



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary Conditional Use

HEARING DATE: JUNE 24, 2010

Date: June 17, 2010
Case No.: **2010.0313 C**
Project Address: **2295 HARRISON STREET
(aka 612-614 ALABAMA STREET)**
Zoning: UMU (Urban Mixed Use) District
68-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 4020 / 002
Project Sponsor: Mark Melvin, Touchstone Climbing
32 Heather Way
Larkspur, CA 94939
Staff Contact: Edgar Oropeza – (415) 558-6381
edgar.oropeza@sfgov.org
Recommendation: **Approval with Conditions**

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

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415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to expand the existing gym use into the adjacent commercial space located immediately to the north. The project would expand the square footage by approximately 7,900 square feet for a total use size of approximately 23,000 square feet. The gym use is independent and locally owned, which has been encouraged throughout San Francisco. The proposed use is not a Formula Retail use.

Mission Cliffs was founded as a San Francisco business, in its current location at 19th and Harrison Streets in 1995. Mission Cliffs is a multi-activity fitness club and is an icon of indoor climbing through out the world. Touchstone Climbing is dedicated to creating innovative and exciting indoor rock climbing centers. Their gyms offer the opportunity for climbers of all abilities to challenge and enjoy themselves in a fun and safe environment.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE

The subject lot measures approximately 43,500 square feet and is improved with 3 commercial buildings which front Alabama, 19th and Harrison Streets. The subject building fronts 19th and Alabama Street and is a 1-story tall with mezzanine space of approximately 18,000 square feet. The building houses one commercial tenant, a 15,000 square foot gym dba Mission Cliffs. Mission Cliffs was founded as a San Francisco business, in its current location at 19th and Harrison Streets in 1995.

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD

The subject property is located in the Mission neighborhood and falls within an area of Urban Mixed Use (UMU) zoning that acts as a buffer between the PDR districts to the north and the residential districts to the south and east. The area contains mostly buildings of an industrial style ranging in scale from one to four stories. Surrounding uses include photography studio, veterinary clinic, auto repair, housing, and various light industrial uses. A recently completed affordable and senior housing project with ground floor PDR space is located one block to the east.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Project was determined by the Department to be Categorical Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") as a Class 1a exemption under CEQA Guidelines as described in the determination contained in the Planning Department files for this project. The Commission has reviewed and concurs with said determination.

HEARING NOTIFICATION

TYPE	REQUIRED PERIOD	REQUIRED NOTICE DATE	ACTUAL NOTICE DATE	ACTUAL PERIOD
Classified News Ad	20 days	June 4, 2010	June 4, 2010	20 days
Posted Notice	20 days	June 4, 2010	June 4, 2010	20 days
Mailed Notice	20 days	June 4, 2010	June 4, 2010	20 days

PUBLIC COMMENT

- The Department has received approximately 700 mailed comments (post cards) in support of the proposal. The department has received 15 letters in support of the proposal (attached with project sponsor's submittal).

No opposition of any type was received.

ISSUES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The expansion is compatible with the immediate neighborhood, an area that acts as a buffer between the PDR districts to the north and the residential districts to the south and east. The area contains mostly buildings of an industrial style with uses including photography studios, veterinary clinic, auto repair, some housing, and various light industrial uses.
- The scale of the project is relatively modest in terms of full fitness facilities. While 15,000 square feet is larger than boutique fitness centers, the proposed square footage of 23,000 square feet is about average for clubs that support more than a fringe group of users in U.S. cities. Furthermore, the building plan does not propose an expansion to the existing building shell; rather it proposes to improve accessibility (ADA compliance) to the subject site by providing a new storefront that is in character with renovations done in the immediate neighborhood.

- Mission Cliffs is located immediately adjacent to a city wide bike lane located on Harrison Street and has a large percentage of users that bike to the site. Over 400 patrons of Mission Cliffs bike regularly to the site (survey with staff).
- The Planning Code does not require new off-street parking (automobiles) for commercial uses within the UMU District. The immediate area is primarily industrial in nature and provides unmetered on-street parking throughout the day. The Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts have eliminated minimum off-street parking requirements in new commercial developments, while continuing to permit reasonable amounts of parking if desired.
- The area for expansion has historically housed non-retail uses (office). Therefore, the project will not displace a neighborhood serving retail use.
- The proposed use is an independent use and locally owned, which has been encouraged throughout San Francisco. This is not a Formula Retail use and would serve both the immediate and greater neighborhood.

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

Conditional Use Authorization is required pursuant to Planning Code Sections 303, 843.51 and 803.29(i), to expand a gym use with a use size greater than 4,000 square feet within the UMU (Urban Mixed Use) District.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Department believes this project is necessary and/or desirable under Section 303 of the Planning Code for the following reasons:

- The project promotes small-business ownership.
- Much of the Mission is mixed-use in character. The subject area is home to a unique mixture of activities which includes many important PDR businesses, as well as offices, housing, retail and other uses. The proposed project is desirable because it would occupy a former office use located within an industrial district and would allow an appropriate expansion of the use that has proven desirable and appropriate for the neighborhood. Furthermore, public support for the expansion has been demonstrated.
- The proposed Project meets all applicable requirements of the Planning Code.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions

