



# Golden Gate Park Stables Renovation

**City and County of San Francisco  
Draft Environmental Impact Report  
2004.1094E  
State Clearinghouse No. 2006122033**

**EIR Publication Date: August 31, 2007  
EIR Public Hearing Date: September 27, 2007  
EIR Public Comment Period: August 31 - October 16, 2007**

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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** August 31, 2007

**TO:** Distribution List for the Golden Gate Park Stables Renovation Draft EIR

**FROM:** Bill Wycko, Acting Environmental Review Officer

**RE:** Request for the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Golden Gate Park Stables Renovation Project (Case Number 2004.1094E)

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This is the Draft of the Environmental Impact report (EIR) for the Golden Gate Park Stables Renovation Project. A public hearing will be held on the adequacy and accuracy of this document. After the public hearing, our office will prepare and publish a document titled "Comments and Responses," which will contain all relevant comments on this Draft EIR and our responses to those comments along with copies of letters received and a transcript of the public hearing. The Comments and Responses document may also specify changes to this Draft EIR. Public agencies and members of the public who testify at the hearing on the Draft EIR will automatically receive a copy of the Comments and Responses document, along with notice of the date reserved for certification; others may receive such copies and notice on request or by visiting our office. This Draft EIR together with the Comments and Responses document will be considered by the City Planning Commission in an advertised public meeting and certified as a Final EIR if deemed adequate.

After certification, we will modify the Draft EIR as specified by the Comments and Responses document and print both documents in a single publication called the Final Environmental Impact Report. The Final EIR will add no new information to the combination of the two documents except to reproduce the certification resolution. It will simply provide the information in one rather than two documents. Therefore, if you receive a copy of the Comments and Responses document in addition to this copy of the Draft EIR, you will technically have a copy of the Final EIR.

We are aware that many people who receive the Draft EIR and Comments and Responses have no interest in receiving virtually the same information after the EIR has been certified. To avoid expending money and paper needlessly, we would like to send copies of the Final EIR in Adobe Acrobat format on a compact disk (CD) to private individuals only if they request them. Therefore, if you would like a copy of the Final EIR, please fill out and mail the postcard provided inside the back cover to the Major Environmental analysis division of the Planning Department within two weeks after certification of the EIR. Any private party not requesting a Final EIR by that time will not be mailed a copy.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

City and County of San Francisco  
Planning Department

# **GOLDEN GATE PARK STABLES RENOVATION PROJECT**

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**DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Golden Gate Park Stables Renovation project (Proposed Project). The Proposed Project would involve the rehabilitation of the Golden Gate Park (GGP) stables which were constructed during the Works Progress Administration (WPA Stables), demolition of the grandstand and ancillary structures, construction of additional stables, and expansion of the existing arena. The City and County of San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD) is the owner and operator of the site as well as the project sponsor.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### PROJECT SETTING

The project site is located within the boundaries of GGP, Block 1700, Lot 1, south of John F. Kennedy Drive (JFK) between Spreckels Lake, GGP Stadium, and Lindley Meadow, and east of the GGP Police Stables. GGP, including the project site, is owned and managed by the City and County of San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. The GGP Stables is located within a P (Public Use) zoning district and OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk District. The GGP Master Plan identifies this site as a Major Recreational Area land use zone. The GGP Stables site is served by James W. Bloesch Road, which intersects with JFK Drive. Surrounding uses include the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) Stables (Police Stables) to the west, jogging path and Polo Field to the south, forest area to the east, and JFK Drive to the north. There is a narrow access road runs west from the GGP Stables past the Police Stables, which is limited to SFPD and other City department staff and is not part of this project.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of the Proposed Project is to bring the historic activity of horseback riding back to the GGP Stables. SFRPD is proposing the rehabilitation of the four stables built during the Works Progress Administration (WPA), demolition of the GGP Grandstand and ancillary structures, construction of three additional stables, and expansion of the existing arena. The four WPA Stables, which were constructed in 1938, would be rehabilitated to meet current seismic and building code standards and the stalls would be reconfigured to increase their size. The number of existing stalls in the WPA Stables would decrease from 52 to 26 stalls. The construction of three additional stables, totaling 4,000 square feet (sq. ft.) would house 20 additional stalls. The project site would house a total of 46 horses. The demolition of the GGP Grandstand would

