



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

*** Press Release ***

Synthetic Turf Renovation Proposed for Minnie & Lovie Rec Center Athletic Field

*Playfields Initiative Partnership to Replace Worn-Down Field
Left Out of Earlier Recreation Center Renovation*

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SAN FRANCISCO – Two years after the opening of the new Minnie and Lovie Recreation Center, the athletic field below the center remains in poor condition - riddled with mud pits, uneven grass, and rusted fencing. That could soon change thanks to a joint proposal from San Francisco Recreation and Parks and the City Fields Foundation to renovate the park's dilapidated sports field with synthetic turf and field lights.

The proposed \$7 million renovation would retain the two existing baseball/softball diamonds and soccer field and add a new full-sized soccer field. To allow for a greater variety of youth sports opportunities, the soccer fields will also be lined for football practice, lacrosse and rugby

To accommodate the park's regular volleyball matches, two volleyball courts will be lined in the youth baseball outfield with sleeves to hold volleyball poles and nets – a first in San Francisco.

Installing synthetic turf and field lights at Minnie and Lovie will more than double the athletic field's capacity for play. Currently, the site can host 1,796 hours of annual play on the soccer field or 3,580 on the baseball/softball diamonds. The proposed renovation is expected to add 5,365 hours of new ground sports play or 3,570 hours of new baseball/softball play.

The rusting fencing surrounding the field on three sides and the crumbling baseball backstops, dugouts and bleachers will be replaced with black, vinyl fencing and dugouts, and new backstops and bleachers. While entire field will be synthetic turf, the raised baseball mound on the full-size baseball field will be preserved (the smaller baseball field/softball field doesn't have a raised mound). The unsightly cargo container used for storage will be removed and field-level park entrances will be improved.

(more)

"This is a terrific opportunity for the Oceanview community and a great step forward for Minnie and Lovie Recreation Center," said Mayor Edwin Lee. "I understand the value of our parks and athletic fields in building community bonds, for families and youth and for neighborhoods in San Francisco. This renovation will help our City continue to thrive."

"In this era of budget deficits and spending cuts, it is heartening to see the city, the neighborhood, and local philanthropists teaming up to help local kids," said Assemblymember Fiona Ma. "This is more than just a renovation of Minnie and Lovie's athletic field; it's an investment in our community."

"This field renovation will make the park safer and more accessible for everyone," said District 11 Supervisor John Avalos. "Instead of a dark, empty field at night, we're going to have a busy community space filled with kids and adults playing a half-dozen different sports."

"The Minnie and Lovie athletic field renovation will complete the park improvements that began with the facility's new recreation center," said Recreation and Parks General Manager Phil Ginsburg. "After years of neglect, this park is poised to become one of the City's nicest, most modern recreation facilities."

"Children, especially children living in big cities, need safe places to run, play and exercise year-round," said Susan Hirsch of the City Fields Foundation. "This field renovation is going to open up the park to thousands of more kids and families."

Though identified as a potential candidate for renovation in the 2008 Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond report, the Minnie & Lovie athletic field renovation really gained steam when suggested to Recreation and Parks General Manager Phil Ginsburg by park neighbors during a District 11 Council meeting.

"This is a wonderful gift to our neighborhood," said Mary Harris, President of District 11 Council and longtime advocate for Minnie and Lovie Recreation Center. "The neighborhood kids love the synthetic turf soccer fields at Crocker Amazon and are thrilled that one may be coming to Minnie and Lovie."

About the Playfields Initiative

The Playfields Initiative partnership between San Francisco Recreation and Parks and the City Fields Foundation was established in 2006 to address the ongoing shortage of athletic fields in SF & help Rec/Park equitably provide sports facilities. The partnership renovates high-use and worn-down athletic fields with synthetic turf and/or lights, and reorganized the department's permit system to improve efficiency and equitability.

To date, the Playfields Initiative has renovated twelve athletic fields in six parks; adding more than 66,000 hours of new athletic play time and creating enough space for 150 new youth soccer teams since 2004.

Parks with renovated athletic fields include:

- Garfield Square
- Silver Terrace
- Franklin Square
- South Sunset Playground
- Crocker Amazon Playground
- Kimbell Playground

Currently, the partnership has two athletic field renovations in the pipeline. Construction will begin later this year on a new synthetic turf field to replace the asphalt soccer field at Mission Playground and an environmental review is currently underway for the proposed renovation of the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields in Golden Gate Park.

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