

SUMMARY OF 2/15/07 PUBLIC MEETING PRESIDIO PLAYING FIELDS WORKSHOP



April 2007

Dear Friend,

On February 15, 2007, the Presidio Trust hosted the third in a series of public meetings focused on playing fields in the Presidio. The goal of these workshops has been to get public input in the development of an overall playing fields strategy for the park. Over the last six months, we have learned a great deal about community needs and preferences for playing fields, as well as concerns regarding particular playing field locations including one that would require special sensitivity. We thank you for your participation in this process. As promised, below is a summary of the most recent workshop and next steps.

I. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The February 15th workshop began with a presentation by Trust Planning Director, Michael Boland. Mr. Boland provided an overview of the planning process, reviewed public input received to date, and explained the objective of the evening – to ask participants to work cooperatively to assemble an overall strategy for the future of playing fields. He reviewed each of the playing field options presented at the last workshop (11/15/06), along with new options developed in response to public input. A summary of the key issues addressed during his presentation includes:

A. **Guiding principles** for the planning process

- Maintain or slightly increase the current number of playing fields (recognizing that some fields may need to be relocated to achieve other park objectives).
- Locate any new fields in appropriate places that minimize park traffic and ecological disruption, maximize operational efficiency, preserve the Presidio's historic character, and protect culturally sensitive areas.

B. **Consensus points** from the previous workshop:

- Fort Scott Field –there was widespread support for upgrading and expanding active recreational use in this location
- Paul Goode Field – agreement that this field would remain in its current location and that upgrades to improve playtime and flexibility, as well as buffer nearby creek zone, could be made
- Julius Kahn – widespread agreement that the field could be substantially improved
- Child Care Center – a new field in this location received broad-based support
- Morton Street Field – concurrence that the field should be removed to restore underlying creek on the condition that a replacement field of like-size is made available prior to field demolition

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C. Field options/locations where a *lack of consensus* remained:

- Pop Hicks
- Fill Site I
- Commissary West
- Doyle Drive Tunnel

Following the presentation, participants were asked to work in small groups to assemble an overall consensus strategy for the layout and organization of fields in the park. As a starting point, each group was given a base map showing the fields where consensus had been reached and implementation was likely. Participants were asked to direct their attention to the sites where consensus had not yet been reached. To assist, a set of “playing cards” which showed the various field options under consideration at each site were provided. Groups were asked to collectively assemble their overall concept/vision for the park.

Groups were given approximately 45 minutes to work through this exercise. At the end of the work session, each team presented their proposal to the larger group. A summary of each group’s proposal is provided below. (Note: this summary is based on the verbal presentations and written comments provided on group worksheets. In some cases, there were discrepancies between the two sources and these are noted.)

Group 1: Recommended that synthetic turf be considered for all fields, and included the following improvements in their overall vision for the park (in addition to consensus sites already included on base map):

- Julius Kahn – maximize use by expanding footprint to provide a high school soccer or two little league fields and convert to synthetic turf
- Fill Site I - small practice field
- Commissary West - soccer field
- Child Care Center - little league field
- For Pop Hicks, this group made recommendations regarding the approach to remediation of the underlying landfill. They encouraged that all fill materials be excavated and removed from the site. There remained dissent in the group about the long-term use of the site – some recommended it be restored as habitat, others supported its return to active play.
- This group also recommended that the Main Parade Ground be considered for potential playing fields.

Group 2: This group recommended that all sites identified as potential fields, be developed to maximize their potential, with one exception. One person did not concur that Pop Hicks should be returned to active play. This group also strongly encouraged the use of synthetic turf for all Presidio fields. The presenter conveyed his first-hand, positive experience working with synthetic turf at a local high school. Group 2 made the following recommendations (in addition to consensus sites already included on base map):

- Julius Kahn – *same recommendations as Group 1* + a recommendation that access to this field be provided via West Pacific with new parking under the forest canopy.
- Fill Site I - little league field

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- Child Care Center - two small soccer fields (more compatible with surrounding uses than a little league field)
- Pop Hicks – high school soccer, with one person recommending no recreational use
- Commissary West – soccer field at minimum, look to expand further
- Fort Scott North & West – strongly urged the Trust to consider these sites in the future

Group 3: The “ultimate vision” for this group was to provide two clusters of fields – one centered at Julius Kahn and the other at Fort Scott, with the following specific recommendations (in addition to consensus sites already included on base map):

- Julius Kahn – *same recommendation as Group 1*
- Fill Site 1 – *same recommendation as Group 1*
- Pop Hicks – more natural conditions, no field
- Child Care Center – demand driven (little league or soccer fields)
- Commissary West – no consensus
- Fort Scott North & West – consider as possible future expansion

Other Comments: Study synthetic turf (is one length appropriate for soccer and baseball, are there wildlife and water quality effects, etc.), conduct similar exercise for tennis courts, and look for playing field opportunities outside the Presidio.

Group 4: Only one representative of this group stayed for the presentation. While the group did not prepare a formal plan, they had a variety of suggestions which are summarized below based on the presentation and written comments.

