

SAVE GLEN PARK COMMITTEE REPORT -- November 9, 1965

We are here tonight because of our concern about the proposed route to widen O'Shaughnessey Boulevard, for this route will require the uprooting of most of the trees which fringe Glen Park. These eucalyptus, cypress and pine trees not only give this park its 'park-like-setting', but they also serve to provide the necessary windbreak for the recreation and tiny-tot areas. Further up O'Shaughnessey Boulevard, the widening will take most of its width from the canyon side and reduce the natural splendor of Glen Canyon itself.

While at the park this summer we noticed some men taking test borings in and among the trees. Inquiries into what they were doing led to the information that they were taking soil samples for the road that was planned across the corner of Glen Park and along the side of Glen Canyon. This was the first time that most of us had heard of such a proposal. And we were appalled. Therefore, we brought the matter before our organization at our last meeting on Oct. 19, and a committee, consisting of Mrs. Joan Seiwald, Mrs. Geri Arkush, and myself was formed to investigate this proposal and see what could be done to save Glen Park.

A trip to City Hall for a look at the plans confirmed that this proposed road would be devastating. Mrs. Seiwald pointed out that this proposal is the Cross-town Freeway by another name. (Which, incidentally, was rejected by the Board of Supervisors in 1957.) For this route is planned all the way to Lincoln Way via Woodside, Laguna Honda and 7th Ave. Presumably, it will end at Golden Gate Park.

Further investigation showed that the Park Commission had not given its approval for this route and since park land is involved, this approval is mandatory. If the Park Commission does give its approval, (which we sincerely hope it will not do) the matter will go before the Finance Committee of the Board of Supervisors for appropriation of funds to construct this roadway.

Because this proposal is still just a plan, we decided to inform our elected officials, the Park Commissioners and the newspapers of our opposition to this route, for we feel that the exchange of a lovely, sheltered park for a concrete roadway is a bad exchange; for one cannot soft-pedal the damage this route would do to Glen Park and the effect of this damage on all citizens of San Francisco. What happens here will affect the entire City.

In regard to Glen Park itself, this proposed route would remove many of the trees in and around the park. (According to the San Francisco Chronicle of Monday November 8th, Mr. Geerts is quoted as saying that there are 116 trees involved--and these are at least five inches in diameter.) Well, these trees not only give Glen Park its beauty, but they also serve a functional purpose; they shelter the small children's area, the tennis courts and the playing fields. Without this shelter, the tiny-tots area, now warm and pleasant, would be wretched and windy; for baseball players it would recreate the conditions at Candlestick Park; and it would be almost impossible to play tennis. And since Glen Park is one of the largest parks in The City, its facilities are extensively used for intra-city sports. Furthermore, the carbon-monoxide from the cars overhead would blow directly upon the children and adults who seek refuge, in the park, from the wind, smog and concrete. Glen Park also houses the Silver Tree Day

Camp which provides a country experience, within The City, for over a thousand children every summer; for many of these children, this is the only country experience available to them. And this route would run in back of the Day Camp, replacing the natural out-cropping of rocks with dirt fill, and the trees with cement trestles. This, to us, seems to defeat the purpose of this outstanding program. And last, but not least, Glen Park is the last rustically beautiful park, of any size, in San Francisco.

Economically speaking, this proposed route is a bad plan. Recently, the Arthur D. Little Report--Community Renewal Project--was submitted to the Board of Supervisors for approval. This report was authorized to find new solutions to the problems which beset San Francisco. There has been a recognition that one of San Francisco's primary economic problems is the mass exodus of middle-income families from The City to the suburbs, for these families form the economic and social background of any urban center. The Arthur D. Little Report stresses that San Francisco must retain its middle-income families and, somehow, woo other families into The City. Among the recommendations for achieving this goal is one which calls for the creation of more parks and playgrounds. (One of the peculiarities of San Francisco is that, by and large, middle-income homes are attached to one another, with small yards, few trees and little lawn; because of this, we rely heavily on parks and green belts for recreation and beauty.) And the removal of trees and the destruction of park land is not compatible with the recommendations of the Arthur D. Little Report.

The success of the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project is largely dependent upon Glen Park. For the brochures from that agency stress the proximity and rustic beauty of Glen Park as one of its primary selling points. With the complete development of this project, the need for this park is even more important. Since this project was designed to expand the tax base of this City, it is bad business to undermine it by removing one of its main assets.

Bear in mind also, that Glen Park neighborhood is one of nine designated conservation areas. This older residential area was singled out for special consideration because of the beauty and charm of the park itself.

There has been a spectacular change in attitude on the part of the Federal, State and Local Governments in regard to the beautification of cities. In the last twenty years, every consideration has been given to accommodating the automobile; and we have seen our cities turn into concrete slums. The White House Conference on Natural Beauty brought this deterioration into the National spotlight. The need is for more parks and open spaces, for more attention to esthetic values, for a re-examination of what has been sacrificed in order to expedite traffic. President Johnson proclaimed that progress in the battle against corrosive ugliness demands that every citizen "be constantly alert to stimulate, to inspire and to stem new danger to beauty,--for it is the quality of our lives that is really at stake."

So we here tonight, are assuming our responsibility; we are trying to stem the tide of ugliness--we feel that there has been too much already. And to exchange Glen Park for this proposed widening of O'Shaughnessy Boulevard is too great a sacrifice on any terms--be they economic, esthetic or human. It is then, the

opinion of this committee that if there must be a choice between a road and Glen Park, there is no contest--we choose Glen Park. The irreparable harm this route would do could never be undone; the exchange would be a bad and sorry bargain. The decision of this committee then, is that the present plans to widen O'Shaughnessy Boulevard are totally unacceptable.

The recommendation upon which we shall vote tonight is as follows:

Since the proposed route is unacceptable, we recommend that the Glen Park Property Owners Association request a public hearing before the Transportation Committee of the Board of Supervisors where all viewpoints can be considered and where the proposed re-alignment of O'Shaughnessy Boulevard can be re-evaluated.

Respectfully submitted,

Zoanne Theriault - Chairman-Save Glen Park Committee
Joan Seiwald
Geri Arkush

This resolution was amended to include that it be strongly considered that there be no road widening at all.

The recommendation and the amendment were voted upon and passed.