allow for the expansion of the arena to 130 feet by 122 feet (15,860 sq. ft.) from its current size of 128 feet by 67 feet (8,576 sq. ft.). The arena would be covered and lit, which would allow equestrian use in poor weather and in the evening. Other project components include construction of a retaining wall along the south end of the expanded arena to protect the integrity of the all-purpose trail running east-west on the southernmost side of the site; construction of site steward and night manager's quarters totaling 1,400 sq. ft.; construction of a new classroom/tack room/office building totaling 1,400 sq. ft.; construction of a hay barn and feed storage building totaling 1,600 square feet; construction of a 200 square foot manure bunker adjacent to the hay barn, use of multiple-use paths to nearby arenas, resurfacing of pathways, road, and parking lot, landscape improvements, and installation of perimeter fencing.

## MAIN ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Initial Study, published on December 9, 2006, found that the project would not cause potentially significant effects in the following areas: land use, aesthetics, population and housing, transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, archeological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards/hazardous materials, mineral/energy resources, and agricultural resources. Therefore no further analysis is required of these potential effects in the EIR (see Appendix A). The Initial Study found that potentially significant effects to historic resources could occur as a result of the project and that further analysis was necessary (see Appendix A, Cultural Resource). The topic of historic resources is analyzed in this EIR. A land use discussion is also included for informational purposes.

### LAND USE (CHAPTER 2.1)

Predominantly single- and multi-family residential areas in the Richmond and Sunset Districts adjoin GGP on the north and south respectively. The Proposed Project would not be a new land use and would be compatible with existing and planned uses in the vicinity. The Proposed Project would re-establish horseback riding activities at the GGP Stables and would not disrupt or divide the neighborhood, nor would it have a significant, adverse effect on neighborhood character. Additionally, the Proposed Project would provide a recreational resource that would be available to the public, thereby meeting the GGP Master Plan's recreation objective to provide uses that are appropriate to the park environment and purpose.

### HISTORIC RESOURCES (CHAPTER 2.2)

The Initial Study found that potentially significant effects to historic resources could occur as a result of the Proposed Project and that further analysis was necessary to determine whether the demolition of the GGP Grandstand and the addition of new structures would affect the historical significance of the project site (see Appendix A, Cultural Resource).

The project site is within the GGP Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2004. The project site is located within the Polo Field/Stables

Recreation Area of the GGP Historic District. Contributing elements of the Polo Field/Stables Recreation Area include GGP Stadium (Polo Field), GGP Grandstand, GGP Stables, the Park Police Stables, Anglers Lodge and Flycasting Pools, and Polo Field restrooms (north and south). GGP Stables is comprised of six buildings and structures including the GGP Grandstand and Works Progress Administration (WPA) Stables, as well as the central riding ring. As facilities constructed (WPA Stables) or modified (GGP Grandstand) for horseback riding uses, these two structures provided recreation opportunities for the city's residents. Therefore, the GGP Grandstand and GGP Stables contribute to the significance of the Polo Field/Stables Recreation Area of GGP Historic District under Criterion A of the NRHP.

The removal of the GGP Grandstand and the Proposed Project components would not cause substantial adverse change to GGP Historic District and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the GGP Historic District. The demolition of GGP Grandstand as well as the expansion and design of the new arena would allow the other structures that comprise the GGP Stables to return to their historic use and would not cause a significant adverse effect to the GGP Stables and GGP Stadium, which are contributing elements of the Polo Field/Recreation Area within the GGP Historic District. The Polo Field/Recreation Area, including its contributing elements would remain an identifiable entity and continue to contribute to the GGP Historic District under Criterion A of the NRHP. The GGP Historic District would retain its significance, importance, and identity after the demolition of the GGP Grandstand and covering of the central riding arena. Therefore, the demolition of the GGP Grandstand in order to expand and cover the arena would not cause a substantial adverse change to the GGP Historic District. The design of the new structures meets the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and is considered mitigated to a less-than-significant impact (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3)). The rehabilitation of the WPA Stables would be completed in a manner that meets the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and is considered mitigated to a less-than-significant impact (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3)).

