



Richmond Area

January 21, 2008 ~ 7:30-9 pm ~ Richmond Recreation Center

Hosted by: Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR)

AGENDA

Approximate number of attendees: 20

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

- Raymond Holland, Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR)

- Isabel Wade, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

Opening up the meeting, Raymond Holland of PAR welcomed the attendees and explained that there had been some confusion regarding outreach for the meeting, thereby lessening the number of people who would be participating that evening.

Following Raymond's introduction, Isabel Wade of the Neighborhood Parks Council greeted the workshop participants and 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

Next, Sue Exline of the San Francisco Planning Department 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 During her presentation, Sue noted that the reason for initiating the update is that the current version is out of date and consequently lacks the status it should have as a strong, guiding policy document for the City.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.

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 ten 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 a consensus on their top priorities for open space and then recorded these on the 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 (*italicized content has been added to for context*):

Table 1

Major concepts from discussion

- *There should be some perks and incentives for digging up concrete in order to encourage more green space.*
- *There should be “Just Do It” info on the City website that empowers grass-roots action. Basically a place where people can share information about projects, available materials for use, instructions on how to do various things, etc.; it would be a one-stop shop for greening and creating open space.*
- *Safety can be improved with more lights (sensor), and volunteer stewards to manage parks when staffing isn't available.*
- *Need better integration of parks groups, so that they can share info and work together.*
- *Need more greening of linear, east-west streets in the Richmond.*

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. Renovations to existing parks
2. Improved general maintenance
3. Safety
4. Acquire open space for linear parks along greenways
5. Improved access to parks (walking, biking, and/or transit)

Priorities – Citywide

1. Open up schoolyards in park-deficient neighborhoods
2. Acquire open space with high quality natural features
3. Improved general maintenance
4. Renovations to existing parks
5. Acquire open space to keep up with population growth

Table 2

Major concepts from discussion

- *Maintenance is a major priority.*
- *Accessibility of parks should be a priority (i.e. multiple entrances, ground-level public access, etc.).*
- *Successful parks require people and the amenities they want to encourage use*
- *Increase volunteer ownership/stewardship of parks, and promote it.*
- *Need more Richmond street greening.*
- *Prioritize existing parks or open spaces and expanding their use; one way is to promote street closings in the parks.*

Priorities – Neighborhood (*specific order not stated*)

1. Improved access to parks (walking, biking, and/or transit)
2. Improved general maintenance
3. Other – offer programming (i.e. classes, lessons, etc.) using park staff or local volunteers
4. Other – spread out park usage to underutilized spaces
5. Other – street beautification

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

1. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
2. Acquire open space to keep up with population growth
3. Acquire new open space for sports fields
4. Improved general maintenance
5. Improved access to parks (walking, biking, and/or transit)

Table 3

Major concepts from discussion

- Improve the maps used in open space planning efforts, *they lack valuable open space opportunity locations* (i.e. PUC & DPW sites, etc.).
- Maintenance of existing parks/facilities is a major priority, San Francisco should be making the most of what we have and protecting it.
- Various needs were identified including:
 - Improving the north side of Park Presidio Blvd.
 - Improving the north side of Golden Gate Park so it is more neighborhood serving.
 - Open space information – i.e. signage, program and opportunity information, etc.
- Promote the use of revenue generators in the parks (i.e. community garden plot rentals, and alternative energy sources like solar/wind that can make the facilities energy neutral).
- Improving safety should be a priority.
- Improve access to existing parks.
- There needs to be recreational opportunities for all ages in the parks.
- The City should open up schoolyards for public use.

Priorities – Neighborhood

1. Improved general maintenance
2. Safety
3. Improved access to parks (walking, biking, and/or transit)
4. More recreational opportunities
5. Open up schoolyards in park-deficient neighborhoods

Priorities – Citywide

1. Improved general maintenance
2. Safety
3. Acquire open space for linear parks and along greenways
4. Open up schoolyards in park-deficient neighborhoods
5. Improved access to parks (walking, biking, and/or transit)

NEXT STEPS & CLOSING

- Isabel Wade, NPC

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.

Closing Remarks

Isabel Wade and the Neighborhood Parks Council staff thanked the workshop participants for coming and reminded them that they would be able to access these meeting notes on the Open Space 2100 website.

