

Editor,

SPUR's reputation for thoughtful analysis and fair presentation of public policy alternatives regrettably suffered as a result of its 1.05 report entitled "The Downtown Parking Solution." While several useful suggestions were made, the report was largely a justification for reallocating street and parking space to increased bicycle use. No wonder; the report's principle author is the former head of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. And so, rather than a broad examination of all forms of transportation into and around San Francisco, SPUR's normally excellent public policy review was compromised.

Consider that there was scant mention of MUNI, taxicabs, CalTrain, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, AC Transit, or the ferries... and nothing at all about either the TransBay Terminal or Bay Bridge reconstruction! If we're tackling transit policy, shouldn't we expand our discussion beyond the tired parking vs. bicycles rhetoric?

We should begin with this premise: San Francisco must plan to enable economic growth and increased commerce. Economic expansion (and the consequent financial benefits to the local citizenry) results from a plan that accounts for the needs of an expanding workforce, and supports daily shoppers and visitors from throughout the region. Adequate parking availability is one critically important component that is given short shrift in SPUR's recent analysis. A balanced transportation demand management strategy must include new parking; transit system improvements and flexibility for route changes; better signage; improved connections between transit modes; better (and easier access to) transit information; and increased housing density and more mixed-use development along transportation corridors.

Furthermore, SPUR recently supported a dramatic increase in the city's Transit Impact Development Fee, as well as broadening its applicability to all commercial property development. But rather than create a new parking development fee as you suggest -- on top of all other development fees, why not allocate some of those TIDF funds to providing shuttle service between remote parking lots and San Francisco's CBD, Union Square, and other key districts?

Again, some of the 1.05 report's recommendations are certainly laudable. However, on the whole, it does not well serve our City's long-term economic needs. Send this particular paper back to the drawing board in order to more fully examine transportation management, with the ultimate aim being a policy that supports job growth and increased retail commerce.

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