



Draft Minutes

Geary Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting 8: Thursday, March 24, 2005

The meeting began at 6:04 PM.

Present were the following members: Aida Berkovitz, Bruce Balshone, Steve Boland, Amber Crabbe, Steve Ferrario, Andrew Green, David Heller, Max Lantz, Brian Larkin, Michael Louie, Bruce Osterweil, David Schaefer.

Absent: Michael Gowe, Ellouise Patton, Kate White, Loren Lopin (Alternate), Maria Sousa (Alternate), Suzanne Tucker (Alternate).

Transportation Authority: Tilly Chang (Deputy Director for Planning), Julie Kirschbaum (Senior Transportation Planner)

1. Introductions

Bruce Balshone, Chair, opened the meeting and called role. Agency staff present in the audience included: Suany Chough (MUNI), Peter Staus (MUNI), Carl Natvig (MUNI), Ken Rich (Planning), and Kevin Keck (DPT).

2. Approval of Minutes

Brian Larkin requested that Authority staff correct the date on the minutes from March to February. There was no public comment on this item. Bruce Osterweil moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Amber Crabbe. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Replace Committee Member Robert Speer

Julie Kirschbaum from the Authority explained that Robert Speer had resigned from the committee due to scheduling constraints. Subsequently, Steve Ferrario nominated Andrew Green to replace Robert Speer, seconded by David Heller. Andrew Green accepted the nomination and the committee voted unanimously to make Green a new member.

Following the nomination, Chair Bruce Balshone indicted concern that the committee was low on alternates and that all the remaining alternates represented District 1. He suggested that staff begin the process for identifying new alternates. Amber Crabbe suggested that staff focus on Districts 5 and 6 to make up for committee members who have resigned.

4. Workshop Rehearsal

Julie Kirschbaum provided an overview of the planned workshop setup and format. She also reviewed the work that staff had done to advertise and promote the workshops including: issued press release, posted on SFGov, sent flyer to organizations and interested individuals, posted on buses and in shelters. Committee members asked if the bus shelter flyers were only up on the Geary lines. Staff indicated that they may have additional resources to post on Clement and to work with Transportation for a Livable City (TLC) to do seat drops. Ms. Kirschbaum circulated a sign-up sheet for members to indicate which workshop they planned to attend and encouraged members to actively promote the workshops.

Following these introductory remarks, the GCAC participated in a round of introductions, emphasizing where they lived and what stakeholders they represented. Subsequently, Julie Kirschbaum from the Authority, Joe Story from DKS Associates and Boris Dramov from ROMA Design Group presented the draft workshop presentation. Following the presentation, Committee members provided feedback on the workshop structure and content.

Aida Berkovitz started the discussion by recommending that the presentation use simpler language. She also suggested that staff put less emphasis on “branding.” Other Committee members supported this comment, indicating that system identity was more important to new riders and tourists than to daily riders. However, David Schaefer commented that identity is a key way to grow ridership. Staff agreed to use less jargon and focus on the term “identity” instead of “branding.”

Steve Boland suggested that the study team emphasize cleanliness as a key bus stop feature. Steve Ferrario suggested that staff go through the slides more slowly, especially during the technical discussion. Max Lantz suggested that staff introduce BRT sooner in the presentation and perhaps return to it more than once, since it would be a new concept for many workshop attendees. He also suggested that staff start more broadly and include background information about the Authority.

David Schaefer commented that the workshop flyer does not define bus rapid transit. He also pointed out the need for a better transition between the first and second segments in the presentation. Finally, he encouraged the study team to move the urban design piece closer to the beginning of the presentation. Steve Boland warned the team to avoid a casual reference to “stop elimination” because it would start up community fears about stop removal. Andrew Green complemented the study team on the presentation and asked if any analysis of ridership had been conducted. Julie Kirschbaum indicated that MUNI was currently conducting a baseline data collection effort on Geary that would provide information about ridership at each stop; however, this analysis would not be ready in time for the workshop. Andrew Green also recommended that the team verify the schedule of the 38L, which was not presented correctly.

Michael Louie suggested spending less time on the historical transportation patterns and more time on the aerial. He also cautioned against putting the BRT examples too early in the presentation. Steve Boland recommended starting with the BRT cartoon graphic.

Aida Berkovitz encouraged the urban design presenter to emphasize that the diagonal parking had strong pedestrian benefits, although it creates conflicts between vehicles and buses. She also suggested that crash statistics be incorporated into the presentation. Amber Crabbe suggested showing the owl service on the service slide. She also asked if the workshops would be tailored to each neighborhood, which could cut down on the time of the presentation. Staff indicated that the workshops had already been advertised as identical across locations.

Amber Crabbe indicated that the LA Metro is not a good shelter example for San Francisco, since it does not include protection from rain and wind. She also pointed out that the LA system did not have high quality pedestrian/waiting areas. Ms Crabbe asked if data was available to explain non-work trip patterns.

David Heller remarked that he enjoyed the presentation, but felt that the commercial aspects of the corridor were overlooked and that parking was presented as a problem, rather than a key corridor benefit. He commented that people do not come to restaurants and shops by transit or bicycle, and that parking was a critical issue for the study.

Steve Boland encouraged the project team to emphasize that urban renewal created a social divide between Japantown and Western Addition. Brian Larkin requested statistics on how long it takes to travel from Downtown to the Outer Richmond. He also requested an analysis of density and percent of residents who are elderly or have a disability. He asked Boris Dramov to define the term “poor visual quality.”

The Chair took public comment on this item. Roger Bazeley reinforced the need for less discussion of the data collection process. He also suggested that the study team should be more upfront about the project benefits (e.g., travel time reduction). The current goals are too abstract. He emphasized that urban design improvements were critical. He pointed out that one of the graphics implies left door buses. He also commented that the center alternative will add parking back to the community because the bus zone can be replaced.

Dan Krause from Rescue MUNI suggested that branding is a key aspect of bus rapid transit, noting that LA attributes a portion of its ridership gains to system identity and marketing. He also commented that transit riders do shop and visit restaurants. He suggested that the study team conduct a demographic study to identify the mode people use to get to local businesses. He liked the urban design discussion, but suggested that the study team avoid prejudging the quality and let people come to their own conclusions.

After the Committee finished providing input into the presentation, Julie Kirschbaum presented the small group exercise. Aida Berkovitz asked who would answer question three, which focused on non-transit users, since most of the workshop participants would be transit users. Bruce Osterweil suggested that the staff avoid focusing on a specific neighborhood, since people will participate from all neighborhoods. Amber Crabbe encouraged the study team to make participants feel heard and to really focus on what will bring people back to subsequent meetings.

5. Next Meeting

The Geary Citizens Advisory Committee will next meet on April 28, 2005 from 6:00 to 7:30 in the Authority's conference room at 100 Van Ness Avenue, 25th Floor.

6. Public Comment

The Chair asked for open public comment. No general public comment was made.

7. Adjourn

David Schaefer moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Steve Boland.