Green Connections are special streets and paths that connect people and wildlife to parks and open spaces. These streets provide opportunities for greening and landscaping, enhancing wildlife habitat; managing stormwater; and calming traffic.

The main objective of Green Connections project is to improve access to parks and open space by developing a network of walking and biking routes designed to meet the following goals:

**Public Health:** Increase park access and encourage active transportation
- Create a legible network connecting parks and other neighborhood destinations
- Address all users
- Improve traffic safety

**Sustainability:** Enhance Urban Ecology
- Design for stormwater retention & filtration
- Increase wildlife habitat
- Encourage public education
- Increase urban tree canopy

**Livability:** Support neighborhood stewardship and placemaking
- Create designs that foster a sense of place
- Develop a legible & navigable network
- Encourage creativity & local stewardship

**WHAT COULD A GREEN CONNECTION LOOK LIKE?**
This rendering illustrates a variety of street enhancements that could transform a typical neighborhood street into a Green Connection. The rendering highlights that various elements of a Green Connection can achieve multiple project objectives, for example greening can help calm traffic and enhance the pedestrian realm, provide habitat for specific wildlife, facilitate stormwater management, and create a distinct community identity.

**WHAT MAKES THESE STREETS SPECIAL?**
Green Connections are envisioned to include a higher level of public realm interventions than standard city traffic calming, pedestrian safety and bicycle projects.

Green Connections are intended to be routes that people will go out of their way to travel on because they are green, quiet, traffic calmed, and safe for walking and biking.

These streets offer educational opportunities for urban ecology and stormwater management.

**HOW CAN A GREEN CONNECTION PROMOTE PLACEMAKING?**
Green Connections create opportunity for community members to share and play on the streets. Additional public space can host art elements, play elements, or educational elements.

[Visit Green Connections: Connecting People and Habitat to Parks and Open Spaces](http://greenconnections.sfplanning.org)
**Green Connections: Project Overview**

**WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?**
- Green Connections Draft Network: a map of 24 routes (totaling over 115 miles) that span the entire footprint of the City
- Design Toolkit: a set of 16 design typologies for blocks and intersections that could be applied to meet local needs and goals.
- Concept Designs: Preliminary designs for routes in six Focus Neighborhoods: Bayview-Hunters Point, Chinatown, Potrero Hill, Tenderloin, Visitacion Valley, and Western Addition.
- Urban Ecology Guide, which provides a narrative for each route and recommendations for plants that promote target species.
- Implementation Guide: a description of resources, programs, and processes that could help the City, private sector and community members to implement the network.

**WHO IS INVOLVED?**
- Green Connections is a public collaboration of the following City agencies: the San Francisco Planning Department, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Department of Public Health, The San Francisco Department of the Environment, The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, The Port of San Francisco and the Mayor's Office of Housing.
- The City Agencies have partnered with three community based organizations: San Francisco Parks Alliance, Walk San Francisco, and Nature in the City.

**WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME?**
- Year 1 (Winter 2011 - Fall 2012)
  - Define and develop a citywide network of Green Connections.
- Year 1 (Winter 2011 - Fall 2012)
  - Develop a design toolkit of intersection and block treatments that can be applied to future Green Connections
- Year 2 (Winter 2012 - Winter 2013)
  - Design a Green Connection in six neighborhoods: Bayview-Hunters Point, Chinatown, Potrero Hill, Tenderloin, Visitacion Valley, and Western Addition
- Year 2 (Winter 2012 - Winter 2013)
  - Get input and feedback on the citywide network of Green Connections, design toolkit and further develop ecology guides.

**Conclusions**
- Accomplishments
  - Consideration of potential future trends affecting design
  - Urban climate adaptation
  - Open space
  - Water system
  - Landscape
  - Emergency management
  - Urban design
  - Development
  - Transportation
  - Public art

**Documents and Policies**
- Green-Connections builds on several City efforts related to street design, open space and sustainability. These plans collectively describe a set of strategies for how to improve our City streets for walking and bicycling, improve access to the City's parks and open spaces, and improve the ecological function of our streets. These documents provide a foundation and starting point for the Green-Connections project.

**Related City Documents and Policies**
- Green Connections builds on several City efforts related to street design, open space and sustainability. These plans collectively describe a set of strategies for how to improve our City streets for walking and bicycling, improve access to the City’s parks and open spaces, and improve the ecological function of our streets. These documents provide a foundation and starting point for the Green Connections project.

