

From: Alice Newton [<mailto:alicenewton62@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, August 04, 2016 12:20 PM

To: PARKS_Commission <ParksCommission@smcgov.org>

Cc: Irving Torres <ITorres@smcgov.org>; Warren Slocum <WSlocum@smcgov.org>

Subject: Neighbors' concerns regarding some aspects of the Preferred Plan for Flood Park

August 4, 2016

From: Neighbors of Flood Park

Subject: Concerns regarding some aspects of the Preferred Plan for Flood Park

To San Mateo County Parks Commissioners:

- Marico C. Enriquez, Chair
- Barbara Bonilla
- Neil Merrilees
- Medo O. Okelo, Vice Chair
- Michael J. Cooney
- Kevin Huo, Youth Commissioner

Copies sent to Warren Slocum, County Supervisor, and Irving Torres, Legislative Aide to Warren Slocum

Dear Commissioners:

We, residents of the Flood Triangle neighborhood of Menlo Park, are writing to you at this time to reiterate and clarify our concerns about certain aspects of the "Preferred Plan" for Flood Park as presented by the SM County Parks Department and approved in concept at the April 7, 2016 meeting. We believe that the locations of the full-size lacrosse/soccer field, new volleyball courts, and new trail 30 feet or closer to backyards on Del Norte Avenue and Iris Lane will negatively impact the quality of life in our neighborhood and should be located further within the park. Noise from shouting and referee's whistles at ballgames can carry several blocks and most local ball fields are not located this close to back yards. The fields in the Plan will likely be used daily year round including all day Saturdays and Sundays. The afternoon breezes usually blow from west to east, i.e. from the park toward our neighborhood carrying sounds. Common mitigation techniques such as bushes will likely not protect our neighborhood sufficiently from noise. Also, locating the lacrosse/soccer field at the far end of the parking lot will be very inconvenient for dropping off players resulting in our neighborhood pedestrian gate at the corner of the park becoming a drop-off/pick-up place which would create daily traffic, parking, and safety issues on our streets. The gate would have to be locked which would deprive neighbors who walk the easy access they appreciate. We have been advised that the locations of these noisy sports immediately behind our yards will likely lower our property values.

There are 23 homes on Del Norte Ave., and residents of 22 of these homes (96%) object to the placement of the new full-size lacrosse/soccer field so close to their properties. Immediately bordering the park are 17 homes on Del Norte Ave. and Iris Lane plus one on Bay Road and only one of these is supportive of the current plan. There are 12 homes on Iris Lane and all neighbors reached, (8 out of 12 contacted) are also concerned with noise, parking, traffic, and safety on our streets with the plan as proposed. The majority of these homes are owner occupied and many owners have lived here several decades. At the April 7th meeting, there were 18 letters from neighbors about these concerns in your packet and 3 additional letters that were not included which we requested be added. Also included was a list of 38 names from 30 homes on our streets and nearby that share the above concerns about the new plan. Many of these people spoke about these concerns at the April 7th meeting. Several letters also were submitted from concerned neighbors on adjoining streets. Nettie Wjsman reported these neighborhood statistics when she spoke at your 4/7/16 meeting, but they were not included in the minutes of that meeting.

We want to describe for you the 2015-2016 process of the "Re-Imagining Flood Park" project as we experienced it. The San Mateo County Parks Department hosted two meetings in May/June 2015 getting ideas and feedback from local communities and one in September at which three designs based on input from the May/June meetings were presented and voted on. On December 9th and 16th, with very short notice to the communities, (email notices sent on 12/3), a new "Preferred Plan" was presented that was quite different than those voted on in September. One of the main changes was that it included a full-size lacrosse/soccer field that was just 30 ft. from the back yards of homes on Del Norte and Iris Lane. This new plan was not on the Parks Department website prior to the meetings in December. Following the September meeting, the Parks Department website had indicated that there would be another place to comment on line before the final plan would be submitted for approval. Many people were following this project online and could not attend the meetings, yet after the December meetings, there was no way to comment online. Consequently, what followed was a flurry of concerned emails in December and January from our neighbors to the Parks Department staff. The Parks Department had planned to present a final plan to you, the Commissioners on February 4, 2016. However, they postponed the presentation after receiving so many questions and concerns from our neighborhood.

