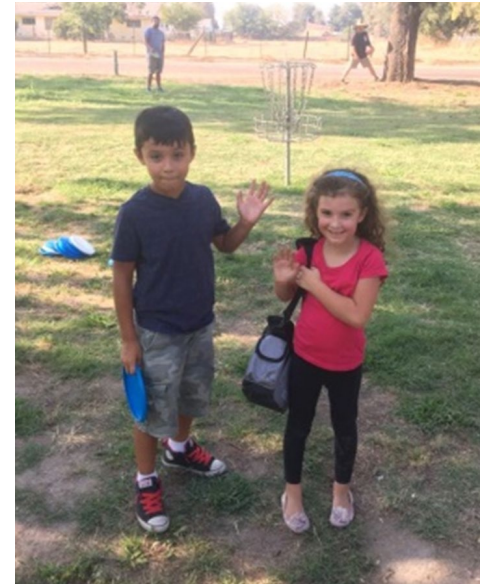


Sonora-Sevilla Disc Golf Course Proposal

April 6, 2022



Prepared for: Granada Community Services District

Prepared by: Disc Golf Subcommittee, Parks Advisory Committee

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DISC GOLF IN GENERAL

- What is Disc Golf?
- What is a Disc Golf course?
- How do you play Disc Golf?
- Who plays Disc Golf?
- Why do people like Disc Golf?
- Is Disc Golf popular?
- Where is Disc Golf played?
- What does it cost to play Disc Golf?
- What does it cost to install a course?
- Is Disc Golf good for people?
- Is Disc Golf good for the environment?

DISC GOLF- SONORA SEVILLA PROPERTY

- Is Sonora Sevilla a good place for disc golf?
- Preliminary course layout
- Estimated number of users
- Who would build the course?
- Preliminary estimate of construction costs
- Preliminary estimate of maintenance costs



Executive Summary

We are proposing the Granada Community Services District (GCSD) collaborate with the Cabrillo Unified School District (CUSD) on a project to expand healthy, outdoor recreation opportunities for our youth, and all residents on the Coastside. Locals have been asking the GCSD for years to establish a disc golf course. Disc golf is an internationally popular, low start-up cost, family-friendly sport for all ages and abilities. HMB High School has had a disc golf physical education class, but there is no public disc golf course in San Mateo County for students to play on. GCSD does not own land that would be suitable for a disc golf course.

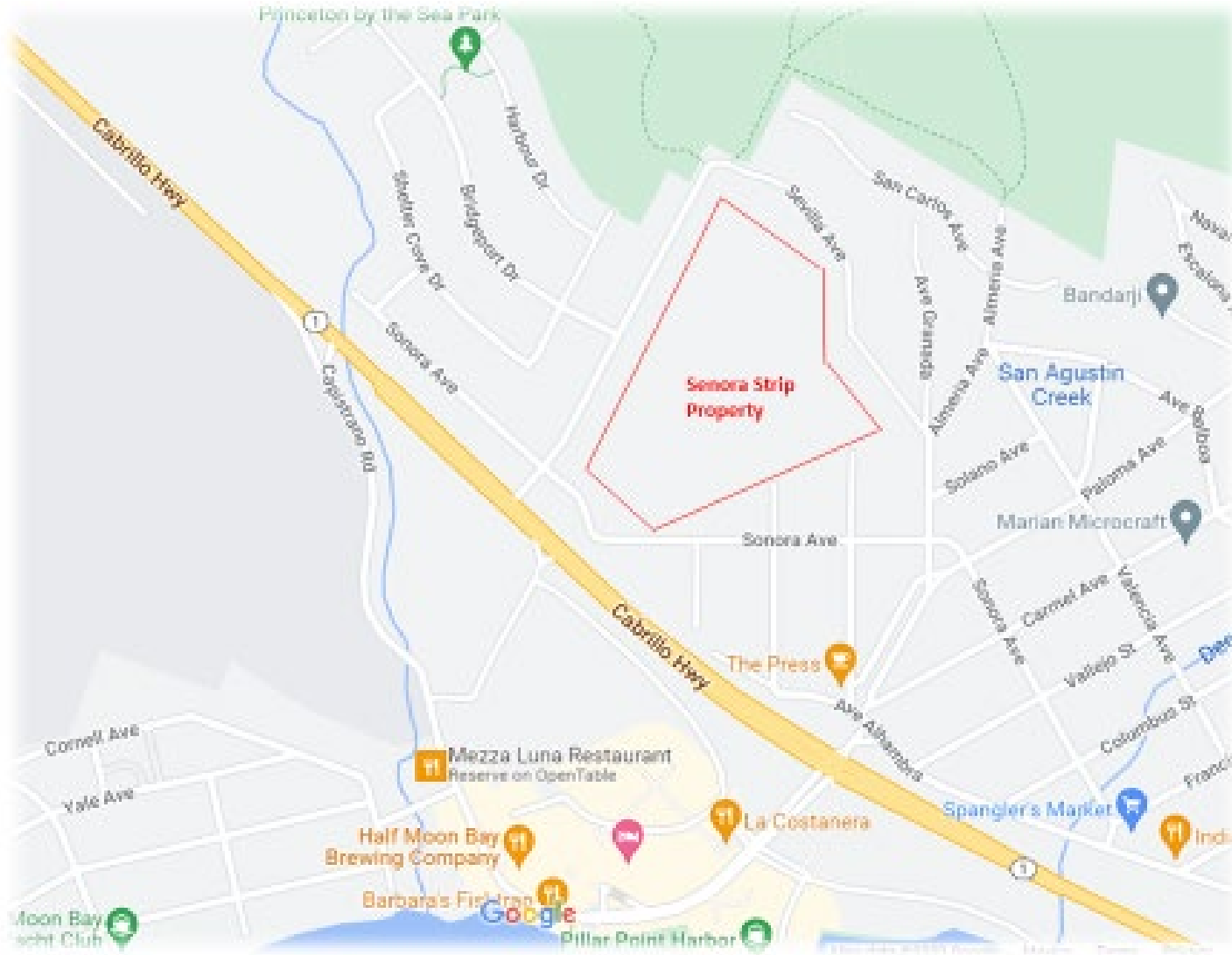
After a search of publicly owned lands in the area we have located an excellent site for a disc golf course. The so-called “Sonora Sevilla property,” is vacant land, owned by the CUSD in El Granada between Sonora and Sevilla Avenues (see Figure 1), and classified as “Surplus Property.” It would provide outstanding opportunities for a disc golf course, as we will describe later. Currently, there is occasional unapproved, informal walking, dog walking and bicycling use of this property. The school district is considering options for use of this parcel, including the building of teacher housing. We recognize that the CUSD wishes to keep its options open for use of this property, so the district does not want any permanent structures placed on it by others.

