

NOPNA News

nopna.org

A Publication of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

Winter 2024



TSUNAMI Brings the Neighborhood Spirit

By Jason Cauthen

Anchoring the corner of Fulton and Divisadero, Tsunami Panhandle has specialized in serving excellent sushi, shōchū, and sake since 2001. This combination, set in a warm and unpretentious atmosphere, is a long-standing winner. Tsunami thrived long before Divisadero became a “dining destination” — and continues to attract both close neighbors and far-flung visitors more than two decades later.

From the beginning, Tsunami has focused on creating — as described by Bar Manager Victoria — “a cool world of Japanese spirits.” Informed by regular trips to Japan, Victoria is responsible for Tsunami’s wide-ranging selection.

Particularly in the early days, Tsunami’s shōchū (a traditional spirit popular in Japan) offerings set the restaurant apart. Today, with over 100 varieties, one of which is a whisky-like barley shōchū aged in oak, Tsunami touts an incredible variety of shōchū (and sake) and claims status as the “largest shōchū bar in the U.S.” with over 100 varieties. And Tsunami’s reputation extends well beyond San Francisco — it’s visited by international shōchū aficionados and has received write-ups in Japanese publications.

If you’re in the mood for food with your drinks, Tsunami also serves delicious hand-crafted sushi. While not to be mistaken as a “budget restaurant,” offerings such as the smaller “chef’s choice” plates and chirashi bowl make

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FROM THE BOARD

A Commitment to Continuing Neighborhood Improvements



Tim Hickey
NOPNA President

Since the pandemic, there’s been a lot of talk about the importance of community. I knew this was important before, but I’ve really experienced a sense of community over the past few years, and this sense of community is why I originally moved to the neighborhood.

As a proponent for livable streets, I particularly appreciated how the North of the Panhandle Neighborhood Association (NOPNA) Board was advocating for creating parklets, making improvements to the Wiggle bike corridor, and the redesign of Masonic Avenue to help reduce the high rate of injuries and fatalities on that street.

This work made me interested in joining the board shortly after I moved here 13 years ago, why I became President soon after, and why I’m back as board President now. To support Vision Zero SF — San Francisco’s policy to “build safety and livability into our streets” — we created a Vision Zero subcommittee on the NOPNA board. Together, we developed a survey and results revealed a strong support for protected bike lanes along the Panhandle. Seven years later, we’re finally getting those bike lanes, we now have Slow Streets on Lyon and Golden Gate Streets, and over the years we’ve added many subtler road treatments to help improve transit, pedestrian safety, and our bicycle infrastructure.

When I biked in the neighborhood with my toddler a decade ago, I rarely saw other parents biking with kids. Now, I can see a dozen. That’s a beautiful sight! I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Census data shows NOPA has one of the highest rates of bicycle commuters in the city – commuting and bicycling has only increased since we began making improvements.

But we’re not done yet. We’re working to pilot green infrastructure that supports the new state law requiring daylighting — parking removal just before an intersection, a proven pedestrian safety improvement — and hope to add more trees and native vegetation throughout NOPA.

If you have an idea for how to improve the neighborhood in some way, we’d love to hear from you. Attend a future NOPNA Neighborhood General Meeting, and join the conversation about the best use of our neighborhood streets and what we can do to make NOPA more livable, sociable, and safer for all.



Sign up for our email newsletter!

Tim is back as NOPNA Board President. He and his wife, Leah, have lived in the neighborhood since 2010 and can be seen with their son, Liam, biking and walking throughout the area.



North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

NOPNA News is published by the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association for the residents, businesses, and friends of our neighborhood, which is bounded by Masonic Avenue and Turk, and Divisadero and Fell Streets.

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NOPNA is a non-profit organization of neighbors who care about the community, our city, and our world. Our mission is to establish neighborhood unity, maintain multi-ethnic, multi-cultural diversity, foster a sense of neighborhood pride, promote a safe and clean community, and improve the quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood.

Your financial support (Venmo @nopnatreasurer) allows NOPNA to cover the costs of our newsletters, community building events like our block party and holiday party, public art projects in the neighborhood, and other activities that enrich our dynamic neighborhood.

Make a difference on our streets and become a member today!

