



London N. Breed, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: April 28, 2023
To: London Breed, Mayor
From: Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, Recreation and Park Department
Subject: ED23-01:
Recreation and Park Department Performance Assessment and Improvement Plan

Please accept this *Performance Assessment and Improvement Plan* on behalf of the Recreation and Park Department (RPD) in response to Executive Directive 23-01 that calls on all City departments involved in the production of housing to streamline their permitting process in support of ED23-01 new housing goals.

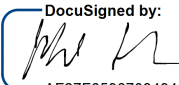
RPD supports housing in San Francisco by providing physical and mental health and wellness opportunities with safe and healthy spaces for residents to recreate and connect with neighbors.

RPD aims to ensure that high quality open spaces are available to all San Franciscans, both through RPD-owned or -maintained parks, and through Development Agreement (DA)-provided open spaces. RPD's review and input help ensure DA-provided open spaces are designed to welcome all residents, meet the current needs of the City's population, enhance the City's open space system, and provide a true benefit to San Franciscans.

San Francisco deserves an integrated, cohesive, park system expertly run by an agency that is highly qualified and well positioned to be the caretaker of the city's entire park system, and whose mission it is to provide open space, rather than a fragmented system run by many different agencies with competing priorities and missions.

Involving RPD in the DA open space review and approval role has resulted in better open spaces for San Franciscans. RPD will continue to prioritize work on DA projects to ensure a robust, efficient, and timely review process while also advocating for a more robust role in the planning and implementation of DA-provided open spaces. RPD proposes three process improvements to streamline reviews and provide a more integrated cohesive park system.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Phil Ginsburg





London N. Breed, Mayor

Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

I. San Francisco Recreation and Park Department

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) mission is to provide enriching recreational activities, maintain beautiful parks, and preserve the environment for the well-being of everyone in our diverse community. Inspiring a more livable city for all, San Francisco's parks connect us to play, nature and each other.

RPD's Capital and Planning Division oversees a large portfolio of park renovations, developments, and acquisitions. Together with community members and park advocates, the Capital and Planning team strives to create and renovate parks that solve social problems and enhance community resilience.

Parks and open space are an integral part of a successful housing project. RPD is committed to ensuring the open space provided by Development Agreement (DA) projects are of the highest quality and provide services and amenities that city residents desire and need and that these new parks complement and enhance existing amenities. In recent years, we have partnered with the Sunnydale Hope SF project to jointly deliver a new recreation center in Southeast San Francisco; with the India Basin Mixed-Use project to deliver 10 acres of waterfront parks in the Bayview; with the Transbay Redevelopment and Schlage Lock Projects to deliver future RPD-owned parks; with the Potrero Power Station Project and Balboa Reservoir Project to review and comment on future Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Open Spaces (POPOS); and with the Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island Project to review park designs and provide maintenance and operations forecasting services and expert advice.

RPD was not named in ED 17-01 as one of the City Departments required to make a *Process Improvement Plan*, so this is the Department's first *Improvement Plan* as mandated by the newly issued ED 23-01.

II. Role

RPD is involved with DA project review in two ways: by reviewing plans and information relating to the project's open space and recreational elements and offerings; and by analyzing shadow impacts to RPD parks resulting from the project's development.

Open Space Review

As the lead agency responsible for providing open space and recreation in San Francisco, RPD aims to review all open spaces delivered in the City, irrespective of whether these spaces would be transferred to the City or become POPOS. RPD staff and the Recreation and Park Commission (RPC) would like to review and provide comment early in the process to provide meaningful feedback that will ensure quality parks for all city residents. RPD brings knowledge and expertise in open space design, understands system-wide open space and recreational needs both across the entire city and within specific neighborhoods, and park maintenance best practices.

RPD's Capital and Planning Division contributes to the DA Review process by reviewing site plans, Open Space Plans, Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), Basis of Design (BoD) documents, Design for Development (D4D)/Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG) documents, DA Open Space Exhibits, park designs, and other plans and documents related to open space planning and design and overall project delivery.

RPD staff can also review Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Plans and provide information on future park maintenance staffing needs and have done so for the Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island Development Project, at the request of the Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA).

For DA projects that include open spaces that are slated to become RPD-owned parks, the RPC reviews and approves the concept design and acquisition of the park, and RPD Capital and Planning Division staff also coordinate additional reviews by the Department's Structural Maintenance Yard (SMY) staff, to ensure compliance with RPD's maintenance and operations practices.

