



Children's Playground, Carousel, and Sharon Building

Visitor Facilities

Visitor Information

A need has been identified for better visitor information for both resident users and tourists. Visitor centers and information kiosks would provide visitor information and could serve as staging areas for tours and other services. Visitor centers should occur within existing park buildings and serve an educational purpose, with information and exhibits on park features, history, and natural resources. These may also provide opportunities for generating revenue through retailing, fees for services such as tours, and fund-raising appeals. The only existing visitor information is available informally at the McLaren Lodge reception desk.

Visitor Centers

There are two visitor centers proposed: one in the eastern park and one in the western park. These would be destination points that attract visitors to them. Due to limited department funds, a park partner organization (such as the Friends of Recreation and Parks) could play a role in the development and operation of visitor centers. The visitor center could also provide an important visible presence for the Recreation and Park Department and the park partner organization. Visitor centers have potential for generating revenue through the sale of park-related merchandise. This revenue may be important for funding operation of the visitor information services.

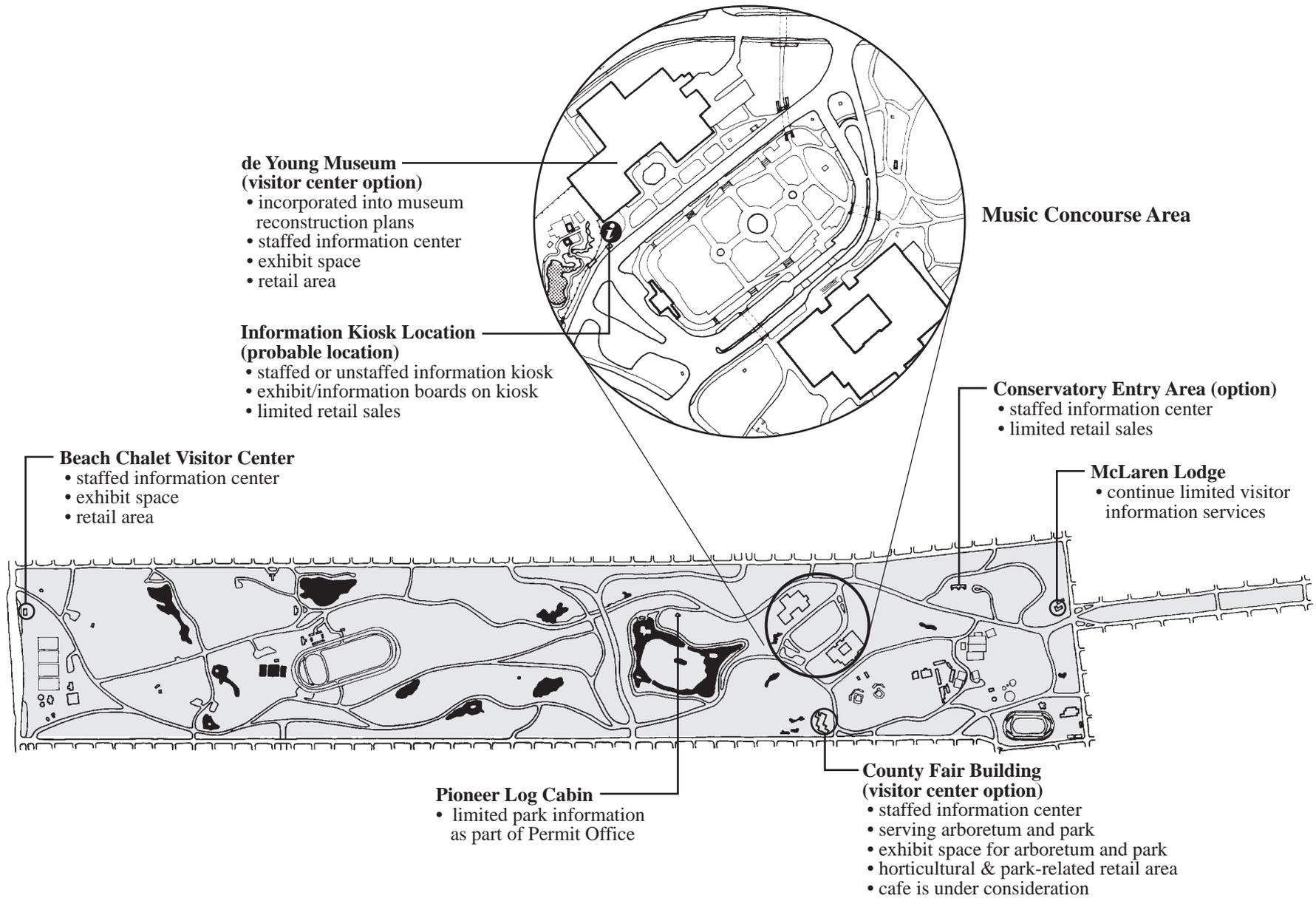
There are several possible locations for an eastern park visitor center, all within existing buildings. Selection of a visitor center location may be influenced by many factors including the relocation of the Asian Art Museum, reconstruction of the deYoung Museum, and redevelopment of the County Fair Building.

