



Potrero Hill

February 24, 2009 ~ 7-9 pm ~ Potrero Hill Neighborhood House

Hosted by: Potrero Hill Boosters Neighborhood Association

Approximate number of attendees: 35

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

- Tony Kelly, Potrero Hill Boosters Neighborhood Association

Opening up the workshop, Tony Kelly of the Potrero Hill Boosters Neighborhood Association greeted the participants and asked people to stand up and introduce themselves.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE IN SAN FRANCISCO: Why it Matters

- Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

Following the introductions, Meredith Thomas of the Neighborhood Parks Council greeted the participants and expressed her gratitude to Tony Kelly and the rest of the Potrero Hill Boosters Neighborhood Association (PHBNA) for their help in sponsoring the workshop. Meredith also thanked Steven Cismowski from the S.F. Recreation & Parks Department for coming to the workshop. She went on to state the importance of Rec. & Park's involvement in the Open Space 2100 effort because in addition to their many other roles and responsibilities, the department is also a major land owner in the City.

Next, Meredith 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.

Meredith also touched upon the importance of having a good geographic representation of people participating in the workshop series, and mentioned that the Neighborhood Parks Council has been actively engaging a variety neighborhood groups in order to ensure comprehensive representation in the ongoing workshop series.

POLICY FRAMEWORK: ROSE

- Sue Exline, S.F. Planning Department

- Ken Rich, S.F. Planning Department

ROSE Overview

Susan 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.

Open Space Planning in Showplace Square

After her presentation on the ROSE update, Sue Exline mentioned that the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan had recently been adopted. The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan addresses open space, "green" and "living" streets, and an increase in open space requirements for new residential development in and around the Potrero Hill area. Adding to this, Ken Rich from the Planning Department gave the participants a quick update on the ongoing planning efforts involving the Showplace Square area. Ken explained that the Plan's zoning changes have resulted in roughly half the neighborhood being reserved for various industrial uses, while the other half is now planned to accommodate increased residential development in the future. He also said that with the adoption of the Plan, the City will begin to implement a few priority improvements sometime this year (2009). Sue Exline followed up on Ken's comments by passing out a draft scope of the proposed Showplace Square Public Realm Plan, and mentioned that the Showplace Square Plan along with the Open Space workshop series is a great opportunity for the neighborhood to move forward in a very realized way. Ken Rich also reiterated that this effort is just beginning, and that the Planning Department will be coming back to the Potrero Hill residents to figure out more specific details in the future. Copies of the Draft Scope can be obtained by contacting Sue Exline at susan.exline@sfgov.org.

Upon completion of the Planning Staff's presentation, a question was asked about whether or not access would be included in the future discussions on the Showplace Square area. In response, Sue Exline explained that public access will definitely be included. An additional question was asked about when the proposed Showplace Square planning effort would begin, to which Ken Rich explained that work will begin sometime in the next few months, but that the City Planning staff would definitely be coming back to confer with local residents before then.

BREAK-OUT SESSION: Process & Outcomes

- *Dee Dee Workman, Host*

Following the Policy Framework presentation, Host Dee Dee Workman briefly provided instructions for the workshop's breakout session and reminded the group about the value of their input. She 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, Dee Dee requested that each table reserve roughly 20 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

- *Dee Dee Workman, 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

- Promote open space that provides a diversity of uses.
- Prioritize acquiring new open space.
- Potrero del Sol is a good example of space with variety
- Include more public art in parks and open spaces.
- *Improve connectivity* by aligning green streets with footbridges and green spaces.
- Assess all publicly-owned land, looking for opportunities to create open spaces – this includes streets (for green streets), however these are not a substitute for a park.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
1. Secure open space with high quality natural features

2. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
2. Open schoolyards for public access
2. Renovations to existing parks
3. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
3. Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks

Priorities – Citywide

No specific priorities provided

Table 2

Major concepts from discussion

- Increase communication and cooperation between neighborhood volunteers and the Recreation & Parks Department.
- *Create* continuous open spaces across the City connecting view points and green beltways.
- Use real grass instead of turf.
- Jackson Square has become a “by appointment only” space (*excessive league usage*), and local residents aren’t able to get enough access to the space as a result.

