

Observation Wheel at the Music Concourse

Historic Preservation Commission
February 17, 2021



GOLDEN GATE PARK 150 YEARS



Extension Request for Temporary Installation

Given the COVID-19 impact on the Wheel, Rec Park is proposing to extend the term of the Permit by four years for the following reasons for the temporary installation of the wheel:

- Fulfill Original Expectations
- Support the City's Economic Recovery



Approval Process

- Rec Park Commission Operations Committee – Feb 3
 - Information Only
- Historic Preservation Commission – February 17
 - Action on Certificate of Appropriateness: Installation Meets the Secretary of the Interior Standards Relating to the Music Concourse for a Temporary Installation
- Recreation and Park Commission – February 18
 - Action on Extension
 - Receiving Same Public Feedback
 - Assessing Impact on Golden Gate Park in General



Why? Positive activation

Many visitors come just to watch the wheel as it is a fun and safe way to enjoy themselves during COVID.

The increased activity has made the park safer at night and helped activate the Music Concourse, which was one of the original goals of the installation.



Why?

Joy and Fun For Children and Families of All Ages



Why?

Provides A Symbol of Hope During Challenging Times



Why? Celebrate History



✧ CALIFORNIA ✧

Midwinter International Exposition

Among these is the Firth Wheel, almost a counterpart of the famous Ferris Wheel of the Columbian Exposition, reaching a height of 150 feet and carrying sixteen cars with a capacity of ten persons each.



Why? COVID-Safe Entertainment



Why? Special Moments and Fun Photos!



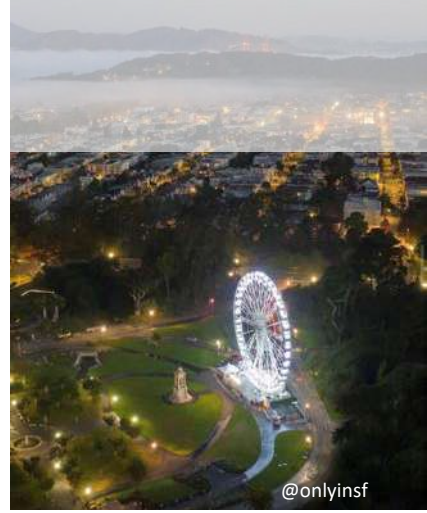
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Why?

Great Cities Have Ways to Celebrate and Enjoy



Melbourne



Hong Kong



London



Paris



Seattle

Why? Economic Recovery

GGP has historically been **an engine of economic recovery** for the City:

- The 1894 Mid-Winter Fair that created the Music Concourse was put on in part to stimulate the California economy **in a time of depression**.
- In the 1930s and '40s, WPA construction projects in the park **helped pull the city out of the Great Depression**:

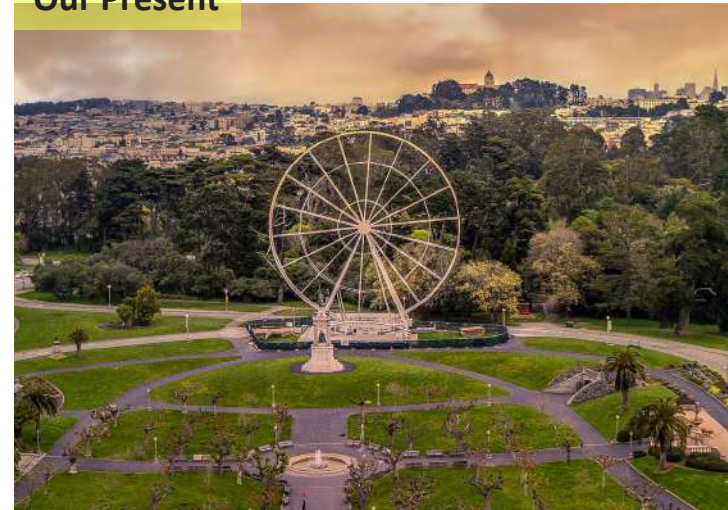
Anglers Lodge
Model Yacht Club
Horseshoe Courts

- Assist the city and small businesses with **recovering from the pandemic** based on conversations with Economic Task Force. Temporary installation will help.

