

Neighborhood Parks Council – Monthly Coalition Meeting
September 6, 2008

RPD GO Parks Bond: Proposed Framework and Projects Presentation and Coalition Discussion

Agenda Item #1: Welcome (Meredith Thomas, NPC)

Agenda Item #2: Introductions (Isabel Wade, NPC)

Agenda Item #3: NPC Program Updates

- Update on Work Days (Chloe Good, NPC)
- Update on Open Space 2100 (Karin Edwards, NPC)
 - o Launch Date of Mayor's Open Space Task Force is scheduled for early November
- Update on Transbay Transit Terminal Design Competition
 - o Public comment period ends September 17, 2007
 - o To view the 3 proposed designs, visit www.transbaycenter.org or visit in person at Yerba Buena Center

Agenda Item #4: Park Group and Other Attendees Introductions (Isabel Wade, NPC)

Agenda Item #5: Presentation by Bond Campaign Consultant (Patrick Hannan)

- Bond Campaign Consultant polled a number of San Franciscans on what they would like to see in the next Parks Bond. Patrick Hannan shared these results:
 - o What are voters concerned with?
 - Seismic safety
 - Playground safety
 - Clean restrooms
 - o The results of the research demonstrated that voters want this Parks Bond to be a “fix the roof” bond. The voters would like to see RPD conduct an inventory of what the city already has and fix the existing problems.
- The information gathered by the Bond Campaign Consultant informed the criteria used to select projects for the bond.

Agenda Item #5: RPD Presentation on Proposed Parks Bond Framework and Projects (Dawn Kamalanathan, RPD; Dan Hodapp, Port)

Dawn Kamalanathan presented the criteria development, project selection and description, past funding, and eastern neighborhoods open space analysis.

Dan Hodapp presented the proposed Waterfront projects.

- Historically, bonds have always been site specific, for example: Zoo, GGP, etc

- Why is the Parks Bond going on the February ballot? By going first (and before the General Hospital Bond, among others), RPD feels like it has a strategic advantage, ie voters are more likely to vote for a Parks Bond BEFORE the Hospital Bond than after it.
- Breakdown of Criteria:
 - o Safe → seismic retrofitting, fixing playgrounds
 - o Clean → restrooms
 - o Green → urban forestry, playing fields, irrigation
- Bond is only one part of a much larger strategy to address our large financial need.
- Looking back at the 2000 Bond – Lessons Learned
 - o Accountability (explicit expectations)
 - o Project Criteria (must be more objective)
 - o Improved reporting
 - o Project management – control
 - o Establish rules for the unexpected
 - o Citizen oversight
- FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS
 - o Neighborhood Parks focus
 - o Accountability
 - o Balance between buildings versus landscape
 - o Balance projects citywide and pay close attention to high needs areas
 - o Seismic retrofitting
 - o Must be a clear system for project selection
 - o Restrooms – open and clean!
- City-Wide Priorities
 - o Restrooms
 - o Reforestation
 - o Community Opportunities Fund
 - o Better Athletic Fields
- Proposed Waterfront Parkscan
 - o Transitioning from a port to an urban waterfront
 - o Waterfront Land Use Plan
 - PROJECT CRITERIA: continuity, sequence, variety
 - o The Bond \$\$ would continue the first phase (Rincon, South Beach Park, Pier 7, Ferry Building), in addition to new projects
 - o Proposed projects are city serving and neighborhood serving
 - o List of proposed projects:
 - Pier 43 promenade (unsafe piers)
 - Brannan Street Wharf (boat launch, failing wharf)
 - Bayfront Park in Mission Bay (dangerous shoreline, waterfront access)
 - Crane Cove Park (Pier 70) – still in planning phase
 - Blue Greenway
- SELECTION OF PROJECTS
 - o Unsafe in an earthquake = 20 points
 - o Poor physical condition = 50 points

- Density = 10 points
- Core park amenities = 20 / 100
- Core park amenities include: playground, recreation center, athletic field, open space > 1 acre

[Click here to view the RPD's presentation](#)

Agenda Item #6: Neighborhood Parks Council presents "Alternative Proposal to GO Parks Bond (Isabel Wade)

Concerns of NPC:

- Accountability is NPC's #1 issue
- Lack of transparency in how the bond money is allocated and how the projects were selected
- The "green" in parks is getting short changed – there needs to be more of a balance between facility projects and softcapex like trees and trails.

