



Responses to Comments on Balboa Reservoir Draft RFP: Public Realm Parameters

Principle 1: *Develop a cohesive public realm (network of streets and open spaces) which provides a range of programmed and unprogrammed spaces for functional, recreational and social activities. Public spaces should be visible and activated from adjacent streets and uses; connect gathering places, destinations and residences on the site and beyond; and provide a sense of identity unique to the neighborhood.*

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| <p>Desire for a larger portion of the Site to be open space and/or desire for a larger minimum park size.</p> | <p>The minimum amount of open space proposed for Balboa Reservoir, 4 acres, is enough to include a substantial neighborhood-scale park as well as smaller open spaces, linear parks, and walking paths. This kind of open space program would create a substantial set of open space amenities that is equivalent to that of comparable large-scale development projects and neighborhoods. The large park, measuring at least 1.5 acres, will alone be large enough to accommodate a number of recreational and open space amenities.</p> <p>In addition, due to the competitive nature of the RFP process, it is likely that the most successful RFP responses will exceed these open space minimums with creative design solutions in ways that more onerous minimum requirements cannot guarantee. To that end, the parameters encourage such creative solutions by suggesting potential innovations which exceed minimum requirements. Proposals that exceed the open space minimums, while also providing fair market land value to SFPUC and meeting the other development parameters, will perform better in the RFP evaluation process.</p> <p>Finally, it is important to note that other large projects in San Francisco have managed to provide even larger amounts of open space, while also meeting other goals like housing creation, by including fewer but taller buildings.</p> |



| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| <p>What types of open space will be included?</p> | <p>It is typical for projects like this one to include a variety of open spaces. The developer partner will work with the community to determine the types and designs of open spaces that work best for current and future residents. In addition to the proposed 1.5 acre park these open spaces could include a linear park or green path, mini-parks, or plazas, to name just a few.</p> |
| <p>Could open space be on top of a building?</p> | <p>Generally speaking, most rooftop open spaces would likely be private (i.e. for residents of that building). There remains an option to include Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces (known as POPOS) on rooftops, based on the proposals that come forth.</p> <p>However, the parameters' minimum park requirements and acreages apply to ground-level, public open space. Note that private open space is not counted toward the 4-acre public open space requirement.</p> <p>Parameters 1 (a) and (b) have been revised to specify that the 4 acres of open space must be at ground level.</p> |
| <p>Are streets and access ways included in the calculation of public open space?</p> | <p>No, the minimum four acre requirement does not include streets or access ways. Parameter 1(a) has been amended to more clearly define what would be included in the four acre minimum requirement.</p> |



| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| <p>What is the methodology for determining the amount of open space? Is there something written into the code in terms of a public open space ratio?</p> | <p>The minimum amount of open space proposed for Balboa Reservoir is enough to include a substantial neighborhood-scale park (minimum of 1.5 acres) as well as smaller open spaces, linear parks, and walking paths. This kind of open space program would create a substantial set of open space amenities that is equivalent to that of comparable large-scale development projects and neighborhoods. The methodology for verifying this involved studying comparable development projects and neighborhood-scale parks and open spaces.</p> <p>For example, the Schlage Lock project will have 1.75 acres of open space, split between a linear park and a neighborhood park, despite being several acres larger than the Balboa Reservoir site. Staff has proposed double this amount of open space as a minimum for Balboa Reservoir based on feedback from the community that open space is a top priority.</p> |
| <p>Desire for large un-interrupted open space, not bisected or segmented by streets.</p> | <p>The best respondents will be able to provide a “significant open space to serve as a park,” as required, by designing a large, uninterrupted space. That park may connect to a linear park or greenway, community garden or other proposed space to create a space much greater than the minimum required. However, the intent of the RFP is to outline minimum performance areas, goals and impact, not to design the park. Community members and stakeholders will have ample opportunity to weigh in on park design at CAC and community meetings after a developer partner has been selected. At this point, it is preferred to minimize design constraints so developer-designer teams can propose their best ideas, which community conversations can refine over a series of design workshops.</p> |



