



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

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Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

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Withdrawal of the Water Treatment Plant Proposal = A new opportunity for Golden Gate Park

The decision to move the proposed Water Treatment Plant out of Golden Gate Park recognizes the value of Golden Gate Park as *parkland*. When the local community was first informed of the SF Public Utilities Commission (PUC) proposal to construct an industrial building for tertiary water treatment next to the Murphy Windmill, many raised their voices. The SF Public Utilities Commission (PUC) responded by holding a series of meetings at which the community presented detailed maps of alternative locations for the facility. Over and above the availability of better locations, the public's concern for preserving Golden Gate Park's parkland resonated with the staff of the SF PUC and resulted in their wise decision to move this industrial use out of Golden Gate Park.

This decision now opens up the western edge of Golden Gate Park to the completion of the vision of the park outlined in the 1998 Golden Gate Park Master Plan. The GGP Master Plan talks of the western end of the park as being a "wild and forested" area. The recently published Ocean Beach Master Plan praises the beauty of Ocean Beach, which "has a wild, rugged character and a unique culture and history. Improvements should retain and draw upon these qualities." Together, these plans suggest the potential for a natural link between Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach.

By envisioning the entire western edge of the Park as a *whole*, there are now over 15 acres open for a new design of what is now an unsightly construction yard, the soccer fields, and the unmade connection to Ocean Beach across the Great highway. Here is an opportunity for renewed meadows, an enhanced windbreak, new planted areas, wildlife habitat, and for a connection to Ocean Beach that enhances the usability and beauty of the entire area.

The idea that the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields, currently grass, should be replaced by artificially paved fields to be used until 10 p.m. every day of the year under 60-foot tall stadium lights, is entirely out of place in this setting. The playing fields should be renovated as live grass that serves a wide range of park-goers as active recreation while preserving the area for quiet pursuits as well.

With the soccer fields restored with natural grass to be used in daytime only, visitors would then enjoy the Beach Chalet restaurant and walk the old railroad path next to the Beach Chalet fields to the renovated Murphy Windmill and the Millwright's Cottage. Maintaining the fields as real grass and opening them to the general public would allow people to return to the area for picnicking, kite-flying, and all of the other activities that allow them to enjoy nature away from the stresses of city life.

This far-reaching vision would value wildlife habitat and the park as a multi-use, naturalistic landscape. While the park would be enjoyed by visitors during the day, at night, when darkness falls, it would return to nature and to the wildlife who find refuge in it. Ocean Beach would continue to be a place where San Franciscans could enjoy the pleasure of watching a sunset, without 150,000 watts of bright sports lights behind them. They would be able to stroll on the ocean edge in falling darkness and to view the stars in the night sky.

San Francisco will only become more dense and crowded in the future. Wildlife needs to have the western edge of Golden Gate Park be a verdant habitat and a refuge, with no plastic grass or deadly night lighting. Future generations of children would benefit from the opportunity to learn about nature and interact with wildlife. We will never have another opportunity like this.

(See related article page four)

Dog Management by Rule Making

In a process that is called “Negotiated Rule Making” the National Park Service has taken on dog management in the Presidio and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). In the past, rules for use of the national parks have been set by park administration. But San Francisco is now a city of large dogs which dog owners cannot seem to confine to a walk around the block on a leash. Taking dogs to exercise in a tempting wide-open park or open space has become one of San Francisco’s thorniest problems. It is such a controversial issue that for the first time the National Park Service is conducting a public planning process to decide how best to manage dog walking in the park. Off-leash or on?



Dog Chasing Great Blue Heron

A very nice dog chases a great blue heron at Crissy Field.

The planning effort has been taking years; a draft Dog Management environmental impact statement (DEIS) was circulated last year and commented on by many. As a result of these comments and suggestions, there will be additional data and studies generated; there may be changes to the DEIS alternatives; impacts of new alternatives will need to be analyzed. Thus a supplemental DEIS is being developed and will be released late this summer for public comment. This provides a second opportunity to comment on the future of dog management in GGNRA before NPS issues a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for public review and comment in 2013.

It is evident that the innocent-sounding matter of taking your dog for a walk in the park is being taken very seriously. The National Parks are seen by dog walkers as opportune open space for their animals to exercise but park terrain, plants and wildlife are adversely affected when there are no rules that people will abide by. Previous rules that were imposed at Fort Funston, for example, were flouted or ignored. Perhaps with public “buy-in”, there will be acceptance and conformance.

To study the proposed rules and comment, go to www.nps.org/prsf and type in “dog management”.

SaveMuni.com

SaveMuni.com was formed over two years ago to expose the flaws in the Central Subway. Little did the group know at the time just how massive and destructive those flaws would turn out to be. The Central Subway picture is far worse now than it was then.