- **County Fair Building.** A park information point may occur within a proposed redevelopment of the entire building that would serve both Strybing Arboretum and the park. An orientation center is proposed for Strybing Arboretum that can include general park information. The center would include a staffed information desk, exhibit space, and retail area for horticultural and park-related merchandise. Short-term parking and a bus pull-out will improve access of the facility.
- **deYoung Museum.** An opportunity may arise to develop a visitor center in cooperation with the deYoung Museum. The relocation of the Asian Art Museum, and the reconstruction of the deYoung Museum may present an opportunity to develop a visitor center in a small portion of the space. The Music Concourse has a high volume of visitors and has parking.
- **Pioneer Log Cabin.** The recently renovated Pioneer Log Cabin is currently serving as the Recreation and Park Department's permit office. As a public office, it also provides limited park information.
- **Conservatory.** The entry area of the Conservatory building could serve as a small park visitor center. The landmark building is the signature building of Golden Gate Park and has high visitor volumes.
- **McLaren Lodge.** McLaren Lodge will continue to provide information at the reception desk. The building currently does not have space for additional visitor services.

The western park visitor center is now open in the ground floor of the Beach Chalet. This use complements the restaurant that is on the second floor. This center enables display of the WPA-era murals that cover the ground floor walls. It also provides a staffed information desk, small exhibits, and the sale of park-related merchandise.

Information Kiosk

There is also a need to provide visitor information in the Music Concourse, which has the largest concentration of visitors. A small information kiosk (less than 75 square feet) would provide park information, a meeting place for tours, sales of appropriate park items, and opportunities for park fund-raising. A kiosk will also provide visibility for the park conservancy organization. The kiosk could be staffed, but should be designed to also provide information when not staffed (possibly including an interactive computer). The most likely strategic location for an information kiosk is in the paved area between the Tea Garden and the Asian Art Museum.



Visitor Information Options

Park Concessions

Throughout the park's history, concessions have played an important role in providing visitor services in Golden Gate Park. It is generally more cost effective for the City to contract out for some services than to provide them. Food vendors, boat rentals, tennis complex and golf course operation are examples of long-standing services that have been provided by concessions. The Recreation and Park Department receives a percentage of revenue, or a flat fee, from concessions. Concession contracts are awarded on the basis of competitive bids. In recent years the revenue generated from concessions has play an increasing role in supplementing the Department's budget. Revenue from concessions is estimated at over \$1.1 million for fiscal year 1993-94.

Issues

It is important to balance concessions and the need to generate revenue with preservation of the park landscape and experience. Concessions should provide services that are recreational or recreation serving, and that enhance the visitors experience. Most people are pleased to have the services provided by the concessions, but there is a limit to commercialization and its appropriateness in the park setting. There have been concerns expressed about concessions that cater primarily to tourists and offer typical souvenir sales without much relevance to the park. The location and appearance of some food concessions has also been an issue. A balance is needed between the need to increase revenue and what is determined to be appropriate for Golden Gate Park. There have been recent efforts made to upgrade the appearance of concessions and the services offered.

