



London Breed, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: November 21, 2019

To: Recreation and Parks Commission

Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
Toks Ajike, Director of Capital & Planning Division

From: Lauren Dietrich Chavez, Project Manager

Subject: Buchanan Street Mall – Conceptual Design for the Turk-Golden Gate block

Agenda Item Wording

Discussion and possible action to approve a conceptual design for Park renovation between Turk Street and Golden Gate Avenue, within the Buchanan Street Mall. 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 & Facilities

Objective: 1.4: Preserve and celebrate historic and cultural resources

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

Objective 2.3: Work with partners and neighborhood groups to activate parks through organized events, activities, and unstructured play

Strategy 3—Inspire Investment: Through community engagement, advocacy, and partnerships, cultivate more financial resources to keep San Francisco’s parks and programs accessible for all

Objective 3.3: Cultivate increased philanthropic support



Background Information

The Buchanan Street Mall is in the Western Addition, within District 5. The park spans the full width of Buchanan, between Grove and Eddy, with three full blocks in the middle and half-blocks on the north and south ends. The Park space is segmented by the cross streets of McAllister, Golden Gate, and Turk, and is bordered by public housing developments and several community institutions: Rosa Parks Senior Center, Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, and the African American Arts and Culture Complex. The Buchanan Street Mall was built by the Redevelopment Agency, opened to the public in 1975, and transferred to RPD management in 1976. The park underwent major renovations in the late 80s/ early 90s and received repairs in the early 2000s.

The children's play area within the Turk-Golden Gate block of Buchanan Street Mall is one of 13 playgrounds that will be renovated across the City as part of the Let'sPlaySF! Initiative, which is a partnership between San Francisco's Recreation and Parks Department and the San Francisco Parks Alliance to renovate the City's worst playgrounds. These 13 playgrounds serve 20,000 children and were selected for renovation by a Playgrounds Task Force because they contain unhealthy wood or are in low-to moderate-income neighborhoods dense with children. The renovation of Buchanan Street Mall's Playground is a Tier 2 Let'sPlaySF! project, and is driven by the transformative power of play:

Wellness: playgrounds encourage kids to get outside, away from screens. Outdoor play burns calories and helps develop muscle strength, and coordination and can foster a lifelong love of outdoor activities.

Creativity: Playgrounds nurture growing brains by promoting imaginative and cooperative play that can foster advanced cognitive skills in young children.

Community: Playgrounds bring people together. They allow people to connect across social, economic and age group divides.

A robust community process for reimagining the five blocks of park space began in 2014. Temporary activations were installed in 2015 in partnership with Citizen Film, Green Streets, The Trust for Public Land (TPL), and the Exploratorium's Studio for Public Spaces, and included trough gardens, audio domes, and gateways. The Trust for Public Land published a Vision Plan for Buchanan Street Mall in 2017. Conceptual design for the full five blocks began in earnest in November 2018, with a high caliber landscape design partnership through the Office of Cheryl Barton and Studio-MLA. In August 2019, in partnership with TPL, we applied for \$5,105,000 in Prop 68 Statewide Parks grant funding for design and construction within the Turk-Golden Gate block.

Proposed Design

The conceptual design process looked at the Buchanan Mall as a whole, as requested by the community. The park property holds both good memories—from early park days with regular BBQs, kids play, and community activation—and traumatic ones—from turf wars and gun

violence—and the space has been thought as unsafe and notably underutilized in recent decades. The community-led community engagement process over the last five years has been a healing process, and improvements to the Park are envisioned as a much larger process of repair to the connective tissue of the neighborhood. Through storytelling, events, and community participation in designing and maintaining the temporary activation elements, the neighbors are moving across the mall more, interacting more, and feeling hopeful for the benefits of imminent capital investment.

The 2017 Vision Plan identified the following community goals for park renovations:

- Connecting all blocks;
- Social exchange, engagement, and interaction;
- Gardens; and
- Play and recreation.

In support of these goals, the conceptual design for the Turk-Golden Gate Block includes the following elements:

- The first segment of a memory walk that is intended to extend throughout Buchanan Mall, incorporating art and interpretive elements to tell the story of the neighborhood;
- New path lighting, to encourage walking through the space;
- A micro-enterprise kiosk adjacent to a picnic and gathering area;
- A flexible plaza for gathering and small classes or events;
- New planted areas with healing and culinary herbs; and
- A new school age children's play area adjacent to an adult fitness court to encourage inter-generational play.

