Attachment C

Supporting Correspondence
May 21, 2013

Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Ms. Bohee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the work of Linda Lucero and the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. I strongly encourage you and your fellow commissioners to extend the current Programming Agreement for the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival for the longest term possible and not disrupt important community relationships built through this enormously successful and important program.

I have worked with Linda for over 15 years through my work directing the TODCO senior poets. Our low-income elders have come from many diverse places including the Philippines, China, Odessa as well as San Francisco. They feel strongly about their next door neighbor—the Yerba Buena Gardens and especially the culturally diverse, free, arts and music programs that they could neither access nor afford were it not for the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival.

TODCO is a model developer of affordable housing for low-income seniors in the Yerba Buena neighborhood and has worked closely with the Yerba Buena Gardens since its inception. Our poem, “Dare We Dream in Concrete” is inscribed near the entrance to the Gardens as speaks to our dream of arts for all in our community. This is a dream we ask you to nourish as a city.

I deeply appreciate the sensitivity Linda and her staff have for including culturally diverse, community-based, elder artists in their festival programming. Giving voice to the elders poets (ages 70 – 92) in our community has inspired audiences each time we perform. Hundreds of TODCO’s residents enjoy Festival events as well.

We are proud to be a part of the community that Linda and her staff nurture through the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. I have included several heartfelt letters from my students, some writing in English as a second language. It is our sincere hope that this program continues to grow with your strong support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Deutsch, Director, TODCO Senior Poets
May 23, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Director Bohee:

I am writing on behalf of the Children’s Creativity Museum (CCM) to express our strongest support for an extension by the OCI1 Commission of the current Yerba Buena Gardens Festival (YBGF) Programming Agreement for the longest term possible. The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival is an integral part of the cultural fabric, not just of the Yerba Buena Gardens neighborhood, but of the entire San Francisco community.

YBGF is one of the few organizations of its kind that consistently and regularly delivers high-quality public programming provided by world-renowned artists for free to the City’s diverse families and communities.

Their children’s series in the Children’s Circle has helped to draw families into the Gardens and also to the Children’s Creativity Museum, and we look forward to continuing to partner with YBGF to explore opportunities for partnership in service of the City’s youth and families.

The YBGF’s leadership – under the experienced guidance of Artistic and Executive Director, Linda Lucero – has guaranteed that the YBGF is a draw for artists and performers from all over the world to bring their craft and creative work to San Francisco.

An extension of the YBGF’s current Programming Agreement will provide a solid foundation for our shared efforts to activate the Yerba Buena Gardens as an incomparable community resource for all San Franciscans to enjoy!

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me at 415.820.3333 or via email at Michael@creativity.org. Thank you for your time and attention!

Respectfully,

Michael Nobleza
Executive Director
May 17, 2013

Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Ms. Bohee,

I am 92 years old and live in Mendelsohn House, a TODCO building behind the Yerba Buena Gardens. I want you to know I have lived in this neighborhood for 25 years, coming from Manila. Please, please keep the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival alive and well for us elderly people and extend the agreement for this.

Yerba Buena Gardens is our garden, our art, our place of unity, one world, one life. I am so happy when I had a chance to perform my poem, “Never Too Late” which is my philosophy of life. It’s never too late to learn something new, try something new, grow like a flower in the Yerba Buena Gardens.

The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival events makes life feel like joy. When I listen to music, see the dance, or when I read my poems, it’s like a medicine for me. I told my doctor! It makes me happy. Makes us happy for all the TODCO elderly. It gives us fuller life, like inspiration.

The art in the Yerba Buena Gardens is so profound. It’s really the art of love. It makes all humanity peaceful. Please help our garden grow and keep the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival strong and growing. I hope you understand my “upside down English.”

With love,

[Signature]

Marie Phong Tran
May 19, 2013

To: Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director  
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure  
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor  
San Francisco, California 94103

Re: Extension of Programming Agreement for Yerba Buena Gardens Festival (YBGF)

Dear Ms. Bohee,

Please extend the programming agreement for YBGF. The YBGF calendar of events represents the heartbeat of this city. I have performed with the TODCO poets for several years now and am truly proud to be a part of this wonderful program. My sister, Denise, a professional jazz singer, has also performed in the gardens and we so value this amazing program that reaches out to our community.