Recommendations

- New opportunities for concessions should be explored. New or expanded concessions should meet a standard of appropriateness and be recreational or recreation serving.
- Concessions should be consistent with City Charter Section 4.113(2) (recreational purpose) and the Objectives and Policies for Golden Gate Park.
- Concessions should be appropriate to the park landscape.
- Retail concessions should include merchandise related to Golden Gate Park, its recreational activities, landscape, horticulture, history, and natural resources.
- Food concessions should meet appearance standards. Carts can be supplied with Golden Gate Park umbrellas.
- Food concessions within the Music Course should be coordinated.

Golden Gate Park Concessions

Existing concessions:

- Golf Course - lessons, pro shop, snack bar
- South-west corner of park - bicycle and skate rental
- Music Concourse - food and beverage service
- Bus parking lot - lot operation, gift shop
- Stables - riding lessons, trail rides, horse boarding
- Children's Playground/Carousel - snack bar
- Tennis complex - lessons, pro shop, court rental
- Japanese Tea Garden - tea house, gift shop
- Conservatory - gift shop, facility rental
- Stow Lake - boat rental, snack bar, bicycle/skate rental
- Strybing Arboretum - horticultural book kiosk, food and beverage service, facility rental
- Mobile food carts - Big Rec, Polo Field, Spreckels Lake, JFK Dr./6th Ave., Mothers Playground (MLK Dr.), Conservatory parking lot, tennis courts, Great Highway
- Kezar Parking Lot - lot operation concession

Proposed changes to existing concessions:

- Music Concourse - improved food and beverage service with cafe seating
- Bus parking lot - permanent replacement structure to consolidate temporary lot attendant and maintenance structures
- Tennis clubhouse - expanded facility (approx. 1,500 sq. ft.)
- Arboretum/County Fair Building - horticultural bookstore, park-related merchandise, cafe (within existing building footprint)
- Golf clubhouse - expanded facility (approx. 750 sq. ft.)
- Stables - improved facilities, code upgrades, replacement of temporary structures with permanent ones (these improvements have an existing environmental approval for upgrade and reconstruction: 93.547E, 10/27/93). The current improvement plan calls for building expansion of approximately 1,000 sq. ft.
- Kezar Parking Lot - landscaping

Proposed new concessions:

- Beach Chalet - cafe, restaurant, park-related merchandise (approved)
- Sharon Building - cafe/restaurant, facility rental (only if arts program vacates building)
- Proposed visitor centers - sale of park-related merchandise
- Pioneer Log Cabin - facility rental, gift shop (only if permit center vacates building)
- Powell St. Railway Shelter - skate/bike rental or other concession
- South windmill area - pavilion structure (approximately 2,500 sq. ft.) with snack bar, skate/bike rental or other concession
- Kezar Stadium - food and beverage sales, facility rental
- Carriage rides
- Park Emergency Hospital - new use to be determined, possible concession use

Park Information Signs

Historically, signs have been kept to a minimum in the park because they conflict with the pastoral nature of the landscape. With the addition of more facilities in different parts of the park, directional signs were added. Growing use of the park led to the need for more regulations, and more signs to inform visitors about the regulations. The automobile brought with it new signs and an entire motor vehicle code to govern their use.

Today, there are a great number of signs in the park (a 1984 sign survey in the park identified 542 signs that were visible along park roadways). They were added case by case as needed, rather than by any plan. The signs include those mounted on poles, freestanding, and pavement signs and generally fall into the following categories:

Park Regulations. Signs relating to public safety and park protection in regard to bicyclists, skaters, pedestrians, equestrians and other nonvehicle activities. These signs are maintained by Recreation and Park staff. Regulation signs are made of various materials, mounted in various manners (including on tree trunks) or painted on pavement.

