



## MEMORANDUM

To: Recreation and Park Commission  
Thru: Yomi Agunbiade, General Manager  
From: Dawn Kamalanathan, Planning Director  
Date: February 27, 2008

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### AGENDA ITEM

Discussion and possible action to approve the composition of seats for a Synthetic Fields Task Force to discuss, clarify, and make recommendations on the environmental, health and social impacts of synthetic fields.

### DISCUSSION

#### Task Force Purpose and Objectives

Over the past decade, park jurisdictions across the country have installed synthetic turf on playfields for the material's known maintenance benefits and an improved play experience. Recent concerns regarding potential environmental and health impacts have caused many of these jurisdictions to initiate additional research and discussion on the overall advantages and disadvantages of synthetic turf. Given dramatic variances in the climate, usage, and context in which synthetic turf is used, each jurisdiction is moving through its own process to determine how to responsibly move forward with playfield renovations.

The Department proposes convening a Task Force, comprised of professional experts and citizens, to clarify and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the use of synthetic turf on playfields in San Francisco.

This task force will meet into mid-April to accomplish the following objectives:

- Review recent research and evidence on the environmental, health, and social impacts of playfields,
- Synthesize and articulate the evidence and existing findings,
- Determine practical steps the Department can take to address potential issues or concerns raised by the review of the research, and,
- Make recommendations to the Commission and policy makers on how to responsibly move forward with the renovations of our playfields.

#### Composition of Task Force

To facilitate a thorough and well-informed discussion, staff proposes the following "seats" for the task force:

- Five (5) Subject Matter Experts to offer expertise on:
  - Climate change and recycling policy
  - Public health impacts and risks (e.g. physical health, respiratory disease, etc.)
  - Water quality and conservation
  - Toxicity of synthetic turf materials
- One (1) seat from the Park, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC)
- Two (2) seats to represent citywide park policy and advocacy organizations
- Two (2) seats to represent park and field users
- Two (2) seats to represent "neighbors" -- those affected by impacts of park uses



- Two (2) seats to represent schools and other youth serving organizations

#### Process for Selecting Participants

Staff requests that the Commission designate a Commissioner to review potential participants for the task force. The designated Commissioner would make final recommendations for the Task Force's membership for consideration at the March 20, 2008, Commission meeting. **[Instead of making final appointments on March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Commission assigned Commissioner Lee the responsibility of reviewing Statements of Interest and making appointments on the Commission's behalf.]**

Individuals interested in serving in the park and field user, neighbor, and schools or youth serving organization seats are invited to submit a Statement of Interest to Dawn Kamalanathan, Planning Director, at [Dawn.Kamalanathan@sfgov.org](mailto:Dawn.Kamalanathan@sfgov.org) by March 11<sup>th</sup> at noon (**changed to March 21<sup>st</sup> at noon, per Commission direction**).

The Statement of Interest should:

- Include the individual's preferred contact information,
- Clearly state the seat in which they are interested,
- Briefly describe the experience or background which qualifies them to represent the constituency served by that seat,
- Describe also their ability to be fair and objective in deliberating with fellow task force members.

Staff will work with the designated Commissioner to review Statements on a rolling basis until March 11<sup>th</sup> at noon (**amended to March 21<sup>st</sup> at noon, per Commission direction**). At that point, the Commissioner will review and recommend participants for each of the seats on the task force.

Final recommendations on nominees for the task force will be made in a staff report submitted to the Commission on March 12<sup>th</sup> for consideration at the March 20, 2008 Commission meeting.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the composition of the Task Force, and designate a Commissioner to review and recommend individuals to fill each seat on the Task Force.