

RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
AGENDA May 25, 2023

Item 6-A – Request for Recreation and Park  
Commission Recommendation that McKinley Park  
Playground Repairs and Replacement be Prioritized  
and for Staff to Move Forward With Implementing  
This Replacement Project

Public Comment

## Katherine Sirota

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**From:** Katherine Sirota on behalf of ARPD  
**Sent:** Friday, May 19, 2023 8:17 AM  
**To:** Matt Nowlen  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] I just posted this on Alameda peeps - McKinley Play Structure

**From:** elisabeth middelberg [mailto:elismid@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 18, 2023 7:05 PM  
**To:** ARPD <ARPD@alamedaca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I just posted this on Alameda peeps

I think you should consider this...

The Alameda Recreation and Park Department asked for feedback on replacing the play structure at McKinley play structure. The previous one was damaged and removed by the recent storm.

Can we have a do-over?

Apart from myself, some 20 families showed up at the park to give input. They were shown four possible (already designed) play structures and families were asked to put a sticker on the play structure they liked most. The children were set loose to put a sticker on their favorite structure and of course several of them had more than one sticker. It may mean that although it is wonderful that children as users will have a voice in the next play structure, it is also possible that the voice of adults who are concerned with safety features or developmentally appropriate aspects, may be missed.

Some parents were able to ask a question individually of the facilitator, but there was not a way to hear anyone's feedback or concern. Parents next to me asked about creating a play structure using more environmentally safe materials and were told that preference was given to the proposed structures because they could be put in place faster. I asked if any thought was given to accessibility for children with disabilities, as I did not see any in the structures proposed. Children with braces, for example, will not be able to access the slides in all the proposed structures. These concerns had not been taken into consideration.

I would love for ARPD to get some deeper feedback and input from adults, which includes some value clarification. It may very well be that parents would opt to allow for more time to construct a new play structure if that means it can be built with more environmental friendly materials and would be accessible to a larger group of children.

Moving ahead based on the choice of sticker happy children seems to be just.....silly....

**Katherine Sirota**

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**From:** Katherine Sirota on behalf of ARPD  
**Sent:** Friday, May 19, 2023 8:12 AM  
**To:** Matt Nowlen  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Fw: McKinley Park Play Structure Replacement

**From:** Jessica Chan [mailto:industrialyte@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 18, 2023 10:31 PM  
**To:** ARPD <ARPD@alamedaca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fw: McKinley Park Play Structure Replacement

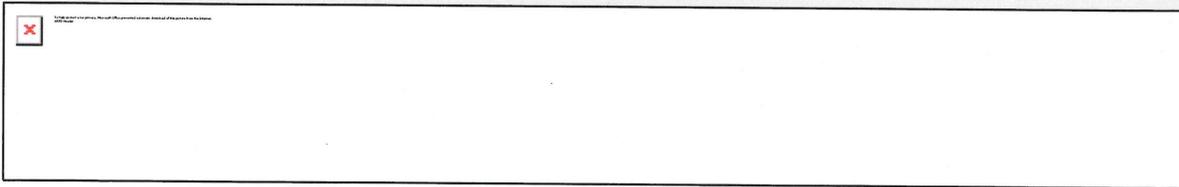
Hi,  
I was unable to attend this Community Meeting today, but I wanted to voice my opinion as a mother of an 8 year old within walking distance of this park. I strongly want an all abilities playground, like how Littlejohn is accessible but still super fun for everyone.

Thanks,  
Jessica Chan

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

----- Forwarded Message -----  
**From:** "ARPD" <[alameda@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:alameda@public.govdelivery.com)>  
**To:** "[industrialyte@yahoo.com](mailto:industrialyte@yahoo.com)" <[industrialyte@yahoo.com](mailto:industrialyte@yahoo.com)>  
**Cc:**  
**Sent:** Wed, May 17, 2023 at 6:15 PM  
**Subject:** McKinley Park Play Structure Replacement

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## Katherine Sirota

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**From:** ARPD  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 16, 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** David Leimsieder; Matt Nowlen  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] McKinley Park Community Planning Meeting

**From:** Lillian Tamir [mailto:lillian.tamir@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 16, 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** ARPD <ARPD@alamedaca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] McKinley Park Community Planning Meeting

Hello!

