

# GREEN CONNECTIONS

## Community Resource List

MARCH 2014



## IMPLEMENTING GREEN CONNECTIONS: NEIGHBORHOOD-LED PROJECTS

Across San Francisco, dedicated residents and neighborhood groups have collaborated with city agencies to organize street cleanup and beautification events, create community gardens, advocate for streetscape and traffic safety improvements, and initiate other projects that make our neighborhoods healthier and more livable. When community members take the initiative to improve our public spaces, everyone benefits – participants can help ensure that projects that meet local needs and preferences, neighbors get to know one another, and over time residents may develop a greater sense of pride in their neighborhood, paving the way for additional community-building ideas and projects.

This section describes the process of how community members can become active participants in shaping and developing Green Connections routes, and the accompanying **Community Resource List** provides examples of programs, grants, and other resources available to help. For additional information on permitting, funding, street design elements, and other how-to info, visit the Better Streets website at [www.sfbetterstreets.org](http://www.sfbetterstreets.org).



**Getting Started:** Most successful neighborhood-led projects start as a single, compelling idea by an individual or small group of neighbors, which eventually catches on and gains the support of the broader community. Getting these ideas off the ground can require years of organizing, fund-raising, and planning, not to mention countless hours of volunteer sweat equity. Although specific needs will vary according to the project, most will need the following:



**City Approvals:** Multiple City agencies have jurisdiction over elements of the streetscape. The types of requirements, permits, and fees that apply to your project depend on the type of improvements you wish to see. For instance, the process to develop a sidewalk garden solely in front of your own home is relatively simple, requiring a Sidewalk Landscaping Permit from SFDPPW. If a project idea involves

multiple properties or changes to other areas of the right-of-way (such as roadways, utilities, and lighting), there may be a more extensive process of approvals – these types of projects tend to be initiated by organized groups, such as neighborhood associations or Community Benefit Districts, rather than by individual residents. The Better Streets website ([www.sfbetterstreets.org](http://www.sfbetterstreets.org)) details the approvals process for a range of streetscape improvements.



**Neighborhood Support:** To the extent possible, project sponsors should aim to get approval from all stakeholders who might be impacted by the project – for instance, a neighborhood that is interested in developing a play street will want to make sure community members on affected blocks have an opportunity to provide feedback. Hosting or attending community events – presenting at neighborhood

associations, holding a block party or street cleanup event – can build goodwill, allow people to voice their ideas and concerns, and encourage longer-term stewardship of the project. Gaining community support can be critical to attract resources. For instance, some grants and programs are only available to nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and other legally incorporated groups. Your district supervisor could also be a great source of support, providing information on funding and other resources, as well as connections to other community members and organizations who may support the project.



**Resources:** Funding is likely to be the main barrier to implementing great ideas, but there are many programs and resources that could provide support. The City has programs and grants geared towards supporting community groups that beautify and strengthen their communities, while local businesses, philanthropic organizations, and individuals

could provide funding, in-kind donations, and other support. The Green Connections Community Resource List profiles just a few of these resources, listed below.















**Maintenance & Stewardship Plan:** Project sponsors should consider maintenance and other ongoing needs early on in the process so that they can be incorporated into the project's design. For instance, a landscaping project could incorporate hardy, drought-tolerant plants that require little irrigation, and seating and other street furniture could

be designed with durability and ease of cleaning in mind. Ideally, this plan will also designate which individuals or groups will assume responsibility for the project, particularly for larger, more complex projects. A community benefit district (CBD) or other local neighborhood association could adopt a project, overseeing maintenance and handling other issues that arise. Alternatively, a group of enthusiastic residents could agree to take on stewardship, creating a more informal volunteer group that hosts regular cleanup and community-building events. Whatever structure is chosen, it is important to think realistically about what the ongoing needs of the project are, and what level of resources and commitment are needed from those responsible for maintenance.

## Green Connections Community Resource List

The Community Resource List provides a snapshot of programs, grants, and other resources available to help community members in designing and implementing Green Connections. For additional information on permitting, funding, street design elements, and other how-to info, visit the Better Streets website at: [www.sfbetterstreets.org](http://www.sfbetterstreets.org)

-  Active Transportation
-  Beautification
-  Maintenance
-  Park Improvements
-  Public Art
-  Public Education
-  School Gardens
-  Stormwater Management
-  Street Trees
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Urban Greening
-  Youth

### Adopt-A-Street Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)

*Type:* 

*Description:* The Adopt-A-Street Program is a partnership between the City and its merchants and residents, and is meant to create a cleaner, more pleasant street environment. Groups or individuals agree to adopt an area and take responsibility for keeping the street, sidewalk, and storm drain clean. In return, DPW provides free street cleaning supplies, and litter and compostable leaf bag pickup.