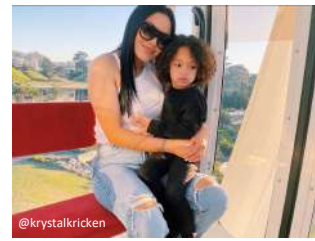
Our Past



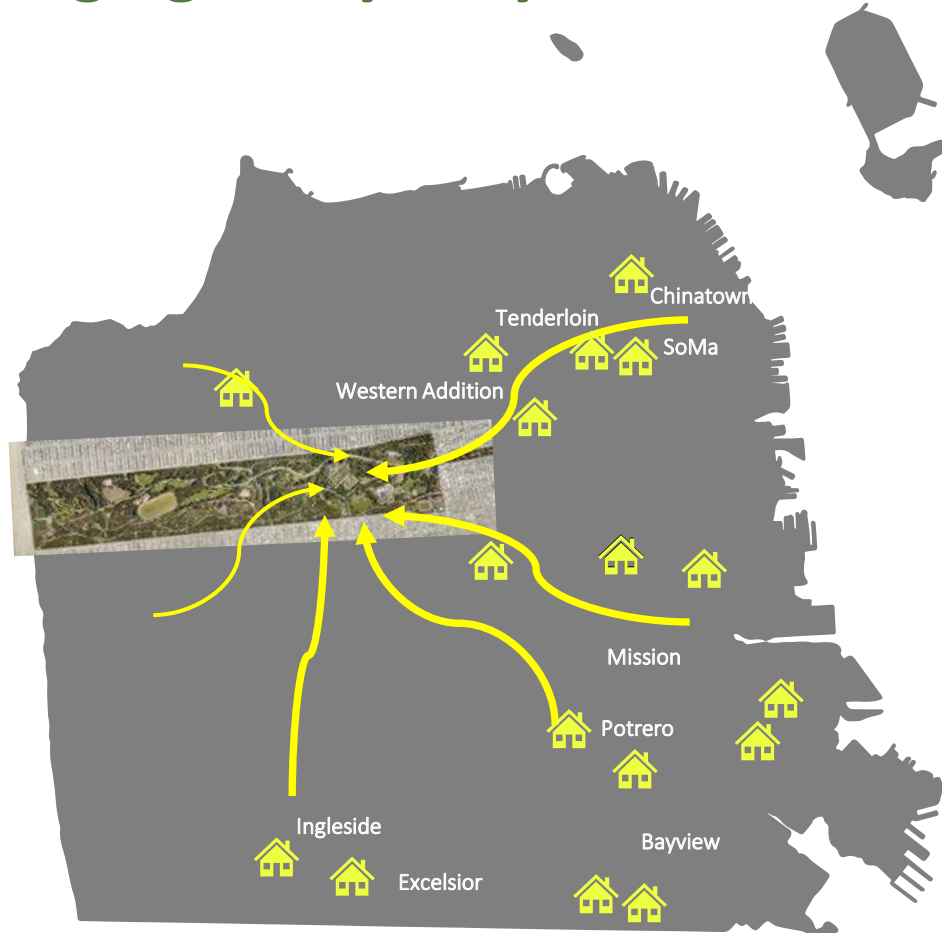
Our Present



Bringing (New) Visitors



Bringing Everybody to the Park



Provides tickets to encourage underserved populations to venture across town to explore Golden Gate Park



Golden Gate Park

GGP

1,017 acres

Music Concourse

1.6 acres

“The Music Concourse is a unique and distinctive civic space within the park that provides an appropriate setting for cultural activities and institutions.”

