



Excelsior Neighborhood

February 11, 2009 ~ 7-9 pm ~ Crocker Amazon Recreation Center

Hosted by: Friends and Advocates of Crocker Amazon and the Excelsior

AGENDA

Approximate number of attendees: 30

INTRODUCTION

- Linda Davirro, Friends and Advocates of Crocker Amazon and the Excelsior (FACE)

Linda Davirro of FACE opened the workshop with a general introduction in which she thanked the participants and workshop facilitators for coming. She also briefly mentioned that FACE had compiled a comprehensive list of opportunity sites for new open spaces within District 11, and that the information was available at the workshop.

OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE IN SAN FRANCISCO: Why it Matters

- Isabel Wade, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

After the introduction, Isabel Wade of the Neighborhood Parks Council greeted the workshop participants and expressed her gratitude to FACE for their hard work in sponsoring the workshop. She also thanked Supervisor Avalos for taking the time to attend the workshop. Next, Isabel reviewed the City's effort to address the challenges of Open Space in San Francisco through the Mayor's Open Space Task Force launched in 2007. She described the key outcomes of this outreach phase of the task force:

- 1) Garnering public ideas and vision to incorporate in a long-term (100 year) Vision Plan for Open Space in San Francisco;
- 2) Creating a ranked priority list of the public's views on what open space issues are most important to tackle and in what order;

3) Publishing an Action Plan for the next 5-10 years with all the best ideas from our workshops and from online participation.

POLICY FRAMEWORK: ROSE

- Sue Exline, S.F. Planning Department

Sue Exline of the San Francisco Planning Department next spoke about the Department's revision of the Recreation & Open Space Element (ROSE) of the City's General Plan. The ROSE, written in 1986, is comprised of over-arching objectives related to open space that have a set of associated policies for each objective. The newest version aims to have actionable and specific implementation steps linked to each policy that are universal across agencies. Community input on the revised policies and implementation steps of the ROSE is strongly desired. During her presentation, Sue noted that the reason for initiating the update is that the current version is out of date and consequently lacks the status it should have as a strong, guiding policy document for the City. She summarized her presentation by mentioning the City's goal of establishing a 5-10 Year Action Plan along with a 100-year Vision Plan for Open Space; both of these documents will utilize the information gathered in the community workshop series. The City aims to have the final draft of the ROSE revision ready for review by late spring of 2009.

At the end of Sue Exline's presentation, a member of the community asked a question about the manner in which new open space is acquired in San Francisco. In response, Isabel Wade of NPC stated that in fact the City has recently not acquired much in the way of new open space and that as a result, there may be a need to rethink and strengthen of the use of San Francisco's Open Space Fund and convert it back to a capital fund that can once again acquire as well as refurbish our parks and playgrounds.

BREAK-OUT SESSION: Process & Outcomes

- Kelly Quirke, Host

Following the Policy Framework presentation, Host Kelly Quirke briefly provided instructions for the workshop's breakout session and reminded the group about the value of their input. He requested that the participants fill out the feedback materials and then prompted group discussion by having each table explore the following central questions:

- "What are the most successful parks and open spaces in your neighborhood?"
- "What are some ways that people can help improve parks and open spaces in your neighborhood?"

Additionally, Kelly requested that each table reserve roughly 15 minutes at the end of their conversation in order to distill their top five priorities for open space as a group, both in their neighborhood *and* in the City, from a list of options that had been provided.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: Challenges & Opportunities vis a vis Open Space in San Francisco

Break-out Session

During this time, each table engaged in a dynamic, free-flowing discussion that responded to the two central questions, while also raising other issues about open space in the neighborhood and the city. The major concepts/ideas that emerged from the discussion were selected by each table to discuss with the larger group.

Distill Priorities

For this portion of the workshop, each table came to consensus on their top priorities for open space and then recorded these on Open Space Priorities form that had been provided.