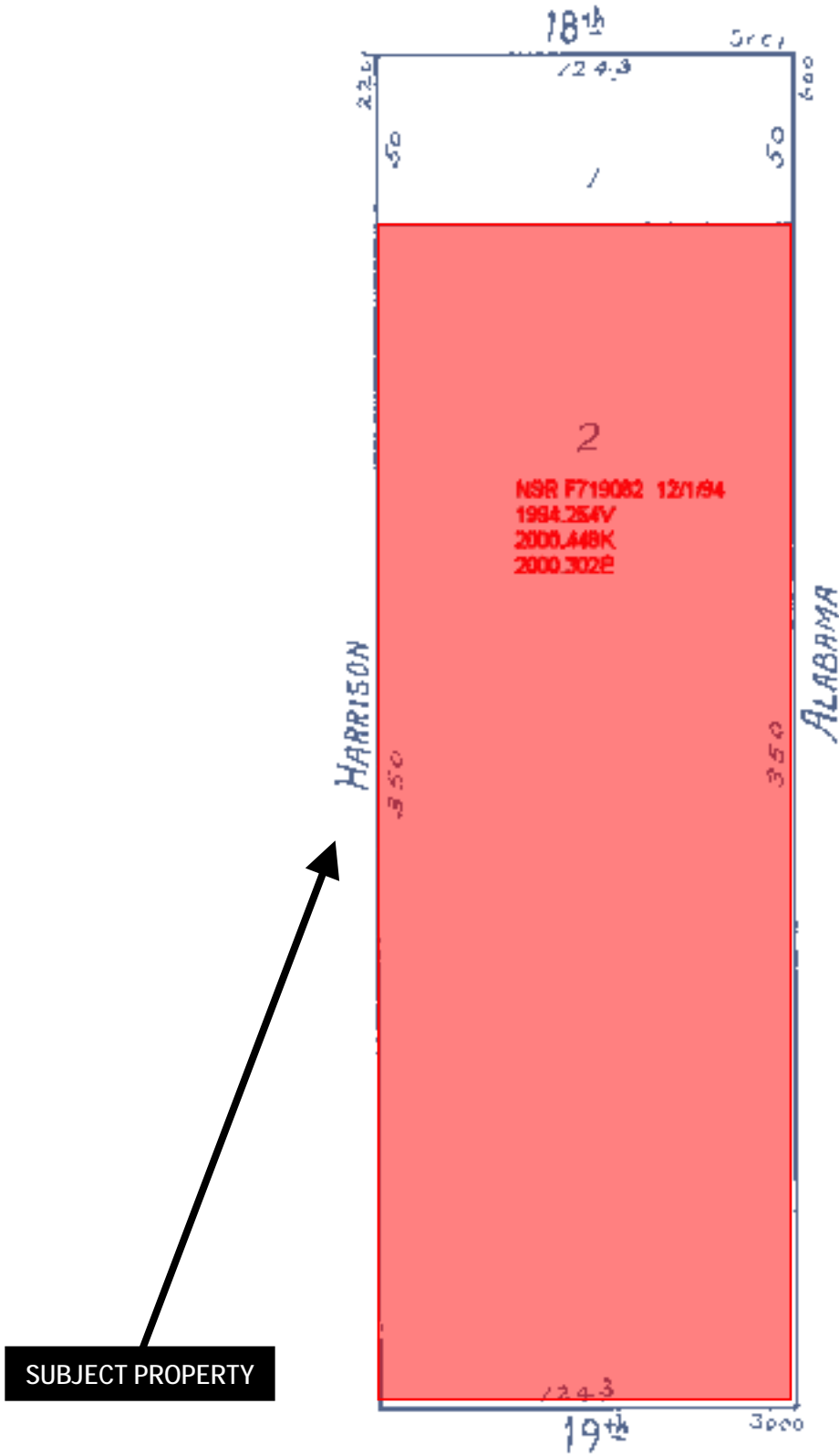
Attachment Checklist

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| X | Executive Summary | X | Project sponsor submittal |
| X | Draft Motion | | Drawings: <u>Existing Conditions</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Determination | | X Check for legibility |
| X | Zoning District Map | | Drawings: <u>Proposed Project</u> |
| X | Height & Bulk Map | | X Check for legibility |
| X | Parcel Map | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health Dept. review of RF levels |
| X | Sanborn Map | <input type="checkbox"/> | RF Report |
| X | Aerial Photo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Meeting Notice |
| X | Context Photos | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Determination |
| X | Site Photos | | |

Exhibits above marked with an "X" are included in this packet

Planner's Initials

Parcel Map



SUBJECT PROPERTY



Conditional Use Hearing
Case Number 2010.0313C
Mission Cliffs
2295 Harrison Street

Sanborn Map*



**The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.*

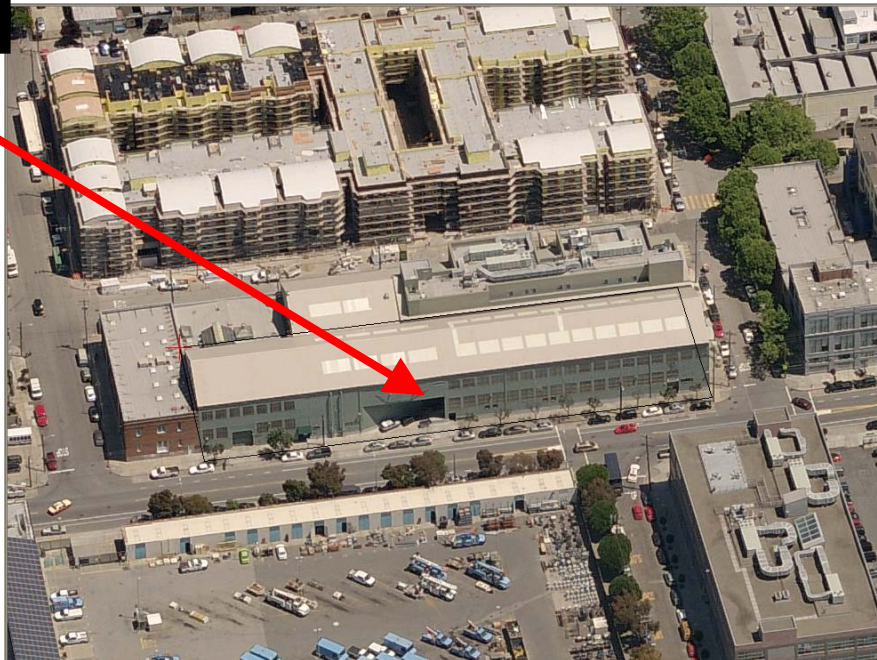


Conditional Use Hearing
Case Number 2010.0313C
Mission Cliffs
2295 Harrison Street

Aerial Photos

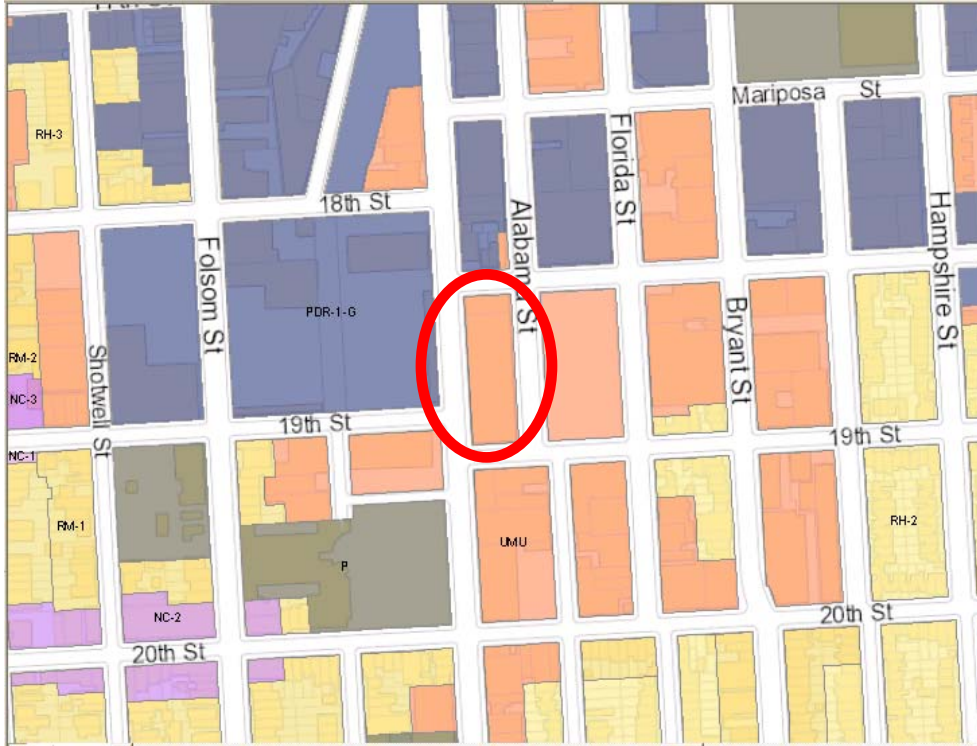


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Conditional Use Hearing
Case Number 2010.0313C
Mission Cliffs
2295 Harrison Street

Zoning Map



Conditional Use Hearing
Case Number 2010.0313C
Mission Cliffs
2295 Harrison Street

Site Photos



Conditional Use Hearing
Case Number 2010.0313C
Mission Cliffs
2295 Harrison Street



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Subject to: (Select only if applicable)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusionary Housing (Sec. 315) | <input type="checkbox"/> First Source Hiring (Admin. Code) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs Housing Linkage Program (Sec. 313) | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Requirement (Sec. 314) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Park Fee (Sec. 139) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

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Planning Commission Draft Motion

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Larkspur, CA 94939
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATING TO CONDITIONAL USE AUTHORIZATION PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 303, 843.51, AND 803.29(i) OF THE PLANNING CODE TO EXPAND AN EXISTING GYM USE GREATER THAN 4,000 SQUARE FEET DBA MISSION CLIFFS, WITHIN THE UMU (URBAN MIXED USE) DISTRICT, AND A 68-X HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT.

PREAMBLE

On April 29, 2010 Mark Melvin (Project Sponsor) filed an application with the Planning Department (hereinafter "Department") for Conditional Use Authorization under Planning Code Section 303, 843.51, and 803.29(i) to expand an existing gym use, dba Mission Cliffs, into an adjacent commercial space within the UMU (Urban Mixed Use) District, and a 68-X Height and Bulk District.

On June 24, 2010, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting on Conditional Use Application No. 2010.0313C.

The Project was determined by the Department to be Categorical Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") as a Class 1a exemption under CEQA Guidelines as described in the determination contained in the Planning Department files for this project. The Commission has reviewed and concurs with said determination.

The Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of the applicant, Department staff, and other interested parties.

