

To: City Council
From: Parks and Recreation Commission
Date: April 16, 2012
Title: Palo Alto Golf Course Re-configuration Resulting From the San Francisquito Flood Control Project

On March 27th, 2012 the Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission (PAPRC) endorsed option G for the renovation of the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course (Golf Course) in conjunction with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) renovation of the levy adjoining the Golf Course. Below the PAPRC articulate the benefits and areas requiring special consideration with option G:

- This valuable recreation area is transformed into a magnificent layout integrating more naturally with the Baylands. It can be a destination “park” for golfers and other outdoor enthusiasts with the opportunity over time to make the clubhouse and its environs a true community center.
- This design allows the City to reserve 10.5 acres suitable for multiple recreation and park needs while maintaining a full “regulation” golf course appealing to golfers of all ages and drawing golfers from a wide area. The Commission recommends that an open and inclusive process be undertaken to explore the full array of recreation needs for the use of the 10.5 acres.
- The current course is profitable and contributes positively to City revenues. Assumptions and projections on estimated rounds played on the renovated course indicate that this asset is highly likely to substantially increase revenue contribution to the City after construction with option G contributing the highest revenue of all the options. The new design with “wow-factors” in many places will be a real draw for golfers from an extended geographical area.
- The full long-term vision to complete transformation of the site – including clubhouse architectural drawings, new parking and pedestrian flow and practice areas - needs to be presented to the Council now for future planning.

The above recommendation is tempered by the following facts:

- Costs for option G are the highest of the choices - exceeding \$7 million. Recently the Blue Ribbon Infrastructure Committee completed work on expenditure priorities. This new project needs to be prioritized and fully funded from known sources. In addition there will be one-year of course closure which will negatively impact stretched City budgets. Lastly, the City should be cognizant of the disproportionate burden on golfers to pay for a golf course design that sets aside 10.5 acres of land for other recreational uses.

- While there is a lot of ad-hoc comment on the need for athletic fields there is no documented urgent need for additional athletic field space at present. The City has done a good job of expanding field space already. Notable examples are the new Stanford fields and the current construction on El Camino Park which will include a full size turf field. Further play on existing fields could be created by adding lights at lower cost than additional fields. Demographic and community trends need to be watched closely to address future recreational needs.
- The full benefit of the golf course renovation (for golfers and non-golfers) cannot be realized without additional significant changes to the buildings, parking and pedestrian access, and practice area of the course. Maximum revenue will likely be blunted for tournament play and corporate outings/meetings by the current unappealing amenities. There will be a jarring difference between the entry to the facility and the course itself. Ideally, this would all be addressed as a total package on close construction timelines.
- This project will have significant environmental impacts that will need to be evaluated prior to development given the proximity to sensitive environmental areas and riparian habitat.