The Disc Golf Subcommittee is proposing GCSD build and maintain, at no cost to the CUSD, a disc golf course

on the school district’s Sonora Sevilla property which would be free for public and student use. As described later, it would be a smaller “Community Course” designed to provide primarily for the needs of the Coastside, and not so large as to draw many persons from outside the area. The specific terms of use and responsibilities would be spelled out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CUSD and GCSD. Details would be worked out at a later time, but initially we propose the MOU cover a ten year period, during which the school district could require the GCSD to remove any recreation improvements at their cost if notified the CUSD wished to pursue other options with the land. The MOU should also give the GCSD the option to continue disc golf use of the property after 10 years, by agreement of both parties. We propose the GCSD would conduct limited tree, brush and grass maintenance only on those portions of the property to be used by disc golf players, while the CUSD would continue to be responsible for tree maintenance on other parts of the Sonora Sevilla property, like what they do now. A final proposal and MOU would need to be approved by GCSD and CUSD Boards prior to any commitments and construction.

The proposed disc golf course is compatible with and does not present safety issues for the existing informal recreation users (many disc golf courses are located in multi-use open space/parks). We do not believe neighbors of the parcel would be significantly negatively impacted by this new recreational amenity or its users, as described later in this document.

Figure 1. Sonora Sevilla Property



Exec Summary *(cont'd)*

The Park Advisory Committee and GCSD would conduct a public outreach effort to seek and include public comments about this proposal before it is finalized. They would also pursue permits needed from the State of California, San Mateo County and other local entities.

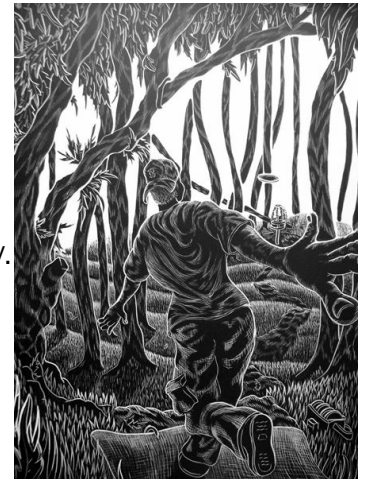
In keeping with the “Community Course” spirit of the project, it would be designed by a professional disc golf course designer donating his time and expertise and primarily built and maintained by community volunteers. We estimate between 2,000 to 5,100 rounds of disc golf will be played per year.

We believe the proposed course, like the 10 most recent new Bay Area disc golf courses, would be build 100% by volunteers. The cost of materials and supplies used during construction, when it was not donated, would be covered by the GCSD. As described later in the proposal, using a community model, we estimate the proposed 12 hole disc golf course would cost between \$13,000 and \$34,000 to build, depending on if volunteer labor and donations are used, or if a licensed contractor is utilized. It could be built over a month period (after MOU approval and permits are acquired). Annual maintenance costs would be about \$5,000, more if there are large tree falls on the course which must be removed. The cost of bi-weekly trash/recycle bin servicing is included.

The GCSD currently has a liability insurance policy which would be used to cover the proposed recreation facilities use. The CUSD would be an additional insured. The GCSD would pay the CUSD an annual property use fee.

The preliminary twelve-hole disc golf course would provide an excellent opportunity for local students to practice the skills they learn in the HMB High School disc golf PE class and encourage them to get outside and engage in a healthy recreation activity. This course would offer desired recreation opportunities to a wide span of the community, both young and old, low and upper income. We see this as a win-win situation for our students, the CUSD, GCSD, and the community.