REPORT BACK: Top 5 ideas/priorities presented from each group

Kelly Quirke, Host

A representative from each table shared the main ideas and priorities from their group. The comments from each table are listed below:

Table 1

Major concepts from discussion

- Crocker Amazon is a successful park for a variety of reasons – youth activities, good benches, nice views, and picnic areas that utilize the area's natural features.
- Islais Creek watershed represents an opportunity to connect open spaces and frame them in an ecological manner.
- There could be a trail around the golf course, which would be an opportunity to improve connectivity in the district too.
- There needs to be more “connectivity” of City agencies – especially in relation to ownership and responsibility for different open space areas.
- Improve parks with new amenities like libraries, bbq areas, and dog parks.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. General maintenance
2. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
3. Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
4. Better access to parks
5. Other – more expressive landscapes that are ecologically grounded

Priorities – Citywide

1. Better access to parks + *interconnectivity*
2. Other – better communication and coordination, including sharing of resources
3. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
4. General maintenance

Table 2

Major concepts from discussion

- Brooks Park is an example of a successful park.
- Try to connect the parks in some way (sidewalks, etc.) – to establish a greenbelt.

- Focus on using appropriate tree/plant species in the park - both in relation to native species and picking specimens that do not conflict with street lighting.
- A major problem is that City bureaucracy prevents the general greening of San Francisco – it is important to improve relationships regarding vision and cooperation amongst City agencies.
- Examine ways in which volunteers can “own” major greening projects
- Examine ways to produce revenue streams – i.e. park improvement districts and/or business sponsorship
- Prioritize maintaining the open space that the City already has.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. Develop open space for food production
2. Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
3. Better access to parks
4. General maintenance
5. Safety

Priorities – Citywide

1. General maintenance
2. Renovations to existing parks
3. Better access to parks
4. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
5. Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks\

Table 3

Major concepts from discussion

- Successful parks include McLaren and Crocker Amazon because of their size and the fact that they are destinations – better maintenance needs to be addressed though.
- It would be good to focus on connecting parks together – establish links between small and large open spaces.
- One major problem is that open space is not close to most areas of the neighborhood.
- The Geneva strip is a significant opportunity site – especially for community gardens.
- It was suggested that the City develop a catalog of locations that could be opportunities for new open spaces.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
1. General maintenance
2. Renovations to existing parks
3. Better access to parks
3. Open schoolyards for public access
3. Develop existing public right-of-ways

Priorities – Citywide

1. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
1. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
1. Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
2. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
2. Renovations to existing parks

2. General maintenance
2. Open schoolyards for public access
2. Secure open space with high quality natural features

Table 4

Major concepts from discussion

- Maintenance is a major priority – specifically prioritize maintenance over land acquisition.
- People are willing to travel to a well-maintained park over a nearby park.
- Streetscape amenities & beautification should be a priority.
- Access & connectivity should be improved (better signage is one means) – one specific example would be connecting San Bruno Mountain to San Mateo County parks.
- Density of neighborhood is a big factor – there is often a lack of personal open space
- Community gardens are a great amenity – some exist, but there is a need for more.
- There is a lot of existing open space that simply hasn't been developed (especially in the Excelsior area).
- The City should provide incentives for property owners to green their land – perhaps the City can take over the planting/maintenance of converted private space.

Priorities – Neighborhood (*specific order not stated*)

- Renovations to existing parks
- General maintenance
- Develop open space for food production – *community gardening*
- Other – better connectivity with San Mateo parks
- Other – street greening and increased resting areas (especially for steep routes/stairways)

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

- Renovations to existing parks
- General maintenance
- Other – keep the Arboretum free
- Other – Make sure that the southern neighborhoods are on maps

NEXT STEPS & CLOSING

- Isabel Wade, NPC

- Linda Davirro, FACE

Staying Involved

Isabel Wade from the Neighborhood Parks Council noted that the bridges between tonight's meeting and the implementation of the 100 year Vision Plan for open space in San Francisco are initiating a number of community-driven projects to improve and maintain our parks, plazas, green streets, and open spaces and keeping meeting participants active in sustaining our investment in open space even through times of economic scarcity. She also mentioned that NPC and other community organizations can act as a fiscal sponsor to neighborhood groups inspired to enhance their local open space; projects could include greening a street median or starting a community garden.

Isabel also reviewed the 'Meeting in a Box' - a handout created to have meeting attendees take back to their friends and neighbors and hold a conversation about open space issues in their

neighborhood and in San Francisco and setting priorities for limited resources. Input captured by these small group discussions will be integrated with data and ideas gathered at the larger workshops and used to inform the ROSE update and the Action Plan. In addition to the 'Meeting in a Box' exercise, workshop participants were asked to finish and turn in the individual Feedback Forms that had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting, or to visit the Open Space 2100 website and take the online survey. Available at www.openspacesf.org/survey, the feedback form collects individual priorities and values regarding open space in San Francisco, and is a very valuable source of information for the aforementioned plans. Isabel also noted that participants would be able to access these meeting notes on the Open Space 2100 website.