I also act as a senior mentor for IHSS (in-home support services) and the programs in the Yerba Buena Gardens are a premier activity that I use to help my mentees as they transition from Laguna Honda Hospital. It gives them great joy.

The Garden and the YBGF is dear to our hearts. As a life-long resident of this city, and a voter, I am proud that the city has been so intelligent and generous as to support this valued tradition for both residents and visitors alike.

I truly hope you will continue to support YBGF and extend their programming agreement for as long as possible.

Sincerely,

Joyce Jackson
101 Banks Street  
San Francisco, CA  94110  
May 20, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure  
c/o Ms. Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director  
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure  
1 South Van Ness Avenue, 5th floor  
San Francisco, CA  94103  

Dear Commissioners:

I’m writing to request that you extend the current Programming Agreement with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival for as long a time period as possible.

The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival is an unparalleled resource for San Franciscans and for the many people who visit our city for the day or for longer stays. It is all of the following and more:

• a showcase for the rich variety of performing art available in this city and a draw for people to come into downtown
• a deeply appreciated source of entertainment for people like myself who are seniors and/or people with disabilities. Being in the daytime, outdoors, and near good public transit, it’s very accessible to almost everyone.
• The management of the YBGF do a lot to promote inter-group appreciation for the diversity of our city.
• It’s a wonderful family resource as people can come with their children; the park setting allows the children to move about freely while taking in good quality programming.
• Unlike Stern Grove, it’s warm and flat and situated in the most densely populated part of the city.
• People of all ages come to the shows and get to know each other in a safe, pleasant environment.

Please ensure that these remarkable programs continue to be there for all of us at Yerba Buena Gardens.

Sincerely,

Susan Kitazawa, RN (retired)
MAY 20, 2013

THE COMMISSION ON
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

c/o TIFFANY BOHEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
ONE SOUTH VAN NESS AVE, 5TH FLOOR
S.F. CA, 94103

DEAR MS. BOHEE,

AS A RESIDENT AND VOTER OF SAN FRANCISCO FOR OVER 30 YEARS, I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO EXTEND THE CURRENT PROGRAM AGREEMENT FOR THE YERBA BUENA GARDENS FESTIVAL.

THE PROGRAMS REFLECT THE RICH CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC DIVERSITY THAT MAKES SAN FRANCISCO THE UNIQUE CITY THAT IT IS. I HAVE ENJOYED THE PERFORMANCES BOTH AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER AND A PERFORMER WITH THE TOPCO POETS. THE SURROUNDINGS ARE A PERFECT SETTING FOR COMMUNITY GATHERINGS FOR ALL OF SAN FRANCISCO'S CITIZENS AND VISITORS. THE LOSS OF THESE PROGRAMS WOULD MAKE US ALL POORER. PLEASE CONTINUE FUNDING.

SANDRA CAIC VANDERPOOL
Sandra Caic Vanderpool
THE YERBA BUENA GARDENS

It started when the ground was dry
When there was a plan on paper
And Mayor Brown was with us
The group of elderly poets
Who put the event into poems
No magnificent buildings,
Museums, cafes, no shops
No stage for performing groups
No waterfall sprinkling silver
No flowers multicolored
No carpet of green grass
Where people lay and rest
No festivals of different kinds
Imagine what people could do
With a piece of old ground
Turning it into a fantastic place!

Genya Ehrlich
May 2013

21 year member
of TODCO Poets
Creative Writing Class
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure of Tiffany Sokol, Executive Director

Sirenly one years ago I immigrated to the US from San Francisco from the former Soviet Union. Imagine how lucky I was being a teacher of English! Immediately I started to use any opportunity to adopt here as soon as possible. There were no Yerba Buena Gardens then. But there was a Creative Writing Class. Our teacher Nancy Sutch told us there are places we could in our poems tell the history of this wonderful place for the generations to come. Our first visit was together with Willy Brown, who was mayor of San Francisco at that time. The place looked as run down as then. The San Francisco Hill of cows and hills of earth could ever think that it will be turned into a wonderful place for people to rest, enjoy visiting the museum, theater, cafes, museums, etc.etc. Happy I am to be able to live and vote in San Francisco.

Lenya Sokol

Member of the Creative Writing class.
May 19, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Director Bohee,

I'm writing this letter as a very new member of The Todeo Poets Creative Writing Class. For many years I have attended The Poets bi-annual performances at Yerba Buena Gardens as a member of the audience. So many memorable photographs over the years.