Contact NOPNA

board@nopna.org
www.nopna.org

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TSUNAMI BRINGS THE NEIGHBORHOOD SPIRIT

Tsunami reasonably accessible. And their Oyster Happy Hour is a great deal — a dozen oysters are included (free) with any bottle of sake or shōchū order.

Like every restaurant in our city, Tsunami was hit hard by the pandemic, but survived through a combination of hustle, creativity, and community-centricity. The team quickly pivoted, repurposing the space, setting up a shōchū and sake retailer/bottle-shop, and augmenting that business with “to-go” cocktails. While indoor dining was paused, Tsunami served customers in its parklet (one of the first pre-pandemic parklets in the city) and commissioned art from neighborhood muralist Todd Kurnat to bring beauty to their boarded windows.

Victoria reports that while the city still doesn’t seem as lively as pre-



COVID, Tsunami is doing well again — well enough, in fact, that they have plans to open a new place in the space next door on Fulton. Stay tuned for details!

Weekends at Tsunami can get busy, but on weeknights it’s still pretty easy to walk-in for a bite or a drink. If you haven’t been (or haven’t been for a while), stop by and pay a visit to this international destination that also happens to be a warm and neighborly restaurant.

Jason is a San Francisco native who has lived in NOPA for over a decade with his wife and two boys. He can be found throwing a football with his kids on Lyon Slow Street.



UPCOMING EVENTS

February 15 — NOPNA

General Meeting

April 18 — NOPNA General Meeting

May TBD — Block Party

June 20 — NOPNA General Meeting

August 15 — NOPNA

General Meeting

September TBD — Sunday Streets

Western Addition

October TBD — Phoenix Day

October 17 — NOPNA

General Meeting

October TBD — Alamo Scare

October 31 — NOPNA

Halloween Block Party

November TBD — NOPNA

General Meeting

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram (@nopna_org), or Twitter (@nopna), and get details and updates by signing up for emails at www.nopna.org.

Recurring Events:

NOPNA General Meetings — 401

Baker Street, 7:30 p.m., 3rd Thursday of even months

SFPD Park Station Community

Meeting — 1899 Waller St, 7:00 p.m., 2nd Tuesday of every month

Farmer’s Market — DMV Parking

Lot, Broderick@Fell, Sundays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Email us to get involved:
board@nopna.org



**North of
Panhandle
Neighborhood
Association**

COMMUNITY IN ACTION: CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS

by Leela Gill



The North of the Panhandle Neighborhood Association (NOPNA) board extends its heartfelt gratitude to our volunteers and sponsors for their important contributions in 2023.

We want to thank the more than 100 volunteers who signed up to help us produce our award-winning newsletter and our neighborhood events. Because of these community-minded neighbors, we're able to deliver an incredible newsletter to 4,000 residents four times per year. These

volunteers also helped with event set up, traffic monitoring, and clean up after our many events including our Annual Block Party, Divisadero Art Walk, Sunday Streets, Phoenix Day, Halloween, and Holiday Party. We would not have been able to pull off safe, fun, and friendly events without these incredible volunteers!

We also want to thank our sponsors, some of whom have been helping NOPNA for more than 20 years. 2023 events would not have come together without the support of our sponsors,

including Avenue Greenlight, Jennifer Rosdail Real Estate, Recology, D5 Supervisor Dean Preston, the families from San Francisco Day School, and Pacific Primary, as well as the many neighbors who donated candy for Halloween.

On December 7, we celebrated these amazing volunteers and sponsors at Club Waziema at 543 Divisadero for our annual Holiday party.

To everyone who has attended our general meetings, volunteered,

and provided financial sponsorship — your contributions helped make 2023 a great year for our community. We look forward to your continued support in 2024 as we strive to foster a vibrant, connected, and thriving neighborhood.

Thank you all for your dedication and support in 2023 to make our community a better place for everyone.

If you're interested in getting involved with your community through NOPNA, go to nopna.org to sign up on our volunteer list or use the QR code below.



GET INVOLVED!

