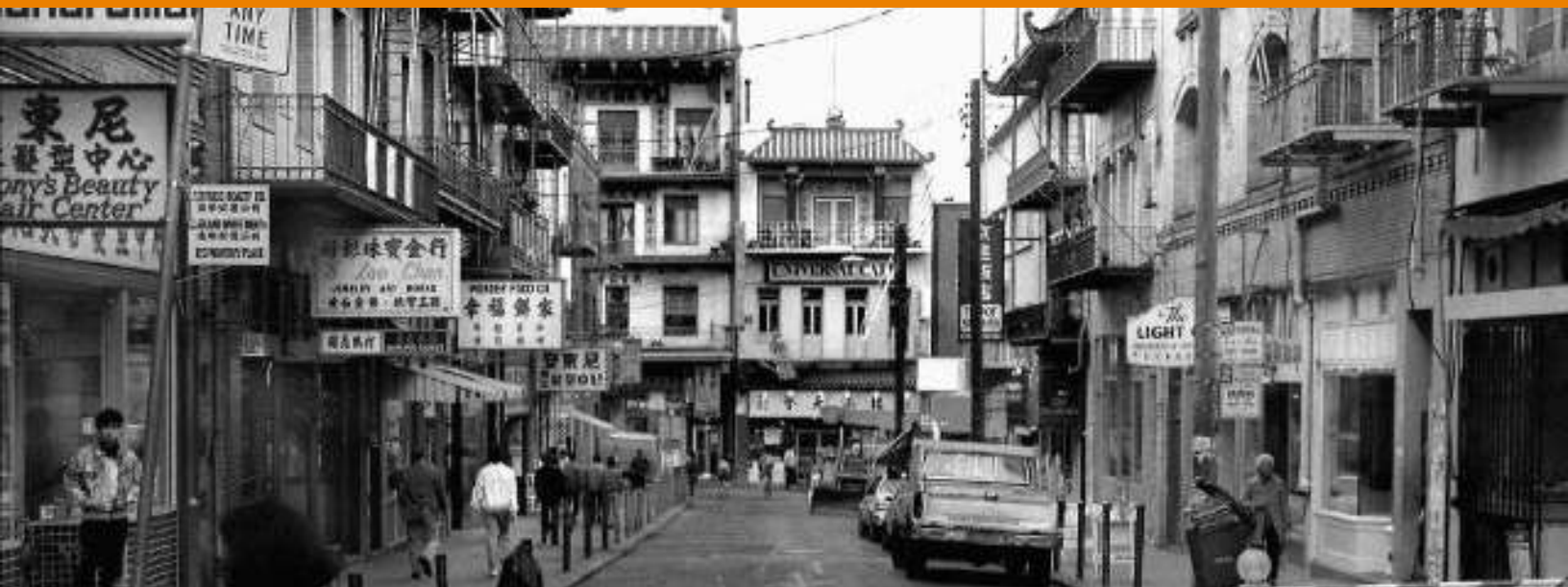


# CHINATOWN & NORTH BEACH:

The Revival of Two Communities through Government Investment in Public Spaces



## SESSION OVERVIEW:

### FRI-FS-05

Friday, November 11, 2022

8:30 – 4:15 PM

Moscone Convention Center

San Francisco has transformed the Chinatown and North Beach neighborhoods through 20 years of strategic investment in public parks. Experience an insider's tour and hear directly how local landscape architects have fulfilled every key role in this transformation by representing government agencies, design teams, nonprofit organizations, and the community.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Introduce the City of San Francisco's strategies and policies for funding capital investments and creating community-centered projects.
- 2) Showcase creative design ideas for urban park design, multigenerational design, and culturally inclusive park
- 3) Showcase multiple partnership strategies with nonprofits, community groups, and advocates to build meaningful lasting parks.
- 4) Experience an insider's tour of two of San Francisco's most legendary neighborhoods and see how the diversity of project scales reflect core city programs.

## PANEL DIVERSITY, EQUITY + INCLUSION

This session brings together a team of professionals, government staff, landscape architects, and community members who have played significant, yet distinct, roles in transforming Chinatown and North Beach's public realm.

Cara Ruppert, Lizzy Hirsch, Willett Moss, Jim Lee are all landscape architects representing different views into the development of public spaces: park activist, client representative, design consultant, and community member. Combined, they have helped deliver dozens of public projects for the City of San Francisco.