Shadow Review

The Recreation and Park Commission reviews shadow impacts per Planning Code Section 295 for shadow cast by a project on property under the jurisdiction of RPC, or a property that will be acquired or transferred to RPC jurisdiction. RPD staff review and comment on Section 295 shadow analyses, making sure they are robust and contain all required information, and RPC makes a recommendation to the Planning Commission as to whether or not the project shadow would have an adverse impact on the use of the park.

See below for RPD Organization Flow Chart and RPD's DA Review Process Flow Chart.

III. Performance Assessment

Open Space Review

From October 2019 to October 2022, RPD's average timeframe for completion of DA project reviews has been 26 days, with 79% of comments submitted on time. While 21% of reviews were delayed, many of these delays occurred during early covid days, as the department was reassigning staff to serve as Disaster Service Workers. Since mid-2021, RPD staff have met 100% of submittal deadlines.

Certifying open space that will be transferred to RPD (e.g., India Basin Big Green, Schlage Lock Parks)

For DA properties that will be transferred to RPD, staff in the Capital and Planning Division and staff from the Operations Division - SMY, relevant Park Service Area manager, Permits and Reservations staff and Park Patrol - review the proposed design as needed and confirm the design falls within RPD Park Design Standards. It is instrumental that RPD staff be involved with park design from inception, especially for parks that are to be transferred to or maintained by RPD. Such parks also go before the Parks, Recreation Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC) for its consideration of acquisition and recommendation to RPC; these parks also go before RPC for approval of both the park's concept design and its acquisition (subject to Board of Supervisors (BOS) approval).

Once the park's design and acquisition have both been approved by the RPC, RPD staff reviews more detailed designs of the park as these become available, and RPD's SMY and the assigned Capital Project Manager review and comment on Construction Documents (CD's) at 30%, 60% and 90% to ensure the park is designed and built to RPD's standards, and maintenance best practices.

Timelines for concept design approval and the acquisition approval process heavily depend on Project Sponsor's timeline for delivery of open spaces and can be delayed as sponsors shift their phasing plans, redesign open spaces or change their priorities for project delivery timelines. Generally, the process for hearing and approving the acquisition by both PROSAC and RPC should take about 6 weeks from start to finish, including PROSAC and Commission Packet preparation by staff. RPD staff bring the acquisition and concept design approval before commission at the same time, if possible, to increase efficiency and shorten timelines.

Once the open space acquisition has been approved by RPC, the transfer of real estate to the City must be approved by the BOS. The time needed for BOS approval is roughly 12 weeks.

SMY review of 30%, 60% and 90% CD's can vary, depending on SMY staff availability. SMY staff are tradespeople who work in the field and have limited availability and capacity for document review, RPD staff make it a top priority to not delay DA project reviews and to coordinate with SMY staff to make sure reviews occur in a timely manner.

Review of Open Spaces that will not be transferred to RPD

Currently, open spaces that are not slated to be owned by RPD usually undergo preliminary design review by the Planning Department. RPD staff are usually asked to review these designs, but not always. The level of RPD staff involvement is often dependent on the language within each development agreement as well as the Housing Delivery Agency Project Manager and the Project Sponsor. Public Works Landscape Architecture and Infrastructure Task Force (ITF) are sometimes included in the design review process. Planning staff incorporate comments from departments and approve the designs. RPC does not review or approve park designs. The design process often involves multiple submittals before and after entitlement such as D4D/DSG documents, infrastructure plans, design review packages, and BoDs documents. This review process has become somewhat more standardized since the ED17-02 was implemented. For parks, the process still lacks clarity leading to confusion by the Project Sponsor.

Construction Documents are not always disseminated to RPD staff for review and even when they are, no SMY or other RPD Operations staff review occurs for non-RPD open spaces, and the review remains within the Capital & Planning Division. Permitting is typically done by DBI for vertical improvements. Permitting for the remainder of landscape and utility elements may be done by either Public Works or BDI, depending on the individual project. Projects on Port property may include Port permitting for some improvements.

This approach has led to a fragmented open space system where many different entities end up owning, maintaining, or having jurisdiction over open spaces. In addition, some of the open spaces not slated to become RPD-owned do end up transferring to RPD despite not having gone through a rigorous review and approval process by RPD staff and RPC. Current examples include the upcoming transition of the Mission Bay Park System to RPD and the likely transition of additional OCII open spaces in Hunters Point to RPD in the coming months.

