



**MYRNA MELGAR**

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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**SUPERVISOR MELGAR URGES SFMTA TO EXPEDITE RESTORATION OF  
TRANSIT LINES CUT DURING PANDEMIC**

*Residents left stranded in hard-to-reach neighborhoods demand transit line access*

**SAN FRANCISCO**— Supervisor Melgar introduced legislation joined by Supervisors Mandelman, Mar, Safai, Chan, Haney, Preston, Stefani, and Peskin urging the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) to expedite the return of transit lines indefinitely cut during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SFMTA reduced service on many transit lines during the shelter-in-place order, however, regular vital routes such as the F, 6, 18, 21, 23, 31, 35, 36, 52, and 53 have remained completely out of service. SFMTA suspended their light rail system, which has provided limited bus substitutions for light rail routes including N Judah, L/K Taraval Ingleside, and M Oceanview. While some of these lines served student commuters, they were relied upon by many seniors and other individuals who need to access essential services such as child care, work, grocery store, and medical appointments. SFMTA launched the Essential Trip Card (ETC) program for seniors in order to access subsidized taxi rides, but it is limited and is still cost-prohibitive for residents living on fixed incomes.

“Frankly – The SFMTA needs to recognize that reinstating these lines is an equity issue. Transit is an essential service and we cannot possibly best serve all neighborhoods in San Francisco if we are going to purely look at ridership levels,” said the Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee, Supervisor Myrna Melgar. “In my district residents with mobility limitations and our senior community have to withstand sharp hills with steep inclines. They are deeply constrained by the suspension of these vital transit lines as they heavily rely on accessible transit to get across the city. When the 36 and the 6 were suspended, it effectively cut off many of our seniors from traveling for essential services.”

“The pandemic has severely challenged our aspirations to be a transit-first city,” said Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, who serves as Chair of the County Transportation Authority Board. “Nearly a year after Muni dramatically cut service, too many residents in neighborhoods like Diamond Heights and Glen Park remain cut off from the community bus routes they once relied on, especially seniors and people with limited mobility.”

“Many of our constituents continue to rely on Muni to get to their doctors appointments, go grocery shopping, or get to work. We need to not only increase the frequency of current bus routes, but bring back essential lines like the 31 Balboa,” said Supervisor Connie Chan.

Supervisor Gordon Mar emphasized the need to re-open with more coordination, “Mobility is a public good and a human right. As more of our City re-opens, we need to re-open transit right alongside it, or risk leaving communities behind, increasing congestion and reliance on cars, and hurting our equity and climate goals”

With a mass vaccination strategy rolling out in the coming months, seniors and people with mobility issues are concerned about how they will easily access sites without dependable, convenient public transit.

"Every day I hear from seniors, low-income residents and people with disabilities in my district begging for bus service so they can meet their essential needs. Our constituents shouldn't have to hold rallies in the street to demand equity in public transit. We know where the need is, our communities know what they need, so let's bring the buses to them," said Supervisor Matt Haney

“As San Francisco reopens to the purple tier, it is imperative that residents in all parts of the City have access to reliable public transit for essential activities, especially for residents in our Southern neighborhoods who rely heavily on public transportation to move around the City”, said Supervisor Ahsha Safai. “Many residents in my District, specifically in the Lakeview/OMI neighborhood, do not have immediate access to essential services within walking distance, such as grocery stores, medical centers and pharmacies, continuous access to COVID-19 testing sites and mass vaccination sites as the City eventually opens appointments to the public. We strongly urge the SFMTA to reinstate critical lines to help our working families stay connected with the rest of the City.”

“I wholeheartedly agree that we must ensure Muni serves our population equitably. As we move towards restoring service in a financially responsible manner, we must continue to focus on those who rely on Muni most.” said Supervisor Catherine Stefani.

The Resolution places urgency on the SFMTA as we head into almost a year of COVID-19. The Board is also committed to working together to solve these issues and will seek inter-agency efforts from key Departments including the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, Department of Public Health, Department of Public works, and the Mayor's office.

Supervisor Dean Preston stated that, “Even during a pandemic, public transportation remains the backbone of sustainable mobility and essential to the recovery of San Francisco. In order to truly address environmental and equity concerns, we must advocate for the return of Muni lines and prioritize public transit and other sustainable modes of transportation.”

Supervisor Myrna Melgar is hopeful that this will create honest and effective partnership with SFMTA moving forward, “I recognize the real budget restraints that SFMTA has endured because of COVID-19 and the public health order. However, we must take action to rectify gaps in service before we permanently lose vital transit lines.”

The Board of Supervisors is expected to vote on this Resolution at its regular meeting next Tuesday, February 2, 2021 and will require the SFMTA to provide a response by April 2, 2021.

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