



## **Mayor's Open Space Task Force Meeting #5: Imagining the Future**

### **Minutes**

July 10, 2008 ~ 3-5pm

Eureka Valley Recreation Center

**3:00 – 3:10 p.m.**

#### **Overview: What We've Accomplished, Where We're Going**

##### **Dawn Kamalanathan, Director of Planning, Recreation & Parks Department**

Director Kamalanathan welcomed Task Force members, provided Task Force updates, outlined the day's agenda, and reviewed key themes that have arisen over the past few months of Task Force work. The city proposes that the Task Force take a two month hiatus to allow city staff to compile and consider all input to date and integrate feedback in to a very loose-draft, 5-10 month ROSE plan. The city will continue to collect input during the hiatus, soliciting feedback and working to educate and engage a broader group of stakeholders. The Task Force will reconvene in December, when the revised priorities and draft ROSE will be informally presented to neighborhood associations. A formal public review process is planned for 2009.

#### **3:10-3:35 Setting the Tone Presentations**

The following guest speakers provided short presentations to help set the tone for the day's focus group discussions:

##### **Wade Crowfoot, Director of Climate Protection Initiatives, Mayor's Office**

Director Crowfoot provided an update on the Mayor's "Sunday Streets" initiative, a pilot program to close a stretch of roads connecting Chinatown and Bayview on two different dates (August 17 and August 31, from 9 am to 1 pm.) to provide increased open space to pedestrians, bike riders, skateboarders, etc.. Based on a program that began in Bogotá, Columbia and has been adopted in a variety of other cities including Chicago and Portland, Sunday Streets aims to engage San Franciscans in outdoor physical activity and to help address the need for open space in underserved communities until long-term open space plans can be implemented. A broad group of merchant, government, and non-profit organizations will help activate closed streets with free programs such as yoga, salsa, and Tai Chi lessons. Volunteers and ideas for programs/activities for both dates are still needed; please contact Director Crowfoot if you or your organization are interested. Please also direct any community concerns or questions regarding the program to Director Wade. If successful, Sunday Streets could potentially role out to other neighborhoods. The August 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday Street date will team up with Slowfood Nation's International Conference. Local cars will have limited access to streets as needed.

##### **Suzanne Whelan, Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF)**

Ms. Whelan provided an overview of urban forestry work being done in the city to help transform and connect open spaces. Beyond engaging volunteers to help build

forestry skill-sets, FUF and others aim to strengthen stewardship towards the overall urban environment. Ms. Whelan led the group in a short visioning exercise for a living city, to help participants expand their views of what an urban forest is and to visualize how they would improve our open spaces and the connections between them.

### **Greg DiPaolo, Park Presidio Neighbors**

Mr. DiPaolo provided an overview of the history of the 10 year-old Park Presidio Neighbors group, which oversees over 23 acres of land through the sweat equity of neighbor volunteers and counts comradery as one of its most cherished successes. Issues the group must address include how to leverage the role of the Presidio greenway and dealing with traffic, dangerous trees, and pedestrian concerns. The group has helped create a master plan to improve the greenway as a connector and gateway, to enhance recognition of entrance and exit from greenspaces. The main challenges the group faces include funding and the glacial pace of improvements/bureaucracy.

### **Moira McEnespy, Coastal Conservancy**

Ms. McEnespy provided an overview of the role of the Coastal Conservancy as a state agency that aims to protect, enhance, and restore open space in all nine bay area county coastal zones (the coastal zone boundary includes land up into coastal water sheds; all of San Francisco County falls under their jurisdiction). The Coastal Conservancy helps support open space legislation, assists with project planning, design, and implementation, conducts studies, and offers “hands-on” grants to engage communities in wetland restoration projects. Heron’s Head Park Ecology Center is a program of the Coastal Conservancy. Limited funding is one of the main challenges to the Coastal Conservancy’s work, given that they are largely bond funded (for capital projects) and struggle to fund maintenance and acquisition.

### **George Williams, SPUR**

Mr. Williams provided an overview of a study SPUR is conducting on privately owned public open space (POPOS) and outlined the city’s history of incentives and requirements around provision and implementation (e.g. access to restrooms, wind protection, access to sunlight, etc.). Mr. Williams explained how changes in the residential use of downtown demand additional incentives for building owners to increase availability and access to open spaces. SPUR is working with groups such as “Re Bar” to activate spaces for a variety of uses. Key considerations moving forward include what behavior should be permitted, how to inform users of their rights/the code of behavior, how to publicize open spaces, and how to manage open space programming (e.g. establish a non-profit for city-wide open space programming).

### **3:35-4:30**

#### **Focus Group Discussions**

Participants divided in to groups to address the topics of Green Corridors, Nature in the City, and the Downtown. Please see the website for detailed notes from the group breakout session.

### **4:30 – 5:00 p.m.**

#### **Summary: Report back and Next Steps**

Each focus group reported back the following summaries of their collective ideas and suggested recommendations and next steps:

## **Green Corridors**

### **Connecting Golden Gate Park to the Presidio: A Network of Green Corridors**

**Facilitator: Greg DiPaolo**

- RECOMMENDATIONS: Linkages between GGP and the Presidio should be multiple, easy, accessible, varied; Connections should go both EW and NS; Include bulb-outs and street furniture.

### **Connecting Golden Gate Park to Lake Merced: A Network of Green Corridors**

**Facilitator: Suzanne Whelan**

- RECOMMENDATION: Use infrastructure that's already there; build off of Lake Merced Watershed Planning process; EW street could be one way streets; connect parks with livable streets.

## **Nature in the City**

### **The Twin Peaks Bioregion - What are the Elements of a Conservation Vision?**

**Facilitator: Peter Brastow, Nature in the City**

- RECOMMENDATIONS: Develop elements of conservation vision; City should consider creating one jurisdiction that would have authority over all open space in San Francisco
- NEXT STEPS:
  - (1) Bring together parties that share jurisdiction (e.g. PUC, UCSF, RPD, fire department, etc.); build a regional-level plan; engage in a mapping exercise
  - (2) Pursue fundraising for acquisition; consider creation of an SF Land Trust

### **Lake Merced Watershed Plan - Assessing the 'Scenarios'**

**Facilitator: Suzanne Gautier, PUC**

- RECOMMENDATIONS: Focus on developing external connections between Lake Merced, Fort Funston, Ocean Beach, etc. to promote creation of new open space in addition to simple renovation of existing open space; Environmental education element should be incorporated in the plan; Public transportation should eventually be improved in anticipation of reduced driving and parking; Attention to uses that have modern popularity.

## **The Downtown**

### **Privately-Owned Public Spaces in the Downtown**

**Facilitator: George Williams, SPUR**

- RECOMMENDATIONS: Create a coalition of stakeholders comprised of businesses, Planning Dept, SPUR, etc, that would become the voice for the POPOS.
- NEXT STEPS:
  - (1) Change the name
  - (2) Form a "Friends of the POPOS" non-profit organization to manage and/or coordinate publicity, website, events, etc for all POPOS
  - (3) Create a map/list of spaces

