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Angelo J. Rossi Playground Restroom  
Community Planning Meeting #2  
Wednesday, March 7, 2012

## Meeting Notes

### Introduction

The project team was introduced: Mary Hobson, Project Manager; Jasmine Kaw, Landscape Architect; and Nelson Szeto, Architect.

An overview of the project was given, including a review of the project scope, budget and schedule. The team reviewed the goals and outcome of Meeting #1 [2/01/12], which focused on selection of the desired placement for the restroom and selection of a restroom proto-type design. The community feedback received from meeting #1 was reviewed: 1) The Annex location was preferred over the other proposed locations for the new restroom; 2) The group expressed a desire to demolish the existing restroom building and construct a new restroom structure that is better oriented to the street, safer, and more connected to the park site; and 3) The group preferred the "Traditional" restroom prototype over the "Contemporary" design. Based on this feedback, the design team has prepared alternative site development schemes utilizing a 'traditional' restroom design located on the Annex site for the group's consideration and comment.

The following Goals for Meeting #2 were presented: 1) Review and confirm the feedback received during Meeting #1; 2) Review proposed site plans developed based on that feedback, and select a preferred Sit Plan Option; and 3) Gather feedback on the site specific project features, such as fencing, lighting and landscape.

### Design Team Presentation

Project Landscape Architect Jasmine Kaw began the presentation of an overview of the existing conditions, constraints and opportunity presented at the Annex site. She identified the following key site conditions which will influence the placement of a new structure on the site: 1) The existing sidewalk grade drops toward Arguello Street which results in an incremental increase in the differential between sidewalk and site elevations of 1.5' to 4' as you move west; 2) The existing Annex site is graded to the northwest corner, where a catch basin is located; 3) The existing driveway to the Annex is at the midpoint of the site; and 4) Mature trees are present along the street and directly inside the fence line.

Given the existing site conditions, Jasmine is proposing placement of the structure in the northeast corner of the site [in the vicinity of the existing structure]. She believes this location is superior for the



following reasons: 1) At this location the grade difference between street and site is relatively small, allowing for the transition to meet accessible path of travel requirements without requiring long ramps and/or retaining walls; 2) this placement would not alter or interfere with existing site drainage patterns; 3) impacts to existing trees will be minimal; and 3) the existing adjacent sidewalk is relatively level and can accommodate a pedestrian crosswalk connection to the main Rossi site.

The alternative site plan concepts were presented. A summary of each option is provided below:

- **Option 1 – North Facing Building.** This option has the restroom structure fronting Edward Street, facing out toward the Rossi PG site. Visitors would access the site using a low-grade ramp that slopes up from the sidewalk to a plaza area in front of the building. The ramp runs parallel to the sidewalk and will have a similar street feel as the ramp on the opposite side of the street. This option is the most visible from the street, and from the Rossi playground. The building is set back from the adjacent property line to the east.
- **Option 2 – North Facing Building with Street Buffer.** This option has the same building orientation as Option 1; however, the building is set back from the street with a landscape band between the building and the sidewalk.
- **Option 3 – West Facing Building.** This option has the restroom structure facing west, into the Annex site. This is a similar orientation to the existing restroom building. But unlike the existing structure, the new building will be set further into the site, away from the property line. Site access will be by a low-grade ramp running perpendicular to the sidewalk. Landscape buffers are proposed between the building and the street, and between the building and the Annex site.

Ancillary design issues which apply to all site plan options were presented to the group.

- **Pedestrian Crosswalk.** The placement of a pedestrian cross walk, as requested by participants in Meeting #1, was presented. The team noted that the designation of this as an official crosswalk fitted with electronic flashers or stop flag would require approval from the Department of Parking and Traffic. The team presented a plan to install a new cross walk connecting the existing curb cut that serves the blue zone on the north side Edwards Street to the sidewalk in front of the proposed access ramp to the Annex site. The cross walk is sited slightly east in order to avoid impacting the existing street tree.
- **Fencing.** Three fencing concepts for the RR building were presented for community consideration and input. All options assume that the Annex site will remain fully fenced and secured. The options included the following: 1) fencing between the RR building and the street only (existing condition); 2) fencing between the RR building and the Annex site only (no security fence between the building and the street); and 3) RR building is fenced on all sides (secured from both the street and the Annex open spaces). The team noted that the fencing schemes had yet to be presented to RPD Operations for consideration. It is likely that RPD will require that fencing between the street and the RR building be provided so that the site can be fully secured at night.

