

Strategic Plan - 2002

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“The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department’s mission is to provide enriching recreational activities maintain beautiful parks and preserve the environment for the well-being of our diverse community.”

THE HISTORY

Recreation and Park Department

The Strategic Plan

The Urban Park Movement

Buildings went up first in the rapidly growing cities of the 1800’s. People had to wait for their parks. Tracing the 130-year history of the urban park movement across the nation, author Galen Cranz chose three urban park systems—those of New York, Chicago and San Francisco—to generalize about the nature of the American park movement as a whole. “This is possible,” she wrote, “because the development of American urban parks has been remarkably homogeneous. New York is an important case because Central Park was the first public park developed (1857—ed.) in the context of what became the urban park movement. Chicago is significant because the reform park was developed to its fullest there. San Francisco completes the triad with a western case, and one in which similarities to the others is not simply the result of Frederick Law Olmsted’s personal tastes and ideals.” (*The Politics of Park Design, A History of Urban Parks in America;* MIT Press, 1989)

A Short History of San Francisco Parks: 1868-2002

The Park Commission

Parks were no part of city planning in the early days of San Francisco. Neither were playgrounds. Recreation was an indoor activity and children weren’t told to “go outside and play” for there was no place to go. Tall buildings rose, brick to brick, lining the streets and causing an editorial in 1868 to lament that “as the few vacant lots fill up, the want of clear sky space will become more than ever felt.” In response to the growing demand for a large public park, in 1868 the Board of Supervisors established a special committee that set aside 1017 acres for Golden Gate Park, including the Panhandle; 36 acres for Buena Vista Park; 20 acres for Mountain Lake Park; the Ocean Beach or “Great Highway;” and 200 acres for a cemetery which later became Lincoln Park and Fort Miley.

In April 1870, the state passed an act “To Provide for the Improvement of Public Parks in San Francisco,” authorizing Governor Henry Haight to establish a Park Commission and appoint three unpaid commissioners. They made John McLaren Superintendent of Parks in 1887, inaugurating his era of growth that, in addition to expanding Golden Gate Park, included connecting it to the Presidio and Mountain Lake by the Park-Presidio Boulevard Parkway; developing the drive and park on Telegraph Hill; creating municipal golf courses and parkway drives at Lincoln Park and Harding Park, zoological gardens, and the children’s area and swimming pool at Fleishhacker; and establishing the Outer Mission park which bears his name.

A new "home rule" charter in 1900 increased the Park Commission to five members, appointed by the mayor. It also put all the city's small parks and squares under Park Commission jurisdiction, adding some 150 scattered areas to the park system. Citizens flocked to their new open spaces, prompting the Park Commission to issue an ordinance in 1918 to establish rules of outdoor behavior. Among other things, it prohibited "riding or hitching wild horses; letting loose of cattle, goats or swine; disturbing fish or catching quail; bathing in ponds or setting up boxing contests; appearing in attire exposing any parts of legs, arms or trunk, except at athletic grounds." The speed limit for automobiles, horseless carriages and motorcycles was 20 miles per hour.

Then as now, growth was determined by dollars. "San Francisco is known as the city of great parks," proclaimed an editorial in 1927 supporting the Park Commission budget that included acquiring land for Mt. Davidson Park, expanding McLaren Park and completing Aquatic Park. In 1941, the Commission produced a coordinated system of parks and boulevards and turned it over to the Planning Commission to include in the Master Plan coming from the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association. The 1954 Master Plan, analyzing the need for and effect of "The Location of Parks and Recreation Areas in San Francisco," noted that "parks contain a relief from the tight mass of building and a visual interest which serves far beyond their immediate precincts. Large green areas such as Golden Gate Park, Lincoln Park and Sutro Forest are as important to the city as the downtown skyscrapers or world-famous bridges. Smaller hilltop parks, such as Buena Vista, Alta Plaza, Lafayette Park or Alamo Square, establish the character of areas around them."

"Much of the plan has been implemented," says the Planning Department's Stephen Shotland, adding that there have been succeeding Master Plans in '73-'74, '86-'87 and the Golden Gate Park Master Plan which was adopted by the Recreation and Park Commission in 1998. He believes that during the next decades "the city will have to focus on fixing existing facilities and acquiring additional parkland, particularly in the eastern part of the city as it gets developed."

The Playground Commission which became The Recreation Commission

Women created the city's first playground in July 1898. The all-women California Club opened a public playground in a school lot at Bush and Hyde Streets. Its success prompted the Board of Supervisors to call a special bond election in 1903 designating \$740,000 for the acquisition of land for children's playgrounds. When it passed in 1904, the California Club followed up with a (successful) charter amendment on the 1907 ballot, empowering the mayor to appoint a Playground Commission. Its funding came from the general tax fund.

The first commissioners took office in 1908 and the playground movement was on its way. The budget was stabilized with a fixed percentage of the property tax in 1924, and under a 1932 charter amendment, the Playground Commission became the Recreation Commission. Its president was Mrs. Sigmund Stern, whose gift of Stern Grove to the city was a jewel in its urban crown and a memorial to her husband.

During the 1930s the WPA (Works Progress Administration) came in to improve many recreational and park sites with planting, playground and field equipment. The ball fields, bleachers and playground at Crocker-Amazon were installed; Fulton Playground and the grounds at Sunset, J. P. Murphy and Rossi were developed; field houses were built in playgrounds throughout the city, as was the recreation center at Glen Park.

In 1926, recreational specialist Josephine Randall was appointed the first woman Superintendent of Recreation and a member of the Commission. During her 25-year tenure, she expanded the department from 22 playgrounds to over 100 recreation units including Camp Mather in the High Sierra and broadened the facilities' range of activities. When the \$12,000,000 Recreation Bond passed in 1947, her spirited and tenacious action on the selected projects resulted in the fact that in 1951, at the opening of the Junior Museum bearing her name, half of the pioneering city-wide recreation plan was underway.

Streamlining and Merging

The Recreation Commission and the Park Commission each now had equal standing as well as occasional jurisdictional disputes, which surfaced in the press. In 1944, Mayor Roger Lapham recommended consolidating the two departments to avoid duplication in personnel and work assignments. It was proposed as a charter amendment in the 1947 election. It failed, but the seeds were planted and when the amendment cropped up again it passed in 1949. This created a merged Recreation and Park Commission, despite opposition by organized labor, various women's groups and employees of the departments. It directed the Recreation and Park Commissioners to appoint a general manager who would appoint a superintendent of recreation, superintendent of parks, director of the zoo and an executive secretary. On June 27, 1950, the seven-member Recreation and Park Commission held the first of the monthly meetings that took place in McLaren Lodge for more than 50 years and set the course for the city's parks and playgrounds under the watchful eyes of mayors, monitors, and active citizens concerned about their parks.

