AGENDA

INTRODUCTION
- Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

Opening up the workshop, Meredith Thomas greeted the participants and thanked them for coming. She then provided a brief description of the Neighborhood Parks Council, stating that NPC works as both an advocate and steward for parks in San Francisco. Following this, the participants were asked to introduce themselves.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE IN SAN FRANCISCO: Why it Matters
- Meredith Thomas, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)

After the introductions, Meredith began to discuss the City’s effort to address the challenges of Open Space in San Francisco by mentioning that the Mayor’s Open Space Task Force was launched in 2007. The goal of the Task Force is to rewrite the existing portion of the General Plan pertaining to open space policies (ROSE). Currently in the public outreach phase of the effort, the Neighborhood Parks Council has been working as the City’s non-profit partner to ensure that the process is conducted in a way that is open to the community. She then 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 then summarized her overview by noting the importance of having these discussions now because there are big changes occurring in the City, and especially in some of the eastern neighborhoods.

POLICY FRAMEWORK: ROSE
- Meredith Thomas, NPC

Next, Meredith gave a brief presentation about the City Planning Department’s revision of the Recreation & Open Space Element (ROSE) of the City’s General Plan. The newest version aims to have actionable and specific implementation steps linked to each policy that are universal across agencies. She reflected on the significance of this because it is only recently that the department heads of various agencies who own land in the City have begun to meet and discuss their shared issues and needs. Meredith also reminded the participants that this is a long-term planning effort, and that they should not get stuck on the restrictions of current economic conditions.

She then went on to restate the three outcomes or products of the current effort, with particular emphasis being placed on the establishment of the 5-10 Year Action Plan along with a 100-year Vision Plan for Open Space. Community input on the revised policies and implementation steps of the ROSE is strongly desired, with public feedback being incorporated into the document’s second draft. The City aims to have this next draft of the ROSE revision ready for review by late spring of 2009. The current draft and policies are available for review on the City’s website (http://openspace.sfplanning.org/).

Meredith wrapped up the ROSE presentation by mentioning that one of the biggest issues related to open space in the City is the difficulty people have in trying to volunteer. While other cities embrace volunteerism in their parks and open spaces, the system currently in place actually hinders people’s ability to get involved. Asked by participants why this is the case, Meredith responded that although it is not the sole reason, the Recreation and Parks Department’s existing labor contracts are a major factor. Additionally, it was noted that there is a poor alignment between the structure of RPD’s maintenance practices and the actual resources available to cover the current needs.

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 in helping to shape the nature of the City’s parks. She requested that the participants fill out the feedback materials and then prompted group discussion by having the participants 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 roughly 20 minutes be reserved at the end of the 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, the participants 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.

Distill Priorities
For this portion of the workshop, the participants 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

The major concepts and priorities established by the participants have been listed below:

Table 1
Major concepts from discussion
• The small, random open spaces around the City are one of the elements that make it special – these should be identified, promoted, and embraced. Corbett Slope is a key example of this, and its preservation as an open space should be a top priority for the neighborhood (a map locating several of these spaces in Corbett Heights has been included at the end of these notes).
• Duboce Park is a great example of a successful open space, and acts as the heart of the surrounding neighborhood – its design makes it inviting and safe for a diversity of uses.
• The Duboce Track Improvement Project, planned for 2010, represents a significant opportunity to pursue enhancements in Duboce Park and promote the surrounding neighborhood’s identity.
• Noe St. (north of Market St.) is a great urban environment and should serve as the model for a green network throughout the City.

Priorities – Neighborhood (specific order not stated)
• More amenities & activities to serve the needs of the community
• General maintenance
• Safety
• Develop existing public right-of-ways into linear parks
• Develop open space for food production

Priorities – Citywide (specific order not stated)
• Acquire new open space in neighborhoods with a deficit
• Develop publicly-owned land along the waterfront into open space
• Increase open space for sports fields
• Develop open space for food production
• Acquire new open space for recreational facilities
NEXT STEPS & CLOSING

Staying Involved
Meredith Thomas from the Neighborhood Parks Council mentioned 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 are keeping meeting participants active in sustaining our investment in open space even through times of economic scarcity.

She then 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 City. Meredith also noted that participants would be able to access these meeting notes on the Open Space 2100 website.

Closing Remarks
Finally, Meredith thanked the participants for coming, and the Neighborhood Parks Council staff for their hard work in putting on the community workshop. She also thanked Dee Dee Workman for her role as workshop host.
1. **Merritt Park**: (Merritt/Market/Danvers) Block 2658, Lot 59
2. **Ord Triangle Park**: (Ord/Corbett/17th/Douglass) Block 2651, Lot 1
3. **Corbin Stairs**: (Connects 17th to Corbett) Block 2652, 2653, Lot 2
4. **Sweetgum Corner**: (Mars/17th) Block 2654, Lot 1
5. **Mars Park**: (Mars@Corbett) Block 2653, Lot 16
6. **Clayton/Corbett Steps**: Block 2660, Lot 48
7. **Corbett Slope**: (Between Corbett & Market) Block 2659, Lot 59
8. **Al's Park**: (19th St - Betw Market & Corbett) Block 2704, Lot 23
9. **Market/Clayton NW**: (Along Clayton/Market) Block 2704, Lot 42