



*A collaborative planning project between
California State Parks and
Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department*



**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #1
Meeting Summary**

Time and Location:

September 6, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Almaden Library & Community Center
6445 Camden Ave.
San Jose, CA

Attendance:

SCC Parks & Recreation Department (Project Team Members):

Lisa Killough, Director
Jane Mark, Senior Planner/Project Manager
Alice Daly, Park Planner
Matt Anderson, Chief Park Ranger/Park Operations Manager
Jim O'Connor, Park Maintenance Manager
Ed Souza, Customer & Business Services Manager
Tamara Clark-Shear, Public Information Officer
George Santiago, Park Maintenance Supervisor
Mark Lilga, Senior Park Maintenance Worker
Gina Ellis, Park Ranger
Greg West, Commissioner Chair, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission

Consultants:

Stephen Hammond, WRT
Jacob Tobias, WRT
Sibella Kraus, SAGE

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Maria De La Fuente, Director/Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Santa Clara
County/Master Gardener Program
Aziz Baameur, Specialty Crop Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Santa Clara County
Kevin O'Day, Santa Clara County Dept. of Agriculture & Environmental Management
Ben Gale, Director, Santa Clara County Dept of Environmental Health
Janet Leader, Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Nutrition & Wellness Unit
Judy Ingols, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), Vegetation Management Unit
Sue Tippets, SCVWD Community Projects Review Unit
Dave Giordano, Giordano Farms, Lessee within Donor's Life Estate Area
Pat Love, Director of Special Projects, Santa Clara County Office of the County Executive
Naresh Duggal, Integrated Pest Management Program Manager, Santa Clara County Office of the
County Executive
Neelima Palacherla, Executive Director, Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo)
Dana Peak, Historic Preservation Program Manager/Williamson Act Program Manager, Santa
Clara County Planning Office

Ira Bletz, Supervising Naturalist, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), Ardenwood Historic Farm

Yvonne Provaznik, Maintenance Supervisor, EBRPD, Ardenwood Historic Farm

Reggie Knox, California FarmLink

Timm Borden, Director, City of San Jose Public Works Department

Dave Mitchell, Parks Planning Manager, City of San Jose Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS)

Marybeth Carter, City of San Jose PRNS

Michael D. Kent, Master Gardeners Program Santa Clara County

Hans Toensfeldt, Santa Clara County 4H Council, Clover Foundation

OPENING REMARKS FROM COUNTY PARKS

Lisa Killough thanked the site host and all of the participants for joining the County Parks Department. Director Killough gave a brief background of the project, noting that this is the first major urban park since the 1960's, made possible through the generosity of Mr. Walter Cottle Lester, who donated an almost 300-acre parcel. This is a joint venture between the state and county. The Donor's vision, as part of the land transfer agreement, is the starting point for the planning process.

Jane Mark thanked the following project partners:

- California State Parks and Recreation Department
- Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, the County Parks Department's funding partner and part of the Master Plan's Project Team. (Remaining funding for the master plan development is from the County Parks Department's Park Charter Fund and Capital Improvement Program. Future grant funding opportunities would be needed to implement the master plan.)
- Mr. Lester's agent, Frank Giordano (who was unable to attend this meeting) and Dave Giordano.
- WRT, the prime consultant.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

History / Background of the Site

Jane Mark provided history and background information including the following points:

- The County Board of Supervisors approved the property transfer agreement for Martial Cottle Park on October 28, 2003.
- The park is approximately 290 acres. 151 acres are County-owned and 136.5 acres are state-owned. About 32 acres remain in the life-estate area which includes Mr. Lester's residence. The life estate area is considered private property; all involved need to respect Mr. Lester's privacy during this planning process.
- There is a Joint Powers and Operating Agreement for Martial Cottle Park between the County and State. Both agencies will consider this park as one unit rather than separate pieces in the planning and development of the park.
- The State and County are approaching this project with a hybrid planning framework; the final product would be a Master Plan with State Park General Plan elements to fulfill the State Parks and Recreation Commission's requirements.

- Jane Mark provided a brief overview of the Cottle family history.