In 1970, Mayor Joseph Alioto asked the business community to sponsor "A Plan for Action" study to streamline the Recreation and Park Department, evaluate programs and recommend changes that would broaden recreation activities in the neighborhoods. Presented by the Blyth Zellerbach Committee in 1971, the plan's suggestions ranged from the department's organization, operations and personnel to accounting, engineering and maintenance. It was the forerunner to a campaign for change that some 25 years later, was initiated by neighborhood groups in cooperation with Recreation and

Park in the late '90s and is marching steadily forward.

The city's original 4 parks have expanded into 227 parks and recreation facilities, which include: 145 multi-use fields, 22 soccer pitches, 21 full recreation centers, 10 swimming pools, 6 golf courses, 3 stadiums, 2 carousels, 2 windmills, and over 80 neighborhood parks. If form follows function, as architect Louis Sullivan has famously proclaimed, then as the Strategic Plan takes shape, the future of San Francisco parks looms brighter and more clearly focused than at any time in its first 132 years.

VISION GRAPHIC ON THIS PAGE

THE VISION

A Day in the Life

It's 2025 and the Department's success in executing the Strategic Plan has drawn local and national attention. The assortment of green shapes marking Recreation and Park facilities on the Department's Guide map (yes, maps on paper still exist) have become known as sites for assorted pleasures large and small. There are sports in state-of-the-art facilities with well-kept rest rooms. Anyone for tennis? Soccer? A swim? Events, concerts-how about the jazz concert in Buena Vista Park? Or a quiet stroll in a neighborhood park on paths flanked by tended flowerbeds, trimmed trees and inviting benches.

Information on what's happening and where, on any given day, is posted on the Internet and in the activity guides that can be picked up at neighborhood centers around the city. Friendly, knowledgeable Rec and Park staff can be reached by phone or at the sites to answer questions, suggest activities and direct people to the trams and carts that will glide them to where they want to go. We embark on a typical tour.

A resident couple with a visitor in tow enters the San Francisco City Center to ask about sightseeing in a favorite park. Directed to the Recreation and Park portal, they step into a tram and are whisked to its green meadows and blooming gardens. On a leisurely walkabout, they see runners on a circuit track in the distance and decide to explore other athletic activities. Spotting a friendly informed and uniformed staff member, they are directed to a full service recreation center and a guided tour full of surprises. In various spaces behind the glass walls they watch an extraordinary range of activities: a senior sewing class, a computer class, a sorting and recycling operation, kids tumbling about and giggling on state-of-the-art play equipment. A thump from above signals that the rooftop garden group has begun its summer solstice celebration.

The threesome moves on to the information booth to ask the volunteer docent about after-school tutoring through a nonprofit group. They are interested in developing some programs that they don't see offered and are directed to a community room where a group is meeting to discuss this very topic. On entering, they find a mix of resident volunteers, uniformed staff, and representatives from the neighborhood nonprofit. After introductions all around, they quickly join the conversation on new programs, learn about the resources available and sign up for the implementation committee. (The visitor resolves to start up a similar program when he returns home.)

Now it's back to the information desk to show their friend another of the park's attractions—a natural areas site--they are directed to a tram that climbs to "the hut on the bluff." The naturalists headquartered there explain the landscape's native plants and the natural areas program. They offer maps of hiking trails and point out which ones permit off-leash dog running, and those that are ADA compliant and have wheelchair access. Strolling the area and marveling at the diversity of nature's plants and wildflowers, the visitors feel the call of nature herself and are pleasantly surprised to discover that the artistically camouflaged structure they admired is really a bathroom (furnished with biodegradable paper.). Green is taken seriously here.

Descending to the world below and out onto the streets of San Francisco, the trio vows that on the next visit, they'll bring a lunch and a camera. With so much still to see and do, the first visit is only a prelude to many more.

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan, like success, has many fathers [and mothers]. They came from Recreation & Park and other City departments, from neighborhood parks and community groups, city officials and civic leaders, foundations and businesses, planners and planters, athletes and activists. Their mission was simple: to restore and rebuild San Francisco's parks and recreation facilities, worn down with heavy use, deferred maintenance and lack of capital investment.

This plan proposes strategic objectives with strategies and tactics for enhancing these parks, facilities and the recreation programs they offer. This plan also proposes a framework for organizational change to support the suggested improvements, the employees implementing them and the community benefiting from them.

For over 100 years, the purpose of San Francisco's park and recreation system was to provide respite for the community.

This plan underscores the need to realize the original vision of the creators of this incredible park and recreation system. In examining the mission statement and other ideals expressed in the plan, the following core values emerged.

WORKING WELL TOGETHER

Working well together embodies having respect for our co-workers, our community and our environment; valuing each other's professional opinions, expertise, and collaboration in order to deliver the best parks and programs.

Great CUSTOMER SERVICE

Great customer service includes a caring and considerate attitude by Department staff. It reflects honest, professional, effective and efficient communication to both co-workers and the community.

Always DEPENDABLE

Being consistently dependable allows the community and staff to count on the Department. This includes reliably accurate information, transparent communication and unquestionable safety standards.

Inspiring INNOVATION

Inspiring innovation brings great riches to all that we do. It encourages respect for the diverse creativity and dynamic environment in which we live and work, and it puts San Francisco at the forefront of many communities.

EXCELLENCE In Everything

In supporting our mission, values, vision and the objectives that follow, we will bring excellence to everything that we do.

The Department is pleased to present the following Strategic Plan.

THE PROCESS

The call to action began in 1998 with the publication of the San Francisco Parks Task Force Report: *"Parks Plan."* Distilled from six months of meetings and discussions with the "mothers," under the sponsorship of the Neighborhood Parks Council and San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), the *Plan* that evolved set the direction and provided a template that was the catalyst for the many steps leading up to this Strategic Plan. In 1999, RPD completed a yearlong *"Great Parks for a Great City Assessment Project,"* (of its capital assets) and the Mayor's

"Renaissance Crusade" was launched. In March 2000 voters approved two key park measures--Proposition A, a \$110 million bond to fund capital improvements and Proposition C, which renewed the Open Space Fund and mandated a Capital Plan, Strategic Plan and an Operations Plan.

