

1 [Urging the Recreation and Parks Department to Adopt Immediate Changes to its Acquisition
2 Strategies to Serve the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob Hill Neighborhoods]

3 **Resolution urging the Recreation and Parks Department and its Commission to**
4 **immediately adopt flexible criteria for its acquisition of potential open space and green**
5 **recreation, parklet and pocket park sites in the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob**
6 **Hill, including prioritizing smaller parcels of 2,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet, that**
7 **would not require years of demolition and construction, but rather think strategically**
8 **about a holistic approach that maximizes more parcels if they must be necessarily**
9 **smaller by design, and urging them to make considerable progress by the end of this**
10 **calendar year on the voter-mandated equity priorities in its Open Space Acquisition**
11 **plan.**

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13 WHEREAS, In 2000, the voters approved Proposition C, which extended San
14 Francisco’s Open Space Acquisition Fund, which is used to finance land acquisitions and
15 capital improvements for the Recreation and Parks Department; and

16 WHEREAS, Section 13.02 of the San Francisco Park Code states that in identifying
17 properties for acquisition under the Capital Plan, the Department shall consider as its top
18 priority open space acquisition sites, facilities and other real property opportunities in
19 neighborhoods designated as “high need areas” in the Recreation and Open Space Element
20 of the City’s General Plan; and

21 WHEREAS, The Recreation and Parks Commission has a history of ignoring equity
22 priorities, such as the 2014 decision to approve the largest drawdown of funds for a single
23 open space acquisition for the Francisco Reservoir in a neighborhood with ample open space
24 opportunities and a district with the highest amount of open space per capita, while attempts
25 to identify potential acquisition sites in the Tenderloin languished, as documented by a June

1 2014 article in the San Francisco Examiner, on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
2 in File No. 230278, which is hereby declared to be a part of this Resolution as if set forth fully
3 herein; and

4 WHEREAS, On October 17, 2022, the Land Use and Transportation Committee heard
5 File No. 220867, a hearing on the public open space needs in the Lower Nob Hill/Upper
6 Tenderloin/Polk Gulch neighborhoods, with an overview of the consultant survey of potential
7 soft sites for acquisition, an accounting of the fund balance for the Open Space Acquisition
8 Fund, and an update on the Recreation and Park Department's ability to meet the mandated
9 "high needs" criteria of the Open Space Acquisition Fund, and community members offered
10 public comment raising concerns with the City's lack of progress serving the neighborhoods of
11 the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob Hill; and

12 WHEREAS, The Recreation and Parks Department claims to use SF Planning's priority
13 equity geography planning areas designated as Environmental Justice Communities,
14 referenced in San Francisco's recently adopted Housing Element, to confirm "high-need
15 areas" for investment and to guide the Department's capital plan budget and acquisition
16 investments, and the map presented at the Planning Commission and at the Capital Planning
17 Committee, informed by approximately 110 different data sets, on file with the Clerk of the
18 Board of Supervisors in File No. 230278, which is hereby declared to be a part of this
19 Resolution as if set forth fully herein, clearly includes and identifies the top 30% of burdened
20 area as the Tenderloin up to Bush Street and Redding Elementary School, (one of the top ten
21 most diverse public schools in San Francisco), on Frank Norris Alley; and

22 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Health also has equity overlays (also referenced
23 in the City's Housing Element), defined as "Areas of Vulnerability" dating back to 2016, on file
24 with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 230278, which is hereby declared to be
25 a part of this Resolution as if set forth fully herein, which include the entirety of the Tenderloin

1 all the way up to Bush Street between Van Ness Avenue to the west and Stockton Street to
2 the east, a zone which has only increased its vulnerable population density in the last two
3 years with the addition of over 1,032 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) and
4 transitional shelter for high-needs residents within a densely concentrated three block radius
5 and more pipeline PSH units and high-needs public health and harm reduction facilities
6 planned for the immediate future, albeit no plans to address the lack of open space in the
7 neighborhood; and

8 WHEREAS, The dense neighborhoods of the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob
9 Hill have very few opportunity development sites for open space, given the historically built out
10 nature of these neighborhoods and relatively small lot sizes, which makes the Recreation and
11 Parks Department's arbitrary size criteria virtually prohibitive for open space acquisitions; and

12 WHEREAS, The dense nature of these neighborhoods means that every potential
13 opportunity site is critical to meet the massive demand for open space, specifically pocket
14 parks, such as the Tenderloin National Forest in Cohen Alley, which is a community-activated
15 23 foot wide and 136 foot deep green space; and

16 WHEREAS, The pandemic only served to highlight the immense need for neutral open
17 space to convene community safely with neighborhood programming, with the need for open
18 space opportunities in the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob Hill neighborhoods
19 especially highlighted within the dense areas bounded by Geary Street to the south and Bush
20 Street to the north and Van Ness Avenue to the west and Taylor Street to the east, which has
21 no parks or open space recreation sites, but many low-income families and seniors; now,
22 therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
24 urges the Recreation and Parks Department and its Commission to immediately adopt flexible
25 criteria for its acquisition of potential open space and green recreation, parklet and pocket

1 park sites in the Tenderloin, Lower Polk and Lower Nob Hill, including prioritizing smaller
2 parcels of 2,000 square feet-5,000 square feet, that would not require years of demolition and
3 construction, but rather think strategically about a holistic approach that maximizes more
4 parcels if they must be necessarily smaller by design, and make considerable progress by the
5 end of this calendar year on the voter-mandated equity priorities in its Open Space Acquisition
6 plan.

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