–GGP Master Plan



Golden Gate Park is Everybody's Park



Wheel Operations

Days Open

Originally scheduled to open on April 4, 2020

- Wheel opened October 21 with limited capacity
- Wheel closed on November 29 due to health surge

Access for All - Community Benefits

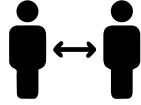
- **Operator to provide 500 tickets/month** to benefit underserved communities in San Francisco
- In November, we **distributed tickets** to non-profits operating Community Hubs, supporting distance learning for the City's most at-risk youth
- Only a few could be used before the shut down
- 500 tickets will continue for a total of 25,000



Wheel COVID Safety Plan



Riders and all employees must wear masks



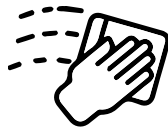
Must practice social distancing



Temperature checks for customers and employees.



Gondolas are private; doors are automatic.



Gondolas are sanitized between rides.



Hand washing station and hand sanitizer available



100% air exchange; fresh air vents open during ride



Tickets must be purchased in advance to avoid crowds. Tickets by the hour. Limited to 25% capacity



Riders must be in same household



Responding to HPC Concerns - Lighting

In response to HPC Conditions of Approval, RPD gathered additional feedback and implemented the following changes:

- White lights on the wheel spokes and perimeter were turned off, and only minimal safety lighting is turned on after 10pm.
- The light show no longer has white lights in the last hour of programming.

Described in detail in our December presentation

Before



After



Responding to HPC Concerns - Generator

In December, we heard concerns from HPC regarding impact of generator:

- **Immediately** – operator has determined how to power down the generator safely at night by reprogramming the computer system. A battery will be used for safety lighting.
- **Short Term** –
 - **Actively searching** to identify options to buffer noise and find a replacement generator
 - **Improve aesthetic** appearance of fencing around generator and wheel
- **Long-term – initiated conversations** with PG&E and PUC to provide additional power to the Concourse, not just for the wheel but for our neighboring institutions.
 - Goal that upgraded power will be one of the lasting legacies of the wheel
 - The 4-year term allows RPD the time and commitment to invest in infrastructure needed to bring additional power to the concourse

Extension Request for Temporary Installation

Given the negative COVID-19 impact on the Wheel's operations, SFRPD is proposing to extend the Permit:

Fulfill Original Expectations of Operations

With the future availability of operational days for the wheel and future capacity limits unknown, this permit modification will both:

- Accommodate the anticipated riders from the original permit
- Provide for an increase in ridership to help offset the financial hardship suffered by the Operator.

The Operator has had to incur significant costs:

- To secure and maintain the wheel while it was closed
- To follow COVID safety requirements with extra staffing and protocols when it re-opened
- As well as losses due to the closure after 39 operational days at 25% capacity

Provide Fun to San Franciscans:

- Bring kids who may have never visited GGP to have an exciting opportunity to enjoy the park
- Overwhelming support from San Franciscans

Extension Request



Museums & Gardens
in GGP



Local merchants in
Inner Sunset



Nearby commercial
corridors

Given the negative COVID-19 impact on the Wheel's operations, SFRPD is proposing to extend the Permit:

Support the Park & City's Recovery

During the brief time that the wheel was open, it attracted new visitors and increased visits to:

- Museums and Gardens
- Local Merchants in Inner Sunset
- Nearby Commercial Corridors

Funds from the wheel will be used to support free public concerts and shows in the Music Concourse as well as Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in the south part of the city helping our entertainment industry to recover

- Helps to fulfill the original purpose of the Music Concourse

By attracting visitors, the Wheel can support essential economic recovery for Golden Gate Park, the Park's cultural institutions, the neighborhood and the City itself as it seeks to draw tourists back to San Francisco when health officials deem it safe.