Regarding the Thursday meeting at 5:30 at the McKinley Recreation Center:

I am a Merit Badge counselor for our local Boy Scouts troop and I work with some of our scouts on their community service efforts. One of their requirements is to interview someone from a government office about a community issue. The discussion about the McKinley Park Structure seems like a logical fit as my scouts are close in age to the primary users of that park. Would it make sense for me to encourage local scouts to attend the Thursday Community Meeting at McKinley and if they do, would there be someone from the city that they could speak to directly (interview) about the park structure replacement?

Thank you,

Lillian Tamir

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**Lillian Tamir**

Email: [lillian.tamir@gmail.com](mailto:lillian.tamir@gmail.com)  
Phone: 412.852.1989

## Katherine Sirota

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**From:** Katherine Sirota on behalf of ARPD  
**Sent:** Friday, May 19, 2023 8:17 AM  
**To:** Matt Nowlen  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] McKinley Park Play Structure

**From:** Robin Devaux [mailto:redevaux@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 18, 2023 6:31 PM  
**To:** ARPD <ARPD@alamedaca.gov>  
**Cc:** Pierre Devaux <pdevaux@point-blue.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] McKinley Park Play Structure

Hi there,

Unfortunately, we were not able to attend the meeting tonight regarding the McKinley Park play structure. However, as neighbors of the park who have a 9-year-old child, we wanted to put in a request that there be a structure for older kids installed. It would be extra cool if you could install a decent-sized climbing wall. Our son really liked the climbing wall that was at McKinley previously, but it got too small for him once he was 7 or 8 years old. Something like the climbing tower at Jean Sweeney Park would also be really fun.

Thank you for your consideration!

Best,  
Robin

## Katherine Sirota

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**From:** Meg Amarasiriwardena <megamarasiriwardena@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 8:16 PM  
**To:** David Leimsieder  
**Cc:** Matt Nowlen; Eric Vlnar; ARPD  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please Reconsider McKinley Play Structure

Dear Acting Director Dave Leimsieder and Recreation and Parks Commissioners,

I was very excited to be invited to the community meeting on the play structure at McKinley Park last week. I would like to see more natural materials and imaginative play to be considered in the playground replacement.

ARPD's quick response to replacing the structure is greatly appreciated, and from the energy at the meeting, seems valued by the neighborhood at-large. Particularly in our understanding that ARPD does not necessarily have the funds planned to update this playground right now, but is doing so for the good of the community. We are grateful for your attention and dipping into the emergency funds to help replace the structure.

I found Options A, B, and C to be decent and understandable options if timing and funds are the primary concern. However, as a resident of the neighborhood, landscape architect, and mother of 2 young children (ages 3 and 5) who will quickly make use of this playground, I think of this moment of misfortune as an opportunity to truly engage the community on a deeper level to rethink the playground with more imagination and engagement.

The playground at Jean Sweeney Open Space is a fantastic example in our own community of how natural materials, as well as thoughtfully selected off-the-shelf equipment were integrated into the landscape to draw out imaginative play that enhances full-body movement and immersion into nature. The new log playground at Chochenyo Park is an excellent small scale example of using natural materials to prompt playfulness and let kids take it from there. The amount of imaginative play I have witnessed there is far greater than McKinley was.

Given enough time, I believe our neighborhood playground could be designed in a way that ignites children of all ages to engage with, and yet be drawn back time and again for new and different experiences. I would like the city to take the time to reimagine McKinley playground.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

MEGAN AMARASIRIWARDENA  
415.640.2429 | *mobile*