



*Pétanque*

at  
C.V. Starr  
Community Center

Proposal for a  
PÉTANQUE TERRAIN  
at C.V. Starr Community Center

presented by  
The Noyo Yoyos Pétanque Players

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## ADDENDUM

*PETANQUE IN PUBLIC PARKS & SPACES*  
by Philippe Boets

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### OVERVIEW

The C.V. Starr Community Center has a large, unused area north of the existing facility. The installation of a pétanque terrain on this site is an excellent, low-cost opportunity for MCRPD to promote physical and mental well-being through active play and community enrichment. The Starr Center would benefit from the current facility's exposure to new people by providing an additional recreation area for locals and by the creation of a venue for attracting visiting pétanque players. When not in use for pétanque this low-impact facility will be well-suited to a variety of alternative activities including hosting outdoor events which would have the potential to generate revenue.

### THE GAME

Pétanque (pay-tonk) is a form of lawn bowling played on a hard dirt or gravel surface. The goal of the game is to throw metal balls called *boules* as close as possible to a small, wooden ball called the *cochonnet* (French for "piglet") or jack, while standing with feet together in a small circle. It is similar to the game of *bocce*. In France where the game originated there are about 17 million players. Pétanque clubs have formed in cities throughout the United States including Fort Bragg, Little River, Willits, Marin, Sonoma, and a number of locations in the San Francisco Bay area.

### THE COST

The estimated cost of a fully-realized pétanque terrain as here proposed, i.e. one large enough to host official tournaments, is \$3,500–\$5,000. This is based on retail material costs and donated labor. Amenities such as benches and a table or two are not included in the cost estimate, but are highly desirable. If a tournament-capable court is not in the MCRPD budget a variety of modifications may be made to the size and materials which could reduce costs to \$2,000–\$3,000.

### THE PROPOSAL

MCRPD in partnership with the local pétanque players will provide a low-cost, low-impact pétanque terrain which will benefit the community, the economy, as well as, local and regional pétanque aficionados.

## WHAT IS PETANQUE?



Pétanque (pay-tonk) is a French version of lawn bowling, a cousin to *bocce* and British lawn bowling, and similar in play to horseshoes. It is a simple, low-cost game most often played on a hard dirt or gravel surface and it requires minimal equipment. The game requires a relatively flat, firm area on which to play, hollow metal balls known as *boules* (pronounced boolz), and a small wooden target ball known as the *cochonnet* (piglet in French) or jack.

The game is played in teams of one, two or three players. In singles and doubles, each player throws three balls; in triples each throws only two. A coin toss decides who plays first. A small circle, about two feet in diameter, is drawn in the dirt. The first team to play throws the jack between 18 and 30 feet from the circle, then throws the first *boule*.

The object of the game is to throw your *boule* as close as possible to the jack. After each team has thrown all their *boules*, the team with the *boule* closest to the jack receives one point for each of its *boules* closer to the jack than the opponent's closest *boule*. The next round begins with a new circle drawn around the last jack position and the jack itself is again thrown 18 to 30 feet away. The first team to score 13 points wins the game.

Unlike horseshoes where the target stake is fixed in place, the thrown *boule* can move the jack and change the scoring. A thrown *boule* may also strike an opponent's *boule*, or your own team's *boule*, and can change the scoring dramatically. These two factors allow for the kind of strategic play that makes the game both dynamic and exciting.



## WHO PLAYS PETANQUE?



One of the best qualities of the game is that it can be played by such a wide range of people. Players range in age from 4 to 94. If you can pick up a *boule*, you can play pétanque. Women and men, young and old, physically challenged—all can enjoy the game together and perform well. Beginners can enjoy the game right from the start, and those who are so inclined can spend a lifetime perfecting their skills.

By rule, the throw is made with both feet stationary, inside the small circle. This basic element of the game makes play possible for people who would find it challenging or impossible to participate in an activity requiring running, jumping, etc.; in fact, wheelchair play is written into the rules of the game.

## WHO PLAYS PETANQUE LOCALLY?



In Fort Bragg the Noyo Yoyos Pétanque Club plays Sunday and Thursday on private property in Noyo Harbor. Sunday's turnout is typically 20–30 players, with 8–12 players showing up on Thursdays.

A group averaging 16–20 players plays every Tuesday morning at the Ledford House in Albion. They hold an annual Bastille Day tournament every July.

The Willits Boules Club, with over 40 members, plays every Monday and Friday, and often on Sunday and Wednesday. The WBC will be hosting the FPUSA *Northwest Regional 60 and Over Tournament* on June 20, 2010.

Sea Ranch has a group of 10–12 players that meets every Saturday morning.