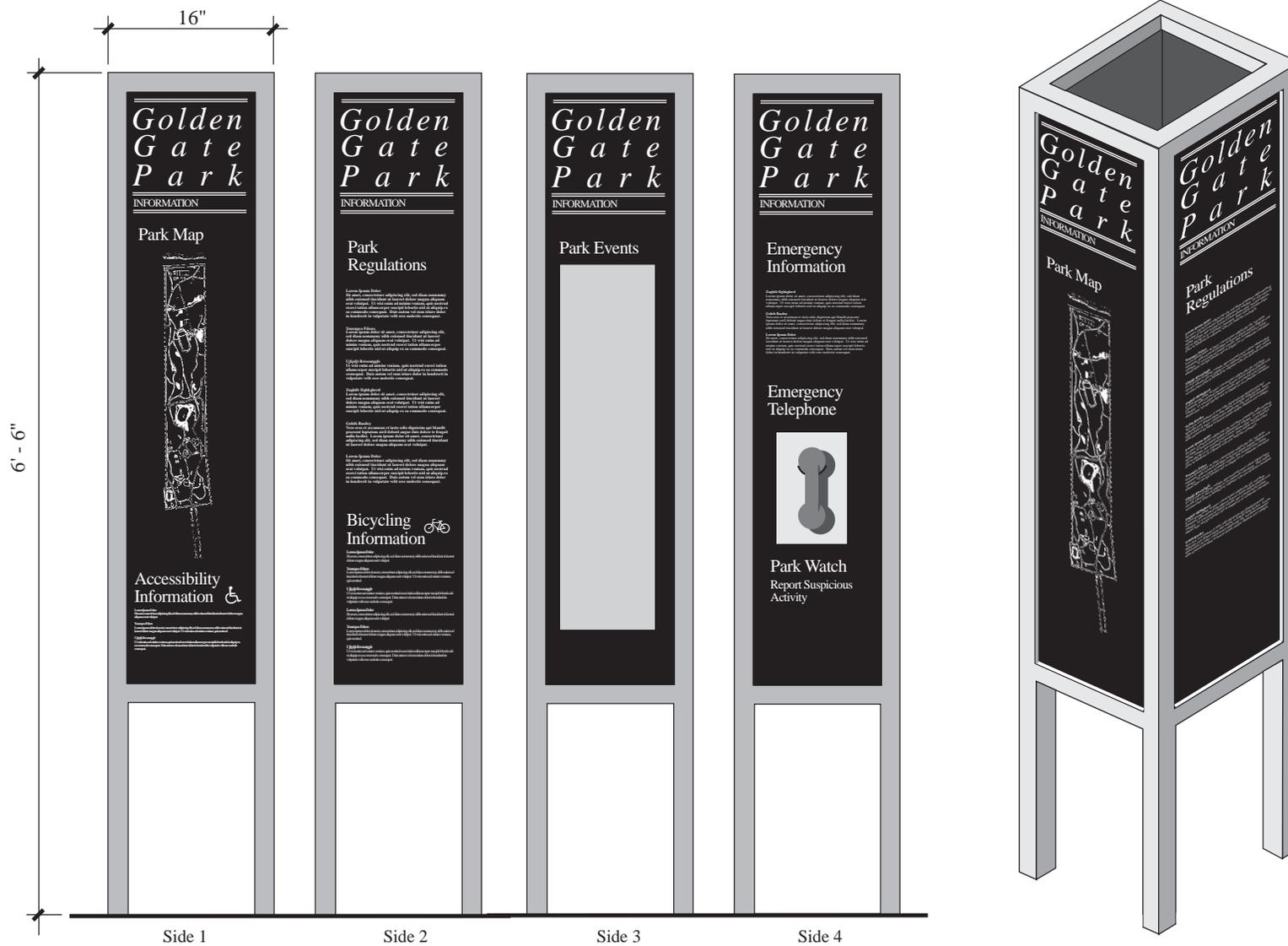
Traffic and Parking. Signs relating to all vehicle traffic and parking regulations. As public roads, the use of these signs is governed by the California Vehicle Code and they are installed and maintained by the San Francisco departments of Public Works and Parking and Traffic.

Park Feature Signs. These are signs that indicate locations, facilities, places, street names, or provide directions to them. They are maintained by Recreation and Park staff. There are three main design types, including brown metal signs (standard recreation signs), green wood panels hung from metal brackets on poles, and wood panels between wood posts (used at some facility entrances).

