Resolution urging the development and implementation of a recreation and open space equity analysis and enhancing protocols for preserving youth and community access in our City’s parks.

WHEREAS, the mission of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (RPD) is to provide enriching recreational activities, maintain beautiful parks and preserve the environment for the well-being of our diverse community;¹ and

WHEREAS, the people of San Francisco have long supported the parks of our city, passing the 2012 $195 million park bond and previous measures², establishing the Park, Recreation and Open Space Fund³, organizing Park Clean-Up days, and spending their free time in our parks; and

WHEREAS, today RPD boasts over 440 programs, 50,000 applicants, and more youth participants than ever before;⁴ and

WHEREAS, the department has the capacity to offer 16,000 slots for youth in their summer programs;⁵ and

WHEREAS, over $800K of scholarships were awarded this past summer and $1.5 million were awarded annually for 50%, 75%, and 100% program scholarships;⁶ and

WHEREAS, RPD does their best to allocate resources appropriately and equally across neighborhoods in the city; and

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¹ San Francisco Recreation & Park Department <http://sfrecpark.org/about/who-we-are/>
² 2012 Parks Bond <http://sfrecpark.org/park-improvements/2012-bond/>
³ Park, Recreation and Open Space Fund <http://charter.sanfranciscocode.org/XVI/16.107/>
⁵ “ “
⁶ “ “
WHEREAS, after the recession in 2008, the RPD faced severe cuts and had to lay off recreation directors and recreation staff positions; and

WHEREAS, during this time, RPD also began renting and leasing out recently renovated clubhouses, which were funded by public tax dollars, to private entities as a way to generate revenue; and

WHEREAS, similar revenue-generating policies of the RPD led to confusion and irritation of long-standing community members, as heard at the October 16, 2014 Recreation and Park Commission Special meeting where people came out to speak about the Mission Playground incident; and

WHEREAS, in October 2014, there was an incident at Mission Playground involving neighborhood youth and adult tech workers, where the adults had reserved the soccer field for permitted play on a field that had historically been used as a pick-up soccer field before renovations; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Parks Commission believes that every resident should have the opportunity to take part in public recreational programs and classes, which foster human development, promote health and wellness and increase cultural unity; and

WHEREAS, it should be among the primary goals of publicly-funded park renovations of our public spaces to better serve communities that have long been using and living near each park, and especially youth and families; and

\[\text{Indoor Facilities } \text{<http://sfrecpark.org/permits-and-reservations/indoor-facilities/>}\]


\[\text{San Francisco Recreation & Park Department: Rec Program Scholarships } \text{<http://sfrecpark.org/recreation-community-services/recreation-program-scholarships/>}\]
WHEREAS, General Manager of the Recreation of Park Department, Phil Ginsberg, expressed that the Mission Playground incident serves as an example of the city’s lack of and limited play space for youth and residents in addition to the city’s larger issue concerning gentrification and displacement;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS, after an emotional process, the youth and representatives from community organizations who use Mission Playground were able to convince Mr. Ginsberg, the department, and the Recreation and Park Commission to make changes to field scheduling including the elimination of adult permits, maintain language access, and extend the hours of lighting for open community play; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2015 at the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services hearing on the Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights, public comments from youth included concerns over site staffing and the need for park monitors, park safety, the need to extend lighting hours, playfield access, and teen access; and

WHEREAS, while reservations and rentals may be necessary for the RPD to continue to generate revenue, the Mission Playground incident taught the city that these policies may have further restricted our already limited park accessibility; and

WHEREAS, one of the most vital public services and violence prevention services that RPD provides is simply providing reliable, safe, public spaces for young people to spend their time during out of school hours in our City’s parks; and

WHEREAS, in June 2014, Herz playground was the site of a fatal daytime shooting witnessed by 60 children, including the son of the victim; and

WHEREAS, many cities and agencies, including our San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, have conducted an equity analysis to help guide their citywide and departmental policy decisions after realizing the limited amount of resources they have; and, WHEREAS, in 2014 SFMTA announced that they would be conducting a Service Equity report to ensure that service performs equally across neighborhoods and that transit dependent customers such as riders from low income and no vehicle households are prioritized in the department’s Strategic Plan;¹¹ and WHEREAS, SFMTA’s Equity Strategy is a neighborhood based approached to improving routes most critical to low-income and minority communities; and WHEREAS, King County in Washington developed a Strategic Innovation Priority Plan after realizing that persistent inequities by race and place for many community conditions and systems resulted in significant portions of the their community being left behind, especially if looked at by race, ethnicity, income, immigration status and ZIP Code;¹² and WHEREAS, an Equity Analysis would assess need by looking at factors such as relative safety of parks; ability for youth in a particular neighborhood to access parks and fields in other part of the city via rides from parents or league play; number of youth in need of after-school activities; the distribution of open space, recreation facilities by type, and open hours by neighborhood; neighborhood density; and neighborhoods with high concentrations of youth, people of color, low-income families, immigrant families, non-English-speaking residents, or disabled people; and


WHEREAS, such an equity analysis would be valuable in guiding investment of the 2012 parks bond and open space fund, ensuring diverse groups of stakeholders are engaged in renovation planning, and highlight needs and opportunities for innovative programs like neighborhood fields or sports league programs, extended lighting, and other initiatives; and now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to urge the Recreation and Park Department to conduct a Recreation and Open Space Equity Analysis on all parks, playgrounds, playfields, and recreation facilities, studying accessibility and service performance in neighborhoods with large numbers of low-income, residents of color, and that they monitor progress to improve services to these communities over time and report on these strategies at their annual budget presentation to the Board of Supervisors; and be it;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to consider our recommendations made during the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights hearing, as well as stated above (site-staffing, non-permitted play, extended lighting hours, and scholarship outreach), while reviewing the budget of the Recreation and Park Department as the main purveyor of outdoor experiences for youth in the city.

Michel Li
2014-2015 Youth Commission Chair
Adopted by Youth Commission March 2, 2015