#### GROWTH INDUCEMENT (CHAPTER 2.3)

The proposed renovated facility would employ a total of approximately six (6) employees at the site, which would include one stable manager, two caretakers (day and night shifts), and three trainers. The caretaker and stable manager may live on site, or be employed on day and night shifts. Other SFRPD employees would also continue to perform park maintenance and related activities with no job displacement. The Proposed Project's construction and operation would occur within the boundaries of the GGP. Construction workers are expected to be from the Bay Area. They would commute to the site from within the Bay Area and would not generate an additional demand for housing in San Francisco. The employees that would be hired for the Proposed Project's operations are expected to come from the existing labor pool in the area. Construction and implementation of the Proposed Project would not displace any homes or people, nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The new facility could bring more recreational users to GGP, but not more than what is anticipated for a regional park. The Proposed Project is in a developed area within GGP and would not entail

expansion of municipal infrastructure not already in place or under consideration. Therefore the project is not expected to induce substantial new residential or commercial growth not already planned for.

## MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

Mitigation and improvement measures have been identified in this EIR that would reduce or eliminate potential significant environmental impacts of the project. Mitigation measures for construction air quality, hydrology and water quality, biological resources, and cultural (archeological) resources were included in the Initial Study and are provided again below. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels. Some mitigation measures may be the responsibility of other agencies. Improvement measures for transportation and circulation and historic resources have also been identified to reduce impacts that have been found to be less-than-significant. Improvement measures are not required as conditions of the project, but are suggested measures the project sponsor can implement if they choose to do so. Other improvement measures may be required by decision-makers as conditions of project approval if the project is approved.

An asterisk (\*) denotes mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study.

### CULTURAL (ARCHEOLOGICAL) RESOURCES\*

1. The following mitigation measure is required to avoid any potential adverse effect from the proposed project on accidentally discovered buried or submerged historical resources as defined in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5(a)(c). The project sponsor shall distribute the Planning Department archeological resource "ALERT" sheet to the project prime contractor; to any project subcontractor (including demolition, excavation, grading, foundation, pile driving, etc. firms); or utilities firm involved in soils disturbing activities within the project site. Prior to any soils disturbing activities being undertaken each contractor is responsible for ensuring that the "ALERT" sheet is circulated to all field personnel including, machine operators, field crew, pile drivers, supervisory personnel, etc. The project sponsor shall provide the Environmental Review Officer (ERO) with a signed affidavit from the responsible parties (prime contractor, subcontractor(s), and utilities firm) to the ERO confirming that all field personnel have received copies of the Alert Sheet.

Should any indication of an archeological resource be encountered during any soils disturbing activity of the project, the project Head Foreman and/or project sponsor shall immediately notify the ERO and shall immediately suspend any soils disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery until the ERO has determined what additional measures should be undertaken.

If the ERO determines that an archeological resource may be present within the project site, the project sponsor shall retain the services of a qualified archeological consultant.

The archeological consultant shall advise the ERO as to whether the discovery is an archeological resource, retains sufficient integrity, and is of potential scientific/historical/cultural significance. If an archeological resource is present, the archeological consultant shall identify and evaluate the archeological resource. The archeological consultant shall make a recommendation as to what action, if any, is warranted. Based on this information, the ERO may require, if warranted, specific additional measures to be implemented by the project sponsor.

Measures might include: preservation in situ of the archeological resource; an archaeological monitoring program; or an archeological testing program. If an archeological monitoring program or archeological testing program is required, it shall be consistent with the Major Environmental Analysis (MEA) division guidelines for such programs. The ERO may also require that the project sponsor immediately implement a site security program if the archeological resource is at risk from vandalism, looting, or other damaging actions.

