

3/15/17

S. Caltagirone

**Caltagirone, Shelley (CPC)**

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**From:** Diana Scott <dmscott01@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2017 11:10 AM  
**To:** Secretary, Commissions (CPC)  
**Cc:** Caltagirone, Shelley (CPC)  
**Subject:** YOUR CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC ART FOR Van Ness BRT corridor - today and going forward

Dear Jonas Ionin:

I received late notice from the SFMTA after 5:00 pm last night about your hearing today which will review preliminary public art designs for the Van Ness BRT corridor; I was unable to open the documents until a little while ago, and cannot attend your review session or comment thoughtfully on such short notice.

Let me say, however, that I don't think Mr. Pardo's designs are appropriate, as shown in your supporting document diagrams; they only add injury to the unfortunate removal of many living trees from this corridor, which I opposed and continue to believe is a mistake.

This sense of "play" is neither very original, nor comforting to many of us who travel along Van Ness, although it might work well in an amusement park.

Again, there's no time for me to respond in detail, so I submit these comments hurriedly, since even preliminary drawings have a way of gaining momentum in final "solutions." I would appreciate more time in the future to respond to your, Mr. Pardo's, and other artists' proposals.

I believe he was awarded a commission in 2015 for other metal "tree" sculptures, but have been unaware that this one was in the works, absent notices from SFMTA, Planning, or the Arts Commission. I think much more public input is needed before any art work for the corridor is approved.

Sincerely,

Diana Scott, San Francisco resident



**Caltagirone, Shelley (CPC)**

Received at HPC Hearing 3/15/17  
*S. Caltagirone*

**From:** Mary Miles <page364@earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2017 9:58 AM  
**Cc:** Frye, Tim (CPC); Caltagirone, Shelley (CPC)  
**Subject:** FW: PUBLIC COMMENT, Item 2, March 15, 2017 Hearing, HPC-ARC on proposed VNBRT Installation, Case 2014-001204CWP

**From:** Mary Miles [mailto:page364@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2017 9:53 AM  
**To:** Aaron Hyland (aaron.hyland.hpc@gmail.com) <aaron.hyland.hpc@gmail.com>; Jonathan Pearlman (jonathan.pearlman.hpc@gmail.com) <jonathan.pearlman.hpc@gmail.com>; Karl Hasz (karl@haszinc.com) <karl@haszinc.com>; Andrew Wolfram (andrew@tefarch.com) <andrew@tefarch.com>; John Rahaim (john.rahaim@sfgov.org) <john.rahaim@sfgov.org>; Jonas Ionin@sfgov.org  
**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT, Item 2, March 15, 2017 Hearing, HPC-ARC on proposed VNBRT Installation, Case 2014-001204CWP

**FROM:**  
Mary Miles (SB #230395)  
Attorney at Law  
364 Page St., #36  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 863-2310

**TO:**  
Aaron Hyland, Jonathan Pearlman, and Karl Hasz, Members, and  
Andrew Wolfram, Ex-Officio Member  
Historic Preservation Commission ("HPC") Architectural Review Committee ("ARC")  
John Rahaim, Director  
Jonas Ionin, Planning Commissions Secretary  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission St., 4th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**DATE:** March 15, 2017

**RE:** PUBLIC COMMENT, Agenda Item #2, March 15, 2017 Hearing, Proposed "Van Ness BRT Installation," Case No. 2014-001204CWP

This is public comment on Agenda Item #2 of the March 15, 2017 meeting of the ARC. Please distribute copies of this comment to each Committee member and place copies in applicable files on this proposed Project.

The proposed Project would replace the formal landscaping and trees that complemented the view of the Civic Center with an installation by Jorge Pardo of 26 oversized steel structures consisting of garishly-colored flat circles mounted on poles twenty feet in height. The childish structures would be mounted on the median strip of Van Ness Avenue at both sides of the intersection of McAllister Street in the Civic Center Landmark District. That intersection provides a public view of national landmarks, including City Hall, the War Memorial

Building, and other examples of San Francisco's renowned beaux arts architectural movement that elevated San Francisco's Civic Center to a world-class level of public visual art more than 100 years ago.

