

## Jackson Playground Renovation Project

July 16, 2020 Community Meeting Q&As

### The Park's New Design

Why does the new design eliminate the tennis courts, and where can people play tennis once the new park is constructed?

This is an issue we have been thinking about for a long time. While many of our courts are heavily used during the pandemic, prior to the COVID-19 emergency the tennis court at Jackson was about 40% utilized, which is a relatively large amount of space in the park that could be utilized more efficiently, and for greater diversity of users. Additional tennis courts are available at the nearby Potrero Hill Rec Center, where we are expanding our reservation capacity.

This type of court in an active park, allows us to maximize the use of this space and have more people to enjoy it, in more ways. The multi-use court provides many opportunities for play for multiple user groups, including basketball, futsal, pickleball, tennis, handball and more.

How will the use of the multi-use courts be regulated?

Multi-use courts are typically first come, first serve. Rec Park has a similar and very successful multi-use space at Joe DiMaggio Playground which hosts lots of different activities. RPD will work with the FoJP and other community stakeholders on programming the multi-use court. RPD has used a couple of different models for multi-use courts and we will work with the community to develop/implement the right one here. Since we only have a few multi-use courts in our system, it is very exciting to be able to add a new one at Jackson Playground.

What will the playground look like? What play elements will it include?

We are currently at the concept design phase, which is a preliminary stage of the design process. As we move forward to a more detailed design, we intend to plan the space to accommodate different age groups, with a multi-level play structure, a nature play area and a universal play area as well as swing(s) and a sand box. We will have more community feedback opportunities during design development, particularly as we test options for play equipment that fits into the new, larger play area.

What is the rationale for relocating the clubhouse?

The clubhouse is considered a Historic Resource therefore it should be maintained and rehabilitated. The size and scale of the clubhouse also harkens back to the history of Potrero Hill. Preserving it meets many of the project's goals and offers a chance to maintain an important piece of San Francisco History. The clubhouse was originally in a more central location on Mariposa and was later moved to its present location at the corner of Mariposa and Arkansas. Moving the clubhouse to Carolina will allow the baseball/softball fields to be rearranged to become safer and for more efficient use of the residual space

not needed by sports, which can then be aggregated on the West side of the park to create more community space.

With the clubhouse's current configuration, elevated above grade and accessed by ramps, the women's restroom is not ADA accessible. Moving the clubhouse to its new location where it will be "at grade" will improve accessibility by eliminating the need for steps or ramps for access.

### Does this project include a space that can host events for homeless population in the clubhouse?

The project includes an expansion to the current clubhouse with flexible program areas. Both RPD and community partners will have the opportunity to develop programming in the clubhouse post-renovation. We will work with a variety of partners to develop programming later on.

### It seems like the new design is significantly increasing usable space, what space has decreased in return?

The park's current design does not include many opportunities for passive, open space. The project rearranges and better utilizes space as well as removing underutilized areas, like the area currently around the edges of the field and behind the backstops. The park's perimeter is currently fenced on all sides along the sidewalk, which makes the park feel separate from the sidewalk. The new design blurs the boundary between the park and sidewalk by strategically placing vegetation and fencing along the park's perimeter to allow planting areas to reach past the boundary line, groves of trees to extend all the way to the curb, and ball field fencing to create pockets for program and new amenities along the perimeter of the field. These gestures may seem small but cumulatively add up to a bigger park with more usable space. New bulb-outs at all four corners of the park add extra space to the park's entries, and a modest 6' curb extension on Carolina Street also increases the total park area.

### Will the fields be natural or synthetic turf?

The fields are proposed as natural turf, with an alternative for synthetic turf. A decision has not yet been made as to which – there are pros and cons to either. Natural turf has a look and feel that people are used to, while synthetic turf allows many additional use hours due to lower maintenance needs and costs.

### Will the passive green space have natural grass or synthetic turf? And the dog play area?

We have heard repeatedly from the community that the preference is for natural grass for the passive open spaces. The dog play area will be synthetic turf so that it is available to users year-round and would not have to be closed regularly like a natural grass play area to allow the lawn to recover from wear.

### How were priorities for the park's renovation established?

Input from a community survey conducted in 2015 informed the three community meetings held in 2016, where the design concept was developed in collaboration with and based on input from community and stakeholders.

### Will the power lines be buried as part of the renovation?

This is something we could consider but there is a high cost associated that may come at the expense of other park features. There are SFMTA MUNI bus lines on 17th Street as well which would only go away after the SFMTA fleet is fully replaced with efficient busses that do not require the overhead infrastructure. On a separate note, new field lighting will be provided as a part of the renovation. The updated fixtures will utilize energy efficient LED fixtures with appropriate shields to decrease glare and light pollution. These fixtures can also be dimmed and have much better controls, allowing half or a quarter of the fields to be illuminated to support nighttime sports usage.

### Will there be any sculpture or art?

The project will include an art piece or pieces. We are still determining what the art components will be and where in the park they will be located. The proposed design includes several opportunities for murals on the backside of the walls surrounding the multi-purpose court.