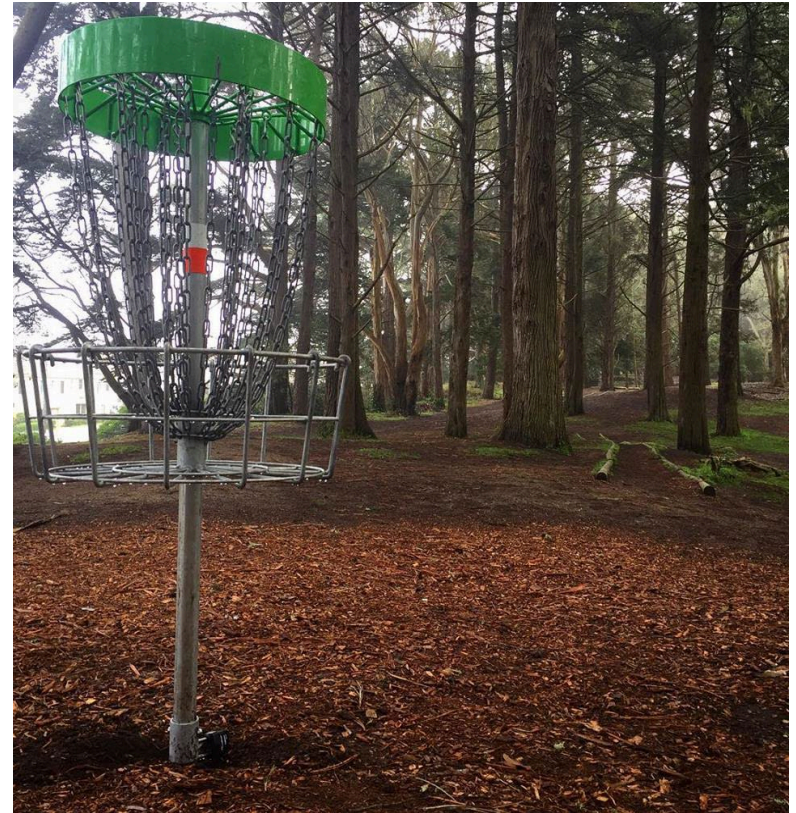
We urge the GCSD to move this proposal forward, negotiate an MOU with the CUSD and provide funding to allow community volunteers to build and maintain the proposed disc golf course on the vacant Sonora Sevilla property. This would create a needed new healthy, free outdoor recreation opportunity for GCSD and Coast-side residents in these COVID times.



What is Disc Golf?

Disc golf (aka Frisbee golf) is a fun, inexpensive, healthy, and environmentally friendly game that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.

It is played much like traditional golf. Instead of hitting a ball into a hole, you throw a disc into an elevated metal basket.

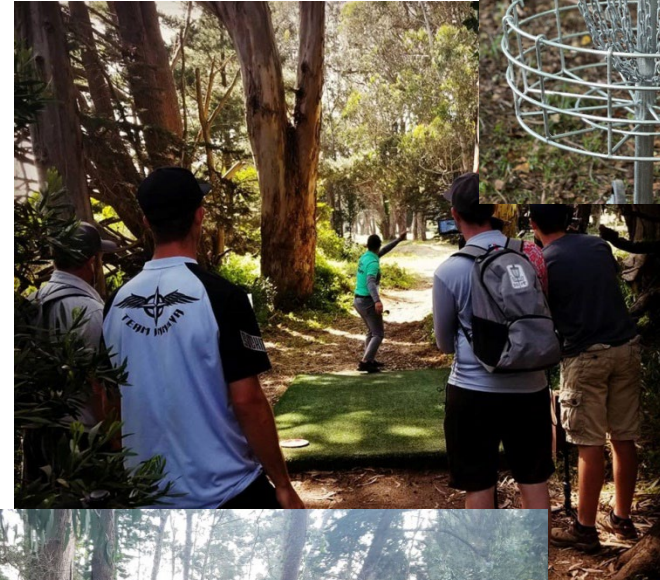


Golden Gate Park

What is a Disc Golf Course?

A typical disc golf course consists of three basic components: baskets, tees, and signs – one set of components per hole.

- Galvanized disc golf baskets, about 5' tall, slide into below-ground collars anchored in concrete. Multiple collars on each hole help to create variety and disperse foot traffic.
- Tee pads are 4-6' wide and 8-12' long, made of concrete, pavers, turf, or rubber. Minor retaining/drainage may be needed.
- A small sign is placed near each tee to identify and illustrate the hole. Additional signs may include an information board, directional signs, and welcome signs.
- There is no major infrastructure involved in most course installations. The health of the natural environment is preserved.



How do you Play Disc Golf?

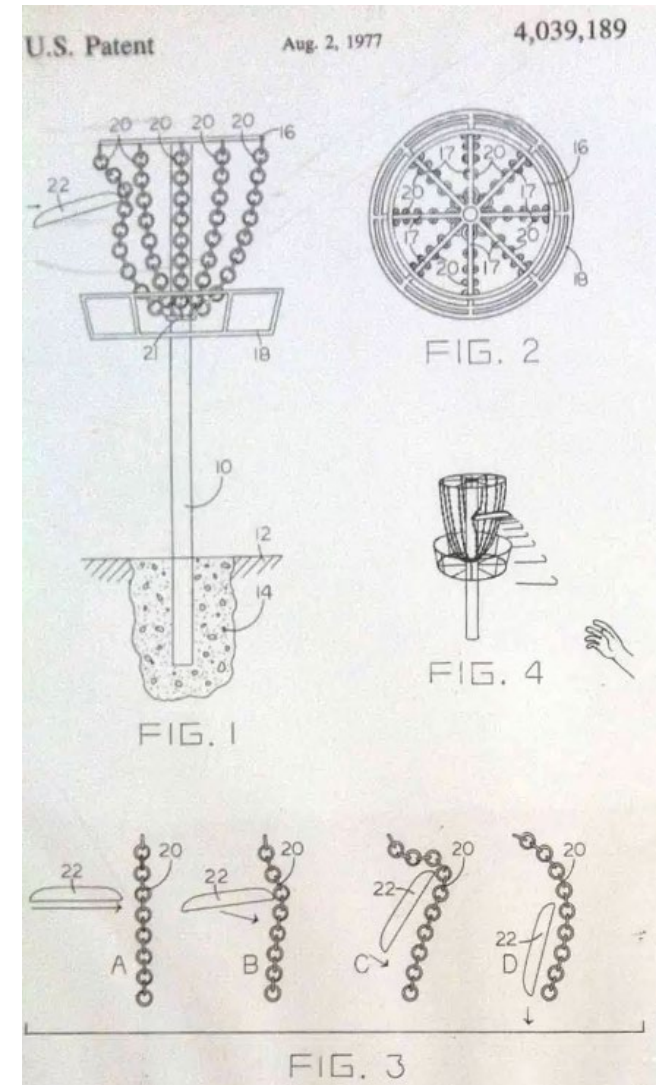
The goal of disc golf is the same as traditional golf: To finish the course in the fewest shots.