Brian Strong and Julie Christensen have played key roles in project implementation, advocating for public realm changes by identifying funding, leading community engagement, organizing long-term stewardship, and championing projects as elected officials and senior city staff.

### During the field session, speakers will discuss:

- Community engagement strategies for disadvantaged communities
- Meaningful and respectful cultural identity in design
- The importance of civic spaces in the fight against Asian hate crimes
- Designing for multi-generational urban parks
- Unique challenges of urban park stewardship in San Francisco's densest neighborhoods



1859 SF Historic American Building Survey

- 2 Willie "Woo Woo" Wong Playground
- 3 Portsmouth Square
- 5 Washington Square
- 6 Joe DiMaggio Playground
- 7 Pioneer Park at Coit Tower

## **SPEAKERS (1/2):**

**Lizzy Hirsch, ASLA, PLA** + Parks Team Studio Lead of San Francisco Public Works Landscape Architecture Bureau



Lizzy, for her last twenty years in landscape architecture, has imprinted the San Francisco public realm, that spans from a pocket playground to 16 acres park. She believes that well designed parks contribute to the cultural and natural health of the city. She has effected change, in the roles of park activist, client agent and design consultant, that resulted in the successful delivery of over 25 projects. Currently she leads the Parks Team Studio within the SF Public Works Landscape Architecture Department. In 2015, her body of work was recognized by the local AIA with the “Community Alliance Award” .

**Cara Ruppert, ASLA, PLA** + Deputy Director, Capital & Planning, San Francisco Recreation & Park Department



Cara is a landscape architect, having split her career between the private and public sectors. She now serves as the Deputy Director of the Capital and Planning team at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, leading large public park renovation projects. In this position, she plays an active role in planning and managing park improvements from conception through construction. She makes every effort to create spaces in which the natural, cultural, and social resources work seamlessly together, and ensures that these spaces are beautifully crafted, sustainable, and meaningful to the people who inhabit them.

**Brian Strong** + Director and Chief Resilience Officer of San Francisco Public Works



As the City’s Chief Resilience Officer and Director of the Office of Resilience and Capital Planning, Brian Strong is responsible for the City’s ten-year Capital Plan, its Capital Budget, and the implementation of the Resilient SF strategic vision. Brian created the City’s first multi-year capital plan in 2006 and has been instrumental in the development and passage of over \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to improve San Francisco’s infrastructure. Brian has implemented several innovative resilience programs to protect San Francisco’s infrastructure such as the Hazards and Climate Resilience Plan, and Earthquake Safety Implementation Program.



## **SPEAKERS (2/2):**

**Willett Moss, ASLA** + Principal of CMG landscape architecture



Willett is a Founding Partner of CMG Landscape Architecture and a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. His work reflects his range of interests with a focus on landscapes of broad value and public appeal. His project experience includes community-based design rooted in ecological understanding and making historic resources relevant today. For Willett, good public spaces have clear purpose, whether symbolic or utilitarian, and contribute to community identity as memorable additions to the landscape. Willett leads CMG's largest urban design and campus planning efforts, including San Francisco Civic Center Vision Plan and UC Berkeley Lower Sproul Plaza.

