

**West of Twin Peaks Central Council
San Francisco, California
Since 1936**



Forward

Since 1936, the West of Twin Peaks Central Council (the "Council") has been dedicated to serving the needs of the residential community located west of Twin Peaks, in the City of San Francisco. Throughout the years, the Council has lobbied vigorously for public schools, parks, libraries, public transportation and other essential needs of the community.

Currently, the Council has delegates from seventeen homeowner associations that collectively represent approximately 90,000 people in San Francisco:

1. Balboa Terrace Homes Association
2. Crest lake Property Owners Association
3. Forest Hill Association
4. Forest Knolls Neighborhood Organization
5. Galewood Circle Homeowners Association
6. Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association
7. Lakeshore Acres Improvement Club
8. Lakeside Homeowners Association
9. Lakeside Property Owners Association
10. Merced Manor Property Owners Association
11. Midtown Terrace Homeowners Association
12. Miraloma Park Improvement Club
13. Monterey Heights Homes Association
14. Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association
15. St. Francis Homes Association
16. Westwood Highlands Association
17. Westwood Park Association

The geographical area served by the Council is depicted on the enclosed map.

The 1930s

The Council organized in September of 1936 "to bring about cooperation and united action among all the home, civic and improvement organizations in the district known as 'West of Twin Peaks.'"

The Council began by successfully lobbying for the construction of new schools, such as Lincoln High School and Miraloma Park Elementary School, and the development of the West Portal branch library on Lenox Way.

The delegates addressed issues concerning transportation, as well. The Council worked with the city to establish efficient public streetcar and bus service, and to develop safe traffic plans for the area.

The Council also participated in the creation of community playgrounds and parks. For example, it was instrumental in the City's purchase of an additional tract of land for Stern Grove, and arranged for the maintenance of gardens in many neighborhood greenways.

In the 1930's, the Council laid the groundwork for preserving the West of Twin Peaks area as a residential community within the City. Council members began closely monitoring the creation and application of zoning laws, such as those concerning commercial uses contrary to the character of the community.

The 1940s

In the war years, the Council helped the West of Twin Peaks community respond to a variety of different needs. For example, the Council sponsored Red Cross blood drives, participated in the development of air-raid shelters and disaster relief plans, and supported neighborhood Victory Gardens.

The 1940's were a time of significant growth in the community. Plans were drawn up for the development of tracts of land around Ocean Avenue, including the present-day stonestown Galleria, property held by Spring Valley Company, and the San Francisco Junior College, now known as the city college of San Francisco, and its surrounding area. The Council closely monitored these developments so as to preserve the residential character of the community.

The Council continued lobbying for the growing needs of the West of Twin Peaks area. It was instrumental in developing the newly constructed Aptos Middle School. The Council also worked to ensure the establishment of the Taraval Police Station, the post office located on West Portal Avenue, and various fire stations within the community.

The Council secured additional land for parkland, such as the northeast slope of Mt. Davidson that was purchased by the city.

The 1950s

The Council devoted much of the 1950's to the educational needs of the emerging baby-boom generation.

Council representatives monitored the development of an addition to Lincoln High School, supported plans for present-day Lakeshore Alternative elementary school and Lowell High School, and even welcomed students from Aptos Middle School to a monthly meeting.

The Council addressed other educational issues as well. It secured the establishment of the Merced Branch library located on Winston Drive. It also sought reform in the selection of the Board of Education, by lobbying for election, rather than political appointment of the Board's members.

The Council participated in the plans for development of the Junipero Serra playground in Lakeside, the search for a suitable site for a public golf course, the development of the recreational uses of Lake Merced, and the construction of the Sava Pool in Larson Park and the Balboa Park Swimming Pool.

The Council continued to closely evaluate any zoning or related issues concerning the residential character of the community.

The 1960s

The 1960's were a time of rapid change for the city and the West of Twin Peaks community within it. In the context of the political and social developments of the decade, the Council reexamined the needs of all the people it served and the demands of preserving their residential neighborhoods.

The Council addressed concerns such as the increased movement of families to the suburbs, the quality of local public education, and the burden of escalating property-tax assessments.

The risk of commercialization of residentially-zoned property was acute during these years. In the late 1960's, the Council responded by financing a lawsuit that successfully upheld deed restrictions prohibiting commercial use of residential property.

Council representatives continued to monitor a variety of city commissions and boards regarding zoning and related issues, such as "in-law" units within homes, and the creation of any "Western Freeway" through the community.

During the 1960's, the Council even prepared monthly letters to the Board of Supervisors to identify the neighborhood organization that would represent the Council at the Board of Supervisors' meetings for that month.

The 1970s

In the 1970s, the council investigated plans for modifying the City's infrastructure. For example, the Council closely monitored plans for the extension of the MUNI rail service within the West of Twin Peaks community, the development of a modernized sewage treatment system, and the use of mechanized street sweeping.

The Council analyzed the possibility of a roll-back in property taxes, even before the passage of Proposition 13. The "Fair Tax Initiative," which was proposed by a local group of taxpayers, called for a rate of no more than 1% of the market value of each home.

The Council also continued to monitor a variety of issues concerning the public education offered in the West of Twin Peaks area. It successfully lobbied for the development of McAteer High School on Portola Drive, pressed for clarification of the allocation of school bond funds, and continued its efforts to change the Board of Education selection process from political appointment to election.

As in the past years, the Council analyzed zoning and related issues of concern to the community. Council representatives continued to represent the community at public meetings of the city commissions and boards, as well .

The 1980s

The 1980's presented sharp challenges to the environment and to the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of the West of Twin Peaks community.

One set of challenges concerned the increase in noise pollution arising from the rerouting of San Francisco International Airport traffic over the community, and the potential for more air traffic upon completion of a proposed, new runway for trans-Pacific flights. To address these issues, a Council representative regularly participated in the San Francisco International Airport Round Table meetings, and the Council monitored the airport's expansion plans.

The 1980's presented a variety of other environmental issues as well, such as the dwindling number of open spaces in the community, the beginning of a lengthy drought, and the continuing development of a sewage treatment system extending out through the western area of the City.

The Council responded to these challenges. For example, the Council promoted the Open Space Plan for preserving undeveloped areas such as "Hawk Hill," located behind Herbert Hoover Middle School. It supported the planting of trees by Friends of the Urban Forest. It also monitored the City's drought plans, and the development of the sewage treatment system.

The 1990s and into the future

The essential issue confronting the West of Twin Peaks community in the 1990's is how the residential character of the neighborhoods can be preserved within the increasingly urbanized City of San Francisco.

Since 1936, the Council has struggled to establish zoning regulations that would foster a flourishing community of single family homes within its neighborhoods. Given the intensity of the current economic, environmental, and population pressures, the Council needs greater assistance from the Planning commission to ensure that suitable residential codes are established and enforced to preserve the character of the community.

Other ways of preserving and improving the quality of life in the community, include redirecting airport traffic away from the West of Twin Peaks area, or at least reducing the noise pollution of continuing flights, increasing the number of areas designated as Open Space, maintaining clean and safe public parks, enhancing public education, cleaning up the streets and public facilities, and providing adequate police protection.

All of these issues are crucial to the preservation of a healthy residential community in the West of Twin Peaks area into the 1990's and the future.

This booklet was prepared in the Summer of 1992, by the History committee of the West of Twin Peaks Central Council. It was authored by Amy V. Quirk with detailed research and editing contributions from Donna Balzarini, Dave Bisho, Karen Hensley, and Scott Peoples, and additional assistance from Maureen Conroy, Carol Kocivar and Art Rosenberg.