

## Community Meeting Notes

### Santa Teresa County Park Historic Area Site Plan

### Community Meeting #1 • May 8th, 2008

The following comments were made by participants at the community meeting. (Comments in parentheses are responses by County staff/consultants to some of the questions.)

1. Is the wooden cross at the Bernal House considered to be of historic significance? Will it be preserved?
2. There used to be a large cross on the hill behind the Bernal House. The location of this is known by residents.
3. What criteria were used to determine historic preservation? (It was noted by County staff that structures were evaluated for Federal, State and local significance. The structures on site are primarily of local significance. Many structures are recommended for preservation even though they were built after the periods of significance that will be interpreted at the site. All structures of historic significance will be preserved in the site plan.)
4. Access to/across the canal should be considered in the site plan as a possible long-term future condition. We should not assume that the canal will always be there in the same condition and under the same ownership. While there may not be any short-term resolution, the site plan should not preclude long-term changes in canal status.
5. Will there be a connection to the Alberston Parkway as a part of the plan?
6. Difference between "Historic Area" and Site Boundaries: Why aren't the American Ranch and Spring areas included in the Site Plan? (It was noted by County staff that improvements to these areas have already been completed, and therefore aren't part of the current planning effort.)
7. Landscaping seems to be only minimally included in the Design Program. (Landscape concepts will be included in the next level of site plan design.)
8. No dogs in historic area? Neighbors would like to be able to walk their dogs somewhere. Is it possible to provide access to other park trails where dogs are permitted?
9. In addition to being a County regional park and historic area, this park also serves a neighborhood. People need places to walk their dogs; kids need places to ride tricycles, etc. We should be finding ways to bring people and families into parks. If we need to ban something, we should be banning wild pigs!!
10. Will there be a space for docents/volunteers to store coats, jackets, etc? Will there be a break room for docents?
11. Consider a historic heritage garden as part of the plan. Consider a volunteer group to maintain a heritage garden, or historically relevant plantings.
12. Consider coordination with the Martial Cottle site.
13. A ranch usually has animals. Will there be more animals than there currently? (It was noted by County staff that maintaining animals is difficult and needs to be considered.) A suggestion was made to work with the local 4H Club on this.

14. Will there be equestrian staging? (No.) Will bikes be allowed on trails? (Current County policy is that bikes are not allowed in historic areas.)
15. Consider partnering with the Water District on interpretation of water themes.
16. Does the design program take into account the number of visitors at a time? (Currently about 2,500-3,000 school children visit the already-developed Ranch area per year. It is hoped that with an expanded park more than one visiting group could be accommodated at a given time. The design program is currently based on a staging area for approximately 40 cars and two buses.)
17. More and more, neighbors have observed that school groups come in cars instead of buses.
18. Neighbors observed that the parking lot at the Bernal Ranch is not always open when the park is open. (Neighbors can call the Hellyer Park office at 225-0225 if the gate is locked when the park is open.)
19. Will parking be free? It should be; otherwise people will park in the neighborhood.
20. Overflow parking, if planned for the school parking lot, needs to be coordinated with the school. There are a lot of activities at the school on weekends with heavy use of the parking lot. Of greater concern is that weekend school users may use the park's parking lot for overflow parking, leaving no place for park users to park, other than the neighborhood.
21. Don't use asphalt paving for whole access trails! Consider other surfaces that would meet whole access standards while looking more "historic", such as stabilized decomposed granite or stabilized dirt.
22. Railings at the Spring have visual disruption for people in wheelchairs.
23. Does the Parks Department have a copy of the Master's Thesis that was done on the area? This may be a good source. (County does have a copy of this.)
24. Consider collaborating with San Jose State, which may have historic artifacts appropriate to the site that could be returned for display.
25. If existing residences are used for residences, there should be a security component. In other words, having residents living there should provide additional site security at night.
26. Since some of the structures are from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it may be appropriate to have transitional stories as a part of the interpretation that link the Californio Rancho period to the more recent structures.
27. Andrew Galvan, curator of Mission Dolores in Fremont, is an excellent resource for the Native American period.
28. Be careful using the term "Ohlone". "Ohlone" represents a specific village. "Costanoan" may be more appropriate. Andrew Galvan could assist with this.
29. Bubble Diagrams: Many liked the idea of water as a unifying continuous theme (Concept 2) instead of as a "feature" that occurs in different event areas (Concept 1). The importance of water during the Native American period for example is that it was used to leach tannins from the oak acorns.
30. Look at incorporating "green" materials and design techniques, such as use of permeable paving, innovative methods for stormwater control, etc. However, such a sustainable approach should be "low-tech" to tie into historic approach, for example, no "high-tech" solar panels.
31. Are there any plans for widening/improvements on Manila Drive? Don't widen Manila! Neighbors want it maintained as a "country" road. Preserve the large oak tree on Manila! (County staff noted that they will

coordinate this with City roads staff. The neighborhood will be updated if the City requests widening/improvements as a part of the site plan.)

32. Consider adding the canal as part of the water story – the role of the canal in more recent history.
33. Others felt the interpretation should be limited to the time periods already specified (Native American, Settlement, Californio Rancho). It gets too confusing to expand, and where do you draw the line? If more current themes are going to be discussed, then global warming should be an important theme and its influence on water supply in the future.
34. Concern about Concept 1: Trails seem too close in some areas to neighborhood property lines.
35. Consider visibility throughout the site for safety of park users and patrol from streets.
36. Some of the participants preferred the location of the Visitor Center in Concept 2.
37. Consider ways of discouraging use of parking area as an evening “hangout” with potential security problems for the neighborhood and for the park. Consider security lighting and visibility for this.
38. Consider acquisition of the canal by County Parks sometime in the future. Consider filling in the canal in certain focused areas. Some neighbors commented that they have seen Parks staff use the canal even though it is not authorized for use.
39. Consider whether school children will use trails through the park as a short-cut to school. They may also be desirable for cross-country training, etc.
40. Consider an “archive” room for copies of artifacts, storage of oral histories, research relevant to the site, etc.
41. Consider security-level lighting, but don't over-light to conflict with the neighborhood.
42. “California Hunting Tales” is a good book with historic tales of the time.
43. Will there be a Visitor Center shop to sell historic books, artifact copies, and other historically appropriate items?