Other information gathering tools that fold into the strategic plan:

- Assessment Staff Workshops of September 1998
- Staff Assessment Debriefing Report of March 2000
- Strategic Planning Key Issues Report of June 2000
- Efficiency Plan of November 2000 (*the report was a requirement of Supervisor Gavin Newsom's Customer Service Ordinance of 1999*)
- Draft Strategic Plan of December 2000
- Strategic Planning Stakeholder Process of 2001-2002

To create a blueprint for change, RPD developed an Issues Database, a comprehensive list of issues and concerns raised by staff and the community. The framework for action began in April 2000. RPD's Strategic Planning Committee set up strategy teams, meetings, interviews and discussions. The Neighborhood Parks Council secured a grant from the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation to guide the Strategic Planning Stakeholder Process and ensure greater public participation. Integrating and combining the findings of both groups, the final Strategic Plan represents the views, concerns and goals of

the people who run the parks and the people who use them, all dedicated to the development of a world class parks and recreation system.

- THE STRATEGIC PLAN

*The Strategic Plan is built around seven **Strategic Objectives**. Each one sets forth strategies supported by a tactical list of specific actions to accomplish it.*

THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

Excellent Parks and Facilities - Create a model park and recreation system that provides first quality parks, recreation facilities and programs that are used widely by residents and visitors alike.

Organizational Excellence - Create a park and recreation organization that is a national model for excellence and efficiency.

Comprehensive Recreational Programming - Create a flexible system that provides cutting edge recreation and promotes fitness and well being through responsive programming.

Maximize Resources - Maximize all available resources to support the delivery of beautiful, safe parks and recreation facilities with a rich array of services that creatively utilize partnerships.

Environmental Sustainability - Create a park system that demonstrates a national model for sustainable management as it applies to the protection and management of open space, natural areas and parks. Key elements include appropriate landscape materials and techniques, as well as effective use of water, electricity, composting, integrated pest management and the development of green building.

Community Participation - Create a parks and recreation system that invites all residents to participate in planning, designing, and advocating for parks and recreation.

Community and Customer Service - Provide the highest level of user-friendly community and customer service that consistently supplies precise, complete and up-to-date information and assistance.

Excellent Parks and Facilities

Create a model park and recreation system that provides first quality parks, recreation facilities and programs that are used widely by residents and visitors alike.

Strategy 1: Foster innovation in management practices.

Tactics:

- Provide the technology, tools, and systems necessary to enhance internal Department communication, coordination, information flow, and work efficiency.
- Conduct management and operational audits that analyze Department resources, streamline the Department, and suggest operational improvements.
- Develop Departmental flexibility and responsiveness through mechanisms that insure that decision-making is taking place at the lowest possible level.

Strategy 2: Renovate, acquire and design parks and facilities to reflect universal, state-of-the-art design and meet the needs and desires of the community, while implementing the Capital Plan

Tactics:

- Create an asset management and improvement program that will allow the Department to upgrade all parks and facilities to state-of-the-art class.
- Develop signature parks and facilities in all parts of the city to increase Department visibility and underscore its value to the community.
- Conduct an annual review of the Capital Plan with preventive maintenance schedules.
- Implement an annual Department-wide equipment assessment to determine the current and future needs of each park and recreation facility.

Strategy 3: Develop a comprehensive and innovative safety and security program.

Tactics:

- Involve the community in a park-by-park assessment to maximize safety and minimize hazards.
- Improve safety in parks and facilities through preventive and proactive measures.
- Provide staff with the tools and equipment they need to adequately and safely maintain all park and recreation

resources.

- Prioritize the repair and replacement of facilities, particularly play apparatus.
- Standardize, post and enforce facility procedures, practices and rules for facility and park use.
- Require supervisors/staff to regularly monitor facilities to ensure safe and appropriate use.
- Expand the park ranger program beyond its current function.
- Recognize that design can be a pivotal element in building, renovating, and maintaining safe parks.

Strategy 4: Become a leader in multi-use land management and protection.

Tactics:

- Establish staff leadership in creating policies and rules regarding disagreements among competing users; delineate action to deal with rules violation.
- Reconfigure single-use fields as multi-use by expanding outfields to fit other sports. (e.g. soccer, rugby).
- Increase enforcement of park codes by appropriate City agencies.
- Engage stakeholders in developing and monitoring the evolution of park policies as needs change or trends emerge.
- Develop a comprehensive off-leash dog policy for parks.

Organizational Excellence

Create a park and recreation organization that is a national model for internal excellence and efficiency at every level.

Strategy 1: Evaluate and modify the organizational structure of the Department to ensure that it meets its stated goals and accommodates community needs.

Tactics:

- Create a new Department structure that contributes to increased operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Consider modifying the organization's structure based on function.
- Consider decentralization as an option for the new organization structure.
- Involve all levels of staff in implementing the new organizational structure.
- Define liaison roles in the Department to coordinate multiple interests, including the Mayor's Office, the Board of Supervisors, and the community.

Strategy 2: Develop a Department-wide accountability program for all employees based on measurable performance standards.

Tactics:

- Create department-wide uniform standards and core values and hold all employees accountable for them.
- Define and clarify job descriptions and responsibilities to ensure that all staff can effectively perform their jobs and maximize their skills.
- Develop individual performance agreements and performance reviews based on annual goals, a work/action plan and evaluation of accomplishments.
- Reward employees who take on responsibilities that go beyond their job classification.
- Develop incentive programs that improve morale and reward individual and group contributions to the Department, such as a "pay for performance" program that includes rewards for meeting or exceeding expectations and consequences for failing to do so.
- Distribute workload in a consistent and equitable manner that encourages productivity and does not overload workers who have demonstrated reliability or reward mediocrity by reducing expectations.
- Implement a computerized management reporting system to summarize work plans, scheduling, program development, operational efficiencies, staffing and budgeting.

Strategy 3: Provide innovative, timely and equitable training and development opportunities for staff to allow them to refine and develop their job skills and better meet the needs of the community.

Tactics:

- Develop procedures for safety training and institute regular interactive employee safety programs.
- Ensure equitable access to frequent job and task-specific training opportunities.
- Create standards for professional preparation and continuous learning.

Strategy 4: Determine and maintain adequate staff to perform Department functions and meet customer needs.

Tactics:

- Promote baseline-staffing level externally.
- Develop clear and consistent written procedures for staff requisitioning, staff selection and retention in order to hire and promote the most qualified candidates.
- Elevate the quality and diversity of the applicant pool and build fairness and equity into the selection process.

- Efficiently fill all positions appropriated in each fiscal year.
- Commit to an adequate number of permanent employees on staff as a means to increase retention.
- Provide an adequately funded staffing plan when new parks, facilities and services are developed.
- Develop an internship program within the organization that recruits and collaborates with local high schools and universities.
- Assign goal "champions" to provide focused and accountable responsibility for advancement of each Strategic Plan Objective.