## Questions and Comments

The meeting was then opened up to the neighbors and park users for comment. Below are the general themes, as well as specific comments expressed by the meeting participants.

One participant requested that the cross walk be moved west, to align directly with the driveway access to the Rossi PG. His opinion was that children will not use the crosswalk, and instead use the most direct path across the street. This would require removing the existing street tree and realigning and/or narrow the existing driveway apron.

Concern over the speed of traffic approaching the cross walk was expressed. Traffic calming features such as a speed bump at the curve should be included.

All participants agreed that the north facing option with the landscape buffer, Option 2, was more visually appealing than Option 1. All participants agreed that Option 1 was the least desirable, and should not be considered.

The group debated the benefits of Option 2 vs. Option 3.

**Option 2** provides the clearest line of site between the Rossi site and the new structure. That visual connection was one of the key design criteria established in Meeting no. 1. However, some participants felt that Option 2 building orientation was too prominent, and may be out of place in the streetscape [no residence should be referred to as the “one next door to the toilet”.] And one participant noted concern that the northerly orientation would block the line of site to a large portion of the Annex site. A resident of the adjacent residence was concerned that this ‘blind-side’ may become a center for undesirable activities.

**Option 3** provides a less direct visual connection between the Rossi site and the new structure. However, in this scheme the structure is set back from the property line and has a significant deeper footprint than the existing restroom structure, which will result much greater visibility from the street than exists currently. The general feeling was this option resulted in a better connection to the existing Annex site, which would be preferable in the long-term should the Annex site be developed for more active use. 90% of meeting participants felt this orientation was preferable than the Option 2 orientation.

A hand vote was taken, and all but one meeting participant supported the Option 3 site plan. The group then discussed ways in which to increase visibility to the Rossi site and create a greater connection between the two sites, the primary issues of concern raised over Option 3.

The group discussed the buffer zone between the RR and the existing Annex site. The comment was made that landscaping should be lower profile so it does not interfere with the line of sight from the playground to the Restroom entrance. One person commented that guardrails and fences should be similar to those at the Rossi Park site. The project should replace the entire chain-link fence that fronts the street across the full Annex site.

The group then discussed the fencing scheme. All agreed that fencing between the street and the building would be required in order to prevent loitering and vandalism during the night. Access to the setback between the building and property line should also be restricted to RPD staff only. Gates at either end should be installed. Some participants felt that the entire restroom area should be fenced and separated from the Annex site. This was a concern as it would result in a second curtain of visual screening along the line of site from the playgrounds. A compromise was proposed to provide a low fence (similar to the one around the play area) between the restroom building and the Annex site to create a barrier to dogs, and discourage Annex visitors from loitering or gathering around the structure. A gate in the fence would be required at some location to provide ADA access to the Annex open space.

Other community comments recorded during the meeting are noted below:

- Skateboard blocks should be installed on the retaining walls and planters, especially those adjacent to the sidewalk.
- The renovation plan should retain the landscape bed adjacent to neighbor's gate. The neighbor maintains the bed and would like to continue doing so if possible.
- Low level security lighting at the building perimeter should be provided [perhaps using motion sensors].

### **Next Steps**

The meeting was adjourned with a quick review of the project schedule and a review of the next key steps. The team explained the process for final review and approval of the concept plan.

The participants were invited to attend the Arts Commission Civic Design Review meeting scheduled for Monday, 3/19 at 3 PM at 25 Van Ness Ave. The team explained that the AC-CDR Committee will be given the Option 3 site plan and the "Traditional" prototype building design for their review. Comments made by the Committee during this meeting *must* be incorporated into the final concept plan. Community members are encouraged to come to the meeting and speak on behalf of the project design.

Following the AC-Design Review Committee meeting, the design team will incorporate modifications to the plan that result from this meeting, as well as any changes required by the Design Review Committee. The final plan will then be presented to the Recreation and Park Commission for final approval. Members of the community were invited to attend the RP Commission hearing and provide support for the design. The RPC meeting is tentatively scheduled for 4/4 at 2 PM in City Hall, Room 416.