As players progress from the “tee” to the “hole,” the trees, wind, water, and elevation changes provide challenging obstacles along the “fairway.” Each throw is made from where the previous throw came to rest. Finally, a “putt” is tossed in the basket to finish the hole.

Courses typically have 9 or 18 holes, but other numbers are not uncommon.



Golden Gate Park

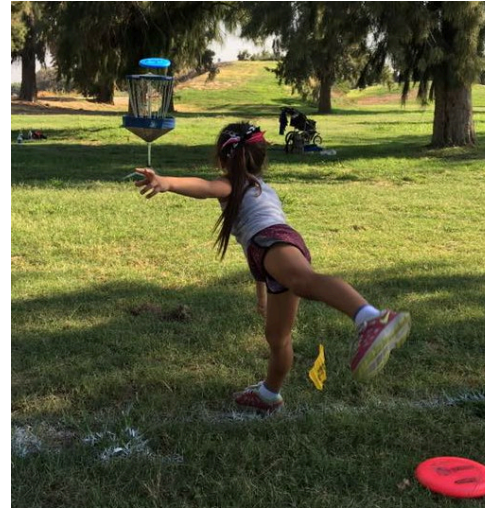


Who Plays Disc Golf?

EVERYONE!

Frisbee-throwing is universally familiar; throwing a golf disc is easy to grasp and enjoy.

Anyone – any age, gender, or athletic ability – can play and have fun.

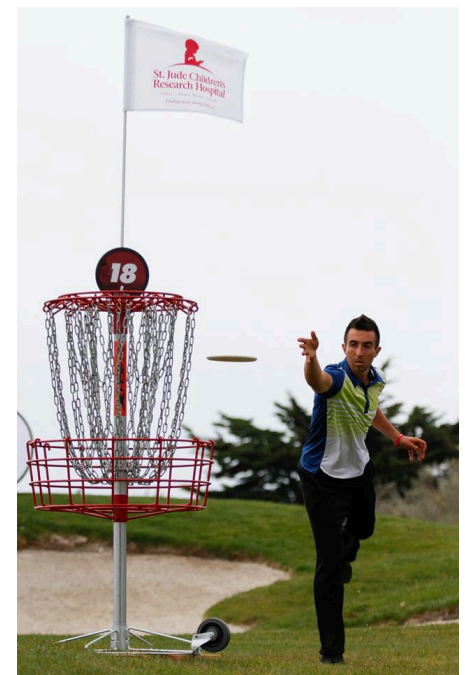


Who Plays Disc Golf? *(more!)*



Why Do People Like Disc Golf?

- Easy to learn
- All skill levels can play together
- Athletic & challenging
- Enjoying nature
- Good exercise
- Affordable
- Watching discs fly
- Informal and formal competition
- Being with friends & family
- Making new friends
- Giving back to the community



Is Disc Golf Popular?

The first official disc golf course – featuring the newly standardized “pole hole” baskets – was established in 1975 at Oak Grove Park in Pasadena. Since then, course and participation growth has been steady and strong.

Today, there are ~13,000 disc golf courses being played in 40+ countries, with ~75% in the U.S. Most U.S. courses opened in the last 10 years.

The Professional Disc Golf Association (www.PDGA.com) sets the rules and standards, sanctions big competitions, and promotes the sport for all skill levels. The PDGA is funded by its ~200K members, mostly “amateurs”.

An estimated 3 million people play disc golf at least once a month, including about 15,000 people in the greater Bay Area. There are a number of disc golf courses that serve the Bay Area, but none on the Coastsides.

Where is Disc Golf Played?

Most disc golf courses are in public parks and open space. A disc golf course can comfortably share space with other pass-through activities like walking, dog walking and biking.

Disc golf courses often utilize less developed areas with lower levels of activity, separate from park areas dedicated to active recreations such as playgrounds, softball, soccer, swimming, and sports courts.

Unlike traditional golf, disc golf is a low-impact activity which utilizes and sustains the existing landscape and environment as-is. The trees, shrubs, wind, water, and elevation changes are essential to a good experience, as they provide aesthetic and challenging obstacles along the way.

