



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

General Plan Referral

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Date: June 26, 2014
Case No. Case No. 2014.0673R

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Acquisition by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department of one parcel owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in the Russian Hill neighborhood for expanded public open space. The project at this time consists of land acquisition only – no immediate change in use or physical site changes are planned.

Block/Lot No.: 0047/001
Project Sponsor: SF Recreation and Park Department
Capital and Planning Division
30 Van Ness Ave., 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

Applicant: Stacy Bradley
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Recommendation: Finding the project, on balance, is **in conformity** with the General Plan

Recommended By: 
John Rahaim, Director of Planning

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Acquisition by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department of one parcel in the Russian Hill neighborhood for expanded public open space. The project at this time consists of land acquisition only – no immediate change in use or physical site changes are planned. The parcel, a former reservoir is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). The SFPUC has determined this to be unnecessary for their operations.

The submittal is for a General Plan Referral to recommend whether the Project is in conformity with the General Plan, pursuant to Section 4.105 of the Charter, and Section 2A.52 and 2A.53 of the Administrative Code.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE

The site is located at 2445 Hyde Street, which is the City's Russian Hill neighborhood. The site was formerly used as reservoir and was decommissioned in 1958. The site has been vacant ever since. An easement for the Francisco Street ROW currently bisects the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

On May 7, 2014, the Environmental Planning Division of the Planning Department determined that the Project (acquisition of property [block/lot number: 0047/001] by the Recreation and Park Department from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission) to be Categorically Exempt from Environmental Review under Class 8, acquisition of land for a park and class 16(b), acquisition of land to establish a park where the land contains a historical resource and to preserve the historical resource.

GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE AND BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Project involves the acquisition of a vacant parcel at 2445 Hyde Street in the Russian Hill neighborhood by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

The project is, on balance, **in-conformity** with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1: Preserve large areas of open space sufficient to meet the long-range needs of the Bay region.

POLICY 1.2: Make open space lands already in public ownership accessible to the public for compatible recreational uses.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop and maintain a diversified and balanced citywide system of high quality public open space.

POLICY 2.2: Preserve existing public open space.

POLICY 2.7: Acquire additional open space for public use.

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of open space in every San Francisco neighborhood.

POLICY 4.4: Acquire and develop new public open space in existing residential neighborhoods, giving priority to areas which are most deficient in open space.

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Note: Policy 4.4 contains two maps articulating areas with high residential densities and areas deficient in open space. The Francisco Reservoir site is adjacent to both a high needs area and an area with high residential density.

Policy 4.4 Graphics

Residential Density Overlay

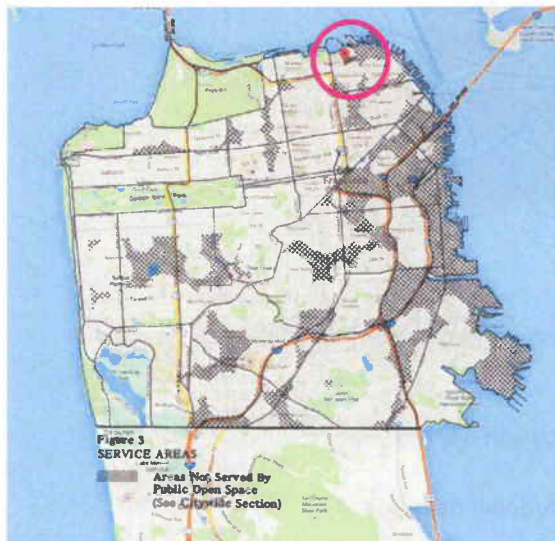
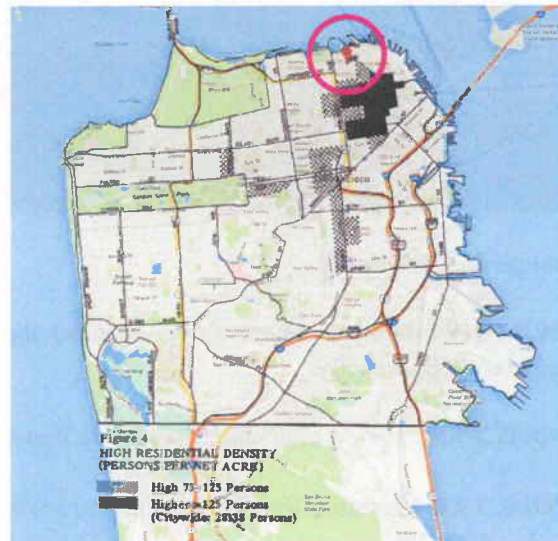


Figure 3 Needs Overlay



URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

POLICY 1.1: Recognize and protect major views in the city, with particular attention to those of open space and water.