Comprehensive Recreational Programming

Create a flexible system that provides cutting edge recreation and promotes fitness and well being through responsive programming.

Strategy 1: Incorporate fitness and well being as a priority focus for recreation and park services.

Tactics:

- Expand and publicize health-related programs available at recreation centers and in parks. Emphasize the health benefits of all programs.
- Promote life-long fitness programs that are accessible to residents of all ages.
- Develop programs with schools to promote physical fitness.

Strategy 2: Provide innovative and high quality programs and services that grow out of the community's expressed needs and desires and respond to the community's growth and change.

Tactics:

- Maintain core commitment to recreation services and provide optional program staffing.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of services and staff to determine where gaps exist and staff skills need to be supplemented. Issue a report to encourage advocacy for program funding.

Strategy 3: Provide a rich array of programs for all age groups.

Tactics:

- Develop regular public survey and feedback mechanisms to determine community preferences; publish the findings to form the basis of Department planning.
- Develop, implement and expand programs for all ages and abilities based on assessed user needs; define age groups to target programming; modify these
- Expand popular and successful programs to meet demand.
- Appoint a committee (public and staff) specifically to develop new recreation programs, some as experimental projects.
- Elevate and promote the value of visual, fine arts and cultural arts through Department programs and services and through active promotion of art in the parks.
- Develop citywide intergenerational programs that enable residents to bridge with people of other backgrounds and cultures.
- Develop and implement standards for children and youth programming to which all staff, including directors and supervisors, are accountable.
- Design programs that respond to and serve the changing needs of all ages and abilities, and all types of users.
- Sponsor a mentoring program with partner agencies.
- Develop short and long range aquatic program plans responsive to community demand and need.
- Increase opportunities for access to day camps.
- Develop a comprehensive off-leash dog recreation policy.

Strategy 4: Seek partnerships in providing services.

Tactics:

- Develop partnership agreements with private and community service providers to supplement existing programming.
- Develop collaborative programs with GGNRA/Presidio.
- Bring back artist-in-residence programs to provide programs and performances.
- Improve transportation access through collaboration with MUNI, SFUSD and paratransit services.

Strategy 5: Expand public outreach to announce available services and the benefits of park events, programs and activities.

Tactics:

- Target marketing efforts to non-users to engage their interest and turn them into users of the system.
- Publish a comprehensive, accurate, bi-annual booklet describing programs and facilities and distribute it widely.
- Develop more ways to distribute news about programs and activities, utilizing technology and the media.

- Expand and improve the Department's website with links to programs and services, policies and procedures, events and public meetings.
- Provide multi-lingual program announcements on the website and to multi-lingual local publications.
- Maximize use of school and neighborhood newspapers, bulletin boards, and flyers.
- Provide recreation directors with tools to create announcements of their programs and activities.

Maximize Resources

Maximize all available resources to support the delivery of beautiful, safe parks and recreation facilities with a rich array of services that creatively utilize partnerships.

Strategy 1: Provide the funding necessary to support the Department's goals through new approaches to fundraising and increased revenue generation.

Tactics:

- Educate staff and community on resources available to fund basic programs and services.
- Develop a revenue strategy for funding sources that a) evaluates current partnerships; b) acknowledges the community's value system when providing basic recreation and park services; and c) supports operations and capital costs.
- Incorporate national research findings regarding other cities.
- Analyze the cost per user for all programs.
- Research and analyze existing programs to determine cost effectiveness.
- Determine which programs will be supported by basic services even if revenues are insufficient.

Strategy 2: Develop a revenue plan that pursues additional resources from user fees, hotel taxes, grants and other sources.

Tactics:

- Develop mechanisms to increase City funding and revenue generation.
- Demonstrate effective use of human and financial resources by leveraging limited city funds with outside resources.
- Develop improved computer systems for tracking revenue, expenditures and all costs relating to staffing. Ensure that the system enables staff to be informed and accountable for revenue and expenditures.
- Leverage the income potential of facilities, especially those that can be self-sustaining.
- Create an earned income strategy for sponsorships, grants and partnerships that are sensitive to community values.
- Seek approval of a base City funding level for the Department's operating budget.
- Tap future growth of the hotel tax fund for Department programs and services.
- Use redevelopment funds and tax increment financing (increased property valuation/assessment on areas surrounding parks) for the creation and redevelopment of parks.
- Evaluate fees and adjust where appropriate:
- Expand parking fee revenues;
- Review some program fees with respect to market rate (i.e. fees at other government, non-profit, private agencies.);
- Charge adequate fees to all organizations who use a facility for cost of park rental and clean-up;
- Review resident versus non-resident fees and use.
- Expand concession and lease revenues and operations to ensure appropriate costs of facility and equipment are covered.
- Create a development office with a grant proposal writer to seek out new revenue opportunities.

Strategy 3: Expand partnerships with non-profit organizations, other service providers and businesses to deliver high quality, cost-effective services.

Tactics:

- Maximize grants and other philanthropic donations to enrich programming and facility development. Empower and train staff to leverage such resources.
- Create incentives for staff to be entrepreneurial in generating revenue.
- Develop corporate sponsorships for events, projects and programs within strict guidelines approved by the Recreation and Park Commission.

- Develop specific policies that clearly state how to work with public/public, public/private and public/not-for-profit partners.
- Work toward a measurable level of equity in all partnership agreements.
- Apply consistent criteria and the highest standard of quality to Department selection of partners. Conduct ongoing evaluation of partners.
- Choose partners that benefit the community and the Department.
- Give preference to nonprofits with the capacity to perform services.
- Reevaluate reciprocal use agreements with other City and County agencies to ensure that the Department is benefiting from agreements.
- Hire staff experienced in partnership negotiations and equity tracking; train existing, involved staff in negotiation and business skills.
- Increase interconnections and partnerships with colleges and universities.

Strategy 4: Leverage available capital funds with other governmental and private resources.

Tactics:

- Host forums to encourage partnerships between the community and the Department in order to get projects done on time and on budget.
- Utilize neighborhood support and the philanthropic community for partnership development on fundraising projects.
- Institute a regular working meeting to team with other City Departments such as the Department of Public Works and the Police to maximize resources.

Strategy 5: Evaluate management of services and facilities that are not cost effective and explore whether there are partners in the community to more effectively manage them.

Tactics:

- Welcome partnerships when the Department cannot efficiently provide the service.
- Create a timeline and public outreach process to transfer services and facilities to new management.