After attending several holiday and special event celebrations, and several invitations, I finally decided to join The Poets group. And what an interesting and enjoyable experience it is.

As a San Francisco taxicab driver of more than 30 years, and my experience transporting a good many elderly passengers, I feel this is exactly the kind of activity that the many residents of the neighborhood around The Moscone Convention Center need.

Please give every consideration to continuing this very worthwhile activity for as long a time as possible.

Thank You.
Sincerely,

George England
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to strongly encourage the Commissioners to extend our current Programming Agreement, at the current funding level for the longest term possible,

I have been a Board Member with the Yerba Bunea Arts and Events for seven years. Serving has been one of the most rewarding opportunities for me. I am a mission driven Board Member; Arts and Events more than fulfills our mission. I am there because it also fulfills my personal mission: 'to inspire the desire for Arts and Culture Literacy'. The Festival is all about supporting cultural literacy.

I went to the opening season concert at the Festival Garden. It's a seasonal migration for me; a sign of Spring. The Festival is a wonderful gatherings of a diverse cross section of San Francisco. The Festival has a broad range of artists representing an electric mix of cultures. It is the most community centered cultural events in the City; artist and audience get to engage on an intimate level in a public space. This is magic happening right in the heart of the City.

Truly unique, truly San Francisco.

Thanks Your for Your attention.

Geol Leonard Weirs
Board Member

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5/21/13

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
C/O Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Tiffany Bohee,

I am a big supporter of the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and have attended several events yearly for many years. The Yerba Buena Festival is a real San Francisco Treasure with free outstanding performances for all San Franciscans during the summer months. I hope the festival can be renewed for as long as possible as I look forward to attending yearly. I have seen so many incredible shows I am deeply grateful to the City of San Francisco and the sponsors that make it possible.

I am very passionate about the festival because I believe it is one of the best events in San Francisco. The staff does an incredible job of bringing in great talent. The entertainment is fantastic and it also supports so many talented local artist and musicians. Please extend the current Programming Agreement as long as possible.

Sincerely,

Michael March
415 821-6353
Summer Series at Yerba Buena

PATRICIA JONES

do:
Denise.Zermani@sfgov.org
05/20/2013 08:35 AM
Show Details

History: This message has been replied to.
As a resident of San Francisco for the last 54 years and a member of the TODCO poets, I remember the City that I knew back in the 60’s. A beautiful city with a great location, but lacking the free entertainment that came to fruition over time. When the Yerba Buena Summer series started in 1993 it added a new dimension to the business oriented downtown area.

This summer series offers entertainment not only to the working lunchtime crowd, but to the multitudes who attend the on-going conventions at Moscone Center and tourists from around the world. This is one of the events that makes San Francisco a most desirable tourist location. I sincerely hope that this program will continue to be funded.

Thank you.

Patricia Jones
1240 Fillmore St, #1107
San Francisco, California 4115
TODCO poets
david gregory
to:
Denise.Zermani@sfgov.org
05/20/2013 05:52 PM
Please respond to david gregory
Show Details

History: This message has been replied to.

As a longtime resident, for almost half a century, and a registered voter in San Francisco, I strongly urge the Commissioners to extend the current Programming Agreement for TODCO. I admit I have a selfish motive for I am one of those TODCO poets who have performed in Yerba Buena Gardens for the last few years. The programme helps keep us seniors active and makes our minds alert. Besides it prevents us from being idle and doing mischief. I especially commend Linda Lucero and her efforts to include the community in Yerba Buena Gardens. DAVID GREGORY
May 24, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure  
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director  
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure  
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)  
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Ms. Bohee,

I am delighted that you and your colleagues at OCIIC are planning to continue the services provided by Yerba Buena Arts and Events (YBA&E, aka Yerba Buena Gardens Festival) in Yerba Buena Gardens. I want to take this opportunity to share with the members of OCIIC a bit of important historical background about YBA&E.

When the Yerba Buena Center Redevelopment Area was being planned, Mayor Moscone’s Select Committee discussed the project with the community in order to secure the necessary community support. Out of many discussions came a final programming agreement among all stakeholders that allowed the long-stalled project to move forward. The key articles of this agreement stipulated, first, that there should be a balance of uses wherein no one use was dominant, and second, that there should be revenue-producing uses to ensure the viability of the artistic and public amenities.

