



Potrero Yard Neighborhood Working Group Meeting 24 Minutes

Monday, June 7, 2021, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar, Webinar ID: 881 4648 9751 (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
Alexandra Harker
Claudia DeLarios Moran
J.R. Eppler
Magda Freitas
Mary Sheeter
Peter Belden

Members Not Present:

Benjamin Bidwell
Kamilah Taylor
Roberto Hernandez
Ryan Parker
Scott Feeney
Thor Kaslofsky

SFMTA Staff:

Rafe Rabalais
Licinia Iberri
Benjamin Barnett
Kerstin Magary
Jesse Schofield
David Nugroho
Bonnie Jean von Krogh

Other Attendees:

Rosie Dilger (consultant)
Abraham Vallin (consultant)
Jenny Zhou (consultant)
Ronald Mitchell
Sonia



Purpose of the Meeting

To provide updates to the Working Group on the schedule and latest steps of the procurement process.

Item 1. Welcome

Rosie Dilger welcomed everyone to the June meeting. She reminded the audience that all related questions from proposers should be directed to San Francisco Public Works, including the Request For Proposals (RFP). She then went over the meeting's virtual etiquette.

To view the RFP, please login or sign up for access to view the document at <https://bsm.sfdpw.org/contractadmin/>.

Item 2. Member Check-in

Working Group members and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) checked in by discussing the Carnaval San Francisco event. Rosie Dilger inquired about possible events the SFMTA could staff in the future. One suggestion was provided.

J.R. Eppler: I invite you all to come to 18th and Potrero Streets on the weekends. We have the streets closed so kids and adults can ride their bikes, play corn hole, listen to music, and do some dancing.

Item 3. SFMTA Announcements

Benjamin Barnett: We have begun to test our electric busses. The first bus is from New Flyer and the second will be from Proterra. The busses were loaded with sandbags to simulate full ridership over hills. These are the first two busses of nine that the SFMTA is getting from New Flyer, Proterra, and BYD USA. These nine busses will undergo a nine-month evaluation period. They are being tested on some of the most difficult routes. Production of each bus takes about 12 weeks.

Jesse Schofield: The service updates we did in May went over well; the target date for the next service restoration is August 7. The added service will mostly be in the southern and western parts of the city. With the August service changes, the 12 Folsom should be returning to its normal route. More details soon.

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: I know J.R. was excited for the 12 to return.



Item 4: Project, Schedule & Legislative Updates

Licinia Iberri: The Planning Commission presentation on May 13 was a high-level overview of what we have done so far. The procurement process, the implementation process, and more specific planning related things like design guidelines and cultural engagement were all discussed. It was overall very positive. The commissioners asked if we were planning on modernizing other sites this way, how the procurement process is going to evaluate the proposers, and what kind of ideas the city has to maximize affordable housing. They also did ask for site tours.

We presented to the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association's Urban Infrastructure Council, which is composed of infrastructure developers and large design firms. Our representative from Arup came along, they are our direct development advisor. Adrienne Heim came and joined us to talk about the prior outreach, and we had some representatives from SITELAB. That was a chance to talk about the project with other design and industry folks.

We also submitted for two public outreach awards, one is the American Planning Association California Chapter for the public outreach award and the other is the International Association of Public Participation for the project of the year. Thank you to those of you who wrote recommendation letters in support of our application. We will see if we are selected!

Jesse Schofield: We tabled at Carnaval. It felt great to be back out there, it felt great to sense that things were returning to normal. People were happy we were there. We heard the usual concerns about the project, so we were able to engage in many healthy discussions. We had a lot of sign ups and handed out a lot of goodies. It was nice to be out in the Mission with great weather and people out talking and dancing. Thank you, Roberto, for inviting us to have a table at Carnaval.

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: What Claudia shared, that it felt like Carnaval, rang true. We had so many locals this year. So many people stayed and chatted. Sometimes in the past, it was a mix of people from the neighborhood. This felt more like there were many people that wanted to learn more.

Jesse Schofield: We had someone stop by who has been on Muni for over 80 years. She was quite the super fan, and we were really excited to meet new people that are so supportive. Her stories over the years were really fascinating. Mariana Maguire also supported us on Sunday and fielded 75% of questions which happened to be in Spanish, even though she is not a part of the Potrero project.



