



Public Affairs Committee

July 14, 2026, 9:00 a.m. -- 10:30 a.m.

291 Geary Street, Suite 200 or Zoom

Minutes

In attendance: Jessie Kozar (John Varvatos), Julia Rome (Gap), Karin Flood (Flood Building), Spencer Sechler (ACE Parking), Thomas Brock (168 Powell LP), J. Timothy Falvey (Hanford – Freund & Co.), Wes Tyler (Chancellor Hotel), Lori Coleman (Kidder Matthews), Pamela Mendelsohn (Maven Properties), Donald Thomas (Club Donatello), Russel D. Keil, Jr. (The Keil Companies), Brian Fenwick (The Marker Hotel), Lauren Ellis (CK Contemporary), and Beau Simon (Cooper White & Cooper).

Staff: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Brooke-Ray Demko (Director of Public Realm), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant, Kat Daniel (Economic Initiative Consultant), Calvin Tobin (Intern), and Isabelle Ho (Intern).

Guests: Kunal Modi (Chief of Health and Human Services for San Francisco)

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Marisa Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. Public Comment

Marisa called for public comment. She reminded the committee that on Saturday, July 11th, First Lady Becca Prowda hosted a citywide volunteer day. The Alliance partnered with Karin Flood to volunteer at Project Open Hand, where the group prepped vegetables and packaged homemade granola. She also shared that following the morning of service, the Union Square Foundation was recognized as the nonprofit beneficiary at SF Magazine's Best of the Bay event. At the event, the organization raised approximately \$10,000 for the foundation through donations and a silent auction.

3. Announcements

- Staffing Update

Marisa introduced Cal Tobin to the committee, the Alliance's summer intern. She then introduced Isabelle Ho as the second intern for the Alliance for the next six months. Isabelle shared she graduated from UC Davis and her excitement in joining the team. Marisa continued to share as part of the strategic plan, the organization is exploring how to best support and build capacity to support marketing and events.



- Strategic Plan Update

Melanie shared that a draft of the Alliance's strategic plan will be shared at the July board meeting, and the final version is aimed at being ready for review and final approval by the September board meeting.

- Economic Initiatives Summit

Marisa shared that the Alliance is preparing for the annual summit which has a new focus on economic initiatives. The DDC, along with other Alliance partners, will be invited to share the work they have been doing as part of the downtown recovery, and the organization plans to share the final version of the strategic plan as well as the Beacon Economics data to review the progress of Union Square.

- Union Square in Bloom 2026

Marisa noted that the Union Square in Bloom initiative is coming to an end of August, and she provided a recap of the successful Local Garden activations that have taken place so far. Marisa added that Bars and Nightlife Week is approaching from July 20th through the 26th to celebrate the nightlife offerings in our district. Then from August 17th through the 23rd, Arts and Culture Week will be taking place, and Union Square in Bloom will finish off with the Bloomies (August 27th, 5:30 p.m., at the Marker Hotel), an award ceremony honoring the best Bloomed businesses.

- Project Updates:

- Farmer's Market

Brian shared that he has been working with the Agricultural Institute to oversee and manage the proposed farmers' market in Union Square. As part of the planning process, a survey will be created and distributed to assess vendor interest and participation. Marisa added that this farmers' market will take place once a week, most likely on Wednesdays, on Ellis Street between Stockton and Powell.

- Maiden Lane Resolution

Marisa reminded the committee that Maiden Lane is officially an entertainment zone. The Alliance is working on a resolution to keep the gates closed from 10am-8pm daily versus the current hours of 11am-6pm. The resolution is currently with MTA who will need to take it to the Board of Supervisors for approval.



Marisa also noted that the Alliance is working with the city to host this year's Winter Walk on Maiden Lane. Bespoke huts will be obtained to fit properly in Maiden Lane. Currently, the Alliance is also working with the city to lay out a plan for managing a temporary pedestrian crosswalk during this holiday market. The Alliance continues to work towards raising more sponsorships, and interested sponsors are encouraged to reach out. Marisa added that JP Morgan has returned as this year's presenting sponsor, and she expressed gratitude for their meaningful support.

4. Action to approve the May 12, 2026, meeting minutes.

Marisa directed the Committee to review the minutes.

Action: The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes of May 12, 2026, as motioned by Russel D. Keil, Jr. and seconded by J. Timothy Falvey.

5. Powell Redesign Project Update; Brooke-Ray Demko

Brooke Ray (BR) shared that the Powell construction timeline remains on track for approximately one year, potentially beginning in late October 2026 and concluding by November 2027, with the goal of disrupting only one holiday season. The \$43 million project includes \$26 million in bond funding and \$17 million in private fundraising through the Downtown Development Corporation, allocated between the Alliance and DPW. Clark Construction has been hired and is currently reviewing sequencing, pricing, and scheduling.

BR noted that the Alliance is developing an RFP for the catenary lighting and securing insurance for project elements that will ultimately be transferred to the Alliance. The Alliance is also coordinating with DPW and Clark Construction on a unified communications strategy. Clark Construction is working with Muni to minimize cable car closures, while the project team is gathering feedback from affected businesses and property owners to accommodate key events. The goal is to maintain storefront access and regular business hours throughout construction.

6. Economic Development Update; Kat Daniel

Kat shared that the Alliance is developing a "white paper" to outline its role in economic development initiatives as part of the Strategic Plan. Drawing on Beacon Economics' analysis, she noted that the most significant post-pandemic shifts in Union Square include changes in retail and shopper behavior, as well as reduced office commuting. The Alliance is exploring what these trends mean for the district



and how to build a sustainable economic base that serves local and international visitors, while continuing to support office workers and residents. The white paper will also outline the roles of various economic development stakeholders and how the Alliance can support their efforts. Feedback is welcome as the work develops.

7. Guest Speaker: Kunal Modi; Chief of Health and Human Services for San Francisco

Kunal Modi outlined three key priorities he has been helping advance on behalf of the Mayor: “breaking the cycle” of homelessness, addiction, and mental health crises; protecting the City’s “safety net,” including public health, Medicaid, and food assistance programs; and advancing the Mayor’s “family opportunity agenda” to make San Francisco more livable for families.

Regarding “breaking the cycle,” Kunal emphasized the importance of balancing efforts around homelessness and public health with economic development and public safety. He discussed connecting individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction, or mental health crises with appropriate care and treatment, while also evaluating the City’s broader system of care and how healing spaces can coexist with commercial activation, economic development, and housing.

Kunal also highlighted the City’s focus on improving transparency, accountability, and outcomes across its systems and finances. He acknowledged that there is still significant work to be done around public safety in Union Square but noted the visible progress and expressed the Mayor’s commitment to continuing efforts to support the district.

Marisa asked about the Mayor’s Office’s biggest challenges and how the Alliance could help. Kunal discussed the challenges created by Proposition 47 and the need for both voluntary and involuntary pathways to address homelessness, substance use, and mental health crises. He also emphasized the importance of stronger coordination across City departments and continued investment in Union Square.

8. Adjourned – The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

9. Upcoming Events

- Next PAC Meeting – Tuesday, September 8th, 2026, at 9 a.m.
- Alliance Board of Directors Meeting – Thursday, July 23, 2026, at Hotel Nikko