The San Francisco Bay Area is the mecca of pétanque in the U.S.; one of the oldest US clubs, La Boule d'Or, plays in Golden Gate Park. There are several hundred pétanque club members in the Bay Area.

WHAT DOES PETANQUE OFFER  
C.V. STARR COMMUNITY CENTER?



The most obvious answer is in the name: *community*. There are very few outdoor activities that provide for friendly competition between young and old, women and men, physically-challenged and able-bodied. Like the dog park, it provides the opportunity for a new kind of sociability that brings together people from all walks of life. It is customary to form teams by random selection of *boules* from a bag, with new selections occurring after each game. A bank president may be teamed with a retired grandmother, playing against a grade school teacher and a carpenter. These individuals may have never met, and now will spend an hour or so getting to know one another. Another significant benefit to the Starr Center is visibility. Players using the pétanque terrain will of course want to get a look at the impressive aquatic and fitness center, and may well decide to become members.

WHAT DOES PETANQUE OFFER THE  
GREATER FORT BRAGG COMMUNITY?



A tournament-worthy pétanque terrain could prove a tourist draw for the entire North Coast area. Pétanque is experiencing rapid growth among the baby boomers, one of the key, coveted demographics for the tourism dollar. The entire northwest corridor from Central California to British Columbia is one of the most dynamic sectors for expansion in the sport. In no area is this more apparent than in northern California which boasts not only the oldest club in the United States, but also some of the most active participants when judged by numbers of club events, club tournaments and FPUSA tournaments. There is a clear overlap with the primary catchment area for Mendocino, Fort Bragg, and North Coast tourism.

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS INVOLVED?



A major advantage of a pétanque terrain is the simplicity and low cost of installation. The terrain as proposed would cost between \$3,500 and \$5,000. This cost estimate is based on the following assumptions:

1. Grading work to be done at no cost based on a trade for services arrangement already in place with the MCPRD and a local landscape contractor
2. Mostly volunteer labor to spread the material and install wood perimeter
3. Approximately \$4,400 in material costs, including rock, sand, wood, and hardware
4. Allowance of up to \$600 for paid labor to supplement the volunteer labor

The above costs can be reduced by decreasing the size, materials cost, or a combination of the two.

See Project Outline on page II.

## WHAT MAINTENANCE IS NEEDED?



Maintenance of a pétanque terrain is simple and inexpensive. The surface is groomed regularly with a heavy-duty landscape rake to keep it smooth and even for play. Weeding and debris removal is done periodically. Generally a pétanque club designates a member who handles most of the maintenance along with two or three helpers.



## OUR COMMITMENT

We very much appreciate your consideration of this proposal, and we are committed to make this a win-win-win result. The community, the Starr Center, and the pétanque players all win if we make this work. We are committed to:

- ⋮ Donate labor to help install the terrain
- ⋮ Develop an outreach program to inform the public of this new opportunity
- ⋮ Regularly schedule introductory programs designed to welcome beginners to the game and teach them how to play. This will be provided at no cost and *boules* will be provided
- ⋮ Donate several sets of *boules* to the Center which can be checked out for play by those who don't yet have their own

As we recognize the value of the planned south-side picnic area and its amenities for the community as well as for future pétanque events, we would like to volunteer our labor for that project as well.

## THE PROPOSAL

We believe that the MCRPD in partnership with the local pétanque players should provide a low-cost, low-impact pétanque terrain which will benefit the community, the economy, as well as, local and regional pétanque aficionados. The investment should be amply rewarded by providing a useful, versatile, recreation space that will reward both the community in general and the C.V. Starr Community Center in particular.

To achieve this, we propose the installation of a terrain that would accommodate several leisure games simultaneously. The proposed size, roughly 12,000 sq. ft., would also facilitate 18 regulation tournament courts (4m × 15m).

The installation is relatively simple, swift, and inexpensive. Maintenance is also simple and inexpensive. When not in use for pétanque play, the area would have the ability to serve a variety of alternate uses for both recreational activities and other outdoor events. Once approved and funded, the installation can be accomplished and the courts ready for play in as little as two weeks time.

When finished, the Noyo pétanque group would begin use immediately and would anticipate setting up an outreach program as described in the commitment section within a few weeks. Players from Willits, Ledford House, and Sea Ranch have all expressed interest in coming to play on a well-designed terrain. Over time we expect our group to grow and new local clubs to form, leading to local inter-league play. One or more of these clubs will likely affiliate with the Federation of Pétanque U.S.A. (FPUSA), which we hope will be the beginning of sanctioned tournament events being hosted in Fort Bragg. We also fully expect that players from the many Bay Area clubs will choose to travel to the Mendocino Coast for a vacation, which will of course include a day of pétanque at the Starr Center.

