameda County Spring Open House for Plan Bay Area 2040, held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds from 7pm to 9pm. Driving through rush hour traffic from my north Berkeley home took me an hour. (Public transportation would have taken even longer). The format was Basic Science Fair: there was no formal introduction, just a big room with poster boards displayed on tables that had been arranged in a circle. Each station addressed a major theme in regional land use planning, such as “Transportation System Effectiveness,” “Adequate Housing,” “Climate Change,” and “Economic Vitality.” Attendees could write their comments on a post-it, to be pinned to a poster board.

My favorite station, however, was the one that featured a map on a table, along with colored yarn and push pins in little buckets labeled “Live,” “Work,” and “Play.” People were invited to grab a piece of yarn and two push pins, and indicate familiar routes on the map.

These activities are suitable for the sandbox set, not the deliberations of a political democracy. They trivialize public discourse to the point of meaninglessness. There’s no way they can even begin to address the difficult issues

## Draft Minutes for the General Assembly Meeting

Draft Minutes : General Assembly Meeting Mar. 15, 2016

1. Call to Order. Due to the illness of President Wooding 1st VP Morgan (CHNA) brought the meeting to order at 7:05PM in the Northern Police Station Community Room.
  - a. Quorum declared. 25 delegates and alternates represented 23 CSFN member organizations. Seven guests signed in.
  - b. Agenda approved.
  - c. Introduction of delegates and guests
  - d. Hosts: 1. Bill Benkavitch (BCNA) talked about the NE waterfront, the gateway, and how his group helped to defeat the 8 Washington project through FOGG.
  2. John Bardis (ISAC) gave us a handout and talked about the accomplishments of his organization.
    2. Officers' Reports.
      - a. President Wooding ( MTHA ) Report is in the Newsletter.
      - b. 1st VP Morgan (CHNA) reported that the AHBP passed out of Planning with no recommendation, is currently at BOS Land Use, and that San Franciscans for Community Planning, of which CSFN is a member, will present an amended plan to Supervisor Peskin on 3/28.
      - c. Recording Secretary Head (SHARP) said the draft minutes were on p. 3 of the NL. He testified before the Ops. Comm. of the RPC on March 3 in his role as VP of SHARP in favor of the SF Deltas organization to bring pro soccer to Kezar Stadium in 2017.
      - d. Corresponding Secretary Rogers (PMAC.) attended the SFMuni meeting about undergrounding the M line and the pros and cons of it.
      - e. Treasurer Scott (PHRA) attested to the sound fiscal condition of CSFN at present.
    3. Committee Action Items
      - a. Executive – in NL.
      - b. Bylaws – Chair Claire Zvanski (EDIA.) –no report.
      - c. Dinner – Chair Marlayne Morgan (CHNA) no report
      - d. Government & Elections. Chair Charles Head (SHARP) said that tonight's program on ballot measures had come out of the committee's hearing at Taraval on March 11.
      - e. Land Use. No report.
      - f. Media Relations. No chair – no report.
      - g. Open Space. Nancy Wuerfel and Kathy Howard (SPEAK) –no report.
      - h. Transportation. Chair Mari Eliza (EMIA) reported that many things are going on.
      - i. Water Task Force. Chair Joan Girardot (MCI&POA) – no report.
  4. Approval of the Feb. 16, 2016 GA minutes – they were approved unanimously.
  5. Unfinished Business – Action on Delegate Devincenzie's (LHIA) motion from the Feb. 16 meeting was continued due to the lateness of the hour. The motion:
 

“ It is moved that to renew or apply for voting member-

ship in CSFN, an organization must fully complete the one page member renewal form published in the February 2016 NL and display to the ExCom the current record of its membership, at a mutually convenient time. Pursuant to its right under the By-Laws, the ExCom may request further information from an organization in order to attempt to ascertain the validity of the information provided.”

6. New Business – Moe Jamil, President of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association (MPNA) introduced the following resolution on the Polk Neighborhood Commercial District:

“Be it resolved that the CSFN endorses this legislation as necessary and desirable for the Polk NCD and shall communicate said endorsement to the Small Business Commission, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors”

This was declared an emergency, debated by the delegates and approved unanimously.

Glenn Rogers (PMAC) introduced the following motion on the Crystal Springs Reservoir:

“Be it resolved that CSFN joins the Bay Area and Loma Prieta Chapters of the Sierra Club, the GG and Sequoia Audubon Societies, the Yerba Buena and the Santa Clara Valley chapters of the Ca. Native Plant Society, and the Committee for Green Foothills, in protecting the high quality water supply for the City and County of San Francisco and its suburban customers. This shall be done by limiting access to mountain bikers on a trial basis. Mountain bikers, which are the main advocate of this program, have been destructive to wild lands both locally and nationally. Lastly, if this project does proceed, it should only be done with supervision and a docent program to protect the environment of plants and animals by informing the public of their value. We recommend the docent program be increased from 3 times a week to 7 times a week, hiring high quality docents. ”

The delegates voted to consider it an emergency (11-2) and then unanimously voted in favor of it.