OUR 2023 SPONSORS:

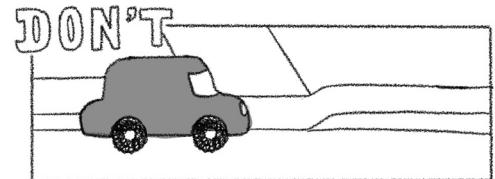
- BASA**, basasf.com
- Mollie Poe and Declan Hickey**, IndigoGroupRealEstate.com
- Jennifer Rosdail Real Estate**, jenniferrosdail.com
- Avenue Greenlight**, avenuegreenlightsf.org
- Recology**, recology.com
- D5 Supervisor Dean Preston**
- D2 Supervisor Catherine Stephanie Che Fico**, chefico.com
- Gamescape**, gamescapesf.com
- Emporium**, emporiumarcadebar.com/locations/san-francisco
- Bob's Donuts**, bobsdonutssf.com
- Souvla**, souvla.com
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Leela is a 20+ year resident active in community safety and event planning. With her two boys and husband, she enjoys every day in the neighborhood.

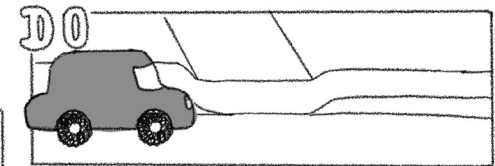
PARKING NEIGHBORLY-LY

Written by Yifat Amir, Illustrated by Diana Advani

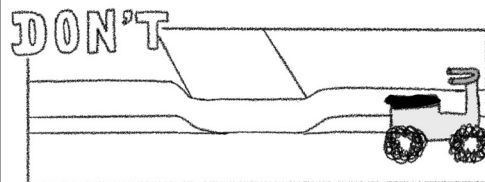
Have you ever driven around looking for street parking only to pass a dozen “almost-spots”? Street parking is a finite resource and our 5x6-block neighborhood has a meager supply. Although we can't easily add new spaces, we can surely better utilize our existing footprint. By practicing some basic neighborly norms, we'll make parking easier and faster for all. A few suggestions:



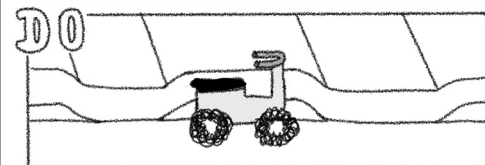
Don't: Park a car beyond the curb-end, partially blocking a driveway or accessibility ramp. This will prevent someone from exiting their garage or safely navigating the crosswalk.



Do: Park closely behind the curb-end, i.e. where the curb starts to slant downwards.



Don't: Leave extra space between your vehicle and the adjacent curb-end/red zone. This creates spaces that are too small for parking and reduces the space on the other side of the vehicle, resulting in fewer cars that could park on that curb.



Do: Park adjacent to the curb-end/red zone. This is helpful, even if it leaves an awkward amount of space on the other end of the vehicle. Your good parking etiquette can later enable a larger vehicle — or additional vehicles — to fit.

One final tip¹: If you live in a building with two or fewer units, you may park parallel blocking your own driveway as long as your license plate is registered to the building's address. But make sure your vehicle does not extend onto the sidewalk or crosswalk!

¹ <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/drive-park/how-avoid-parking-tickets#Driveways,%20Sidewalks%20and%20Crosswalks>

Yifat loves participating in the annual summer and Halloween block parties in the neighborhood. She also enjoys running on NOPA's slow streets and hopes to meet you while she's out walking her cat.

Diana lives in Bernal Heights. She's a part time illustrator who recently finished her first children's book. You might see her in the neighborhood at a Madrone Art Bar figure drawing night or visiting her friend Yifat.

NOBODY IS A STRANGER AT STRANGE EXCHANGE

by Mark S. Smolinski



I was unpacking my bags from a recent trip to Italy and found four sets of travel amenities provided by the airlines in small cloth drawstring bags, one from each leg of the journey. I thought to myself, “These could be useful to someone.” But it’s a hassle to figure out how to get items like these to those in need. Then I remembered “Strange Exchange,” the newest booth at the Divisadero Farmers’ Market.

Strange Exchange’s green banner depicts a melting or decomposing pine cone as it goes back to the earth and contributes to the soil and regrowth. Their mission is to:

1. Extend the life of everyday items and reduce waste going to landfills;
2. Serve as the conduit between one person’s trash and another’s treasure; and
3. build community

by sharing useful items.