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| <p>Is the amount of open space a requirement that we can impose on the developer?</p> | <p>Yes. This is typically done once there is a developer on board and the project is seeking all of its legislative approvals. For Balboa Reservoir, the approvals package will include a “development agreement” contract that specifies a minimum amount of open space.</p> |
| <p>Are there dangers that we need to be concerned about around water transmission lines and the amount of buffer space?</p> | <p>The current SFPUC pipeline easement (the area that cannot be built upon) is larger than the pipes themselves, so this kind of protection is already built in.</p> |
| <p>Clarify what the purpose of a “buffer” would be and what it would look like. It should not cause the development to be walled off. If it does not provide useable space for residents, it should not be counted toward meeting the project’s open space requirement.</p> | <p>The parameters 1(d) and 1(e) have been revised to reflect the desire to have this space serve as a connection between the neighborhoods rather than something that separates the neighborhoods, while respecting the privacy of neighbors.</p> |
| <p>Regarding 1(a), provide more specific information regarding its definition of "open space" in terms of what sort of open space apart from a contiguous park, off-street walking routes, or linear parks.</p> | <p>Examples of open spaces that may be appropriate for this kind of project include lawns, plazas, seating and picnic areas, playgrounds and tot lots, arbors, and gardens. Surface parking is not considered an “open space” use. To more adequately define open space, Parameter 1(a) has been revised.</p> |
| <p>Desire for creativity in making multiple use of space throughout the day.</p> | <p>Parameter 1(a) has been revised to include the following text: “Spaces should accommodate multiple types of open space activities or programs within a given day, week, or time of year.”</p> |
| <p>Desire to minimize walking route’s impact to adjacent Westwood Park neighborhood. (Parameter 1(d))</p> | <p>Parameters 1(e) and 1(f) address privacy and transitions to all adjacent neighbors. 1(d) has been amended to ensure that walking routes are supportive of privacy and respect neighbors.</p> |
| <p>In Parameter 1(f), insert "and" between "topography" and "walking routes" and strike out "or transition."</p> | <p>Public comments also included a desire to have these spaces serve as connectors between existing neighborhoods and the proposed new development. The idea of a transition is consistent with transitioning the urban design (e.g. heights, building design, massing patterns) and should remain to accentuate the need to respect the design of neighboring land uses. The parameter has been revised to ensure that all adjacent uses are included.</p> |
| <p>In Parameter 1(f), reference Sunnyside as well as Westwood Park.</p> | <p>Parameter 1(f) has been revised to reflect all of the adjacent neighbors.</p> |



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| <p>Does Parameter 1(g) mean that there may be building on top of the open spaces in the future?</p> | <p>No. The project’s open spaces will remain open spaces in perpetuity. Parameter 1(g) has been revised to clarify this.</p> |
| <p>Do not impede view of residents in surrounding neighborhoods. (Parameter 1(h))</p> | <p>The intent of Parameter 1(h) is to help prioritize views of neighborhood landmarks in the future placement of public spaces. This is consistent with city policy and the Urban Design Element of the General Plan. Parameter 1(h) has been revised to clarify that it refers to views visible from open spaces and not to neighboring residents’ views.</p> |
| <p>New open spaces should be transferred to the Recreation and Parks Department to ensure that they cannot be developed in the future.</p> | <p>Open spaces can be protected from future development through a Development Agreement between the City and the developer, even if the Recreation and Parks Department does not own them. If the Balboa Reservoir project’s publicly-accessible open spaces are privately owned, the Development Agreement will require the developer to record a Notice of Special Restriction on the open spaces. This is a legal document that requires these spaces to remain publicly accessible in perpetuity and that remains attached to the land regardless of any future ownership changes. The Developer Agreement can also ensure that the new open spaces, even if they are privately owned and maintained, operate similarly to publicly owned and maintained open spaces.</p> |
| <p>Sunnyside Neighbors Association does not support prioritizing views of the CCSF Science Hall if this in any way will be used to promote or justify building height limits in excess of current zoning. (Parameter 1(h))</p> | <p>Noted. Please note that building heights are addressed in the Urban Design & Neighborhood Character Parameters, so suggestions related to building heights should focus on ideas for that set of parameters.</p> |
| <p>Include "Bishop Riordan High School" in Parameter 1(i).</p> | <p>Parameter 1(i) has been revised to state that adjacent educational institutions should also be respected.</p> |



Principle #2: Design the public realm as a useful, safe and welcoming part of daily experience for diverse neighbors of all ages, visitors to the site, and CCSF affiliates.

