

November 3, 2021

Gwyneth Borden, Chair
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
MTABoard@SFMTA.com

RE: Restoring MUNI Transit Service in Hayes Valley, Western Addition, and Market & Octavia Area

Dear Chairman Borden and SFMTA Board of Directors,

The Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association (HVNA) emphatically opposes the current SFMTA transit service and route structure plan. We demand full restoration of all pre-Covid19 Pandemic transit routes and service hours including frequencies and daily hours of service. We underscore the lines that go through Hayes Valley, Western Addition and the Market and Octavia Better Neighborhoods Plan, including the 6 Parnassus, the 21 Hayes, and the 47 Van Ness. We are also in solidarity with neighbors asking for restoration of the 2 Clement and 3 Jackson and for a complete citywide full restoration of all lines to pre-pandemic levels.

While we appreciate the potential proposal to restore some service on the 6 Parnassus and the 21 Hayes, the current iteration for restoration is unacceptable in terms of frequency and service hours. Additionally, restoration must include the 47 Van Ness, which would soon traverse the much-anticipated Bus Rapid Transit lanes on Van Ness Avenue.

We note that SFMTA received federal funds to support and restore public transportation, not to change or restructure public transportation. These funds should be immediately utilized to bring back all the lines to pre-pandemic service levels. We urge you to support proposed upcoming ballot measures to fully-fund Muni service and routes. In the following sections, we detail why it is critically important to restore the 6 Parnassus, 21 Hayes and 47 Van Ness lines to full pre-pandemic service levels.

Broadly, Muni cannot expect ridership to return to normal if reliable service is not restored. If service is not restored soon, we are concerned that people will permanently shift to private automobiles and TNCs. San Francisco's goal of reducing congestion, reducing GHGs, and reducing fatality and injury on our streets cannot be met if this happens.

More specific to Hayes Valley, our neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods made a pact with the city, through our support of the Market & Octavia Area Plan, to absorb new housing, jobs, and population. The Plan was adopted with the expectation that transit capacity would adequately serve the additional population and ridership. However, pre-pandemic buses and trains traveling through the Market & Octavia area were beyond capacity. Based on preliminary analysis of census tracts that overlap with the Market & Octavia Plan Area, between 2010 and 2020 population in the plan area increased by over 5,000 persons (a 13% increase). You cannot cut transit capacity this drastically, and then expect thousands of new residents to rely on transit.

Additionally, reducing the frequency of the 6 Parnassus, the 21 Hayes and removing the 47 Van Ness disproportionately affects people of color and middle and lower-income transit-dependent residents. These residents, and the bus lines on which they rely, cannot be adequately served by other lines. Justification for complete restoration on specific routes include:

6-Parnassus

The EIR for the expansion of UCSF Parnassus campus was recently certified by the City, and assumes that the 6 Parnassus will adequately serve the campus expansion. According to data in Volume 2 of the EIR for the Parnassus Campus Plan, 32 percent of UCSF pre-pandemic employees travel to/from the existing campus on public transit, and this is anticipated to increase.¹

Transit is integral to the UCSF expansion, and the campus cannot expand without it. The hospital will be 40 percent larger with 30 percent more employees, while no new parking garage will be built. UCSF has also stressed decreasing single occupant vehicles (SOVs) from roughly half of current trips to less than 30-40 percent of trips. With an estimated 52,200 external daily person trips, without the 6 Parnassus and other routes returned to full capacity and future expansion, the full length of District 5 will be saturated in car traffic related to UCSF.

21-Hayes

The 21 Hayes Connects the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Commercial District, BART and Muni Metro, Market Street Commerce, Hotels, and Offices, Golden Gate Park, St Mary's Hospital, the John Adams Campus of City College, The Civic Center and Performing Arts establishments,

¹ (<https://campusplanning.ucsf.edu/node/596> and <https://www.ucsf.edu/cphp/community> esp. Vol 1 Sec 4.15 Vol 2, Sec 8.3)

Alamo Square Park, the Divisadero commercial corridor, the Ida B Wells Continuation High School, Mercy Terrace Senior Residence, and the DMV, as well as connecting new and existing high-density housing developments, particularly below market rate housing, within a block of Hayes Street. As mentioned above, some Hayes Valley census tracts that straddle the 6 Parnassus show increases of upwards of thousands of new residents since 2010.

Topographically, the 21 Hayes is also important because it traverses a section of the City with steep hills that seniors and riders with disability find difficult to navigate. Muni's assumption that such riders will easily walk three blocks to other routes is not realistic.

As you restore the 21 Hayes, we also ask that you re-route the outbound bus to Grove Street in order to enable continued and expanded operations of the successful weekend Hayes Open Streets program implemented for social distancing during the pandemic. This has been vital for businesses and residents alike. As more development pours into Hayes Valley, the Western Addition, and Market & Octavia area, there will be more need for open space and public gathering spaces. This is a logical place to do it and we urge you to be creative and make full restoration of the 21 Hayes compatible with a permanent Hayes Open Street.

47-Van Ness

The 47 Van Ness links Caltrain to Fisherman's Wharf, making it an important regional connector that will soon be improved with exclusive BRT lanes on Van Ness Avenue. The 47 Van Ness was already a conglomeration of two previously cut lines, the 10 and 42 lines, which served as a downtown loop connecting to Caltrain. Further cuts to this line remove large areas from Muni coverage, including accessibility to the Hall of Justice, to Costco, Oracle Park, Caltrain's 4th and King terminal, and to a number of businesses and entertainment venues South of Market.

The Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Project is anticipated to open in 2022. Why is the City cutting transit on a line that has had substantial investment and that operates as a clean trolley bus route? Riders have not waited years for this improvement only to see it downsized with a key element eliminated. Moreover, the Hub EIR was certified with the understanding that the 47 Van Ness would connect new residents to the Caltrain Station at 4th and King Streets and other destinations listed above.

The trip from Hayes Valley to Caltrain's 4th & King Station takes twice as long on the Muni Metro as it used to take on the 47 Van Ness, and travels nearly twice the distance on a route that is in large part covered by multiple other trains and bus lines along Market to Embarcadero. By contrast, the 47 Van Ness travels a route that is not covered by other transit, and does so on a faster and shorter path (approximately 2 miles on the 47 Van Ness compared to approximately 4

miles on the K or the T). Additionally, many pandemic-weary passengers prefer to remain on the surface, with open windows, which is not an option on Muni Metro.

In summary, HVNA has long been a champion of San Francisco's transit first policy, and has supported many ballot measures to improve and expand Muni. Instead of cutting routes and consolidating lines, the city, as it densifies, must be expanding capacity on all routes and increasing frequency on all routes. We urge you to work with local elected officials and community organizations to put a funding measure on the ballot at the next reasonable election date (Nov 2022). Most importantly, restore all lines and service levels to pre-pandemic levels at your December 7th SFMTA Board of Directors' hearing.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Laska, President, HVNA



Jason Henderson, Chair, HVNA Transportation & Planning Committee

Jason M Henderson

Barbara Early, HVNA Corresponding Secretary