In October 2023, Christina Gilyutin and Lela Means, co-founders of Strange Exchange and NOPA residents, embarked on a 10-week pilot program to test out their concept by collecting specific items (see below). All items collected are sorted, counted, and weighed to maintain a record of total weight diverted from landfill. Everything is displayed at their booth and the community is invited to take or leave small items that may be useful to someone else.

The most important tenet of Strange Exchange is to collect

only those items for which a genuine need has been established. Lela is surprised by how much the goods are reabsorbed by the community before being donated to their partners. The path donated items take differs as they’re distributed among their nonprofit partners, including Haight Ashbury Food Program, Larkin Street Youth Services, Lions Club, Lions in Sight, Mercy Housing, Muttville, RecycleBalls, SCRAP, and Urban Angels SF. Strange Exchange enlisted these partners through personal visits. They started at SCRAP and in their first six weeks, they collected over 300 pounds of goods.

While I was interviewing Christina and Lela for this article, Dr. Loren — a physician at the San Francisco County Jail — stopped by the booth to pick up some recent magazines, a hot commodity for those who are incarcerated. Henry, another regular visitor to Strange Exchange, initially



found a pair of shoe laces that were the right size for his shoes. Since then, he's come by every week to say "hello." He recently donated a carpenter's tool belt. Christina shared one of her favorite stories about when a neighbor dropped off a pristine catalog of precious gems from Christie's auction house and ten minutes later another neighbor gasped at the sight of it, claiming it a "must-have" for the gemological society with which he's affiliated. Both Lela and Christina agree that the most exciting aspect of this project is witnessing these types of serendipitous events shared between neighbors.

Christina and Lela are warm, inviting, and sincerely committed to this new endeavor. When asked about any future plans, Lela shared the idea of adding job training for young adults as she needs help each week with setting up the booth, inventory, customer service, social media, and other tasks that could help build skills. The future may also include adding a few service partners, such as a seamstress for simple mending or a bike repair. Perhaps 2024 will see expansion to another farmers market. Strange Exchange recently added a bag tree placed near the Department of Motor Vehicle entrance on

Broderick Street for market goers to take or leave bags for use at the market (hopefully encouraging market visitors to use fewer plastic bags).

So, if you "come for the jewelry and stay for the spiel," you never know what you're going to find at Strange Exchange. Stop by their booth the next time you visit the Divisadero

Farmers' Market and follow them on Instagram @strangeexchangesf. Meeting terrific neighbors like Christina and Lela will certainly inspire you.

Mark is a medical epidemiologist and long-time NOPA resident, along with his Bombay and Bengal cats.

STRANGE EXCHANGE COLLECTION LIST

Arts and Crafts | oil/acrylic paint, brushes, tape, glue, scissors, buttons, yarn, stickers

Accessories | shoelaces, wallets and men's belts (good condition), broken belts (any style)

Corks | natural and synthetic

Cards and Calendars | unused greetings cards, envelopes and postcards, calendars 2024

Gardening | tools, gloves, seeds, plant cuttings

Glasses | sunglasses, prescription glasses, cases, and repair kits

Jewelry | including broken jewelry, watches, single earrings

Kitchen | green berry baskets and pulp berry cartons, plastic wrapped utensils, chopsticks, condiment and sugar packets, wrapped tea bags

Magazines | 2022-present and National Geographic (any year)

Metal (small items) | keys, keychains, locks, bottlecaps, hardware (nails, screws, picture hooks)

