



Ocean Beach Neighborhoods

January 14, 2008 ~ 6-8pm ~ County Fair Building

Hosted by: Ocean Beach Vision Council

MEETING NOTES

Approximate number of attendees: 47

OPENING REMARKS & HISTORY OF OCEAN BEACH

- Lara Truppelli, Ocean Beach Vision Council

- Eric Mar, District 1 Supervisor

- Brian O'Neill, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Superintendent

After an introduction by Lara Truppelli of the Ocean Beach Vision Council (OBVC), District 1 Supervisor Eric Mar spoke to workshop attendees regarding the resolution introduced at the Board of Supervisors to convene the OBVC and his support of the work that the group will conduct relating to the future and role of Ocean Beach for San Francisco.

Following these comments, Brian O'Neill, Superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, spoke about the natural and social history of Ocean Beach and its development as a recreation destination. Mr. O'Neil noted he hopes the work of the OBVC will begin in earnest in March of 2009. The purpose of conducting an open space workshop with members of the OBVC was to set the stage for participants to think about the past, present, and possible future conditions of Ocean Beach and the surrounding neighborhoods.

INTRODUCTION TO OPEN SPACE PLANNING

- *Isabel Wade, Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)*

After the opening remarks were made, Isabel Wade of NPC discussed 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.

WORKSHOP

- *Sue Exline, S.F. Planning Department*

- *Kelly Quirke, Workshop Facilitator*

Presentation on Policy Framework: ROSE

To initiate the workshop portion of the meeting, 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 is attempting to have actionable and specific implementation steps linked to each policy and that are universal across agencies. Community input on the revised policies and implementation steps of the ROSE is strongly desired. During her presentation she noted that the reason for initiating the update is that the current version is woefully out of date and does not have the status it should as a guidance 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 which would utilize the information gathered in the ongoing community workshop series. The City aims to have the ROSE revision finished and submitted for approval to the Planning Commission by late spring of 2009.

Break-out Session

Following the Policy Framework presentation, Kelly Quirke briefly provided instructions for the workshop's breakout session. He asked participants to fill out the feedback materials and prompted group discussion by having each table explore the following central questions:

- "What are the most successful 'parks' in our dense and compact city of San Francisco?"
- "Does this exist (a successful park) in our neighborhood?"

Each table then engaged in a dynamic, free-flowing discussion in responding to these questions and raising other issues about open space in the neighborhood and the city. The top 5 ideas/topics were selected by each table to discuss with the larger group.

Report Back

A representative from each table shared the ideas of their group. The comments from each table are listed below:

Table 1

- *Ideally parks should be safe and scenic.*
- *Need to better enforce non-smoking laws.*
- *Extend Farallones National Marine Sanctuary to Ocean Beach shore in order to reduce pollution there.*
- *Maintain recreational open space.*
- *Need to have bathroom/showers on ocean side of Great Highway.*
- *Promote safe access – pay attention to pedestrians & traffic; accessible to everyone (different ages, etc.).*
- *Lake Merced shooting range?*
- *Prefer benches of wood.*
- *Wildlife biodiversity & safety are major priorities.*

Table 2

- *Community should take ownership of park.*
- *Must improve the linkage/connectivity/responsibility of agencies and interested groups.*
- *Toilets, facilities, etc. are an important priority.*
- *Access to parks needs to be addressed*
- *City should promote programmatic activities (schools are available).*
- *Renovation and preservation should be priorities.*

Table 3

- *Supervision – well maintained, “eyes on the park”, both contribute to a park’s success.*
- *Main priorities include diversity; multi-use & diversity of users; plant life; facilities.*
- *Community – take ownership and be engaged in order to ensure successful parks.*

Table 4

- *The most important priority is maintenance, which also relates to park care vs. abuse.*
- *Make Ocean Beach more of a destination.*
- *Examples of successful parks to refer to and learn from include Hyde Park & Regents Park (because of a variety of uses), Shanghai’s pocket parks, & Golden Gate Park).*
- *Efforts should be taken to reduce light pollution.*

Table 5

- *Successful park features – I.D. information/resources are very helpful*
- *People want to feel like they are “in nature” while using parks.*
- *Parks should feature diverse activities to accommodate for all ages/groups.*
- *Incorporate art and other distinctive elements into neighborhood parks.*
- *Proximity/Access to parks is an important relationship, if not near a park a person should be able to easily access one.*
- *Play equipment, hiking, dogs, toilets are priorities to focus on*
- *Better maintenance & management are required in San Francisco parks.*
- *People like being involved in projects (allow and promote community stewardship neighborhood involvement in parks).*

- Design for durability.
- Consistency in management features – raise the bar (*the City needs to ensure more cooperation amongst agencies and involved organizations, “dysfunction has been the excuse for too long”*).

Table 6

- Opportunities to connect *open spaces should be pursued*.
- *Table participants* appreciate unstructured AND structured parks.
- *The City should make use of* underutilized areas like schoolyards and medians.
- Closing streets temporarily *should be promoted*.

Table 7

- Identifying needs for public & agencies *such as improved safety, maintenance of facilities, and clean and open bathrooms at all parks*
- Access /connectivity, safety, and conservation are *important and* related issues.
- Dedicated & passionate community involvement *is a way to improve many issues*.
- Ocean Beach needs more services (*i.e. bathrooms/showers, vendors, better access*)
- *Increase public art, it gets people engaged and makes them less likely to trash the park.*

Table 8

- Stewardship – community involvement & stewardship “makes good park”.
- Multi-agency & holistic involvement from City *is a requirement for success*.
- Community *should be the one who* determines park elements & uses.
- Family oriented *amenities/uses should be promoted*.
- *Emphasize diversity* – Dolores Park & Crissy Field as examples of diverse uses, etc.

CLOSING

- Meredith Thomas, NPC

- Astrid Haryati, Mayor’s Office

Getting Involved, Staying Involved + MIB

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 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. Meredith noted 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 and hold a conversation about prioritizing what needs to be done for and with open space in San Francisco. 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 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.

Next Steps + Closing

Lara from OBVC asked to get the information collected at this workshop for the use of OBVC.

Astrid Haryati, Greening Director for Mayor Newsom, thanked participants for their valuable input and reiterated the importance of being able to identify and act upon priorities for open space in San Francisco.

MEETING WRAP UP

- *Lara Truppelli, Ocean Beach Vision Council*

Lara Truppelli thanked the participants for coming and directed people to go to the Ocean Beach website <http://www.oceanbeachsf.org/index.php> for more information regarding upcoming events.

