

# BALBOA SITE STUDY

## Summary of Public Workshop #2

CCSF Multi-Use Building, Room 140

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

6:00-8:00pm

### Background to the Public Land for Housing Program

In 2014, San Francisco voters passed Proposition K: an additional affordable housing policy goal of constructing or rehabilitating at least 30,000 housing units by 2020, 33 percent of which are to be affordable housing available to low-income and moderate-income households. To help achieve this goal, Mayor Ed Lee established the [Public Land for Housing](#) program to identify and develop underutilized, publicly-owned properties that would better serve the public as housing. The 17-acre “lower” Balboa parking lot west of City College was chosen as one of these sites. This site, owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), has been vacant or leased as a surplus parking lot for 30 years. It has long been identified as a site for a mix of housing and open space, most recently in the 2009 [Balboa Station Area Plan](#). It is important to note that any future use of the site also needs to respect SFPUC’s obligation to its ratepayers of receiving fair market value for the land.

### Balboa Reservoir Study and Public Participation

In late 2014, the San Francisco Planning Department, the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and the SFPUC began a public dialogue in efforts to better understand the opportunities and challenges presented by developing the site with open space and housing at a range of affordability levels.

To date, more than 450 people have attended public workshops and community meetings with local organizations. More than 100 people attended one or both public workshops, the second of which is summarized below.

The public conversation is currently focusing on development principles for the site and potential public amenities to serve the surrounding neighborhoods. These principles will structure the Request for Development Proposals (RFP), a formal invitation for development proposals, expected in late 2015 or early 2016. The City will select the proposal that best meets the criteria determined with the help of community analysis and input.

There are still ample opportunities for public participation in this process. CAC meetings will take place before the RFP is issued. After the developer partners and designers are selected in 2016, they will host a more robust series of community design workshops around specific designs of the site, open space, buildings and housing.



## How we've incorporated public input to date (December 2014 – April 2015)

Several public comments and questions have already been incorporated into the RFP or input processes. As City agencies learned early on that the community would like a large open space and walking routes, public dialogue since then has focused on how to ensure these two elements are well incorporated into the site's overall open space network. Planning and OEWD have also heard the need to address parking, traffic, and access issues related to the City College's properties. In response, the agencies have initiated a process of securing more staff and resources from SFMTA, conducting a potential analysis focusing on neighborhood transportation, and coordinating closely with the City College master plan process. The need for child care locations, non-profit service provider space, and designs which respect neighborhood character were also early concerns. They have helped to structure later workshops and enhance public dialogue, and will be ultimately addressed in the RFP.

## Summary of Public Workshop #2

### Workshop Overview

On May 5, more than 150 people attended a public workshop hosted by the Planning Department and OEWD about the City's proposal to develop housing on the lower Balboa site. After a brief presentation, participants broke into small discussion groups to speak with staff from Planning, the PUC, OEWD, Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH), the Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), and consultants from AECOM, a professional technical service provider. The purpose of these small groups, or "stations," was to better understand participants' values and preferred public amenities in the following subject areas: Open Space & Sustainability, Housing & Neighborhood Character, and Transportation.

Some of the questions discussed were:

- What descriptive words or characteristics of a park would you prioritize for this area? Considering these qualities and the neighboring open spaces being built, what specific uses would you prioritize?
- What overall sustainability goals would you prioritize? What strategies would you prioritize to meet those goals? How can we integrate sustainability into other values? Consider that we can plan the site at once, rather than on individual building basis.
- Once the project is built, what would you consider a success from a transportation perspective? What is the outcome? What strategies would you prioritize to meet those goals?

## What we heard

### *Open Space & Sustainability*

Suggestions for open space and sustainability include that open space should buffer the project from existing housing in Westwood Park; that open space on the site should accommodate seniors; and that the site should be developed at a higher density for better energy sustainability. More specific comments on particular uses or designs include requests for a large open space; linear open spaces for walking and jogging; smart water meters at residences; permeable surfaces to reduce rainwater runoff; facilities for greywater reuse; habitat for native and drought-tolerant plants; an urban farm or community garden; green roofs and garden patios in housing units; and playgrounds for children of all ages.

### *Housing & Neighborhood Character*

Discussions of housing and neighborhood character include the suggestions that housing should promote and welcome social interaction among neighbors; that the site should be walkable and pedestrian-friendly, particularly for seniors; that site character, density, and design should be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods; and that housing should serve particular City populations that are underserved, such as students, teachers, and seniors. Other suggestions for housing and neighborhood character called for specific uses, such as community rooms and supportive housing for the homeless and people with disabilities.

### *Transportation*

The transportation discussions produced several suggestions that can help shape development principles for the site. Participants suggested reducing automobile trips from the site in order to address congestion in the area. Other participants suggested more specific measures, such as incentives to use alternatives to automobiles or developing underground parking.

Unfortunately, some suggestions are either not possible within current policy or were beyond the scope of the project but can be discussed in further detail at future meetings. These included:

- Convert the entire site to a park or donate the land to City College. It is not financially feasible for the site to be donated to City College or converted to a park, nor would these proposals provide much needed affordable housing in San Francisco, as consistent with Proposition K. However, a large open space and other open spaces will be included in the RFP, and proposals will be evaluated in part on the strength of these spaces.
- Keep the entire site as a parking lot. Similar to other proposals for the entire site, this idea is not financially feasible or consistent with the voter-approved City policy. However, parking is being studied in close coordination with City College's master plan. Thanks to the many public comments on parking, the City is seeking to conduct a more robust analysis and a solutions-oriented transportation demand management (TDM) plan for the neighborhood beyond the Balboa site.

- Muni bus and streetcar services near the site should be improved (beyond the Muni Forward improvements already made in April 2015). Transit service is beyond the scope of this project, but any impacts on transit to the neighborhood would be evaluated in the environmental review of any project proposals.
- The site should be developed to a height of one or two stories; to a height of four to five stories; to the maximum density feasible; with 100% of housing on site permanently affordable to low-income families; and into for-sale, not rental, housing. This workshop focused on overarching principles and objectives, and took note of recommendations for designs or specific uses. Building heights, densities and levels of affordability will be addressed and discussed in the process after a developer partner is selected. However, it is currently the City’s goal to dedicate at least 33% of the site to affordable housing for low and moderate income households and families.

## NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, public discussion of the project will be carried forward by a newly-formed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) composed of community representatives. The CAC was recently appointed by Mayor Ed Lee and Supervisor Norman Yee. It includes the following representatives:

<i>Sunnyside Neighborhood Association President</i>	Lisa Spinali
<i>Westwood Park Neighborhood Association President</i>	Kate Favetti
<i>OMI Resident</i>	Maria Picar
<i>City College Employee or Trustee</i>	Brigitte Davila
<i>Member of Balboa Park Station Area Plan CAC</i>	Robert Muehlbauer
<i>Ocean Avenue Business Owner</i>	Howard Chung
<i>SFPUC CAC Member</i>	Rebecca Lee
<i>At-Large Seat #1:</i>	Christine Godinez, Lick Wilmerding HS
<i>At-Large Seat #2:</i>	Jon Winston, Sunnyside resident

The CAC meetings will provide an opportunity for these representatives and the public to engage in deeper, more detailed discussions about specific aspects of the project as they relate to transportation, parking, open space, City College, sustainability and neighborhood character. You can find more information on the CAC, including its members and meeting schedule, on our [website](#).