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1229>

### Adopt-A-Tree Fund

*Agency:* San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)

*Type:*   

*Description:* The Adopt-A-Tree Fund was established to facilitate monetary donations to enhance and fund the urban forest. In addition to donations, the Adopt-A-Tree Fund includes administrative fees, permit fees, fines, and in-lieu fees (which developers pay when that remove or destroy street trees). Funds can pay for the planting and maintenance of trees under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works.

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=645>

### Community Benefits Districts / Business Improvement Districts

*Agency:* Various / San Francisco Office of Economic & Workforce Development (OEWD)

*Type:*   

*Description:* Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) strive to improve overall quality of life in targeted commercial districts and mixed-use neighborhoods through a partnership between the City and local communities. Property owners must vote to establish a CBD, a special assessment district that levies funds for community improvements, administered by a nonprofit organization created for this purpose. Many CBDs work on streetscape improvements and other projects meant to increase safety, economic development, and community cohesion.

<http://www.oewd.org/Neighborhood-Revitalization-Community-Benefit-Districts.aspx>

### Community Challenge Grant Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Office of the City Administrator

*Type:*   

*Description:* The Community Challenge Grant Program (CCG), formerly known as the Neighborhood Beautification Fund, provides matching grants to local residents, businesses, nonprofits and other community groups to make physical improvements to their neighborhoods. The CCG focuses on projects that directly engage residents and businesses in working together to create green spaces, gathering places, public art, and other neighborhood amenities. The program is an important tool for enabling communities to take the lead in conducting small-scale improvements in their own communities.

<http://sfgsa.org/index.aspx?page=4264>

## Community Opportunity Fund

*Agency:* San Francisco Recreation & Park Department (RPD)

*Type:*  

*Description:* The San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department (RPD) created the Community Opportunity Fund as part of the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks General Obligation Bond, to provide an opportunity for residents, neighborhood groups, and park advocates to initiate capital improvements in their parks. Projects must be located on land owned by RPD, and typically they leverage public funds with matching private gifts and volunteer sweat equity. Relevant past projects include pathway improvements in Panhandle Park, wayfinding signs around the McLaren Jerry Garcia Amphitheater, and a community garden along Geneva Avenue.

<http://sfrecpark.org/park-improvements/2008-clean-safe-bond/community-opportunity-fund/>

## Invest in Neighborhoods – Economic Development Grants

*Agency:* San Francisco Office of Economic & Workforce Development (OEWD)

*Type:*  

*Description:* Invest in Neighborhoods is an initiative to provide focused, customized assistance to meet the specific needs of San Francisco's neighborhood commercial corridors. It includes grant opportunities for neighborhood groups and nonprofit organizations for projects that strengthen and revitalize neighborhood commercial districts.

<http://oewd.org/IIN.aspx>

## Neighborhood Tree Planting

*Organization:* Friends of the Urban Forest

*Type:*  

*Description:* The Neighborhood Tree Planting program makes it easy and affordable for San Franciscans to get new street trees in their neighborhood, providing support with tree selection, city permits, planting, and maintenance. To be eligible, a group of property owners in a neighborhood must organize to request a tree planting event, meant to be a community gathering involving neighbors, Friends of the Urban Forest staff, and volunteers.

<http://www.fuf.net/programs-services/planting/sidewalk-gardens/the-sidewalk-garden-project/>

## Pavement to Parks (including the Parklets Program)

*Agency:* San Francisco Planning Department

*Type:*    

*Description:* Pavement to Parks (P2P) is a collaborative effort between the San Francisco Planning Department, SFPD, SFMTA, and the Mayor's Office. The program seeks to temporarily reclaim underutilized rights of way or intersections and inexpensively turn them into new public spaces. The program includes the Parklets Program, which collaborates with community members to reclaim public space in the parking lane in underutilized intersections or streets within the City.

<http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org>

## San Francisco Safe Routes to School Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

*Type:*   

*Description:* San Francisco's Safe Routes to School program promotes safe and active walking and bicycling to and from school. Participating schools implement pedestrian/bicyclist safety curriculum and plan outreach events (such as Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day, and Green Teams). Building on these efforts, several schools have worked with SFMTA's School Area Safety Program to implement safety improvements, such as bulb-outs and pedestrian signals around schools.

<http://sf saferoutestoschool.org>

## SF Arts Commission Community Grants Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Arts Commission

*Type:*  

*Description:* The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) is a city agency that champions the arts in all aspects of civic life. The Community Grants Program, part of SFAC's Community Arts & Education Program, supports nonprofit, non-arts organizations that use the arts to serve their constituents.

