
1999

**RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA**

RUDY
BRUNER
AWARD



FOR URBAN
EXCELLENCE

A Representative Sampling of Architects, Developers, Professional Consultants, Other, and Community Groups

Organization	Key Person	Telephone
<i>Public Agencies</i>		
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency	Helen Sause	415/749-2506
San Francisco Department of City Planning	Hillary Gittelman	415/558-6381
<i>Architect/Designer</i>		
Mallas & Foote	Lauren Mallas	415/ 673-9933
Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein Moris	Cathy Simon	415/546-0400
Adele Santos Architects	Adele Santos	415/908-3767
Gensler	M. Arthur Gensler	415/433-3700
<i>Developer</i>		
Millennium Partners	Mark Farrar	415/537-3890
The Related Companies of California	Matthew Witte	949/640-6234
WDG Ventures, Inc.	Paula Collins	415/896-2300
<i>Professional Consultant</i>		
Jeanne Nelson	Jeanne Nelson	510/554-9812
<i>Other</i>		
American Institute of Architects, San Francisco Chapter	Nora Klebow	415/781-9800
Yerba Buena Alliance	Anita Hill	415/541-0312
<i>Community Group</i>		
Yerba Buena Policy Advisory Committee	William Osterhaus	415/278-5030

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ABSTRACT

Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG), San Francisco

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG) is an 87-acre mixed use urban development of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) in the South of Market (SOMA) region of San Francisco. It is perhaps the most diverse contemporary mixed use facility in the world, comprising a cultural center of over two dozen museums and galleries; an open space network with 5-½-acre park; a 10-acre block of children's facilities, including ice skating and bowling center, historic carousel, child care center for 90 infants and children, hi-tech children's cultural center, amphitheater and play and learning garden; a wide range of rental and condominium residential facilities, from complexes for low-income seniors and working poor to market-rate facilities; hotels; commercial and entertainment facilities; and one of the most popular convention centers in the world. The primary goals of the project are (1) to reclaim a severely blighted sector of the city; (2) provide employment, children's facilities, open space, cultural facilities, and other amenities to its citizens; and (3) to support the growing tourism industry, which contributes over \$5.5 billion annually, the largest single contribution, to the city's economy. The SFRA worked extensively with the community, planners, designers, specialized consultants in many fields, and others to develop each element of the project so that it would be successful in its own right while complementing all the other elements of what has become an exciting new neighborhood and cultural district. In addition to the physical buildings, gardens, and other improvements, programs for children, families, seniors, and others have been developed to ensure that the community is well-served. Thousands of temporary and permanent jobs have been created; a cultural center called by *Newsweek* "the most concentrated arts district west of the Hudson River" (January, 1995) has sprung into being; children, families, seniors, and individuals from all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds have an oasis of diversity where, it has been said, "there is something for everyone;" and a major central sector of the city has been reclaimed from its derelict condition to fill the needs of the community. Many delegations of planners, government representatives, economists, cultural specialists, convention specialists and others from all over the world visit YBG to learn from its success and take the ideas manifest here back to their own cities and communities.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? You may wish to consider such factors as effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

(1) Yerba Buena Gardens is an internationally-recognized model of public/private partnership and community participation; the SFRA worked extensively with the community at large, as well as countless specialized groups, interest groups, consultants and other experts to elicit the needs and wishes of the community and fulfill them, down to the smallest detail of a community theater facility or child care facility. (2) *Innovative approach*: the convention center was placed underground, in spite of a high water table, so that (a) the large, blocky, windowless buildings typical of convention centers would not be a blight on the neighborhood and (b) it would be possible to make double use of expensive and scarce infill land for community benefit in the central district of this geographically small peninsular city. (3) The SFRA's policy of including a high percentage of local and woman- and minority-owned businesses throughout the \$2 billion development has made an incalculable contribution to the community. (4) *Economic development*: The phenomenal increase in productivity of land that was once a slum is a substantial benefit to the community and is responsible for a continuing spread of reclamation beyond the boundaries of the project. (5) *Design quality*: rather than a homogeneous overall design, the SFRA solicited proposals from the international community for its own facilities and worked with individual developers to ensure the highest quality design in their respective developments. Overall, YBG fulfills the Rudy Bruner Award of integrating well-designed elements, each of which is independently successful and several of which are truly unique, into a complex, inclusive and multidimensional whole which embodies true excellence in the urban environment.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG), San Francisco

1. What local issues did this project address? How has it affected the local community?

The issues addressed by this development were primarily renewal of a blighted area and creation of visitor facilities. Named "Yerba Buena" for the fragrant herb that grew all over the sand dunes, this 87-acre area in the heart of the City was first settled by the pioneers in the mid-1800's. From that time until the mid-1900's, it went through a number of incarnations, including docks and related storage areas and industrial support mixed with all types of housing. Over time the neighborhood became a fine residential area; however, the introduction of cable cars allowed for a shift of elegant housing to the hills. This began the decline of the Yerba Buena neighborhood, so that by 1960 it had become a chaotic mix, including run-down hotels, shanties, auto repair shops and meat rendering plants. The City that had grown up around Yerba Buena generally located an intense financial district to the east and the civic center to the west. The deteriorating Yerba Buena area had a major blighting effect on the City's center. In addition, the City was beginning to be a visitor destination and there were inadequate facilities to accommodate this growing demand. The local decision makers decided to renew the declining Yerba Buena area and build a convention center and related services in the area. Its effect on the local community has been two-fold. A number of single elderly gentlemen were displaced by the renewal. The deteriorated area has been rebuilt as a vibrant and active mixed use neighborhood through the inclusion of a wide range of rental and sale housing priced from subsidized to expensive condominiums.

2. Describe the design concept, materials used, and visual impact of the project. How was the design shaped and influenced by its intended use? Its urban context?