It was further agreed that there were to be as many admission-free and publicly-accessible artistic venues as possible, with the Gardens managed and maintained for maximum activity. It was recognized by all that such active and meaningful public use would result in a space both well-loved by the community and free of the security issues that often beset outdoor urban spaces. The intention was to design an artistic venue that could accommodate as many types of performances as feasible, from presentations by the TODCO Senior Poets to the San Francisco Opera. Thus the built-in stages, the slopes for amphitheaters, a “green room” for artists and publicly-owned equipment were built into the agreement for Yerba Buena Gardens early on.

At that time, the Redevelopment Agency believed the Gardens could be managed by the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) board and staff. Thus, for the first 2 or 3 years after the project came online, the Gardens programming was managed by YBCA.
However, YBCA, with its focus on its indoor arts facilities lacked the time and the necessary expertise to guide and develop the Gardens as an outdoor artistic venue in their own right. Mario Garcia Durham, a performing arts curator, resigned his position at YBCA in order to take the position of first executive director of YBA&E and to pursue the development of a distinct artistic program for the outdoor performing arts spaces of Yerba Buena Gardens. Mario’s success in managing YBG as the premier outdoor performing arts venue that it was intended to be eventually caught the attention of the staff at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The NEA then created a new specialty department for outdoor performing arts and hired Mario to be the first director.

We were fortunate at that time that Linda Lucero was available, and, with Mario’s encouragement and support, she assumed the role of YBA&E executive and artistic director after Mario left for the NEA. Linda has successfully built on the solid foundation that Mario laid – positioning YBG as an internationally-recognized outdoor performing arts venue bringing in the highest quality local and international artists for more than 100 free events every year. The City is very fortunate to have Linda and the fine board and staff she has brought together to fully realize the vision and intended purpose of YBG to operate as a world-class performing arts venue.

I urge you to grant a 5-year extension for YBA&E to ensure the continued viability and stability of this pioneering organization, which has done so much to fulfill the commitments made in the building of the YBC redevelopment project.

Sincerely,

Helen Sause
former SFRA, Deputy Director for Projects and Programs
Dear Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure,

I am writing to you and your commissioners to ask that you support extending the current programming agreement with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival (YBGF). In my multiple roles as an Arts Commissioner for the city, as a San Francisco State faculty member in the College of Ethnic Studies and the School of Music and Dance, and as an arts program administrator for the San Francisco Unified School District, I am heavily involved and invested in the performing arts and arts education. YBGF is a small, independent non-profit organization without walls, providing a six-month season of admission-free programming to benefit all San Franciscans and visitors to this great city.

Over the years, I have seen how YBGF has served a diverse community of both artists (who value the opportunity to showcase their work through paid performances) and arts patrons (who value the diversity of the free presentations). Their commitment in this programming endeavor has contributed to the economic vitality in the immediate area, has drawn major resources to the City and County of San Francisco, and generated national funds for public purposes and for the city's tourism and convention industry. Their events are always well attended and are designed with public input and maximum public benefit. I believe that as a presenting organization, YBGF is on par with other nationally known outdoor festivals such as Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Sigmund Stern Grove Festival.

In closing, YBGF and its staff have proven to be stalwarts and guardians of Yerba Buena Gardens and its use for public enjoyment and the arts. They have a proven track record amongst many concerned communities whom I sure will be requesting the same as I do, to keep YBGF as the programming organization for the Garden.

Sincerely,

John Calloway, Ed.D
Arts Commissioner, City and County of San Francisco
Faculty, San Francisco State University
May 28, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: Extension of Yerba Buena Arts & Events' (YBG Festival) Programming Agreement with San Francisco’s Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure.

Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to submit an unconditional endorsement of the Yerba Buena Arts & Events and YBG Festival program and an extension of the agreement to work with them for the longest extension period possible. As a program co-organizer with YBG for 15 years, I can say that they provide an unequalled service to the community in quality programming that promotes the cultural diversity and vitality of San Francisco. Our organization was displaced in 2000 with the dot.com boom and bust and since then this event has been one of our primary means of reaching out to the community. YBG represents diverse artists, provides ongoing and consistently high quality, cost-effective programming to the general public, and their professional and dedicated staff are always a pleasure to work with. I believe this is one of the best investments your department could make in showcasing the artistic talent of the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond in a program that is well managed (no drama) and shows the positive cultural elements of San Francisco loved by locals and visitors alike. I apologize for not being able to attend this important meeting but hope you will take our favorable endorsement into consideration in your deliberations and thank you for the opportunity to present this letter of support.