7. Program: The Government and Elections committee presented a program on several ballot measures.

Prop A: Lander Karuth from the Campaign spoke in favor of the Public Health and Safety bond .

Prop B: Todd David of Friends of the Park Alliance and Kathy Howard of SPEAK argued pro v. con about the Park, Recreation and Open Space Charter Amendment.

Prop C: Supervisors Kim and Peskin spoke in favor of the Charter Amendment on Inclusionary Housing.

Prop D: Mawuli Tugenyoh of Supervisor Cohen's staff spoke in favor of mandatory investigation by the O.C.C. of all police involved shootings.

All the presenters held Q&A before they left, after which the GA heard the committee's recommendations, debated and voted as follows:

Prop A: in favor ( 8-2 ); Prop B: opposed ( 11-3 ); Prop C: in favor ( 7-5, not a 2/3 vote as required, so no position taken ); and Prop D: in favor ( 9-4 ).

There were no motions to write ballot measures.

8. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:54.

*Charles Head (SHARP) Recording Secretary*

## Executive Committee Report • March 2016

The CSFN ExCom met on Wednesday, March 23 at the Northern Station. Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 5:40 and established a quorum, with Head, Rogers, Clark and Lucas present. Wooding was excused. Guests Paul Webber of THD and Claire Zvanski of EDIA also attended.

President Wooding reported on CSFN's involvement on the AHBP Legislation since it passed out of Planning. Reporting Secretary Head reported on the success of the Kezar stadium lease to a professional soccer team, and Corresponding Secretary Rogers reported on the proposed redesign of the M Streetcar Line by the SFMTA.

Hosts for the April GA will be the Cathedral Hill Neighborhood Association (CHNA) and the Cole Valley Improvement Association (CVIA).

Two choices for the program at the April GA were discussed at length; either revisiting the discussion and vote on Proposition C (Inclusionary Housing) or scheduling a presentation from BART. In addition, there was a request from SF Beautiful to present their 2016 platform.

Also, a lengthy discussion was held on the topic of establishing processes and procedures for verifying membership eligibility. As there is a continued motion on this subject before the delegation in April, the ExCom postponed further discussion on this topic until after the General Assembly meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

*Submitted by Marlayne Morgan (CHNA)*

## Govt. & Elections Committee Report

At the March 11 G&E meeting, the Committee heard from presenters for Prop A ( the bond ), Prop B ( the Rec & Park set aside ), and Prop D ( the OCC requirement ). We did not hear from anyone re: Prop C ( Inclusionary Housing ). As a result, we made a recommendation for A and D, and against B, based on what we heard: we made no recommendation for C. After Supervisors Kim and Peskin spoke at the GA on March 15, delegates debated and then voted for C, but failed to meet the 2/3 requirement. A motion to reconsider could have been made then, but is now too late: a motion to rescind can't be made, for no position was taken.

*Submitted by Charles Head (SHARP), Chair*

## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee has communicated with the membership, seeking candidates for the Officer and ExCom At Large positions of the Coalition As the date of this Report (April 3, 2016). the following persons are candidates for election to the positions specified, and there is no position for which there is more than one candidate:

### POSITION ,CANDIDATE, CANDIDATE'S GROUP

#### President

George Wooding, Midtown Terrace Homeowners Ass'n

#### First Vice President

Marlayne Morgan, Cathedral Hill Neighbors Ass'n

#### Recording Secretary

Charles Head, Sunset Heights Ass'n of Responsible People

#### Corresponding Secretary

Glenn Rogers, Parkmerced Action Coalition

#### Treasurer

Greg Scott Pacific Heights Residents Ass'n

#### At Large ExCom Member

Penny Clark, Russian Hill Improvement Ass'n

#### At Large ExCom Member

Mary Harris, Oceanside, Merced, Ingleside Neighbors in Action

At the present time, there are no candidates for the positions of Second Vice President and two of the At Large ExCom Members.

Nominations may be made, by eligible members, from the floor of the forthcoming General Assembly meeting to be held commencing at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, April 19, 2016. Following the close of that meeting, NO ADDITIONAL NOMINATIONS WILL BE RECEIVED. The final list of candidates will be published in the May, 2016 Coalition Newsletter, and the election will be held at the regular General Assembly meeting on May 17, 2016. If there is only one candidate for an office, voting by ballot for that office will be dispensed with.