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| Who are "City College affiliates"? Students, faculty, and staff? | "City College affiliates" refers to any kind of person affiliated with City College, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Principle 2 has been revised to clarify this. |
| <p>Please define "alleys," "intimate spaces," and "linear spaces" provide examples of each. (Parameter 2(c))</p> <p>Undesirable activity happens in alleys and intimate spaces.</p> | <p>In the context of these parameters, "alleys" refer to small-scale streets that typically carry low numbers of vehicles accessing adjacent properties. As the Better Streets Plan states, their character can vary:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Alleys should be designed to a pedestrian-scale speed and level of detail wherever possible, to calm traffic and emphasize pedestrian use. Alleys may also include seating, landscaping, and pedestrian lighting to create usable public spaces.</i></p> <p>Per the Planning code, alleys are 30 feet or less in width. They can be used to provide more paths of travel for pedestrians and to break up large blocks while making the site more pedestrian-friendly. Examples of alleys exist throughout the Hayes Valley, South of Market and Mission neighborhoods. Successful examples include Linden Alley in Hayes Valley. Linden is a shared street that has active uses fronting it and serves as a supplemental open space for the neighborhood.</p> <p>"Intimate spaces" refer to smaller scale open spaces. The objective is to ensure that the project includes a diverse group of public spaces with different sizes, looks, and functions. This kind of diversity will allow the open spaces to serve different people with different needs. The intent is not for the smaller spaces to be secluded or otherwise conducive to undesirable activities. An example of an intimate space is the series of the large sidewalk open spaces in Duboce Triangle. These spaces are less than 1,000 square feet and provide seating, greening and pedestrian safety.</p> <p>"Linear spaces" are long and narrow open spaces, such as the waterfront parks along the</p> |



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| | <p>creek in Mission Bay. These spaces can provide walkways, paths, gardens or other types of open space activities.</p> <p>The design of the open spaces is key to their success. City staff will work with the developer to design a process that ensures full community participation in the design and programming of these spaces to ensure they meet the criteria for successful open space design.</p> |
| <p>Support for incorporating linear spaces and otherwise moderating building scale, both of which are in keeping with the character of existing neighborhood surrounding the site.</p> | <p>Noted.</p> |
| <p>Desire to keep the space well-lighted and generally visible.</p> | <p>The specific elements to be included in the open spaces will be designed in coordination with the developer partner, the City and the community.</p> |
| <p>The meaning of the phrase "...and buildings to moderate scale" is unclear. Please provide examples and additional information to help the community understand what this is.</p> | <p>This phrase is an excerpt from the following development parameter:</p> <p><i>Incorporate linear spaces, smaller common areas, courtyards and/or mid-block alleys into the site and buildings to moderate building scale, provide intimate spaces and diversify activities in the public realm.</i></p> <p>The idea is to utilize open spaces, alleys or courtyards in the design of the "site and buildings" to minimize scale and break up the scale of blocks and buildings.</p> |
| <p>Consider the adjacent neighborhood's historic character and the displacement of wildlife. (Parameter 2(e))</p> | <p>Under state law, wildlife impacts must be studied through the environmental review process, which will occur once a developer has been selected and the project has been fully designed.</p> <p>The Urban Design & Neighborhood Character parameters address the need to be sensitive to local historic character.</p> |
| <p>Desire for shared use and partnership in management of space.</p> | <p>The principles under the Public Realm section, as well as all others, emphasize the need to partner with City College and coordinate the</p> |



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| | design and programming of the open spaces with neighbors. These questions will be a significant part of the ongoing conversation after the developer partner is selected – when architects are available to talk to the community about potential design and programming solutions. |
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Principle #3: *Incorporate the different needs and hours of activity for diverse users in the area.*

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| Suggest revising Parameter 3(a) to mention safety for the various user groups. | Parameter 3(a) has been revised to reflect this feedback. |
| Desire to keep gathering places away from the private Westwood Park backyards. (Parameter 3(c)) | Parameter 3(c) has been revised to reference the privacy concerns addressed in Parameter 1(f). |

Principle #4: *Privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS) should read as part of an overall, coordinated pattern of open space. Recognize that per City policy, buildings will be required to provide a minimum 80 square feet of private open space per unit or 60 square feet of public open space per unit (above and beyond the public open space requirements above).*

