



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor  
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

**Date:** October 7, 2015

**To:** Capital Committee  
Recreation and Park Commission

**Through:** Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager  
Dawn Kamalanathan, Director of the Capital and Planning Divisions

**From:** Karen Mauney-Brodek, Project Manager

**Subject:** Civic Center Playgrounds Concept Design Approval and Naming

**Agenda Item Wording:**

Discussion and possible action to: 1) approve the concept design for the renovation of the playgrounds at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza aka “Civic Center Plaza”, and 2) approve the naming of the playgrounds to be the “Helen Diller Playgrounds at Civic Center.” Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

**Background / Description:**

In September of 2014, the Recreation and Park Commission approved the execution of an agreement with The Trust for Public Land for design and construction of new playgrounds at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza aka “Civic Center Plaza”. This agreement provided for the city to accept a grant of in-kind design and construction services and other project funds, together valued at up to \$5 million, and recommended that the Board of Supervisors accept the grants from the Trust for Public Land.

Over the last several months, The Trust for Public Land and Recreation and Park Department (RPD) Staff have worked together to conduct an extensive community process to develop the design for the new playgrounds. The process included a user survey conducted in 2013, three community-wide workshops and numerous focus group meetings with stakeholders including parents, educators, children, institutions and city agencies.

The existing playgrounds are approximately 20 years old and in need of renovation and improvement. Additionally, these playgrounds serve an area where open space is limited for residents of the Tenderloin, Civic Center, Hayes Valley and South of Market neighborhoods. The playgrounds are a large park of the City’s cultural life and part of the ritual of visiting some of the city’s most notable cultural institutions. The playgrounds’ unique locations result in diverse and exciting usage: they are used by many nearby daycare centers, local and visiting school



children, and other visitors to the surrounding attractions. These attractions include the Main Library, the Asian Art Museum, the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Ballet and many other institutions that have active and regular programming for children. On any given day you can see neighborhood residents and children from the rest of the city and the bay area and beyond using the playgrounds.

The goal for this renovation is to create unique and artful play areas that complement the context of the Civic Center and serve the various user groups. In addition, as this renovation is planned, the team is cognizant that there is a potential future renovation of the plaza to come one day.

### **Funding and Partnerships**

As discussed in the agreement, The Trust for Public Land is responsible for the design and construction of two new playgrounds at no cost to the City. The Project is funded by the Helen Diller Family Foundation that has a Pledge Agreement with The Trust for Public Land. The Helen Diller Family Foundation has supported a number of programs and institutions in the Bay Area and throughout the world, including other award-winning playground renovations in the city, such as the Helen Diller Play Area at Julius Kahn Playground and Helen Diller Playground in Dolores Park.

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national non-profit organization that has successfully worked in partnership with the City and communities in the Bay Area for 40 years to ensure that everyone has access to quality parks and open space. Some of the recent park renovations resulting from this partnership include Hayes Valley Clubhouse and Playground, Balboa Park, and Boeddeker Park and Clubhouse. This partnership has represented over \$16 Million in investments to the parks in our system.

### **Community Outreach**

The Trust for Public Land and staff have been supporting this project since early 2013, collecting data, meeting with stakeholders, agencies and city officials. This project initiation phase was meant to gauge support for the project, gather and analyze information about existing conditions and related planning efforts and solidify the work plan. Part of the work included user surveys on site to understand how the playgrounds are used.

During the participatory design phase, The Trust for Public Land worked with staff to hold several community workshops and focus group meetings with stakeholders to develop a concept design for the Civic Center Playgrounds. Community workshops were advertised through flyers posted in key locations including at the playgrounds, emailed to more than 250 residents and stakeholders. The first meeting was also advertised by mail that reached to more than 2,000 residents in the area. The outreach was also supported through the Rec Park website, Supervisor Jane Kim's office and other key city agencies. The Bay Area Women's and Children's Center, the organization that originally led the effort to install the existing playgrounds, also helped organize meetings that included site visits and the Tenderloin Network meetings with service providers and educators as well as meetings with children at the Tenderloin School.

At these meetings the donor’s gift and project goals were discussed, and ideas and desired features were explored in the context of the existing playgrounds, and design options were presented and discussed resulting in the current final concept design.