<http://www.sfartscommission.org>

## SF Environment Grants

*Agency:* SF Environment

*Type:* 

*Description:* SF Environment periodically issues grants and Requests for Proposals to help the city achieve environmental and other goals. For example, the Environmental Justice Grant Program has funded street trees, energy efficiency, job training, and urban agriculture programs in the Bayview Hunters Point and Potrero Hill neighborhoods.

<http://www.sfenvironment.org/about/grants>

## SFPA Action Grants

*Agency:* San Francisco Parks Alliance

*Type:*   

*Description:* The SFPA Action Grants fund volunteer engagement and community actions that will improve and encourage usage of San Francisco parks, recreation centers, and open spaces (including street parks, community gardens and other publicly owned properties). Projects include programming, artwork, events, small capital or beautification projects, and other creative ideas.

<http://sfparksalliance.org/the-alliance/philanthropy/available-funding/sfpa-action-grants>

## SFPUC Community Benefits Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)

*Type:*  

*Description:* SFPUC's Community Benefits Program guides the Commission's efforts to be a good neighbor to all whose lives or neighborhoods are directly affected by its water, wastewater, and power operations. Its core funding priorities are education, workforce development, neighborhood revitalization, environmental justice, land use, and arts programs. For example, the program has supported urban agriculture and gardening programs.

<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=230>

## SFUSD Bond Program – Green Schoolyard Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)

*Type:*  

*Description:* The SFUSD Bond Program includes funding for a Green Schoolyard Program, which allows SFUSD schools to design and construct green schoolyards that enhance sustainability, stewardship, and ecoliteracy. Many schools have incorporated native plantings, school gardens, and stormwater gardens and catchment systems, elements that could be a great addition to schools adjacent to Green Connections routes. The nonprofit organization Education Outside works closely with the SFUSD Bond Program and can provide schools with technical assistance on green schoolyard design and curriculum.

<http://sfusd-cboc.com/schoolyards.php>  
<http://www.educationoutside.org/sfusd-greening>

See also: <http://www.fuf.net/programs-services/planting/trees-for-schools/>

## Sidewalk Gardens Project

*Agency/Organization:* San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC); Friends of the Urban Forest

*Type:*   

*Description:* The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) and Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) are partnering on the Sidewalk Garden Project. The program will replace concrete sidewalks with thriving gardens that capture stormwater, reducing the burden on our sewer system while beautifying neighborhoods.

<http://www.fuf.net/programs-services/planting/sidewalk-gardens/the-sidewalk-garden-project/>

<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=641>

## Sidewalk Inspection & Repair Program

*Agency:* San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)

*Type:* 

*Description:* The Department of Public Works' Sidewalk Inspection and Repair Program makes it easier and less expensive for property owners to comply with City and State codes that require them to keep their sidewalks clean and free of defects. The program accomplishes this by conducting sidewalk inspections, providing information and technical assistance to property owners, and coordinating large-scale sidewalk improvements.

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=642>

## Sidewalk Landscaping Permits

**Agency:** San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)

**Type:**   

**Description:** Individual property owners can apply for a permit to remove portions of sidewalks directly adjacent to their lot in order to add landscaping, which can make streets more livable and help reduce stormwater runoff. Applicants must submit plans indicating how the project will comply with relevant regulations, such as ADA accessibility and preservation of utility lines. The nonprofit Plant SF provides technical assistance to interested gardeners, and has many photos of finished projects on their website.

<http://www.sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1532>

## Street Parks Program

**Agency/Organization:** San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW); San Francisco Parks Alliance

**Type:**   

**Description:** Street Parks is a partnership between DPW, the San Francisco Parks Alliance and the residents of San Francisco to develop and create community managed gardens on public rights-of-way owned by DPW, including streets, sidewalks, medians, stairways, traffic circles, and other spaces. The Street Parks program transforms vacant lots into gardens, trash and illegal dumping spots into greenery, and hillsides into parks. Costs for improvements are partially off-set by volunteer participation and support from SFPA and DPW.

<http://sfdpw.org/index.aspx?page=1237>

<http://www.sfparksalliance.org/the-alliance/programs/street-parks>

## Street SmARTS Program

**Agencies:** San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC); San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)

**Type:**  

**Description:** To reduce the considerable costs associated with graffiti and vandalism, the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) and DPW partnered to create StreetSmARTS, comprised of two programs. The StreetSmARTS mural program connects established urban artists with private property owners to create vibrant works of art that makes the property less likely to be vandalized. The Where Art Lives program places professional artists in public schools to teach youth the difference between public art and graffiti vandalism, culminating in a mural-painting project on school grounds.

