



16 October, 2009

Tom Nolan
Chairman, Board of Directors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103-1267

Dear Chairman Nolan:

On behalf of the 10,000 members of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, I am writing to voice our strong support for the *2009 Extended Meter Hours Study* prepared by San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency staff at your direction earlier this year, and urge you to adopt and expeditiously implement the recommendations from the Study. Extending SFMTA's parking meter operating hours is good for business, good for equity, good for Muni, and good for SFMTA's mission.

Extended parking hours are good for local business. Extending parking meter operating hours will not deter customers from patronizing businesses; on the contrary, it is likely that extended metering will benefit business, as it has in many other U.S. cities which have implemented extended meter hours (among them Denver, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston). As the Study reminds us, parking meters were originally introduced in order to increase the availability of parking for the sake of local business. By creating greater turnover for parking spots in busy shopping districts, extending meter hours allows more customers to stop and shop. Other U.S. cities have recognized this benefit and have proven it works.

Extended parking hours are equitable. After your budget deliberations earlier this year, you voted to reduce Muni service and increase fares; however, parking rates remained stable and owners of private autos were offered unlimited, free parking all day on Sunday and after 6:00 PM throughout the city. Many have and will continue to argue that people needed free parking in order to shop or attend religious services; however, the nearly 25% of San Franciscans who do not own a car and depend on transit to shop, play, work, and worship were not given a similar free ride. This discrepancy is highly inequitable and contradicts the Transit First Policy of San Francisco. Why do we reward driving with deep discounts when transit is denied them?

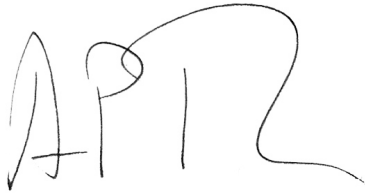
Extended parking hours are good for Muni. Private vehicle traffic is a top cause for Muni's low on-time performance, and providing free, unmitigated private auto storage encourages individuals to drive, rather than take transit. By raising fares and cutting service for Muni riders without asking auto drivers to share the burden, you will

continue to exacerbate Muni delays, imperiling SFMTA efforts to achieve the voter-mandated 85% on-time rate.

Extended parking hours serve SFMTA's long-term goals. Executive Director Ford has called for SFMTA to lead a dramatic shift in transportation modes in the next 20 years, cutting auto usage in half (from the current 60 to 30 percent), boosting transit use from 20 to 30 percent, and doubling trips made by walking and cycling (from 20 to 40 percent). The SFMTA Board of Directors must act to support this vision and one of the best ways to support this is to discourage casual auto use and increase the cost of private auto storage in the public realm, as recommended by staff.

Again, we urge you to adopt and expeditiously implement the recommendations from the Study, and thank you for your thorough and considered attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'APT' followed by a stylized flourish.

Andy Thornley
Program Director
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

cc: Mayor Gavin Newsom
Nathaniel Ford, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
San Francisco Board of Supervisors