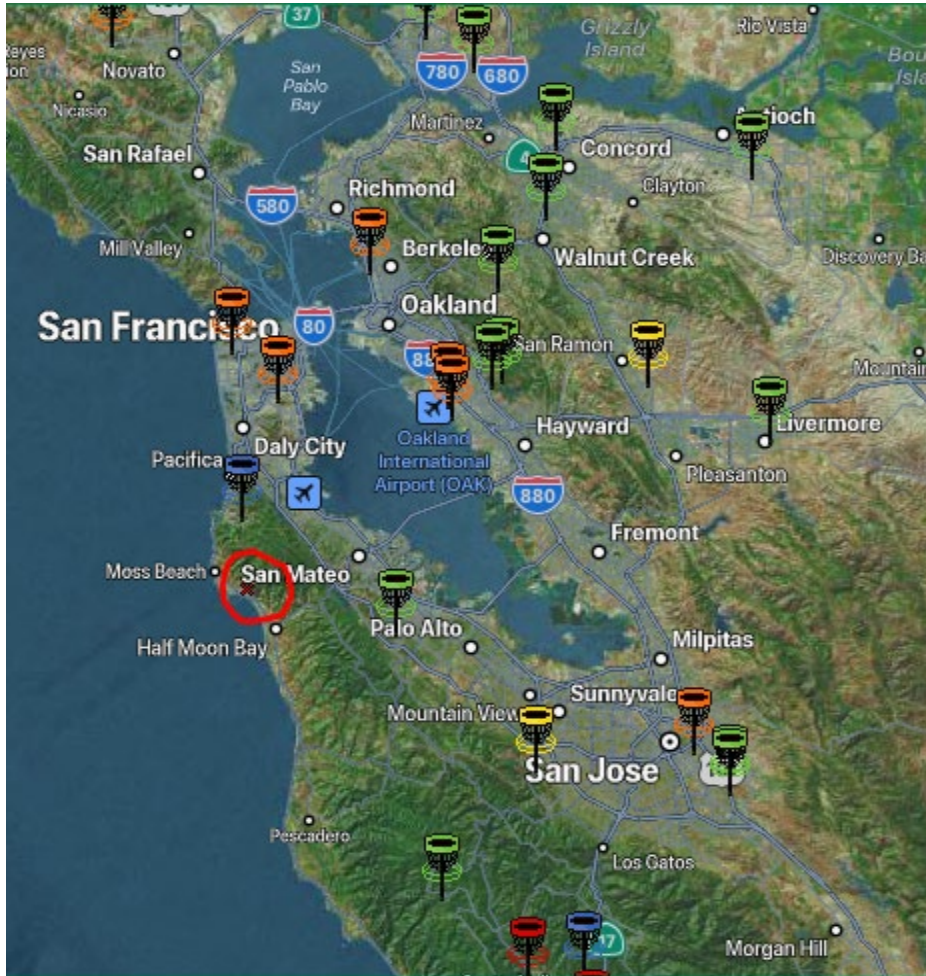
In public parks and open space across the Bay Area, disc golf has shared space amicably and sustainably for almost 40 years.



Benicia

Where are the Local Courses?

There are 45 disc golf courses in the greater Bay Area, but only 4 on the Peninsula. The closest, in Pacifica, is an unappealing 4-hole layout with trash cans for baskets.



Next closest are two expensive disc golf courses on traditional private golf properties: Emerald Hills in Redwood City (9 holes) and Gleneagles in San Francisco (18). These are not very close, ideal for beginners, nor affordable for families.

Golden Gate Park has a great 18-hole course – free to play, fun for all abilities. But it's 45+ minutes away.



How Much Does It Cost to Play?

Most disc golf courses are free to play. Most are located in community open space or parks where parking is also free, but some county and regional open space and parks charge for parking. A few disc golf courses are private, charging fees from \$5-25 for 9-18 holes. Emerald Hills in Redwood City charges \$15/person for 9 holes of disc golf.

The only essential equipment is a golf disc, starting new around \$10.

Only one disc is needed; three discs is plenty for beginners. Avid players may carry 15-25 discs with different shapes, weights, and plastics. Each disc flies uniquely.



Is Disc Golf Safe?

Golf discs are more compact and flatter than regular Frisbees. They are intended for controlled flights on a disc golf course, not for playing catch.

Serious injuries are extremely rare, particularly an injury to someone else using the open space/park. Each year, about 4 *trillion* disc golf throws are made in public parks (8000x365x30x50), but serious injuries occur roughly once every 2-3 years across the entire sport.

The main reason injuries are rare is because, historically, most courses are located in public open space/parks. Patience and courtesy have become an intrinsic to disc golf's culture. Players wait for the space to clear before throwing.

Experienced course designers know how to make the extremely low risk even lower. They are experts at predicting flight patterns and dispersion for all skill levels. They study current park usage. They account for various environmental factors.



Aquatic Park, Berkeley

Does Disc Golf Impact the Environment?

Unlike traditional golf, disc golf courses use the existing landscape as-is, without any grading or cutting. The trees, wind, water, and elevation provide attractive and challenging obstacles. We are committed to sustaining the environment because it makes the sport more fun.

Nonetheless, disc golf does impact the environment in two ways. First, the basic challenge is to throw discs past obstacles – and sometimes you hit them. (Without trees, disc golf would be as boring as tennis without a net!) Designed well – e.g., tees are located only near sturdy or protected trees—the trees' viability is ensured. The only risk is minor aesthetic damage.

Second, disc golfers walk throughout the course, trampling ground cover and some brush, especially near tees and baskets. Depending on the terrain and usage, soil erosion may occur. Simple mitigations include multiple basket sleeves, planned pathways, and wood chips.

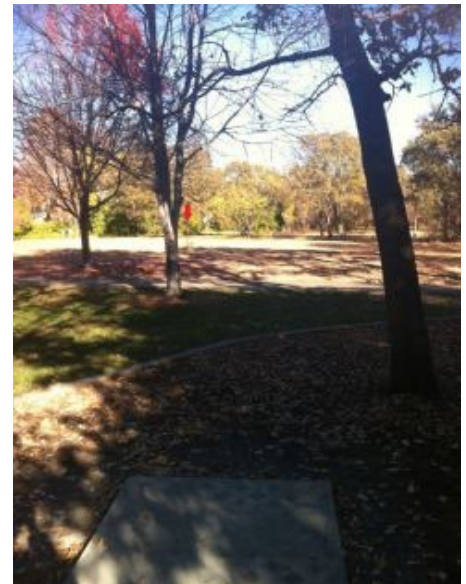
Overall, as demonstrated at other Bay Area courses, the ecosystem will perform as it did prior to disc golf's arrival – no major impact.