The design concept as built was developed as a master plan for the 22 acres of the central blocks of the Yerba Buena area focused on public open space. A deliberate choice was made to under-develop the land and make a substantial public investment in infrastructure and provision of buildings for public and cultural uses, even though these were not revenue-producing. High quality architects were selected to design institutional buildings in such a way as to fit into context with one another and the open space. The "user-friendly" principle of design was very important, along with design excellence. Buildings were to be designed not to convey any sense of an isolated area, but fit into the context of the City so the renewal area would appear as a seamless part of the City.

3. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant tradeoffs were required to implement the project?

Among the tradeoffs was the investment in public open space versus tax revenues and financial returns resulting from sale of land in the area for the "highest and best use," e.g. the greatest monetary value. There was the choice of investing in housing subsidies, a skating rink and bowling center, a non-profit child care center and other amenities, also versus commercial development which would bring in revenues. There was the choice of providing public amenities versus developing more convention facilities, which again would have brought in considerably more revenues to the City.

4. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation, where appropriate.

A major effort was made over the years to involve the community in the development process. Many large public meetings were held, including design proposal presentations at every step of the process, along with heavy involvement of the architectural and planning community. There was a strong commitment on the part of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and its commission to be informed by the public process and include in the development a wide variety of publicly advocated programs. The Agency was committed to providing major amounts of public funds to build the public buildings and infrastructure, as well as a continuing income stream to maintain over time the operations and security of the area.

5. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources, and square foot costs where applicable.

Among the funding sources were tax increment financing jointly with the SF Redevelopment Agency and the City; land sales proceeds from the SFRA; the City's hotel tax fund; private investment on the part of developers; and the proceeds from land and air development rights through the SFRA to support operations, maintenance and security. The construction value of the entire project is \$2 billion. Construction costs for some of the major elements are, the San Francisco Marriott hotel, \$300 million; the Esplanade Garden, \$40 million; Four Seasons Hotel and Tower, \$350 million; Moscone Convention Center, \$330 million, with an expansion opening in 2003 at a projected \$157 million; The Rooftop at Yerba Buena Gardens (children's center), \$57 million; Metreon, a Sony Entertainment Center, \$100; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, \$40 million; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, \$65 million; W San Francisco Hotel, \$73 million.

6. Describe what is unique about the project. Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

A primary reason the project is unique is that it reflects the public priorities of the community in which it is located. Another is design excellence. Also, the public agencies responsible for the development have been committed to making this cleared, reclaimed area become a seamless part of the City rather than a discrete, even monolithic entity. The mix of uses is probably unique in the world today: a neighborhood of residential, cultural, hotel, visitor, open space, convention, children's and seniors' facilities. Cities of all sizes can use this area as a model – the mixture of uses is highly adaptable to a broad range of communities, particularly including a range of housing types to ensure the continuing vitality of the neighborhood. Also, design excellence should always be an important principle for all communities to strive for, and community participation is vital to any city and any process.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE: William E. Osterhaus

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part? To prepare for the design, construction and operation of the cultural component of the Yerba Buena redevelopment project, an "operating board" was formed in 19___. I was one of those founding board members. Some of the other directors had participated in meetings that the Redevelopment Agency had arranged over a prior two-year span to gather input from a large and diverse array of artists, performers, filmmakers, arts administrators and arts educators. Based on that collection of ideas and advice, the Agency had determined that the public cultural component would consist of a theater and a building with visual arts galleries and film/video facilities. There would also be an outdoor stage in the adjacent Yerba Buena Gardens to accommodate free public performances. The Operating Board's job was to continue that input through the design phase, to develop a "start up" plan, and to formulate an operating strategy.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Based on public input, the Agency emphasized that the public spaces should be programmed with the nearby residents in mind, as well as to attract the interest of convention goers, tourists and the general public. The expertise on the operating board was also put to use in considering certain aspects of the gardens design so as to provide adequate layout of the performance space and to accommodate audiences of various sizes. In response to community expression, the Agency also sought to provide amenities for children and families on the parcel of land atop the existing Convention Center. Community committees were set up to meet with Agency planners and architects on each project; the day care facility, an ice skating rink, and an arts/performance place specifically for young people. I participated in many of the meetings related to the planning for the children's art place and the adjacent gardens play area. Eventually I also became a board member of that non-profit, now known as ZEUM.

3. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

Over time there were many developments which fostered delays, changes, and uncertainty. While these were frustrating they also provided additional time and opportunity for review and fresh perspective. The cultural center buildings (now known as Yerba Buena Center for the Arts) had to be scaled down and re configured because it was to be built over the convention center expansion instead of above a parking garage as was the original intention. As a result the theater can only accommodate mid-sized performances, and the Visual Arts building could not provide a ground floor cafe with public access. The child/family facilities were delayed first by a slump in the economy that threatened the reliability of sufficient construction funds, then by a need to scale down due to construction bids far over the estimated amounts.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE: William E. Osterhaus

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this award? Please be as specific as possible.

Just addressing the cultural and public components, they have been a huge success. Center for the Arts has had five years of deficit-free operation and is noted for its presentation of visual, film/video, performance and musical arts. Zeum opened in October 1998 and is already on the list of places that young people think of as a "cool" place to go. The ice rink is so popular it has stopped advertising. The day care center is first rate with a waiting list. The free events in the Gardens have ranged from poetry slams to salsa music to Shakespeare to The San Francisco Symphony and are very well attended. More residential units are under construction and the convention center plans to expand. The first-of-its-kind SONY Metreon entertainment complex will open in May 1999.