MOVED, that the Commission hereby authorizes the Conditional Use requested in Application No. 2010.0313C, subject to the conditions contained in "EXHIBIT A" of this motion, based on the following findings:

FINDINGS

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are accurate and constitute findings of this Commission.
2. **Site Description and Present Use.** The subject lot measures approximately 43,500 square feet and is improved with 3 commercial buildings which front Alabama, 19th and Harrison Streets. The subject building fronts 19th and Alabama Street and is a 1-story tall with mezzanine space of approximately 18,000 square feet. The building houses one commercial tenant, a 15,000 square foot gym dba Mission Cliffs. Mission Cliffs was founded as a San Francisco business, in its current location at 19th and Harrison Streets in 1995.
3. **Surrounding Properties and Neighborhood.** The subject property is located in the Mission neighborhood and falls within an area of Urban Mixed Use (UMU) zoning that acts as a buffer between the PDR districts to the north and the residential districts to the south and east. The area contains mostly buildings of an industrial style ranging in scale from one to four stories. Surrounding uses include photography studio, veterinary clinic, auto repair, housing, and various light industrial uses. A recently completed affordable and senior housing project with ground floor PDR space is located one block to the east.
4. **Project Description.** The project proposes to expand the existing gym use into the adjacent commercial space located immediately to the north. The project would expand the square footage by approximately 7,900 square feet for a total use size of approximately 23,000 square feet. The gym use is independent and locally owned, which has been encouraged throughout San Francisco. The proposed use is not a Formula Retail use.

Mission Cliffs was founded as a San Francisco business, in its current location at 19th and Harrison Streets in 1995. Mission Cliffs is a multi-activity fitness club and is an icon of indoor climbing through out the world. Touchstone Climbing is dedicated to creating innovative and exciting indoor rock climbing centers. Their gyms offer the opportunity for climbers of all abilities to challenge and enjoy themselves in a fun and safe environment.

5. **Public Comment.** The Department has received approximately 700 mailed comments (post cards) in support of the proposal. The department has received 15 letters in support of the proposal (attached with project sponsor's submittal).

No opposition of any type was received.

6. **Planning Code Compliance:** The Commission finds that the Project is consistent with the relevant provisions of the Planning Code in the following manner:

- A. **Retail Controls in the MUG, MUO, and UMU Districts.** In the UMU District, up to 25,000 gross square feet of retail use (as defined in Section 890.114 of this Code) are permitted per lot. Above 25,000 gross square feet, three gross square feet of other uses permitted in that District are required for every one gross square foot of retail. In the UMU District, gyms, as defined in Sec. 218(d), are exempt from this requirement.

The project proposes the expansion of the existing gym use dba, Mission Cliffs by approximately 8,000 square feet for a total of 23,000 gross square feet. Pursuant to Planning Code Section 803.9(i) the project to expand the existing gym use will not trigger additional square footage of uses that are not retail in nature at the site.

- B. **Use Size.** Within the UMU District, a gym use greater than 4,000 square feet in size requires Conditional Use Authorization

The project proposes the expansion of the existing gym use dba, Mission Cliffs by approximately 8,000 square feet for a total of 23,000 gross square feet. The project applicant is seeking a Conditional Use Authorization for the proposed expansion.

- C. **Parking.** Planning Section 843.10 of the Planning Code does not require off-street parking for any commercial use located within the UMU District.

The Subject Property is located within the UMU District and does not propose new off-street parking of any type.

7. **Planning Code Section 303** establishes criteria for the Planning Commission to consider when reviewing applications for Conditional Use approval. On balance, the project does comply with said criteria in that:

- A. The proposed new uses and building, at the size and intensity contemplated and at the proposed location, will provide a development that is necessary or desirable, and compatible with, the neighborhood or the community.

Much of the Mission is mixed-use in character. The subject area is home to a unique mixture of activities which includes many important PDR businesses, as well as offices, housing, retail and other uses. The proposed project is desirable because it would occupy a former office use located within an industrial district and would allow an appropriate expansion of the use that has proven desirable and appropriate for the neighborhood. Furthermore, public support for the expansion has been demonstrated.

The expansion is compatible with the immediate neighborhood, an area that acts as a buffer between the PDR districts to the north and the residential districts to the south and east. The area contains mostly buildings of an industrial style with uses including photography studios, veterinary clinic, auto repair, some housing, and various light industrial uses.

The scale of the project is relatively modest in terms of full fitness facilities. While 15,000 square feet is larger than boutique fitness centers, the proposed square footage of 23,000 square feet is about average for clubs that support more than a fringe group of users in U.S. cities. Furthermore, the building plan does not propose an expansion to the existing building shell; rather it proposes to improve accessibility (ADA compliance) to the subject site by providing a new storefront that is in character with renovations done in the immediate neighborhood.

- B. The proposed project will not be detrimental to the health, safety, convenience or general welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity. There are no features of the project that could be detrimental to the health, safety or convenience of those residing or working the area, in that:
- i. Nature of proposed site, including its size and shape, and the proposed size, shape and arrangement of structures;

The proposed project will operate within the existing building envelope and is in keeping with the existing size and scale of uses located in the immediate industrial area.

- ii. The accessibility and traffic patterns for persons and vehicles, the type and volume of such traffic, and the adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;

The Planning Code does not require new off-street parking (automobiles) for commercial uses within the UMU District. The immediate area is primarily industrial in nature and provides unmetered on-street parking throughout the day. The Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts have eliminated minimum off-street parking requirements in new commercial developments, while continuing to permit reasonable amounts of parking if desired.

Mission Cliffs is located immediately adjacent to a city wide bike lane located on Harrison Street and has a large percentage of users that bike to the site. The bicycle is a desirable alternative to the automobile as a means of urban transportation in San Francisco. It can successfully be used for most transportation needs, including commuting, shopping, errands, and recreation. Active encouragement of bicycle use as an alternative to automobile use, whenever possible, is essential in light of the continually increasing traffic congestion caused by motorized vehicles which aggravates air pollution, increases noise levels and consumes valuable urban space. The bicycle is a practical and economical transportation alternative which produces no emissions or noise. In addition, each bicycle user enjoys health benefits through increased physical activity.

Additionally, Mission Cliffs continues to come up with high capacity bike storage systems and locates those systems within their confines.

- iii. The safeguards afforded to prevent noxious or offensive emissions such as noise, glare, dust and odor;

The gym operation is not expected to generate noxious or offensive emissions such as noise, glare dust and odor. The gym is located within an industrial area, and operates within enclosed building walls and closes no later than 11:00 P.M.

- iv. Treatment given, as appropriate, to such aspects as landscaping, screening, open spaces, parking and loading areas, service areas, lighting and signs;

The building plan does not propose an expansion to the existing building shell; rather it proposes to improve accessibility (ADA compliance) to the subject site by providing a new storefront that is in character with renovations done in the immediate neighborhood.

- C. That the use as proposed will comply with the applicable provisions of the Planning Code and will not adversely affect the General Plan.

The Project complies with all relevant requirements and standards of the Planning Code and is consistent with objectives and policies of the General Plan as detailed below.

- 8. **General Plan Compliance.** The Project is, on balance, consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

COMMERCE ELEMENT

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1:

MANAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CHANGE TO ENSURE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TOTAL CITY LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

Policy 1.1:

Encourage development which provides substantial net benefits and minimizes undesirable consequences. Discourage development that has substantial undesirable consequences that cannot be mitigated.

Policy 1.2:

Assure that all commercial and industrial uses meet minimum, reasonable performance standards.

Policy 1.3:

Locate commercial and industrial activities according to a generalized commercial and industrial land use plan.

The proposed development will provide a necessary and desirable service to both the immediate and greater neighborhoods. Further, the proposed project is consistent with the stated purposed of UMU (Urban Mixed Use) district in that the intended use maintains all characteristics of the existing building and preserves the commercial and industrial nature of the area.

The Project will provide net benefits by converting 3000 square feet of existing office space for a personal service use. The use is expected to generate traffic patterns suitable for the area and will not create undesirable impacts to traffic and parking in the area.

OBJECTIVE 2:

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE AND FISCAL STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY.

Policy 2.1:

Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the City.

The Project will reuse and retain the existing commercial building and use, thereby enhancing the diverse economic base of the City.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Objectives and Policies

OBJECTIVE 1:

MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FOR SAFE, CONVENIENT AND INEXPENSIVE TRAVEL WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO AND BETWEEN THE CITY AND OTHER PARTS OF THE REGION WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGH QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THE BAY AREA

Policy 1.3

Give priority to public transit and other alternatives to the private automobile as the means of meeting San Francisco's transportation needs, particularly those of commuters.

Mission Cliffs is located immediately adjacent to a city wide bike lane located on Harrison Street and has a large percentage of users that bike to the site. The bicycle is a desirable alternative to the automobile as a means of urban transportation in San Francisco. It can successfully be used for most transportation needs, including commuting, shopping, errands, and recreation. Active encouragement of bicycle use as an alternative to automobile use, whenever possible, is essential in light of the continually increasing traffic congestion caused by motorized vehicles which aggravates air pollution, increases noise levels and consumes valuable urban space. The bicycle is a practical and economical transportation alternative which produces no emissions or noise. In addition, each bicycle user enjoys health benefits through increased physical activity.

