



**July 2021 Virtual Community Meeting
(Neighborhood Working Group Meeting #25)**
Tuesday, July 13, 2021, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Zoom Webinar, Webinar ID: 885 2296 3877 (Virtual)

Note – The meeting summary captures the overall tone of the discussion and is not meant to be an exact transcription.

Attendees: 54
Facilitator: Bonnie Jean von Krogh
Spanish interpreter: Enrique Aguilar
Project Managers: Licinia Iberri and Rafe Rabalais

Overview

Earlier this year, San Francisco Public Works released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Potrero Yard Modernization Project to the top three developer teams that qualified through the earlier Request For Qualifications (RFQ) to submit proposals to design, build, finance and maintain the nation's first mixed-use bus yard. Ahead of submitting their proposals, this Virtual Community Meeting provided the public with an opportunity to give the proposing developer teams direct feedback as they prepare their proposals. The project team invited the public to join the Working Group at their regular meeting to participate in the conversation to share their input and provide an added layer of transparency around the procurement and developer selection process.

Developer teams submitted questions to the public, and all responses from this meeting and the accompanying online survey have been shared with developer teams. Each question was presented individually for responses from both the Potrero Yard Neighborhood Working Group members and the public.

The meeting was publicized through a Spanish-English bilingual mailer and email updates to the project update list and neighborhood stakeholders. The event featured live, consecutive Spanish translation.

The San Francisco Planning Department prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) in connection to the Potrero Yard Modernization Project. That process is being run by the Planning Department, and the project team did not take comments on the Draft EIR at this meeting.

Question 1 – Community Outreach

How would the community like to be engaged and updated as the Project develops? Please be as specific as possible on forms of communication.

Working Group Responses

J.R. Eppler: It is important for the developer to work closely with the local neighborhood groups, like in the Northeast Mission, the general Mission, and Potrero Hill. I urge the developer to strongly consider local expertise.



Public Responses

Tim Hickey: I agree with J.R. Eppler's point about working closely with the community, perhaps by reaching out to Mission Local, other local newspapers, and all neighborhood groups within a half-mile of the project area. You can also draw from San Francisco Planning Department's comprehensive list of neighborhood groups.

Zoellen Eichen asked in the Q&A section: What is the definition of affordable?

Question 2 – Community Outreach

How can the Project team improve racial equity and inclusion in the surrounding community?

Working Group Responses

Magda Freitas: I live across the street from the site and want to see workshops with the developer team in the community so they can hear concerns directly.

Peter Belden: The developers can discuss racial equity in transit improvements since communities of color in San Francisco are more transit oriented. This is a citywide step forward in race equity in addition to immediate local equity.

J.R. Eppler: The project should maximize affordable housing and ensure that people who are currently living in the neighborhood can remain there. This will help with racial equity as well.

Question 3 – Project Benefits

Thinking about the neighborhood, what benefits to the community would a successful Project provide?

Working Group Responses

Mary Sheeter: I live around the corner from the project and am on the Board for Friends of Franklin Square. A top priority is installing a bathroom in Franklin Square as a community benefit since there is a playground for children, grass for picnics, and a soccer field. The lack of bathrooms poses a health and safety issue - especially if more housing increases park usage.

Magda Freitas: I want the project to be harmonious with the community and the cultural and artistic aspects. I want the project to minimize direct impact to the neighborhood. The team should take shadows into account, especially on the park, and improve traffic.

J.R. Eppler: Privately-owned public space would help activate Franklin Park. I would like to see retailers on the ground floor open early on, rather than wait a few years for them to establish themselves. Perhaps there can be a rent subsidy to support this.

Public Responses

Byron (public) entered into the chat: Mary's suggestion is awesome.



Question 4 - Project Benefits

Thinking about the building uses, what kind of street-level activity would a successful Project bring?

Working Group Responses

Peter Belden: This project can look at root issues along the corridor in terms of traffic and transportation infrastructure. Buses coming and going impacts immediate traffic nearby, as Magda noted. There is potential for improving bike safety along the 17th Street corridor.

Mary Sheeter: I would love to see activation on all sides of the block beyond just parking. Some of the corners are pretty dead.

Magda Freitas: The project should respect the hierarchy of the street. Although there is a bike lane on 17th Street, Hampshire Street also has bicycles because they feel safer on it than on Potrero. Regarding street level activity, I would like to see art – art galleries, community spaces, or non-profit spaces.

Mary Sheeter: I'd like to see small-scale food vendors; they do not need to be full-scale restaurants, maybe an ice cream place, tacos or boba.

Question 5 – Project Benefits

Thinking about the building design, what design elements or features would a successful Project have?

Working Group Responses

J.R. Eppler: This gets at activation on all four sides. We should do something to add visual connections or actual connections between the streets, and between people living outside and inside the project area.

Mary Sheeter: Friends of Franklin Square values putting as much affordable housing as possible. Although we want the design and development team to be mindful of the shadow on the South side of the park, this concern would be outweighed by an affordable housing possibility.