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| Please define how POPOS in Principle #1 are different from POPOS in Principle #4. The requirement in Principle #4 appears to suggest that the 80 sq. ft. or 60 sq. ft. will be in addition to the open space described in Principle #1, please confirm. | Principle #4 has been revised to clarify that private open spaces should meet or exceed City regulations, which require a minimum of 80 square feet of private open space per unit or 60 square feet of open space per unit if it is publicly accessible. |
| How can you ensure that a privately-owned public open space (including POPOS) will be successful? | Once a developer has been selected, it will be required to work with the City and the community to craft a design and later a Development Agreement that ensure the open space is well designed, programmed and maintained. |
| What does “ground level” mean (Parameter 4(a)) relative to the site’s current elevation and slopes? | With regard to open space, “ground level” is used to distinguish from above-ground open spaces such as balconies or rooftop terraces. The Public Realm parameters do not prescribe the ground’s precise elevation or topography. |
| Suggest removing “mid-block alley.” (Parameter 4(b)) | Please refer to the discussion of alleys in the responses above. |



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| <p>Provide examples within San Francisco where alleys have been successfully and safely implemented in recent new or reconfigured developments.</p> | <p>Hickory St in Hayes Valley was designed as part of a development project. Stevenson Alley is an example of a successful redesign of an alley adjacent to a newly developed building in Hayes Valley. Jack Kerouac alley was recently redesigned as a shared street. Annie Alley has pilot re-designs and active programming which could lead to longer term changes.</p> |
| <p>Alleys should be well-lit and safe.</p> | <p>All streets will be required to comply with lighting standards in the Better Streets Plan. http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/streetscape-elements/street-lighting/#design_guidelines</p> |
| <p>Alleys should not be considered as part of the proposed developments' total open space.</p> | <p>Alleys will not count as open space to meet the minimum open space requirements.</p> |
| <p>Suggest removing "intimate" from the list of desirable attributes for private open spaces. (Parameter 4(c))</p> | <p>"Intimate spaces" refer to smaller scale open spaces. The objective is to ensure that the project includes a diverse group of public spaces with different sizes, looks, and functions. This kind of diversity will allow the open spaces to serve as amenities for a lot of different people with different needs. The intent is not for the smaller spaces to be secluded or otherwise conducive to undesirable activities.</p> <p>The parameters have been revised to emphasize "human scale" as a key attribute.</p> |

Principle #5: *Design a variety of open spaces within the public realm network to create a variety of sensory experiences, incorporating the surrounding natural and/or cultural environment into the siting and design.*

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| <p>Desire for walking paths to be as flat as possible to accommodate elderly and disabled walkers. Greater grade variations outside of the walking pathways would be acceptable as long as the pathways are generally visible. (Parameter 5(a))</p> | <p>Given that the site is very flat and does not substantially change in elevation from one end to the other, steeply sloped walking paths are highly unlikely. In addition, American Disabilities Act (ADA) and City standards ensure that grade changes are not impediments to using paths and public space.</p> |
| <p>Suggest adding "without impacting sun exposure to surrounding neighborhoods" to Parameter 5(b).</p> | <p>Sun exposure for surrounding neighborhoods is addressed in the Principle 2 of the Urban Design & Neighborhood Character Parameters.</p> |



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| <p>Utilize alternative energy sources. In particular, use solar power to light the paths.</p> | <p>The City agrees that this could be a desirable method for lighting the paths. However, the specifics of the energy source to light the paths will be determined once a developer has been selected and can engage engineers to perform the necessary analysis. The Sustainability Parameters address and encourage alternative energy sources.</p> |
| <p>The site will be impacted by wind from all directions. Conduct a wind study to understand this better. Make sure that the winds will not kill the landscaping. Make sure the new buildings will not increase wind in surrounding neighborhoods. Use trees to buffer wind.</p> | <p>Parameter 5(c) has been revised to strike “westerly” and to specify that landscaping should withstand winds. If it is determined that a wind study is required, it will be conducted during environmental review, and site designs will anticipate the need to minimize these impacts.</p> |
| <p>Consider green roofs and/or rooftop solar. If pursuing green roofs, developer will need to do research and make sure they are designed and maintained to really work.</p> | <p>Green roofs and alternative energy generation are addressed and encouraged in the Sustainability Parameters.</p> |
| <p>The RFP should allow for developers to be creative in what they do with the open space.</p> | <p>The current parameters allow for this kind of creativity by laying out baseline open space characteristics without prescribing specific designs, features, uses, or programming.</p> |
| <p>Walking routes should be connectors. Desire for trails that connect to Unity Plaza and toward the BART station to create more access to transit.</p> | <p>This concept is addressed, and encouraged, in the Urban Design & Neighborhood Character Parameters and the Transportation Parameters.</p> |
| <p>Distinguish between permeable vs. paved space.</p> | <p>Open space design guidelines typically distinguish between “softscape,” which consists of plant materials (grass, trees, shrubs, etc.) and paved “hardscape” (courtyards, pathways, etc.). It is likely that the project’s final design guidelines will require a combination of softscape and hardscape.</p> <p>Note that permeable space is any kind of surface through which water can absorb into the soil below. Softscape is, by definition, permeable, and certain types of hardscape are permeable as well.</p> |
| <p>Level the berm and create a meeting place for people from Westwood Park and the new development.</p> | <p>Once a developer is selected, it will work with the City and the community to determine the specific design of the entire site, including the existing berm. As noted above, design of any meeting place should be sensitive to privacy considerations of nearby neighbors.</p> |