Environmental Sustainability

Create a park system that demonstrates a national model for sustainable management as it applies to the protection and management of open space, natural areas and parks. Key elements include appropriate landscape materials and techniques, as well as effective use of water, electricity, composting, integrated pest management and the development of green building.

Strategy 1: Develop and promote sustainable practices in every aspect of system management from facilities to landscape.

Tactics:

- Identify unique or critical ecosystems and produce written plans, in collaboration with the community, to protect them.
- Develop a program and educate staff and the community about ecological values and landscaping techniques to build awareness and support for sustainable management approaches and policy development, as well as to educate them on the implications and importance of environmental sustainability and the Department's responsibilities in this area.

Strategy 2: Ensure continuity of open space and land acquisition and improvement.

Tactics:

- Develop a detailed open space acquisition and prioritization strategy in areas deficient in open space and recreation facilities, considering equity in distribution throughout the neighborhoods.
- Conduct an immediate assessment of current open space acquisition proposals for Mission Bay, Hunter's Point, Treasure Island, the Central Waterfront and the Peninsula Watershed areas.
- Solicit public suggestions for new park and recreation center acquisitions.

Strategy 3: Ensure that remaining natural areas are acquired to protect sensitive plant and wildlife habitat.

Tactics:

- Develop a specific natural areas acquisition component of the open space acquisition strategy.
- Hire staff and provide budget to acquire, plan and implement parks and natural areas management for both existing and future properties.

Strategy 4: Expand sustainable landscaping while creating a balance between natural areas, designed landscape and recreational areas.

Tactics:

- Conduct a landscape site assessment involving staff and community and identifying natural features (soil, water, and other environmental factors) to guide sustainable planning, maintenance and use.
- Assessment to provide detailed management plans for landscaping with comprehensive guidelines and plant lists.
- Create maps showing boundaries and elevations of properties (i.e. a G.I.S. - Geographic Information System).
- Improve the collaborative process that involves the Department and the community in developing design guidelines and park specific landscape designs for staff to follow.
- Change design practices to reflect guideline implementation.

Strategy 5: Develop an energy efficiency plan for all facilities. Design all new buildings as sustainable and green.

Tactics:

- Ensure all new buildings and building renovation projects meet industry standard sustainability guidelines and utilize renewable energy options such as solar and wind power.
- Build all new facilities, including infrastructure and paths, using best, environmentally friendly designs and materials.
- Conduct sustainability audits of all buildings and parks and implement recommendations.

Strategy 6: Become a leader in environmental education.

Tactics:

- Train all staff in their role as environmental stewards promoting environmental sustainability in programs and services.
- Develop a curriculum that teaches appropriate use of parks and facilities to promote environmental awareness and appreciation. Mount a public education and outreach campaign that includes schools and community groups.
- Incorporate environmental education programs in recreation programming for youth from grade school to young adults.
- Create a "park corps" youth program to promote stewardship and leadership development.
- Develop partnerships with SFUSD and other schools to create and implement public service/education programs.

Strategy 7: Become a leader in urban forestry management.

Tactics:

- Create ongoing public education on specific role of trees in the environment, and the need and value of removal as well as planting.
- Develop specific annual planting goals (indicated on site plans), with species lists, for wide scale community tree-planting projects.
- Promote partnerships with local schools and Bay Area universities to enhance forestry education and management.

Community Participation

Create a parks and recreation system that invites all residents to participate in planning, designing, and advocating for parks and recreation.

Strategy 1: Facilitate partnerships with other City Departments, civic organizations, the business community, nonprofits, schools, and volunteers.

Tactics:

- Educate staff about the value of volunteers: their demographics, ways to encourage them and the role of staff in facilitating their work.
- Clearly define staff-volunteer roles and work; differentiate responsibilities and indicate expectations.
- Better publicize the specific telephone number and point person to whom staff can direct all volunteer queries.
- Develop an attractive, comprehensive online guide of current volunteer opportunities indicating type and location. The guide is to be updated, printed and made available monthly.
- Involve the community in developing strategic work plans for each site and spell out specific tasks and projects that volunteers can undertake to supplement limited staff time.
- Encourage exemplary current and former park employees to volunteer to help train existing staff.
- Enhance community outreach/volunteer programs to involve as many people as possible in the Department's operation.
- Create a volunteer bank of skilled specialists to support Department services.
- Better publicize the recognition program for all volunteers.
- Partner with schools to teach young people an understanding of and respect for

parks.

- Establish partnerships with corporations to offer technology training and increase public ability to communicate on computers.
- Work with non-profits to develop recreation programs for the homeless.

Strategy 2: Create a sense of stewardship in our parks and recreation

facilities.

Tactics:

- Develop a park and recreation watch program to monitor and support compliance with Department rules and regulations.
- Establish a telephone hotline.

Strategy 3: Invite the community to engage in dialogue on all aspects of recreation and park services.

Tactics:

- Increase communication and the flow of information between staff and the public using the website and media to publicize services, volunteer opportunities, public hearings, neighborhood "Friends" group meetings, District Meetings, Recreation and Park Commission meetings, and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC) meetings.

Strategy 4: Support park "Friends" groups for each site.

Tactics:

- Train staff to encourage formation and participation of "Friends" groups as a volunteer supplement to staff personnel and resources.
- Involve appropriate staff, i.e. gardeners, DPW, etc. in meetings on such issues as site improvement, workdays, problems and specific ways that Friends groups can help.

Community and Customer Service

Provide the highest level of user-friendly community and customer service that consistently supplies precise, complete and up-to-date information and assistance.

Strategy 1: Develop a model customer service philosophy and program that:

· Recommits to a real service orientation by standardizing and

mandating customer service training for staff;

· Enhances communication, information and responsiveness between the Department and the community;

and:

· Regularly and periodically conduct a professionally developed and assessed survey of programs and the people they serve. The survey should evaluate quality, equity, effectiveness and demographics.

Tactics:

- Develop and maintain a standard of high quality services for all.
- Create standards for staff interaction with the public.
- Designate and train a point person within the Department for each supervisor's district to act as a liaison to the public.
- Provide all staff with ongoing, current information about park projects, programs and events to answer users' questions.
- Create a tracking system to monitor customer service that includes post-contact evaluation and surveys.
- Create a mechanism for identifying users, both citywide and facility-specific, to assist in the development of targeted services.
- Ensure that employees, who are the first point of contact for customer service, particularly those answering the general information phone number, are completely informed about staff and programming.

Strategy 2: Establish standard information and amenities at each park and facility to increase users' enjoyment.