Magda Freitas: I want to see more open space and building designs that minimize impact around the neighborhood and noise and minimizes shadows cast. The design should respect the historical importance of the neighborhood, which are mostly small manufacturers and art studios, and include more public art that reflects and connects the neighborhood. Perhaps metal or concrete would work well.

J.R. Eppler entered into the chat: I'll stand by my prior comments: retail tenants as soon as possible! :-)

Mary Sheeter: What we like about Potrero Yard currently is that people can see what is going on inside. It would be nice if the new facility had some windows so people can see the action. This would help people be more aware of the bus yard functions and operations.



Question 6 – Housing

What mix of housing types would you like to see at Potrero Yard? Think about types such as senior housing, family housing, supportive housing, studios, etc.

Working Group Responses

J.R. Eppler: The City has been good at building market rate units and bad at building affordable units. I would like to see multi-bedroom family units that are affordable.

Alexander Hirji: I agree with J.R. that there is a deep need for more affordable housing.

Peter Belden: I would like to see housing for Muni employees. Specifically, operators who have shifts that start and end at the facility. The challenge is that they fall in that middle gap – they make too much to qualify for low-income housing, but not enough to afford living in the city.

They are driving far at odd hours to operate buses and need to park in the neighborhood. If they could live closer, there would be impacts on local parking and congestion.

Mary Sheeter entered into the chat: I agree with J.R. that it would be great to prioritize family housing and housing for people in the neighborhood that have been displaced. I would support a variety of income levels.

Public Responses

Tim Hickey: I like that the new units would be 50% affordable, but I would like to see a bit more and a diversity of income levels under the affordable housing. Specifically, the middle-income housing seems to have a gap. Studios can be fine, but one- and two-bedrooms are ideal for families that just need to be in the city. Three-bedrooms tend to be more expensive and out of reach for a lot of working families.

Question 7 – Housing

Should current neighbors have priority for living at Potrero Yard? How would you determine who gets that preference?

Working Group Responses

Peter Belden: I want to include people who work in the neighborhood. This aligns with the City's transportation goals since they would also use public transportation. Their commutes would be factored in and have a better impact on transit and traffic.

Public Responses

Tim Hickey: Former neighbors who have been displaced (and are therefore not current neighbors) should be included too. Is there a list of them? It feels important to include them.

Peter Belden agreed with Tim Hickey's comment.



Question 8 – Concerns

What are your biggest concerns related to the Potrero Yard Modernization Project?

Working Group Responses

J.R. Eppler: The typical capital project concerns apply. Specifically, lengthy delays and long construction timeframe.

Peter Belden: Similarly, providing affordable housing requires public funding and elected officials. It may take a lot of time, but there is an urgent need for transit maintenance and housing. I fear that it will take too long to bring critical steps forward that are so important for transit.

Mary Sheeter: I agree that housing and a new bus facility are desperately needed in the neighborhood. I fear that it will be difficult to create a feasible and good development project. If it is not carefully designed, neighbors will be unhappy with impacts to the park since there are so many proposed changes to the block. Those people may not be following the process closely, so outreach to them should continue.

Magda Freitas: The project should be in harmony with the surrounding area. The design should not compromise the architectural integrity and historic importance of the neighborhood. The scale of the building should match the scale of the neighborhood.

Alexander Hirji entered into the chat: I agree with J.R.'s concern, especially within the larger Building Progress program. These types of pauses and delays would be detrimental to the project - temporary yards and assignments, future rebuilds, delays related to affordability or execution, etc.

Question 9 – Concerns

What concerns do you have about the neighborhood that the Project can address? (e.g. Can the Project improve access to public spaces for current neighbors?)

Working Group Responses

Peter Belden: This project is more important than just the neighborhood because it has the potential to improve a transit system for the entire city. For example, many parents do not feel safe letting their kids ride transit. Upgrading a facility is a significant step forward, though it will not solve all transit issues.

Magda Freitas: The buses are loud – I can hear them in the middle of the night. I want to see a good solution to minimize that noise. Also, Muni employees eat on the sidewalk and especially because of COVID, they want to eat outside. We should have more outdoor space for them and the neighborhood to enjoy a meal.



Mary Sheeter: Land and space in the city is expensive and precious. This is an opportunity to upgrade an old facility and have better transportation infrastructure. It can also incorporate housing which is scarce for people of all income levels, while upgrading the park and neighborhood.

I also want to say thank you for all the time spent to make sure that the city can squeeze in as many benefits as possible. I hope for the project to have a smooth trajectory and to benefit the neighborhood and San Francisco.

Peter Belden: Regarding street activation, many people do not feel safe at night or taking the bus at night. How late could the retail and businesses be open and still respect the neighborhood? Street activation in the evening can make walking and taking the bus feel safer for more people at night.

Public Responses

Tim Hickey: It would be nice to have improvements to the bicycle infrastructure. For example, Mariposa and Bryant are bike unfriendly. I would like to see something better than Class 3, a protected bike lane. Other adjacent streets would improve in safety too with better bike infrastructure.

Byron entered into the chat: Sunshade devices can help with sustainability, and net-zero energy would be ideal. It would be good to have electric buses and electric homes that do not need to use natural gas.