

Livable City, Tom Radulovich, 7 June 2006

## REMEMBERING PATRICIA

Sadly, San Francisco's Livable City movement lost a great advocate with the passing of Patricia Walkup yesterday. Patricia was a dedicated neighborhood advocate who founded the Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association, and effectively and graciously worked on behalf of her neighborhood to help it through the difficult yet promising transitions of the past two decades.

I met Patricia over a decade ago, when I was an eager young appointee to the Citizens Advisory Task Force on the Central Freeway. Hayes Valley was then a neighborhood reeling from the depredations of 1950's and 60's traffic engineering and freeway building. It was divided by an ugly double-deck freeway, many of its streets had been co-opted into one-way traffic sewers. Patricia was already well established as a committed advocate for safe streets, working with neighbors and the police to address the criminality and desperation that clustered under the elevated freeway. The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake brought about the removal of the earthquake-damaged Embarcadero Freeway, as well as the Central Freeway north of Fell Street. Hayes Street, freed from the noise, grime, and shadow of the freeway, became much more upbeat. Hayes Valley began to imagine life without the Central Freeway, and Patricia stayed committed through the three ballot campaigns it took to secure the Octavia Boulevard. At last year's boulevard dedication, she remarked (with characteristic modesty) that "Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things."

Patricia knew that great neighborhoods are diverse ones, and she was also dedicated to transforming the Housing Authority's projects on Haight Street from scary, unwelcoming places to the tidy townhomes there today, and was vitally interested in making sure that the residents were able to return after the reconstruction. She also worked to renovate neighborhood parks, and was active in the Octavia & Market planning, where she championed retaining the neighborhood's dense, mixed-use character, building less parking, creating housing for a range of incomes and households, and reclaiming the streets from excessive traffic. She was excited about the future of Hayes Valley, not only for the neighborhood's sake, but as an urbane example for the rest of the city. She was an inspiration, and we will miss her greatly.