Support

Organizations*

Open Space and Nature

- Golden Gate National Park Conservancy
- Presidio Trust
- SF Botanical Garden Society
- Friends of Oak Woodlands
- SF Children & Nature Collaborative
- SF Parks Alliance

Small Business

- Annie's Hot Dogs & Pretzels
- Conchita Food Truck
- Flywheel Coffee
- Inner Sunset Merchants Assoc
- Manny Yeuketel, small business
- Parkwide Bike Rentals
- SF Mercantile
- SF Council of District Merchants Assoc
- Twirl and Dip

*partial list

Economic Recovery and Tourism

- Golden Gate Restaurant Assoc
- Hotel Council
- iHeartMedia
- Marriott Fisherman's Wharf
- SF Chamber of Commerce
- SF Travel
- David Chiu, State Assembly
- Carmen Chu, City Administrator and Co-Chair Economic Task Force
- Phil Ting, State Assembly
- Scott Weiner, State Senator

Youth Focused Organizations

- America Scores
- Boys and Girls Club of SF
- Jamestown Community Center
- Stepping Stones Pre-School
- Street Soccer USA
- YMCA

Neighborhood Organizations

- A. Philip Randolph Inst.
- Grow the Richmond
- Inner Sunset Park Neighbors
- Mission Housing Development Corp
- Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp (TNDC)
- United Playaz

Golden Gate Park Partners

- AIDS Memorial Grove
- California Academy of Science
- de Young Museum
- GGP150 Honorary Committee
- GGP Park Band
- GGP Skate Patrol
- Illuminate
- Local 261
- SF Tennis Coalition

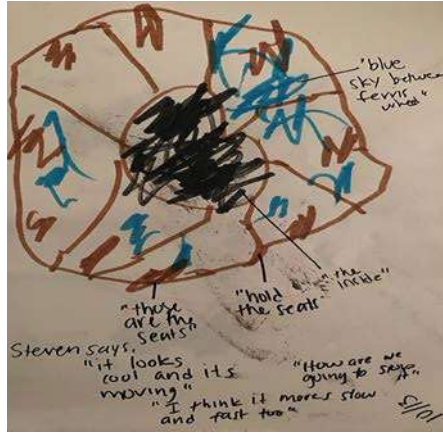
Over 1,200 **individuals** have taken written action to show their support for the wheel.

Support for the Observation Wheel



--Rodney Fong
CEO, SF Chamber Co-chair,
GGP150 Honorary Committee

“ Extending the permit will allow the Wheel to continue playing an important role in supporting our city’s economic recovery, as well as mitigating the financial hardships on our local businesses. ”



“ My husband was very sick most of last year. During his recovery he saw on the news a story about the SkyStar Wheel... He told me the first thing he wants to do when he gets his health back is visit the SkyStar Wheel either on Valentines Day or our 30th wedding anniversary to renew our vows.... Please let it stay... don't take it away! ”
--SF Resident



--Rudy Corpuz
Founder United Playaz
SOMA

“ I am pleased to witness the evolution of the park to stay relevant and modern as we honor its past. I hope that the Observation Wheel can stay for the long term as an added attraction for future generations of San Franciscans and bring more visitors to our great city. ”

“ The day the wheel was being tested before the Grand Opening was the best day of [my students'] lives. It was a symbol of bright hope for them that the world they once knew was slowly coming back together. ”
--Ruqoiyah Ghe-Huang
Director, Stepping Stones
Preschool

“ This has been the hardest year of my 38 years in business in San Francisco. The Ferris Wheel is so popular and adds so much foot traffic to our business that our location close to the ferris wheel was a huge reason why we were able to pay our rent, employees, taxes...The smiles on the kid's faces and the buzz that it brings to Golden Gate Park is a glorious respite from the crushing reality of this pandemic. ”
--Cathy Schoop
Annie's Hot Dogs & Pretzels

Thank You & Next Steps

SF Rec Park Commission will consider the extension at its February 18, 2021 meeting.



Firth Wheel, Midwinter Exposition of 1894



Today's Observation Wheel