The garishly-colored, oversized, primitive, steel structures will block and dominate the view of City Hall and other structures and artifacts, and debase the view and the public purpose and character of the Civic Center.

The Pardo installation is clearly inappropriate for this site and is incompatible in form, scale, color, materials, and massing with the Civic Center Landmark District. The primitive structure is irrelevant and inimical to the public purpose of the Civic Center historic Landmark District. Pardo's idiosyncratic personal style clashes visually and lacks the quality and detailed artistry that characterize the Civic Center structures and artifacts, including City Hall, War Memorial, and other buildings in the beaux arts Greek revival style, as well as the beautiful streetlamps and other historic buildings and artifacts that adorn Van Ness Avenue.

Historic Van Ness Avenue, U.S. Highway 101, has for decades has greeted millions of travelers to and through the center of San Francisco. The grand Avenue was itself adorned with unique streetlamp-posts and formal landscaping that complemented the Civic Center buildings without blocking or distracting the public view of them. The MTA's/SFCTA's "Van Ness BRT" Project is already destroying the Van Ness Avenue streetscape with a half-billion-dollar busway inspired by third-world transit concepts that will permanently eliminate traffic, parking, and turning lanes and convert them into a barren red-painted expanse the center of the grand Avenue from Lombard to Mission Streets, including the segment fronting the Civic Center Landmark District. The Van Ness "BRT" also proposes replacing the graceful, old lampposts, trees, and formal median landscaping, with stark, oversized glaring, generic streetlights, plastic bus shelters with moving advertising displays, and cheap, vanity "art" projects, such as Pardo's, that debase and cheapen Van Ness Avenue and the Civic Center.

The San Francisco Arts Commission's continuing promotion of Pardo's projects on Van Ness Avenue calls attention to the need for reform and oversight of that entity. The public has no say in the Arts Commission's tasteless choices, since that Commission is unaccountable, unelected, and conducts no public proceedings. The Arts Commission has already approved three other large steel monstrosities (called "redwoods") by Pardo at prominent intersections on Van Ness Avenue. Far from enhancing the "public realm," those and the proposed structures degrade the public environment. The Civic Center Landmark District and other important historic districts in San Francisco do not need large, primitive, ugly steel installations that clash with and block views of the graceful landmark structures. The Civic Center beaux arts structures and artifacts stand on their own as art.

The proposed 20-foot steel structures plainly do not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, since they are incompatible with the character of the historic Landmark District, are not "high quality landscaped medians," and debase the formal landscaping and median trees that the City is now removing for its BRT Project. That formal landscaping enhanced the visual character of the Civic Center buildings, and this proposed street will not. That landscaping and those trees should be replaced in kind as they existed before the current pointless "BRT" devastation, not further degraded by visually incompatible clutter.

Your duty is to preserve and protect the historic character, structures, and artifacts of Van Ness Avenue, including its formal landscaping and lamp posts, not to "provide a branded, cohesive identity for the proposed BRT service." (March 8, 2017 "staff report") Much more is required under the National Historic Preservation Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, and other statutes, local ordinances, and policies. The City should mitigate the Van Ness BRT Project's significant impacts on the aesthetic and historic character of Van Ness Avenue, not destroy, cheapen, and degrade it more.

That the HPC has already allowed the destruction of the historic character of Van Ness Avenue does not justify allowing more visual blight, particularly across the street from City Hall and other Civic Center structures and artifacts. The latest Pardo proposal does not help the Historic District. It hurts it, and should be rejected.

Sincerely, Mary Miles





March 8, 2017

Mr. Alan Martinez  
Chair and Historic Architect  
Architectural Review Committee  
Historic Preservation Commission

RE: Jorge Pardo Proposal for Van Ness BRT Bus Stops

Dear Mr. Martinez:

As the developer of 100 Van Ness, 150 Van Ness and the Civic at 101 Polk Street, I am writing to express my enthusiasm and support for the design proposal by the artist Jorge Pardo for a unique lighting component for the Van Ness and McAllister stations of the Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Project.

