

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisorial District Four
Supervisor Ken Yeager



BOSD4-032911-08

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DATE: March 29, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM:

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Ken Yeager
Supervisor, District 4

SUBJECT: Parkland Acquisition Plan 2011 Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to the County of Santa Clara's Parkland Acquisition Plan: 2011 Update, including the following:

- a. Accept status report relating to Parkland Acquisition Plan.
- b. Accept policy recommendations based on input from Supervisors at the September 28, 2010 Board of Supervisors' Study Session, affirming the following:
 - i. The County's role in providing park services to park-deficient urban and suburban areas in the County;

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ii. The County's role in land acquisition, at both the regional level and in partnership with other park and recreation service providers in the County's urban core.

c. Refer to the Administration a request to report back to the Board on the development of a formalized acquisition program to address urban and suburban park needs, consistent with the County's historical role, while still maintaining the County's commitment to the acquisition of regional parklands.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

This proposal would direct Administration to engage in a public process to develop an acquisition program to address urban and suburban park needs, formalizing the work in which the County Parks and Recreation Department has historically engaged in the urban core, without compromising the County's ability to meet regional demand for recreation and resource protection in the hillsides and natural areas surrounding the valley.

Included in the report-back to the Board would be Administration's recommendations for outreach and engagement of stakeholders and the public. The culmination of this public process would include a recommendation for a percentage of the annual allocation of Park Charter acquisition funds to be dedicated to acquisition of property for urban greenspace and trails. Consistent with the provisions of the Park Charter Fund, development, operation, and maintenance of any future greenspace or trails would be the responsibility of the city or partner agency. Any property acquired would be dedicated for a park purpose, and the County would receive a conservation easement in exchange for its funding assistance.

The opportunities presented by a formalized acquisition program to address urban and suburban park needs include:

- Funding assistance to cities or schools, as established in Memoranda of Understanding, to build out trail networks, add recreational facilities to promote healthful lifestyles in children, and add more greenspace, including the provision of neighborhood-serving facilities;
- Additional neighborhood access points to trail systems for improved physical activity;
- Addressing the larger community health crisis of obesity by providing safe areas for

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exercise and physical activity.

BACKGROUND

The County Parks and Recreation Department has played a major role in the provision of a network of parks in the rural, suburban and urban areas, with particular emphasis on protecting the larger, natural landscapes. This “Emerald Web” concept is set forth in the Department’s Strategic Plan and acknowledges the importance of linking the urban and rural areas into an interconnected network of parks and trails.

The Strategic Plan also acknowledges the importance of providing user experiences closer to home, in the urban and suburban areas. Moreover, the Countywide Trails Master Plan gives highest priority to completing trails within the urban areas, where the majority of people live.

As presented at the September 28th Study Session with the Board, the Department has had a history of working with local cities on various partnerships that promote parks and recreation services throughout the County. These partnerships have been complementary to the multi-faceted role of the County to provide regional park experiences in both urban and rural areas.

Over the last 30+ years, the Department has partnered with cities and agencies in acquiring parkland that helped to grow local park systems, while leveraging each other’s funds to achieve park facilities that neither could afford on their own.

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