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

Apparently the conventional wisdom in city planning has been that you won't be successful mixing such diverse components as convention, museum, recreation, residential, retail, office and children's facilities. This formula which appears to be working for San Francisco, may not be suitable for other locales. San Francisco has a reputation as a first rate tourist and convention city. And there are other factors that are perhaps unique to San Francisco. Using the sale/lease proceeds from commercial development to fund public amenities is not new, however the notion of actually combining those mixed uses within a redevelopment area is special.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

The Yerba Buena project has already established itself as a destination as well as a great place to live and work. During each of the next three years, seven more major components will open to the public. Hotels, museums, retail and residential buildings are either under construction or in final design. The promise of Yerba Buena is what has attracted them. The convention center is adding another building to handle the extraordinary demand for meeting and exhibit space. Thus far, the intermix of people living in or coming to Yerba Buena has been nicely balanced. There is day and night activity. The success of the Yerba Buena area in coming years is likely to be based on its ability to make such a diverse array of people feel well served by living, working or visiting the area.

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COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided.

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name John Elberling Title Chairperson
Organization Yerba Buena Consortium Telephone (415) 896-1882
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Signature John Elberling

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part?
The Yerba Buena Consortium first convened in 1980, meeting consistently ever since. Its members include several dozen of the 1,800 low-income elders living in seven subsidized residences in our Yerba Buena Neighborhood, representatives of their nonprofit housing and service providers, and other community-based organizations involved in the Yerba Buena project. Our goal has always been to achieve a true Neighborhood in Yerba Buena as one part of the overall redevelopment effort. We prepared the first and only "Yerba Buena Neighborhood Plan" in 1981, including detailed recommendations for Yerba Buena Gardens and its potential role as a part of our Neighborhood. We also focused during all these years on the everyday practical issues of safety, security, and access for our very vulnerable population in the planning, design, and management of the Gardens. We have participated in every public planning and approval process, very advisory group for the Gardens from the beginning, commented on every environmental analysis, dealt with the behind-the-scenes politics, worked directly with the for-profit developers on their projects' design, and in general used every advocacy technique available to pursue our goal of a real Yerba Buena Neighborhood. Each year we sponsor the "Yerba Buena Senior Ball" hosted by the Moscone Convention Center and attended by 1,200 residents, to celebrate the linkage between our Neighborhood and the civic importance of Yerba Buena Center.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issue concerning this project?
To be a genuine and contributory part of our Yerba Buena Neighborhood, the Gardens must: (1) incorporate the highest standards for safety, disabled accessibility, and security in its design and management; (2) in particular, fully mitigate all negative pedestrian safety and traffic safety impacts; (3) incorporate park areas and other public amenities of direct utility and interest to our exceptionally diverse, multicultural senior population; (4) incorporate project components and program activities which feature or support needed Neighborhood services and activities; (5) incorporate community-based events and exhibitions as a featured element of the cultural and civic programs in the Gardens; (6) assure that the low-income residents of our Neighborhood and the Central City can afford - through discounts and participatory groups - to take full advantage of the entire Gardens, including its many commercial recreation elements; (7) realize the potential for creative linkages between the programs of the Gardens and its commercial and cultural operations and ongoing Central City community programs serving elders, youth, and other low-income populations.

3. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

Principally, to accommodate the goals of many different and powerful civic constituencies, the Gardens and Yerba Buena Center development program has become increasingly dense over this 20 year history. This directly increased the environmental impacts on our Neighborhood - traffic, noise, congestion, etc. We accepted increased density in most of the Project Area to protect low-density development of the Childrens' block in the Gardens, and to secure financial support for mitigation programs and other community benefits that advanced our Neighborhood-building goal, such as the Childrens' block Childcare Center endowment fund drawn from hotel developers and deployment of traffic control officers funded by the Convention Center operations. The Consortium has been either the leading advocate and negotiator for these community-driven objectives, such as the mini-park included in the Sony Metreon project, or part of a larger coalition which pressed for their inclusion, such as the Bowling Center on the Childrens' block and the overall Neighborhood priority for the several thousand permanent jobs in Yerba Buena. In retrospect, our advocacy and political efforts were weak in the 1980's - significant progress on these objectives was not accomplished until a change in City Hall leadership in 1988, and major earlier opportunities were lost. We should have developed a stronger political base beginning in 1980 - both at community organizing and civic policy levels - to press our goals more aggressively from the start.

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this Award? Please be as specific as possible.

In addition to providing a civic and cultural amenity for all San Franciscans, and the economic base for the City's key tourist industry, development of Yerba Buena Gardens and the surrounding Project Area have largely succeeded in creating a new Yerba Buena Neighborhood. This was a conscious accomplishment - a goal achieved piece-by-piece over the course of two decades and now nearing completion. The resulting Neighborhood will include about 5,000 residents, 2,000 of whom are low-income elders. They - and the 30,000 residents of both the wealthy and low-income Central City neighborhoods a few blocks away - will all be able to use and enjoy the Gardens as part of their own Neighborhood. The poor communities will also be able to secure meaningful economic benefits directly from the very large new employment base - about 5,000 jobs total - and indirectly from the community facilities and programs funded as part of the Yerba Buena development plans. This large scale outcome of ongoing positive community benefit is rare, if not unique. Besides the specific Gardens' elements noted in other answers, this includes a vital Neighborhood supermarket that will be included in a condominium project now under construction, a 1/3 acre community garden for local seniors, an adult day health center, and Central City youth programs attached to each of the cultural organizations. The commitment by the Redevelopment Agency early in the 1980's to the creation of a Yerba Buena Neighborhood, first embodied in changing key land-use designations from commercial to residential in a 1982 environmental impact analysis at community urging, was the turning point, although actual implementation proceeded very slowly until the late 1980's. As a result, the Yerba Buena Neighborhood has now become not just a safe, new place to live, but a wonderful community of great value to its low-income elderly residents and the youth of the Central City.