Pardo is a McArthur fellow who has successfully bridged the worlds of art, design and architecture for over twenty years. He is expert at working across a diverse spectrum of art and architectural genres offering the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment. Pardo's contemporary design for the VN-BRT against the backdrop of the Beaux-arts architecture of City Hall will provide a successful merger of the old and the new. His VN-BRT artwork would be a coup for this city and a significant attraction for the many people who live, work, and visit the area.

Sincerely,



Marc Babsin  
Principal



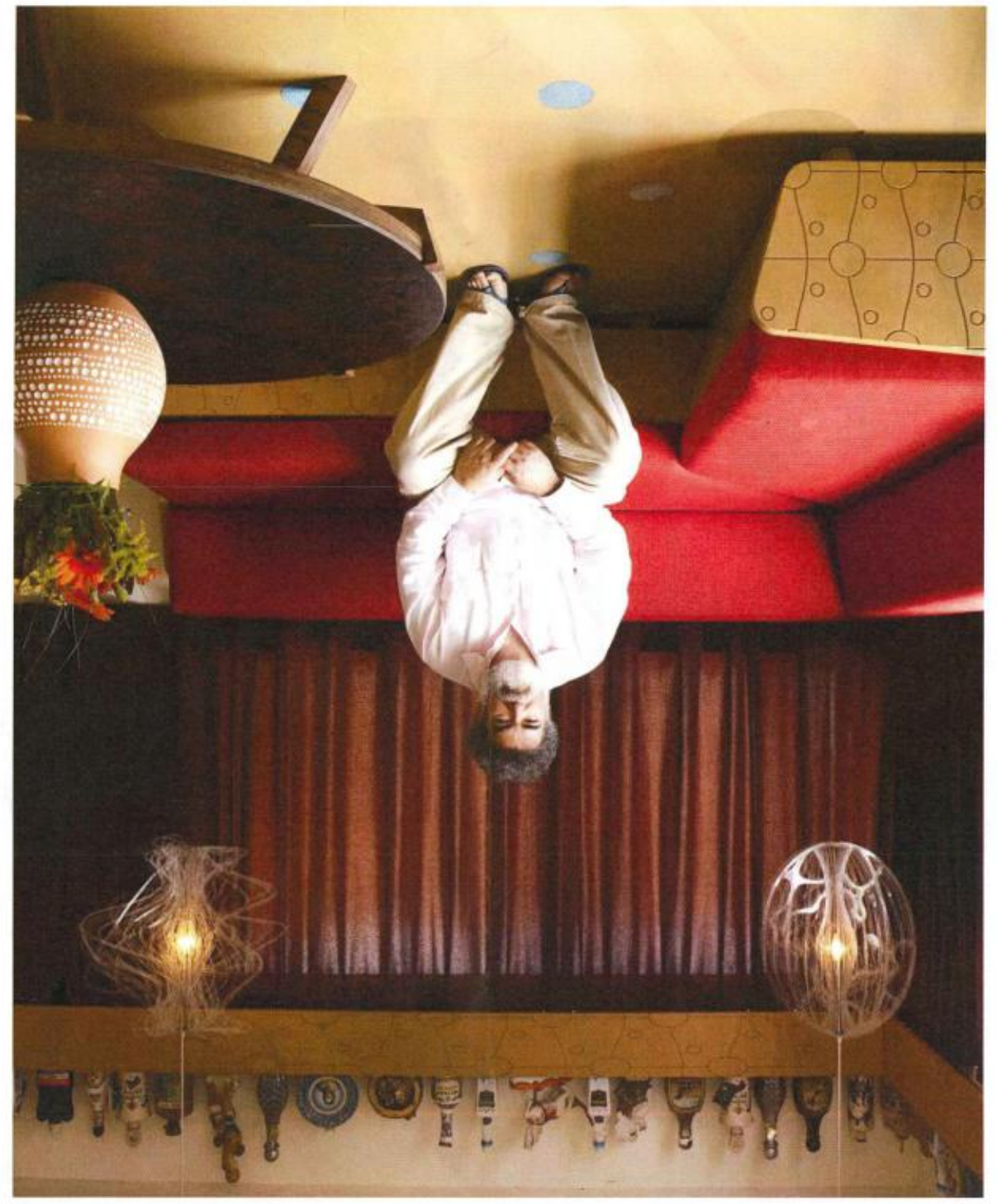


Received at HPC Hearing 3/15/17  
*S. Caligiore*





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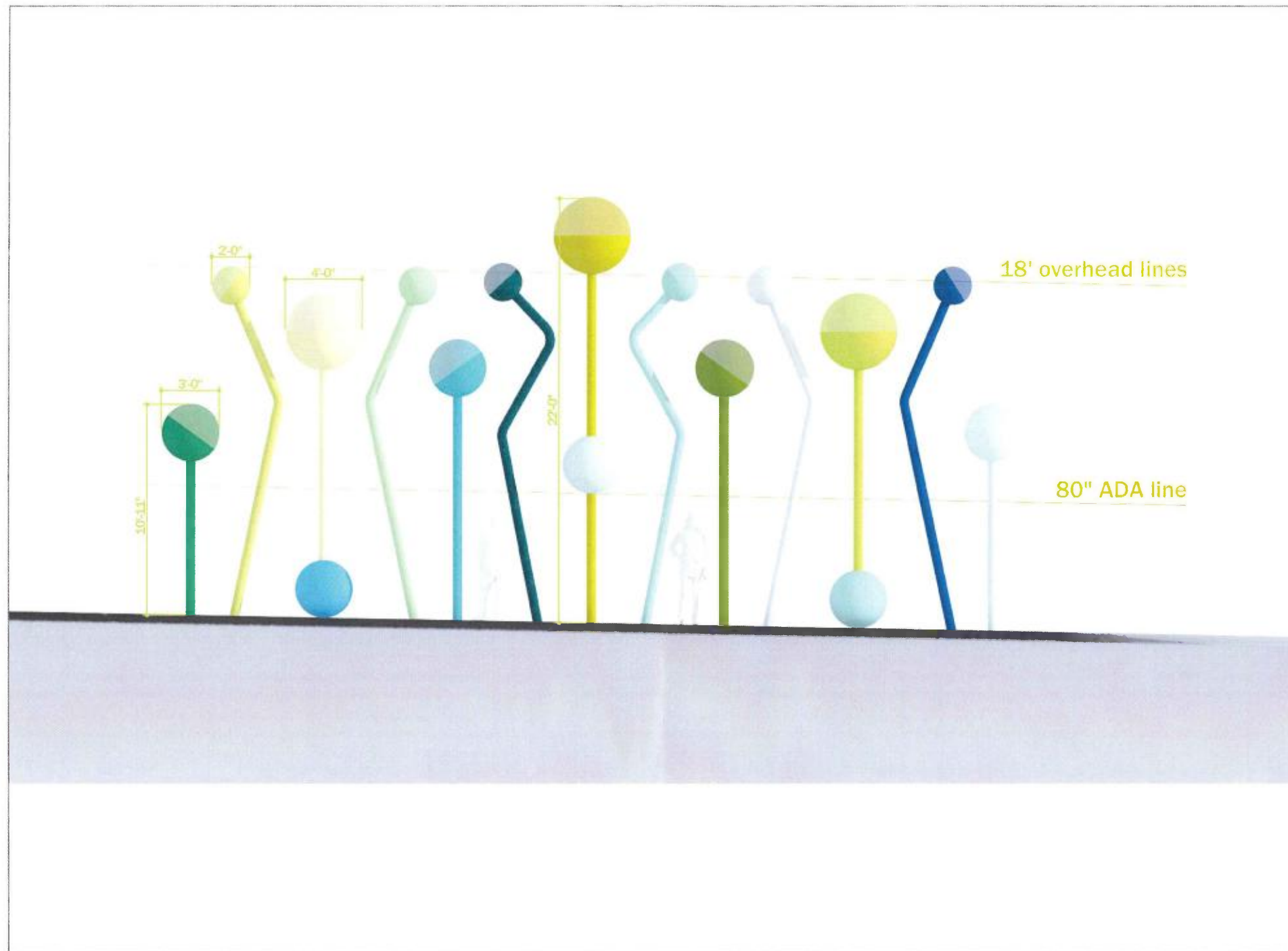


McAllister Southbound: East Elevation



McAllister Southbound: Perspective





McAllister Northbound: West Elevation

