

# Update on Sidewalk Pocket Park Garden Model Sites to be Presented by the Urban Forest Council for San Francisco

SPONSOR/SPEAKER: Urban Forestry Council Member Jocelyn Cohen

## The Sidewalk Pocket Park Garden Model Puts Trees at the Center of the Ecology

Short Review: January 2008 Jocelyn Cohen presented request to Planning and Funding Committee for UFC to achieve a small tangible, practical task: the creation of three pilot permeable landscaping projects involving landmark and/or significant trees. The committee recommended support for implementation so that the UFC could demonstrate a model for Sidewalk Pocket Park Gardens in conjunction with existing, mature trees. At the February full Council meeting Resolution 002-08-UFC was passed with full Council support of the motion.

I am soliciting specific involvement and support from UFC members in the following areas:

### **Request for prime sites:**

Seeking "nominations" from Council members and community, criteria includes the following:

- Existing mature tree(s), either of landmark or "significant tree" status
- Location that receives good visibility either from automobile, public transportation, bicycle or pedestrian use
- Neighbors, businesses, community interest in maintaining the site
- Think remnant trees like the Valley Oak we lost in the Mission, or the Elderberry on Bernal Hill
- or Champion trees, the biggest of its kind
- and heritage trees that have meaning to the community

Locations suggested at previous UFC meeting:

Bernal Heights Library with the two landmarked trees, Cortland Merchants Association maintenance possibility

Landmark trees on Bush and Octavia

Alamo Square

### **Request for cosponsoring Organizations and Agencies**

Not the names, but rather are you affiliated or friends with or colleagues with an individual or group that you are willing to talk to for collaborations and associations including libraries, schools, and religious organizations. Names suggested from member at prior meeting included Friends of the Urban Forest, Living Library, Association of Professional landscape Designers, Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods.

### **Request from members and or their agency, business or affiliation for specific contribution and in-kind donations, including but not limited to:**

Removal of concrete

Re-use of concrete on site as borders or pathways

Plants

Tools for the day of installation

Volunteers for the day of installation

Arborists

**Requested sketches and drawings of specific locations in order to visualize how the projects would look like initially and over time:** see attached

### *Current tasks for pilot sites*

#### **Evaluate time line with specific target dates and goals.**

1. August 2008 meeting, review site recommendations
2. August 2008 meeting, list of stake-holders and their commitments
3. September, 2008 meeting, commit to three sites with both Landmark or “significant trees” and willing participants.
4. Create site analysis of proposed SPPGs establishing a base map, site conditions and existing plant inventory.
5. Simple Design & Plant Plan for each site, assistance from APLD
6. Contractor notes for demolition
7. Secure donations of plants from local nurseries.
8. Collaboration with concrete contractors or DPW to remove concrete, design to reuse as much of concrete on site as possible.
9. Collaborate with local arborist/tree workers to prune large trees if needed.
10. Collaborate with Merritt College Pruning Club to prune smaller trees under 20’.
11. Have media lined up to cover the transformation, Ron Sullivan and Joe Eaten from “The Chronicle.”
12. Compile notes and documentation for “Guidelines” flyer/brochure available online for creating a SPPG and ongoing care of tree(s) and plants.

### *Urban Forest Council – Example of Specifications for SPPG installation*

#### **Line itemize with unit cost for each task**

1. Remove concrete and take to recycle
  - a. Fair trade, 3x3’ square, \$50. Sq ft.
  - b. Alternative: Remove concrete and re-use to build small dry stack wall/border around garden and for foot paths between street and sidewalk
2. Cost of permit: \$160. To \$215.
3. Amend soil, preparation and grading as necessary in new planting areas
  - a. Hand grade per Sq ft., \$3.
  - b. Note: Do not rototill soil as we want little disturbance to tree roots, amend soil as necessary to bring to grade mixing with native soil
  - c. Soil amendment appx. \$6. materials only for 2 Cubic ft. bag, adds 3” of soil to 8 sq. ft. area.
4. Unit Cost to plant 4” plant, \$15. to \$15.00
5. Unit Cost to plant 1 gallon plant, \$15. to \$24.00
6. Unit Cost to plant 5 gallon plant, \$44. to \$58.00
7. Unit Cost to plant 15 gallon tree, \$150. to \$215.00

- a. Alternative: Plants to be provided and planted by property owner, neighbors and community
  - b. New plants to be placed in field per design UFC and "client" establish
8. Mulch entire area with 3" of mulch, fir bark or Forest Floor
  - a. Mulch appx. \$6. materials only for 2 Cubic ft. bag, adds 3" of mulch to 8 sq. ft. area.
9. Responsible party for long term maintenance, adapt a contract and procedures.

### Additional thoughts in support of nurturing old trees.

Current progressive thoughts encourage the idea of planting one new tree not for every tree removed, but rather one tree for every year old a tree is that is removed or lost. In an urban area the chances of a tree living into natural maturity are rare, so if a tree has managed to live 50 years and it is lost due to mechanical or catastrophic failure or injury, construction blight or other abiotic conditions, environmental stress, or sheer neglect we replace it with 50 trees, a tree 100 years old we replace 100 trees. Given the attrition rate of trees in our urban economy this is what it will take to replace that one tree with one other 50 or 100 years down the road. Also, benefits of trees accrue exponentially as trees mature, so we must learn to manage the trees rather than cut them down. Furthermore, as trees mature they support increasingly larger numbers of other life forms and habitat. Providing Sidewalk Pocket Park Garden havens gives already mature trees, in less than ideal cultural conditions, a better environment in which to thrive.