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

We would advise other community groups - after setting up a project-specific long-term coalition among themselves - to: (1) first, master the technical process of redevelopment - the applicable redevelopment laws and regulations, the environment review procedures, and local civic approval procedures in order to understand how to exert maximum pressure and leverage at just the right time to achieve community goals; (2) also, develop an understanding of real estate development economics to realistically evaluate what can and cannot be expected in community to a meaningful degree, and turn that into specific proposals that can be addressed one-at-a-time, and also pursued on independent tracks; (3) use every procedural and civic opportunity to relentlessly assert the community's goals, and to build a broad base of civic support for them; (4) identify the real senior decision makers and their key advisors, especially in the private sector, and negotiate directly with them; (5) network with larger politically-active community coalitions that can support the community's goals; (6) assume that the effort will require 10-20 years of consistent effort by successions of community representatives and plan accordingly; and (7) be committed and bold - reject token or symbolic accommodations and pursue community benefits at the largest scale that appears practicable which will have a genuine positive impact for real people in the community. This all takes ongoing community leadership and technical skill as well as ongoing community organizing. The most effective source for this capacity are a Neighborhood's community-based nonprofit corporations, especially those engaged in housing and community development projects. This nonprofit community capacity proved essential to the Consortium's long-term success.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact? A straightforward initial test of project success will be whether a substantial portion of the 3,000 new Yerba Buena jobs that will be filled by then are held by formerly low-income Central City residents, as now promised. But even more important, in the year 2004, after 40 years, the Yerba Buena Center Project Area expires as a result of "sunset" provisions in State Redevelopment Law. Thus one key test of the permanent success of Yerba Buena Gardens will be whether its collective programs of public, community, and Neighborhood benefits - beyond "bricks and mortar" facilities - will be continued. This will depend on the organizational structure and powers of a successor nonprofit Gardens operating entity - one not yet established or even planned - and its assumption of the Gardens' financial resources. The mission and governance of this future Gardens' operator may or may not include community benefit goals and representation. It may or may not have direct access to the Redevelopment Agency's Yerba Buena funding streams, especially the Marriott Hotel ground lease which provides more than \$5 million per year. The second key test is whether additional community benefits will be incorporated within the remaining development as full "build-out" of the Project is completed in the next five years. This includes the \$400 million "Bloomingdale's Project," a department store/retail/entertainment/hotel complex - the largest YBC private development of all - which is midway through its approval process, and the further expansion of the Moscone Convention Center which will start in 2000. The final key test will be whether community organizations and residents of the Yerba Buena Neighborhood continue to work as an effective coalition to assist, monitor, and implement these goals year after year. Without this, there will be an inevitable loss of holistic direction and community commitment by the Gardens operators and institutions, and they will devolve to more limited, self-centered agendas. But with this Neighborhood and community engagement, they will continue to be challenged to achieve a vibrant and dynamic mixture of disparate interests and disciplines that can generate and regenerate creative responses to vital community and human purposes for this Neighborhood, its low-income residents in particular, and the entire Central City.

1. My Company, The Related Companies of California, was selected in July 1989 as developer for one of the key sites within Yerba Buena Center ("YBC"). During the nine years preceding this selection, I was intimately involved as a Developer in San Francisco, and as an observer to the evolution of YBC (which has been a Redevelopment Project since the late '60's). Shortly after being selected, I founded and am currently Chair of the Yerba Buena Gardens Marketing Alliance ("YBGMA"), which was initially made up of approximately 50 stakeholders from the YBC neighborhood and now includes several hundred members. Over the ensuing 8 years, I have been actively involved in promoting YBC as San Francisco's newest and most vibrant and vital neighborhood. Additionally, as Managing Partner, I have been responsible for the development of our Project in YBC.
2. The original competition for our site contemplated a 500,000 square foot Class A office tower (Architect: I.M. Pei & Partners) and indeed, our vision for the site remained as such until 1996 when, due to continuing softness in the commercial marketplace, we converted our development concept to a 500 unit luxury apartment building (Architect: Elkus, Manfredi Associates). Although this represented a significant change in land use, it was completely consistent with the evolution of YBC into a 24 hour, 7 day a week neighborhood. The Project is now scheduled to break ground in June 1999 and will be completed mid-2001.
3. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency ("SFRA"), Project sponsor for YBC, employed numerous creative and effective financing techniques to facilitate the development of the considerable infrastructure that now exists (discussion of these techniques would require a separate extensive response). Our Project is being financed with a combination of tax exempt bonds, institutional equity and credit enhancements, and will be operated as a "80/20" Project, which means that 20% of the 500 units will have their rent subsidized for 50 years in order to be affordable to lower income families (50% of median income); the balance of 400 units will be operated as luxury rentals.
4. YBC comprises approximately 100 acres in the center of downtown San Francisco and as such, it represented a once in a lifetime opportunity to remake a substantial portion of the City over a relatively short +/-20 year period. The Project benefited from several critical catalysts: 1) Moscone Convention Center Phases I (1984) and II (1992); 2) The relocation to YBC of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1990); 3) The creation of the Center for the Arts by the SFRA (1993), 4) The development of the Marriot Convention Hotel (1988) and, 5) The SONY Metreon Retail Complex (1999). Although each of these projects involve different ownerships and constituencies, the common link allowing all of them to be realized was an unwavering commitment by the SFRA to create a very high quality, uniquely San Francisco environment, which has finally been accomplished. All other concurrent and subsequent developments have and will continue to benefit from this extraordinary commitment to quality.

