



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

DATE: March 6, 2014
TO: Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors
FROM: Kearstin Dischinger, Kearstin.dischinger@sfgov.org, 558-6284
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RE: Green Connections – Informational Hearing

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Background

Green Connections is a two-year grant-funded effort to improve access to parks and open spaces for San Franciscans. Green Connections aims to increase access to parks, open spaces, and the waterfront by envisioning a network of ‘green connectors’ – city streets that will be upgraded incrementally over the next 20 years to make it safer and more pleasant to travel to parks by walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation. The project aims to make the City more healthy, sustainable, and livable through features such as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, street trees and other landscaping, stormwater management, and opportunities for beautification, public art, and community stewardship.

The Green Connections Plan includes:

Green Connections Network: a map of 24 routes (totaling over 115 miles) that span the entire footprint of the City.

Design Toolkit: a set of 18 traffic calming devices for blocks and intersections that could be applied to meet local needs and goals. The Design Toolkit introduces six new traffic calming devices to San Francisco’s design palette.

Neighborhood Concept Designs: The Green Connections team developed preliminary designs for routes in six neighborhoods: Bayview-Hunters Point, Chinatown, Potrero Hill, Tenderloin, Visitacion Valley, and Western Addition.

Implementation Guide: a description of resources, programs, and processes that could help the City, private sector and community members to implement the network.

Ecology Guides, which provides a narrative for each route and recommendations for plants that promote target species.

SF Plant Finder (coming soon): SF Plant Finder is an online, searchable database that provides gardeners and designers with recommendations for locally climate-appropriate plants they can use in backyards, rights-of-way, and other urban spaces to support ecological diversity.

Community Resource List: A guide for community members who want to get involved in designing and implementing Green Connections routes, which includes examples of programs, grants, and other resources available to help.

The Green Connections plan is a collaborative effort between the San Francisco Planning Department, the San Francisco Department of Public Works, The San Francisco Department of the Environment, The Port of San Francisco, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Department of Public Health and the Mayor's Office of Housing. The City also partnered with three community-based organizations: San Francisco Parks Alliance, Walk San Francisco and Nature in the City.

The Green Connections planning process included a number of opportunities for community input and engagement. The project team held over thirty outreach events across the city. These events took different forms and took place in locations across the City including large open houses, participation at Sunday Streets, neighborhood walks, and smaller focused meetings with resident and stakeholder groups. The project also explored different forms of engagement online and through social media including two online surveys, a Facebook page, a survey on Neighborland, and a poll on ImproveSF. This effort helped the team understand stakeholders' vision for Green Connections and solicited feedback on the draft network, needs and opportunities in different neighborhoods, and potential design options for the routes.

What is a Green Connection?

A Green Connection is a special street or path that connects people to parks and open spaces and enhances the ecology of the street environment: routes are intended to improve access to parks for both people and wildlife.

In recent years, San Francisco has made great strides in retrofitting streets with pedestrian and bicycle improvements that make it easier to access parks, schools and other neighborhood destinations. Green Connections builds on this work, envisioning a network of safe, functional, and attractive streets connecting people to parks, open

spaces, and the waterfront that will be built over the next twenty years. Green Connections was created to meet three goals – **public health, sustainability, and livability** – through features such as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, street trees and other landscaping, stormwater management, and opportunities for beautification, public art, and community stewardship.

The Green Connections Network

A network of streets that connect to parks is not a new idea. Burnham and Bennett's 1905 plan for San Francisco included recommends areas for parks and park connections. The idea for Green Connectors more recently was identified during the early phases of the Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE) planning process. Developing the network was an iterative process relying on technical analysis and community input to identify streets well suited to meet traffic calming, greening and placemaking goals. The network was developed to build on existing opportunities, such as low

The project was funded by a \$633,000 planning grant from the State of California Strategic Growth Council. More information about the project can be found at greenconnections.sfplanning.org

Attachment:

1. Green Connections Network Map
 - a. http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/Citywide/green_connections/GC_Final_Network_Map_03-2014.pdf
2. Green Connections Draft Plan
 - a. <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3002#finalreport>