Pet Supplies | good condition collars, leashes, and small toys

Tennis balls | any condition

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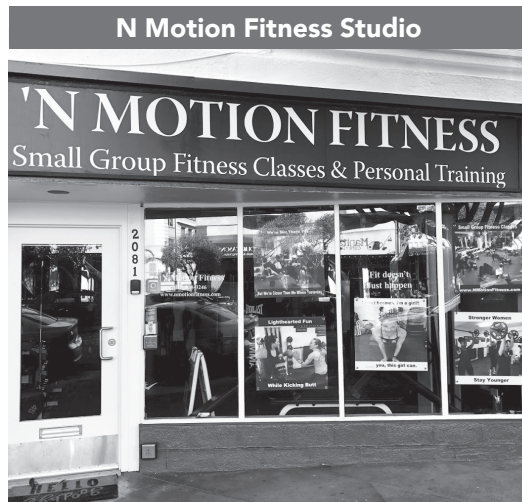
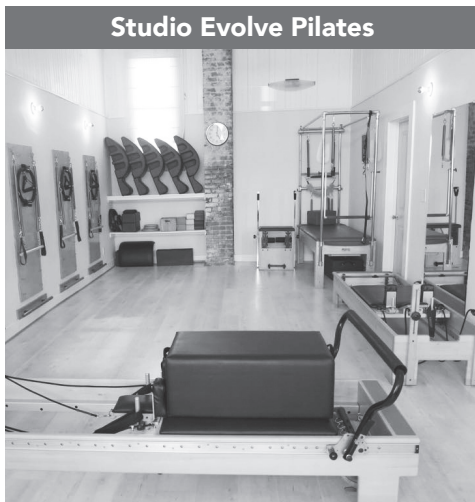
by Anu Rajan

With winter fully upon us and as we begin a new year, NOPA residents looking to stay (or get) in shape have a variety of options. In addition to the bountiful outdoor activities (weather permitting), such as bundling up for a wintertime stroll or run in the Panhandle or Golden Gate Park, NOPA is home to several locally-owned fitness studios with a range of options to help you get your sweat on during these colder months.

Folk NOPA (286 Divisadero), located in a beautiful three-story Victorian on Divisadero, has been a fixture of the NOPA fitness community for nearly 20 years. They offer both yoga and strength training with an array of classes including Yoga Flow, Power Yoga, Pre-and-Postnatal Yoga, Restorative Yin Yoga, Mobility and Strength Training, and High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). Newcomers looking to try out Folk NOPA can check out the \$15 Community Classes on

Saturday mornings from 8–9 a.m. or a monthly Yoga 101 class. Classes at Folk NOPA run from around 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week. <https://folksf.com/locations/nopa/>

KINO SF (1498 Fulton) is a boutique fitness studio located at 1498 Fulton Street (conveniently located across the street from Bob’s Donuts for those planning for a post-workout treat). Kino SF was founded by Justin Stevens, a trainer with over a



decade of experience in the fitness industry. Kino SF offers science-based personal training courtesy of Justin, physical therapy from Doctor of Physical Therapy David Atwood, and donation-based yoga classes led by Julia Sunderland on Saturday mornings. In addition, general memberships are available for self-motivated folks looking for a space to do their own training. The studio is open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, and scheduling can be handled via their website: <https://www.kinosf.com/>

THE PARK GYM (1823 Divisadero) is one of the few old-school boxing gyms in San Francisco. Owned and operated by local resident David Park, The Park Gym offers a well-rounded boxing curriculum for folks at beginner, intermediate, and sparring levels. The gym is equipped with a boxing ring, punching bags, and weights. For those who prefer a one-on-one setting, The Park Gym also offers personal training sessions with their team of expert trainers. Recharge after a grueling class with a delicious smoothie at The Park Gym's cafe. The Park Gym is open seven days a week. <https://www.theparkgym.com/>

STUDIO EVOLVE PILATES (543 Lyon) is one of the best-kept secrets in NOPA. Alisha Engle, the founder and instructor of Studio Evolve Pilates, has been teaching private and group classes at the Lyon Street location for almost 20 years. Alisha blends classical and evolved

Pilates styles with an individualized approach to ensure that folks of all body types leave her classes feeling strong, flexible, and aligned. A great way to try out the studio is through the Monday drop-in community class. To schedule time with Alisha, leave her a message at (415) 531-2433.

N MOTION FITNESS STUDIO (2081 Hayes) is a women-only gym dedicated to building strong bodies in a positive, empowering community. N Motion is owned by founder, Coach Charlie, a certified fitness professional with over three decades of experience in pre- and postnatal fitness, injury rehab and conditioning, and personal training. N Motion offers in-studio small group classes ranging from Cardio and Core to Booty and Arms and Functional Fitness. Since the pandemic, N Motion also offers a bootcamp, a great option for those who want to work up a sweat

while getting some fresh air. <https://www.nmotionfitness.com/>

KORET HEALTH AND RECREATION CENTER (KHRC), UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO (2130 Fulton Street), is a great spot to exercise your body, mind, and spirit. Here you'll find two weight rooms, totaling 6,000 sqft, offering an elite-level training zone. They also have a selection of Olympic weights, functional training equipment, TRX® equipment, barbells, dumbbells, kettlebells, and more; two levels of cardiovascular machines including elliptical machines, treadmills, bikes and more; exercise classes for yoga, HITT/strength, spin, TRX®, and more; an indoor Olympic pool with adult swim; and personal training. Neighborhood memberships available to residents in the area surrounding KHRC (boundaries are Lyon, 3rd, California, and Haight).

