



Public Affairs Committee

September 9, 2025, 9:00 am – 10:30 am

291 Geary Street, Suite 200 or Zoom

Minutes

In attendance: Russell D. Keil Jr. (The Keil Companies), Donald Thomas (Club Donatello), J. Timothy Falvey (Hanford – Freund & Co.), Brian Fenwick (The Marker Hotel), Jessie Kozar (John Varvatos), Beau Simon (Womble Bond Dickinson), Peter Hart (Hilton & Parc55), Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel), Spencer Sechler (ACE Parking), Darcy Brown (SF Beautiful), and Tammy Brock (Property Owner).

Staff: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Daniela Vasile (COO), Ken Rich (Director of Policy & Economic Development), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), and E. Ryan Santamaria (Intern).

Guests: Julie Kirschbaum (SFMTA), Amanda Eakin (SFMTA), Hank Wilson (SFMTA), and Maia Small (SFMTA).

1. Call to order and Introductions.

Brian Fenwick called the meeting to order at 9:09 am. Marisa announced that moving forward, the committee chair will preside over the meeting and do roll call. Brian Fenwick proceeded to do roll call.

2. Public Comment

Marisa shared that there is a press conference with Mayor Lurie taking place in the Union Square Plaza after the committee meeting. The mayor will speak to the next 100 days, his objectives for the City, and actions to achieve them.

The committee provided some updates on the ownership of Hilton and Parc55. Full disclosure will be made public by the end of October.

Marisa congratulated Tammy Brock, as new store, Dandelion Chocolate currently resides on her property block.

3. Announcements & Updates

- Welcome Brian Fenwick – Official PAC Chair!
Marisa welcomed Brian Fenwick as the new official PAC Chairman, succeeding the role held by Erik Murray.
- Marketing and Economic Development Summit Recap
Marisa thanked the Marriott Union Square Hotel for hosting the Alliance's Marketing and Economic Development Summit recently. She recognized Hollie for kicking off the event, demonstrating how everyone in the district can leverage the Alliance's marketing efforts. Ned Segal served as the keynote in a fireside chat with Marisa, sharing his perspective on downtown's recovery and reaffirming his commitment to the Powell redesign. He also highlighted leveraging new openings, such as Stephen



Curry's Bourbon Bar at the Westin St. Francis, to sustain momentum in the district and create a welcoming environment for return-to-office.

- PermitSF

Brian Fenwick encouraged the committee to pass along the deck from the last meeting that highlighted the improvements in the permitting process. PermitSF is part of the Mayor's 100 days that is focused on immediate changes around public safety, economic recovery, and internal changes within his administration.

- Strategic Plan 2026

Marisa updated the committee that the Alliance has started the process of the strategic plan. The Alliance will be releasing an RFP and will have the work focus on addressing ongoing community with an emphasis on economic development. Further discussion took place regarding the timeline of when to expect the strategic plan to commence.

- Project Updates:

- Maiden Lane – 9/11 Kick Off Event

Ken informed the committee that Maiden Lane will have weekly programming as part of a grant given from OEWD to engage the community and revitalize Maiden Lane. The Alliance will be hosting "Afternoons on the Lane," formerly known as "Lunch on the Lane," a community-wide program for local restaurants and cafes to draw foot traffic onto Maiden Lane with live entertainment. The launch date of the program is on September 11th.

- Winter Walk

Winter Walk will be making its return this holiday season on Stockton Street again from December 13-24. JP Morgan Chase will be the presenting sponsor and the Alliance continues to work with Kevin Bartram to secure additional sponsorships. Marisa expressed her gratitude towards the DDC for their grant to support Winter Walk.

- CCTA Activation

The Cable Car Turnaround has now been activated with the second art installation: Curb-A-Peel, a banana that serves as a bench and photo op, with live performances such as salsa dancing and activities such as embroidery workshops and face paintings on the launch date. This installation will run until the end of September with the third installment scheduled for October 3rd.



Powell Street

Marisa and Ken noted that property owners along Powell Street are being contacted regarding the lighting installation for the Powell Street Project. Each owner will need to sign a license agreement consenting to the installation.

- Union Square Alliance 2nd Annual Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, October 1st

Marisa reminded the committee to mark their calendars for the Second Annual Board of Directors Meeting set for Wednesday, instead of the usual Thursday.

4. Action to approve the August 12, 2025, minutes.

Marisa directed the committee to review the August 12, 2025, meeting minutes.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the minutes from August 12, 2025, as motioned by Russell D. Keil Jr. and seconded by Brian Fenwick

5. SFMTA Updates: Meters, Powell Street, Market Street, and Budget

Marisa gave a warm welcome to the SFMTA team and proceeded with introductions.

The SFMTA prepared discussions about three topics: parking, Market Street, and overall financial update of MTA's budget.

Hank Wilson noted that Union Square experiences significant loading activity and that its streets were not designed for general parking, hence the need for district garages. SFMTA staff recently surveyed parking and loading regulations, some dating back to the 1990s, and are testing color-coded signage to simplify rules for drivers. Darcy Brown raised concerns about managing heavy downtown traffic, which Hank plans to review with SFMTA engineers. Russ Keil reflected on how garage operations have changed since nonprofit management days, when safety was higher due to more on-site staff. He and others recommended increasing staffing and improving signage. Marisa added that the Alliance is in talks with the DDC about valet parking. Hank appreciated the feedback, noting its value in attracting more visitors to downtown.

Julie Kirschbaum provided an overview of current SFMTA challenges. Although downtown covers only 4% of the city's land, it generates 10% of its economic activity. She emphasized public transit's role in economic recovery, affordability, and access to opportunity. Muni now operates nearly all electric or hybrid renewable diesel vehicles, contributing just 0.02% of city emissions.

Julie explained that unlike some international systems funded federally, SFMTA relies on local revenue. A major milestone was Prop E in the 1990s, which diversified funding



sources such as garages and parking fees. She outlined ongoing investments in service quality, safety, cleanliness, and frequency, improving reliability and reducing wait times.

Ridership has rebounded since the pandemic, though revenue remains about one-third of pre-pandemic levels. Discussion followed regarding fare structures and budget recovery strategies.

6. Adjourned: 10:30 a.m.

7. Upcoming Events

- 2nd Annual Board of Directors Meeting- Wednesday, October 1, 2025- Hotel Nikko
- Next Committee Meeting- Tuesday, October 14, 2025 (last one of the year!)
- Safe Shopper- TBD
- Save the Date! Union Square Foundation Annual Holiday Fundraiser- Dec 4
- Winter Walk- December 13-24