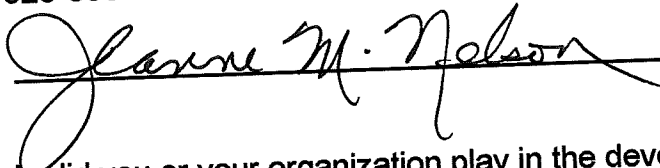
5. Clearly, the enormous number of diverse public and private interests which deliberated (and at times quite literally fought) over this unique 6 square block District, made the redevelopment of YBC extraordinarily challenging. Again, only the SFRA's perseverance and unwavering commitment to the vision of YBC as a "complete, mixed use District with something for all San Franciscans" allowed the concept to become reality. Additionally, the numerous real estate cycles which have occurred over the last two decades, have created enormous financial challenges for the SFRA. Perhaps the only real "failure" of YBC is that a mixed-use development which was originally intended to be dominated by office towers will, in the end, have no office towers. Although all parcels will soon be built-out, the absence of this element will be missed.
6. During the "dark" years of the early 90's, YBC continued to evolve without a viable commercial development "engine" to drive it. The real lesson of YBC, in my opinion, is that cultural facilities can serve as a catalyst for commercial development to follow. Clearly, this has been the case at YBC.
7.
 - 1) If, in the future, a San Franciscan speaks of YBC in the same way as he/she now speaks of North Beach, Nob Hill, or Pacific Heights (i.e., as one of the City's special neighborhoods), YBC will be an unqualified success.
 - 2) If the current enthusiasm and momentum among San Franciscans for YBC as the "in" spot in the City remains strong (this will require continual reinvention), YBC will have realized its vision.
 - 3) If the safety, security and maintenance of all public areas within YBC can continue to be maintained to the high standards which have been set by the "Gardens" and its immediate environs.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVEE

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FAX (510) 528-6955

Title: President
Telephone: (510) 558-9812
E-mail

Signature: _____



1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Child Care Choices provided 8 years of planning and consulting work on the design, organizational capacity building, marketing, fundraising and public/partnership development to support the Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG) Child Care Center on the "Rooftop". Some of my activities included:

- Community outreach
- Concept planning and strategy development
- Forging partnerships with city departments, businesses and community groups
- Consultation on architectural design
- Identifying and evaluating an operator for the child care program
- Technical assistance on board development, fundraising and marketing in nonprofits

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment? The children's center project (Rooftop), as well as the entire Yerba Buena Gardens was intended to revitalize a part of San Francisco that was long considered unsafe, undesirable and had less than adequate housing and services for those who lived there. The project was meant to accomplish two major goals:

- To work with the existing community to create a safe neighborhood where programs, social services, housing, recreation opportunities, jobs and arts organizations was available to all people regardless of age, cultural or economic background
- To support and expand the economic viability of the neighborhood to attract visitors, conventions, additional business services and other amenities

3. Describe the project's impact on its surroundings and on the people in the area. Do you have data that document these effects? Attach supplementary material appropriate. The impact has been an explosion of new opportunities for businesses, arts/cultural institutions, recreational activities, social services for people who live and work in the area as well as for visitors. The YBG Child Care Center is a perfect example of the merging of the needs of the existing neighborhood and needs of expanding businesses. The Center was planned to accommodate 30 children from low-income families from the neighborhood, 30 children whose parents commute and work in the area and 30 children from the community at large. Plans are to include programs in the future for drop in care for visitors and Moscone convention goers. The addition of SF Museum of Modern Art as well as many other arts organizations in close proximity has meant that the YBG child care center can form partnerships with these groups to develop a rich arts curriculum – an opportunity which did not exist before.

4. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

The process of completing the "Rooftop" took much longer than expected due to financial backing changes and construction delays. The impact was that at times momentum was lost in achieving some goals. However, the tradeoff was that in the case of the YBG Child Care Center, the building of the infrastructure of the non-profit board of directors became much more solid and stronger. Delays meant more planning time to conduct working parent focus groups, develop marketing strategies and resolve many other issues. A stronger child care program was in place and more support from the neighborhood, business community, board, potential users of the programs and funding sources.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? What would you now do differently? Attempting to merge the needs and interests of the existing primarily low-income immigrant community with the opportunities that a revitalized emerging neighborhood can be very challenging. Not enough can be said about organizing ongoing meetings and discussion groups to create more avenues to meet and form mutually beneficial partnerships between old and new neighbors. The leadership of the nonprofit YBG Child Care center came from a neighborhood community-based perspective and could have benefited from additional technical assistance, leadership development, facilitated discussions and support to better understand and serve the changing neighborhood.

6. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

This project has a number of challenges and opportunities for others to learn from. Among them are

- Value of planning, goal setting, training and infrastructure building is well worth the time and effort in a nonprofit organization
- Merging public and private interests and funding sources can benefit and strengthen a community as well as the constituency it serves
- Creating a mixed economic culturally-sensitive child care center can work with the proper planning, focus groups, board, qualified teachers and community support

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact? Measures of success would include such factors as:

- Full enrollment of the child care program and a waiting list
- Program is able to sustain itself
- Local community residents are supportive and involved in the child care program and services and provide input and direction
- Parents in the program regardless of economic and cultural backgrounds value each other and work together to make the program the best it can be
- YBG businesses acknowledge the value of the child care program and support it by employees using it and donating in-kind and financial resources
- Child care program has well established partnerships with the arts organizations and are a vital part of the curriculum
- Parents and children report that their experiences at the child care center as well as all the other programs on the "Rooftop" make YBG an exciting family friendly place to be

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

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Signature Lauren S. Mallas

1. Describe the design of the project including design concept, choice of materials, scale, etc.

Yerba Buena Gardens is a twenty-one acre redevelopment area just South of Market Street and Union Square in San Francisco. The centerpiece of the development is an urban park and recreational facility which has been developed on the roof of Moscone Convention Center. The public gardens provide a tremendous variety of facilities and experiences, perhaps unmatched anywhere in an inner city environment.

Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade is a five-acre garden complex which includes a meadow, wooded areas, decorative plantings, two cafes, extensive fountain and pool areas, and flowering gardens honoring the fourteen sister cities of San Francisco. A popular feature of the esplanade is an aluminum leaf mural designed by Danish artist Lin Utzon which flanks a spectacular waterfall. The upper terrace of the park incorporates a reflecting pool which mirrors the sky and moving clouds as well as surrounding buildings. This portion of the park has become a center for multi-cultural performances and a welcome respite for tourists and residents.

Yerba Buena Gardens Children's Center adjoins, providing a skating rink, bowling center, childcare center, technological arts center, and carousel. This group of buildings has its own internal focus, a splendid children's garden which includes an amphitheater, sundial garden, maze garden, play circle, a fountain, and numerous play features. The Esplanade and Children's Center are linked with a broad upper level bridge which spans the heavily trafficked street below.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

Yerba Buena Gardens functions as a social gathering place on many levels. It serves as a local park for the surrounding community, a haven for tourists and conventioners, a respite for downtown office workers, and as a destination for Bay Area citizenry of all ages. Seniors prevail in the early morning; a dawn visit reveals Tai Chi practice, sword practice, fan dancing, brisk walkers, and elderly strollers. The morning sun brings lunchtime picnickers from the nearby office towers. Afternoon visitors to the adjacent museums and galleries overflow onto the park benches as an extension of their cultural experience. Youth gather to sunbathe on the lawns and to chat in the cafes. The evening dusk offers a place to unwind on the way home or back to the hotel.

The entertainment and cultural facilities which surround the park have, in a sense, become auxiliary to the public place itself. They are an enhancement of the environment rather than its central purpose. In my view, the primary and most important social function of the design is that of an outdoor living room for the public. It is a safe haven, a place of welcome and comfort, a great outdoor room in which to greet guests, to meet with family and friends, to sit alone reading, meditating, and watching the real life of the city around you.

There are a large number of planned events in the gardens. These include lunch hour and weekend performances of every variety, political and citizens groups, non-profit organized events, and so forth. The project is rented to a limited number of private organizations for special events, which bespeaks the huge popularity of the venue. The income from these events helps offset the maintenance and operations costs, but such events are secondary, not primary programmatic functions.

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design tradeoffs or compromises required to complete the project.

Designing in the public sector is always a major challenge, and probably no place more so than in San Francisco, where the review process is encumbered with constituents from every conceivable political, social, economic, and cultural bias. The Esplanade underwent five major redesigns over a period of four years before it was finally approved by public reviewing agencies. The Children's Center has a similar difficult history. However, in light of the subsequent success of the facilities, it seems inappropriate to characterize the numerous changes as tradeoffs.

As an architect, I usually find it difficult to visit a project just after it is completed. Too often I wander through, seeing only the compromises, the things which were not built properly or well, the problems which were only partly resolved. But I never have felt this way about Yerba Buena. I go there often myself, triumphantly taking my family and friends with me. I enjoy it as much as anyone, maybe more. It has been the chance of a lifetime to work on a project which so many people use and truly enjoy. I feel a sense of civic pride in having helped contribute to its existence.

Yet, I admit I sometimes do think about certain aspects of the previous designs which might have been wonderful if they had been built. In particular I recall the long alley of trees which was designed to transverse the esplanade, cross the bridge, and continue onto the children's garden plaza. That would have been a splendid place to stroll and would have strengthened the connection between the two halves of the open space development. I also remember the Winter Garden-- a glass pavilion of spectacular design. It would have been the perfect place to sit and have a cup of tea on a rainy day. However, I do not think the design was compromised by the absence of these things. I feel that tremendous credit is due to Romaldo Giurgola, the primary design architect, for his ability to imbue the place with a special spirit.

4. Describe the strengths of the project's design and architecture, and the way in which it relates to its urban context.

When the City of San Francisco built the original first phase of Moscone Convention Center, it was determined that the massive building would work best in the urban environment if it were lowered into the ground as far as possible, and the roof reserved as a public park. Years later, when an expansion of the Convention Center facilities was deemed necessary, the same reasoning was put forth. Hence, the two huge roofs were available for development into a public park. And, at the same time, the Convention facility could be maintained in the heart of the city within walking distance of the hotels and retail venues. Thus, the siting for the project was both its primary challenge--to create a very large public park on top of a massive concrete roof, and its primary strength--its central position in the downtown development.

To complicate matters, there are a number of cultural buildings which are also positioned on the roof and which surround the gardens. There has been a certain amount of criticism in the press about the orientation of these surrounding buildings. Although they each make an attempt to open to the street in some form, their primary orientation is towards the gardens. Therefore, they are seen as "turning their backs" on the street. However, now that the area is almost entirely developed, and the blank sites are filled with buildings which complete the streetscape, this design criticism seems less warranted.