Principle #6: *All public rights of way should be attractive, safe and useable public open spaces with generous landscaping, lighting and greenery as appropriate to the scale and use of buildings and the site.*

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| What are alleys and “intimate” spaces? Suggestion that references to alleys and intimate spaces be removed from the parameters. | Please refer to the Principle #2 responses above for the response to comments regarding alleys and intimate spaces. |
| The alleys around Octavia Blvd are a positive example of alleys. | Staff would expect any alleyways in the Balboa Reservoir project to be of similarly high quality design and materials. |
| Where will "neighborhood commercial" be placed? | In this parameter, “neighborhood commercial” refers to a street design standard found in the Better Streets Plan. If any neighborhood commercial uses are located on the site, the location of them would be determined once a developer partner has been selected. |

Principle #7: *Plan and design in coordination with a long-term, sustainable maintenance plan and community-serving programming.*

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| Who will pay to build and maintain the new open space? Suggested funding sources include developer, new residents, and a new parks bond. (Parameters 7(b) & (c)) | The developer will need to deliver the open spaces as part of its project obligations. The method of paying for ongoing maintenance will be determined once a developer partner is selected and the City can determine the costs and preferred partnership (developer- or city-provided maintenance). Suggestions for sources have been noted. |
| Suggest minimalist design to reduce maintenance costs. | The developer will be required to design and construct robust, high quality open spaces in coordination with the City and community's input. All suggestions for how to reduce maintenance costs should be included when the specific spaces are designed. |



Additional Comments

| Question/Comment | City Response |
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| Recognize that open space is not necessarily green space. | The parameters are inclusive of many types of open space. To further clarify, Principle #1 has been re-worded to acknowledge that public spaces can consist of either softscape or hardscape. |
| Recap of survey results, listing community members' top priorities for the site. | The proposed parameters incorporate the top survey results as project requirements or strong suggestions. Specific open space uses, such as dog facilities, special events programming, and community gardens, would fit within the required public open spaces and therefore can be explored in the design workshops once the developer partner has been selected. Indoor common uses, such as recreational or arts spaces, can also be addressed in the design workshops. |
| Desire for open space to be used as parking for CCSF students and/or the planned Performing Arts Center. (Parameter 7(d)) | For purposes of this project, "open space" has been more clearly defined in Parameter 1(a). Parking is not considered a type of "open space" use. Therefore, parking--including CCSF student, faculty, and staff parking--is addressed in the draft Transportation Parameters. |
| Land is serving an important function currently. San Francisco General Plan policy 1.2 said that if SF Water Department property becomes surplus, appropriate land areas should be dedicated for use as public open space. Why did this policy change? Please provide detail on PUC land being returned to public use. | <p>The Policy cited is likely from the old Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE) of the SF General Plan. The current (2014) version of the ROSE states, in Policy 2.8:</p> <p><i>...When public land becomes surplus to one public use, San Francisco's Surplus Property Ordinance, passed in May 2004, requires the city's surplus property be considered for affordable housing...</i></p> <p>The policy also prioritizes open space in certain situations. The Balboa Reservoir RFP language respects the needs for both affordable housing, as consistent with the Surplus Property Ordinance and ROSE, as well as for open space – a strong desire by community members.</p> |