

City and County of San Francisco  
Recreation and Parks Department and Department of Public Works  
**Buena Vista Park Capital Improvement Plan**  
**Meeting #2 NOTES**  
March 24, 6:30 – 8:00 PM  
Randal Museum, Buckley Room

**Welcome:** David Burke, Interim President, Buena Vista Neighborhood Association  
**Presenters:** Dawn Kamalanathan, Director of Planning and Capital Management,  
SF Recreation and Parks (RPD)  
Lizzy Hirsch and Gabe Meil, Landscape Architects, SF Public Works (DPW)

## 1. Recap of Meeting #1

- a. Capital Improvement Plan
  - i. Consists of a series of small scale projects to create momentum for a bigger improvement plan effort
  - ii. Ensures Buena Vista Park is well positioned to attract future funding sources
  - iii. Creates an organizing opportunity to build momentum for larger capital planning efforts beyond these initial projects
- b. Feedback from Meeting #1
  - i. Safety and the physical environment were both key concerns
  - ii. Safety issues included elements such as hazardous trees/limbs, lighting and visibility as well as illegal activities and crime
  - iii. Environmental issues included erosion, trail conditions and irrigation

## 2. Overview of Strategy and Potential Projects

- a. Objectives for Meeting #2
  - i. Gain community input on 3 preferred projects of a total of 7 potential projects
  - ii. Provide participants the opportunity to give feedback on whether the projects capture the values and ideas expressed in Meeting #1
- b. Overview and Context for Buena Vista
  - i. Woodland haven that is in the heart of the city
  - ii. A counterpoint to the dense urban fabric of San Francisco
  - iii. Within short walking distance of off-leash dog areas, children's play areas (including a new Panhandle Play Area in 2016) and other recreation facilities
  - iv. Is experiencing environmental degradation in its woodland and perimeter regions (tree hazards, erosion, stormwater runoff) and risks worsening conditions



c. Strategy and Options

- i. A menu of “Potential Projects” presented based on ideas from meeting #1, all of which address *immediate needs* but contribute to a long-term vision
- ii. Projects were presented based on their cost and “readiness” (or ease of implementation)
- iii. The 7 projects included: Perimeter Apron Improvements, Primary Entry Improvements, Perimeter Pathway Lighting, Playground Improvements, Tree Management, Water Management, and Soil Management

**3. General Feedback from Participants**

a. Questions (Q), Answers (A), Comments (C)

- i. (Q) Were maintenance costs included in the project costs displayed?  
(A) Only capital costs were included – RPD is accepting the maintenance cost in constructing the project; however, increased maintenance costs must be weighed when selecting a project.
- ii. (Q) Will the Dog Play Area be moved to Haight Street?  
(A) No, due to lack of community support.
- iii. (C) Moving the playground to a more prominent area would address crime and illegal activities.
- iv. (Q) Isn't it normally up to RPD to take care of tree management?  
(A) Yes, but the agency is underfunded – there is only 1 tree maintenance team for the entire park system and they are only able to respond to emergency situations.

(C) There might be a way for the neighborhood association to band with other neighborhood groups to the lobby the city to better fund tree maintenance activities.

(A) Kezar Track is a good example of this – constituents organized a coalition and lobbied the mayor and board of supervisors to replace the track.

(Q) Does tree management (*i.e., one of the 7 options*) include pruning?

(A) Yes

(Q) Is there an emergency fund for tree damages?

(A) This is part of the forestry budget for the current work being done.



- v. (Q) What are the ramifications of selecting a project?  
(A) This enables the city to refine the details and flesh out a proposal for the selected projects and present them at the next meeting - this process will also help organize lobbying efforts, make the case for more investments (i.e., COF opportunities and priorities to invest collective energy).

(Q) If we are considering one of these projects for a COF grant, should we take into account?

(A) Choose a project that's important to you.

- vi. (Q) Funding some projects is easier than others? How do we think about whether a project is more "fundable"?  
(A) Start with values and let those guide the projects you choose – it's important to have consensus and commitment to the projects.

#### 4. Break-out Session

- a. Participants were given 3 stickers to place next to the 7 projects (listed above) that were most important to them
- b. Final tally:
  - i. Perimeter Apron Improvements **(16)**
  - ii. Primary Entry Improvements **(11)**
  - iii. Perimeter Pathway Lighting **(10)**
  - iv. Playground Improvements **(8)**
  - v. Tree Management **(11)**
  - vi. Water Management **(13)**
  - vii. Soil Management **(12)**

#### 5. Summary and Comments

- a. Recap of Voting Trends
  - i. There was general support for "Perimeter Apron Improvements," "Primary Entry Improvements" and "Perimeter Pathway Lighting," indicating that these are a clear priority.
  - ii. Environmental improvement projects including "Tree, Water and Soil Management" were the second highest priority.
  - iii. The Playground improvement project did have some support, but due to readiness (i.e., feasibility of implementation) and cost, it did not gain as much support as other projects.



b. Additional Comments

- i. Must keep in mind how to tackle “ground zero” of unsafe activity with perimeter work.
- ii. If there is no money for maintenance, the project will deteriorate over the years.
- iii. For environmental issues, there is a cost in NOT doing something.
- iv. Proposed Panhandle playground will likely be located in the same area.
- v. Buena Vista Park can be used in other ways by kids that aren’t monkey bars.
- vi. Safety issues on paths were not addressed in the 7 proposed projects; it’s safe on the main paths at night, but not on the secondary paths. Fewer social paths would be safer.
- vii. Broken window theory – if the perimeter gets a facelift, there would be a lot of bang for the buck in terms of who it attracts from curb appeal.
- viii. Where does volunteerism fit in? Monthly activity is lightly attended.  
*(Perimeter planting and maintenance is scalable and volunteer friendly – there is an existing RPD volunteer program that can be utilized).*
- ix. We should get safety input from the Police Department – will these projects impact what the police do? *(RPD is reaching out to PD)*
- x. Install cameras in high crime areas *(RPD does this in certain places; it is not effective if not fully staffed and cameras can get stolen).*
- xi. There are privacy issues about being filmed on security cameras.
- xii. Small fence around trees seems to have cleared out a homeless encampment.
- xiii. Every two weeks there are formal visits to break up homeless encampments and this is also monitored by the BVNA – enforcement is one small part of the puzzle.

**Next Steps**

1. Presentation and notes to be posted to RPD website
2. RPD and BVNA to communicate next meeting via email, website and physical postings
3. DPW and RPD will follow up on selected priority list (perimeter improvement projects and environmental improvement projects) and present at next community meeting