The gardens are amazingly deceptive in that they appear to have been there for a very long time. They evoke a sense of the natural in what is a purely human-made environment. Several years ago, during the week of celebrations which surrounded the opening of the Esplanade, I took part in a special dedication of a Native American artwork which has been installed on the slope of the garden lawn. Before the early settlers came to San Francisco, this place was the burial ground for the Ohlone Indians. With no mention of the convention center below us, members of the tribe gathered at sunset to dedicate the site back to their ancestors. They felt it had returned to its natural state.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature Cathy Simon

1. Describe the design of the project including design concept, choice of materials, scale, etc.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

1. *Describe the design of the project including design concept, choice of materials, scale, etc.*

The design concept of the Yerba Buena Gardens is essentially three central blocks which connect the heart of the gardens with Market Street, San Francisco's main street and its central transit corridor and the dynamic South of Market district, the City's emergent arts and multi-ethnic community. Layered with public, cultural, entertainment and arts facilities, the central gardens themselves provide a much needed oasis in San Francisco's most industrial, hard-edge neighborhood, a landscaped "living room" for gatherings, celebrations, relaxation and respite. Surrounding these central blocks is a broadly conceived mix of museums, social and market rate housing, hotels, an expansive convention center and various commercial buildings. The buildings, like the uses, are diverse, but a common architectural approach unites them—they are frankly modern buildings, unsentimental and of their time, many designed by exceptional architects. The palette of materials is not prescribed, but most are light colored, some are metallic and crisp, some are masonry or precast concrete, but, especially in the Central Blocks, a serious attempt was made by the architects to respect the late Twentieth Century context of buildings and the urban fabric beyond. Some of the actual structures represent the most important new public architecture in San Francisco and have defined a new vocabulary for the City's heretofore conservative, Beaux Arts public realm. The materials and high quality of the Gardens themselves are noteworthy.

2. *Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.*

In my view, there are two crucial social aspects of Yerba Buena Gardens: first, the creation of a new arts/cultural/entertainment district in the city, and, second, the accommodation of a new residential neighborhood for young and old, wealthy and poor, in direct proximity to the downtown area, the new arts facilities and a major urban park. The former has had enormous implications for the South of Market neighborhood—the new arts institutions have spawned over thirty-five galleries nearby, numerous restaurants and other cultural agencies, bringing millions of visitors a year to what was once a derelict district of the city. At the same time, they have provided a showcase for the avant-garde, for the experimental, for new artistic experiments to a city whose cultural institutions had been conservative, traditional and sometimes rather stuffy. By creating an exciting new home for the arts, YBG has created an audience for them. Furthermore, the development has brought over 3000 new residents to the area, ensuring both day and nighttime vitality to the area, making it a safe after-hours venue.

3. *Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design tradeoffs or compromises required to complete the project.*

Aside from the challenges of completing such a large, diverse and important project over a significant period of years, and the daunting economics of the marketplace (Olympia and York, for example, YBG's master developer, declared bankruptcy before building the most economically significant element in the project), the project's greatest obstacles were the South of Market urban fabric with its enormous blocks and its wide, busy streets, in combination with the rich program for the Esplanade Gardens, and the City's need for a major new convention center, much of which was to be placed partially underground. In combination, these meant that the cultural buildings with their relatively small programs around the Gardens had to face either into the park or onto the surrounding streets (they face the park and turn their backs to the street). Further, they had to accommodate around their perimeters the convention center's numerous, utilitarian emergency exits onto the streets, further isolating them from the urban fabric. Additionally, on Central Block 3, where the convention center was only partially underground, public facilities had to be built significantly above street level, making easy, spontaneous public access difficult. Both these given conditions tend to rob some of the streets of fine grain pedestrian activity, except in the case of METREON where the large retail program provides interactive perimeter along the streets and at the Esplanade Gardens.

4. *Describe the strengths of the project's design and architecture and the way in which it relates to its urban context.*

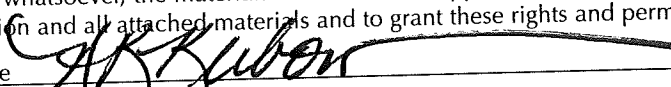
The strength of the project from an architectural point of view derives from the very high quality of its individual structures and its ensemble. Notable buildings, both new and historic, include Maki's Center for the Arts, Polshek's Theater, Giurgola's Pavilions and Esplanade, Botta's Museum of Modern Art, the METREON and Zeum (both designed by significant local woman architects), Willis Polk's historic Jessie Street Substation with its intervention by Daniel Liebeskind (it will become the new Jewish Museum), and St. Patrick's Church. Colors and materials vary but are primarily either red brick (the older buildings and SFMOMA) or silvery metal and glass, detailed with modernity, sophistication and panache. The smaller alleys of South of Market are acknowledged in several of the buildings, where entries align with these small streets, relieving the long blocks characteristic of the area and welcoming visitors to the Gardens along a number of different pathways. This is a place of urban serendipity, of relief from the frenetic pace of the city, of tremendous cultural vitality and of welcome to the Bay Area's diverse community.

OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

As the local chapter of the AIA, we participated in the public discussion and design process as an organization of interested architectural and urban design professionals. Individually, I attended and contributed to some of the discussions mentioned above. Our organization supported the plan and the process as it developed.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

I perceive three primary benefits: 1) as a safe and calm place in a busy urban setting; 2) as a neighborhood activity center and resource for both organized and spontaneous activities; and 3) as a formal node, focal point or "knuckle" in an arts complex, still developing its final density.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

Large scale events (like the mayor's inauguration) are held here. People eat their lunches on the lawn. Children learn about butterflies and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It's a "black hole" in the gravitational sense only. Anyone near the place is drawn to it -- and, once there, rewarded with a positive experience. It uplifts and enhances the public's expectations of the area.

4. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

Built atop another building, the physical design of the space was extremely limiting. Funding of ongoing operations is a challenge, too. Each challenge, however, was looked upon as a creative opportunity, and the result reflects the optimism (the "I won't take no as an answer") with which the problems were addressed.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

I believe the mid-block entrances to the open space are not adequately resolved with respect to the landmark buildings that surround it. They are also not adequately considered in the adjacent transportation and pedestrian planning and operations. A greater effort to coordinate these factors in the design phase may have further enhanced an extremely successful design, and made an already vital and strong place even better.

6. What can others learn from this project?

Two main things can be touted as YBG's grand successes, in my mind. First, the YBG Alliance itself is a management and marketing structure which is indispensable to a project of this kind. The physical design must be considered in the management and operation of the space, and the Alliance does this extraordinarily well. The Alliance recognizes the need to program, maintain and "balance" many competing forces -- and does so without compromising the quality of each force's resolution.