**Sustainability**
- Stormwater Design Guidelines
- San Francisco's current infrastructure is not prepared for the impacts of extreme weather events. The Urban Forest Plan identifies strategies to proactively manage and grow the City's urban tree population with a primary focus on street trees. The plan outlines specific design guidelines for a variety of streets types.
- Better Streets Plan
- A world-class, walkable, cycling environment that promotes vitality in our commercial districts, makes our neighborhoods more livable, and enhances the overall quality of life in our City.
- WalkFirst
- Provides a strategy to improve walking conditions on a citywide basis and in priority neighborhoods.
- Urban Forest Master Plan
- The Urban Forest Plan identifies opportunities to preserve and enhance the City’s urban forest and to develop new park and open space areas. The plan outlines specific design guidelines for a variety of streets types.

**Resources**
- San Francisco Bicycle Plan
- A plan establishing the Citywide Bicycle Network & Design Toolkit.
- Recreation and Open Space Element
- An Element of the City's General Plan that provides a Citywide vision and implementation strategy for the future of the City’s recreation and open space system.
- Blue Greenway Vision and Roadmap to Implementation
- A plan establishing the Citywide Green Connections vision and implementation strategy for the future of the City’s recreation and open space system.
The Green Connections planning process included a number of opportunities for community input, including more than twenty outreach events across the city. 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.

The project launched with a kick-off event on February 15, 2012. Participants were asked to identify their favorite parks to visit, what streets they use to get to parks, existing barriers to walking and biking, and what other destinations they would like to reach using the routes. Following the kick-off, the team participated in a number of events including walks, talks, and Sunday Streets to publicize the project and solicit additional feedback. In addition to events, the project team developed two online surveys. A second open house was held on October 3, 2012 to present the draft citywide network and design toolkit. The second year of the project focused on the six neighborhoods. Events were held from November 2012 – June 2013 to develop a conceptual design in each neighborhood.

**Year 1: Outreach Events**

**Open House 1: February 15, 2012**
Kick-off event for the Green Connections project held at the LGBT Center. Members of the public were invited to provide feedback on their route to the park and their vision for a Green Connection.

**Open House 2: October 3, 2012**
The second open house for the Green Connections project held at the LGBT Center. The public was invited to stop by and provide feedback on a draft network map and design toolkit.

**Walks**
A series of seven walks exploring what a Green Connection could look like in San Francisco, hosted by Nature and the City, San Francisco Parks Alliance, and Walk San Francisco. The walks highlighted projects initiated by both community members and the City, that are successful examples of greening and landscaping, traffic calming, wildlife, and community stewardship.

- **Bernal Heights Park Week (with Ingrid Clancy)**
  - April 10, 2012
- **Visitation Valley Greenway Walk**
  - April 13, 2012
- **Cesar Chavez Park: Bike to School Day**
  - May 10, 2012
- **Green Streets, Main Streets, Valencia and Mission**
  - May 26, 2012
- **Tracye McFate: A Turfless Dog Park**
  - July 1, 2012
- **Potez Hill to Visitacion Valley Greenway Gap to Visitacion Valley**
  - July 19, 2012

**Sunday Streets**
We asked visitors to draw their route to the park and about how to improve neighborhood routes to parks.

**Day:**
- **March 11, 2012**
- **April 8, 2012**
- **May 26, 2012**
- **June 9, 2012**
- **July 7, 2012**
- **August 4, 2012**
- **September 8, 2012**
- **October 6, 2012**
- **November 3, 2012**

**Year 1: Online Surveys**

**Survey 1:** Defining the Network - 450 participants, Feb 2012 to June 2012
- **Survey 2:** Draft Network - 450 participants, Oct 2012 to March 2013

**Year 2: Neighborhood Concept Designs**

The second year of the project focused on developing a concept design for a Green Connection in six neighborhoods: Bayview-Hunters Point, Chinatown, Potrero Hill, Tenderloin, Visitacion Valley, and the Western Addition. Events in the focus neighborhoods included workshops and meetings to define project goals and develop initial design concepts. These neighborhoods have high-population density, large populations of children and seniors, limited open spaces within their bounds and little access to parks elsewhere in the city. They also have large proportions of low-income households, and in some cases residents are less likely to own cars and are more likely to walk, bike, and ride transit.