



Potrero Yard Neighborhood Working Group Meeting 13 Minutes

Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar, Webinar ID: 821 3576 8377

(Virtual)

Note – The meeting minutes capture the overall tone of the group’s discussion and is not meant to be an exact transcription.

Members Present:

Alexander Hirji
Magda Freitas
J. R. Eppler
Mary Haywood Sheeter
Alexandra Harker
Scott Feeney
Brian Renehan
Claudia DeLarios Moran

Members Not Present:

Roberto Hernandez
Benjamin Bidwell
Kamilah Taylor
Erick Arguello
Thor Kaslofsky

SFMTA Staff:

Rafe Rabalais
Adrienne Heim
Pamela Owen Adams
Jonathan Rewers
Kerstin Magary

Other Attendees:

Rosie Dilger (consultant)
Abraham Vallin (consultant)
Alia Al-Sharif (consultant)
Ryan Marcelo
Linda Crouse
Mark Kelly
Ronald Mitchell (SFMTA, Muni
Operator and Joint Labor
Management Board-DSC
representative)

Purpose of the Meeting

To discuss project general project updates, solicit feedback on outreach strategies and methods, review new brochure collateral, and discuss the release of the RFQ.

Item 1. Welcome

Rosie Dilger welcomed everyone to the meeting. Highlighted webinar features of Zoom and reminded the Working Group meeting of virtual etiquette. Working Group members shared media they were enjoying while sheltering in place.



Item 3. Project Updates

Rafe Rabalais: We don't have too much to report on the CEQA side other than it's a lot of work going through all of the technical studies and scopes. Responding to draft scopes, finalizing scopes - for example the wind analysis is one of the potential environmental impacts that we have to analyze. They have to build a three-dimensional model of the bus yard to simulate wind conditions and determine where on the site there are wind hazards. The areas of concern are, primarily on the southwest corner of the site, which was above the acceptable threshold. We've been having to play with conceptual design interventions, which is an extensive process. That's one of several potential impacts along with noise, shadow, air quality, etc. We are on schedule for a draft environmental impact report to come out about nine-ten months from now.

The RFQ and RFP release is a big topic of conversation for today's meeting. Those of you who volunteered to be on the RFQ subcommittee have sent some emails back and forth about a synopsis document about the principles within the RFQ. Which is the first phase, to get to a shortlist of qualified potential respondents before we then send out the RFP that has the more detailed information about the project. We are hoping for a late May release of the RFQ. Those of you who are on the RFQ subcommittee saw that summary document, so thank you very much for all of your useful input.

The project-specific legislation is not something that has to precede the RFQ, but we are aiming for it to precede the RFP. We're looking to introduce this to the Board of Supervisors, that would probably be discussed in committee mid-June. The next big milestone will be the RFP itself, which will come out late summer, late in August or early in September. That all culminates in the selection of a joint development partner, which will happen in late 2020 or early 2021. There is a pretty large lag time between the release of the RFP and the actual selection. That has to do with the amount of detail that we want to see in the RFP response. That's a really quick overview. Any questions about these milestones?

Rosie transitioned Rafe to COVID-19 updates once the working group established, they had no questions.

We do have some updates regarding COVID-19 since last month's Working Group meeting. Conclusions from last month are that: the project remains a high priority at the SFMTA, and that outreach impacts remain the same. We know there is a big challenge in this regard, we must reach the community during a difficult climate. Because of this, there has been a two to three-week delay in the outreach schedule. We are still committed to an outreach process that is as comprehensive and equitable as it can be. We are very aware of digital-divide issues and language access issues.



We have another month of data to suggest that circumstances will remain far from normal for a while. Fare revenue and ridership for the SFMTA has been impacted by the lack of tourism, workers staying home, and shelter in place generally. What our ridership will look like for a period of time remains unknown. That stated, the Potrero Yard is a 100-year project; the density of the City and the economic vitality of the City in the long-term are not going to change. Therefore, the Potrero Yard project remains a wise long-term investment. The bad news comes with the budget situation, and how it relates to the Mayor's Office of Housing. Over the past two weeks, MOHCD has had to qualify their prior budgeting for the project in light of their own budgetary uncertainty. The City funds that would help us to meet our ambitious affordability target are much more in question than they had been before COVID.

