



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 30, 2016

Ms. Cassandra Costello, Property Manager  
San Francisco Recreation & Park Department  
McLaren Lodge  
501 Stanyan Street, San Francisco, CA 94117

**RE: LAKE MERCED WEST, LETTER OF INTEREST**

Dear Ms. Costello,

The YMCA of San Francisco (YSF) is pleased to submit a letter of interest in the development of Lake Merced West. YSF is a 501(c)3 charitable organization with more than 160 years of service in San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties. Throughout the organization's history, we have adapted to address the most pressing social issues of the day. Historically, the Y has focused on the development of youth through all of their life transitions so that they establish the skills and habits for a successful lifetime.

Today, we accomplish this same goal by focusing efforts in youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, to include a range of initiatives from truancy prevention to workforce development and engaging youth in healthy activities.

The YMCA of San Francisco spans services throughout the Bay Area with 14 branch locations each offering robust recreation, aquatic, health and wellness, and social service programs to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. We are a leading partner to the City of San Francisco working with multiple City departments and San Francisco Unified School District across 120+ program locations serving youth, adults, families and seniors and meeting the needs of our community every day. We are an experienced operator of programs and services on public lands including: SF Rec and Park clubhouses, SFUSD campuses, the Presidio of San Francisco, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA).

Annually we serve more than 200,000 individuals, 40,000 of whom are ages 18 and younger. We are the 24<sup>th</sup> largest employer in San Francisco, and designated from the SF Business Times as one of the "Best Places to Work."

**Our interest in Lake Merced West is directly tied to our bold Vision for the year 2020:**

The healthiest children in America will live in the Bay Area, building the skills and habits for a healthy life, being empowered to reach their highest potential and make valuable contributions to society through the strength of the communities we serve.

An essential component of our Vision is access to safe and open spaces for all people, but especially youth. We operate two outdoor environmental education centers (one in the Marin Headlands, and one in the Santa Cruz Mountains) annually serving 20,000 youth as well as and 14 urban gardens across the Bay Area. We take pride in teaching young people how to ride bicycles and learn bike and aquatic safety, and how to recognize

**YMCA OF SAN FRANCISCO**

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and care for nature in their own communities. We have recently innovated two unique frameworks to provide outdoor education to under-served elementary and middle school pupils—Play Learn Work Serve and the Advanced Outdoor Leadership Academy.

The opportunity for the Y to provide services at Lake Merced West is once in a lifetime. Our experience leading youth in outdoor education programming and providing recreation opportunities for all makes the Y an ideal partner for the location. Our primary interest for Lake Merced West is to extend our core programming with youth and provide a wide variety of on-site programs and services during out-of-school time, such as after school, weekends, holidays and vacations. Additionally, we are open to collaborating with the final service provider at Lake Merced West to provide adult, family, and senior programming consistent with our mission and expertise. At this time, YSF recreation activities would not require substantial indoor space, so we are an ideal partner for a more facility focused organization.

We know that when people discover and learn in parks and open spaces, they cultivate appreciation, understanding, and love for the out of doors and foster the incumbent responsibilities of environmental stewardship. To that end, we hope that we can provide our areas of expertise to the finalist chosen to develop Lake Merced West and to contribute to a stronger collective impact for human development and the preservation, enhancement and conservation of the our natural assets.

We welcome to the opportunity to explore partnership opportunities with any of the respondents to the RFP and with the City and County of San Francisco related to this very special location.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Collins  
President & CEO  
YMCA of San Francisco