Shadow Review

RPD staff works with City Planning staff to review shadow analysis performed by the Project Sponsor. Shadow reviews undergo two hearings at RPC - at Capital Committee and at Full Commission – both in the same month. RPD staff prepare a Commission Packet with staff report and attachments, and a presentation to be presented at both hearings. The shadow review process by RPC takes about ~6 weeks from agenda setting to resolution, including the two hearings and staff preparation for both.

RPD staff make it a point to meet all ITF deadlines and provide thoughtful comments in a timely manner. RPD staff and RPC have allowed 'Priority Housing Projects' to appear before RPC with very little notice; staff and RPC have been very flexible with scheduling hearings for shadow review for such projects, including foregoing the first hearing at Capital Committee; and staff have prioritized review of materials to facilitate hearings for Priority Housing Projects.

IV. Housing Coordinator

The RPD Housing Coordinator is an experienced Planner in RPD's Capital and Planning Division, working closely with the Deputy Director of Planning and the Director of Capital and Planning to streamline the review process and get the relevant and appropriate staff to review in a timely manner, including Capital Project Managers (PMs), Park Service Area (PSA) Managers, the Director of Operations, the Superintendent of Parks and Open Space, Park Patrol staff and the SMY, as needed. This structure has worked well for the Division due to the Division's small size and highly collaborative work environment. RPD currently has a very flat management model to quickly escalate issues to senior staff and the General Manager. Based on the work required by RPD to deliver on ED 23-01 around housing, the appropriate staff member has been assigned as the Housing Coordinator. This role is nimble and has the capacity to quickly move requests and issues to resolution.

V. Process Improvements

RPD proposes the following process improvements to ensure the quality of DA-provided open spaces citywide, the seamless maintenance of new open spaces to be owned or maintained by the City, and the timely and streamlined review of open space designs and shadow analyses.

Open Space Review

RPD proposes that concept design approval by RPD could also be required for non-RPD spaces, to ensure a holistic and robust review of all future San Francisco parks. RPD should also have the first right of refusal for ownership/management of future DA-provided open space.

RPD is also available to review other entities' Open Space O&M plans and/or provide maintenance cost estimates based on a staffing prediction model developed by the department. RPD staff have been successfully working with TIDA to provide predictions on maintenance needs at the future Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island open spaces.

RPD Amendment to General Park Code

RPD staff have recently proposed an amendment to the City's Park Code. This amendment will apply the Park Code to any properties RPD leases or maintains under a Maintenance Agreement. Previously, staff have had to amend the Park Code to include each new property it needed to be applied to. This was a time-consuming process for staff which included approval by both RPC and the BOS. This latest amendment, which will go before RPC for approval in April 2023, will ensure all future properties that are placed under RPD's management and operation will be subject to Park Code, without requiring any additional amendments. This will streamline, for example, the upcoming transfer of maintenance responsibilities to RPD of Mission Bay Parks and other OCII parks that RPD may accept responsibility for maintaining in the future. The Park Code amendment is expected to go before the BOS for approval later this summer.

Shadow Review

Effective as of July 1, 2023, RPD proposes to reduce the number of hearings required for Shadow Review from two to one. Shadow Review will only be heard at Full Commission hearings and will not be required to go before both Capital Committee and Full Commission. This change would reduce ~2-3 weeks off the shadow review process timeline (though agenda setting will still occur at the same time). This process improvement would also save about five hours of billable RPD staff time and would save Project Sponsors about 2-3 hours of staff/consultant time typically spent at Capital Committee hearings.

VI. Capacity Assessment and Plan

RPD's Housing Coordinator is an experienced Planner who coordinates with relevant individuals such as the Director of Capital and Planning, Deputy Director of Planning, and other Planners and PMs within the Division to work on preparing the deliverables for DA projects and to accomplish the actions of the Housing Element and ED 23-01. PMs and Planners are assigned to review plans and documents as needed.

At current levels we have been able to adhere to review timelines. With changes proposed for open space review due to the new housing goals we anticipate to increase our unit's capacity by at least 0.5 FTE. With changes RPD proposes to review all open space, RPD estimates an additional 0.75 FTE Planner, and 0.25 FTE PM would be needed.

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department Organization Chart