### How are the existing olive trees moved safely?

It is possible, with care, to box and move the large olives tree to another location within the park. The team will rely on expert advice from a certified arborist to move the olive trees, which requires extracting the soil volume where the roots are growing to keep the tree healthy. An arborist will oversee the transplanting process and monitor the tree health before and after the relocation to ensure proper procedures are used.

### Will any of the perimeter trees function as windbreaks?

The perimeter street trees will block some wind, but the canopy is required to be a minimum of 7-feet clear from the ground. A proper windbreak tree would have a lower canopy height and resemble a hedge, which is not compatible in an urban streetscape use.

### Will the learning garden have a fence around it?

Yes, the learning garden will have a fence around it to protect what is being grown. Access to the garden will be controlled via a locked gate. A new storage shed for garden equipment and a large composting area is included in the new design.

How will the proposed open space and play areas be secured at night, so there is no unnecessary wear and tear to the park?

The City's Park Code determines the operation hours of parks under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department. Parks are officially closed at night and where gates are available, they are locked when the park closes for the day.

### **Project Construction and Funding**

When is construction expected to begin, and how long will it take?

We are in the midst of the design process and working to secure funding for the project. A date for construction start has not been set yet, but it is likely years away until full funding is secured. In the meantime, we will move as fast as we can through design and approvals process and keep everyone posted as the schedule firms up. Construction for a project of this scale could take around 18 months.

Will construction be phased to allow use of the park, or will the park be closed during construction?

Construction will not be phased. Projects of this scale and complexity are too cumbersome to phase. When we phase projects, it can double construction time and cost extraordinary amounts of money. We ask for the community's patience during the park's construction and will work expeditiously to return the Park back to stakeholders.

What options are there for the project to receive additional public funds?

We will keep working to secure funding for the project and close the funding gap. Options for additional funding include City, State and federal grants as well as philanthropic contributions by individuals or corporations.

### **2020 Health and Recovery Bond**

What if the bond doesn't pass?

Without funding through the 2020 Health & Recovery Bond, the project would have a funding gap of about a third of the project budget.

For more information on the upcoming Bond, please visit the San Francisco Elections Department website: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/>

Is it possible for Jackson to get more than 10MM from the bond?

Jackson Park is a priority park within the 2020 Health and Recovery Bond Recovery Parks program, and as such it will be allocated \$10 million, if voters approve the Bond.

For more information on the upcoming Bond, please visit the San Francisco Elections Department website: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/>

### Why wasn't Jackson a named project on the bond?

Jackson Playground could not be a named project on the 2020 Health and Recovery Bond because it has not yet completed the legally mandated CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) process.

For more information on the upcoming Bond, please visit the San Francisco Elections Department website: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/>

### How do we ensure that Jackson gets the \$10 million it has been allocated on the Bond?

We are committed to ensuring Jackson Playground will receive the funding it has been allocated, if voters approve the Bond.

For more information on the upcoming Bond, please visit the San Francisco Elections Department website: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/>

## **Other Questions**

### What happens when the social distancing circles are gone, and fields resume operation?

Ballfields are heavily used and an essential component for Rec and Park and city as a whole. By the time the new park is built our current situation with COVID 19 will hopefully be over. We are having ongoing conversations on what will happen in the future. We are pleased during this time to have been able to provide open space for use, and given the current situation with the pandemic we don't anticipate regularized sporting activities in the near future.

The proposed design features additional areas specifically designed to support the kinds of passive activities that are happening on the ballfields now.

### Is it possible to have the fields function as a dedicated open space on certain times and not allow ball games during those times?

This field is essential for use by schools as well as adult and youth groups. The intense use we're seeing now (just like at all our parks) is because hanging out in parks is the only thing anyone can do right now. Prior to COVID-19 we left the field at Jackson Playground open on Saturday mornings almost year-round (except during youth baseball season) as well as one evening per week from 6:30 to 8 pm for after-school use. We will likely continue this programming after shelter-in-place is lifted.

**Why can't dogs be allowed on the baseball fields?**

Sports fields are essential to our whole community, and dogs can damage them. Per RPD policy, dogs are not allowed on athletic fields, and should be kept on leash in common areas of the park. Dogs are only allowed off leash in designated dog play areas.

**Is a future protected bike lane planned for 17<sup>th</sup> St. to connect to the park?**

All bike lanes, including ones adjacent to public parks, are the responsibility of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. A map of SFMTA planned bike projects can be found here: <https://www.sfmta.com/getting-around/bike/key-bike-projects>

**In light of increasing awareness of the history of Andrew Jackson is it possible to consider renaming the park?**

The Recreation and Parks Department does support renaming parks that were previously named after controversial historic figures. A recent example is Julius Khan Playground that was renamed Presidio Wall Playground in 2019. The renaming process would have to go through approvals by the Recreation and Park Commission and would likely occur during construction so that the new park is unveiled with the new name. Renaming parks is a process typically driven by the community.