For starters, the project would cost \$1.58 billion and yet attract only 35,000 riders a day by 2035. Moreover, when Caltrain is extended to the new Transbay Terminal, this already dismally low ridership would drop by at least a third to just 23,000 riders a day or less. Many Muni diesel bus lines carry more riders than that. And yet by 2035, the subway would be adding over \$15 million a

year to the Muni deficit, a deficit that is already out of hand. **SaveMuni.com**'s objectives include:

- a.) seeking to protect Muni's 700,000 daily riders and the rest of San Francisco from the significant damage that the Central Subway as presently configured would cause, and
- b.) working with MTA Director Ed Reiskin and his staff to improve Muni's overall operation, particularly with respect to the quality of service on Muni's 70 existing bus and rail lines.

For more information about **SaveMuni.com** and the subway project go to SaveMuni.com. To sign the "NO ON CENTRAL SUBWAY" petition go to: <http://tinyurl.com/No-to-CentralSubway>

If you don't like Muni service cuts and fare hikes you're going to HATE the Central Subway!

Park Merced lawsuit filed by SFT and Park Merced Action Coalition (PMAC)

SFT and the Park Merced Action Coalition (PMAC) have filed a law suit against the City of San Francisco's certification of the Park Merced EIR for a development proposal which would increase zoning capacity there and decrease affordability of dwelling units. The lawsuit targets not just the sufficiency of the EIR but the Development Agreement between the Park Merced investors and the City which insufficiently addresses the loss of affordable dwelling units at Park Merced.

At issue in the case are:

1. The question of whether the project's development agreement provides adequate assurance of rent controlled replacement units for tenants who will be displaced by the demolition of 1500 garden apartments. The EIR grossly understates the project's displacement impacts.
2. Whether the EIR for the project adequately disclosed and discussed the project's potential impacts, including transportation impacts, seismic impacts, impacts from potential rupture of nearby major PG&E gas lines, impacts to historic structures, and biological impacts, including destruction of many mature trees and wildlife habitat. The proposed placement of windmills at the project's western edge might cause the destruction of migratory birds or the disruption on their flight along the Pacific Flyway.
3. The failure to adequately consider alternatives to the proposed project, especially alternatives that

might have protected Parkmerced's recognized value as a historic cultural and architectural resource.

4. The Project's violation of Priority Policies placed in the San Francisco General Plan by San Francisco's voters as part of Proposition M. The policies include protecting and preserving existing neighborhoods, preserving affordable housing within the City, and assuring maximum protection against earthquake damage. The Project also violate many policies in the General Plan Housing Element that was in effect at that time.
5. PMAC is also claiming violations of due process during the final approval process before the Board of Supervisors, including inadequate notice of last-minute changes to the Development Agreement and refusal to allow public testimony to be heard by the full Board before it voted on the project.

SFT and PMAC are seeking support in their challenge to the City's public process. San Francisco residents deserve at least as much respect as the City's leaders now give to developers and their financiers.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Support SFT's call for candor and honest cooperation with the residents of Park Merced by e-mailing Board of Supervisors.

See SFT's website SFTomorrow.org

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Pulp mills in the US consume more than 12,000 square miles of forest each year; almost half of all trees cut now end up as paper, and the percentage is increasing.

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We will not lend your e-address to others.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE QUESTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL HARM OF LIGHTING UP OCEAN BEACH

As you know, the National Park Service (NPS) has jurisdiction over the entire Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA,) and with the Coastal Commission, is highly engaged in issues that affect the coast-side environment, such as Ocean Beach in San Francisco.

The proposal to reconstruct the Beach Chalet soccer fields with artificial turf and artificial lighting has generated a draft environmental impact report (EIR) and a firm National Park Service reply, a deeply questioning letter pointing out the incompleteness of this document to the Planning Department (the agency handling the EIR). Since the EIR takes *no notice* of Ocean Beach at all, even though it is directly across the Great Highway from the proposed soccer complex, the NPS letter asks that Ocean Beach, both on-shore and off-shore, be included in the study area in its full presence “as a National Park resource”. It requests, furthermore, that the SPUR master planning process be referenced in the DEIR. (Amazing it is that these two major points could have been overlooked in the EIR.)

The NPS letter firmly requests that the EIR “consider a reasonable **range** of alternatives, including:

- renovating *other athletic fields* not adjacent to Ocean Beach;
- improving the Beach Chalet fields *without the proposed lighting*;
- scheduling games earlier in the day to accommodate play during the hours before sunset;
- seasonal lighting limitations to avoid adding night lighting to the area during the times of bird migrations and the snowy plover presence.

The NPS letter comments that one of the Project Objectives,” Improve and increase nighttime use at the west end of Golden Gate Park” should be amended to add “while minimizing impacts to adjacent undeveloped open space areas”.

The NPS states its concerns that increased nighttime use could impact Ocean Beach resources: “The area around Sutro Heights Park and Land’s End is one of the darkest areas in the city and is emerging as a stargazing location for the public. Though the eastern skyline is dominated by the light from San Francisco, nearby lighting has the potential to measurably degrade the entire night sky quality as it is only 1.0 mile away. As a rule of thumb, lights that are half the distance exert six times more impact upon the night sky. Thus, a single light at the project site would have the same impact as 55 lights of the same design in downtown San Francisco.” (See *San Francisco Tomorrow’s EIR comment letter on the website SFTomorrow.org*)

For information about San Francisco Tomorrow, go to www.sftomorrow.org



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