## PROJECT OUTLINE

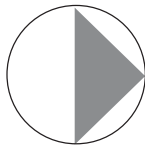
The process for installing a pétanque terrain is fairly simple. It doesn't have to be perfect, in fact imperfections are desired and are very much a part of the "infinite variety" of the game. Our proposed terrain installation would go as follows:

1. Mark the perimeter of the area
2. Scrape to remove all organic material, debris and some soil, to form a level base
3. Spread approximately 2" of fine gravel (i.e. ½" "wash rock") over the area
4. Apply clean sand to the gravel layer to fill in and just cover
5. Top dress the terrain with the playing surface material—in our case this will be crushed urchin shell (donated)
6. Due to the nature of urchin shell, a solution of bleach and water will be applied to eliminate odor
7. Fine tune the surface by leveling and compacting the upper layers
8. Install the wood perimeter using rebar to hold it in place

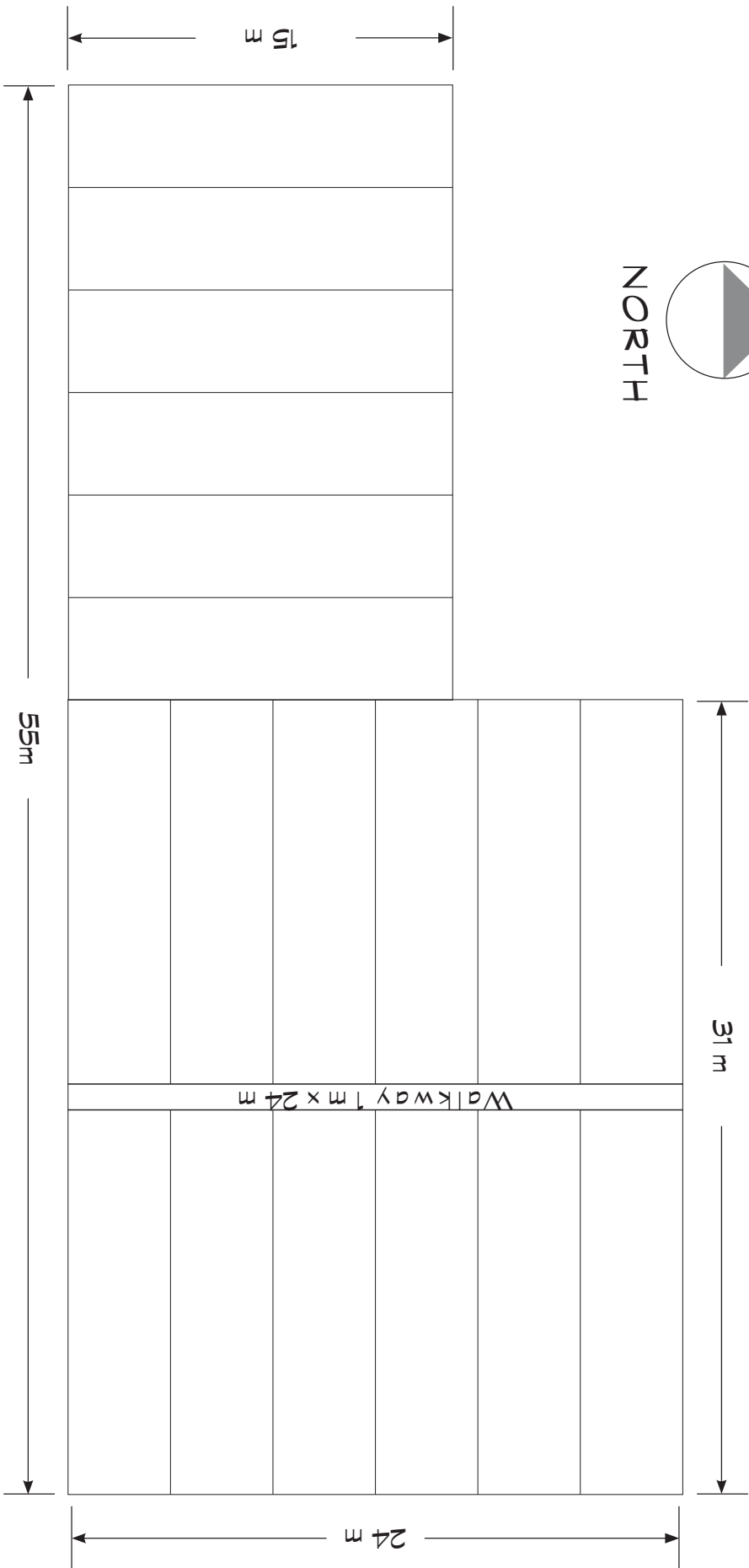
### MATERIALS FOR THE PROPOSED TERRAIN

½" "wash rock"	80 cubic yards	\$ 2,400
clean sand	32 cubic yards	\$ 1,140
2'×4'×20' pressure treated doug fir	40 units	\$ 364
20' rebar	13 units	\$ 69
20' con heart redwood	6 units	\$ 73
	SUBTOTAL	\$4,046
	SALES TAX	\$354
	TOTAL	\$4,400