Donor's Vision

Jane Mark provided an overview of the two Donor's Vision plans, explaining that the programming responded to the agricultural suitability of different soils on the site, with the most fertile soils preserved for agriculture and the less fertile soils used for recreation. The Donor's original 1996 vision included several program elements including a lake, miniature train network, trails, retaining the 1860's family residence for interpretive and programming uses, pasture, a visitor's center, grazing, and community gardens. The 2003 Donor's Vision that is included as part of the land transfer agreement includes many, but not all, of these elements.

The property transfer agreement includes deed restrictions, such as:

- Prohibition of high intensity, organized recreational uses;
- The property should be used as a public historical park, and allows passive recreational uses;
- Commercial uses are allowed as long as they support the historical and agricultural purposes of the park.

Planning Team Introductions

Steve Hammond introduced his consultant team members, Jake Tobias (WRT) and Sibella Kraus (SAGE). Then, the TAC members made brief introductions around the table.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Site Overview

Steve Hammond described the site and context with a Powerpoint slide presentation, describing site features including the surrounding context, existing structures, easements through the site, the site's wells, natural features, views and current uses within the property. Key points are as follow:

- There is a challenge and excitement about the opportunity to provide agriculture in an urban context and within easy reach of people. The interface between the park site and the urban development that abuts it would need to be addressed. Challenges include land use compatibility issues. Opportunities include excellent regional access and interface with residential uses surrounding the site.
- Branham Lane and Snell Avenue are scheduled for future widening. We hope to have discussions with the City of San Jose about what those street edges will become and how the street and sidewalk amenities may be compatible to the future park.

Organization Chart and Relationships

The Organizational Chart describing the roles and responsibilities for the State, County, Consultants and their partners was distributed to the TAC. Key points include:

- The Consultant team will be addressing the joint State and County planning requirements for the project. Commissions from both jurisdictions will be involved. The plan will have to be approved by both the County Board of Supervisors and State Parks and Recreation Commission.
- WRT will take the lead in park planning.
- SAGE will conduct outreach with the agricultural community and provide guidance on how to address the urban agricultural component of the plan.

- LSA is helping the team with the Resource Inventory and completing an EIR.
- EPS will complete the economic analysis and financial studies for the master plan.

Role of Technical Advisory Committee

The role of the TAC is to assist the County, State and Consultants in becoming aware of issues, providing advice, keeping their agencies apprised of the project and providing communication back and forth.

The number of TAC meetings was discussed. Initially, the TAC's involvement was intended to be limited to one meeting. Based on this meeting, it is clear that additional TAC meetings will be necessary to ensure that the County and State has sought and received the valuable input from the technical agencies and partners. The schedule of TAC meetings will be determined to incorporate meetings at certain milestones. It is hoped that the TAC members will attend other meetings. The TAC will be invited and notified of all of the public meetings.

The TAC was asked to suggest additional members if there is someone missing from this TAC.

Task Force Committee Update

Jane Mark provided an update on the make-up of the Task Force Committee. It is anticipated that this Committee list would be finalized by mid-to end of September.

Scope of Work and Schedule Overview

Steve Hammond gave an overview of the scope and project schedule. This master plan project involves six phases as follow:

- Phase 1, project initiation, to be completed in October, 2007. A Case Studies Report will be completed.
- Phase 2, resource inventory, opportunities and constraints, scheduled to be completed by November, 2007.
- Phase 3, developing the program and vision, scheduled to be completed at the end of March, 2008.
- Phase 4, design development, to be completed October, 2008. It is the intent of the County Parks Department to start immediate implementation upon approval of the master plan.
- Phase 5, master plan development, to be completed in January, 2009.
- Phase 6, EIR, to be completed March, 2009.
- Approval of the plan is anticipated after adoption of the EIR.

Public Outreach

Steve Hammond provided an overview of the public outreach efforts for the master plan project, including: four Task Force Committee meetings; three Community Workshops; formal presentations at public meetings including State Department of Parks and Recreation's Policy, Planning and Programming Committee (PPPC), EIR public scoping workshop, a series of County Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, County Board of Supervisors meeting for considerations to adopt the EIR and approve the Draft Master Plan.

TAC members are invited to all of these public outreach meetings.

Overview of Agricultural Component of the Park

Sibella Kraus described the agricultural component of the park, explaining that agriculture at the edge of cities makes a lot of sense, but it is the most threatened farmland. Sibella described Santa Clara County's commitment to promoting and sustaining agriculture, as evidenced by many local agriculture and food-related programs.