Note: The existing site has views of the Bay

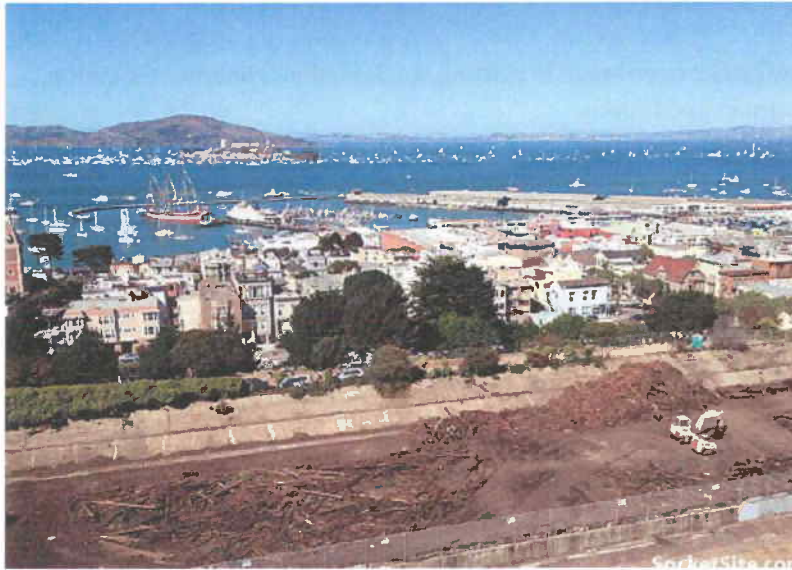


Image: SocietSite.com

OBJECTIVE 4: Improvement of the neighborhood environment to increase personal safety, comfort, pride and opportunity

POLICY 4.8: Provide convenient access to a variety of recreation opportunities.

POLICY 4.9: Maximize the use of recreation areas for recreational purposes.

PROPOSITION M FINDINGS – PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1

Planning Code Section 101.1 establishes Eight Priority Policies and requires review of discretionary approvals and permits for consistency with said policies. The Project, demolition and replacement of the Chinese Recreation Center, is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies as set forth in Planning Code Section 101.1 for the following reasons:

Eight Priority Policies Findings

The subject project is found to be consistent with the Eight Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1 in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced.

There are no direct or immediate changes to existing retail as a result of SFRPD's purchase of the property. However, the continued and future use of the site as a public open space will contribute to the overall improvement of the Russian Hill neighborhood, thereby supporting and preserving neighborhood-serving retail uses.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhood.

There are no proposed changes that affect housing. The continued and future public open space will be compatible with the existing neighborhood character and support local neighborhood activities.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.

Policy does not apply -- there are no proposed changes that affect the City's supply of affordable housing.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The purchase of the property by SFRPD is not expected to increase local traffic or create an additional burden on neighborhood parking. Because the future proposed use (public park) does not involve residential or employment uses, there is no anticipated increase in commuter traffic from this project, nor will there be an impediment to Muni transit service.

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for residential employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The proposed property acquisition does not involve commercial office development that would cause displacement. In the future, the intended use of the site is an expanded public park, which would be accessible for the enjoyment of residents, employees and visitors in the area.

6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

Policy does not apply -- property acquisition will not affect preparedness in the event of an earthquake. The presence of an expanded public open space may provide a gathering place for the exchange of information and resources following an earthquake or other natural disaster.

7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

There are no historic buildings however, the reservoir is considered historic While not listed with the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources, the reservoir was constructed in 1859 by the San Francisco City Water Works. No physical changes to the reservoir are planned at this time – planning and design work need to be completed to identify anticipated, physical changes to the reservoir.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

The property to be acquired will continue as public open space and eventually be developed with expanded public open space. The location of the site on northern side of Russian Hill will ensure access to sunlight and vistas of the bay, Alcatraz, Angel Island, Mann County and portions of the Golden Gate Bridge.

RECOMMENDATION:	Finding the Project, on balance, in-conformity with the General Plan
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