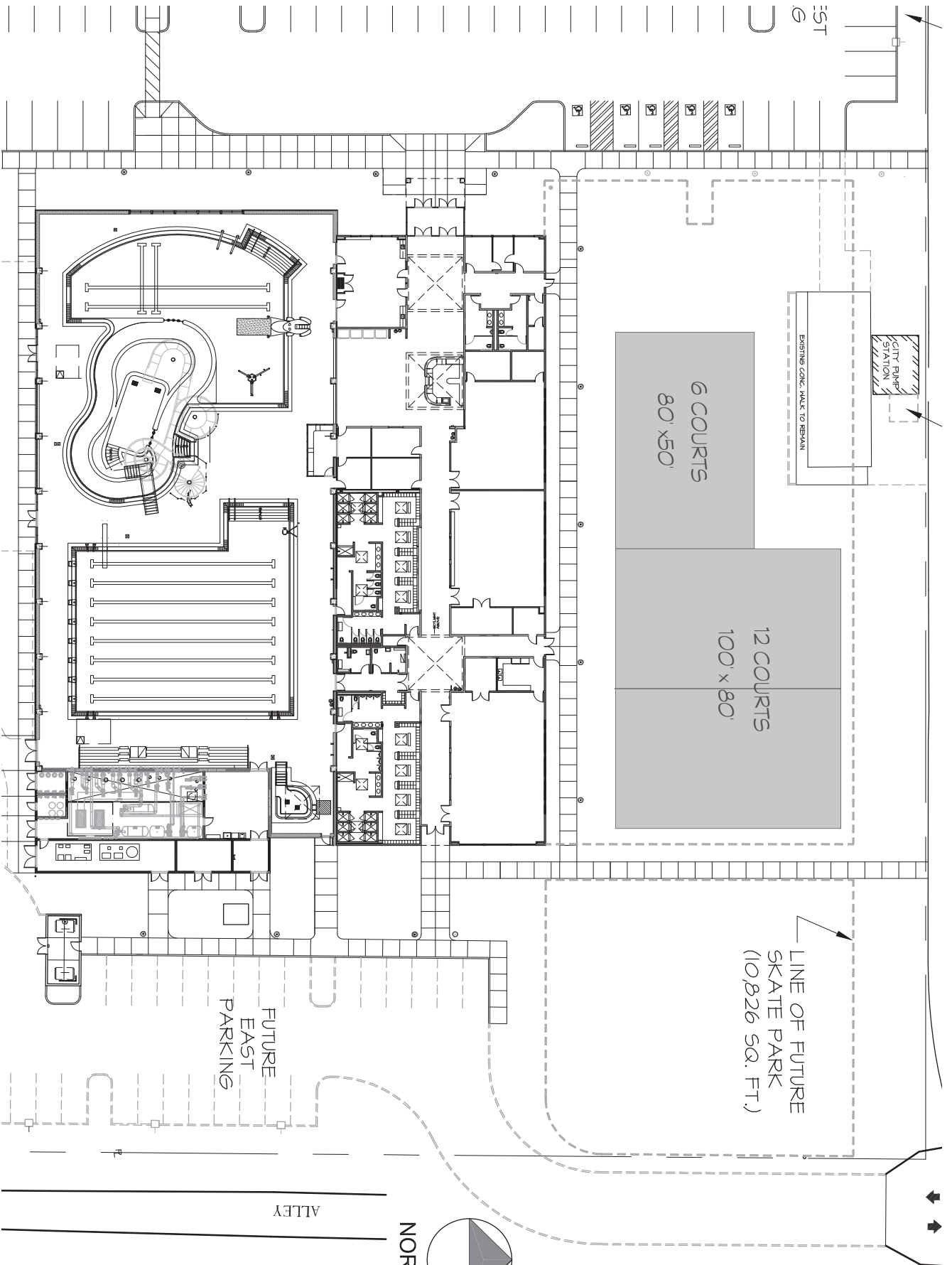
# 18 TOURNAMENT COURT ARRANGEMENT



NORTH







ST

CITY PARK STATION

EXISTING CONC. WALK TO REMAIN

6 COURTS  
80' x 50'

12 COURTS  
100' x 80'

LINE OF FUTURE  
SKATE PARK  
(10,826 SQ. FT.)

FUTURE  
EAST  
PARKING

ALLEY

NORTH