9. **Planning Code Section 101.1(b)** establishes eight priority-planning policies and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the project does comply with said policies in that:

- A. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses be enhanced.

The project site has historically housed non-retail uses (office). Therefore, the project will not displace a neighborhood serving retail use.

- B. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.

The proposed project is consistent with the stated purpose of the UMU (Urban Mixed Use) district in that the intended use maintains and preserves all characteristics of the existing building. Moreover the subject zoning district is located in an area serving as a buffer between residential districts and PDR districts in the Eastern Neighborhoods.

- C. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced,

No housing is removed for this Project.

- D. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The Planning Code does not require parking for any use within the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts.

- E. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The Project will not displace any service or industry establishment. The project site has not housed an industrial or service sector uses since 1995 and therefore no industrial related jobs are lost per this application.

- F. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

The Project is designed and will be constructed to conform to the structural and seismic safety requirements of the City Building Code.

- G. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

A landmark or historic building does not occupy the Project site.

H. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

The project will have no impact on existing parks and open spaces.

10. The Project is consistent with and would promote the general and specific purposes of the Code provided under Section 101.1(b) in that, as designed, the Project would contribute to the character and stability of the neighborhood and would constitute a beneficial development.
11. The Commission hereby finds that approval of the Conditional Use authorization would promote the health, safety and welfare of the City.

DECISION

That based upon the Record, the submissions by the Applicant, the staff of the Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **APPROVES Conditional Use Application No. 2010.0313C** subject to the following conditions attached hereto as "EXHIBIT A" in general conformance with plans filed with the Application as received on April 29, 2010 and stamped "EXHIBIT B", which is incorporated herein by reference as though fully set forth.

APPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF MOTION: Any aggrieved person may appeal this Conditional Use Authorization to the Board of Supervisors within thirty (30) days after the date of this Motion No. XXXXX. The effective date of this Motion shall be the date of this Motion if not appealed (After the 30-day period has expired) OR the date of the decision of the Board of Supervisors if appealed to the Board of Supervisors. For further information, please contact the Board of Supervisors at (415) 554-5184, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on June 24, 2010.

Linda D. Avery
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: June 24, 2010

Exhibit A

Conditions of Approval

1. This authorization is for a Conditional Use Authorization under Planning Code Section 303, 843.51, and 803.29(i) of the Planning Code to allow an expansion of the existing gym (Mission Cliffs) at 2295 Harrison Street (aka 612-614 Alabama Street) within the UMU (Urban Mixed Use) District and a 68-X Height and Bulk District, in general conformance with plans filed with the Application as received on April 29, 2010 and stamped "EXHIBIT B" included in the docket for **Case No. 2010.0313C**, reviewed and approved by the Commission on June 24, 2010.
2. Prior to the issuance of the Building Permit for the Project the Zoning Administrator shall approve and order the recordation of a notice in the Official Records of the Recorder of the City and County of San Francisco for the premises (Assessor's 4020, Lot 002), which notice shall state that construction has been authorized by and is subject to the conditions of this Motion. From time to time after the recordation of such notice, at the request of the Project Sponsor, the Zoning Administrator shall affirm in writing the extent to which the conditions of this Motion have been satisfied.
3. Pursuant to Planning Code Section 143 new street trees are required for the subject property. The street trees installed shall be a minimum of one 24-inch box tree for each 20 feet of frontage of the property along each street or alley. Within the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, street trees shall be installed along all street frontages in the public right of way.
4. Violation of the conditions contained in this Motion or of any other provisions of the Planning Code may be subject to abatement procedures and fines up to \$250 a day in accordance with Planning Code Section 176.
5. Should monitoring of the Conditions of Approval contained in Exhibit A of this Motion be required, the Project Sponsor or successors shall pay fees as established in Planning Code Section 351(e)(1).
6. The property owner shall maintain the main entrance to the building and all sidewalks abutting the subject property in a clean condition. Such maintenance shall include, at a minimum, daily litter pickup and disposal, and washing or steam cleaning of the main entrance and abutting sidewalks at least once each week.
7. Signs and exterior lighting for the business shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department before they are installed.
8. The Project shall appoint a Community Liaison Officer to address issues of concern to neighbors related to the operation of this Project.

9. The authorization and right vested by virtue of this action shall be deemed void and canceled if, within 3 years of the date of this Motion, a site permit or building permit for the Project has not been secured by Project Sponsor. This authorization may be extended at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator only if the failure to issue a permit by the Department of Building Inspection is delayed by a city, state, or federal agency or by appeal of the issuance of such permit.



June 15, 2010

Dear Planning Commissioners:

As the project sponsor for the expansion of Mission Cliffs, I would like to present our case for expansion. Attached are letters from community groups, and notes from kids that have benefited from our support. As of this date, we have received over 700 letters of support, and know of no opposition. In the past two weeks, we have also collected a list of over 400 names of members who bike to the gym, which is only a fraction of the total. We think we've done the right thing by our community and deserve your support.

Mission Cliffs was founded as a San Francisco business, in its current location at 19th St. and Harrison in 1995 and has been an integral part of neighborhood dynamics ever since. A core value of the business has been commitment to community, as evidenced by the list on our web page of hundreds of organizations and schools which we have supported, amounting to literally thousands of San Francisco residents whose lives we have affected in a positive way. We know of no San Francisco based non-profit organization with a mission statement that benefits kids-at-risk or adults-in-need that we have ever turned away.

Mission Cliffs, an icon of indoor climbing buffs throughout the world, is for practical purposes a multi-activity fitness club, an industry well known to pull primarily from a local population. Over three thousand San Franciscans regularly use the gym for recreation, and we see over 15,000 drop-in users a year, over 3,000 kids in parties and after school programs, and just under 1,000 kids that come through associated with a community service organization. Our clientele is local: over 25% are in our precise zip code, over 50% are within a mile, or easy biking distance, over 75% are within two miles, and no zip code out of that range in the city or elsewhere includes more than 3% of our regular users, most only 1% or less.

Our use is supportive of health and fitness, important in the busy urban lifestyle of today. Whereas almost any health related activity is beneficial in a busy city like San Francisco, our gym creates unique social groups because of the need for interaction in the act of rock climbing. The nature of climbing also interests disadvantaged youth and adult support groups as a diversion they can use to support their greater missions.

The expansion is compatible with the neighborhood, involving the remodel of an existing design firm with office space, to a use that accommodates more of our community. The building plan improves accessibility by switching the entrance and exit to allow ADA compliance without the use of a lift, currently in place. New store front glass will bring part of this monolithic structure more in character with renovations in the neighborhood. No residential neighbors will be affected visually, since the only adjacent user is a PG&E service yard, and the fact that the building shell remains unchanged.

We think Mission Cliffs has one of the largest percentage of users that bike, of any business with a relatively large user base in San Francisco. We are working with the SF MTA to figure out how to come up with far denser bike storage systems than currently in use, but even the internal bars we use are packed every night – see attached photos. We're committed to continued support of bike use, and innovation to increase capacity.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Melvin', written in a cursive style.

Mark Melvin
CEO, Touchstone Climbing Inc.