Closing Remarks

Linda Davirro of FACE thanked the workshop participants for coming, and the Neighborhood Parks Council staff for their hard work in putting on the community workshop. She also brought gave another reminder about the list of possible sites for new open spaces in District 11 that FACE had helped to compile. This list can be found below.

DISTRICT 11 ROSE GREENSPACE CANDIDATES

Street Address	Latitude	Longitude	Comment
3243 San Jose Ave	37°42'29.28"N	122°27'34.53"W	extra wide sidewalk greening potential
100 Baltimore Way	37°42'32.79"N	122°25'55.19"W	City owned & maintained median
300 Winding Way	37°42'32.99"N	122°26'11.46"W	City owned & maintained median
3400 Alemany at Sagamore	37°42'39.96"N	122°27'43.24"W	City owned & maintained median
338 Brunswick Ave	37°42'40.00"N	122°26'29.45"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
335 Brunswick Ave	37°42'40.87"N	122°26'30.29"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
226- 230 Brunswick	37°42'41.94"N	122°26'26.71"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
126 Brunswick	37°42'43.05"N	122°26'23.00"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
156 Morse	37°42'43.72"N	122°26'20.95"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
26 Brunswick	37°42'44.06"N	122°26'19.43"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
1000 Naples	37°42'50.42"N	122°26'10.49"W	At Geneva - Historic entrance to Crocker Estates
Orizaba and Farallones	37°42'50.79"N	122°27'45.64"W	wide street and muni track area
1 Newton St	37°42'52.20"N	122°26'20.39"W	Blind corner asphalt surface
1 Curtis St	37°42'54.16"N	122°26'24.70"W	Blind corner asphalt surface
585 Geneva Avenue/Geneva Avenue Mini-Park	37°43'13.11"N	122°26'42.71"W	Was a Community Garden; now a mini park
4700 Block Mission Street	37°43'16.61"N	122°26'13.14"W	vacant lot across the street from the Burger King
1 Geneva Avenue	37°43'21.83"N	122°27'5.99"W	Under City College Overpass
Excelsior & Vienna Intersection	37°43'24.95"N	122°25'41.10"W	Roundabout
Persia Triangle	37°43'25.18"N	122°26'9.04"W	commercial lot with excellent potential as town center
300 Capistrano	37°43'37.08"N	122°26'17.77"W	wide roadway area
234 Capistrano	37°43'39.09"N	122°26'18.45"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
99 Pilgrim	37°43'42.46"N	122°26'32.35"W	Orphan BART lot
99 Nantucket	37°43'43.04"N	122°26'31.10"W	One of 5 Orphan lots which BART was to have given to Habitat For Humanity
99 Colonial	37°43'43.75"N	122°26'29.20"W	Orphan BART lot
100 Capistrano	37°43'44.18"N	122°26'14.71"W	abandoned lot unknown owner
176 Cotter	37°43'44.36"N	122°26'10.38"W	Cotter Lot, near Cayuga, which is privately owned and development plans are in the works
312 Santa Rosa	37°43'44.95"N	122°26'25.51"W	Orphan BART lot
356 Circular Avenue	37°43'46.32"N	122°26'32.14"W	City owned & maintained median
342 Detroit Street	37°43'49.44"N	122°26'37.34"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
4175 Mission Street	37°43'51.56"N	122°25'42.99"W	vacant lot across from Manila Oriental Market

**DISTRICT 11
ROSE GREENSPACE CANDIDATES**

Street Address	Latitude	Longitude	Comment
Mission Street	37°43'54.45"N	122°25'41.36"W	280 Overpass potential for hanging plants or greenery
4950 Mission Street	37°43'9.20"N	122°26'22.31"W	steps across from Safeway Mkt
340 Brunswick Ave	38° 2'55.16"N	122°24'48.35"W	fenced in lot - may be abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road
64 Capistrano	37°43'46.34"N	122°26'17.33"W	abandoned City owned & maintained fire access road