

## **Bocce Ball Courts in Grant Park**

### Enable a North-South Senior Bocce Ball League

I am on the board of the Los Altos Legacy fund. The beneficiaries are Los Altos and Los Altos Hills seniors. Most of our contributions are modest supplements to the senior programs run by the City of Los Altos. Almost a year ago the Board offered \$10K to the City for bocce ball courts at Grant Park. It was hoped that the Grant Park courts would be done in time to serve the players displaced by the community center project and would benefit senior services in Grant Park. If the total cost turns out to be greater than \$10K, we assumed the City of Los Altos would make up the difference.

Recently, Cheryl Anderson, Director of the Los Altos Senior Center, proposed temporary courts at Grant Park. The Legacy Board considered this but voted to support permanent courts only. The Board has appointed me to work with the City of Los Altos to, hopefully, help make this happen in the near future.

#### Thoughts on how to proceed:

1. Meet with (or email) the past leaders of bocce ball at Hillview and discuss the opportunity to get permanent courts at Grant Park. Get their advice. Discuss a North-South LA/LAH bocce ball league for seniors. Would these experienced players help introduce the idea to seniors at Grant Park?
2. What might two bocce ball courts with partial shade and benches cost? See if the two courts in the new community center bid were itemized. If we build courts in Grant Park, make them identical to the courts at Hillview.  
Use oyster shell or artificial turf surface? Include partial shade.
3. Inform the Senior and Recreation Commissions of the idea and ask for their advice and support. Go for formal (agendaized) or informal?
4. Arrange to meet with the seniors at Grant Park to make a presentation with help from the Hillview bocce ball leaders. Describe the value of adding bocce ball courts to Grant Park. **Note that tiny tots and youth and young adults have outdoor facilities at Grant Park. But seniors have no outdoor recreation facilities there.** Bocce ball delivers outdoor recreation for seniors and the general public. Bocce ball provides both physical and social activity, both are important to the quality of life for seniors. Discuss the process we followed prior to putting in the Hillview courts and how that was

funded. Review the success of the courts and the concept of a North-South bocce ball league for seniors. Record the feed-back: comments and advice.

5. There is plenty of room for two permanent courts between the basketball court and the path at Grant Park. The courts would run East-West. The photo shows this area, looking west from the play structure area. This area is quite close to the present senior activities room and rest rooms.



6. Meet with council members to discuss the idea of a small (\$) and fast (less than four months) project to build and maintain two permanent courts at Grant Park. The CC would have to direct staff to pursue adding bocce ball courts to Grant Park for the idea to proceed to the staff level. The Legacy Board is offering \$10K to help pay for the courts because we think this project would benefit seniors. We want the new courts to serve both Hillview and Grant Park seniors until the Hillview courts are ready for play. This would help introduce the game to new players, develop new relationships, and build toward a North-South League. While seniors have been the main users at Hillview, the courts would benefit players of all ages.

7. Cheryl Anderson will provide a request for funds to the Legacy Board to transport seniors to the Los Gatos bocce ball indoor courts as part of the introduction process prior to the completion of the Grant Park courts.

8. Suggest that regular Hillview players promote and conduct one or more familiarization parties at Cuesta Park bocce ball courts for new prospective players among Grant Park seniors.

Background: Los Altos seniors in 2001 spent about a year playing at Cuesta Park and Los Gatos to help the seniors evaluate the game. Then the Senior Coordinating Council decided to offer the City \$5000 to share the cost of building two courts. The City built the courts and the Los Altos seniors have enjoyed the game ever since. The courts were public for all to enjoy, but the seniors were the predominant users. They took responsibility to keep the courts in good shape doing some work and asking for City help when necessary. Two bocce ball sets were stored at the Senior Center.

Having the courts next to the Hillview senior center benefitted the players, the observers on benches, and the senior center. This optimum closeness will not be reproduced at Hillview and not at Grant Park, but the proximity will be sufficient to work.

King Lear, 10/7/19