The project archeological consultant shall submit a Final Archeological Resources Report (FARR) to the ERO that evaluates the historical significance of any discovered archeological resource and describing the archeological and historical research methods employed in the archeological monitoring/data recovery program(s) undertaken. Information that may put at risk any archeological resource shall be provided in a separate removable insert within the final report.

Copies of the Draft FARR shall be sent to the ERO for review and approval. Once approved by the ERO, copies of the FARR shall be distributed as follows: California Archaeological Site Survey Northwest Information Center (NWIC) shall receive one (1) copy and the ERO shall receive a copy of the transmittal of the FARR to the NWIC. The Major Environmental Analysis division of the Planning Department shall receive three copies of the FARR along with copies of any formal site recordation forms (CA DPR 523 series) and/or documentation for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places/California Register of Historical Resources. In instances of high public interest or interpretive value, the ERO may require a different final report content, format, and distribution than that presented above.

#### AIR QUALITY\*

1. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) recommends the following basic control measures for project less than four acres in size. Due to the small size of the Proposed Project (approximately two acres), the following basic control measures would reduce construction-related air quality impacts of the Proposed Project to a less-than-significant level. In addition to the mitigation measure provided below, project construction activities shall comply with all applicable BAAQMD rules and regulations including Rule 6 (Particulate Matter and Visible Emissions), Rule 8-3 (Architectural Coatings), and 8-15 (Emulsified and Liquid Asphalts).

- Water all active construction areas at least twice daily, and more often during times of high wind.
  - Cover all trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials or require all trucks to maintain at least two feet of freeboard.
  - Pave, apply water three times daily, or apply (non-toxic) soil stabilizers on all unpaved access roads, parking areas and staging areas at construction sites.
  - Sweep daily (with water sweepers) all paved access roads, parking areas and staging areas at construction sites.
  - Sweep streets daily (with water sweepers) if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent public streets.
2. To ensure compliance with Article 6 of the San Francisco Health Code, which requires manure and stable refuse to be removed from the stables at least semi-weekly and the stables be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, the SFRPD or their designated stable operator shall prepare a manure management, storage, and trail waste disposal plan to minimize resultant odors to surrounding areas. Manure shall be removed from stables on a daily basis and temporarily stored in the manure bunker. The plan shall specify the schedule and frequency of onsite manure management and storage, as well as the collection and disposal of waste on the trails used between the project site and nearby arenas.

#### HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY\*

1. The manure storage bunker shall be constructed of impervious material and be designed such that surface runoff from surrounding areas are prevented from entering the storage area and runoff of contaminated water from the storage area shall be prevented by roofing the manure bunker. Grass filter strips shall be installed around the storage bunker to catch any runoff from the storage site.
2. Water from stables shall be directed to the drains that connect to the combined sewer system by a system designed to prevent such runoff from going off-site.

## BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES (NESTING RAPTORS)\*

1. If project demolition/construction activity would commence during the raptor nesting season (February 1 to August 31), preconstruction surveys shall be conducted in areas of suitable nesting habitat within 500 feet of project activity. Surveys shall be conducted within 14 days prior to commencement of project activity. If no active nests are found, no further mitigation shall be required. If construction is initiated and completed outside of the raptor nesting season, no mitigation is required.
2. If an active raptor nest is found, appropriate buffers shall be established. No project demolition/construction activity shall commence within the buffer area until a qualified biologist confirms that the nest is no longer active. CDFG guidelines recommend implementation of 500-foot buffers, but the size of the buffer may be adjusted if a qualified biologist determines it would not be likely to adversely affect the nest. Monitoring of the nest by a qualified biologist may be required if the activity has potential to adversely affect the nest.

The following improvement measures for transportation and circulation and historic resources have also been identified to reduce impacts that have been found to be less-than-significant. Improvement measures are different from mitigation measures in that they are not required, but suggested measures the project sponsor can implement if they choose to do so.