Kids Groups Supported at Mission Cliffs 2007-2009

Kids Total: 4,919

Aim High	Glide-Family, youth and children center	Mission Neighborhood Center
Alice Fong Yu Elementary	Good for Kids Foundation	Mission YMCA
Alvarado School	Greenwood School	New Door Ventures
AP Gianinni	Grow Through Adventure	OMI Beacon Center
Asian America Recovery	Growth & Learning Opportunity	Outward Bound
Banot Camp	Guadalupe Elementary	Paul Revere After-School program
Bay Area Asian Sports Dragons	GWHS Girls JV Volley Ball Team	Phillip Burton Afterschool Program
Bay Area Community Resources	Hebrew Academy	Potrero Hill Neighborhood House
Bayview YMCA	High Tech High	Potrero Neighborhood Center
Bessie Carmichael School	Home Away from Homelessness	Presidio Heights Playground
Blue Dolphin Swim Team	Ida B. Wells	Presidio YMCA
Booker T	Ida B. Wells High School	Richmond District YMCA
Boy Scouts	Immaculate Conception Academy	Rita da Cascia
Boys & Girls Club	Impact Academy	S.F. School
Brandeis-Hillel Day School	Impact Academy of Arts	Sacred Heart
Bridgemont	Impact High School	Sage
Buchanan YMCA	Independent Living Schools	San Raphael Outdoor Adventure Club
Burton High School	International High School	Sanchez School
California Academy of Sciences	International Studies Academy	School of the Arts
Camp Here We Come	Japanese Community Youth Council	Sea Crest School
Cathedral School	Japanese Youth Community Council	Seven Tepees
Central YMCA	JUMA	SF Friends School
Cesar Chavez	Jump Start	SF Islamic School
Children's After School Arts	June Jordan High School	SF Youth Works
Chinatown Community	Katherine Del Mar Burke	SFSU
Development Center	KIPP	Sherman -Aim High
Chinatown Youth Community Center	KZD Armenien School	Sports 4 Kids
Chinese Progressive Assoc.	KZV	Sports 4 Kids -Fairmount Elementary
Christ United Presbyterian Church	La Perouse	Sports 4 Kids -Sanchez Elementary
Citizen School	Larkin Street	Sports 4 Kids (Cobb Elementary)
Civic Center Secondary School	Leadership High School	St. John's Educational
Cleveland Elementary School	Leadership Public Schools	St. John's Tutoring
Colombia Park	Lick -Aim High	Stonestown YMCA
Corner Stone Academy	Lighthouse	Stownstown YMCA
Cornerstone	Linking Youth Nurturing Community	Sunnydale Housing Projects
Creative Arts School	Linking Youth Nuturing Community	Swim Neptune
CUPC	Lowel High School	Tailor Made
De Marillac Academy	Lycee Francais	Tenderloin After-School Program
DeMarillac Academy	LYNC	The SF School
Friendship House	Lyric	Unity High School
Full Life Church	Marina Middle School	Vista Center
Gateway High School	Mavericks	Waldorf High School
Giannini School	Miraloma Playground	Westside Community Services
Gilman Rec Center	Mission Girls	William Cobb School
Girl Scouts	Mission Graduates	Woodside International H.S.
Girl Ventures	Mission Graduates -Marshall Elementary	YMCA
Girls After School Academy	Mission High School	Young Life
Glen Park Rec. Center		
Glide Church		
Glide Foundation		

Mission Cliffs Indoor Rock Climbing Gym

2295 Harrison St. San Francisco



2009 Facts:

3,361 Members

17,314 Day Users

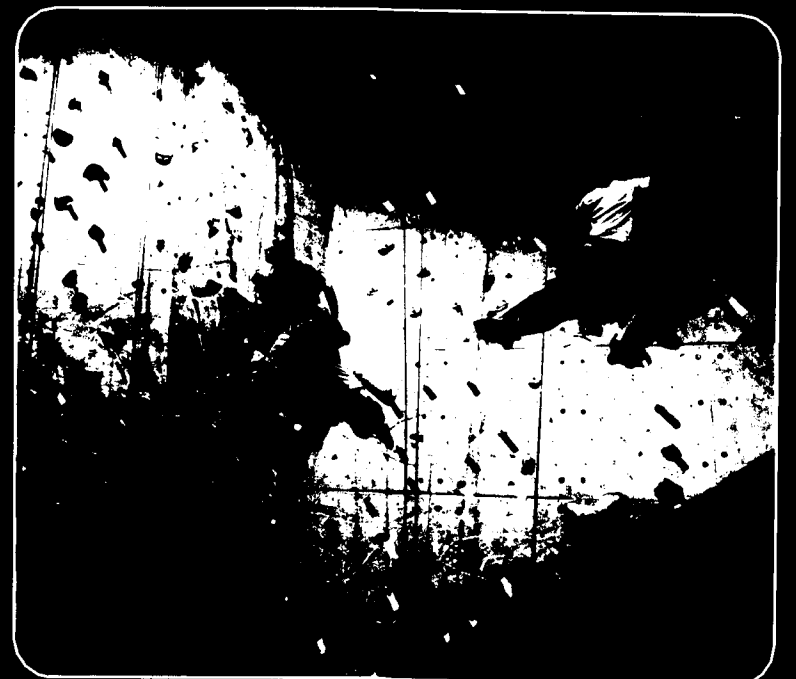
2,314 Intro Climbing Classes

173,205 Total Visits

3,196 Kids Attended Parties

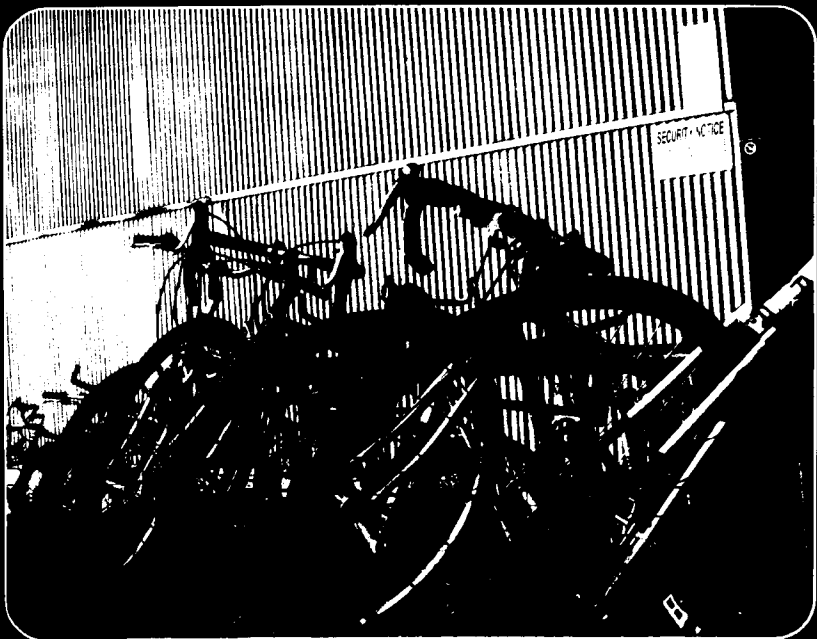
960 Under Privileged Kids

651 Non Profit Donations



Mission Cliffs Indoor Rock Climbing Gym

2295 Harrison St. San Francisco



Mission Cliffs Indoor Rock Climbing Gym

2295 Harrison St. San Francisco



In 2009, Touchstone Climbing helped over 178 community groups give 2,300 participants a chance to try Rock Climbing. Touchstone also gave away hundreds of donation gift certificates to help fundraisers for schools and other charitable organizations. For a complete list: touchstoneclimbing.com/commblog.html.





*Mission High School
3750 18th Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 241-6240*

May 23, 2010

Dear Planning Commissioner,

My name is Tol Lau and I am a mathematics teacher at Mission High School in San Francisco. I am writing to show my support of Touchstone Climbing and Mission Cliffs.

For the past three years, Mission Cliffs has allowed me to bring my students to the climbing gym and introduce this amazing support to San Francisco youth. Not only do these students come from all over the city – Bayview, Hunter’s Point, Portrero Hill, Mission, the Sunset, and the Richmond – they also come from all over the world – El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, China, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Many of these youth are from disadvantaged backgrounds and do not have the opportunities to experience climbing without the support of a gym like Mission Cliffs. Each year the gym shows its dedication to giving back to the community by providing Mission High School with its facilities and belay staff free of charge.

These students face challenges everyday. Sometimes just getting to school is a struggle. Through climbing, my students have learned new things and found courage within themselves. Here’s what a few of them have to say about their experience at Mission Cliffs.

“I overcame my fear of heights and had a great time doing it.”
-Alejandro (age 16, from Bayview)

"I would recommend others to do it because it builds your confidence"
-Claudia (age 16, from Mission)

"I would recommend climbing to others because it's really fun and even though you're afraid of heights you'll still like it"
-Joanna (age 15, from Sunset)

“As teens would say ‘I had a popping time, and this is not my last time going.’”
-Miksha (age 15, from Portrero Hill)

Each year that I have been a teacher at Mission High School, I have brought a group of my students to the rock climbing gym. Mission Cliffs is dedicated to being more than just a rock climbing gym, though. It is an integral part of this community. Each time, I watch this experience really level the playing field for the students. Some students who have never had a chance to shine in the classroom, finally get to do so while climbing. That confidence that the students gain from their trip to Mission Cliffs really transfers over to the classroom. I witness students begin to take control of their education and overcome any obstacles they encounter. Mission Cliffs has directly impacted the lives of my students in a positive way.