RPD Proposed Funding Allocation

Neighborhood Parks	\$121 M
Waterfront Port Parks	\$32 M
Restrooms	\$14 M
Playfields	\$8.5 M
Reforestation & Trails	\$7 M
Community Match Fund	<u>\$4 M</u>
	~\$185 M

NPC Proposed Funding Proposal

Neighborhood Parks → \$135M (Waterfronts not separate)

Restrooms → \$6M

Playfields → \$9M

Trees & Irrigation → \$15M

Opportunity Fund → \$20M (The larger opportunity fund will leverage more money – the \$20M could potentially become \$40M, \$60M, even \$80M – some of this being sweat equity)

Agenda Item #7: Q&A and Coalition Discussion

Bob Nelson – Alamo Square Park: Don't want slated bathroom, want irrigation

Alamo Square Park is worse off from the work done in the park with the \$2M from the 2000 Bond. Alamo Square wants their irrigation fixed, not a restroom as is slated for this bond.

Edward Evans – Boeddeker Park: ADA Accessibility

SF Parks need to be more ADA Accessible, e.g. Mountain Lake Park, and more programs should be offered for the disabled.

Rec and Park Response: 25% of the cost of each project is added to make it ADA compliant, which is legally required.

Charles Spencer – Fillmore/Turk Mini Park: Western Addition’s High Need not in bond

Charles has been a volunteer at Fillmore/Turk Mini Park in the Western Addition for over 3 years. He says that it is impossible to get RPD to create a long-term plan for the park. Buchanan Park Mall, a pedestrian Boulevard in the Western Addition, has the potential to become an amazing community park.

Both of these projects have been left out of the Bond and Charles feels that Buchanan Park Mall is a perfect project to include in the Bond because of the high density and need in the Western Addition. He also agreed that the attention given to creating new playfields is a good thing given the high need, but points out that there has been no effort to improve and increase youth sports programming.

Ahsha Safai – District 11: Waterfront projects are not an appropriate use of bond funding and where are the children in the bond?

A Neighborhood Parks Bond should not be used on projects where there are obvious funding alternatives. Examples of this are the Waterfront projects – especially Fisherman’s Wharf. These projects should be financed by a parcel tax, community benefit districts, etc. In addition, why is a *future* project such as Pier 70 even in the bond? This is a type of project that should be funded by new development.

Asha also drew attention to the fact that children were completely left out of RPD’s presentation, when children and retaining families should be their FOCUS. District 11 has the largest number of children under the age of 18 in San Francisco, however, this is not being represented in the selected projects. Balboa Park is not on the list – even though they just secured a \$400,000 grant with NPC. Asha reiterated that San Francisco must do everything to keep families in San Francisco.

Friends of Camp Mather

Camp Mather is RPD-owned land near Yosemite National Park. It is a destination for thousands of San Franciscan families. The Camp is putting money back into RPD, but RPD is not putting money back into Camp Mather. Despite the fact that RPD has put the cost of repairing Camp Mather at an astronomically high price, the Friends of Camp Mather would only like to have a few historic buildings renovated in this upcoming bond. In addition, Friends of Camp Mather pointed out that the number of repairs listed by RPD for Camp Mather is incorrect.

Richard Magary – Buena Vista Park: Why don’t the project costs add up?

Why does the total of the Neighborhood Projects only add up to \$104M when the breakdown lists \$124M?

RPD RESPONSE: There is a difference between cost and contract cost. When you add contingency and soft cost on top of the baseline cost, you come up with \$124M. In other words, there is a 20% add-on for soft costs.

