



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING + URBAN RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION

654 Mission Street
San Francisco, California
94105

415.781.8726 t
415.781.7291 f

www.spur.org

Co-Chairs

Linda Jo Fitz
Lee Blitch

December 13, 2011

Executive Director
Gabriel Metcalf

Vice Chairs

Emilio Cruz
David Friedman
Mary McCue
Wade Rose
Bill Rosetti
V. Fei Tsen

Treasurer

Bob Gamble

Secretary

Tomiquia Moss

Immediate Past Chair

Andy Barnes

Advisory Council

Co-Chairs

Michael Alexander
Paul Sedway

Board Members

Carl Anthony
Alexa Arena
Fred Blackwell
Chris Block
Larry Burnett
Michaela Cassidy
Michael Cohen
Madeline Chun
Charmaine Curtis
Gia Daniller-Katz
Oscar De La Torre
Kelly Dearman
Shelley Doran
Oz Erickson
Manny Flores
Norman Fong
Gillian Gillett
Chris Gruwell
Anne Halsted
Dave Hartley
Mary Huss
Chris Iglesias
Laurie Johnson
Ken Kirkey
Florence Kong
Dick Lonergan
Ellen Lou
Janis MacKenzie
John Madden
Gordon Mar
Jacinta McCann
Chris Meany
Ezra Mersey
Terry Micheau
Jeanne Myerson
Mary Murphy
Brad Paul
Chris Poland
Teresa Rea
Byron Rhett
Victor Seeto
Elizabeth Seifel
Chi-Hsin Shao
Ontario Smith
Bill Stotler
Stuart Sunshine
Michael Teitz
James Tracy
Will Travis
Steve Vettel
Debra Walker
Cynthia Wilusz-Lovell
Cindy Wu

Anson Moran, President
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
1155 Market Street, 11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: PUC Urban Agriculture Pilot Projects

Dear President Moran and Members of the Public Utilities Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Public Utilities Commission's urban agriculture pilot projects approved at the October 11th meeting. SPUR appreciates the time staff has spent discussing the outstanding questions regarding implementation and the process going forward. We encourage the PUC to remain open to a broad variety of urban agriculture uses and recommend that the RFP process begin as soon as possible.

SPUR believes that urban agriculture provides multiple benefits to San Franciscans. City gardening and farming connects residents with the broader food system; offers vibrant greenspaces and recreation; educates consumers about fresh, healthy food and the effort it takes to produce it; and serves as a potential new source of modest economic development.

SPUR is currently drafting a report, due for publication in the spring of 2012, with recommendations on the use of public land for urban agriculture. Based on our research and the deliberations of the SPUR Food Systems and Urban Agriculture Policy Board, we wish to offer a couple of comments regarding the proposed pilot projects at College Hill Reservoir and the Southeast Treatment Plant.

The PUC should consider a wide variety of urban agriculture types for its sites

There are many types of urban agriculture suitable for the two proposed sites. College Hill Reservoir and portions of the perimeter of the Southeast Treatment plant are currently surrounded by fencing and inaccessible to the public. These types of greenspaces have a broad range of potential because placing an urban agriculture project on that site will not impede on an existing public amenity, such as a picnic area or playing field. Greenspaces that are not currently accessible lend themselves to intensive production, including commercial urban agriculture, as well as more traditional forms of community gardens. A full list of types of urban agriculture the PUC should consider for these sites is attached.

The PUC should use these projects to create model lease language and oversight mechanisms that can be replicated for more PUC sites inside and outside City limits.

We commend the Commission for authorizing these projects and supporting the aims of the Mayor's Executive Directive on Healthy and Sustainable Food from 2009. As a large

landowner within the City and the agency with the most land outside San Francisco, the PUC has the potential to greatly expand its support for urban agriculture. In addition to the two proposed pilot sites, the PUC identified five additional sites with potential for urban agriculture in 2010 as part of a citywide land audit. The PUC already has a track record of providing land and support to urban agriculture projects including Garden for the Environment (a demonstration garden), White Crane Springs Community Garden (a plot-based community garden) and the Visitation Valley Greenway (a hybrid garden and greenspace). Outside the city, the Sunol AgPark is a model for leasing PUC land to farmers that could be replicated in other areas. We hope that these two pilot projects in the city and the Sunol AgPark help establish a process that can be used to activate even more projects on PUC land in the future.

With these projects, the Public Utilities Commission has an opportunity to set an example that other city agencies can follow. We appreciate your consideration of SPUR's comments and encourage you to continue moving the process forward without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Z.', written in a cursive style.

Eli Zigas
Food Systems and Urban Agriculture
Program Manager

CC: Michael Housh, Commission Secretary
Juliet Ellis, Assistant General Manager for External Affairs
Molly Petrick, Program Development and Policy Manager

Forms of Urban Agriculture and Examples in San Francisco

Form of Urban Agriculture	Description	Examples in San Francisco on public and private land
Community Garden – Plot-Based	A plot of land that has been subdivided into plots, but is managed by a group of people, usually volunteers. Individuals are given access to plots to cultivate as they see fit. Usually produce and flowers are grown for personal consumption. Commercial activity is rare.	Most of the community gardens in San Francisco
Community Garden – Communally Managed	A plot of land that is managed and cultivated in one piece by a group of people, usually volunteers. Commercial activity is rarely the focus.	Alemany Farm, Hayes Valley Farm, 18 th & Rhode Island Garden, the Free Farm
Demonstration Garden/Farm	Similar to a community garden, but with a strong emphasis on education and demonstration rather than production.	Garden for the Environment, Hayes Valley Farm, and school gardens
Market Garden / Farm	A plot of land cultivated by a small number of individuals with an emphasis on maximizing production	Little City Gardens
Orchard	A site planted with multiple trees cultivated to maximize production of fruit and/or nuts. Most often requires in-ground planting and long land-tenure.	Portion of Alemany Farm and a Department of the Environment project underway
Animal Husbandry	The raising of animals for food. The scale in residential areas is often small, but in larger sites could involve large numbers of animals. Beehives can be located in many dense areas including atop buildings. Poultry, rabbits and goats require more space and have more health and nuisance considerations.	Beehives are located at numerous community garden sites and at Laguna Honda Reservoir. Chicken coops are in many backyards and in a small number of community gardens.
Aquaponics	A system that combines the raising of fish (aquaculture) with the hydroponic cultivation of plants – most often operated within a greenhouse or other climate-controlled building.	None yet in SF. Prominent examples in Milwaukee, WI.
Large Greenhouses	Large structures either located on the ground or on roofs that provide a controlled environment in which to grow plants in containers.	Southeast Community Facility Greenhouses
Rooftop Garden/Farm	The growing of food atop a building. In San Francisco, most frequently involves container gardening. Can also involve covering the roof with soil in which edible plants are then grown.	Graze the Roof at Glide Memorial Church, SF Chronicle Rooftop Garden
Resource Centers	A site where urban gardeners and farmers can pick up mulch, compost, seedlings, tools, and other resources. Does not require land suitable for cultivation and could easily be established on paved sites. Requires large vehicle access for pick-up and drop-off.	No dedicated resource centers currently exist
Food retail	A produce stand, farm stand or farmers' market where food is distributed to the public. Certain health regulations apply depending on the form of the retail operation.	Free Farm Stand, Little City Gardens