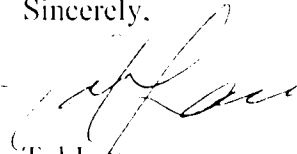


Mission High School
3750 18th Street
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 241-6240

Expanding Mission Cliffs can only benefit the community. People of all ages and walks of life use the gym to better their lives. And as I have stated in this letter, my students have certainly learned a lot and improved their lives as a result of their trip to the gym. Mission Cliffs has been an vital part of the Mission community (as well as the San Francisco community). Expanding the gym only helps Mission Cliffs to continue to provide these amazing experiences to its community.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or Mission Cliffs support of Mission High School please feel free to e-mail me at mister.tol@gmail.com or call me at (415) 608-8555

Sincerely,



Tol Lau



Mission High School Field Trip 2008



Mission High School Field Trip 2009



Mission High School Field Trip 2010

May 25, 2010

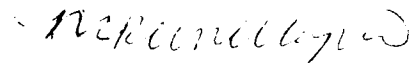
To Whom It May Concern:

Mission Graduates is a community-based non-profit in the Mission district that works to increase the number of young people from the neighborhood who pursue and complete a college education. We run academic and enrichment after-school programs in partnership with numerous neighborhood schools for students in grades K-12.

Mission Cliffs is a wonderful community partner of our teen programs. Over the last several years, Mission Cliffs has provided our programs with a discounted rate to bring students on weekday afternoons to climb at the gym. We provide the adults to chaperone and belay for our students, and Mission Cliffs gives us access to their entire climbing gym. Our students, all teens who either live or go to school in the neighborhood, love going to Mission Cliffs! Those trips are among the most popular each year and some students have had the opportunity to climb with us numerous times. Rock-climbing at Mission Cliffs helps our students build confidence, provides an opportunity for healthy risk-taking and teamwork, and is FUN!

We are very appreciative of Mission Cliffs' continued willingness to provide their space at a discounted rate so that we can bring neighborhood youth to climb.

Sincerely,



Maddy Russell-Shapiro
High School Programs Director



SF International
High School
2/10/10

Thank You

- Kara

We will send a couple of
pictures shortly.

To Mission Cliffs Staff,

Our students all had a great time.
They are all English Language Learners so
I will record some of the favorite moments
that they told to me.

One student said her favorite moment was stopping
half way up the wall because she was scared,
but then continuing to the top.

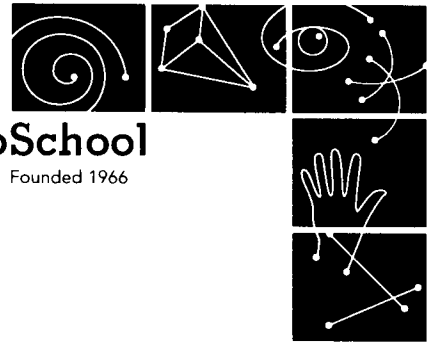
3 boys told me their favorite part was how
hard it was to climb, & challenging themselves
with harder & harder climbs.

Only one student had climbed before, so for
9 students this was their first time climbing.



mission
graduates
formerly St. John's





June 14, 2010

Dear Planning Commissioner,

In my seven years as a teacher, I have had the pleasure to bring over a hundred young people, ages 8 through 15, to Mission Cliffs. I have brought several classroom groups as an end of year celebration or as beginning of the year team-building, groups of girls from Aim High, a summer program for low income youth, as well as families who bid on the opportunity to bring their child climbing with their teacher and in the process, helped to raise money for the school. Mission Cliffs has offered hugely discounted rates, along with free day passes for the auction items. Mission Cliffs has made clear its commitment as a community organization to introduce diverse groups of young people to rock climbing.

300 Gaven Street
San Francisco
CA 94134
tel 415 239.5065
fax 415 239 4833

Rock climbing has had a powerful and beneficial impact on the young people I've worked with. Students have learned lessons about teamwork, perseverance, and positive self-image. I've seen the proud smile of students who never thought they would be able to reach the top of a climb, but pushed through their nerves. I've seen girls with generally low self-esteem, cheered on by groups of their peers, building their self-confidence every step of the route. Climbing trips are a highlight of the school year for all of my students. They would not be possible without the generosity of Mission Cliffs.

I ask you to please keep in mind the diverse groups of young people that Mission Cliffs positively impacts as you consider their bid for expansion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Corley'.

Ruth Corley
Sixth Grade Humanities Teacher
The San Francisco School



girlventures

Outdoor adventures for inner discovery

May 24, 2010

Dear Commissioner,

It is a privilege to submit this letter of support on behalf of Mission Cliffs and their proposed expansion. GirlVentures has enjoyed a generous ongoing relationship with the Touchstone Gyms, and Mission Cliffs in particular, for over 8 years now.

We are a small nonprofit working to *empower adolescent girls to develop and express their strengths*. Since 1997 we have served over 3,000 Bay Area girls through outdoor adventures for inner discovery. One of our most successful programs is an afterschool rock-climbing mentorship program called "Girlz Climb On." The power of the program comes from the poignant combination of physical challenge, supportive mentorships and meaningful reflections.

This program, Girlz Climb On, would simply not be possible without the support of the Touchstone Gyms. Mission Cliffs alone as hosted well over 100 GirlVentures' girls, approximately half of whom are local to the Mission District, and 70% of whom received scholarships to participate. Without Mission Cliffs' investment in giving back to the local community, these girls would not have the benefits of a healthy one-on-one mentorship with a responsible and loving adult or the boost of confidence that comes from discovering you can do so much more than you thought.

We are grateful to Mission Cliffs for their commitment to the community and look forward to continuing our relationship with them in support of confident, healthy & competent young women. We support their efforts to expand what they are able to offer the community as we see nothing but positive outcomes as youth and adults alike engage in physical endeavors together.

Thank you,

Sarah Heath
Director, Programs and Outreach

Date: June 10, 2010

To: Planning Commissioner

From: Amabelle Sze and Chris Slater, San Francisco Friends School

Regarding: Mission Cliffs' Expansion Project

Dear Planning Commissioner,

When our school moved into the Mission a few years ago, we knew we wanted to be an active part of the community. This included making ties with local businesses. One of these which we have formed a relationship with is Mission Cliffs. For a few years now, we have had an enrichment class offered to our students at Mission Cliffs, and it is a much-loved activity by our students. It is an important extension of our Physical Education and athletic programs, helping urban kids with an opportunity to try something new and developing skills.


An example is a former student of mine, "Bill." Bill has some physical limits, displaying a limp when he walks. I would not guess most other students would call him athletic. However, because of Bill's build and body-type, he excelled at rock climbing. After taking our class, he decided to become a member of the gym and now climbs there regularly. Needless to say, his self-esteem has soared.

Watching our students climb at Mission Cliffs is truly inspiring. Not only do kids find strengths they never knew they had, they learn how to better work together outside of a classroom environment and continue to challenge themselves.

Because of these reasons, we support Mission Cliffs' expansion plans.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerrely,


Amabelle Sze


Chris Slater

June 14, 2010

Dear Planning Commission:

I would like to offer my enthusiastic support to Mission Cliffs as they plan their gym addition. I have had a wonderful experience with this organization, both on a personal level as a rock climber for the last 5 years, and as a teacher who has brought hundreds of high school students to climb here as well.

When I taught at Mission High School, I brought students in my drama ensemble to climb as a community-building event. I explained to the gym staff that the cost would be prohibitively expensive, and they immediately agreed to a very reasonable fee that would allow us to climb and rent all needed gear. We came again the following year, as students felt it was a great experience, and helped them to get to know their ensemble members on a new and deeper level.

Two years later, when I taught at Unity High School in East Oakland, a very small charter school with only 50 students per grade level, we wanted to bring every single sophomore on a field trip to the city. We did three rotations with groups of 18 – on to the MOMA, one to Dolores Park, and the third to Mission Cliffs! As you can imagine, this was a big chaotic organizationally, but once again, Mission Cliffs rolled with us, not only providing a very generous price break, but also letting us bring a huge number of kids, one group after the other, and being really mellow and supportive throughout the process. Nearly all of the students later described the climbing portion of their day their absolute favorite, and hoped to go again!

