

**EXCELSIOR PLANNING COLLABORATIVE:
VALUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY
A Working Draft
v. 2/7/13**

The Excelsior Planning Collaborative, comprised of local organizations and residents, is in the midst of a comprehensive planning process to improve the quality of life for all who live, work, and play in the Excelsior District. Over the past three months, the Collaborative has analyzed a wide range of studies and recent data regarding the neighborhood's living and working conditions. Emerging from this analysis is a set of aspirational values and actions we can take to build a foundation for the neighborhood plan—a foundation that will be flexible and reflect continuing input from our community.

ASPIRATIONAL VALUES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

- **Community Engagement and Empowerment**
Community members actively participate in the neighborhood in a variety of ways and, as a result, demonstrate that we have a voice in determining who and what our community is and where we're going.
- **Neighborhood Diversity**
The neighborhood collectively respects, celebrates, and engages in an exchange of our members' unique attributes including socio-economic status, ethnicity, language, cultural traditions, immigration status, lifestyle, health status, and age.
- **Economic Justice**
All community members have the opportunity to thrive economically, including having access to quality education and training, a job earning a living wage, business ownership, affordable housing, and a full understanding of one's financial options and responsibilities.
- **A Healthy Quality Of Life For All**
Community members have access to the information and services we need to maintain excellent physical, emotional and mental health, while enjoying a vibrant, secure neighborhood life in a safe, clean and inspiring environment.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY 1:
Community Vitality**

What does "Community Vitality" mean? One definition is a neighborhood with a rich social environment, robust enjoyment of day-to-day life, celebrating diversity of all sorts, thriving commercial life, abundant health, and more. Each Excelsior resident likely has his or her own opinion of what makes life "vibrant and vital" in our neighborhood—your ideas create opportunities to enhance our community's vitality. In the Excelsior, we're fortunate to have ample assets to build upon—however, there are also barriers we can work together to remove and promote a vital, engaged life for all who live and work here.

Key Statistics:

- 50% of District 11 residents are foreign-born.
- 74% of District 11 households are considered "family households."
- 18% of District 11 residents live in "linguistic isolation."
- 28% of Spanish-speaking households and 27% of Asian language speaking homes lack adequate community services.
- There are few public plazas or spaces for neighbors of all ages and ethnicities to gather.
- We lack family entertainment venues and clubs for all ages.
- The poverty level is 7.54%, according to Federal statistics. Of those who live in poverty, 44.27% live in extreme poverty (meaning they can't afford housing).

Short-Term Opportunities (within 1-2 years):

Develop a partnership with community stakeholders and companies to open businesses in the Excelsior; public, central place to gather; parklets on Mission & Geneva; Develop signature events, cultural celebrations; increase collaboration around events that already exist

Longer-Term Opportunities (3 years +):

Community cultural theater; bowling alley

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY 2:
Economic Development and Jobs**

Our strategic plan will increase opportunities for all Excelsior residents to thrive economically—opening access to good quality jobs, financial education, the possibility to run our own businesses, and the tools to build our personal financial assets. Our goal is to develop economic opportunities right here in our own Excelsior neighborhood. A robust "commercial corridor" (a main street or set of neighboring streets with a plentiful array of small businesses that serve the neighborhood) in the Excelsior will be a critical element to improving our local economic development strategies.

Key Statistics:

- Lack of affordable commercial space and business incubator spaces for local entrepreneurs.
- Empty storefronts remain dark while small businesses cannot afford inflated rents.
- From a poll of your neighbors by the Excelsior Working Group - Desired Business Types for the Excelsior Commercial Corridor.
 - 81% Fine Dining
 - 75% Fitness Center
 - 72% Bookstore
 - 33% Youth Space
 - 33% Pet Store
 - 27% Family Entertainment

- 24% Plant Nursery
 - 24% Night Light
 - 16% Print Shop
- *81% of the 370 respondents would patronize a new business either daily or weekly.*

Short-Term Opportunities (within 1-2 years):

Wash/clean businesses in Excelsior corridor; mirror Ocean/West Portal business district; grant or three months free rent for new businesses operating in the Excelsior; find key investors to support local businesses; job shadowing network for youth; job skills development; paid internships for adults; volunteer opportunities to build resumes

Longer-Term Opportunities (3 years +):

One-stop job center; bring mid-size businesses to the neighborhood; community block grant to support our merchants and the commercial corridor

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY 3:
Education and Youth**

The long-term sustainability of any community resides with its youth. Are our youth being given the opportunity to thrive via education, exposure to the arts, recreation, high earning occupation-focused training and civic engagement? Will our youth stay in the Excelsior to raise the next generation or will they move out? Are robust educational opportunities accessible to all children and adults—from cradle to career—as the key to career success and prosperity? This strategic opportunity will identify priorities to strengthen the lives of our neighborhood’s children and promote a culture of life-long learning.