There are several factors that make the Turk-Golden Gate block the most project-ready area within Buchanan Street Mall, including: the Let's Play SF! funding commitment; knowing that no other capital projects are planned in the near future at the Rosa Parks Senior Center nor adjacent housing developments; and the community desire to have the first wave of capital investment occur in the middle of the mall.

Community Engagement

The community in the Western Addition has been heavily involved throughout the Buchanan Mall visioning and planning process and there is support for an accelerated timeline for the Turk-Golden Gate block. Citizen Film and Green Streets are core community partners who launched The Buchanan Change Team and have driven much of the outreach and re-visioning efforts in recent years. TPL has also played a particularly active role in community engagement, bringing their expertise at creating parks and protecting land for people, and providing essential project management. Below is a summary of engagement highlights from the 2015-17 visioning process.

- Over 20 community events were hosted on the Buchanan Street Mall, utilizing the temporary activation elements.
- Three community design workshops were held where community members:
 - Talked about childhood memories and built models of their favorite places;

- Selected photos, wrote what values the photos represented, and placed the photos on a map of the Mall; and
- Provided feedback on a functional diagram that TPL and the Exploratorium had created based on community input from the first two workshops.
- Two reflection sessions were held in coordination with the community design workshops, where community members talked about violence prevention and safety concerns, the importance of community presence on the mall in order to keep kids safe, and how the temporary activation installations have catalyzed positive change.
- Over 430 individuals were surveyed about the Community Vision Plan.
- Resources were dedicated to supporting local youth in sharing their vision, hosting events, and interviewing local elders. Some of those youth leaders are still actively involved today.
- Twelve documentary videos were created, highlighting the stories of the past and hope for the future, organizations that are providing community benefit and inspiration, and youth perspectives on Buchanan Street Mall.

Extensive outreach was done during the planning phase over the past year and community input on desired park uses and improvements drove development of the conceptual design. In brief, Community Engagement with the conceptual design process, starting in late 2018, included:

- 71 community members participated in two design workshops/ community meetings;
- 55 community members participated in two design presentations;
- RPD, Green Streets, Citizen Film, O|CB, and/or TPL tabled at six community events; and
- Over 1150 surveys were conducted.

Community engagement efforts for conceptual design of the full Buchanan Street Mall recently ramped up again, and RPD will participate in several focus groups and community events and host another community meeting before the end of winter 2020.

Project Funding

Confirmed Funding

General Fund	\$1,025,000
Let's Play SF!	\$ 835,000
Development Impact Fees	\$ 415,000
Trust for Public Land (in-kind project management, community outreach, planning, and design services through conceptual design)	\$ 232,000

Potential Funding

Prop 68 Statewide Parks Grant	\$5,105,000
2020 Parks Bond	TBD

Through the Let's Play SF! Initiative, a partnership between with the Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Parks Alliance, the children's play area within the Turk-Golden Gate block of Buchanan Street Mall was identified as a Tier Two project for renovation.

If additional funding is not received, the conceptual design will need to be scaled back to a single playground renovation.

Project Schedule

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>
Visioning	Winter 2014	Fall 2018
Planning	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
Design	Winter 2020	Fall 2020
Bid & Award	Fall 2020	Winter 2021
Construction	Winter 2021	Spring 2022

Execution of design and construction on the Turk-Golden Gate block per the conceptual design and according to this schedule is contingent upon the receipt of \$5,105,000 from the Prop 68 Statewide Parks grant.

Environmental Review

The project has been reviewed by the Planning Department and a Categorical Exemption (Case Number 2019-020014ENV) under Class 1 – Existing Facilities and Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land will be received on 11/15/2019.

Project Status

In order to qualify for the \$5,105,000 in Prop 68 Statewide Parks grant funding, the CEQA process needs to be complete by the end of 2019. The community has been extensively involved in reimagining the Buchanan Street Mall since 2014 and are in favor of expediting the Turk-Golden Gate block in order to remain eligible for funding. RPD is actively working with and TPL and our core community partners to engage the wider community and complete conceptual design for the full five blocks of the Buchanan Street Mall by March 2020.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the conceptual design for park renovation between Turk Street and Golden Gate Avenue, within the Buchanan Street Mall. Approval of this proposed action by the Commission is the Approval Action as defined by S.F. Administrative Code Chapter 31.

Supported By

RPD Staff
Citizen Film
Green Streets
The Trust for Public Land

Opposed By

None known

Attachments

Attachment A Conceptual Design Package, November 11, 2019

Attachment B CEQA Categorical Exemption Determination, November 15, 2019

Attachment C Letters of Support