

Subject: FW: Written Comments for Improvements at East Hillsdale Park

From: Annie Schlossman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2022 2:00 PM
To: parksandrecreation@cityofsanmateo
Cc: Ikuo Shirayanagi [REDACTED]; Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Re: Written Comments for Improvements at East Hillsdale Park

March 1, 2022

Dear Sheila Canzian Director of Parks and Recreation and Parks and Recreation Commissioners,

This letter is in regards to the upcoming meeting on March 2, 2022, about the planned park renovation at East Hillsdale Park in the Hillsdale area. The following are my concerns that focus on the choice of equipment, the impact on parking in the neighborhood, and the location of the equipment within the park:

1. Regarding the voting issue of children's vs. adult preference. I have a hard time understanding how the preference of 21 children would result in the city's decision about which equipment they will purchase. I have never heard of children making this type of decision in any school yard or city park. It is an adult decision. Of note, 44 adults voted vs. 21 children. The age of children is not given. The vote shows what some children would like to play on today. However, they grow up and move away. They are not the parents who pay taxes and have real concerns like those that follow.
2. I was present at the last meeting. The clear winner of the vote was Specified Play Equipment. If it was going to come down to the total cost of how much each option of play equipment would cost, then why were we even asked to vote on the more expensive choice? Why not go back to Specified Play Equipment and ask them to scale down the scope of the equipment and by doing so, their cost? We, as a neighborhood, wanted a simplified version of the play equipment. We didn't ask for and don't need so many play elements.
3. Location of the play equipment. The map shows it is to be consolidated in one area. The East Hillsdale Park Play Area Upgrade Project Neighborhood Survey dated February 19, 2020, results showed no marked preference for the area located closest to Hickory and Briar Lanes. The answers for where it was to be placed on the survey showed they were all over the park. Question 1 was: Are you in favor of having a new play area in a more consolidated location rather than being dispersed around the perimeter of the main lawn area? 51 (54.3%) said "yes", 28 said "maybe" (29.8%) and 15 said "no" (16.0%). There were only 19 responses gathered from people who live adjacent to the park. Those responses should have more weight than people who live further away. There were no pros and cons listed from the respondents. **There didn't seem to be a consensus for placing it where it is now proposed.** More input should be gathered from the adjacent homes as we are the ones impacted by increased traffic and noise. See #10, #11 and #12, regarding parking and potential noise. Also the results of this survey to my knowledge was not shared openly with the respondents. I had to ask to see it.
4. What standard was used to assess the safety of the equipment?
5. Potential targets for graffiti. Our park has been vandalized and targeted with extensive graffiti many times. The Hags play equipment has more and larger surface area to be tagged and written on than Specified Play Equipment. This will cost more money and man power to clean up. We have had major graffiti on the play equipment at least 2 times in the last month alone. One I witnessed right after the fact and the other I heard about from a neighbor.
6. What is the anticipated lifespan of each brand of equipment?

7. How easy is it to get replacement parts for the equipment? The Hags equipment is made in Poland. The Specified equipment is made in the USA. Wouldn't products made in the USA be easier to replace when a part is broken? Shouldn't we support companies that are US sourced?

8. The Hags design by Miracle Play Equipment that has a woven rope base that I suspect is for jumping, concerns me. Who is going to keep the younger children off of it? It looks like an accident waiting to happen—a young child's foot will get caught between the ropes.

9. The Hags Spin R2 spinning wheel also looks like dangerous equipment especially if younger children use it. I also would not place it so close to a walking path.

10. What is the plan for parking if all the equipment except the swings is located closer to Hickory and Briar Lanes? While some parents will walk to the park, there are others who drive. The cul-de-sacs leading to the park are single car width. More cars on the street causes more parking congestion in an already crowded area. I do not appreciate when people off load their children and trample on my lawn. I have patches that once had grass but now have dirt from the constant off loading and disregard for my property. If the equipment were spread out—it may spread out the parking. A consideration should be to spread out the equipment to prevent these problems.

11. Per meeting notes, it is documented the city was resistant to considering looking at options for the location within the park of the equipment. Based on the West Hillsdale park, it is the easiest to enter off of 31st where there is easy street parking and it is the formal entry to the park. West Hillsdale Park has the play equipment located closer to 31st. It is only human nature to park and off load at the closest location to where the equipment is located. The side lanes were not intended to take extra traffic as there is limited street parking and the lanes are narrow. Please place the play equipment so as not to adversely impact a particular lane feeding the park.

Please relook at the layout of East Hillsdale park, which also has a formal entry on 31st Ave. The equipment could be spread out more between Arrowood and Briar and Hickory Lanes, with some of the equipment located closer to Arbor and 31st. This would relieve the congestion on our side streets that will only get worse if the new play structures are placed as proposed. **There is far more safe parking on 31st and that is the formal entrance to the park. There is a lighted crosswalk placed there for pedestrian safety. There are also sidewalks on 31st Ave., whereas there are none on the lanes.** I invite you to personally come and see our park and area before a formal decision is made.

12. Putting all the children in one place increases the noise level to neighboring homes. It is a concern to me as young children tend to squeal and the older ones yell. I would like this topic addressed with consideration to spreading out equipment.

13. Place the picnic tables closer to 31st on the East side of the park so they are afforded more shade and people coming on their lunch breaks can access them most quickly from 31st.

14. At the last online meeting which was held prior to the meeting in the park, I raised my hand virtually and was not called on. I heard that two other neighbors that live adjacent to the park were also not called on. I was so frustrated I lost sleep for a week. I am also concerned that not enough prior notice was given for this meeting. We were only notified about it by email this past Thursday, February 24th at 4:03pm. No postcard was sent out and it didn't give us enough time to have our letters published in the agenda packet as they need to be submitted the Wednesday before the meeting.

I hope my concerns will be addressed so that we can all enjoy the renovated park. Many people use our park from outside our immediate area by car especially since COVID started but a greater emphasis should be placed on the unique needs of the immediate neighbors who thoroughly use the park as well, as we are the ones most impacted on a daily bases by the changes and improvements.

We also clearly expressed a desire at the online meeting to have a more natural, low key design for the equipment which is what we were given with Specified Play Equipment.

Please note that our lane is so narrow that when two cars are parked on either sides of the street, at the entrance to the 100 block of Briar Lane, only one car can pass at any one time. It is a real safety concern as cars have been sideswiped that have parked there. Also I and at least 2 of my neighbors have addressed this dangerous issue with public works and we

have gotten no relief. Large delivery trucks are on our street all the time and it is often not safe for little children if they were to get away from adult supervision. I have to be especially cautious when I back out and exit my garage. Please, please consider this with the placement of the equipment.

I am looking forward to today's meeting and the committee's addressing the above issues. I appreciate the opportunity to provide input and the amount of work it takes by the city employees and the committee making this decision to plan and improve the park.

Thank you.

Annie Schlossman



Sent from my iPad