Anu and her husband, Clemente, moved into the neighborhood in 2023. You can catch them trying new restaurants on Divisadero and jogging around the Panhandle.

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MORE RED-LIGHT CAMERAS COMING TO NOPA

by Sarah Otis



In 2025, there will be more red-light cameras at stoplights that will automatically detect and issue tickets to drivers who run red lights at major intersections around San Francisco, including NOPA. This is part of San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA), the San Francisco Police Department's (SFPD), and other city agencies' joint Automated Enforcement Program, which — according to Contract No. SFMTA-2016-49 between SFMTA and Traffic Solutions, Inc. — was renewed until 2028 and will cost approximately \$5 million.

SFMTA and SFPD report that running red lights is one of the top five leading causes of traffic-related injury and death in San Francisco. Vision Zero SF also shared in its annual report that drivers' failure to stop at red signals has consistently been the second-highest cause of traffic-related injury and death in San Francisco since it began reporting in 2014. Vision Zero communities hope to eliminate all traffic fatalities within

ten years, and one of the ways they plan to do this is by improving traffic enforcement with red-light cameras.

The expansion of red-light cameras is worth celebrating. The Automated Enforcement Program focuses mostly on the high-injury network of roads in San Francisco where SFMTA and Vision Zero SF data show over 68% of high-risk traffic crashes occur.

According to the SF Standard, one intersection affected in NOPA is on Fell Street at Masonic Avenue, which could receive a northbound red-light camera in addition to the existing westbound red-light camera. The westbound camera is one of 19 existing red-light cameras in San Francisco. In early 2024, this project is expected to release a list of 33 new recommended locations in the city for red light cameras. Assuming successful approvals and construction, SFMTA says service operations for new cameras could begin in early 2025.

While automated enforcement is seen as a good start toward minimizing red light violations for many reasons — including elimination of biases that occur with officer-initiated ticketing — there may be issues with this expansion project's plan. For instance, red-light enforcement technology is not a foolproof solution to fatalities. As SFMTA says in its Automated Enforcement Program's info page, its efforts have "resulted in a 66% citywide drop in injury collisions resulting from red-light running between 1997 and 2022." But

this metric inflates the enforcement program's success. Vision Zero SF reports that between 2017 and 2022, the percentage of collisions from red-lights and people running stop-lights has actually risen 26%, now making up a total of 12.8% of traffic fatalities in San Francisco as of 2022 — 10.5% if we isolate just red-light runs.

Theoretically, an increase of red-light cameras in the city in 2019 should've helped prevent this rise.

This increase may have to do with enforcement. SFMTA claims to have daily remote monitoring of these traffic enforcement systems, weekly remote inspections, and monthly physical inspections. SFMTA, with the help of SFPD, also claims to review and issue citations within 15 days and warnings to violators within 30 days. With a rise in collisions and people running stop lights, it appears these promised citations aren't being issued. It's unclear why — this may be due to faulty cameras or faulty processes within SFMTA and SFPD. Additionally, the most recent update to these red-light cameras in 2019 caused long disruptions to the cameras, making more pedestrians and cyclists vulnerable to crashes with motorized vehicles.