Following the May General Assembly meeting, any vacancy in an officer or at large ExCom position maybe filled by the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee

April 3, 2016

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE



## Reconfiguring the M Streetcar Line

**T**his new reconfiguration of the M streetcar undergrounding is an improvement over the previous plan where the staff was directed to provide an elevated solution. With both the M and K streetcar going underground, it removes congestion at the St. Francis Circle and the Ocean Avenue crossing. Then, the M line is improved with an elimination of the 19th Avenue crossing beside Stonestown and lastly, the crossing over Junipero Serra would be improved dramatically by an underground route. Instead of a one streetcar track which is present today and part of the previous solution, there would be two streetcar tracks available going in either direction. A streetcar would make grade, emerging from underground, at Randolph Street where the road widens.

### Where the new M Line fails:

Where the new alignment fails in its analysis, is that it ends the M streetcar at Parkmerced, where a J streetcar receives passengers moving into the Oceanview district. The opportunity for less service into Oceanview is likely since it is not a politically well connected neighborhood. Both the old and new M streetcar alignment avoid a stop at the Senior Center located at the Temple Methodist Church. It is inappropriate to foster a care facility in San Francisco, have the public depend on that center's care, then abandon the center by no longer providing public transportation for seniors, the disabled and handicapped to this center. Presently, there is a stop at Beverly Street where the senior center is. Service to this center should be fought for by the neighborhood. Additionally, the stop at the existing Lakeside business districts is considered optional. The elimination of this stop could have a dramatic effect on the existing businesses there. Most importantly, the J streetcar traveling downtown, could just change its sign from J to M at the Parkmerced station and not have the passengers leave the streetcar and find new seating on the

M streetcar. Also, in returning home, if this same procedure could occur, it would improve J ridership dramatically. The Parkmerced project has always been about providing more market rate housing for the City tax coffers. This plan to treat J streetcar riders, as second class citizens, needs to be brought to the attention of the City and SFMTA.

### Why the new M Line line is better:

In my opinion, this underground solution was necessary because the 18,000 new residents of Parkmerced would appear to be poorly served by the transportation provided by the previous plan. The previous plan had no solution for the St. Francis Circle congestion which would be both difficult for traffic and the M and K streetcars alike. In the previous plan, there was only one track going each way; this new design has two. With only one track in the previous plan, this could lead to lines of streetcars going downtown, one after the other. The first streetcar full, picking up even more passengers and those streetcars behind relatively empty. Then, the elevated track over the Junipero Serra/19th Avenue exchange would have had numerous failings. First, the noise created in an elevated platform, would have been hard to mitigate causing blight in at least two nearby Towers by the noisy streetcar regularly passing by. Today, the elevated plan is to have the streetcar make grade on the narrow part of Randolph Street (39'-6" wide). This would leave 11'-6" for two rows of parking and two rows of traffic, obviously, not nearly enough space for either activity. Therefore, the elevated plan with the ramp ending at 19th Avenue, near Randolph street, is the preferred plan between these two.

### Oceanview's difficulties:

Other hardships the Oceanview neighborhood has endured in the past have been Highway 280 providing an impassable barrier along its southern border. Then, the entrances into the neighborhood have been minimized by traffic engineers, more interested in traffic flow than economic opportunity for the residents. Also, many parts of the Oceanview neighborhood were designed with super blocks that are 3 to 4 times larger than regular blocks in San Francisco. These giant blocks, popular in the early part of the 1920's, minimize an opportunity for commerce by having fewer intersections. Typically, family and other businesses occur at street corners. Super blocks have been abandoned by City planners today. The Oceanview district does not need another obstacle to its success like a separate J streetcar line. 1.

1. [https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/projects/19thAve\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.sfmta.com/sites/default/files/projects/19thAve_final_report.pdf)

*Submitted by Glenn Rogers (PmAC)*

**Planning** *Cont. from p. 3*

raised by land use and transportation planning in the Bay Area. All they can yield is a laundry list of concerns, which, as the website linked above indicates, is exactly what they did. The February 23 RAB meeting had the same results (posted here under “Poster Board – comments collected at meeting”).

Now ABAG staff, working with Barbary Coast Consulting, have created new “engagement tools” that will provide “an interactive engaging experience for participants in the Spring/Summer 2016 Plan Bay Area workshops.” As described in the staff report for Item 11 in the agenda for the ABAG Administrative Committee’s March 28 retreat, one of the tools is:

... a simple online game designed for both smart phones and full computer screens that will allow participants to choose between the three scenarios and provide personalized input. The game will feature a description of Plan Bay Area 2040 and each scenario. Users will be able to click on one of the scenarios to express a preference and utilize a text box to share more detailed thoughts about one or all of the scenarios, as well as the Plan. The game will be available on laptops at the workshop and will be available online to gather continuous input that will help inform the development of the Plan.