Rosie Dilger: Jumping in here really quick, as that was a lot of information. At our last meeting we discussed that the Potrero Yard was still on schedule and continues on. Since then, the real impact may be on the housing aspect with the changes in market conditions, if you want to touch on that.

Rafe: In our conversations with management at the SFMTA and the Mayor's Office of Housing, the conclusions were that the project goals remain the same; that in the face of challenges our goal for an equitable project and a substantial number of affordable housing units remains the same. Fundamentally, some subsidy has to be in place for the affordability target to be met. Market conditions could affect the affordable housing component as well, although construction costs could go down and stimulus funds for housing could come out of DC, but we are still in as dynamic a set of conditions as ever.

Scott Feeney: If we were to just build a bus yard, would it be possible to do it in a way that leaves the air rights open for potentially adding on housing later?

Rafe Rabalais: I don't want to suggest that that is likely (i.e. not including housing in the program of the site), but I think it's a great thought. That we could future-proof the project to allow for some type of development on this prime 4.5-acre site.

Brian Renehan: What are you thinking in terms of the timing of the procurement documents?

Rafe Rabalais: No real change in that regard. We are still two and a half years from starting construction, and three years away from having to bake in financing and subsidy commitments. With the caveat that we need to adjust the documents appropriately, to acknowledge COVID-19. But the schedule basically remains the same.

Rosie Dilger: Adrienne, would you like to give us an update on the general SFMTA response to COVID-19?



Adrienne Heim: We've been working fast, furious, and nimbly since the 17 Muni routes were reduced in order for people to get to essential services and trips. As of April 25, we brought back five routes that are modified: that's the 5 Fulton, 9 San Bruno, 12 Folsom, 28 19th Avenue, 38 Geary Rapid. And we've increased frequency for the early-bird BART shuttle, the L, and the N. More information can be found at [SFMTA.com/COVID19](https://www.sfmta.com/COVID19). In addition, we created the essential trip card program. That was rolled out at the same time we brought back the five routes. It allows people with disabilities and seniors to access taxi service. The program allows two to three trips per month, with a 20% discount. It is exclusive to the elderly - if you know anyone who is 65 and older tell them to call 311 and mention the program or go to the website at [SFMTA.com/ETC](https://www.sfmta.com/ETC). We also brought back the M bus service shuttle between Balboa Park and West Portal station for weekdays only from 6 AM to 9 PM. The frequency is every 20 minutes. Lastly, we rolled out the Slow Streets program about a week ago, designed to limit traffic, for people to have more open space. If you would like to see a street open for activity go to [SFMTA.com/slowstreets](https://www.sfmta.com/slowstreets).

Item 4. Spring Outreach

Rosie thanked the SFMTA team for the Open Streets program and transitioned to Spring Outreach.

Rosie Dilger: As we've looked at our outreach for this project, at least through the next several months to the next year, we've realized that a lot of what was available to us before won't be available in the future. As we've looked at our plans and as the project goes on, we've taken a deep-dive and reevaluated outreach within the current situation. We've broken things down into how we will manage our outreach efforts while we shelter in place and after. Take a look at this slide from the last meeting and let us know if you have questions or ideas.

We are really excited about the outreach we are doing this spring. We will be distributing the brochure some of you have already seen by mail and to CBOs that still have their doors open. We are planning "office hours" events which are virtual and telephone town halls for people to call in and ask questions about the project and hear about updates. We are going to have a telephone event in English through a service called Broadnet, and another one in Spanish using Zoom. We wanted to make sure that anyone with a telephone would have access to these town halls. We will promote these events through mail, email, social media, reaching out to you and other networks. The content will be focused primarily on the RFQ. Looking further into the summer we are also going to be pursuing some options with radio as well as putting together a new project video and virtual tour.

Scott Feeney: I had a question about the Office Hours. Are you thinking about having them at multiple times? That way essential workers who want to join, can?



Rosie Dilger: Absolutely, I think as we are putting together the brochure, we're going to list the two events and then advertise too. But that's not to say that we're unwilling to do others and to do more. I think it depends on what the level of attendance looks like to determine the format. Rafe you can jump in here too.