Second, that the design of such a dynamic and successful space can be achieved with a strong master plan and a deliberate, incremental approach to its physical development.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

People will still be going there on their own -- without a programmed activity -- and feel safe, calmed and enriched by the beauty of the grass, water and surrounding buildings. If this feeling and activity can be maintained once the retail/entertainment element is complete, they will have truly succeeded!

1999 RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER PERSPECTIVE
Yerba Buena Gardens (YBG), San Francisco

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Anita Hill

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

The Yerba Buena Alliance was established in 1991 as a not-for-profit representative neighborhood organization with the goal of developing and promoting a positive and cohesive image for the YBG neighborhood. The Alliance's early collaborative efforts resulted in a complete reversal of media attitude (from negative to positive). The Alliance has worked extensively with the community, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, and most of the organizations and institutions in the YBG neighborhood in community outreach, public education, public relations, and issues advocacy. The Alliance promotes collaboration among YBG businesses to develop customer base; produces the annual Gardens Gallery Walk, which brings 15,000 - 20,000 art lovers and families to the neighborhood each September; represents the neighborhood's interests in issues advocacy; participates in planning of public events and openings; works with the media to promote the neighborhood and educate the public about its transformation; and engages many other activities to benefit the community and establish a sense of neighborhood. I have been executive director of the Alliance since its founding in 1991.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The original object of YBG's development, proposed by business and civic leaders, was to reclaim an area near downtown where severe slum conditions had developed, as well as to support the growing tourist industry, which is a large portion of the city's economy. After the city's citizens rejected massive, business-oriented designs for development, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency worked with the community to develop an overall design which would provide amenities for a broad sector of the community: open space; children's uses; cultural uses; a convention center built under ground to allow for double use of the limited land area; a variety of residential opportunities, from housing for low-income seniors and workers to market-rate condominiums and rentals; and enough commercial development to make the whole project economically viable.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

A major derelict area of our city has been reclaimed. Many thousands of temporary and permanent jobs have been created; the convention center brings 1.3 million visitors a year, contributing greatly to the city's economy; the attendant hotel tax fund supports housing, the arts, and social programs; the galleries and museums enrich people; all the cultural institutions have children's art and education (literacy, job preparedness, etc.) programs; the child care center provides for working parents, many of whom receive subsidies for their children's care; the seniors benefit from many social service, educational and recreational programs; and so on. The Alliance is undertaking an economic benefit study which will quantify many of these and other benefits.

4. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

Multitudes of tradeoffs and compromises were made throughout the development of YBG, geared toward achieving more value for all participants involved. I have sometimes been indirectly involved. Developers have been encouraged to donate parts of their project area for parks and other community amenities and to support community organizations; the theater was reduced from a more economically viable size to accommodate the needs and wishes of community performing groups; and so on.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

The least successful aspect of the project relates to streetscape. Through traffic, especially freeway approach traffic, is very heavy in the YBG neighborhood, but it would be virtually impossible to redirect it. The need for emergency egress and air handling for the underground uses has resulted in some utilitarian structures at street level; these might have been designed more carefully. Some of the projects present less-than-ideal faces to the street: the entry to Moscone Convention Center is efficient, but not inviting. The two buildings which make up the otherwise very attractive Yerba Buena Center for the Arts might have been designed to present more graceful faces to the street. Access to the children's center is somewhat restricted, but space limitations and the project's site on the roof of the convention center did not allow for more access; actually, the solutions were elegantly conceived. I was not involved in the design of any of these projects.

6. What can others learn from this project?

Delegations of developers, municipal representatives, planners, government officials, arts and cultural professionals, economists, urban designers, architects, and others come from all over the world to study all aspects of this complex project. Among the lessons to be learned: (1) placing a convention center under ground, particularly in an urban infill project, not only allows for multi-layer development of scarce land, but also avoids having a large, boxy, windowless building dominate its surroundings and exert a palliating effect; a concentration of arts and cultural uses can draw visitors, enliven the streets, generate direct, secondary and tertiary income, and constitute an amenity which will make an area much more attractive for further development; including a broad range of residential opportunities encourages diversity, including economic, social, cultural and age, and enlivens the neighborhood; it is possible, even desirable, to assemble a wide variety of disparate uses in a manner which will allow them to complement one another and to form a whole which is far more than the sum of its parts; developing a neighborhood through the public involvement process is time-consuming, but results in a far better urban environment than rushing ahead to completion; ensuring that each element in a diverse development is excellent and stands on its own, all the way through programming and management, can result in a phenomenally exciting and stimulating environment; the public hunger for children's and seniors' facilities, open space, cultural activities and entertainment is deep and continuing, and people will flock to a pleasant environment which offers all these; an urban infill space can be reclaimed with imagination, creativity, and tenacity; community involvement is the key to ensuring that the development will be used and will fill the needs for which it is intended.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

The neighborhood would be thriving, with people feeling safe on the streets and in the public spaces, enjoying the free public art and entertainment. The cultural institutions would be prospering, offering a variety of cultural and educational experiences and supporting the work of emerging new artists. The child care center would be full, with a waiting list, and its family resource center would be providing families with the help they need city-wide. The hotels would be comfortably full, contributing to the hotel tax fund, which supports housing development, the arts, social services and other community benefits city-wide. The relationship between vehicular and pedestrian traffic would have been solved so that the two could co-exist comfortably. There would be additional parking in a well-designed, attractive structure with useful ground floor cultural and retail uses. Programming of the open spaces would be divided equitably between the corporate events which finance free public entertainment and community events which reflect the rich cultural diversity of the neighborhood.