



## Public Affairs Committee

February 10, 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), Lauren Ellis (CK Contemporary), Beau Simon (Womble Bond Dickinson), Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel), Pulkesin Mohan (Taj Campton Place), Karin Flood (Flood Building), Tammy Brock (Property Owner), and Darcy Brown (TMAAF).

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

**Guests:** Rodney Fong (SF Chamber of Commerce),

#### 1. Call to order and Introductions

Marisa Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

#### 2. Public Comment

Marisa shared highlights from the incredible week of Super Bowl events and activations taking place throughout the city. She also reported that there were no incidents in Union Square and noted the positive feedback she has been receiving from retailers.

#### 3. Announcements & Updates

- PAC 2026 meeting dates

Brian Fenwick shared that, moving forward, the committee will transition to meeting every other month rather than monthly in order to align with the schedule of the Alliance's other committee meetings.

- Union Square in Bloom 2026

Marisa stated that Union Square in Bloom is approaching, as the Alliance is preparing marketing collateral as well as incorporating a new program called Local Gardens. The concept is that each month, there will be a new "Local Garden" theme featuring a curated group of three to five local businesses, each providing a limited-time offering promoted and available for one week. The goal of this program is to drive consistent foot traffic to a variety of local businesses in Union Square through exclusive, themed offerings. Additionally, Marisa encouraged the committee to bloom their businesses. Marisa encouraged the committee to save the dates for Tulip Day on March 21<sup>st</sup> and Mother's Day Fashion Show on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

- Strategic Plan update

Marisa shared that the Alliance will be working on their strategic plan with Beacon Economics, a firm that specializes in collecting and analyzing data, as well as Uncommon Bridges, another firm that has experience with working with other BIDs.



Uncommon Bridges will be the day to day facilitator while Streetsense will be a sub-contractor under them focusing on retail analysis. This strategic plan is for the bigger picture in preparing for renewal of the BID in 2029. The goal of the strategic plan is to set out the organization's goals the next few years as the organization prepares for renewal in 2029.

- Clean Streets and Fair Pay Act

Marisa shared an update with the committee regarding proposed prevailing wage legislation that would require certain city-contracted street cleaning and ambassador services to meet prevailing wage standards. The committee discussed the potential impacts the legislation could have on contracted services, operational costs, and public-private partnership models across San Francisco. Marisa also informed the committee that the San Francisco Benefit District Alliance is closely monitoring the legislation and is considering submitting a letter expressing concerns about how the proposal could impact BIDs and CBDs if they are not exempted.

- Project Updates:

- Farmer's Market

Brian Fenwick shared with the committee that he and the Alliance are in talks with the Agriculture Institute to potentially host a farmer's market on Ellis Street. The goal is to have a June/July 2026 launch.

- Maiden Lane Resolution

Marisa reported that the Alliance is partnering with Supervisor Danny Sauter's office on proposed adjustments to the vehicular street closure hours on Maiden Lane as part of a broader entertainment zone initiative. The current closure hours are from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and the Alliance is seeking to extend them to 8:00 PM to better accommodate evening activations and events. The next step in the process is approval from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board. Marisa also recognized Marlenne Mendoza for her leadership and efforts in activating Maiden Lane.

- Powell Street

Marisa reported that the Alliance has been collaborating with the Mayor's Office, OEWD, and additional city departments on the Powell Street Improvement Project. The project is anticipated to begin construction in fall 2026, with the goal of a ribbon-cutting ceremony targeted for completion by Thanksgiving 2027.

#### 4. Action to approve the October 14, 2025, minutes.

Marisa directed the committee to review the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes.

**Action:** The committee unanimously approved the minutes from October 14, 2025, as motioned by Russell D. Keil, Jr. and seconded by Lauren Ellis.



## 5. Chamber of Commerce Updates; MTA tax measures

Rodney Fong, President and CEO of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, joined the meeting and provided an overview of two transit funding measures and two executive tax proposals currently being discussed.

The first two measures focused on transit funding. The first, the Muni Parcel Tax proposed by Mayor Daniel Lurie, is projected to generate approximately \$183–187 million annually to help address Muni’s estimated \$307 million operating deficit. Under the proposal, single-family homes under 3,000 square feet would pay approximately \$129 annually, with exemptions available for seniors, while larger residential and commercial properties would pay higher amounts based on square footage.

The second measure discussed was the Connect Bay Area Act (SB 63), a proposed regional five-county sales tax expected to generate approximately \$980 million annually for transit operations and improvements. It was noted that the two measures are intended to work together, and that failure of either measure could result in significant Muni service reductions, including cuts to approximately one-third of transit lines and increased wait times.

The third item discussed was a proposal from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to increase cable car fares from \$9 to \$15 and eliminate certain Clipper Card discounts for Muni riders. Committee discussion emphasized the cultural and economic importance of the cable car system as one of San Francisco’s top tourist attractions. Additional discussion focused on preserving the cable car system within the City Charter and ensuring it remains a priority for the City.

The fourth topic focused on an executive tax proposal commonly referred to as the “CEO Tax,” a proposal backed by SEIU and IFPTE that would significantly increase the Overpaid Executive Tax by shifting calculations from San Francisco-based employee comparisons to global employee comparisons. It was noted that the proposal would reverse portions of the 2024 Proposition M agreement, which reduced the Overpaid Executive Tax by 80%.

In response, the Chamber, in partnership with Advance SF, is supporting a counterproposal that would pause scheduled tax increases, increase the small business exemption threshold from \$5 million to \$10 million, and provide a 10% tax reduction for mid-sized businesses. Rodney shared that current polling shows the countermeasure outperforming the labor-backed proposal by approximately 8–10%. The Chamber is currently seeking \$2.5 million in campaign funding and building a long-term advocacy fund.



Discussion also took place regarding the potential impact these tax measures could have on leasing activity and business attraction in Union Square. It was noted that despite concerns surrounding the proposals, developers and retailers continue to express interest in investing and doing business in Union Square.

**6. Adjournment:** 10:13 a.m.

**7. Upcoming Events**

- Next PAC Meeting – Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 9am
- Tulip Day – March 21<sup>st</sup>, 12pm, at Union Square Plaza
- Alliance Board of Directors Meeting 0 Thursday, March 26, 2026 – Clift Royal Sonesta
- Union Square Foundation Annual Luncheon – Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> – Westin St. Francis. Sponsorships and ticket sales soon to come.