Whether the minor impacts are worth the recreational and health benefit may depend on the comparison. For example, baseball and soccer require removing all natural landscape and habitat. On the other hand, hiking on existing paths does not nick trees or create newly worn paths.

Disc golf's tradition of stewardship often results in improvements to the environment where it is played. Most disc golfers don't litter. Moreover, they often plant trees, help clean creeks, and inform staff of issues.



Golden Gate Park



Walnut Creek

How Does a Course Change Open Space?

For the vast majority of park and open space users, a course has little or no impact on their usual experience. They can still walk, ride, play, and relax as they did before. Dog walking is commonly done through disc golf courses. The main difference is that there are a few more friendly people to say “Hi!”

A typical disc golf course is usually quite peaceful. Typically, a community course has 3-4 people playing, maybe 10-12 in the late afternoon if the wind isn't too strong. On the rarest days when the course is full (2-5 people per hole), that means 2-10 people per acre depending whether the layout is compact or spread out. Most courses don't have big events.

Parking needs are roughly one vehicle for every two players – i.e., 2-4 cars most of the time, with 10 cars on rare days.



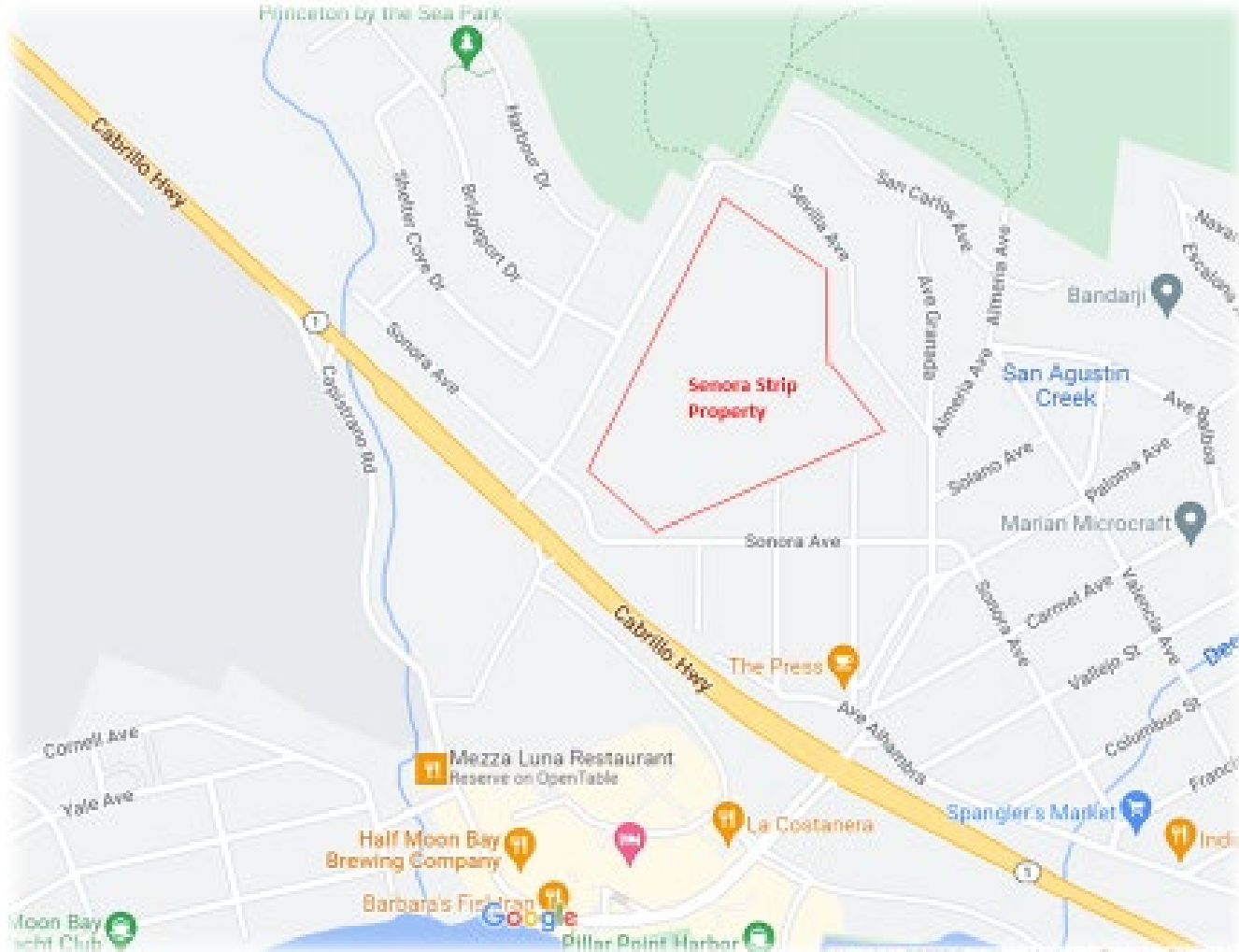
Periodically, most clubs perform minor maintenance -- spreading wood chips, improving paths, picking up trash, etc.

Disc golfers often adopt the open space/parks where they play. They get to know the other regulars. They keep an eye on things. Their regular presence tends to discourage troublemakers.

Disc Golf at the Sonora Sevilla Property



Figure 2. Sonora Sevilla Property, El Granada



The so-called Sonora Sevilla property is vacant land, owned by the Cabrillo Unified School District in El Granada, between Sonora and Sevilla Avenues, and classified by the school district as Surplus Property. Currently, there is occasional informal dog walking, bicycling and walking use on this property.