The Trust for Public Land continues to work with staff to keep the stakeholders and community informed and updated on the progress of the project.

**Concept Design and Signage**

The goals of the project design have centered around themes developed in the community workshops and with the design team. The project identified goals for the project, which included creating an inviting, inspiring, fun and safe place for families. As shown in the attached presentation, the project will create two equal and inclusive playgrounds each of which will serve children of various ages and abilities. Themes for the design, including the unique San Francisco weather and nature experiences provided inspiration for the project’s design. (see Attachment A). Attachment A also includes examples of the proposed signage to be included in the playgrounds to reflect the playground naming and the donor’s generous gift of the improvements to the city.

**Budget**

The original MOU for this project assumed an overall budget of \$5million. After design development, it was determined, in coordination with the donor, that the overall budget would be close to \$10 million for a project of this nature. Additional detail is included in the attached approved MOU and Addendum 1 (See Attachment C).

Construction Budget (including contingency)	\$7,500,000
RPD Project Management	\$54,600
Dedicated Maintenance Fund	\$30,000
Other Project Costs	\$2,415,400
<b>Total Gift:</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>

**Community Meetings and Workshops**

<b>July 15, 2014</b>	First Community Meeting - Presented the project, existing conditions and gathered information about use.
<b>August 6, 2014</b>	Site Focus Group
<b>September 3, 2014</b>	Tenderloin Network Bay Area Women and Children Center Focus Group at Library
<b>October 2, 2014</b>	Second Community Meeting
<b>October 21, 2014</b>	Site outreach at playgrounds
<b>October 23, 2014</b>	Kids focus group at Tenderloin School
<b>November 5, 2014</b>	Kids focus group #2 at Tenderloin School- 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>November 6, 2014</b>	Tenderloin Network Bay Area Women and Children Center Focus Group at DeMarillac Academy
<b>January 7, 2015</b>	Third Community Meeting, present concept design
<b>April 16, 2015</b>	Presentation to Asian Art Museum staff
<b>April 30, 2015</b>	Presentation to SF Public Library staff

**May 13, 2015** Tenderloin Network Bay Area Women and Children Center at SF  
Public Library  
**May 20, 2015** Civic Center Community Benefit District  
**June 9, 2015** Presentation to Alliance for a Better District 6

In addition to community meetings and workshops, the project webpage has provided updates and information on the project throughout the development process.

**Project Schedule**

Approval of Concept Design	October 2015
Final Construction Documents	Spring 2016
Construction	Summer 2016 - Fall 2017

**Stakeholders Participating in the Process:**

Supervisor Jane Kim  
The Trust for Public Land  
Bay Area Women's & Children's Center  
Civic Center Community Benefit District  
Office of Economic and Workforce Development  
San Francisco Planning Department  
SF Department of Public Works  
SF Department of Real Estate  
SF Public Utilities Commission  
Asian Art Museum  
San Francisco Public Library Main Branch  
San Francisco Parks Alliance  
SF Beautiful  
Glide Memorial Church  
Tenderloin School  
DeMarillac Academy  
Demonstration Gardens  
Shih Yu-Lang Central YMCA  
SF Beautiful  
Wu Yee Children's Services

**Specific Letters of Support Provided by:**

Asian Art Museum  
Bay Area Women and Children's Center  
Civic Center Community Benefit District  
San Francisco Public Library. Main Branch

**Opposed By:**

None known.

**Environmental Review:**

On June 8, 2015, the city's Planning Department issued a CEQA Categorical Exemption and on June 17 the city's Planning Department Historic Preservation Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for this project. (Attachment D)

**Contact:**

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**Staff Recommendation:**

To approve the concept design for the renovation of the playgrounds at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza aka "Civic Center Plaza" and to approve the naming of the playgrounds to be the "Helen Diller Playgrounds at Civic Center." Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

**Attachments:**

- A. Concept design
- B. Letter of Support from various organizations and individuals
- C. Memorandum of Understanding between the Trust for Public Land and Rec Park, including addendum reflecting revised project budget
- D. Planning Department Issued, CEQA Categorical Exemption Determination, Case Number 2015-005727COA, and Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. 0259