Tom Radulovich – Livable City: Natural Area are nowhere in the bond, more value should be captured from new developments, alternate financing such as community benefit districts and developer fees should be used for waterfront parks, connectivity of waterfront is important, the waterfront should be a stand alone bond.

Natural areas are not included in the baseline proposal. He also reiterates Asha's point about looking for alternative ways to finance parks in areas with new development. He mentions that other cities capture the value from new developments for park acquisition and development. These cities include: Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver. The city must couple financing with community benefits and developers fees. Examples: Mission Bay development could help pay for Waterfront parks. It is important to democratize the waterfront – think about connectivity! Finally, the Waterfront should be a stand alone bond and redevelopment should pay for Mission Bay. He then asked RPD about the 2013 Bond.

RPD Response: This is still an open-ended question – RPD data is getting better (from the last bond). By 2013, RPD will have rich datasets including: use, COMET data, demographic projections.

Linda Richardson, District 10: Where are the park projects in the Southeastern Neighborhoods and why isn't the projected density being taken into account? Where is the community input?

The greatest opportunity right now is in the South Eastern Neighborhoods. But where do these neighborhoods show up on the project list? The Bond should focus on these neighborhoods and the selection criteria should focus on these new communities, assimilate growth, and take into account projected density. Linda's main point was that RPD needs to get community input. Community input has been completely absent in this whole process. It is important that RPD approach communities for input because it is the community that can identify best with the needs of their neighborhood parks.

President of District 11 Council: Why wasn't the community involved in the process? Why isn't the Geneva Office Building on the list—it meets all the criteria? Why weren't the Better Neighborhoods Plans used to pick Projects?

No community meetings about the bond held in District 11. They were told to go to the Sunset. In addition, community meetings were only held after the project list was a "done deal". The selection criteria are a joke. For example, the Geneva Office Building meets every criteria, yet it did not make the list. Why didn't RPD use the Better Neighborhoods Plans to pick projects? The Geneva Center is the center of District 11 and could be a successful community center with high quality programming. District 11 reiterates Asha's comment about the high number of children in District 11 and the disproportionately small number of projects in District 11.

Greg Garr – Nature in the City: Where are the natural areas? Then environmental caucus will oppose the bond unless 5% of the bond is allocated towards natural areas.

Greg attended the Environmental/RPD meeting earlier in the day to discuss the Natural Areas Program (NAP) and get feedback from the Natural Areas caucus. He said that the entire environmental caucus (Audobon Society, Sierra Club, Nature in the City etc) has not been involved in the entire 8-month process.

NAP makes up 27% of RPD land (1100 acres), yet receives less than 1% of the budget. It has 14,000 volunteers per year.

NAP will NOT support the bond if natural areas projects are not included. In short, if the bottom line is not met (NAP is under-funded), they will oppose the bond. Examples include: Glen Canyon Park, Lake Merced. This is important for our children and future generations.

Friends of Joe DiMaggio Playground: Is there hope for parks to receive funds from the bond if we are not on the project list?

Joe DiMaggio is not included in the list of projects. Friends of Joe DiMaggio wants to know if it is then hopeless for them to get any money from the bond?

RPD RESPONSE: There is the matching grand fund. Also, the bond is only one tool in the RPD “park financing toolkit”.

NPC RESPONSE: This is why the Opportunity Fund is so important. When there is no citizen oversight in the project selection, there’s got to be a large opportunity fund.

Friends of Geneva Office Building: Why weren’t the Better Neighborhoods Plans used? Where is the Geneva Office Building?

Why didn’t the selection criteria for the Parks Bond include the Better Neighborhoods Plans? For example, the Balboa Neighborhood Plan identifies areas of need and improvements on existing open space. Friends of Geneva Office Building recommends that every bond project should be an opportunity fund project.