Sonora Sevilla: A Suitable Location

Good sites for disc golf have certain fundamental characteristics, many of which are common to any recreational feature in a park or open space:

- Enough space to play without significant detriment to other activities: typically, 1/2-acre per hole for community courses – shared space! – and 1-2 acres for advanced courses.
- Good variety of obstacle distribution (typically trees and water): areas with lots of obstacles (“technical” in disc golf parlance), moderate density, or “wide open”.
- A habitat which can thrive with a course, including mitigations for foot traffic, tree deflections, and soil erosion as needed.
- A lack of severe risks or nuisances – e.g., extreme slopes, rampant poison oak, busy streets, dangerous wildlife.
- Reasonable access and operation – e.g. pathways, areas for trash bins, parking.
- Natural beauty.
- A community that wants to play!

The Sonora Sevilla property shown in Figure 2 has all of these characteristics.



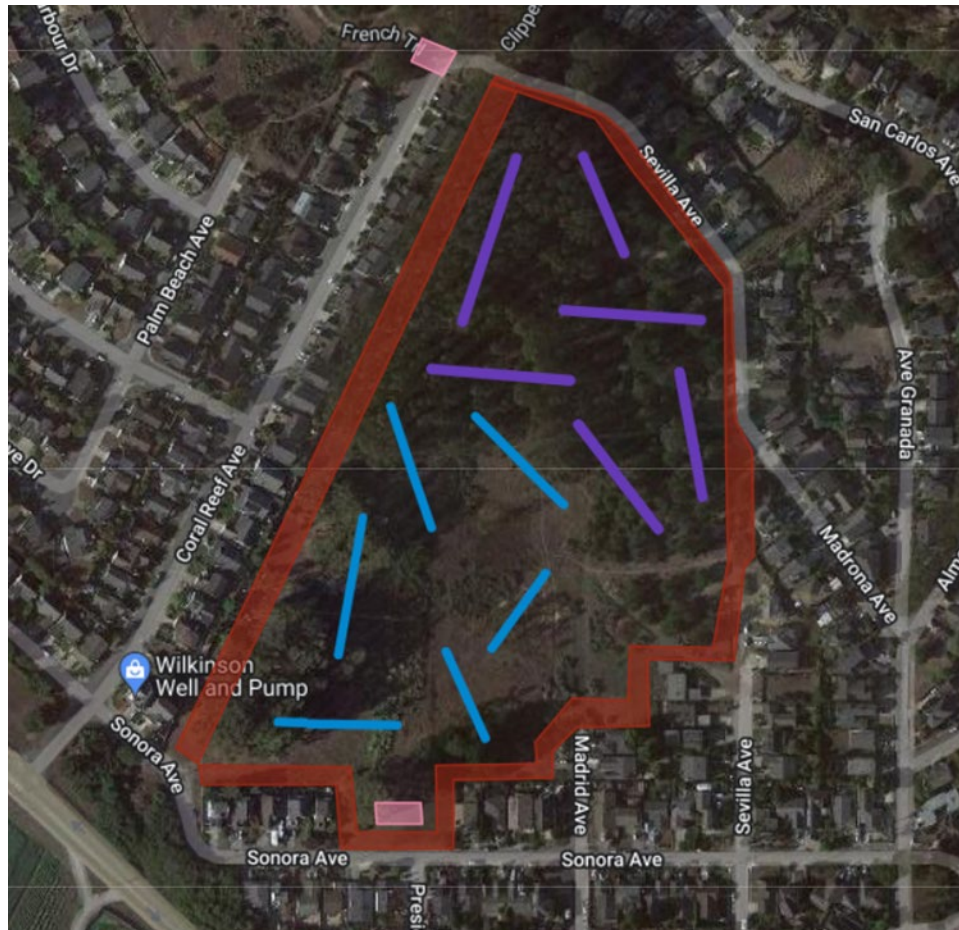
Preliminary Disc Golf Course Design

For demonstration purposes a preliminary disc golf course layout, shown next in Figure 3, has been developed for the Sonora Sevilla property. This layout was created by Leonard Muise, a nationally known disc golf course designer. This design can be modified to accommodate agency and public input. Features include:





- A 6-hole beginners' course and a 6-hole advanced course, for a total of 12 holes/baskets.
- Use of on-site trees and shrubs as obstacles to provide different levels of “technical” difficulty
- Tee boxes and tee signs
- On-site vegetation is used to screen users from others. Minimal vegetation clearing needed.
- Buffer zone to maintain adequate distance from neighbor property
- Two locations for waste/recycling receptacles, if these are deemed necessary
- Two locations for off-street parking



Figure 3. Preliminary Disc Golf Course Layout



Legend

-  Beginner Course Hole & Fairway
-  Intermediate Course Hole & Fairway
-  Potential Off-Street Parking
-  Boundary of CUSD "Sonora Strip and Buffer Zone Near Houses

Design and layout created by Leonard Muise,
whirlwinddiscgolf@gmail.com

Leonard Muisse, Professional Course Designer

World renowned disc golf course designer. 40-year Bay Area resident.

Local courses include Golden Gate Park & Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline.

From the community's perspective, Leonard designs for multi-use compatibility and environmental sustainability.

From a player's perspective, Leonard designs for variety, challenge, visual interest, and easy navigation.

Whirlwind's goal is for the park to serve the community as well as possible, with disc golf providing just one part of a great overall outdoor experience.