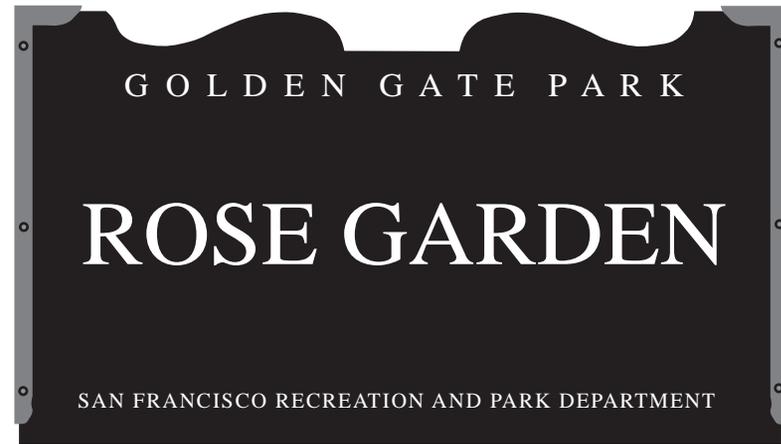
Pedestal Maps. The pedestal maps are relatively recent additions to the park's signs. They consist of an illustrative park map mounted on a concrete pedestal. They are placed in strategic locations and receive frequent use by visitors. The design is vandal resistant.

Recommendations

- Automobile entry signs should announce entry into the park, post speed limit and other vehicle restrictions, and request that park visitors drive with care. Standard vehicle signs can be mounted on larger signboards.
- Standard entry sign designs should be durable and vandal resistant, and include informational panels that can be easily updated or replaced as necessary.
- Continue the use of concrete pedestal signs in the park. Update sign panels as needed.
- Implement a system of trail and pathway signs to foster safe trail use and cooperation between different trail users, and to communicate trail use prohibitions.
- Improve accessibility of park information through better sign designs.
- Placement of regulatory signs should meet legal requirements to facilitate enforcement of regulations.
- Brochures and maps should be developed to supplement fixed signs, providing self-guiding tours that focus on visitor activities such as bicycling, walking, horseback riding, historical tours, sculpture tours, tree tours, bird watching, and other activities.
- A comprehensive sign master plan should be developed for the park that establishes a coordinated, well designed sign system with standards for sign design, placement, and uses. Standard sign designs should complement the park's historic landscape design.
- A new system of entry signs is proposed that would provide comprehensive information at all park entries, thereby reducing the need for signs within the park. Information signs at pedestrian and bicycle entries will include a park map, park regulations, accessibility information, bicycling information, park events, emergency information, and an emergency telephone.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Entry Sign Concept