Item 5. Procurement Process to Date

Rafe Rabalais: The last few months have been busy. We released the RFP on April 9, and since then we have been working on several trailing documents to the RFP. There has been a dialogue with each of the three proposal teams that we shortlisted from the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process. For a project of this size, we do not want the teams to sit idle because of the complexity. We had a round of all-day meetings with each of the teams to discuss technical and design discussions on the first part of the day, and then financial and commercial agreement on the second half of the day.

We provided them the opportunity to submit formal questions to track the substance of these conversations, and we have received about 228 questions so far. These are questions that are not simple yes or no questions and we must be accurate when we answer. The responses are shared between all three teams and shared with the City Attorney's office to provide clarity with the city.

We have released four addenda to the RFP which you can see on the Contract Admin website (<https://bsm.sfdpw.org/ContractAdmin/Login.aspx>). We have gone through a productive process so far.

Rosie Dilger: Rafe can you remind us how unique this is to the procurement process and why they are important?

Rafe Rabalais: As a larger agency, the SFMTA needs planning services, or architectural services. But with an RFP you must consolidate these services in a short amount of time. After this is done and a proposal with a scope is determined, it is a more straightforward process. A dialogue is a necessary practice for big public-private joint development projects like this.

Rosie Dilger: The next part of this conversation in this procurement process involves us, the SFMTA wanting to talk to you. We would love to reschedule from July 6 to July 13 and switching up the style of these meetings for that month a bit. Bonnie Jean?

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: We have been trying to shine a light on this RFP process, and in that spirit, we thought about how we can continue to open this process up to the community whilst being fair to the project. We have obtained questions from the three prospective developers anonymously for the community and hope to provide the community the opportunity to provide feedback.

Licinia: I will add that an issue we've often heard is that RFP processes tend to be closed. Our question to the Working Group is that, does this feel like a good use of your time? Would this yield substantive responses?

Magda Freitas: I really like this idea, and I could join the meeting on July 13.

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: Thanks Magda, others?



Rosie Dilger: I will jump in, Mary, how do you feel about this? Would this be meaningful?

Mary Sheeter: I am available on July 13. I joined a bit late and might have missed what this would be about?

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: I can describe it. So what we are asking is that we turn the July Working Group meeting into a meeting where questions the developer teams have thought of can be shared with the Working Group and with the community. The questions would be asked anonymously, and the teams would not be able to provide responses. They would take all feedback with them as they work on the proposals.

Mary Sheeter: To confirm, would the community members be able to ask them questions?

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: It cannot be a dialogue. You could propose questions, but they would not be able to answer.

Rafe Rabalais: There is no perfect way to structure it, because of the confidentiality of the RFP process. We really thought that this would be a great way for the developers to hear voices. We hope that this would be an opportunity for both sides to hear issues of concern.

Mary Sheeter: The three contenders would ask questions then whoever wanted to respond could respond?

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: Yes, exactly. Working Group members or members of the public.

Mary Sheeter: This sounds great.

Rosie Dilger: Peter, Claudia, Alexandra, Alexander all also feel like this is a good idea and are available. J.R. what do you think?

J.R. Eppler: I am available, I like the idea of the community being able to speak directly with the developers.

Rosie Dilger: It sounds like the 13th is on. We will loop back when we have more details. We will also do some promotion via a mailer.

Bonnie Jean von Krogh: Yes, we would like for the community to know about this opportunity.

Rosie Dilger: If there are organizations, we should share this with please let us know.

Item 6. Next Steps

Licinia Ibarri: Jolene Yee, a member of the Friends of Franklin Square group requested that we do a little bit more work on the shadow study and proposed that we speak to people at the park. This is a great idea, and it has been piloted on other projects, so we might have some idea about how to do this. We are interested in partnerships like this, and that we should go through with this when we narrow down a proposal. Thank you, Mary, for being the conduit to Jolene.



Mary Sheeter: The shadow study would be what we expect the worst case to be? So, it would not be significantly taller, or casting much more shadow when the building comes to fruition. Is that correct?

Licinia Iberri: That is correct, in the RFP the only way the project could deviate from that would be through the Alternative Technical Concepts process where the proposer's team could deviate from any technical requirements. At that point it would be incumbent on them to describe to us why a taller building is a better idea. I am 90% sure that there would be changes to the project that the community does not want. If they were to propose a change, they would have to do another shadow study, accompanied with why the city and the neighborhood should accept that.

Mary Sheeter: If that happens, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) would have to be revised?

Licinia Iberri: That is an unlikely scenario, but I don't want to tell you yes because I can't say with complete certainty that things won't change.

Mary Sheeter: I will communicate that to Jolene.