Emerald Hills, Redwood City

Estimated Amount of Use

Disc golf is growing in popularity. There is an active group of disc enthusiasts on the Coastside. For a number of years HMB High School students have participated in a disc golf PE course. These Coastside persons we believe will initially be the primary users of the proposed disc golf course. Use will grow in the ensuing years as word spreads about the activity. The proposed preliminary, modest-sized disc golf course is designed as a “Community Course” and should not draw large numbers of persons from outside the Coastside.

We estimate between 15 - 35 persons will initially play at least one round of disc golf on the proposed course on a weekend day. Half that number are projected to use it during a weekday or during inclement weather. Based on these figures, we estimate the following number of disc golf users and rounds played.

	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	
2023 Estimated Disc Golf Players Per Weekend Day	15	35	Players
<u>2023 Estimated Disc Golf Rounds Played</u>			
* Per Month Spring, Summer and Fall	180	420	Rounds Played
* Per Year	2,000	5,100	Rounds Played

The primary users of the proposed course will be local residents, and some will be walking or bicycling to it. We estimate the number of vehicles parking on a weekend day would be 3 - 8 cars. There are two existing areas on/near the Sonora Sevilla property which could easily accommodate that number of cars for off-street parking. That amount of cars should have minimal impact on local traffic.



Cost

On a typical disc golf course, just the equipment and materials cost \$500-\$1500 per hole, depending whether the installation is bare bones – only mid-quality baskets – or shoots for higher quality, including common features such as tee pads and tee signs. Multiplying by 12, the cost for a 12-hole course for equipment and supplies ranges from \$6,000 to \$18,000 – around \$12,000 for a mid-level installation.

Whirlwind Disc Golf provides a convenient [cost worksheet](#) which enables anyone to explore the costs of various features at different quality levels and quantities.



Beyond baskets, tee pads, and tee signs, additional common costs include:

- welcome sign with course layout, rules, and etiquette
- directional signs (“this way to the next hole”)
- small landscaping enhancements – trail boundaries, retaining and drainage for tee pads on slopes, small platforms for elevated baskets
- practice basket for putting before/after your round.
- trash cans, benches

Preliminary Construction Cost Estimates

The following provides a initial picture of the costs for constructing the preliminary 12-hole course shown in Figure 2. All of the ten most recently built disc golf courses in the Bay Area have been constructed solely by volunteers and residents/businesses have made substantial donations of money and materials. Construction generally does not require use of heavy equipment, except for trimming large trees. Discussions with disc golf clubs and local players indicates there would be strong volunteer support, and also donations We believe that, like all the others recent Bay Area courses, the Sonora Sevilla disc golf course could be 100% built by volunteers. Estimates below include costs of mid-level equipment and supplies. Two costing alternatives were developed to show the range of costs for construction.

A. Volunteer Built – It assumes volunteers will conduct all construction tasks from clearing necessary grass and brush, digging holes and placement of baskets, building tee boxes and placing tee signs. One day of a tree service company would be included to trim high tree branches. Cost of 3 trash dumpsters. GCSD would purchase equipment and supplies, when not covered by donations.
Alternative A Cost: \$13,000

B. Contractor Built – A licensed contractor would conduct all the construction activity. One day of a tree service company would be included to trim branches. Cost of 3 trash dumpsters for debris. GCSD would purchase equipment/supplies, when not donated.
Alternative B Cost: \$34,000



Installation & Maintenance

Most disc golf courses in the Bay Area were installed by volunteers working primarily with hand tools, sometimes including power tools such as a gas tamper or auger. Rarely, heavy equipment (read: bobcat) is required for leveling a couple tee areas or removing heavy overgrowth. Installation requires roughly 20-50 hours of volunteer effort per hole.

Once installed, maintenance is nominal. The baskets are sturdy, lasting 15-20 years without any maintenance. The tee pads, depending on the material, need only occasional sweeping of natural debris. The tee signs, again depending the type, usually last as long as the baskets.

Most maintenance effort consists of trail work and clearing fallen branches. At most courses, the local club holds “work parties” to keep the course in good shape. Ideally, club and park district establish a formal partnership which responsibilities and ensures consistent, long-term upkeep.



Preliminary Maintenance Cost Estimate

Experiences in the Bay Area have verified that disc golf courses require very little maintenance. No water is used and no regular mowing is required. The initial estimate of the costs for maintaining the preliminary 12 hole disc golf course are based on the following assumptions: Volunteers would conduct all maintenance, including collection of litter and small branches from the course and around the holes, mowing grass along holes in spring and fixing/replacement of broken or vandalized course features. The exceptions are three trash/recycle bins which would be placed on the property and would be served bi-weekly by a contracted company. A professional tree service company would be needed to trim any large trees/branches that fall on the course, and this would be on an as needed basis. GCSD or disc golfers would not be responsible for maintaining trees or other property features which are not used for disc golf. If there are large trees which fall on the course, then there would be a higher maintenance cost.

Estimated annual maintenance costs for the preliminary course layout is \$5,000



Final Thoughts

Disc golf can provide a great complement to the other recreational experiences on the Coastside, particularly activities which provide healthy, affordable fun for younger and older community members. No near-by courses exist, while there is substantial demand for disc golf by HMB High students and local enthusiasts.

The subcommittee believes the Sonora Sevilla property would be ideal for a 12-hole disc golf course, such as the one identified. We are confident the course will preserve the natural beauty of the current location and have no large adverse impacts on neighbors, and we'll seek their input. We expect it may actually enhance the look and feel of the Sonora Sevilla by discouraging encampments, reducing overgrown non-native species and increasing community stewardship for this wonderful space. Construction and maintenance costs are reasonable, and will be reduced through the use of committed volunteers and donations.

We look forward to working with GCSD and CUSD staff, area users and neighbors for the successful planning, installation, and maintenance of a great new disc golf course!

