

Daniel Lurie, Mayor



Kat Anderson, Commission President  
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

**Date:** January 16, 2025

**To:** Recreation and Park Commission

**Through:** Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager  
Lisa Bransten, Director of Partnerships

**From:** Joel Riddell, Assistant Director of Partnerships

**Subject:** Estate of William Benjamin Bobo Bequest – Accept and Expend

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**Agenda Item Wording:**

Discussion and possible action to recommend that (1) the Board of Supervisors authorize the Department to accept and expend a bequest in the amount of approximately \$3,600,000 from the estate of William Benjamin Bobo to provide improvements and renovations to various park sites and (2) to approve recognizing the Bobo estate in projects receiving \$250,000 or more of these funds.

**Strategic Plan References:**

**Strategy 1: Inspire Public Space:** Keep today's parks safe, clean, and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow.

Objective 1.2.: Strengthen the quality of existing parks and facilities.

**Strategy 2—Inspire Play:** Promote active living, well-being and community for San Francisco's diverse and growing population.

Objective 2.2: Strengthen and promote the safety, health and well-being of San Francisco's youth and seniors.

**Strategy 3: Inspire Investment:** Through community engagement, advocacy, and partnerships, cultivate more financial resources to keep San Francisco's parks and programs accessible for all.

Objective 3.3: Cultivate increased philanthropic support.

**Background:**

William Benjamin Bobo passed away in late 2023 and bequeathed a portion of his estate to the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, estimated at approximately \$3.6 million. The only directive provided in Mr. Bobo's will was to place "newly built park benches in San Francisco parks that bear plaques stating, 'In Memory of Ben, Rory and Chad.'" The inscription



commemorates the late Mr. Bobo, his former partner Rory, and their dog Chad, who lived near Alta Plaza Park.

The executor of Mr. Bobo's estate agreed with RPD staff that the estimated sum of \$3.6 million is greatly out of balance with Mr. Bobo's wishes and worked with staff to develop alternative allocations for the funding that were still in keeping with Mr. Bobo's wishes to benefit parks across San Francisco. The spending allocations below have been reviewed by the Executor of Mr. Bobo's estate and – once generally approved by the Commission and the Board of Supervisors – will need final approval from Probate Court.

To honor the decedent's wishes while maximizing the benefits for San Francisco's parks system and residents, staff recommends this bequest be used in the following ways:

- A) 40% (approximately \$1.44 million) allocated to implement a portion of the Alta Plaza Park master plan including installing one bench plaque in a prominent location with a dedication stating, *"In Memory of Ben, Rory, and Chad."* The Alta Plaza Master Plan was adopted by RPD Commission on April 21, 2016. Use of funds include making repairs to concrete elements and replace asphalt pathways with concrete paving; unifying site furniture and signage; replacing 11 benches and adding 20 new benches on the south and east terraces; and addressing Park accessibility. Donor recognition will be added to the existing Alta Plaza donor circle approved in 2016.
- B) 20% (approximately \$720,000) allocated to build and install approximately 50 new benches and other park furnishings. Each park site will include one plaque with the dedication, *"In Honor of Ben, Rory, and Chad."* Examples may include The Great Highway, John McLaren Park, the JFK Promenade in Golden Gate Park, and other locations where there is need for seating.
- C) 40% (approximately \$1.44 million) allocated to support RPD capital project(s) or refurbishments, including but not limited to dog play areas, new parks, and playgrounds, with donor recognition as approved by RPD Commission. For sites receiving \$250,000 or more, RPD will recognize the estate with either a small stand-alone plaque or as part of a Commission-approved donor recognition program. Any recognition would comply with the Recreation and Park Commission donor recognition policies and will honor Ben, Rory and Chad.

Any project(s) supported by these funds will be subject to standard RPD approvals. It should be noted that there is no deadline to spend the funds.

The suggested use of funds will be reviewed by the Probate Judge in March of 2025.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Department staff recommends that the Recreation and Park Commission recommend that (1) the Board of Supervisors authorize the Department to accept and expend a bequest in the



amount of approximately \$3,600,000 from the estate of William Benjamin Bobo to provide improvements and renovations to various park sites and (2) to approve recognizing the Bobo estate in projects receiving \$250,000 or more of these funds.

Financial Impact:

\$3,600,000

**Supported by:**

Department management and staff

Mr. Kim Ridinger, Executor, Bobo Estate

Anita Denz, Friends of Alta Plaza Park

**Opposition:**

None known

