

Day on the Dump

Music amphitheater nears ground breaking



Shoreline Park is the future site of Bill Graham Production's new amphitheater.

The place looks like a dump. Literally.

Every few minutes a mammoth garbage truck rumbles down a nearby access road and drops a load of trash on a vista overlooking the site.

Quickly, to discourage scavengers of all species, the refuse is plowed under, and the mound becomes a little fuller.

Beauty, however, is in the eye of the beholder. When Mountain View's city manager Bruce Liedstrand looks at the dump, he sees "a steady flow of income to the city for a long time to come."

The site, in the Shoreline Park area of Mountain View, will soon undergo a transformation, leaving a state-of-the-art amphitheater in place of the current eyesore. The amphitheater, which recently gained final approval from the City Council, is a joint effort of the City of Mountain View and concert promoter Bill Graham Presents.

According to Ken Alsman, Mountain View's principal planner, the amphitheater will be a quality addition to the Bay Area's supply of outdoor concert venues. "There will be approximately 15,000 seats," Alsman says, "8000 of which will be in fixed positions, with seat-backs. The other 7000 will be on the turf."

Alsman expects crews working for Bill Graham Presents to soon begin sculpting the site. "They'll probably bring the earth-movers in to start shaping the contours of the bowl within the next few weeks," Alsman says.

"We're currently looking forward to a Spring '86 opening," says Timi Shays, a staff member at BGP. Shays confirms that earth-moving equipment will soon be brought in for

the groundbreaking, though the date has not been announced.

BGP vice president Danny Scher heads the project, Shays says, "and he is still traveling, to and gathering information from other amphitheater sites. We're going to do this thing right."

Project costs are estimated at between \$20 and \$22 million. Under terms of the agreement with the city, BGP will finance the approximately \$16 million construction costs for the amphitheater itself, while Mountain View will contribute between \$5 and \$6 million for land acquisition and general improvements to the Shoreline Park area.

The city retains ownership of the land and will execute a long-term lease with BGP, giving the city a share of gate revenues.

The city-funded improvements include a new access road, landscaping and other enhancements designed to beautify the potentially scenic east Mountain View area.

In addition, both BGP and Mountain View personnel express excitement about plans for noncommercial community uses of the site. "We haven't worked out all the details yet," says City Manager Liedstrand regarding the arrangements. "We're still devising the best plan for community use of the site, though the city and BGP are in general agreement about how to go about it," he adds.

"There have been some very good discussions," Liedstrand says. "They [BGP] are very professional and a pleasure to deal with."

The facility will have canvas tent-like structures which will provide shade and protect the stage and many of the seats from inclement weather.

—Hal Plotkin