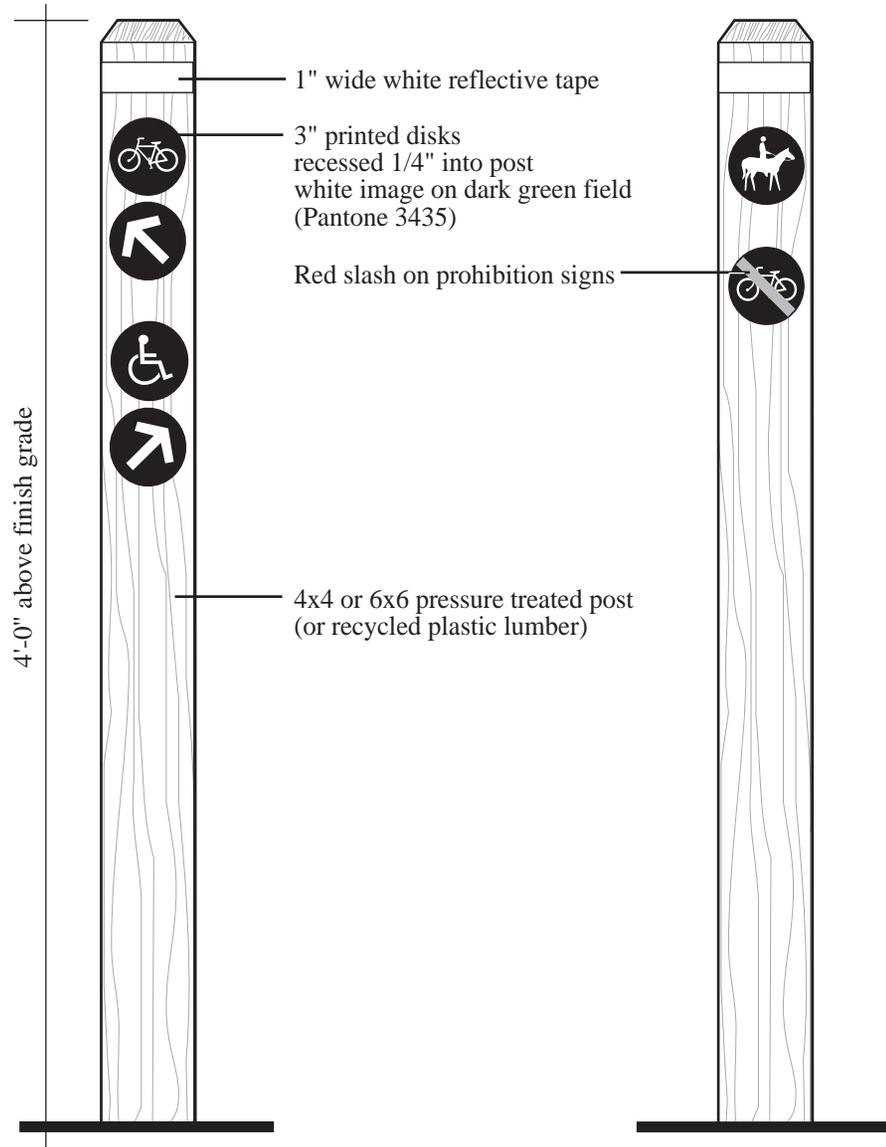
Typical Park Feature Sign



12" printed sign
white image on dark green field
(Pantone 3435)

Trail Sign Symbols

-  pedestrian route
-  accessible route
-  bicycle route
-  equestrian route
-  directional arrow



Trail and Path Signs

Restrooms

The condition of the park's restrooms greatly influences visitor perceptions of the park's condition and management. Many of the restrooms are in poor condition, needing major repairs, or do not meet accessibility standards. The design of some is dark and cramped. Depending on their location, some restrooms are abused frequently and are often dirty, others are well maintained and kept clean. Some of the problem restrooms have been closed.

Many of the restrooms will be rebuilt with funds from the 1992 Golden Gate Park Infrastructure Bond. Almost all will need accessibility improvements. The complexity of the upgrades will determine which of three courses of actions to take: rehabilitation within an existing structure, rehabilitation with a slight enlargement of an existing structure, or demolition and construction of a replacement structure. In the case of a replacement structure, locations may be shifted slightly to improve access or reduce impacts of the structure.

Recommendations

- Restore restrooms with priority given to removing accessibility barriers. Mechanical and structural improvements should be coordinated with accessibility work, which may require minor expansion of some buildings.
- Where feasible, preserve the architectural quality of restroom buildings, particularly those constructed during the WPA period.

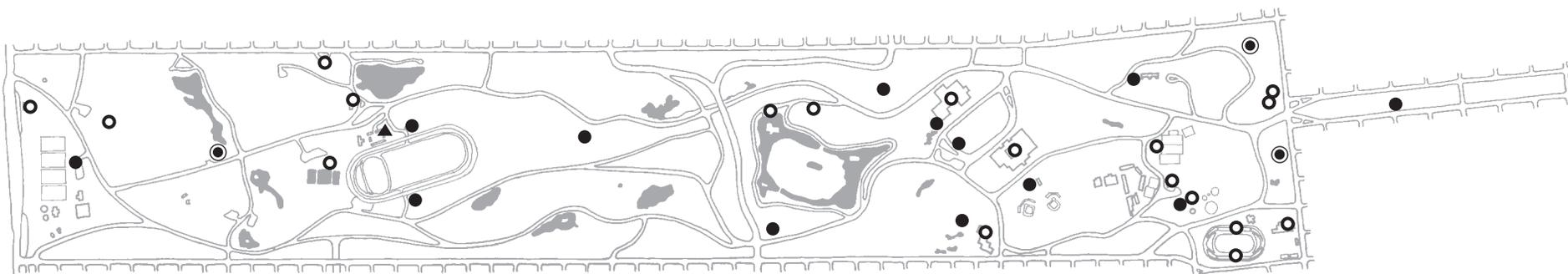
- Some restrooms will require new structures when the existing ones cannot be adapted. New restroom structures should be appropriately designed for Golden Gate Park.
- Reopen restrooms that have been closed. Provide adequate security and maintenance to keep all restrooms in good condition.