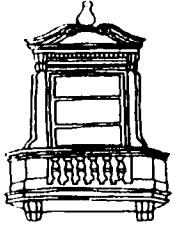
The subsequent year, when I taught at Impact Academy of Art and Technology in Hayward, I once again brought a drama ensemble to climb, to bond, to have a fun reward day after working hard on a show. This was my fourth trip to the gym with students, and of course, we had a fabulous time and were completely accommodated by the lovely gym staff.

The following year I held a much bigger climbing event. Our school decided to participate in an activity called “Week Without Walls”, where each teacher spends a week teaching one of their personal passions to a group of kids from the school who sign up for whatever activity most interests them. Unsurprisingly, I decided to teach rock climbing! Not only did we spend a wonderful day at Mission Cliffs, but traveled to Ironworks and Great Western Power Company as well, the other Touchstone Gyms. Staff made this so easy and doable. We really valued the experience. These freshmen and sophomores made comments such as, “Rock climbing isn’t so easy...these gyms are really challenging, and that’s what I like.” One student said, “I enjoyed every minute I was on the wall...everyone was helping and cheering for each other.” Another said, “The staff was really nice – it was a great gym, and we felt safe, and had a lot of fun. Thank you again for the fantastic experience, and making it affordable enough that we could all participate!”

Clearly, Mission Cliffs is a positive supporter of the community. Please encourage and approve their plan to expand their gym so they can continue providing great service as they have to my students and me over the last five years.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Krumbein
Former High School Teacher
Education Director, SF Playhouse



GUADALUPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

859 Prague Street
San Francisco, California 94112
Tel: 415-469-4718, Fax: 415-469-4066

Dear Planning Commissioners,

My name is Kent Schmitz. I teach 5th grade at Guadalupe Elementary School in San Francisco. I have been an avid rock climber for the past twenty-two years and I have been enjoying indoor climbing at Mission cliffs over the past twelve.

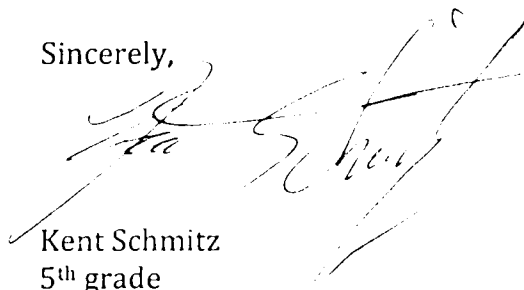
I am writing to voice my support for the expansion of Mission Cliffs. Not only do I personally enjoy the gym as a climber, but as a schoolteacher as well. For the past ten years, Mission Cliffs has provided every one of my students with the opportunity to rock climb free of charge. Most of the students in my class qualify for the free lunch program and come from lower income families. Without Mission Cliffs' support, my students would never have had the opportunity to experience this positive and unique activity.

I enjoy sharing climbing with my students and find it to be a valuable learning experience for them. I believe when my students face their fear of heights, it is analogous to many of the challenges they will face in school and life. When these kids successfully push through their fears and succeed, they realize that with effort, hard work, and trust, anything is possible.

My students remember me as the 5th grade teacher who took them rock climbing. More than once I have been told that Mission Cliffs was the best field trip they have ever taken. The expansion of Mission Cliffs will allow more schools to enjoy the unique opportunity my students take pleasure in.

Thanks!

Sincerely,



Kent Schmitz
5th grade
Guadalupe Elementary

Potrero Hill Neighborhood House

953 DeHaro Street • San Francisco, California 94107 • (415) 826-8080 • FAX (415) 826-5252



June 11, 2010

Dear Planning Commissioner,

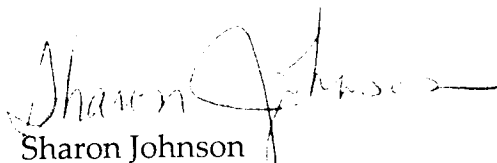
We at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House truly support Mission Cliffs' expansion efforts. They continue to be a positive presence in our community. Each year they help groups such as ours allow children to experience rock climbing for the first time.

Climbing is a unique activity that our kids have truly benefited from. They have engaged in activities to help overcome fears, work together with their peers, while being supportive of one another and walking away feeling great about themselves. Mission Cliffs has assisted us with discounts, which we appreciate, as it enhances our ability to give the kids a chance to shine.

The expansion efforts will allow others the opportunity to enjoy and learn just as our kids have. We host 60 youth over the summer months and currently must break up our youth into groups in order to fully enjoy this facility. However, this expansion may allow us to bring all of our students to have a day of fun at mission cliffs.

We love Mission Cliffs, and have been coming for numerous years now. We trust that you will grant the request and allow Mission Cliffs to expand their facility as they continue to enhance our community.

Sincerely,


Sharon Johnson
Youth Program Manager



Member agency of the United Way of the Bay Area • Related to the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A



JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

6996 MISSION STREET
DALY CITY, CALIFORNIA 94014
(650) 550-7700
FAX: (650) 550-7790

Thursday, June 3, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a teacher at Jefferson High School in Daly City and I am writing on behalf of Mission Cliffs/Touchstone Climbing, Inc. I have recently learned of Mission Cliffs plans to expand their facility and services. I have had quite a long history with both Mission Cliffs and Touchstone Climbing, and I believe that they are more than just a gym but also an asset to the broader community. Mission Cliffs has sought to make the unique experience of indoor climbing available and accessible to a wide range of youth and adult groups within their community.

Jefferson High School serves a culturally and socio-economically diverse student body. Approximately 75% of our students are on the free or reduced meal plan. A trip to Mission Cliffs from Daly City at full cost (including transportation and lunch) would normally be too expensive for most of my students. However, because of the respect and consideration of both management and staff to the diverse needs of their community, I was able to bring a group of students to the gym at a VERY low cost to them. I also know that our group was not the "exception," but rather the "rule." The management at Mission Cliffs has made a practice of considering the financial needs of the special groups that wish to enjoy their facility.

My students had an unparalleled experience at Mission Cliffs. It started with a combination of trepidation and excitement at the challenge of trying something new and different, as well as overcoming some very healthy fears of heights! A few of the students' quotes are listed below:

"I didn't even think that I was going to like this at all, but now I can't wait to come back and to finish the ones that were too hard for me this time."

"It was fun and tough, and I learned something new, too!"

"I thought that I would never learn how to belay, but then I was belaying for all of my friends and it was really great to have them trust me and I trusted them, too."


"I was a little nervous about it, but then I learned about how safe it is and I feel good about tying my own climbing knot and knowing that I can belay."

"I never thought wall climbing would be so fun! I hope I can come back and show more of my friends this place. It was awesome!!"

It was such a gratifying experience to see my students work together, challenge themselves, and learn something new outside of the classroom environment. They really pushed themselves beyond their comfort level, trusted each other, and took control of their own experience. I was impressed with their team-work and how quickly they learned the new knot-tying and belay safety skills. My students had an opportunity to feel adventurous and discover something new about themselves because of the experience at Mission Cliffs.

I hope that Mission Cliffs will find the support and approval that they need to expand their services and continue to enrich and strengthen the community they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Amy C. Thwaite
Science Teacher/Academic Advisor
Jefferson High School
650-550-7700

amy.thwaite@jefferson.k12.ca.us

Jefferson High School Climbing Group April 2010



Jefferson High School Climbing Group April 2010





1563 Page St., San Francisco, CA 94117 | ph 415 626 2919 | fax 415 626 1125 | www.urbanschool.org | info@urbanschool.org

Dear Planning Commissioner

June 10, 2010

I am writing on behalf of Mission Cliffs in support of their plans to expand the physical space of the climbing gym.

For the past eleven years I have brought Urban School students to Mission Cliffs as a part of our Physical Activities program. Being a school in an urban setting, we are limited in our ability to provide physical space for students to exercise, play, and generally be physically active. Because of this, we have had to be creative in how we provide such opportunities to our students.

Mission Cliffs has been an excellent partner with the Urban School for more than a decade. Throughout the school year, we bring students to the gym twice per week in order to climb and exercise. Though I have climbed for more than twenty years, some of my students have taken to the sport with such enthusiasm that they have begun to match and even surpass my own abilities. Mission Cliffs has been more than just a space for students to climb and work out, it has been a place for them to challenge themselves, support one another, and build a sense of community amongst themselves as well as within the larger climbing community.