Priorities – Neighborhood (*specific order not stated*)

- More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
- Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
- Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
- Secure open space with high quality natural features
- Develop open space for food production

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

- More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
- Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
- General Maintenance
- Safety
- Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
- Secure open space with high quality natural features
- Develop open space for food production

Table 3

Major concepts from discussion

- *Prioritize* improving existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Make sure that the Showplace Square area gets enough housing.
- Develop usable openspace along the waterfront.
- *Utilize* more open space for food production – especially in relation to schools.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. Develop public right-of-ways into linear parks
1. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit – can also utilize the sale/exchange of linear right-of-ways to accomplish this
2. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
3. Better access to parks (ped., bike, transit)
4. Other: mark all MUNI (MTA) & SFPUC land and add this up *when considering possible open space sites*
4. *Establish* park maintenance districts

Priorities – Citywide

No specific priorities provided

Table 4

Major concepts from discussion

- Prioritize maintenance for existing parks.
- Develop land along waterfront into new open spaces.
- Connect schools/open spaces/parks with green streets, and employ traffic-calming *measures to enhance the pedestrian environment.*
- Create a better separation between *conflicting* recreation activities – i.e. dogs & kids.
- *Enable* a better utilization of City/State property for public spaces.

Priorities – Neighborhood

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

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

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

Table 5

Major concepts from discussion

- Increase signage and marketing of existing recreational spaces and resource in order to make people aware of what is already available to them.
- Prioritize maintenance AND adding more new open space.
- Provide more bathroom facilities *at parks.*
- Supplement maintenance with youth involvement – i.e. job training, school *programs*, etc.
- *Ensure* access to the waterfront and water resources.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. General maintenance
2. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
3. Better access to parks (ped., bike, transit)
4. Safety
5. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit

Priorities – Citywide

1. General maintenance
2. Safety
3. Better access to parks (ped., bike, transit)
4. Other: signage promoting awareness and outreach about parks
5. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community – especially bathrooms

Table 6

Major concepts from discussion

- Prioritize acquiring new open space – even simple ones like green sidewalks.
- Acquire waterfront land to create new parks.
- Provide more amenities in parks – i.e. places to sit & read, picnic facilities, and more programming directed towards teenagers/older kids.
- Create linear parks for strolling and hiking – these should connect different green spaces.
- Diversify the programming available at Jackson Park.
- Develop more open space for food production.

Priorities – Neighborhood (*specific order not stated*)

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

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

- General Maintenance
- Safety
- Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
- Better access to parks (ped., bike, transit)
- Other: staffing of existing facilities

NEXT STEPS & CLOSING

- Meredith Thomas, NPC

Staying Involved

Meredith Thomas 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 the 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 specifically referred to the Community Challenge Grant Program, which provides up to \$100,000 several times a year; and the 2008 Neighborhood Parks Bond, which includes a \$5 million Community Opportunity Fund for neighborhood parks projects. Meredith 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.

Meredith also reviewed the 'Meeting in a Box' - a handout created to have meeting attendees take back to their friends and neighbors to hold a conversation about open space issues in their neighborhood and in San Francisco, and set 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 visit the Open Space 2100 website and take the online survey. Available at www.openspacesf.org/survey, the survey collects individual priorities and values regarding open space in San Francisco, and is a very

valuable source of information for the aforementioned plans. Meredith also noted that participants would be able to access these meeting notes on the Open Space 2100 website.

Closing Remarks

Meredith Thomas thanked the workshop participants for coming, and the Neighborhood Parks Council staff for their hard work in putting on the community workshop. She also thanked Tony Kelly and the Potrero Hill Boosters Neighborhood Association for their help in organizing and setting up the workshop. In addition, Meredith also expressed thanks to Sue Exline and Ken Rich of the Planning Department, Supervisor Maxwell's office for sending a representative, Chris Guillard from the NPC Board, and Tinish Hollins from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services for attending.

Following Meredith, Tony Kelly made one final announcement about the EN TRIPS meeting on March 26th. The public meeting is taking place at 7 pm at SOMArts, and is an attempt to figure out broad transit related issues pertaining to the wider Potrero Hill area.