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Sibella described the educational opportunity of agricultural parks, and noted that TAC member Janet Leader has been a leader in promoting the agriculture/healthy foods educational effort.

Lisa Killough noted that Mr. Lester is very aware of the healthy and local food movement and would like to see a connection between Martial Cottle Park and the school districts.

Status of Case Studies Report/ Resource Inventory Work

Preparation of the Case Studies report is in process. The case studies that have been identified are complex entities. The report will address diversity in crops, marketing, educational programs and scales.

Status of the Resource Inventory

WRT is completing an administrative draft of the Resource Inventory by end of month. It is anticipated that a final inventory report will be completed and released by the end of October.

Upcoming Meetings

- The first Task Force Committee meeting will be scheduled for October.
- The first Community workshop will be scheduled for November.

OPEN DISCUSSION: TAC MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVES

After this project overview, the Consultants opened the meeting to the TAC members to share their perspective on the project. The Consultants wanted to hear from the TAC about issues from their point of view and discuss their concerns as agency representatives.

The following comments are noted from the individual TAC members:

Hans Toensfeldt, 4-H Council/Clover Foundation

Mr. Toensfeldt noted that this is one of the three remaining farm sites in the valley. 4-H is losing membership. 4-H is the only organization other than FFA (Future Farms of America) that provides opportunities to work with animals. 4-H sees an opportunity to get involved. A similar model could apply here as at other 4-H sites in area (such as Prusch Farm Park). Also, Clover Foundation provides a vision to develop a youth-oriented agriculture education center. Mr. Toensfeldt would like to see several acres for those purposes.

Maria De La Fuente, Director/Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Santa Clara County/Master Gardener Program

Ms. De La Fuente suggested inviting Yvonne Jacobson, author of *Passing Farms: Enduring Values, California's Santa Clara Valley*, to participate in the planning discussions. She noted that the TAC is missing some representation from the Farmers' Market Association; they may be able to assist with the promotion of the vertical integration of the produce and marketing at these markets. (Farmers' market association representatives were invited, but could not attend the meeting.)

Gina Ellis, Park Ranger, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department

Ms. Ellis asked whether the Department will close the park at night for security purposes. She stated that it is important to maintain the chain link fence to enclose the park.

Jane Mark explained that the park property currently has boundary control questions. The Department will maintain the existing fencing as a boundary control until the County and State complete the master plan and determine the details of implementing the programming elements and access restrictions.

Ben Gale, Director, Santa Clara County Dept of Environmental Health (DEH)

Mr. Gale described the following areas of expertise at the DEH. Most of the regulatory authority comes from the state or federal level.

1. Potable water: The County and Consultants can coordinate with the Santa Clara Valley Water District on decisions related to the development or abandonment of the on-site wells.
2. Sewage disposal: There needs to be a discussion related to public, domestic and on-site systems, and the abandonment of existing septic systems.
3. Urban runoff: Issues related to containment and proper treatment need to be discussed.
4. Retail food program: DEH can assist with what would be required, supply of restrooms, etc.
5. Hazardous waste and hazardous materials: There may be questions pertaining to agricultural practices. Cooperation with the Agriculture Department would be needed.
6. Solid and medical waste: There are grant opportunities for clean-up of any waste that may be part of the existing site conditions, whether litter or illegal disposal. There is a \$2K grant to clean up illegal dumping sites on farms.
7. Vector control, such as the West Nile virus and mosquito issues: The creation of ponds tends to bring nuisance issues which need special attention.
8. Noise: DEH enforces the noise ordinance. DEH validates what does or does not exist through investigations and enforcement.
9. Underground storage tanks and above-ground storage: DEH may offer advice on closure and disposal of any such items.

Janet Leader – Santa Clara County Public Health Department. Nutrition & Wellness Unit

1. Regarding the farmers market, Department of Environmental Health has to be involved to approve.
2. The trend to take EBT food stamp card should be discussed as a policy to allow low-income participation at the Farmers' Market.
3. Regarding the school districts, the Department should invite someone from the County school district. (The County invited Anita Parsons.) Steve Berta was recommended for his involvement in schools, health and nutrition.
4. One regional project is healthy choices for vending machines. The Public Health Department would like to consult with the Project Team on that.