**Jim Lee, FASLA** + Principal of SWA Group's San Francisco office



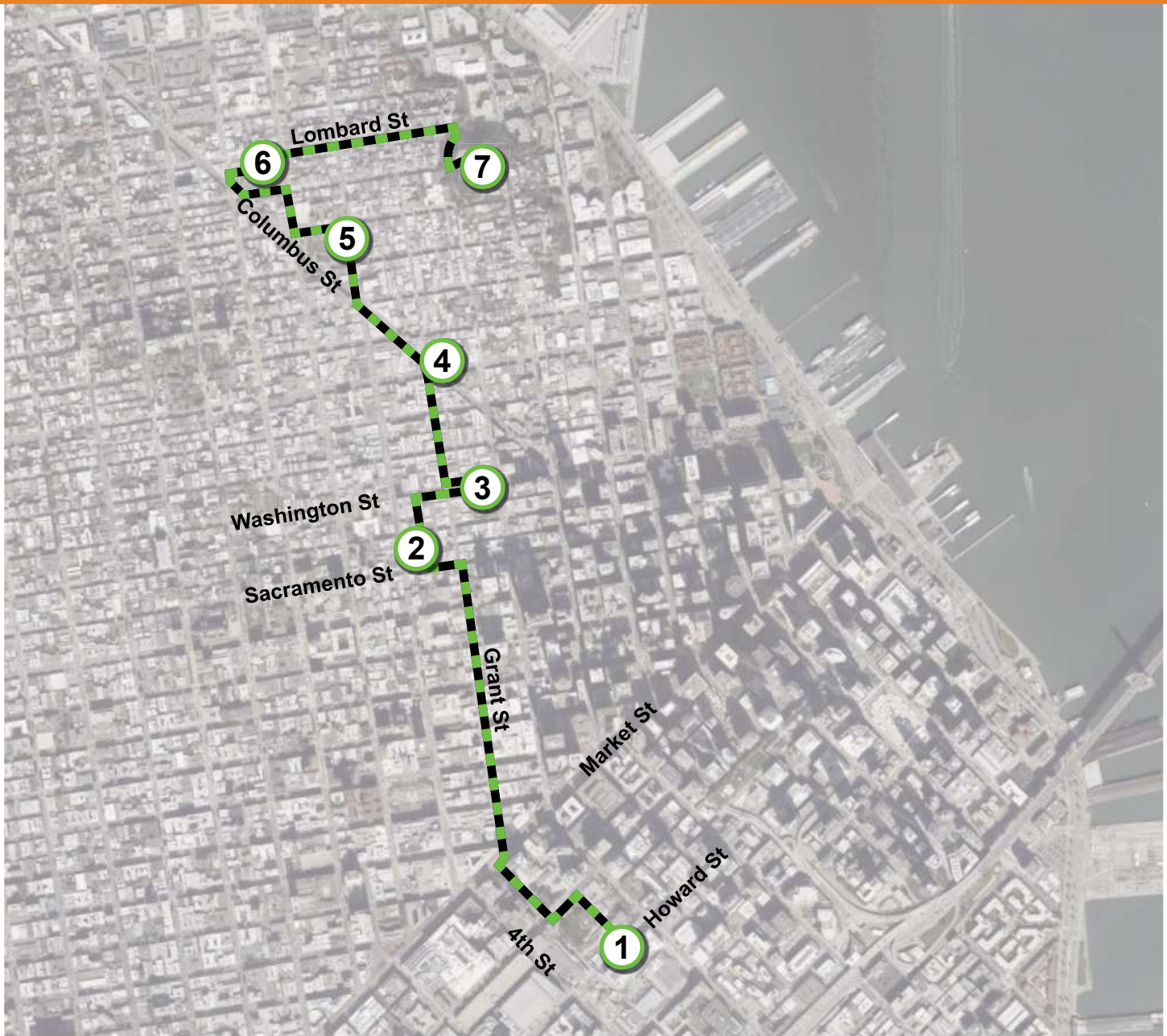
Jim Lee, over the past 40 years, Jim has designed sites that honor the qualities of their locations and value the eccentric characteristic aspirations of their programs. This is most evident in his mixed-use programs in the western U.S. and Asia, where he embraces a modern sensibility in resolving site characteristics with program to create livable places. Jim was born in the San Francisco Chinese Hospital and raised in the Chinatown community. Jim is passionate about working on the Portsmouth Square Improvement Project as it is heart of his community.

**Julie Christensen** + Executive Director Dogpatch & NW Potrero Hill Green Benefit District



Julie worked as Senior Interior Designer for SOM before opening her own design studio in 1982. For 33 years Julie's SurfaceWork studio fashioned innovative products, materials and finishes for high profile A&D, high tech and consumer goods companies in the US, Europe and Japan. In parallel, Julie has been a deeply committed volunteer parks advocate, playing a key role in the renovation of 3 major San Francisco parks. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the first Green Benefit District, applying quick build and iterative design principles to improvements to the public realm.

