

Philanthropies in Support of Crissy Field

August 25, 2011

Bill Wycko
Environmental Review Officer
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, California 94103

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the 34th America's Cup

Dear Mr. Wycko:

We are writing to offer comments on the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the 34th America's Cup.

We share the city's excitement about bringing this historic event to our great city of San Francisco. At the same time, as concerned stakeholders who have made deep investments in the restoration of Crissy Field, we want to make sure that the city and its partners are doing everything in their power to protect Crissy Field and other locations from any adverse impacts associated with hosting the America's Cup.

We believe that the 34th America's Cup is an immense opportunity for San Francisco. The races and associated events promise to provide a significant boost to the local economy while at the same time showcasing the Bay Area's wealth of natural, civic and cultural resources for a national and international audience.

As the city is well aware, however, the crowds, the added traffic, and the use of the San Francisco Bay and its surrounding shoreline by race teams, the news media and millions of spectators could create lasting damage to vital community assets. It is estimated that as many as 6.8 million visitors will turn out at sites around the Bay to view the races and to participate in America's Cup-related events in 2012 and 2013. Early estimates are that Crissy Field alone will draw crowds of 80,000 or more on the some race days. It is our belief that these numbers could easily underestimate the actual crowds, as this will be the first-ever America's Cup with races held close enough to shore to allow land-based spectators to watch.

We understand that Crissy Field will be a prime gathering area for these spectators, with its extensive bay frontage and proximity to the race course. It will potentially host America's Cup sponsored activities and will also provide prime front-row viewing for the general public from multiple vantage points along the shoreline. Diligent planning and the availability of significant resources for mitigation, protection and restoration are necessary to fully address the impact on Crissy Field. Given the start of America's Cup events in 2012, these measures require immediate attention and action.

Collectively our philanthropies – joined by over 5,000 generous donors from throughout our community – helped the Conservancy raise more than \$36 million for this park that now attracts more than one million visitors each year.

We often say that Crissy Field is a park for all people. Its transformation ten years ago from a former military base with just 30 acres of usable space to a 100-acre urban national park was made possible because of the support of the entire Bay Area community. Now, we are asking that the city protect the enormous investment that our community has made, and continues to make, in restoring and sustaining this natural wonder, this beloved gathering place for people of all ages and from all backgrounds.

The organizers and sponsors of the America’s Cup must be held accountable for ensuring that Crissy Field, as well as other locations in our community that will be impacted by these events, are left in pre-race condition. As the city works with the Event Authority to prepare the Parks Event Operations Plan described in the EIR, we strongly encourage you to devote special attention to developing solid, well-thought-out plans to:

1. define mitigation measures for Crissy Field; and
2. identify financial resources for event preparation and management, crowd safety and traffic control, and post-event repair and restoration.

We also request that the following elements are specifically referenced within the Final Environmental Impact Report:

1. mitigation measures relevant to national park sites affected;
2. commitment to the financial resources required to execute these measures; and
3. the specific timeframe for the commitment of these financial resources.

We know that the city shares our interest in protecting Crissy Field as a crown jewel in the Golden Gate National Park system and San Francisco. We look forward to a successful 34th America’s Cup that showcases the beauty of our city while protecting its remarkable natural, civic and cultural resources for the generations to come.

Direct responses to this letter can be addressed to Doug Overman, Deputy Director of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy at (415) 561-3025 or doverman@parksconservancy.org.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Walter J. Haas, Chair
Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund



Robert and Colleen Haas

Pamela David, Executive Director
Walter & Elise Haas Fund

Kristine Johnson, Trustee
Timothy Dattels & Kristine Johnson
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Randi and Bob Fisher

Toby Rosenblatt

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Phil and Sue Marineau

Julie and Will Parish

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi
Ed Lee, Mayor, City and County of San Francisco
David Chiu, President, Board of Supervisors, City and County of San Francisco
Mark Farrell, Supervisor, District 2, City and County of San Francisco
Frank Dean, General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Craig Middleton, Executive Director, Presidio Trust
Craig Thompson, CEO, America's Cup Event Authority
Mark Buell, Chair, America's Cup Organizing Committee