Tactics:

- Inform and involve the community on facility work plans. Train employees on ways to implement, solicit and receive ideas from the public; as well as maintain and meet the goals of the work plans in order to provide quality customer service.
- Establish baseline standards on operations and programs to improve the appearance of parks, park amenities, signage, color schemes and landscaped areas. Incorporate into work plans for each park.

Strategy 3: Create state-of-the-art public communication practices.

Tactics:

- Utilize technology and media in a campaign to regularly inform the public about Department programs, facilities, services and calendar. Publish information in various formats including website.

- Regularly update the Department's website to supply current information about programs, services, events and projects.
- Enhance Department's Internet information by posting policies and procedures and providing opportunities to respond to Department issues.
- List key staff members on website including contacts for specific needs.
- Broaden list of information distribution venues to include schools, local and neighborhood publications, community centers and libraries.

Strategy 4: Create mechanisms for surveying customers and collecting satisfaction feedback.

Tactics:

- Conduct a public survey periodically and publish the findings to form the basis of Department planning.
- Develop an efficient response system for customer inquiries, complaints, suggestions and compliments. Consider posting the system on-line and allowing people to respond to the various issues.
- Establish a 72-hour turnaround time for response to customer complaints and inquiries. Develop a regular monitoring system to follow up on each communication

Strategy 5: Create an open door forum at each facility for community-staff interaction and problem solving.

Tactics:

- Identify Department staff, invite appropriate city representatives and organize neighborhood groups for community input.
- Create ongoing outreach effort to publicize program.
- Establish specific steps for follow up and evaluation.

NEXT STEPS

Upon the adoption of this strategic plan, the Department must begin to align its operations and structure with the plan's key strategic objectives. Where required, the Department's traditional business practices must be transformed. Many of these changes are currently underway or being developed as part of the Department's Operations Planning Program. Additionally, collaborative working groups of staff and the public will be formed in 2003 to continue to aid the alignment of the Department's activities to this plan, as well as to further develop and refine many of the recommendations presented.

The intended outcome of these continuing planning efforts will be the creation of an invigorated organization with new and strengthened internal staff communication, improved and revitalized partnerships, and clear directions for future action. As staff and the community become acquainted with this strategic plan, the greatest hope is that they embrace the values, vision, and mission for a reinvigorated Recreation & Park Department, and that they become thoroughly engaged in the plan's implementation. Only together can we achieve great parks for a great city.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE – 2001- 2002

Capital Plan:

- 51 projects in pre-construction phase: project development, construction document or contract award
- 14 projects in construction
- 30 projects completed in first two years of capital plan

(Per Report to RPD Commission 10-30-02)

Other Facilities Update:

- Harding Park and Fleming Park renovation began in Spring 2002
- Union Square renovation completed and opened to the public in July 2002, with the building completed in September 2002.
- Conservatory of Flowers restoration continues to be on track for a September 2003 opening.
- Mission Pool renovation completed July 2002
- North Beach pool is expected to close in 2003 for renovation
- Marina Yacht Harbor Master Plan Conceptual Design adopted by Recreation & Park Commission in August 2002 – Environmental Impact Report to proceed

Operations Plan:

- 12 Action Plans produced by December 2002
- 8 Reports on additional implemented Action Plans by December 2002
- 20 additional Action Plans to be developed by December 2003

Recreation Programming:

- Sent 11 San Francisco Teams consisting of 103 kids to Newark, NJ for 2002 Youth Games
- The City of San Francisco & the Recreation & Park Department will be hosting thousands of kids from all over the United States in July 2003 for Youth Games
- Midnight Music/Park Sessions – in 2002 created 15 music-related events for youth ages 8-12 and 14-18
- Teen Tool Time – created an afternoon program that matched youth from our Sunset District Recreation Programs and Project Insight with trained crafts people in RPD's Maintenance Yard to learn carpentry, painting and iron work skills – Spring/Summer 2002
- Partnered with Mayors Office of Criminal Justice and YMCA to create new Safe Haven program at Ocean View Recreation Center (Minnie & Lovie Ward Recreation Center) for at risk youth in the OV neighborhood
- Skate Park opened at Crocker Amazon in fall 2001
- Martin Luther King Pool, a state of the art pool facility, opened in October 2001 – "Learn to Swim" classes filled to capacity in the first week pool was opened.
- Treasure Island Sailing School is a partnership between the Department and TI Sailing school in which over 800 children got free sailing lessons in both Summer 2001 and 2002
- Project Insight, the Departments program for deaf and visually impaired youth, continues to provide progressive programming which often includes trips to far-away places
- Teen Training – 400 Recreation Directors and Assistant Recreation Directors participated in a full day of interactive training to create new programs or reinvigorate old programs for teen participation - January 2002
- Aquatics Director hired November 2002.

Park Maintenance and Operations:

- Neighborhood Green Project – Job training program for 20 participants from Bayview/Hunters Point & Potrero Hill neighborhoods to perform park maintenance duties. This program is a partnership with RPD, DPW, Strybing Arboretum Society, and Neighborhood Jobs Initiative funded by a Dept. of the Environment Environmental Justice Grant.
- CityWide dog policy adopted by the Recreation & Park Commission in May 2002; policy sets standards for off-leash recreation throughout the City; 1st Dog Advisory Committee meeting held September 2002. Board of Supervisors suspended the Green Ribbon Panel and replaced it with a Board appointed committee in December 2002.
- Natural Areas Program – Draft Management Plan delivered to the Department in Spring 2002. Green Ribbon Panel established Summer 2002 to evaluate, report and design public workshops for broad public education campaign.
- Pilot Recycling Program begun in five neighborhood parks in Spring 2002

Administration:

- Introduced automated time sheets to management staff Summer 2002
- PFS (position control system) Phase 1 completed August 2001
- Customer Service Training mandated for all employees; 882 employees have completed Customer Service Training as of November 2002
- New Employee Orientation instituted April 2001
- New Employee Handbook complete and distributed June 2002
- Employee Identification badges issued to all employees September 2001
- EIS (financial management software) installed September 2002
- In-service training for all finance staff begun October 2002
- Information Systems Strategic Plan completed January 2003
- Reduced lost work time due to lifting and body mechanics injuries by an average of 44.75 % per year since the Fiscal Year 98-99
- Completed 74 Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Projects since FY 98-99

Partnerships:

- Campaign to Save Golden Gate Park Windmills kicked off in June 2002 – this partnership plans to raise \$8.5 million for restoration of both windmills located at the West end of Golden Gate Park and the surrounding areas.
- Conservatory of Flowers Restoration – Friends of Recreation & Parks continues to raise funds for the renovation of the Conservatory of Flowers.
- Palace of Fine Arts – the Maybeck Foundation began their campaign to raise funds for the restoration of the Palace of Fine Arts.
- Randall Museum Friends – Museum Outdoor renovation completed Fall 2002
- Friends of Recreation & Parks was awarded \$1.8 million grant to redesign historic Children's Playground in Golden Gate Park

