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February 10, 2012

San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

RE: The Recreational Open Space Element (ROSE)

Dear Mr. Campos,

Thank you for considering SPUR's comments on the most recent draft of the Recreational Open Space Element (ROSE) issued in (June 2011). SPUR has long advocated for lively, active and well-maintained open spaces as a vital ingredient of a great city. We have participated in the ROSE for the past several years. As you know, Gabriel Metcalf, SPUR's Executive Director, worked with Isabel Wade to help to form the ROSE taskforce in 2007. SPUR also hosted focus groups and a community meeting in January 2009 on the ROSE with the Neighborhood Parks Council and the Mayor's Director of City Greening to ensure an inclusive community process.

Overall, SPUR believes that the Planning Department's most recent draft of the ROSE (June 2011) is consistent with the City's commitment to maintain and expand recreation and open space in San Francisco and would like to see this draft in its current form move forward to adoption. The June 2011 Draft is appropriately consistent with many of the Department's existing public realm efforts, including the Better Street Plan. The Draft also appropriately contains a broad definition of open space that is inclusive of non-traditional forms of open space such as parklets, streets and alleyways. We would like for the ROSE to continue to include all of these important aspects of the public realm.

SPUR strongly supports the following policies and recommends that they continue to be included in the ROSE as the draft moves forward to adoption.

Policy 1.1 Encourage dynamic activation and flexible programming of open space

The final draft of the ROSE needs to incorporate policies that clearly state that recreation and open space be integrated and have multifunctional uses. Activating public open space is a critical way to enhance the usability of our existing open space. While preservation of historic characteristics of open space is important, SPUR believes that the priority must be on multipurpose and varied types of activity.

Policy 1.2 Prioritize renovation in highly- utilized open spaces and in high needs neighborhoods

SPUR supports this policy direction as it is consistent with the City's definition of *high needs areas*; *high population densities, high concentrations of seniors and youth and lower incomes are areas in which resources should be prioritized for renovation*. This recommendation ensures that San Francisco's most vulnerable populations have better access to recreation and open space.

Policy 1.7 *Preserve existing open space by restricting its conversation to other uses and limiting encroachment from other uses.* We believe that there is a way to protect open space and recreation while allowing for some flexibility in certain narrow situations. The four policies proposed under this policy section provides safeguards for the preservation of protected open space land while also providing some flexibility for a very narrow set of development activities that contribute to the public good – in particular, new recreation and cultural buildings. We agree that the criteria highlighted in this area should be explicitly stated in the General Plan.

Policy 3.1 *Creatively develop existing publicly owned rights of way and streets into open space.* This policy is consistent with SPUR's work on the need to activate non- traditional spaces for open space. Temporary and permanent street closures are a great way to enhance the open space network. We encourage the City to adopt this policy direction as it serves as one of the most cost effective ways to expand recreation and open space to the most San Franciscans.

Policy 6.1 *Develop innovative long-term funding mechanisms.* As we all know, securing permanent funding sources for recreation and open space is an on going challenge. SPUR agrees that the recommendations in this draft of the ROSE are a good start. We have additional recommendations that can be found in SPUR's paper Seeking Green adopted in (September 2011).

A wide variety of community stakeholders have reviewed the ROSE extensively over the course of three years and the Department's most recent draft of the ROSE reflects their input. We encourage the Department to retain the recommendations in your most recent draft. SPUR believes that the June 2011 draft of the ROSE s represents sound planning and is consistent with the City's efforts to create and maintain excellent parks while increasing the usability of the public realm for walking, bicycling and other recreational activities. Open spaces should not just be lovely to observe– they should also address recreational, social and environmental needs.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 644-4280.

Sincerely,

Tomiquia Moss
Community Planning Policy Director