Rafe Rabalais: We're up against the overall project deadline, the RFQ release has already slipped a bit from our goal. I will ask the Working Group - if we were to have one town hall for English and one for Spanish, when do you think it makes the most sense to have them? Lunchtime? Late afternoon? Weekends? When would work best for the most amount of people? If we have blockbuster attendance for these first two, we can talk about having more events.

Adrienne Heim: We are also taking into consideration our own staff, by scheduling a separate meeting with the Unions and future internal events. This is an ongoing dialogue with our colleagues.

Scott Feeney: I didn't realize that the proposed time was on a Saturday, that is pretty good.

Rosie Dilger: We're going to be sending the brochures out with the proposed dates and times, that said we will also be using social media and digital media beyond the mailed brochure to alert people of the project and the RFQ process. We want to make sure that neighbors are informed about updates for the project. We anticipate a much bigger public outreach push over the summer. As we've discussed, the RFQ is the baseline of qualifications when we are looking for firms, whereas the RFP is the meat of what we're looking for in terms of community expectations. The office hour events are a great way to keep our doors open. That way when the RFP is released, we can point to this outreach already having happened. In lieu of doing one big workshop, we're going to have to be creative and have these smaller events.

Rosie explained trifold design of the brochure including the placement of Spanish/Chinese translations.

Rosie Dilger: We're planning on doing a separate printing run in Spanish, which we want to distribute to CBOs and service providers in the Mission. We were wondering if anyone had any groups in particular that you'd like us to deliver to.

Rafe Rabalais: We have a pretty broad distribution list that we've used for previous outreach, if you have any suggestions, we'd love to hear them.

Adrienne Heim: I'll receive the suggestions via email if you think of any.

Rosie Dilger: If you have any initial feedback on the brochure let us know as well. We are hoping to print very soon, so please let us know any general feedback that you might have now; we are more than happy to take your feedback and incorporate it.



Scott Feeney: I like it in general, I think it's a well-done visual layout

Rafe Rabalais: We had to have a lot of content. We were trying to strike the balance because readers won't have the opportunity to attend a large event like they typically could.

Rosie Dilger: We'll be sure to mail it to all of you as well. If you'd like a stack or have a particular place for them to be delivered please let us know.

Rafe Rabalais: Did we figure out if we could drop off stacks at grocery stores or restaurants? Places that are still open?

Rosie Dilger: We had just planned to deliver them to service providers, CBOs, and open SFMTA sites.

Adrienne Heim: Due to hygiene measures, restaurants might not accept the brochures.

Rafe Rabalais: That is a good point, I'm less inclined to collect paper anything these days.

Scott Feeney: Have you thought at all about ads inside the busses for people taking essential travel?

Rosie Dilger: We have but decided not to because this round of outreach for the RFQ is so technical. But it is an idea we will look at as we move forward.

Adrienne Heim: We were considering doing that prior to March. I was talking to our marketing department, which oversees ads within the busses, and they said that logistically it is very difficult to determine which busses are running to Potrero and surrounding neighborhoods. That's something we can look at over the next two to three months.

Scott Feeney: Okay yeah, that seems like a good idea to do during the summer.

Rafe Rabalais: In terms of bus utilization right now, it is recommended that people only take the bus if necessary.

Scott Feeney: I was thinking of it primarily because essential workers are people that are hard to reach, and who might take the bus.

Rosie Dilger: As an agency it is important to have some sensitivity, although busses are a place where we can reach essential workers and people who are hard to reach. But the agency's position is to discourage bus travel, so we won't be doing bus ads at this time. Any more questions regarding the brochure or outreach that we just discussed?

Rafe Rabalais: We are trying to encourage engagement with the public through many forms of media. For the English and Spanish language events, people can dial in or text the number listed on the brochure. That way, even if someone doesn't own a smartphone, they can still participate.



Rosie Acknowledged Rafe's point about people texting their comments or questions, and asked Adrienne to explain Textizen.

Adrienne Heim: We have been using Textizen for about 6 years now. We designed the survey in a structured way based on the information from the brochure to garner the best responses.