- Maximize field flexibility (multiple configurations – serving as many sports as possible)
- Support/agreement with “consensus sites” identified on the base map
- Make existing fields better and expand at Commissary West and Child Care Center sites
- Strong support for lighting and use of synthetic turf
- Support environmentally sensitive design
- Consider adding running track around fields
- Emphasis should be given to serving K-8th age groups

Group 5: The presenter for this group acknowledged that they had mixed views and were not able to reach full consensus. No written comments were provided. The following concepts were conveyed during the presentation:

- Pop Hicks – some felt this was critical place to replace Morton Street Field; one person opposed any recreational use at the site
- Julius Kahn – transform into a soccer-dominated cluster (with overlapping little league for off-peak soccer times) – *same basic recommendations as Group 1*
- Fort Scott – baseball dominated cluster with soccer during off-peak times
- Fill Site 1 – little league, unless it impinges on natural areas. If natural areas are impacted, than a smaller practice field should be developed.
- Commissary West – soccer field

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2. CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

Over the past six months, the Trust has benefited from robust public input and discussions surrounding playing fields. This effort has led to new ideas and approaches to improving the park and expanding opportunities for active play. While this process did not culminate in complete consensus, substantial progress has been made towards reaching a shared vision for the Presidio's playing fields. The most recent workshop helped further that shared vision -- one that will provide great benefit for the park, the public who enjoy it, and the resources it supports.

There remains, however, one primary area of dissent – Pop Hicks Field. The long-term disposition of Pop Hicks Field has been the ongoing subject of public debate for more than a decade. This issue has been addressed in several prior public planning efforts, first by the National Park Service and later by the Presidio Trust [Presidio GMPA (NPS, 1994), Presidio VMP (NPS and Trust, 2001) and PTMP (Trust, 2002)]. All of these planning efforts have ended with the same conclusion; Pop Hicks Field will be restored to active play after the remediation of Landfill E. The Trust does not believe that a reversal of this long-standing land use decision is warranted at this time.

Underlying, and perhaps at the very heart of the public debate regarding Pop Hicks, appears to be the proposed remediation treatment of Landfill E. Specifically, how the waste materials will be managed to protect human health and safety and the environment. A variety of options have been analyzed including containment in place using an engineered cap with ongoing monitoring, excavation and transport to an permitted waste management facility outside of the Presidio, or some combination of both. This issue has been the subject of substantial review, scientific analysis, monitoring, regulatory oversight, and public input. If you are interested in learning more about the Presidio Environmental Remediation Program or specifically the remediation plans for Landfill E, please visit the Trust Library. You may also attend Remediation Advisory Board (RAB) meetings which are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm in the Presidio Officer's Club.

Vision & Next Steps

Over the next several years, the Trust intends to pursue the playing field improvements captured in the map presented on the next page. Each of these fields and associated facilities will require design, review and funding and would be phased by the Trust over time. Based on public input, as well as the schedule for other relevant land management activities (i.e., remediation program), the following sequencing is proposed.

DRAFT

Presidio Playing Fields Vision for the Future

Results of Public Workshops (Sept. 2006 - Feb. 2007)

R|H|A|A 

San Francisco Bay

Pacific Ocean

Fort Scott
Expand and Upgrade
(2) Softball /
(1) High School Soccer

Commissary West
Type TBD

Child Care Center
Type TBD

**Pop Hicks Field
(Landfill E)**
After 2010
(1) Little League /
(1) High School Soccer *

Fill Site 1
After 2010
New Practice Field

Morton Field
Field Relocated and
Eastern Tributary Restored

Paul Goode Field
Upgrade
(1) High School Baseball /
(2) U-10 Soccer

Julius Kahn Playground
Expand and Upgrade
(1) High School Soccer /
(2) Little League

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* If Julius Kahn cannot be expanded to accommodate a high school soccer field (Morton replacement), then Pop Hicks will be designated for this use.

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Draft Phasing Strategy

- Expand/Upgrade Julius Kahn
- Child Care Center
- Fort Scott
- Fill Site I, Pop Hicks & Upgrade Paul Goode - all linked to remediation activities scheduled for 2010
- Commissary West (design will begin after the adjacent Doyle Drive construction is underway – estimated to begin in 2009)

One of the consensus points from the previous workshop was the need to relocate the existing recreational use at Morton Street Field before the field is removed to restore the Eastern Tributary of Tennessee Hollow. This strategy assumes existing Morton use could be accommodated either at an expanded and upgraded Julius Kahn or Pop Hicks Field. This concept will be refined through further design and coordination with the City, and will be analyzed as part of the environmental review for Tennessee Hollow.

If you would like to provide feedback on anything presented in this package, please direct your comments to the Presidio Trust Planning & Park Projects Department (see contact information below). If you are interested in reviewing summaries of the previous workshops or scheduling play time at one of the Presidio's fields, please visit our website at <http://www.presidio.gov/trust/projects/fields.htm>.

Again, thank you for your participation in this process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make the Presidio an exceptional national park!

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