Separate Restroom Buildings:

Arboretum
Bandstand Annex
Big Rec
JFK Drive at North Lake
Children's Playground
Conservatory Drive West
Horseshoe Courts
Meadow west of Rose Garden
Tea Garden
Mother's Meadow
North Training Quarters (Polo Field)
South Training Quarters (Polo Field)
Panhandle
Stanyan & Page
Beach Chalet Soccer Field
Speedway Meadow

Restrooms within Larger Structures:

Anglers' Lodge
Academy of Sciences
Sharon Building
deYoung Museum/Asian Art Museum
Golf Course
County Fair Building
Model Yacht Club
Stow Lake Boathouse
Tennis Clubhouse
McLaren Lodge
McLaren Lodge Annex
Beach Chalet
Lawn Bowling Clubhouse
Pioneer Log Cabin
Senior Center
Kezar Pavilion
Kezar Stadium



- Separate restroom buildings
- Closed restrooms to be reopened
- Restrooms within larger structures
- ▲ Proposed new public restrooms

Public Restrooms

Park Furnishings

Benches

Benches are scattered throughout Golden Gate Park and are an important element for passive use of the park. Benches create social spaces in the park. There are several types of benches in the park, most with concrete or metal frames and wood slats. Most benches are painted green, although some are natural wood. The benches are basic designs, without a distinctive character. A memorial bench policy provides guidelines for donated benches with a recognition plaque. A minimum donation of \$3,000 covers purchase and installation of a bench (for an estimated 5-year bench life), routine maintenance and repair, administration of the Memorial Bench Program, and a contribution to a park maintenance endowment fund.

Recycled plastic lumber is gaining popularity for many uses, including landscape furnishings. Purified high density polyethylene (HDPE) is the best material for landscape use. It is durable and resists damage from sunlight or vandalism. The material has integral color and will not absorb moisture, rot, peel, or splinter. Other benefits of using recycled plastic lumber are reuse of fossil fuels, reduction of landfill materials, and timber and ecosystem preservation.

Recommendations:

- Standard and distinctive designs should be selected for Golden Gate Park benches that complement the park setting, resist abuse, meet accessibility regulations, and are cost effective. There should be an ornamental bench for formal areas, and a simplified design for other areas. The benches should

be selected from standard commercial designs that will be available in the future.

- Designs utilizing recycled plastic lumber (purified HDPE) should be considered.

Trash Receptacles

There are trash receptacles scattered throughout the park, most in high activity areas. Despite the number of trash receptacles, litter is a problem in the park. In some high use areas the trash receptacles fill up quickly, resulting in trash being piled around it. Dumping of household trash is a problem in some areas, particularly where there are larger dumpster type receptacles. The dumpster-type trash receptacles are used because they can be easily emptied into garbage trucks. The dumpsters however, are unsightly and the locations that are accessible to trucks are usually highly visible. Many of the other trash receptacles are recycled storage drums that, while economical, are unsightly. Like other park furnishings, trash receptacles should contribute to the park setting rather than detract from it.

Recommendations:

- A trash receptacle design should be chosen that can be serviced economically and is more appropriate for the park setting. An appropriate design should be used in high visibility areas such as the Music Concourse.
- Where dumpster-type trash receptacles are necessary, an enclosure should be used to screen the dumpster.
- Priority should be given to providing staff to service trash receptacles at frequent intervals.
- Continue to encourage volunteer and neighborhood groups to assist with litter pick up.