Adrienne read each Textizen survey question out loud and explained that each language would have their own survey linked to their unique number.

Rosie Dilger: We will also be promoting this with digital ads, and in-language social media.

Item 5. RFQ/RFP Discussion/ RFQ Subcommittees

Rosie highlighted how productive Working Group members had been in their subcommittees and asked Rafe to provide updates on the RFQ.

Rafe Rabalais: The goal is to get the RFQ out by the end of May. We want to open up the opportunity for public feedback while keeping the community informed about where we are in this process. We might get a lot of feedback; we might get minimal feedback. Once the RFQ is released we will have a pre-bid conference, and we will receive questions and answer them, after which we'd receive written proposals for evaluation. The evaluation panel will score the highest three proposals, and with that we'd advance to the RFP stage. The three shortlisted firms would then be asked to submit a formal proposal, which is a much more intensive process. The RFQ is to separate the good from the bad, as the RFP stage is resource-intensive for firms to do the design work, financial analysis, and paperwork.

In terms of immediate next steps, it's just revising the draft RFQ, which we've been drafting internally. We have a team that's been working on this from the City Attorney's Office, the SFMTA, Public Works, and Arup. With the input that we've received drafting, doing multiple drafts of the RFQ, and then included in the most recent draft is the feedback that we've received from the RFQ subcommittee, which was extremely informative. It is essential to have a dense document looked at by a group of people with fresh eyes. Your feedback from this has made it a very helpful process.

Rosie Dilger: To add to that, the subcommittee did such a great job of helping, and of course we're going to continue to have subcommittees. The RFP will be a huge lift, and we will be looking to you to help us over more than one meeting. Rafe, did you want to speak about any of the potential subcommittees?



Rafe Rabalais: Just a question about the process that the RFQ subcommittee used. We gave people a little more than a week to respond and comment to a Google doc with more crystalized, digestible information. Did editing and replying to this document work well for the RFQ subcommittee? From my understanding everyone seemed to work well using this format.

Magda Freitas: The process worked well for me, I had time to process and respond to it. I think the format works very well.

Rafe Rabalais: We will be looking to replicate that and use a similar process for other subcommittees. Adrienne where do we stand with signups for other subcommittees?

Adrienne Heim: Most sign ups have been for housing, open space, and ground floor activation. There have been 4 or 5 popular subcommittee groups.

Rosie Dilger: We can go through and see which areas we can combine, and we can start to set up a Google doc or sheet to best collect input. If we have a lot of feedback on a certain topic, we can make sure to calendar that for the next meeting to make sure the topic is discussed.

Rafe Rabalais: We can set up another prompt for people to sign up, if some did not have a chance to join a subcommittee. I would anticipate that some of the homework could go out within the month, where we start with housing, and that would allow us to go through the various topics.

Rosie Dilger: We can try to invite people to come and speak to specific issues, like the Planning Department to talk about the CEQA process or Arup. If there are things you are eager to hear about, we are happy to set that up. Rafe mentioned homework briefly. If anyone would like to share at the next meeting, please let us know. Anything else you would like to discuss tonight?

Rafe Rabalais: Just a reminder for those who have not signed up for a subcommittee to do so. Anything that the RFQ subcommittee would like to note for the larger Working Group?

Scott Feeney: Who is on the RFQ subcommittee?

Rafe Rabalais: People who commented are Alex, Magda, JR, Thor, and Brian.

Adrienne Heim: Rafe, do you want to highlight any key suggestions that people made?

Rafe Rabalais: There were technical detail suggestions relating to energy infrastructure, battery-electric technology, and green building technology. That was very helpful in terms of the qualifications. The other thing to emphasize is that we should expect a proposal for outreach at the RFP stage, by the firms. We'd ask them to provide reference projects they have previously worked on, and what was the nature of their community work relative to those projects.

Rosie reiterated that people can still join subcommittees, and that the form would be circulated via email.



Rafe Rabalais: We can circulate the form with the feedback that we've received from the RFQ subcommittee to the rest of the Working Group. That way the suggestions are not exclusive to people in the subcommittee.

Rosie opened the meeting up to public comment. No comments were given. Rosie then thanked Working Group members and attendees for participating and concluded the meeting.