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21 February 2003

Ms. Allison Stone
NEPA Compliance Coordinator
The Presidio Trust
P.O. Box 29052
San Francisco CA 94129-0052

RE: Tennessee Hollow Watershed Project Initial Scoping

Dear Ms. Stone:

The Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR) submits the following comments on the initial scoping of the Tennessee Hollow Watershed Project.

PAR, established in 1970, is the largest neighborhood association in San Francisco. We have a dues-paying membership of approximately 1,600 households in the Richmond District. Our neighborhood adjoins the southern boundary of the Presidio from Arguello Boulevard on the east to the ocean on the west. PAR has participated actively in Presidio planning over the years and our members frequently visit the Presidio and participate in Presidio programs.

We thank you and the Presidio Trust for granting a 30-day extension of the comment period for the initial scoping of this very complex project, and for adding a second phase which will permit further public comment once a range of project alternatives have been issued. We look forward to preparing more detailed comments at that point.

PAR requests that you address and, to the extent possible, provide specific answers to the following questions during the second stage of the scoping process:

A. Questions regarding the restored stream

1. How will the stream traverse the reconfigured Doyle Drive? How will that reconfiguration and attendant construction affect and be affected by the goals of restoring the natural stream and creating a continuous wildlife corridor at other points along the watershed?
2. How will the YMCA gymnasium, which plays an important role in the recreational resources of the Presidio, and its parking lot be affected as the stream passes through that area?
3. Will there be any limits on public access to the restored streams and tributaries? What form might any restrictions take (e.g. cable fences) and, if so, at what distance from the streams? Will trails be located along the main streams and, if so, how close?
4. Is the water flow in the stream and its tributaries year-around or seasonal? For each portion of the tributaries and the main channel leading to the marsh, please indicate whether there is a year-round flow, a steady wet season flow, or a more sporadic wet season run-off condition.
5. How much material will have to be removed to bring the stream to the surface in the lower reaches of the watershed? Please describe the width and depth of the significant excavations, along with their impact on existing uses in the area. What is the estimated cost of removing this material?

B. Questions regarding wind impact and tree removal

1. What is the anticipated impact of the removal of tall tree stands on wind and temperature, both within the immediate area of tree removal and the area downwind? Will windbreaks and shaded trail areas be reestablished within the oak, grassland and riparian areas of the project? How would possible increased wind and colder temperatures affect recreation and sports at each of the recreation areas – including Julius Kahn children’s playground, tennis courts and playing field, and the Paul Goode Field?

2. What is the total number of trees to be removed from the project? Please provide a breakdown of the estimated number of trees by species to be removed within each of the five areas shown on the project’s scoping map. Are there plans to retain the redwood grove in the western tributary area?

C. Other questions

1. Since the Presidio is a National Historic Landmark District (NHL) because of its history as a military post under the Spanish, Mexican and American flags, how will the establishment of a riparian corridor be reconciled with the topography and drainage in place at the time of that designation? Would the riparian corridor be considered a restoration, a recreation, or a new construction within the NHL?

2. What is the feasibility of subdividing the Tennessee Hollow Watershed Project into separate geographic components that are separately planned and established independent of an overall, unified project?

3. How will the story of water and human habitation be included as an educational element of the project or projects? The Presidio was founded near water sources and the dominant source seems to have been the Tennessee Hollow area. Early settlement outside the Presidio seems to have occurred at El Polin Springs, where Juana Briones lived before relocating to the eastern edge of the present Presidio near Lyon and Green Streets. The role of this water source is significant to these early settlements. How should this be interpreted?

4. If a playing field such as Pop Hicks or Morton Street is eliminated by the project, will the field be replaced? If so, specifically where will it be relocated? Will the new field be completed prior to the removal of the existing field?

5. To the extent any revenue-generating buildings will be demolished in the course of this project, what impact will their removal have on the Presidio Trust’s financial sustainability mandate? If buildings are removed, will they be replaced? If so, where will they be located? Will the replacement buildings be constructed in advance of the demolition of the existing structures?

Thank you for considering our questions,

Sincerely,

Ron Miguel
Planning Association for the Richmond

CC: NAPP