Key Statistics:

- *Zip code 94112 is home to the largest number of infants, toddlers, pre-school age, and school-age children in San Francisco.*
- *Zip code 94112 is home to the largest number of infants and toddler eligible for subsidized care—and has the third largest population of pre-school age children and second of school-age children.*
- *48% of District 11 adult residents earned a high school degree or less.*
- *Children live in 37% of all District 11 households.*
- *71% of Students qualify for a Federal Lunch Subsidy. There is a clear need to work with SFUSD to promote free lunch SUMMER programs in the Excelsior schools.*

Short-Term Opportunities (within 1-2 years):

Promote “Bring Your Child to Work Day”; 21st Century Skills (STEM Programs); Arts & Enrichment; Educational programs for Adults and Seniors; identify key organizations/institutions supporting youth and fellowships, integrate into the community; volunteer opportunities for youth; social skills; increase summer jobs for all youth.

Longer-Term Opportunities (3 years +):

Myeep Program to place youth in local businesses, not just non-profits.

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY 4:
Health and Safety**

Good health is the vital keystone to the arch of a thriving life, as health impacts everything from our ability to work, to engage with others, and to enjoy all that life has to offer in our neighborhood. There are many different types of health to consider—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Critical to our overall health is the concept of “safety”—the ability to move throughout the community without the risk of harm or even the fear of potential harm. This strategic opportunity will identify priorities to strengthen our neighbors’ health, wellness, and safety.

Key Statistics:

- *High Injury Corridors - Mission from Trumbull to the SF/Daly City border & Geneva from Lisbon to Mission and near the Balboa BART station. The “Walk SF - 2011” recommend:*
 - Installing bus/sidewalk & corner bulb outs on Mission Street at all corners of the “Persia Triangle”,
 - Prohibit left turns from Persia onto Mission in both directions
 - Install informal seating in bulb outs.
 - Improve lighting
 - Paint limit lines
 - Install ADA compliant ramps along the length of Mission Street.
- *Walksf.org and the City and County of San Francisco recommends installation of parklets in this area, based on their April - August 2011 “Parklet Impact Study”. People liked the creation of new public spaces to sit, relax, and enjoy the area. The number of people stopping to socialize and engage in positive behavior increased significantly at Valencia and 22nd streets, Polk and Bush streets, and Stockton at Union.*
- *Above Average or Severe Public Health Indicators include:*
 - Hospitalization Rate due to Adult Asthma
 - Hospitalization Rate due to Asthma
 - Hospitalization Rate due to Pediatric Asthma
 - ER Rate due to Alcohol Abuse
 - Hospitalization Rate due to Congestive Heart Failure
- *There are limited to no Department of Public Health mental health services in this neighborhood.*
- *Access to primary and preventive health care services for those with public health insurance is limited. The clinics in the neighborhood do not necessarily have room for new patients, forcing insured people to go to another part of town.*
- *For low-income adults without insurance, there is now a free health clinic in the neighborhood that is committed to access to care within 2 weeks of enrollment.*

Short-Term Opportunities (within 1-2 years):

Promote free clinics; expand Big Brothers/Sisters; exercise classes like Zumba, salsa, yoga for a lower cost or free to adults and families; mental health services for youth (edgewood satellite clinic?); street safety, lighting, get the city to implement the recommended Persia Triangle traffic plan; personal safety and awareness workshops (partner with public schools & better promote Rec & Park programs); promote awareness of health resources already available by way of health fairs/inclusive events (partner with public schools)

Longer-Term Opportunities (3 years +):

Set up neighborhood watch groups; senior escorts, model Potrero Hill Neighborhood House type of resource focusing on at risk teens and their families

**STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY 5:
Housing and Land Use**

Essential to any thriving, healthy community is the availability of affordable, quality housing for all its residents. The Excelsior community faces an enormous challenge meeting this need, facing the dual pressures of insufficient affordable housing for our own working families, seniors, and young adults and increasing gentrification pressures as the homes of aging residents go on the market for the first time in decades. Yet in the midst of this potentially dire situation, our neighborhood has an untapped opportunity: to aggressively pursue new land-use strategies that can convert our numerous undeveloped and underutilized spaces—parking lots in particular—into a wide variety of residential and commercial uses for everyone in our community to enjoy.

Key Statistics:

- *A very high level (95.52%) of available housing is currently occupied, indicating the neighborhood needs more residential units to meet the community's demands.*
- *According to the 2010 U.S. Census: 62.54% of housing is owner occupied with an average of 3.73 people per dwelling. Renters live in 37.46% of occupied housing with 3.49 people per dwelling.*

Short-Term Opportunities (within 1-2 years):

Tenants rights/Land Use; free rent to small businesses starting up in unoccupied spaces; use Prop C housing stabilization funds to support improvements to existing structures

Longer-Term Opportunities (3 years +):

Instead of allowing gentrification, what about rehab - resell for income qualified homeowners; affordable housing in the upper yard at Balboa Park.