

**Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol & Grounds Restoration  
Planning Meeting**

**Sunol Yard Conference Room  
February 25, 2013**

**Meeting Notes**

**Attendees:**

Robb Marshall	Paul De Freitas, SF Dept. of Public Works
Irv Tiessen	Stanley So, SF Dept. of Public Works
Diane Tiessen	Carla Schultheis, Natural Resources and Land Management
Jim O'Laughlin	Tim Ramirez, Natural Resources and Land Management
Pete Alexander, EBRPD	Neil Fujita, Natural Resources and Land Management
Rich Cimino, Alameda Creek Alliance	Emily Powell, Communications & Public Outreach
Aspen Kvicala, SAGE	Betsy L. Rhodes, Communications and Public Outreach
Barry Kaminsky, Sunol CAC	
Solveig Shearer	
Bryan Dessaure, SFPUC, Project Manager	

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

The purpose of the meeting was to present revised designs for the Sunol Yard layout and building in response to comments from the San Francisco Civic Design Review Committee.

**II. Summary of activities to date: Tim Ramirez**

**a. San Francisco Civic Design Review**

After our last meeting with this group, the previous Sunol Yard layout was presented to the SF Arts Commission Civic Design Review Board. We have been working to address their comments ever since. We have tried to take into account the same issues that you brought to our attention back then. Paul De Freitas, our new architect, will present this to you later during this meeting.

**b. Funding** for the Sunol Yard and Watershed Center was approved by the S.F. Public Utilities Commission budget hearing as part of our 10-year capital budget. The funding covers a large portion of the anticipated costs for the Watershed Center and the Sunol Yard.

**c. Watershed Center – Interpretive Elements and Design**

Due to limitations in Paul Okamoto's contract, we can no longer utilize him for architectural design services for this project. We will release an RFP for architects for the Watershed Center this spring. In the meantime, Paul De Freitas and his team will work on getting us through Phase I of Civic Design Review for the Watershed Center.

The Center buildings will also receive a second treatment, and Jenny Rigby from Acorn is still on the project. She is currently working on the interpretive elements for the Watershed Center, and we are hoping to present them at the next planning meeting. The picnic area will still be re-furbished and re-opened. We will account for an eventual trail connection across Alameda Creek to Vargas Plateau with East Bay Regional Park District. The Watershed Discovery Trail will remain as well.

Construction for this project is currently anticipated to start in late 2014 and is expected to be approximately two years.

### **III. Presentation of Revised Sunol Yard Drawings: Paul De Freitas**

Paul presented the revised Sunol Yard Drawings and answered questions and took comments from the group.

#### Questions and Discussion:

##### Trees and Plants:

- Clarification that currently the groupings of three trees along the road are preliminarily poplars that have been planted 100 feet apart.
- What is the plan for maintenance of those trees? The trees are now just a concept, so we have not gotten into the details, yet.
- The SFPUC should reach out to the California Rare Fruit Growers Association to place older variety fruit trees in the orchard along the side of the road. They could assist with maintenance of the trees as well, since they are experienced in caring for fruit trees. Plus it would be an educational opportunity at the site.
- What kind of groundcover are you planning? Perennial? Not specified at this time.
- The tall trees will also screen the four industrial buildings on the border with the Ag Park.

##### Walls

- The low wall – will it be made using wire baskets with rocks inside? Yes, that is the current plan. It not only ties into the filter gallery and literally pulls it up out of the ground; it is also an economical way to make a low wall. It also separates the orchard from the landscaping on Temple Road.
- What are the walls made of that make up the sides of the buildings? Cast in place concrete that is stained to match the colors of the surrounding rock, and then sand blasted to show some of the aggregate. The idea is for it to be an attractive wall.

##### Stormwater Management

- How will stormwater be addressed? Bioswales on the site will capture, slow, and treat the run off before it is returned to the Creek or channeled to the linear landscape corridors within the Yard.
- Is that paving permeable? There are plans for permeable paving in certain areas. Because the plan is to channel surface runoff into the landscape corridors, there is less need for permeable paving, however.

### Wastewater Management

- What are the current plans for wastewater? Last I heard the plan was catching it in tank and trucking it off. Your building at 525 Golden Gate has an innovative Living Machine that reuses your wastewater, reduces your water use, and could be a model project for the entire county. Alameda County areas like this one are on septic, and it is a problem. If you are still planning on trucking the wastewater away, it is a terrible example to make. The team is considering living machine technologies here. It could be incorporated into the design now. It is not off the table and is still being considered, however cost and maintenance must also be taken into account.

### Entry Gate:

- What are your plans for the entry gate? We plan to refurbish the gates and return them to their historic look of 'gargoyle fish'.
- Caltrans plans for the intersection at Four Corners might affect this, however, they are four years away from having a final plan. The SFPUC will continue to work with Caltrans. We will fix the wall, and if we have to move it later, we will work with it. If we can accommodate now, we will do that.

### Other Questions:

- Will you open this up on weekends? When the center is built and we have the staff, yes, that is the plan.
- Will you paint those industrial buildings earth tones to further hide them? Yes.
- How many people would work at the yard? Approximately 70.

### General Feedback:

- This design is a vast improvement on the previous design.
- The design has balance to it.
- It is well thought out and lovely.
- We are pleased to see a new approach to the Sunol Yard design that is more functional and fits better with the surrounding area.

## **IV. Next Steps**

- The drawings as shown will be shown to SF Civic Design Review on March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- SFPUC will bring the revised drawings of the Watershed Center to the group in the spring or summer.
- At the same time we should be able to bring the Interpretive Master Plan from Jenny as well.

*Visit [sfwater.org/sunolvalley](http://sfwater.org/sunolvalley) and click on the Watershed Center link to view and download these concepts*