## CHINATOWN & NORTH BEACH WALKING TOUR MAP



**1 Start! Moscone Center**  
Along the way: Yerba Buena Gardens, Yerba Buena Lane, Chinatown Gate

**2 Willie “Woo Woo” Wong Playground**  
Along the way: Chinatown Alleys

**3 Portsmouth Square**  
Along the way: Chinatown’s Grant Street

**4 Language of the Birds Art Plaza**

**5 Washington Square**  
Break for Lunch!

**6 Joe DiMaggio Playground**  
Along the way: Telegraph Hill Neighborhood

**7 Pioneer Park at Coit Tower**



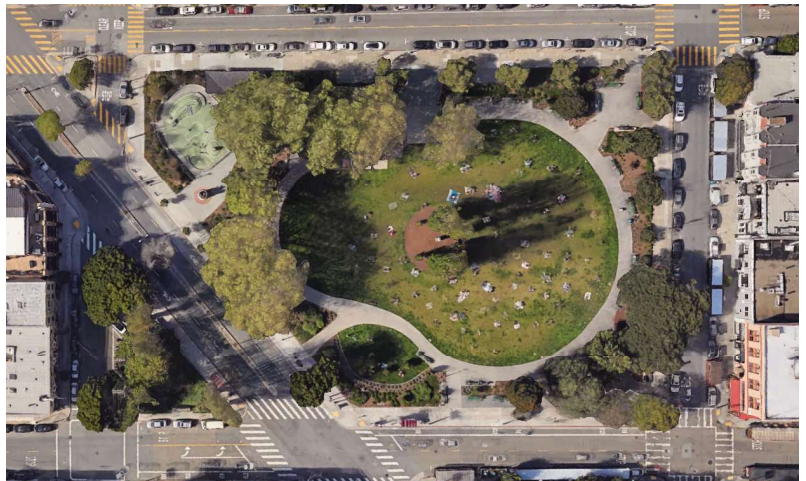
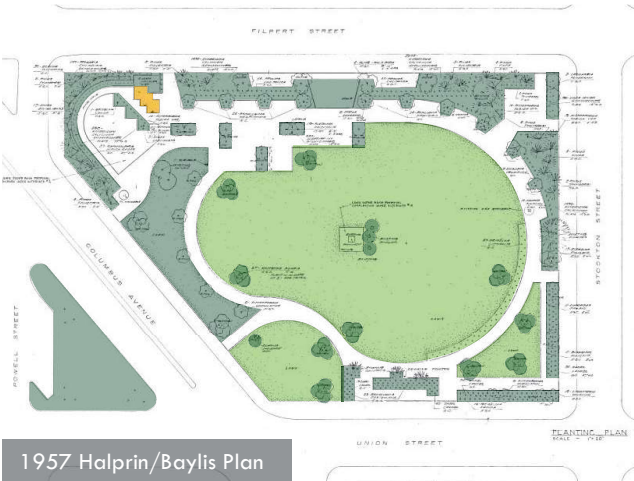
**2 Willie “Woo Woo” Wong Playground - Recreational Hub** Completion: 2021 | \$14 million



**3 Portsmouth Square - Neighborhood Hub** Targeted Completion: 2025 | \$72 million



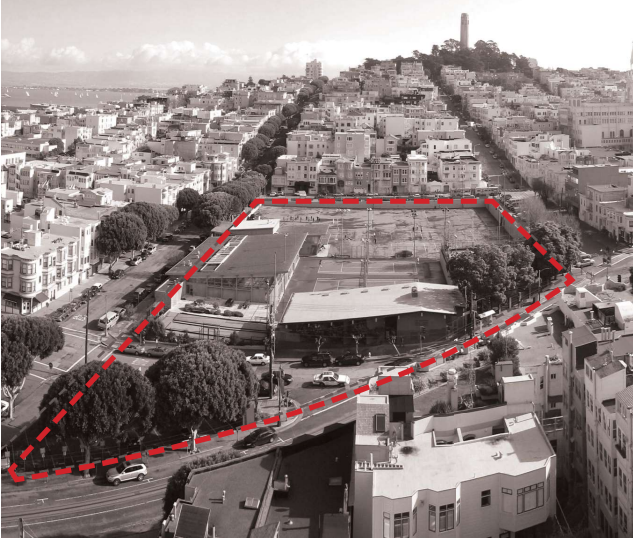
**5 Washington Square - Neighborhood Hub**  
Restroom (2015) \$1.8 million | Let's Play SF (2019) \$1.6 million | Water Conservation (2019) \$3.3 million





**6 Joe DiMaggio Playground - Recreational/Cultural Hub**

Pool/Clubhouse (2006) \$7.5 million | Library Bond (2014) \$14.5 million | Park Bond (2015) \$6.5 million



**7 Pioneer Park at Coit Tower - Citywide Attraction**

Park Stairways (2001) \$1.3 million (public/private partnership) | Coit Memorial Tower (2018) \$2.6 million





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Chinatown Alleyway program: <https://www.sfpublicworks.org/project/chinatown-alleyways-renovation-program>