RPD RESPONSE: RPD has demonstrated that it has the ability to leverage more than \$400M from state and federal funds. Yomi’s point is that the \$124M going towards Neighborhood Parks projects could leverage additional funds. He also reiterates that the bond is only one financial strategy in RPD “tool-kit”.

Park Advocate: How will the opportunity fund work?

How would the opportunity funds work? Who would decide on the projects and administer it? How much of that money would be eaten up by administrative costs?

NPC RESPONSE: The Opportunity Fund should be treated like the old Open Space Fund. PROSAC could decide on projects or another community group. It MUST be citizen-based.

MAYOR’S OFFICE RESPONSE (Alfredo Pedroza): There are a number of positive models for grant programs including: Community Challenge Grants. These are small capital grants ranging from \$30K-250K.

RPD RESPONSE: Mini-parks are a perfect example of how the matching grant program should work. The matching grant program is ideal for projects that require unique solutions – “neglected nooks”. With regards to who would administer the program – the Parks Commission or PROSAC would be the administering body. RPD would also create a Task Force to develop rules for the program. The administrative costs would depend on the size and type of grants.

Park Advocate: Who will be doing this work? Where will the personnel come from?

This was a question regarding personnel – Who is going to do the work on all of the new projects? How many new personnel positions are going to be created?

RPD RESPONSE: This issue is being addressed and RPD has discussed this need with the Board of Supervisors. RPD recognizes that they cannot invest without providing the necessary staff. To date, RPD has the funding to hire 37 new gardeners, 15 custodians, and 10 new rangers.

Linda Harte – FACE, Friends of McLaren Park, District 10 and 11: \$400,000 for a restroom is too high, the bathroom at Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park is brand new so why is it receiving a new restroom? The new Crocker Amazon Playground needs a restroom.

Linda reiterates concerns the public has over the expense of the free-standing restrooms (predicted to be approximately \$400,000. She points out that Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in John McLaren park is on the list to get a new restroom. The Jerry Garcia Amphitheater DOESN'T NEED a restroom! However, the rest of McLaren park has other, huge needs. She questions the legitimacy and accuracy of the list and wonders how the projects were chosen.

Crocker Amazon Playground, a brand new facility, does not have a restroom, though it is desperately needed. However, it is not on the project list.

RPD RESPONSE: Clarification – the list includes all the existing restrooms – because a restroom is on the list does not mean that it needs improvement. The list highlights gaps and existing improvements. RPD wants to reiterate that there is a \$1.7B need in the city, and the bond is ONLY a start, because you have to start somewhere. The bond is meant to start fixing the most immediate problems.

Natural Areas Advocate

We must consider conserving water and sustainability in all of these projects

Glen Canyon Park Advocate: What will funding for Glen Canyon go towards?

A member of the audience wanted clarification on what the bond money will be used for in Glen Canyon Park.

RPD RESPONSE: The recreation center is sinking – so a portion of the money will go improvements of playfields, etc and another portion will go to understanding what is happening to the building. There will also be a feasibility study done on daylighting the creek.

Agenda Item #8: QUESTIONS FOR THE COALITION

QUESTION #1: What are the project concerns on this bond?

- Waterfront projects
- Fisherman's Wharf
- Accountability of execution
- Free-standing restrooms too costly at \$400,000 per restroom

- Bathrooms not needed (e.g. Alamo Square, Mountain Lake Park athroom at Mountain Lake Park (Friends of Mountain Lake Park))
- No systemic projects
- No trust in administration
- There is master planning in the bond
- Too much emphasis on structures and buildings and not enough money going towards “green”
- Significant funding for planning

Some community members stated they would not support the bond if the below projects or actions are not included:

- Systemic approach to solving city-wide issues such as irrigation or fields.
- Camp Mather
- Landscaping
- Natural Areas
- Clear administration of projects

QUESTION #2: Do you support putting more money into the Opportunity Fund and Trees/Irrigation?

- Overwhelming YES!

If you have any corrections to these minutes please email cgood@sfnpc.org.