Licinia Iberri: Prior to the DEIR release, we can have conversations about the existing shadow study with the Friends of Franklin Square group. We have already discussed the report at a Working Group meeting when the San Francisco Planning Department (Planning Department) presented. Once the Draft EIR comes out, the SFMTA would need to wait until the end of the DEIR comments period to meet with the community. If the Friends of Franklin Square wanted to have a conversation prior to June 30 we could do that, or if they wanted to have a conversation with the Planning Department, they could do that. Or if they wanted to comment during the public comment period of the RFP, they could do that. I don't know at this point, what could be done in response to comments about the shadow study because the city is not redesigning or redrafting anything. I will respond to Jolene's email and CC you Mary. I would suggest we wait.

Mary Sheeter: We were thinking that if anyone had a strong feeling that it could be made available for the developers, so they know how the group feels. That is why we are thinking it might be a good time to go ahead and do it. We can talk more about it.

Rosie then asked to switch back to Item 5, briefly

Rosie Dilger: If you have any suggestions about the mailing list for the July Meeting, for our outreach for the mailer please let us know. A lot of the outreach we have done has been local to the project site.

Peter Belden entered in chat: On the mailing list topic, I imagine these groups are already on your list but as the transportation person I feel I should suggest sending the invitations to SF Bike Coalition, SF Transit Riders, Walk SF, Vision Zero Coalition, Families for Safe Streets, Urban Environmentalists, Kid Safe SF, People Protected. Happy to provide contact info if you do not already have it.



Bonnie Jean von Krogh: I hear that. It is probably easiest to spread it around our email distribution lists to stakeholders to get the word out.

Rosie Dilger: Thanks Bonnie Jean, I see we also have some important dates coming up for the Draft EIR.

Licina Iberri: Before I dive into the Draft EIR, does anyone have any questions or comments about other components of the project?

Magda Freitas: My neighbors asked about the preservation of the façade on Mariposa Street. The process is not clear to me, are we retaining the wall?

Licina Iberri: I know there has been some questions as to what the Preservation Committee's role is, back in October of last year we went to the Preservation Commission following the recommendation from the Planning Department and we did a presentation on what the preservation alternatives of the Draft EIR were going to be. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that you analyze alternatives to anything in the project that hit the threshold of significance. One of the subject areas of environmental review in these CEQA guidelines is historic resources, and the threshold of significance for historic resources is a building that is eligible for the California Register of Historic Places. There are people, specifically architectural historians, who are specifically trained to develop reports that say whether a building meets the significance threshold. We on the Potrero Yard team did these historic resources evaluations in 2017, and Christopher Plank, an architectural historian found the building to meet the significance threshold. The age and function were both key in meeting it, due to the building being over 100 years old, its function, and Michael O'Shaughnessy, the engineer who led its construction.

The project description in the Draft EIR mentions demolition, but as stated in the CEQA Guidelines it requires that we look for alternatives to that impact. We had to present an alternative that either preserves the building, or partial preservation of the building. We brought these alternatives to the Preservation Committee last October to hear if the Planning Department led us in the right direction in designing these alternatives. There was no decision made by the Historic Preservation Committee, nor action made. At the time they said that the full preservation looked great, and that the partial preservation needed some work. All alternatives require that we meet most of the project goals, for us, while being counseled by the Planning Department this means that we could still build a modern bus facility, but we could not fit as many maintenance bays or as many busses. For us, the SFMTA, both are very difficult trade offs for the city to accept. This building would not functionally meet our needs, which means, currently, the city is not intending to retain any portion of the building. There is nothing that precludes the developers to keep a portion, and we do not see any way that we could keep a portion of the building without impacting function.

Once the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is released on June 30 we can no longer have conversations about EIR-related issues. If you or other stakeholders send me any emails, I would have to forward those to the San Francisco Planning Department.



Magda Freitas: Thank you.

With Magda's question answered, Rosie then invited Claudia to comment.

Claudia DeLarios Moran: In terms of ongoing conversations, I think it would make sense for us to continue to discuss the impact of adding housing units to our neighborhood. If you are thinking about adding in experts on the issue you could bring in Causa Justa, Homeless Prenatal, and Coalition on Homelessness just to continue understanding the impact this project will have.

Rosie Dilger: Those are excellent suggestions, if you have any more, please send them via email.

Item 7. Public Comment

Rosie Dilger reminded the audience that all related questions from proposers should be directed to San Francisco Public Works, including the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Jenny Zhou asked for public comments. There were no call-in attendees. With no additional public comments, they concluded the meeting.