Sincerely,
Janeen Antoine, Director
American Indian Contemporary Arts
May 28, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: Yerba Buena Arts & Events

Greetings,

As a leader and longtime member of the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band, the first openly LGBT music organization in the world celebrating its 35th anniversary this year, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to submit this letter of support for the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival (YBGF). The San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band has been fortunate to perform at Yerba Buena Gardens both as part of the YBGF season and for our own special events, and we can't speak highly enough about YBGF and its dedicated and knowledgeable staff, led by Executive Director Linda Lucero.

We all know San Francisco is one of the most desirable destinations in the country with the tradeoff that real estate is expensive and rents are high. As a small performing arts non-profit, our key challenge is finding venues that won't bust the bank. Having access to a performance space like Yerba Buena Gardens right in the center of downtown San Francisco in a district where major shopping and cultural destinations intersect has been an amazing opportunity for us to reach audiences who never would have otherwise heard our concert performances.

The San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band first performed at Yerba Buena Gardens as part of YBGF's Ol' Fashioned 4th of July Alternative Family Picnic, a collaborative, artful answer to posturing by conservative politicians about the alleged dangers of alternative family structures. The event was a colorful demonstration of San Francisco's inclusive spirit years before marriage equality was making national headlines. It was a perfect match for our mission – building bridges between the LGBT community and mainstream audiences. We were honored to be invited and the staff was so otherwise on top of all our needs as performers – sound, equipment, publicity, appropriate collaborators – that we returned for the this event for many years. Our wonderful experience even led us scheduling two major events of our own in Yerba Buena Gardens.

We further collaborated with YBGF, when Linda Lucero invited us to premiere an original piece in the gardens composed for the Freedom Band by Jennifer Higdon, an out lesbian and rising star in the classical music scene. Working with an internationally recognized composer as she created music specifically for us was an incredible experience that was only possible because of Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and Linda Lucero's leadership.

Yerba Buena Gardens Festival is truly a gem in the heart of San Francisco. We strongly encourage you to extend Yerba Buena Arts & Events programming agreement for the longest term possible.

Best,

[Signature]

Heidi Beeler
Director of Communications, San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band

SAN FRANCISCO LESBIAN/GAY FREEDOM BAND, INC.
584 Castro Street, PMB 841, San Francisco, CA 94114  Phone 415.255.1355  www.sflgbf.org
May 28, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: Support for Yerba Buena Gardens Festival’s Current Programming Agreement.

I am sending this letter to request your support for the extension of the Yerba Buena Garden’s Festival (YBG Festival) current Programming Agreement.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the YBG Garden Festival, I am proud to inform you that we have been dedicating its resources to enhancing the vitality and quality of life at Yerba Buena Gardens through the curated presentation of free artistic, community, and cultural programs. The YBG Festival presents classical, world, and jazz music; contemporary and traditional dance; theater; children’s and family programs; and other cultural events every Saturday and Sunday afternoon from May through October. We have successfully secured funding from the National Endowment of Arts, and from private foundations such as the Hewlett Foundation, Packard Foundation, and San Francisco Foundation to support up-and-coming artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. Consequently, we have attracted tens of thousands of people to the Gardens every year, making the Gardens one of the most prominent destinations in San Francisco. These events have not only gained international fame, but also made the Yerba Buena Center area vibrant and welcoming.

The YBG Festival has also been responsible for managing the use of the Gardens by leasing the space on the upper level of the Martin Luther King Memorial Fountain and the Gardens for private functions and events. The revenues from these activities help fund the operations of the YBG Festival. San Francisco needs an organization like the YBG Festival to enhance the vibrancy of the City. I strongly request that the CCII Commissioners fully support the YBG Festival and approve the extension of the current Programming Agreement.

I thank you for the opportunity to send you this letter of support. I look forward to hearing the good news.

Sincerely yours,

Chi-Hsin Shao
Principal

cc: Denise Zermani
    Linda Lucero