

Mr. Rick Cooper
Senior Environmental Planner
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA. 94103

Dear Mr. Cooper,

Thank you for completing the 19th Avenue Corridor Study.

The WTPCC helped to initiate this study so that the cumulative impact of several individual planning projects could be reviewed comprehensively. Heretofore, each planning review project was examined on an individual basis and approved on its merits. It is our organizations belief that the 19th Avenue Corridor Study will help the Planning Department and the Western neighborhoods mitigate the combined infrastructure impacts of the Parkmerced, San Francisco State University, 800 Brotherhood Way, 77-111 Cambon, 700 Font (SFUSD), Stonestown, 445 Wawona (Arden Wood) and 1150 Ocean (Balboa Park) projects. Planning needs to take a close look at any large new development consisting of 20 residential units or more and/or 50,000 square feet of retail or commercial space that would be located along or near the southern portion of the 19th Avenue Corridor. This forwards the West of Twin Peaks Central Council's (WTPCC) written testimony for the 19th Avenue Corridor Study for your review.

COMMENTS/TESTIMONY

The build-out of the above identified development projects is estimated to increase the city's population by about 16,850 persons by 2030. These projects would include about 7,375 residential units, 460,000gsf of retail uses, 834,000 gsf of institutional/educational uses, 80,000 gsf of office uses, 214,000 gsf of community facilities, and an eight-screen movie theater.

-Water Delivery Services: We agree with your reports assessment that there will be an adequate water supply for the 16,850 people who will be added to the 19th Avenue corridor by 2030. The term adequate is deceptive in that the average daily per capita water consumption in San Francisco is an already a very low 58.7 gallons of water per day. This is an extraordinarily low amount when compared to the 120 gallons per day used by San Jose residents. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) growth demands for San Francisco dictate that the average daily water consumption in San Francisco may be as low as 47.8 gallons per day by 2030. This low level of water usage will become a quality of life issue.

San Francisco's new 25 year master water contract, signed in the Summer of 2009, will allow San Francisco only 81 million gallons per day from Hetch Hetchy. The 94.5 million gallons of available water that you are projecting is not reliable and the SFPUC costs to achieve this 94.5 million is cost prohibitive. The costs to achieve this additional 13.5 million gallons of water (14% increase) through the WISP and Wastewater bonds will double to triple the cost of water and sewage for the average San Francisco consumer. At some point the City is going to have ask if the costs of this additional water and growth is worth burdening the existing population for the 7,375 net housing units that will be added by 2030. The Planning Department will have to monitor city water consumption very closely to make sure that planned growth is feasible AND affordable for the average citizen. The expected high cost of water and sewage will have a tremendous impact on future developments. The citizens of San Francisco will be subsidizing this population growth at a very high cost

-The study's conclusions for "available schooling" is completely inaccurate. The study concludes, "The geographic context for the analysis of the development projects' effects on schools is the entire City, because while school assignments take into account parents' preferences, which often include where a student lives, assignment is not necessarily to the closest neighborhood school." Due to changes in SFUSD admissions policy, proximity to a neighborhood school for elementary and middle-school children will now be prioritized geographically. Showing that there is availability throughout the entire system is no longer relevant. The study needs to show how the additional 1,500 children living in the 19th Avenue Corridor will be able to go to schools in the proximity of their neighborhoods. Under the new SFUSD admission guidelines the schools inside the 19th Avenue Corridor will not be able to adequately service the higher population of children.

Transit: It is commendable that Planning reviewed the 4A - 4C tier approaches. All four are good representations of logical and well thought out transportation options. The true test will be the Planning Departments Tier 5 option. As stated in the study, "Subsequent to the evaluation of these four future tiers, a Tier 5 study will be conducted that assesses large-scale and long-term projects to address corridor-wide transportation issues. This study will be scoped and conducted at a later date." It is critical that this Tier 5 study be completed as soon as possible.

The WTPCC questions the ability of the SFMTA to deliver on its promise of faster transit times. Muni's delivery time has dropped steadily over the last five years. In 2008, the average speed of a Muni bus/train was 9.1mph. The average speed is now 8.75mph and still falling. Declining rates of speed add millions to the costs of operation and continue to make Muni less efficient. Muni light rail used to travel at speeds of up to 55 mph through the West Portal tunnel. Due to poor track conditions, light rail trains are traveling at a much slower rate of speed. Muni may be able to repair rail lines and purchase new buses because of the

capital improvement funds that they are and will be receiving. Muni's operational funds are in shambles with Muni running huge operating deficits that will no longer be paid for through State funding. If Muni follows through on its promised 10% service cuts by May 1st, 2010 Muni will have reduced its operating services by 20% over the last year. As Muni's operational budget continues to go deeper and deeper into debt, there is no reason to be optimistic about increases in Muni's service times. At Muni's current reduction rate in operational service, Muni may be operating at 50% of its current service level by the time that the 19th Avenue Corridor developments are completed. Muni's lack of service will cause more people to rely on automobiles and create higher rates of traffic congestion and a greater need for parking.

On page III.3 of the study states the following, "In addition, the review of operating speeds indicated that bus delays would noticeably increase under Tier 1 and Tier 2 conditions, due to projected congestion levels along the streets. The transportation improvements included in Tier 3, Tier 4A, Tier 4B and Tier 4C would help reduce the travel time increases, but buses would still operate more slowly than they do under existing conditions, which could have impacts on Muni schedule adherence and service reliability."

The 19th Avenue Corridor study is only evaluating transportation from a capital improvement point-of-view and must consider the SFMTA's operational budget constraints. Federal, State and developer funding will allow the city to proceed and build Tier 5 plan, but operationally Muni will not be able to perform to anticipated standards. We believe that the Planning Department should take a close look at what has happened at St. Francis Circle. This main intersection has the longest stoplight waiting times in San Francisco. These excessive intersection waits are caused by the Muni light-rail trains running directly through the intersection. The 19th Avenue Corridor plan will have the same problems at Ocean Avenue and going into the Park Merced development. Although the cost is anticipated to be four times greater, the Planning Department's Tier 5 plan should analyze having the Muni light-rail trains go underground at the Ocean Avenue intersection and going into Park Merced. Without the underground option, the expected increases in population and traffic will greatly impede 19th Avenue traffic.

Parking: The 19th Avenue Corridor plan is projecting that there will be a substantially greater parking demand primarily focused near Stonestown, SFSU and Parkmerced. The study states, "It is likely that both SFSU and Parkmerced will have a substantial parking shortfall. As a result, the unmet parking demand in the area would tend to spill over into the adjacent residential neighborhoods, exacerbating any current parking problems." The bicycle lanes installed along Holloway Avenue would also reduce existing parking. Under new city planning guidelines parking is almost eliminated from the Balboa Park development and is rationed by income at Parkmerced. City Planning's insistence on higher density housing developments with limited parking will only discourage a limited number

of people from owning an automobile. These cars will be warehoused in existing neighborhoods. As Muni fare costs soar and service becomes more constricted and unreliable, development residents will purchase MORE cars and have less incentive to ride Muni. Parking along the 19th Avenue Corridor and in the surrounding neighborhoods will be horrendous.

CONCLUSION:

The WTPCC wants to again thank the San Francisco Planning Department for producing such a detailed plan of the 19th Avenue Corridor developments. It is our hope that the approved developments will lead to a satisfying and affordable quality of life for West side neighborhoods. We are concerned that the Planning Departments good intentions may lead to unintended negative consequences with respect to water availability, school admissions, mass transportation operations and parking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George Wooding
President
West of Twin Peaks Central Council