

September 15th, 2025

Dear Members of the Commission Streamlining Task Force,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on **Agenda Item 11 Recreation and Parks Bodies at the Commission Streamlining Task Force Meeting on 9/17/25.**

We, the past two chairs and the current chair of the San Francisco Park, Rec Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC), write to you today to respectfully ask you to consider continuing our committee. PROSAC is a valuable asset to San Francisco's recreation and open spaces for several important reasons.

### **PROSAC Impact on Open Spaces**

PROSAC has been a strong advocate for creating and preserving open spaces in our city. We were instrumental in rewriting the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's (RPD) acquisition policy. The previous policy was so restrictive that it made it nearly impossible to purchase new parkland. Our work on the revised policy has directly led to the acquisition of new properties, such as **Indian Basin Park**.

### **A Voice for the Community**

While many dedicated employees work within the RPD, they are city employees who must adhere to departmental policies. As a committee appointed by district supervisors, PROSAC serves as a crucial bridge between the community and the city. We have the ability to work with both district supervisors and RPD staff to find common solutions. We also have the direct access to reach out to various department heads to address issues that need to be resolved.

We often address smaller, yet significant, community issues. We hear from residents who may not feel comfortable speaking directly to a commissioner or who have had their concerns go unaddressed after contacting 311. Our knowledge of the internal systems allows us to navigate the bureaucracy and connect with the right people to get things fixed. Sometimes, these small, quality-of-life issues make the biggest difference to the residents who use our parks daily.

### **Valuable Expertise and Lived Experience**

One of the guidelines for persevering a citizens advisory committee is that it should include areas of expertise that would otherwise be missing from government or create pathways of community involvement on an issue. PROSAC's unique quality which sets it apart from other citizens advisory committees is that members are appointed based on their area of professional expertise and/or lived experiences. Members are not

simply appointed to fill a vacancy, but instead to offer a lens into which communities ultimately benefit from our parks and recreation system that would otherwise be overlooked.

Each of these members utilize their diverse lived experiences and professional expertise to advise RPD, the Commission, and General Manager on the essential needs of the communities they serve. Many of the presentations given by the department are done so at the request of our membership's direct advocacy, which allows RPD to continue its commitment to serving all San Franciscans equally. The dissolution of this committee would cut RPD and the Commission off from a crucial link between the communities, including those who have been historically marginalized, and good governance.

### **Checks and Balances**

Our committee appointments by the District Supervisors provide an essential check on the fully mayoral-appointed Recreation and Park Commission. This system of checks and balances is fundamental to our city's governance. Relying solely on executive authority for city departments would diminish the voices of the people's representatives. We believe San Francisco is better than that and deserves a system that ensures accountability and shared power.

### **Cost vs Benefit**

The cost of the PROSAC at approximately \$25,000, is a minor investment compared to the significant benefit of enhancing public trust in RPD.

With the recent collapse of the Park Alliance, there has been a considerable erosion of public confidence. Our committee, through its direct and approachable engagement, can effectively rebuild and restore that trust.

### **A Question on the Charter**

Finally, we have a question regarding the proposed changes to the city charter. We ask for clarity on whether the public will have the ability to vote on each committee's elimination individually, or if it will be an all-or-nothing proposition. We strongly urge you to allow the electorate to vote on each active committee and commission separately.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important points.

Cyntia Salazar, PROSAC Chair  
Wendy Aragón, PROSAC Past Chair  
Nick Belloni, PROSAC Past Chair