



## **Visitacion Valley**

**February 28, 2009 ~ 10 am - 12 pm ~ Visitacion Valley Community Center**

***Hosted by: Visitacion Valley Greenway Project***

*Approximate number of attendees: 20*

## **AGENDA**

### **VISITACION VALLEY PROJECTS UPDATE**

*- Fran Martin, Visitacion Valley Greenway Project*

Opening up the workshop, Fran Martin began by giving an overview of some of the work that has been done in the neighborhood as it relates to open space. Fran discussed the most recent work of the Visitacion Valley Greenway Project, as that group finishes up work on the greenway that runs uphill from Leland Avenue to Tioga Avenue. Fran also highlighted the “Green Stewards” program that brings youth from the neighborhood to the Greenway to learn about park stewardship through its practice. Youth participate in maintenance of the greenway, while participating in an environmental education component.

Fran also discussed updates surrounding the Bayview Hunters Point development plans put forth by Lennar. She pointed out ways that neighbors can participate in advocating for open space in that project, and also raised some concerns about some proposed plans. Finally, Fran thanked attendees for participating in this workshop.

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

*- Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)*

Meredith Thomas of the Neighborhood Parks Council greeted the participants and thanked Fran Martin of the Visitacion Valley Greenway Project for her help in sponsoring the workshop.

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 given the different open space needs of various communities. She elaborated on this by mentioning that the Neighborhood Parks Council has been actively engaging a variety of neighborhood groups in order to ensure comprehensive representation in the ongoing workshop series. In summarizing the overview of open space in San Francisco, Meredith addressed the fact that while some parts of the City have sufficient amounts of public open space, others are severely lacking.

### **POLICY FRAMEWORK: ROSE**

- *Astrid Haryati, Mayor's Office of Greening*

Astrid Haryati of the Mayor's Office of Greening next spoke about the Planning 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. During her presentation, Astrid 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. Community input on the revised policies and implementation steps of the ROSE is strongly desired. 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 Astrid's 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 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

- 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

- Enhance connectivity, both citywide and within the neighborhood – i.e. try to connect *small*, local green spaces with larger ones such as McLaren Park & Candlestick Park.
- Focus on expanding the small existing parks.
- *Continue* efforts to “narrow” streets by adding green strips, etc.
- *Promote and enhance* the Blue Greenway.
- Reclaim Mansell as a greenway/open space.
- Try to open up backyards as “neighborhood greenways”.
- Improve access by connecting the 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Rail line to the waterfront.

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
- Increase open space for sports fields
- Secure open space with high quality natural features
- Develop open space for food production
- Acquire new open space for recreational facilities

Priorities – Citywide (*specific order not stated*)

- More amenities & Activities to serve the needs of the community
- Increase open space for sports fields
- Secure open space with high quality natural features
- Develop open space for food production
- Acquire new open space for recreational facilities

### Table 2

Major concepts from discussion

- *Ensure equality in providing amenities to various neighborhoods* – most goes to Northern parts of City, the Southern parts of the City need more – i.e. museums, etc.
- *Develop* more educational programs.
- *Try to utilize* ethnic media outlets to ensure better outreach & education.

- Focus on the better *utilization* of existing space.
- Develop nature walks – can use students to guide seniors.
- *Find ways to make* City youth into green stewards.

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
- Better access to parks (ped., bike, transit)
- Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
- Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks

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 publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
- Other: develop Candlestick Park as a flagship open space

Table 3

Major concepts from discussion

- Successful parks are those that have varied uses – i.e. McLaren Park.
- The neglect of existing parks/facilities is a major issue – i.e. McLaren Park, Mansell, Visitacion and Sunnydale have restrooms that aren't open.
- An example of success is Candlestick Park (no dense housing).
- Prioritize providing more playground programming – especially for older kids
- The Visitacion Valley Greenway and related stewardship *are examples of success.*

Priorities – Neighborhoods

1. Develop open space for food production
2. Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
2. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
3. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
3. Acquire new open space for recreational facilities

Priorities – Citywide

1. More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
2. General maintenance
2. Develop open space for food production
3. Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space

**NEXT STEPS & CLOSING**

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](http://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 Fran Martin and the Visitacion Valley Greenway Project for their help in organizing the workshop. In addition, Meredith also expressed thanks to Astrid Haryati of the Mayor's Office of Greening for attending.