• Recreation & Park's Volunteer Program filled 11,016 volunteer slots in FY 2001-2002, up from 10,209 volunteer slots filled in FY 2000-2001

- The Department's Volunteer Program has begun a wider outreach campaign for recreation volunteer

- Playground Campaign launched with Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC)
- RPD and NPC continue and expand District Park Planning Councils
- Multi-agency MOU concluded for renovations at Julius Kahn Playground (Friends of Recreation & Parks, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Presidio Trust & Recreation and Park Department)

Acknowledgements

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PHASE 1: 2000 - 2001

Strategic Planning

Committee Members

Adela Baker, Recreation Director
Kelly Cornell, Tree Topper Supervisor
Keith Grier, Recreation Director
Mike Hegerhorst, Park Section Supervisor
Debra Holtzman, Gardener
Michael Isham, Custodian
Jim Jackson, Recreation Director
Davida Kapler, Gardener
Mary King-Gorwky, Principal
Administrative Analyst
Doug Martino, Gardener
Jennifer Tom, Recreation Director
Lea Williams, Truck Driver
Linda Woo, Assistant Superintendent, Recreation
Helen Vozenilek, Electrician
Gordon Chin, President, Recreation and Park Commission

Strategy Teams:

Communications Team

Becky Ballinger, Public Relations Director
Wayne Barry, Recreation Director
Suzanna Buehl, Volunteer Coordinator
Anne Marie Donnelly, Special Assistant
James Evans, Jr., Recreation Director
Dana Gillard, Gardener
Michael Isham, Custodian, *SPC Member*
Rick Kimball, Principal Administrative Analyst
Jocilynn Mc Cree, Custodian
Marc Stevenson, IS Administrator III
John Terra, Painter
Gregory Weir, Recreation Director
Lea Williams, Truck Driver, *SPC Member*

Facilities and Restrooms Team

Liz Bazile, Custodian
Steve Cismowski, Gardener
Pat Gazzano, Steamfitter
Angela Gengler, Senior Administrative Analyst
Jim Jackson, Recreation Director, *SPC Member*
Albert Khoo, Custodian
Sandy Lee, Principal Recreation Supervisor
Larry Lofberg, Painter

Lemar Morrison, Park Area Supervisor
Jeanette Rehrig, Industrial Hygienist
John Ruppert, Head Park Patrol Officer
Barbara Tate, Recreation Director
Helen Vozenilek, Electrician, *SPC Member*
Robert Watkins, Park Section Supervisor
Marvin Yee, Assistant Landscape Architect

Maintenance Team

Nick Anderson, Laborer
Mario Avendano, Assistant Superintendent, Structural Maintenance
Kevin Barteaux, Associate Civil Engineer
Peter Borodin, Carpenter
Michelle Carl, Gardener
Sam Grech, Stadium Grounds Keeper
Mike Hegerhorst, Park Section Supervisor, *SPC Member*
Gloria Koch-Gonzales, Park Area Supervisor
Mike Mahoney, Plumber
Mike Major, Investigator, Health and Safety
John Quirke, Roofer Supervisor
Kevin Reavey, Truck Driver
Tino Risan, Custodian
Leon Smith, Chief Stationary Engineer
Aaron Vurek, Roofer

Personnel Team

Jeffrey Bramlett, Safety Officer
Sandra Choate, Gardener
Denise Coucher Graham, Cashier
Terry Daniel, Personnel Analyst
Amy Dawson, Museum Director
Lynn Dyer, Clerk Typist/Scheduling
Linda Griffin, Executive Secretary
Steven Kilgariff, Gardener
Mary King-Gorwky, Principal Administrative Analyst, *SPC Member*
Bob McDonald, Planner III
Janet Salyer, Administrative Analyst
Jennifer Tom, Recreation Director, *SPC Member*
Patti Toomey, Park Section Supervisor
Tera Wattles, Recreation Director
Linda Woo, Assistant Superintendent - Recreation, *SPC Member*

Community Issues Team

Richard Bach, Gardener

Kristin Bowman, Director, Volunteer Services

Tony Colonese, Senior Animal Keeper

Gonzalo Gradis, Custodian

Greg Johnwell, Assistant Recreation Director

Davida Kapler, Gardener, *SPC Member*

Mike Major, Investigator, Health and Safety

Candie Mattson, Park Section Supervisor

Dan Mauer, Assistant Landscape Architect

Bob Nastor, Park Section Supervisor

Brian Pangan, Park Section Supervisor

John Ruppert, Head Park Patrol Officer

Mercedes Weatherford, Secretary II

Gardening and Landscaping Team

Jeffrey Bramlett, Safety Officer

Dan Briesach, Park Section Supervisor

Caroline Gates, Gardener

Daren Henry, Locker Room Attendant

Debra Holtzman, Gardener, *SPC Member*

Roberto Lopez, Laborer

Doug Martino, Gardener, *SPC Member*

James Max, Pest Control Specialist

Bob McDonald, Planner III

Bruce Porteous, Tree Topper

Phil Rossi, Chief Nursery Specialist

Terry Seefeld, Gardener

Ken Sheffield, Plumber

Andy Stone, Gardener

Diane Tyrell, Gardener

Lisa Wayne, Special Assistant VII, Natural Areas

Recreation Team

Jim Anderson, Carpenter

Adela Baker, Recreation Director, *SPC Member*

Linda Barnard, Assistant Recreation Director

Barbara Boykin, Cashier

Norma Etzler, Recreation Director

Keith Grier, Recreation Director, *SPC Member*

Victor Jones, Assistant Recreation Director

Fidel Joshua, Recreation Director

John Le Tourneau, Recreation Supervisor

Deborah Learner, Planner VI

Tony Leung, Architect

Trina Lintz, Recreation Director

Lorraine Luna, Assistant Recreation Director

Kathleen Matias, Lifeguard

Joe Meier, Lifeguard

John W. Miller, Gardener

Dee Minor, Recreation Director

Diane Palacio, Secretary II

Janelle Pierce, Assistant Recreation Director

Diane Price, Dance Instructor

Margot Reed, Recreation Director

Bob Rosenberg, Gardener

Stella Santos, Laborer

Mark Siegenthaler, Senior Engineer

Pat Wiley, Assistant Recreation Supervisor

Recreation and Park Commission (2000)

