



Mayor Mark Farrell
Phil Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: March 15, 2018

To: Recreation and Park Commission

Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
Toks Ajike, Interim Director Director of Capital and Planning Division

From: Anne Baskerville, Project Manager

Subject: Francisco Reservoir – Approval of Concept Design

Agenda Wording

Discussion and possible action to approve the conceptual design to renovate the Francisco Reservoir. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

Strategic Plan

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: 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: 2.1: Strengthen the quality, responsiveness and accessibility of recreation programs.
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 the San Francisco’s parks and programs accessible for all.
Objective 3.3: Cultivate increased philanthropic support

Background Information

Until 2014, the 3.29-acre Francisco Reservoir site was under jurisdiction of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). In June of 2014 the Commission authorized the San



Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) General Manager to enter into a transfer agreement with the SFPUC for the fair market value purchase of \$9.9 million. The new park will combine the Francisco Reservoir site with a largely inaccessible piece of open space operated by RPD known as the Russian Hill Open Space that sits at the highest and southernmost edge of the site.

The Francisco Park Conservancy (FPC), a non-profit with a twelve-member Board consisting primarily of community residents and other stakeholders, is collaborating with (RPD) to, through outreach and donor fund raising, design, construct, maintain and gift to the City this project known as Francisco Park situated on City-owned land.

The proposed project, Francisco Reservoir, seeks to build a public park on the site of the existing inactive historic reservoir, along with the surrounding publicly inaccessible open space and hillside. The 4.5-acre (195,300 square foot) park is bound by Bay, Hyde and Larkin Streets and is intersected by Francisco Street.

Community Process

The outreach process was conducted in 2016 - 2018 with the goal of understanding the community's desires and to ensure that they are reflected in the concept plan. The project team conducted its outreach by facilitating five (5) well attended community workshops. Community workshops were held on the following dates: September 21, 2016, November 16, 2016, January 11, 2017, May 17, 2017 and February 10, 2018. Attendance exceeded 50 participants at each meeting. In addition to the workshops an electronic feedback survey was posted on the Francisco Reservoir website. The survey received 956 responses and 617 written comments. Following each community workshop, presentation and meeting materials were shared on the Francisco Conservancy website. The project team staffed an outreach table at the North Beach Halloween Extravaganza which was hosted by Friend of Joe DiMaggio Playground and included over 600 hundred participants. The process began by polling the community for the most desired program elements. The community members provided comments and the project team produced a final preferred concept for review and approval by the community stakeholders. The concept plan obtained wide approval and consensus from the community stakeholders.

Proposed Renovation Program

The Francisco Park Conservancy and design team have been working to create a new public park on the site of the Francisco Reservoir in Russian Hill bound by Bay, Hyde and Larkin Streets and intersected by Francisco Street. The 4.1/2 acre park will provide programming for a wide cross-section of visitors, including a multi-use Main Lawn, children's playground, dog park, community garden, and several view terraces set along meandering paths. Steeper slopes will be planted to increase bird and insect habitat as well as visitor enjoyment of native plant communities. The eastern portion of the Reservoir will be retained to interpret the history of the

Reservoir, with visitors able to walk on the actual brick bottom of the Reservoir, and see the original tank, gauges and other infrastructure. The interpretive program also will have contemporary messages on water conservation, including the Park's proposed rainwater harvesting system under the Main Lawn to be used to offset the Park's water usage.

A 1200 square foot combined building will have a public restroom and a Rec & Park maintenance building. The public restroom will have stalls for men, women and all gender, a common handwashing area, and a janitor's closet. The maintenance building will have a garage space for Rec & Park maintenance vehicles, a pump room for the rainwater harvesting system, and space for other electrical and mechanical requirements. An enclosure for trash, soil, mulch, and compost will be located to the west edge of the Park for easy access from Larkin Street. The building is currently proposed to have a living roof to be visually integrated into the hillside above.

The primary landscape architecture concept is to convert the inactive and abandoned reservoir into a naturalistic park with passive recreation and interpretation of the historic reservoir resource. While a dog park, children's play area and main lawn area will be provided, the park is intended for quiet activities such as walking along the curving paths and taking in the views of San Francisco Bay. There are no features or planned events that will cause noise levels to disrupt the neighbors. Universal access from Bay Street, up to the historic reservoir basin, and main lawn and then up to the view terraces above the convenience building will be achieved with ramps and sloped walkways, using retaining walls and imported fill to make the steep site accessible with graceful landforms.

Several mature trees will be preserved on the north slope of the site along Bay Street. These include a charming grove of gnarled Australian Tea Trees on the northwest side of the park. A large and an exceptional specimen of Monterey Cypress is front and center at the base of the slope. A large Coast Live Oak on the slope to the northeast is in excellent health and structure, a good representative of this California native. A unique large native Toyon will be preserved at the top of the berm.

The proposed planting design will create various zones for the visitor to enjoy as they walk up the site. Starting from Bay Street, one enters the park through a plaza with drought-tolerant flowering shrubs and perennials and a lawn area. Heading up the winding entry path, the visitor passes through a new grove of small scale trees and large shrubs such as dogwoods, buckeyes and manzanitas, with an understory of low groundcovers of varying leaf textures and flowers. Emerging at the top of the entry path, the visitor arrives at the brick reservoir basin and playground in the middle of the site. The path here cuts through the rocky remnants of the historic berm, which will have planted with sporadic pockets of plants. The path continues up to a large open lawn for picnicking, viewing and tot recreation. The upper slope to the south is designated as habitat. Poison oak, blackberries and other invasives will be removed here, and the slope will be replanted with a Coastal scrub palette, featuring habitat friendly plants such as toyon, coffeeberry and sages. A new grove of Coast Live Oaks at the southwest corner will help screen the large blank building wall.

Sources & Uses of Funding

Sources:	\$ 25,000,000	Francisco Park Conservancy
Uses:	\$16,900,000	Hard Costs
	\$5,200,000	Soft Costs
	\$2,900,000	Project Contingency
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	\$ 25,000,000	Total Uses

Project Schedule

- Planning Phase September 2016 – July 2017
- Design Phase August 2017 - January 2018
- Bid Phase May 2018 – September 2018
- Anticipated Construction Phase Summer 2018 - Summer 2019

Environmental Review

The project has been reviewed by the Planning Department and was issued a Categorical Exemption under Class 1 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15301) and Class 3 (Guidelines section 15303).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the conceptual design to renovate the Francisco Reservoir. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

Supported By:

- Mayor Mark Farrell
- Supervisor Catherine Stefani
- Alive & Free/Omega Boys Club
- Aquatic Park Neighbors
- Chinatown Child Development Center
- Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods
- Galileo Academy
- Golden Gate Audubon Society
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- Nature in the City
- North Beach Neighbors
- Middle Polk Neighborhood Association
- Parks and Recreation Open Space Committee (PROSAC)
- Russian Hill Community Association
- Russian Hill Improvement Association

- Russian Hill Neighbors
- San Francisco Beautiful
- San Francisco League of Conservation Voters
- San Francisco Parks Alliance
- San Francisco Tomorrow
- Self-Help for the Elderly
- Sierra Club, Bay Chapter
- South End Rowing Club
- Telegraph Hill Dwellers
- TEL-HI Neighborhood Center
- Wu Yee Children's Services
- YMCA of San Francisco (Chinatown)

Opposed By

None known

Attachments

- Concept Design Package
- Community Outreach Summary
- CEQA Declaration