

PANHANDLE Path Improvements :

A COF Grant Application to SF Rec+Park

I. Project Objective:

To increase the identity of The Panhandle of Golden Gate Park and the safety of its users, while promoting increased usage.

II. Problem Statement:

The Panhandle of Golden Gate Park is increasingly being used by more people. Users are residents from the neighborhood and across the city, as well as visitors from out of town. The number of families using the park is increasing. The park is used for recreation and commuting. There is no signage identifying the park as part of Golden Gate Park. There is no way-finding signage directing unfamiliar users.

The North shared path supports all modes of non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians. It is a unique park with the shared path being a major cycling connector route for the city. Therefore, the park is a pass-thru experience east-west, with 11 intersections of north-south paths crossing from pedestrian sidewalks. With that consideration, it needs to operate more safely and efficiently for all users. Crowding on the path sometimes leads to conflicts and injuries.

The South pedestrian path is in disrepair along much of its length. Disrepair includes cracks, tree roots pushing up, eroded edges and surfaces, pot holes, and flooding. The disrepair makes it hazardous and undesirable to use by some, which adds to crowding of the shared path.

Lighting quality along the paths at night needs to be more effective and efficient. The yellow light is dim and doesn't cover enough of the path. Additionally, illegal behavior (graffiti and camping) is an ongoing problem around the McKinley Monument. The absence of lighting and visibility is a contributor to the problem.

Existing amenities like Waste Cans, Benches, and Bike Racks are insufficient for the increasing needs of users. The Waste Cans often are too full. They are the old standard of 1 can with a recycling top (usually in disrepair causing recyclables to go into garbage) vs 2 separate bins. There could be more benches. There are no bicycle racks except for at the playground to lock up a bicycle, and this rack is somewhat hidden behind plantings and structures. There are many gathering spots that people cycle to in the park. Currently cyclists drop their bikes on the grass dirt while recreating.

III. Project Description:

The identity and safety objectives may be notably addressed by a number of path improvements, including:

1. Signage:
 - a. Add 3 standard Rec + Park green park Identity posted signs at Baker, Ashbury and Stanyan intersections
 - b. Add 7 way-finding posted signs at Baker, Masonic, Ashbury and Stanyan intersections
 - c. Replace "shared path" posted signs w/ symbols at Stanyan and Baker

2. North Path improvements:
 - a. Re-stripe the center yellow dashed line
 - b. Paint pedestrian and bike symbols on path to signify shared users
 - c. Paint diagonal crosswalk striping at path intersections
 - d. Add green-boxed bike arrows (Sharrows) on street at each end of path for bike wayfinding to/from path
 - e. Remove curb at Baker entrance for easier bike entry
 - f. Expand paved waiting area at Fell and Shrader to ease congestion
 - g. Expand paved waiting area at Stanyan end to ease congestion
 - h. Expand paved area at corner of Fell + Baker to ease congestion while waiting for lights and to give space for people to orient to signs off the path.

3. South Path improvements
 - a. Re-pave the entire path + cross paths with “Natural Pave”, re-graded for proper drainage, 10’ wide for vehicles, proper intersection turning radius for vehicles to reduce muddy pools in tire ruts.

Natural Pave is an impervious asphalt substitute with no petroleum. It is ADA compliant and has a high solar reflectance to reduce heat island effects.
 - b. Move the path farther away from the curb at Oak and Shrader and add a landscaped buffer from vehicles.
 - c. Remove the west crosswalk at Oak and Shrader, nearest the dangerous merger of lanes carrying fast-moving vehicles.
 - d. Move Masonic crossover paths away from street and add a landscape buffer for visual and acoustical distance from cars. View corridors East-West to be maintained. Very low planting used near intersections, in order to maintain visibility. Plants to be drought-tolerant.
 - e. Provide a “Natural Pave” path to the McKinley monument, which is ADA compliant and activates the space.
 - f. Expand sidewalk width along Baker with “Natural Pave” to ease congestion, and allow for more seating, bike racks. The goal is to provide space which invites people, engages the space, and more strongly identifies this gateway to the park.

4. General safety improvements:
 - a. Stripe all street crosswalks with continental striping and advance stop lines
 - b. Stripe Oak and Masonic in Yellow for the nearby Urban School expansion on Oak
 - c. Lighting:
 - replace bulbs with LED for brighter visibility; explore adding a shield to focus the light down
 - Add 3 lamp posts around McKinley for night-time visibility. The lights are expected to reduce the incidence of graffiti, encampments and give this GGP gateway a presence/identity at night, and perhaps eliminate the need for fencing around the statue.

5. Amenity upgrades:
 - a. Replace trash cans with 2-bin standard (waste+recycle) as in GGP; requires a concrete pad to bolt down containers.
 - b. Relocate or add some trash locations
 - c. Add bicycle racks in visible locations near areas of high use/ congregating.
 - d. Pave concrete under each bench, wide enough for mower to reach edge of adjacent grass; This makes cleaning under benches easier also.