<http://www.sfartscommission.org/CAE/category/street-smarts-arts-education/>

## Urban Watershed Stewardship Grants

**Agency:** San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) / San Francisco Office of the City Administrator

**Type:**  

**Description:** The Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant (WSG) Program is a partnership between the Community Challenge Grant Program and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The WSG Program was developed specifically for community-based projects that help manage stormwater using ecologically based strategies known as green infrastructure. The WSG Program funds projects that harvest rainwater, remove impervious surfaces, or implement other green infrastructure like bioswales and rain gardens. See the PUC website for a full list of awarded projects.

<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=104>



## Other Resources & Technical Assistance

### Architecture for Humanity – San Francisco Chapter

*Description:* Pro-bono design services

<http://sanfrancisco.architectureforhumanity.org>

### Better Streets Plan Website

*Description:* A guide to making street improvements in San Francisco

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org>

<http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/learn-the-process/funding-and-technical-resources>

### Build a Better Block

*Description:* Training and ideas for implementing temporary streetscape improvements

<http://betterblock.org/>

### Citidex

*Description:* Online database of San Francisco neighborhood & merchant associations

<http://citidex.sfgov.org>

### Foundation Center – San Francisco

*Description:* Information on applying for foundation grants, with an online grant database (accessible free of charge at their office)

<http://foundationcenter.org/sanfrancisco/>

### Garden for the Environment

*Description:* Gardening resource & demonstration garden featuring native plants and edibles

<http://www.gardenfortheenvironment.org>

### Intersection Repair

*Description:* Ideas for developing community-led interventions to beautify neighborhood streets and intersections

<http://cityrepair.org/how-to/placemaking/intersectionrepair/>

### IOBY (In Our Backyard)

*Description:* A crowdfunding site focused on citizen-led projects to improve their neighborhood

<http://ioby.org>

### Kickstarter

*Description:* A crowdfunding site that helps people with innovative ideas publicize and raise funds to get them off the ground

<http://www.kickstarter.com>

### Nature in the City

*Description:* Resources, support, and information on how to conserve and restore San Francisco's ecological heritage

<http://natureinthecity.org>

### Neighborhood Empowerment Network

*Description:* A collaborative effort of community groups, nonprofit organizations, the City, and other stakeholders to build community resiliency in San Francisco neighborhoods

<http://empowersf.org>

### PlantSF

*Description:* Information and support to promote permeable, native, and drought tolerant landscaping on city streets

<http://www.plantsf.org/howto.html>

### Public Architecture 1% Program

*Description:* Pro-bono design services

[http://publicarchitecture.org/The\\_1.htm](http://publicarchitecture.org/The_1.htm)

### SF Beautiful

*Description:* Develops projects to create, enhance, and maintain San Francisco's public spaces

<http://sfbeautiful.org>

### San Francisco Parks Alliance

*Description:* Information and opportunities to protect, sustain, and enrich San Francisco's parks, recreation, and green open spaces

<http://www.sfparksalliance.org>

### Walk SF

*Description:* Information and resources on how to improve pedestrian safety and make the experience of walking more enjoyable

<http://walksf.org>

## Local Plant Nurseries

### Bay Natives Nursery

10 Cargo Way, San Francisco, CA  
 Paul Furman  
[baynatives.com](http://baynatives.com)  
 (415) 287-6755 | [info@baynatives.com](mailto:info@baynatives.com)

### Literacy for Environmental Justice: Native Plants Nursery

1150 Carroll Ave., San Francisco, CA  
 Patrick Rump  
[lejyouth.org](http://lejyouth.org)  
[patrick.rump@lejyouth.org](mailto:patrick.rump@lejyouth.org)  
 (415) 282-6840 (open by appointment)

### Mission Blue Nursery

3445 Bayshore Blvd., Brisbane, CA  
 Joe Cannon & Lawrence Fernandez  
[mountainwatch.org](http://mountainwatch.org)  
[jcannon@ccsf.edu](mailto:jcannon@ccsf.edu)  
[lfernandez@mountainwatch.org](mailto:lfernandez@mountainwatch.org)  
 415-467-6631 (open by appointment)

### Nature's Acres Nursery Bay Area Native Plants

Pengrove, CA  
 Andrew Scavullo & Josiah Clark  
[naturesacresnursery@gmail.com](mailto:naturesacresnursery@gmail.com)  
[naturesacresnursery.com](http://naturesacresnursery.com)  
 415-713-1572 | 415-317-3978  
 (call for appointments or delivery)

### Oaktown Native Plant Nursery

702 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA  
 (510) 387-9744  
[www.oaktownnativenursery](http://www.oaktownnativenursery)