In 2012, SFPD announced the Focus on the Five program and its commitment to administering at least 50% of its traffic-related citations for the top five violations which cause injury and death on SF's streets. Red-light running citations fall into this five. However, according to Transpo

Maps’s infographics page, “San Francisco Police Traffic Enforcement,” enforcement is at an all-time low since 2020, in comparison to 2014; in 2018, SFPD issued over 1,500 citations for

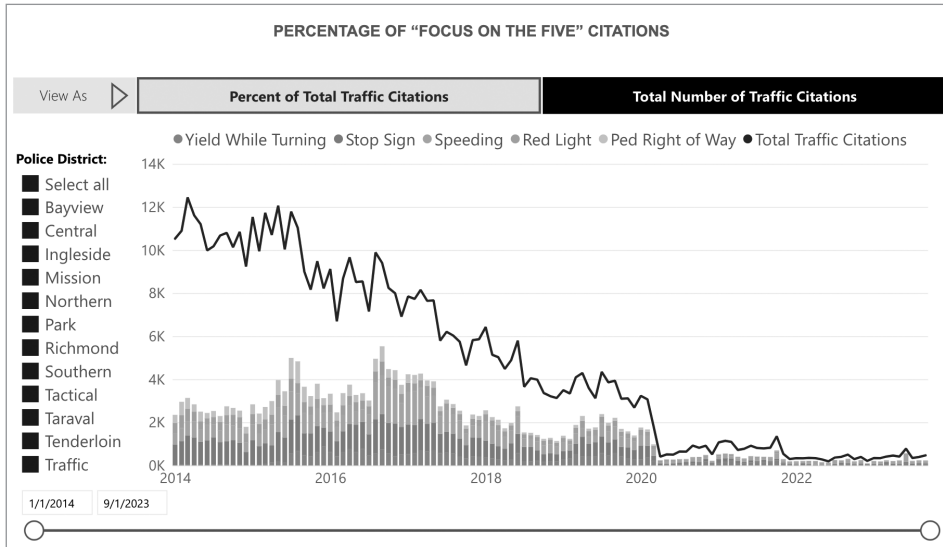
red light violations while in 2022 there were only 176. Also, in 2018, there were 4,691 total citations for “the five” and in 2022, there were only 771.

As Transpo Maps states, an average

of only ten citations per day are currently issued across the entire city. This isn’t nearly enough citations to make an impact on the over 472,000 vehicles registered in San Francisco and their potential violations.

This is why we can’t rely only on enforcement. Driver accountability AND citywide enforcement of traffic violations can help prevent crashes. But perhaps one of the best ways to prevent crashes in the first place is through better infrastructure — that is, better designed streets that help slow traffic. This could protect not only pedestrians, but everyone who moves through our streets.

Sarah has lived in San Francisco for three years. Her primary mode of transportation is walking.



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Happy New Year NOPA Friends & Neighbors! WHAT'S IN STORE FOR '24

As we enter a new year, positive outlooks for 2024 abound, "California housing market will rebound in 2024 as mortgage rates ebb. Housing supply in 2024 will remain below the norm despite a projected increase in active listings of between 10 percent to 20 percent, as market conditions and the lending environment continue to improve."

- California Assoc of Realtors

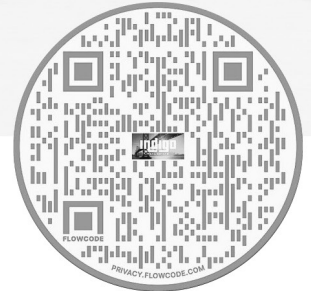
Personally, we at Indigo are already seeing an uptick in buyer activity in San Francisco which is an earlier-than-norm kickoff to the post-holiday selling season. With that, we thought it might be helpful to share California Assoc. of Realtor's 2024 California Housing Market Forecast:

"With the economy expected to soften in 2024, the Federal Reserve Bank will begin loosening its monetary policy next year. Mortgage rates will trend down throughout 2024, and the average 30-year fixed rate mortgage could reach the mid-5% range by the end of next year," said C.A.R. Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Jordan Levine.

In the meantime, our market is fueled by savvy Buyers opting for aggressive loan products, such as 5 or 7-yr arm loans, which offer lower rates than the traditional 30-year fixed product. Many are seeing Q1 2024 as an opportune time to jump into the market before a continued rate decrease quickly leads to the uber-competitive market San Franciscans as accustomed to, and despite the dip in 2023, good homes in appealing locations are always able to fetch an audience!

Again, wishing you the very best for 2024! If there is anything we can help out with, please reach out anytime. With nearly 30 years of selling property within NOPA's borders and throughout San Francisco, we have the wherewithal to provide unparalleled results. Would love to hear from you!

All the Best-
Mollie + Declan



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