## IMPROVEMENT MEASURE - TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION\*

1. The SFRPD shall install signs along the primary or designated trails that will be used between the project site and arenas which would inform users of the multi-use trail. These signs would communicate trail use and indicate which users should yield to others.
2. The SFRPD shall place mirrors at blind corners along the trails such that different users can see who is approaching.
3. If determined necessary, the SFRPD shall clear vegetation along trails that may have blind corners or sharp turns to provide a line of sight between different users.

## IMPROVEMENT MEASURE – HISTORIC RESOURCES

The following improvement measure is recommended prior to the GGP Grandstand demolition:

The SFRPD has agreed to document the GGP Grandstand prior to demolition. This would include:

- Detailed-level historical research on the construction history of the structure as well as its historical associations with GGP and the Stables, that includes existing architectural drawings, news articles and literature related to the Grandstand; and

- Photographic documentation and written description of the existing structure (exterior, interior, and setting).

This documentation shall be submitted to the History Room of the San Francisco Public Library, and to San Francisco Planning Department MEA.

## **SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED**

According to the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15382, a “significant effect on the environment” means a substantial, or potentially substantial adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. In determining whether or not the Project has the potential to result in a significant impact to the environment, the City and County of San Francisco employed “thresholds of significance” derived from the CEQA Environmental Checklist Form (Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines). The thresholds for historic resources are provided in Chapter 2.0 of this Draft EIR prior to the evaluation of impacts section.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in any significant unavoidable impact including to historic resources and to the GGP Historic District.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT**

The alternatives analysis describes a range of reasonable alternatives to the Project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the Project, while avoiding or substantially lessening any significant impacts, and evaluates the comparative merits of the alternatives (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a)). Alternatives that avoid or substantially reduce significant impacts are considered, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of Project objectives, or would be more costly (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(b)). No significant unavoidable impacts were identified as a result of the Project. However, several alternatives were considered to evaluate impacts of other development alternatives.

The following alternatives are considered in Chapter 5 of this Draft EIR:

- The No Project Alternative (Alternative 1), which assumes the continuation of existing conditions on the Project site.
- The Preservation Alternative (Alternative 2), which assumes the preservation of the GGP Grandstand and rehabilitation of the WPA stables only.
- Alternative Site Plan A (Alternative 3), which consists of the rehabilitation of the WPA stables, demolition of the grandstand and ancillary structures, construction of

three new stable buildings, construction of an education and administration building, and a manure bunker and hay barn.

- Alternative Site Plan B (Alternative 4), which consists of the rehabilitation of the WPA stables, demolition of the grandstand and ancillary structures, construction of three new stable buildings, and construction of an education and administration building. The manure bunker, hay barn, and six of the stalls would be within one building.

CEQA requires the identification of an environmentally superior alternative. Based on the information contained in Chapter 5, and in accordance with CEQA, Alternatives 3 and 4 would both meet all of the project objectives. Alternative 2 would not include any new construction or expansion of the central riding arena and would therefore be the environmentally superior option. However, Alternative 2 would not meet the project sponsor's objectives.

## **AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED**

This EIR focuses on the issue of historic resources. A land use discussion is also included for informational purposes. All other potential environmental effects were found to be less-than-significant or to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level, with mitigation measures agreed to by the project sponsor. Please see the Initial Study, Appendix A, for analysis of issues other than historic resources. The City and County of San Francisco filed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research on December 9, 2006. The 30-day comment period ended on January 8, 2007. Comments were received relating to transportation, horse safety, facility operations, and use of the facility for harness and carriage horsemanship. Some members of the public may consider these issues controversial. Most of the comments were related to the economics of the facility and future operations. Some of these are not environmental issues and therefore not addressed in the EIR. When a facility operator is hired, their agreement with the SFRPD would include certain conditions such as insurance and safety procedures for the horses and users of the facility. Improvement measures related to transportation and circulation are addressed in the Initial Study (See Appendix A, p. 32).