Gordon Chin, President

John Murray, Vice President

Gloria Bonilla

Eugene Friend

William P. Getty

Lawrence Martin

Lynne Newhouse Segal

Department Management Team

Elizabeth Goldstein, General Manager

Dan McKenna, Acting Southern Superintendent

Ron De Leon, Northern Superintendent

Becky Ballinger, Public Relations Director

Marvin Yee, Assistant Landscape Architect

Deborah Learner, Planner VI

Jaci Fong, Principal Administrative Analyst

Jeffrey Bramlett, Safety Officer

Mary King-Gorwky, Principal Administrative Analyst

Rick Kimball, Principal Administrative Analyst

Angela Gengler, Senior Administrative Analyst

Pat Cox, IS Administrator Supervisor

Kin Gee, Personnel Director

Lydia Zaverukha, Senior Administrative Analyst, Strategic Plan Project Manager

Margaret McArthur, Commission Secretary

Special Project Staff

Carmen Collazos-Fournet, Assistant

Rose Marie Dennis, Special Assistant

Elton Pon, Public Relations Assistant

Tim Chee, Web Content Coordinator

Consultant Team

Carolyn Verheyen, Principal, Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG)

Sharon McNamee, Project Manager, (MIG)

Kelly Aiken, Project Associate, (MIG)

Julie Kirschbaum, Project Associate, (MIG)

Julie Stein, Project Associate, (MIG)

Leland Brown, Global Bridges

Josephine Shaw, Shaw and Associates

Mickey Fearn, The Synapse Group

Natalie Macris, Writer

Katharine Lewis, Stuart A. Lewis & Company, Inc.

Kerry Enright, Articulate Integrity

PHASE 2: 2001 - 2002

Recreation and Park Department and other City Agency Participants

Recreation and Park Commission (2002)

John Murray, President

William P. Getty, Vice President

Gloria Bonilla

Gordon Chin

Jim Lazarus

Larry Martin

Rebecca Prozan

RPD Staff & Other City Agency Participants

Adela Baker, Recreation Director

Becky Ballinger, Public Information Director

Nani Coloretti, Department of Children, Youth & their Families

Chris Daly, Board of Supervisors

Ron De Leon, Superintendent, Northern Division (retired)

Steve Elder, Gardener

Jaci Fong, Property Manager

Michael Frank, Director of Administration and Finance

Angela Gengler, Finance Division

Elizabeth Goldstein, General Manager

Ed Harrington, Controller

Tom Harrison, Local 261

Anne Heinline, SF Unified School District

Debra Holtzman, Gardener

Gary Hoy, Director, Capital Division

David Kapler, Gardener

Mary King-Gorwky, Finance

Mike Mahoney, Plumber

Dan McKenna, Superintendent, Southern Division

Lynne Newhouse Segal, former Recreation and Park Commissioner

Richard Newirth, Art Commission
Gavin Newsom, Board of Supervisors
Mohammed Nuru, Department of Public Works
Katie Petrucione, Mayor's Office
Jessica Ring, MUNI
AnMarie Rodgers, Planning Dept.
Ramiro Rodriguez, Custodian Supervisor
Gerardo Sandoval, Board of Supervisors
Rontonette Scott, Assistant Recreation Supervisor
Peg Stevenson, Controller's Office
Gregory Suhr, SFPD, Commander
James Threat, Assistant Superintendent
Jennifer Tom, Recreation Director
Patricia Vinh-Thomas, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families
Helen Vozenilek, Electrician
Lisa Wayne, Natural Areas
Lea Williams, Truck Driver
Linda Woo, Assistant Superintendent, North
Lydia Zaverukha, Project Director

Community Participants

Nancy Barber, Park, Recreation & Open Space Advisory Committee
Bill Barnes, Aid to Supervisor Chris Daly
Donna Bero, formerly of Friends of Recreation and Parks
Margaret Brodtkin, Coleman Advocates for Youth
Mark Buell, formerly of S.F. Conservation Corps
Kimiko Burton, San Francisco Public Defender
Martie Bolsinger, Y.M.C.A. of San Francisco
Cory Calandra, formerly of SF League of Urban Gardeners
Krystal Canady, Y.M.C.A of San Francisco
John Cervantes, Tennis Advisory Committee
Arthur Chang, North Beach Parks
Jim Chappell, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research
Jeanne Darrah, Precita Valley Neighbors
Martha Diepenbrock, Youth Sports Connection
Boris Dramov, ROMA Designs
Ron Dudum, Westside Democratic Club
Matt Gonzalez, Board of Supervisors
Ruth Gravanis, Sierra Club
Anne Halsted, Goldman Institute of Aging
Al Harris, OMI Neighbors in Action
Linda Hunter, Neighborhood Parks Council
Maurice James, Morrisania West
Sarah Law, Neighborhood Parks Council
Mike Leo, formerly of Friends of Recreation and Parks
Toby Levine, SW Mission Neighborhood Association
Franco Mancini, Friends of McLaren Park
J.R. Manuel, J.R.M. Associates
Sophie Maxwell, Board of Supervisors
Mary McAllister, Stanford University
Wendy McClure, SF DOG
Ron Miguel, Planning Association of the Richmond
Kate Milkens, formerly of Friends of Recreation & Park
Maria Morgan-Butcher, Friends of Rochambeau Park
Zoanne Norstrom, Friends of Glen Canyon Park
Katie Pilate, Neighborhood Parks Council
Nino Parker, Western Addition Community Unity
John Plummer, Friends of Lake Merced
Roslyn Payne, Citizens Capital Advisory Committee
Joan Roughgarden, Stanford University
Bruce Sievers, formerly of Walter & Elise Haas Fund
Rebecca Silverberg, Parks & Recreation Open Space Advisory Committee

Sonia Smith, San Francisco Boys & Girls Clubs
Warren Stewart, Morrisania West
Sim Van Der Ryn, Van Der Ryn Architects
Isabel Wade, Neighborhood Parks Council
Marybeth Wallace, Coleman Advocates for Youth
Rich Weideman, National Park Service
Ned York, Friends of Duboce Park

Special Thanks:

The Gerbode Foundation

The Neighborhood Parks Council

Leon Younger, Younger and Pros, Inc.

Kate Burke, Younger and Pros, Inc.

Jeanne Alexander, Freelance Writer

Valerie Aiken, RPD Administrative Assistant

Pat Cox and Staff, RPD MIS

Jodi Darby, Controller's Office, Special Projects Team

Peg Stevenson, Controller's Office, Special Projects Team

Corina Monzon, Controller's Office, Special Projects Team