As luck would have it, on March 28 a relevant and revealing post appeared on the website Planetizen, a great source of information on the planning profession in the U.S. Under the headline “Is Face to Face Community Engagement Dying Out?,” consultant Dave Biggs, chief engagement officer at MetroQuest Public Involvement, identified a major threat to firsthand civic participation: “angry groups disrupting public meetings.”

“When tensions are high, Biggs wrote, “public workshops can provide fertile grounds for disruptors,” for the following reasons:

- 1 Since they are time consuming to attend, [public workshops] tend to attract the people who are most passionate (i.e., angry), increasing the likelihood of conflict;
- 2 They are typically advertised well in advance, giving disruptors plenty of opportunity to organize;
- 3 They provide grandstanding and mic grabbing opportunities for people seeking to influence others and steer the outcome; and
- 4 Disruptors can intimidate others into not speaking their mind out of fear of backlash.

Biggs seems not to realize that timely public notice, conflict, organizing, and persuasion are all essential components of a vital democratic politics; or that disenfranchisement of the public can take many forms, including the one he proposes a solution for the problems he perceives, “pop-up engagement”:

Pop-up engagement is a style of engagement in which organizers simply pop-up a booth or table in a busy public location, perhaps in conjunction with another event, and

offer simple and fun ways for people to learn about the project and have their say. Trailblazers like Candy Chang who pioneered the “Before I Die” public blackboards that invite people to fill in the blanks have led the way for others. She’s since gone on to “I wish this was” stickers that invite people to propose solutions for community development projects. Others like Projects for Public Spaces use simple stickers to invite people to weigh in on planning choices. There are limitless ways to engage people quickly at these pop-up stations. There is typically project staff on hand to chat with people, project materials, fun activities for visitors to do, refreshments, and other inexpensive ways to slow people down and draw them in.

By now, this should sound familiar. It’s as if political discourse has been reduced to the equivalent of Twitter exchanges—with one crucial difference: It’s just the public that’s being subjected to these demeaning maneuvers. The power players aren’t wasting their time playing silly games; they’re meeting with the decision-makers and shaping public policy behind the scenes.

As transportation engineer, consultant, and activist Gerald Cauthen told me about the RAB project:

During at least the past two years there have been ongoing meetings with local agencies, affected transit properties, MTC, state and federal agencies, and San Francisco’s elected officials here, in Sacramento, and in Washington. The tried and true method of getting the political snowball rolling downhill before the opposition knows what’s going on is already well under way. Only the public has been left out of the discussions... until last Tuesday night [the February 23 meeting].

I trust that the dignitaries participating in these meetings were not asked to write their comments on post-its, mess with yarn and push pins, or play simple online games. Members of the public ought to demand equal treatment.

*Zelda Bronstein, in 48 Hills (reprinted with permission)*

## CORRECTIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Turn in written submissions to ExCom Chair (marlayne16@gmail.com)

**NEIGHBORHOOD VIEWS** is published monthly, the official voice of the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods, Inc., a 501(c)4 organization.

To Submit Articles: Email articles by the 3rd (third) of the month to: Newsletter Editor (2nd VP) in Microsoft Word-compatible document (i.e. no pdf’s) in-line or as attachment. Articles reflect the opinions of the submitter, not necessarily the opinion of the CSFN. We invite material from member organizations as well as rebuttal to articles already printed. We reserve the right to edit where necessary. Member organizations may receive two copies of the newsletter without charge. Subscription: Members/\$10, Non-members/\$15.



**APRIL 19, 2016 • CSFN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA**

- 6:30 I. Sign In and Refreshments**
- 7:00 II. Call to Order/ Ascertain Quorum**
  - A. Introduction of Delegates and Guests / Short Announcements**
  - B. Hosts**
    - 1 Cathedral Hill Neighborhood Association**
    - 2. Cole Valley Improvement Association**
- 7:10 III. Officers' Reports**
  - A. President**
  - B. Vice Presidents**
  - C. Secretaries**
  - D. Treasurer**
- 7:15 IV. Committee Action Items—written reports in Newsletter**
  - A. Executive**
  - B. Bylaws**
  - C. Dinner**
  - D. Government & Elections**
  - E. Land Use & Housing**
  - F. Media Relations**
  - G. Open Space**
  - H. Transportation**
  - I. Water Task Force**
  - J. Nominating Committee**
- 7:25 V. Approval of March 15, 2016 Minutes**
- 7:30 VI. Unfinished Business**
  - A. Motion on Membership Eligibility**
- 7:45 VII. New Business**
  - A. CSFN Becoming a Nominating Agency for the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force**
- 8:00 VIII. Let's Fix BART- Presentation from Bay Area Rapid Transit**
- 9:15 IX. Adjournment**