Mission Cliffs provides an essential space and service in connecting youth to positive ways to be engaged and active. The possibility that they may expand their physical space will open up opportunities to other youth in need of places to safely, positively, and creatively challenge themselves physically while building self confidence and a sense of community.

Thank you for your time and energy in considering the proposed expansion of the Mission Cliffs climbing gym, which I am hopeful you will approve.

Sincerely,

Derek Harwell
Director of Outdoor Trips

May 30, 2010

Ruben Negrete
520 Geary St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Planning Commissioner:

Five years ago, while trudging along a rather tedious day in high school, I happened across a poster advertising a club that would introduce me to my own rite of passage into being an adult. The club in question was the climbing club of John O'Connell high school, and the gym that was to be used was Mission Cliffs, the best suited because of its extremely close proximity. At the time, my classes at John O'Connell were uninspiring and my main reason for choosing to go to that school, the John O'Connell Robotics team, was losing steam and members, the latter of which was due to graduation. Pretty soon, I had no other reason to attend school other than to receive a diploma, but even that seemed distant and far off to me.

However, there was one productive use of my time that wasn't taken away, the school's climbing club. Having been the most diligent member of the club, I quickly forged a strong relationship with the club's instructor, Fred Tsui. For a while, I enjoyed weekly excursions into a place kids my age rarely ventured. My self-esteem rose just as the difficulty of climbing I took on did. Even though life at school looked bleak, I could still look forward to going to Mission Cliffs.

My third year at O'Connell seemed to be the proverbial bottom of my rather enjoyable well. Fred, the only person capable of being the instructor of a climbing club—no other teacher at the school had any experience rock climbing—was transferred to another school downtown. Without a replacement, the club was disbanded without question. The price of admission and Fred's new schedule left my trips to Mission Cliffs a monthly occurrence, at most. I had feared that I had just lost my one true delight.

Towards the end of my third year, perhaps sensing my palpable dismay, Donna, manager of Mission Cliffs, offered me a position as part of the belay staff. Cautious optimism, not full out rapturous celebration, was the first emotion to pass through my head. The job would be the first I've ever had and working with kids isn't the best of places for mistakes to occur. I accepted, despite what the job entail, only when I looked back and remembered what Fred taught me and, more importantly, how fluid the motions are when done properly.

That same fluidity was put to the test the first few months of employment. Inconsistent schedules and an unforgiving audience were commonplace during that time, and, truth be told, I was at the brink of termination because of my sustained novice like performance. It was when I learned of this, by a phone call from Donna, that something in my mind clicked into place, and I understood that working here was going to be a lot different than any sort of work at John O'Connell, or in any school for that matter.

Around a year ago, shortly after I graduated from O'Connell, I remember a party where one of the youngsters kept referring to me as "mister" when speaking to me and "the adult" at all other times. At the time, I felt as though the youngster had the wrong idea of me; I certainly didn't feel like an actual adult, nor did I think I was deserving of the title. But after writing this letter, which was extremely self-reflective for me, I feel like I have fulfilled my rite of passage; I have experienced true dismay and came out of it all the wiser. At every step of the stage, rock climbing was there as my motivation; Mission Cliffs as my inspiration. I hope for many others to share in the same growth of character as I have experienced.

Sincerely,

Ruben Negrete

EZRA HOLLAND
CONSULTING

June 1, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Ezra Holland, and I'm a faculty member at San Francisco State University in the Recreation Parks and Tourism Department, and I own a consulting company that develops and consults community non-profit organizations in and around the Bay Area. One of my main projects has been the development of a non-profit on Potrero Hill named Linking Youth Nurturing Community, LYNC. LYNC was developed five years ago to provide mentoring programs to schools in San Francisco.

Over those five years Touchstone/Mission Cliffs has played an integral role in helping us provide our services to over a 1000 children. Touchstone/Mission Cliffs has always helped us with reduced pricing, excellent customer service, flexible scheduling, and a large amount of patience.

I would like to endorse and recommend any movement forward for their vision. Touchstone/Mission Cliffs is true community partner and it is always a pleasure to work with them.

Thank you,

Ezra Holland,
Owner
Ezra Holland Consulting
Faculty
San Francisco State University
Recreation Parks and Tourism

June 14, 2010

Angelica Ochoa
716 South Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94110

San Francisco Planning Commission
c/o Edgar Oropeza
1650 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Planning Commissioners:

My name is Angelica Ochoa and I am a resident in the Mission District. I support the expansion plans of Mission Cliffs because I believe the expansion of the gym will further benefit its users and the community. I have benefited from this facility in many phases of my life.

I have been apart of *GirlVentures*, a nonprofit organization in the Mission District, as a student and staff member. It was through *GirlVentures*' outdoor program in the Sierra Nevada Mountains that I learned how to rock-climb when I was 13 years old. I never imaged how one trip in the wilderness with *GirlVentures* would change my focus on life. I became an outdoor enthusiast. Enchanted by the thrill and adrenaline I experience while rock-climbing outdoors, I became an active member of *GirlVentures* in my late teens, which led to my employment in *GirlVentures* as an Assistant Instructor for *GirlVentures*' outdoor programs, including rock-climbing. In 2007 – 2008, I helped lead two *Girls Climb On* programs at Mission Cliffs. *Girls Climb On* was designed to help young adolescent girls meet with female volunteer mentors who served as role models and spend time rock-climbing together. Before I took on the leadership role as an Assistant Instructor for *GirlVentures*, I was recommended to participate on an *Outward Bound Wilderness* course to gain more experience.

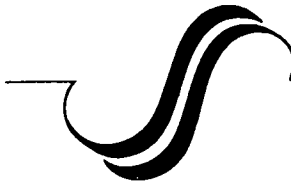
In 2004, I had the opportunity to be apart of *Outward Bound* and embark on a 22-day sea kayaking and mountaineering trip in the North Cascades. To prepare for this trip, I spend many weeks climbing at Mission Cliffs getting physically prepared. Then, a few years later, in 2006, I had the opportunity of a life time to embark on an 81-day semester course with *Outward Bound Wilderness* that would take me to the Colorado Rocky Mountains for mountaineering, and then to the high glaciers of Ecuador for ice-climbing. Once again, I found myself returning to Mission Cliffs to prepare for the journey ahead.

Due to my involvement with *GirlVentures* and *Outward Bound*, I became a member of Mission Cliffs—and currently—I am employed at Mission Cliffs. I decided to be a staff member of Mission Cliffs because I wanted to be able to climb more often and also because I want to inspire youth to become future climbers just as I was inspired. I have definitely benefited from Mission Cliffs' facility to prepare for outdoor adventure and on a daily basis to climb with close friends. I truly believe the expansion of Mission Cliffs will benefit its users and the community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and my connection to Mission Cliffs.

Sincerely,

Angelica Ochoa



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June 15, 2010

Planning Department
1650 Mission St., Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

To Planning Commissioner:

We support the planned of Mission Cliffs expansion in the neighborhood. They have been our customer for 15 years and are an asset to the neighborhood.

We wish them well with their expansion.

Sincerely yours,

Magnhild "Midge" Santora
Santora Sales

Scott Harris
588 Alabama St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
June 15, 2010

Edgar Oropeza
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Edgar Oropeza:

My wife and I are long-time residents of San Francisco and the Mission district near Mission Cliffs, and I am writing to express my full support for the expansion plans for the gym.

I own a townhouse literally one block from Mission Cliffs (18th & Alabama St), and have had no issue with their business in the two years living in this location. Mission Cliffs is a model business from a community perspective, consistently drawing in polite members, visitors, and families who support local businesses. As a homeowner living about as near to the gym as possible, I fully support any expansion plans and new facades that Mission Cliffs has to offer, and I have full confidence that any changes they make will be in the best interest of my community.

I also support the expansion from the perspective of the rights of a business, and would be appalled if any legislation prevented the expansion. This is the first letter of this kind I have ever written, but would write many others in appeal if the expansion were limited by the Planning Commission, hearing, or other law.

I appreciate your taking time to review this letter, making it a part of the official record, and bringing it to the attention of the planning commission.

Sincerely,

Scott Harris

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