

A bit of park history...

In 1998, Jean Sweeney walked in this former Belt Line rail yard for the first time. Struck by the silence and what a gem of nature it was, she said, "This has got to be a park." The future of the rail yard was discussed at a public meeting in which Jean's dream was strongly supported. Inspired, she filed an initiative with the City of Alameda to rezone the rail yard as "Open Space." Her argument stated, "The Belt Line rail yard is a wonderful, natural meditative place within our city...

Seasonal fresh water ponds support the Pacific Chorus Frog. There are also red and blue bellied lizards, many species of birds, including hawks, owls, egrets, jackrabbits, dragonflies and butterflies." In 2002 the initiative passed with strong support.

Through persistent research, Jean

uncovered the 1924 contract of sale in which the City sold its belt line railroad for \$30,000 to the Western Pacific and the Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad companies. Later on this line would become the Alameda Belt Line. The contract included the City's right to purchase it back at any time for the original cost plus improvements. Upon receipt of the City's notice exercising this right to purchase, the Belt Line Railroad sued the City in 2000, alleging the contract was not enforceable. In 2006, the Superior Court of California for the County of Alameda found the contract valid and ruled in favor of the City. The ruling was appealed by the Railroad and in 2009 the California Appellate Court sustained the ruling. This allowed the City to purchase all of the Alameda Belt Line property, worth a conservatively estimated \$20 million, for less than \$1 million.

Thank You

Thanks to Alameda Advertising and Recognition for event donations.
Thanks to the Franz-Nichols Band and OGMC (Oakland Gay Men's Chorus) Pride of the Easy Bay for the event music! And a heartfelt thank you to Dorothy Freeman and Joe Woodard of Joseph Woodard Multimedia for their many hours spent taking video and photos of the park design, advocacy, and construction to document this momentous project and always being there to help with everything in between!

Project funding from the City of Alameda, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Tim Lewis Communities, Rotary Club of Alameda, Jean Sweeney Open Space Park Fund, Alameda Kiwanis Club, and the Alameda Community Fund.

Jean Sweeney Open Space Park

GRAND OPENING

Saturday, December 15th, 2018
1925 Sherman Street, Alameda



Alameda Recreation and Parks Department
www.alamedaca.gov/recreation



Jean Sweeney Open Space Park is a new, 25-acre community park located on the former Alameda Belt Line rail yard in the west end of Alameda. This first phase of the park includes the Cross Alameda Trail, a bicycle/pedestrian trail that ultimately will link across the entire Alameda island, a natural playground, picnic pavilion, open lawn, seating, parking, restroom, and Bay-Friendly, drought tolerant landscape.

Future phases will add a community garden, demonstration gardens, outdoor classroom, bicycle skills loop, outdoor classroom, and lots of open space and trails to enjoy. When fully completed, this will be the largest park of the Alameda Recreation and Parks Department.

Ode to Jean Sweeney by Lori Cassels

Born on a Nevada reservation

Jean saw the beauty beneath the blight

Scaled rusted fence

Trespassed concrete blocks

Wandered amid rails, ties

And the unloved urban void

Jean touched the trees

Jean heard the birds

Jean knew the quiet open space

Jean saw a Potential Park

Neighbors suffered acres of tangled brush and trash

Developers desired retail, residences and riches

Railroad right of way impasse

Jean knocked on doors

Jean called and wrote

Jean begged and

JEAN UNEARTHS A RIDER ON A 1924 CONTRACT!

City and Corporation a decade in court

Today stand on the grass and gravel path

Today ride the cross bike trail

Today swing your children and watch them slide

Today picnic with neighbors under the pavilion

Today listen to the birds that inspired and say thank you Jean Sweeney.

She will hear you.

Grand Opening Ceremony Speakers

Alameda City Council

Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer

Councilmember Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

Councilmember Frank Matarrese

Councilmember Jim Oddie

United States House of Representatives

Congresswoman Barbara Lee

California State Assembly

Assemblymember Rob Bonta

California Department of State Parks and Recreation

Sedrick V. Mitchell, Deputy Director, Community Engagement Division

Jean Sweeney Open Space Park Foundation

Jim Sweeney, Board Director

Dorothy Freeman, Board Director

Emcee

Amy Wooldridge, Recreation and Parks Director, City of Alameda

Alameda City Council

Mayor Trish Herrera Spencer

Vice Mayor Malia Vella

Councilmember Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

Councilmember Frank Matarrese

Councilmember Jim Oddie

Staff

Dave Rudat, Interim City Manager

Elizabeth Warmerdam, Assistant City Manager

Amy Wooldridge, Recreation and Parks Director

John McDonald, Parks Manager

Jack Dybas, Project Manager

Recreation and Parks Commission

Chair Ron Limoges

Commissioner Adrienne Alexander

Commissioner Mindi Chen

Commissioner Chris Pondok

Commissioner Eric Robbins

Construction

Suarez and Munoz, Contractor

Placeworks, Landscape Architect