



In Defense of Animals

Don Lewis
Major Environmental Analysis
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

February 18, 2010

Dear Mr. Lewis,

In Defense of Animals is an international animal protection organization established in 1983, with over 80,000 members worldwide and headquartered in San Rafael, California. We are committed to protecting the rights, welfare and habitats of animals.

We are concerned to learn about the proposal by the Department of Recreation and Park to build a soccer complex on natural, open space land in the western end of Golden Gate Park. We believe that a project of this scale has potential environmental impacts, and a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report is necessary. As far as we know, there has been no city-wide outreach on this issue and no effort to let people in the greater Bay Area weigh in on the destruction of parkland considered by many to be a prime regional park.

It is our understanding that this project proposes to transform the western end of Golden Gate Park from a grassy meadowland to a hard-edged, paved soccer complex with up to five artificial turf fields, eliminating vital habitat for the variety of wildlife that currently live there. We strongly agree with the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club that this proposal will negatively impact wildlife in the area. Grass fields provide foraging habitat for a variety of hawks, owls, thrushes, blackbirds, sparrows, gulls and warblers, as well as many mammals. Additionally, we understand that the plan proposes the installation of bright lights which will come on before sunset and stay on until 10:00pm each day, year-round. These lights, erected on 60 foot poles surrounding the fields and along sidewalks, paths and parking areas, will have a deleterious effect on the mammals and birds, as well as on the insects upon which these creatures feed. Fog in the area will increase the brightness of these lights, deepening the impact on wildlife.

We believe this project will destroy the habitat value of the western end of Golden Gate Park and possibly have a deleterious impact on Ocean Beach. There is nothing about this project that is beneficial to the bird and animal inhabitants of Golden Gate Park. We encourage you to reconsider this proposed development, and to require that an Environmental Impact Report be prepared for this project.

Sincerely,

Eliot M. Katz, DVM
President & Founder

cc: John Rizzo, Sierra Club
Authur Feinstein, Sierra Club
Michael Lynes, Golden Gate Audubon Society