At the community meeting in September (just one meeting held) people were asked to vote on 3 plans, stated to have been created from "hundreds" of online surveys (220) and people attending the meetings in May and June (150). Votes by raised hands were tallied at the meeting thus:

Central Park - 37 votes (this plan contained a youth soccer field as well as the existing ball field)
Arts and Culture - 13 votes (existing ball field only)
Natural - 21 votes (existing ball field only)

The total votes for the 2 plans without the soccer field was 34 votes, just 3 less than the 37 for the Central Park plan containing the youth soccer field. Also of note is that soccer was listed as

a medium priority in the September presentation per the surveys, and lacrosse was not on the list at all. In December, these 2 sports fields were suddenly described as high priority desires.

Still hoping that the Parks Dept. would present a revised design to the Parks Commissioners on April 7th and wanting to have a voice in the process, a few of us neighbors invited the Parks Dept. staff to walk through the park together and discuss various options for relocating the fields, volleyball courts, and new trail. The response to this was an invitation from the Parks Dept. to the whole neighborhood to have a walk-through on March 19th. Despite short notice again, (notices for this meeting show a postmark date of 3/10, but arrived in mail boxes around 3/16), there were 40+ neighbors attending the meeting, many of whom were very unhappy with the "Preferred Plan." At this vociferous meeting, Marlene Finley, Parks Department Director, finally said, "We got it." with regard to placing noisy activities near neighbors. However, they presented the same "Preferred Plan" at the 4/7 Parks Commissioners' Meeting where it was approved in concept, and an EIR planned.

Needless to say, this is frustrating to the neighbors on Del Norte Avenue, Iris Lane, and nearby streets who want the new amenities to benefit the general public without having negative impacts on our neighborhood. We believe there are other possible locations for the sports fields that should be considered, possibly a multipurpose field within the existing ball field, as well as other locations where a youth soccer field could be built with minimal loss of trees.* Perhaps the Flood School property could be annexed and used for the lacrosse/soccer field. The community expressed the importance of preserving trees at the Sept. 1st meeting, yet the current location proposed for the full-size lacrosse/soccer field would require cutting down a grove of redwood trees in the northeastern corner designed by former Flood Park Ranger Pam Noyer to buffer the neighbors from freeway noise. Keeping the volleyball courts and eastern trail farther within the park (such as where they are now) should be relatively easy to do. We believe these things can be and must be accomplished to fulfill new desires while respecting the needs of neighbors of the park and preserving the natural character that makes Flood Park unique and important in this urban environment.

Since the new Assistant Director of the Parks Dept., Sarah Birkeland, began working on April 18th, we wanted to meet her and describe our concerns so we invited her to meet with a few of us in the park. She and Carla Schoof met with three of us at Flood Park on May 16th. We discussed the problems we neighbors anticipate with the above aspects of the Preferred Plan and considered alternative suggestions.* We neighbors requested that 1 or 2 public meetings (preferably 2) be held for information and feedback after the draft EIR is available with ample advance notice of the dates. It is our understanding per Park Rules that meeting notices should be posted at least 2 weeks in advance of meetings. This did not occur for the December or March meetings. At least a 45 day period for public feedback is desirable after completion of the EIR. If the Parks Dept. should organize a task force of interested community groups to help with plans for the park, our neighborhood group would like to participate. Apparently, such a task force had been considered, but not activated. Many of us have lived next to (or near) the

park for several decades. We cherish Flood Park and it's role in enhancing life in our communities, and we want to continue to be actively involved as plans for it evolve.

We urge you to support reconsideration of the "Preferred Plan" design.

* Suggested alternative locations for the full-size lacrosse/soccer field measured by neighbor Nettie Wijsman are attached.

Respectfully,

Nettie Wijsman, 1037 Del Norte Ave.
Alice Newton, 1023 Del Norte Ave.
Danny Meehan 1023 Del Norte Ave.
Whitney Thwaite 1059 Del Norte Ave.
Joan Caldwell 1063 Del Norte Ave.
Joan Hilse 1073 Del Norte Ave.
Doug Bui, 319 Oakwood Place
Bill Lampkin 1155 Tehama Ave.

Attachments:



Preferred Alternative - Components



Preferred Alternative - Components

