



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: May 3, 2016

To: Recreation and Park Commission
Capital Committee

Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
Dawn Kamalanathan, Director of Capital and Planning Division

From: Cara Ruppert, Project Manager

Subject: Washington Square Playground – Approval of Concept Design

Agenda Wording

Discussion and possible action to approve the conceptual design to renovate the Children's Play Area at Washington Square. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

Strategic Plan

Strategy 1: Inspire Public Space: Keep today's parks safe, clean, and fun; promote our parks' historic and cultural heritage; and build the great parks of tomorrow.

Objective: 1.2.: Strengthen the quality of existing parks and facilities.

Strategy 2: Inspire Play: Promote active living, well-being and community for San Francisco's diverse and growing population.

Objective 2.2 Strengthen and promote the safety, health and well-being of San Francisco's youth and seniors.

Background Information

The Children's Play Area at Washington Square is located on the Northwest corner of Washington Square Park in the North Beach neighborhood, at the intersection of Columbus Avenue, Powell Street, and Filbert Street. Established in 1847, Washington Square Park is one of the city's oldest parks. The Square is a community gathering place with a long and fascinating history, hosting festivals, free movie nights, and other special events throughout the year.



Washington Square was designated as a San Francisco Landmark in 1999. The park is therefore considered to be a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA and all improvements are required to be reviewed by San Francisco’s Historic Preservation Commission.

As a project of the LetsPlaySF! Initiative, a part of the 2012 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond, the Washington Square Playground Improvement Project will provide a renovated children’s play area, repaved walkways, repair of benches and lighting, new signage, and upgraded site accessibility.

Community Process

The outreach process was conducted in 2016 with the goal of understanding the community’s desires and to ensure that they are reflected in the concept plan. The project team conducted its outreach through online surveys and 3 large community meetings. The process began by polling the community for the most desired program elements. This poll resulted in prioritizing tot swings, slides, a climbing structure, and a musical element. The project team then presented two alternative designs that included these elements. The community members provided comments and the project team produced a final preferred concept for review and approval by the community stakeholders. The concept plan obtained wide approval and consensus from the community stakeholders.

Proposed Playground Renovation Program

The scope of work for the project includes the renovation of the children’s play area and associated amenities serving it. Please refer to the attached concept design report for plans and views of the proposed project. The concept plan is fully accessible and meets all ADA guidelines for accessible design. The proposed improvements include:

- New safety surfacing throughout play area with undulating topography.
- New play equipment featuring: a slide, tot swings, nest swing, musical chimes, a balancer walk called a “cushion perch,” monkey bars, and a tunnel built into the undulating topography.
- Removal of stairway to provide a safer naturally contained space
- New perimeter wall and playful art elements
- Improved planting and irrigation
- Improved paving and drainage systems

Sources & Uses of Funding

Sources:	\$1,700,000	2012 Neighborhood Parks Bond
Uses:	\$990,000	Hard Costs
	\$710,000	Soft Costs
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	\$1,700,000	Total

Project Schedule

Planning Phase: March 2016 – April 2017
Design Phase: April 2017 – November 2017
Bid Phase: November 2017 – March 2018
Construction Phase: April 2018 – September 2018

Environmental Review

The project has been reviewed by the Planning Department and was issued a Categorical Exemption under Class 1 – Existing Facilities. As part of the Environmental Review, the project was presented to the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, where it received unanimous approval and support.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the conceptual design to renovate the Children's Play Area at Washington Square. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

Supported By

Community Meeting Attendees
Friends of Washington Square
San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
San Francisco Parks Alliance

Opposed By

None known

Attachments

Attachment A. Concept Design Package