Timm Borden, City of San Jose Public Works Department (DPW)

The City is starting to prepare preliminary designs on the street improvements. The DPW would be very interested in working with the County and Consultants on defining what the edge conditions and capacity conditions for Branham Lane and Snell Avenue. The DPW has been working with the VEP Neighborhood Association to ensure parallel desires are met.

Naresh Duggal, Integrated Pest Management Program Manager, Santa Clara County Office of the County Executive

Mr. Duggal stated that this park could be a demonstration farm for sustainable agriculture. The County has an IPM ordinance related to pesticide use.

The Department is required to implement the Board-approved Integrated Pest Management (IPM) ordinance at Martial Cottle Park. The understanding is that this park will be organically-farmed.

Neelima Palacherla, Executive Director, LAFCo

One of LAFCo's missions is to preserve agriculture and open space. Common issues for this project and LAFCo are related to compatibility between urban uses and agriculture. This project can be an example of demonstrating the benefits of being close to urban areas and reducing the negative impacts on urban areas, e.g. buffers, organic farming.

The LAFCo Commission recently adopted agricultural mitigation policies to be implemented by cities and conservation entities. Martial Cottle Park could be a demonstration of the application of these policies.

LAFCo is interested in monitoring the future water usages for the park. The Parks and Recreation Department would need to secure LAFCo approval for any water connections to the City as well as municipal sewage connections.

Reggie Knox, CA Farmlink

CA Farmlink offers experience in agricultural projects. Reggie Knox is the Central Coast representative for Watsonville. There are two other offices in Sebastopol and Davis.

Martial Cottle Park could be involved with CA Farmlink's Farm Incubator Program. This program could provide opportunities for all ages of farmers and support young aspiring farmers. CA Farmlink has a database of 250 farmers with varying experience, many of whom are seeking land. CA Farmlink works with landowners and farmers on how to structure leases and direct marketing and local distribution of farmed goods.

John Fischer, who has also worked with Hidden Villa, would be a great resource.

Greg West, Commission Chair, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Commission

Mr. West is a neighbor to the Martial Cottle Park property. Dan Murillo, another County Parks Commissioner, lives on the northeast side of the neighborhood. Another Commissioner is very interested in community gardens and has her designs on a plot in the southwest corner.

Mr. West looks forward to the agricultural program that could be brought into the three local high schools. He also looks forward to bringing back active agricultural programs through local 4-H clubs.

Mr. West noted that the community has placed great emphasis on this road widening efforts for Snell Avenue and Branham Lane.

Dave Mitchell, Parks Planning Manager, City of San Jose Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS)

The City of San Jose usually provides raised beds and brings soil in so the southwest corner of the park would work for community gardens.

Ira Bletz, Supervising Naturalist, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), Ardenwood Historic Farm

Mr. Bletz made the following initial recommendations for Martial Cottle Park:

- There is an opportunity to provide educational programs for young students as part of the elementary school programs, given the State content requirements for science and history. Create enough space for the program to grow. One of Ardenwood's problems is not enough indoor classroom space provided.
- Create smaller-scale hands-on opportunities such as gardens and row crops.
- Farm animals are a huge draw at Ardenwood. Mr. Bletz recommends that the Parks Department does not create a petting zoo, but rather to create an actual farm, for which the park can be classified as meeting the USDA farm criteria.
- Double whatever storage space you come up with as the storage capacity.
- Think about the people and immigrants who worked the land—not just the family who lived there.

Kevin O'Day, Santa Clara County Dept. of Agriculture & Environmental Management

The County Department of Agricultural & Environmental Management is involved with the regulatory and educational aspects of agriculture. The Department has close interaction with over

150 growers on a number of issues, including pesticide enforcement and safety. Some organic farmers use limited pesticides. The Department regulates the registration and inspection of organic growers and farmers markets, who can sell at the markets. The Department address types of commercial enterprises such as licenses for commercial nursery stock, apiary management, invasive species management, Santa Clara County weed management area, integrated waste related to composting, and animal control related to livestock disposition, management and excess animals. The Department works under federal, state and county regulations.

Dana Peak, Santa Clara County Planning Office, Program Manager for Historical Preservation Program/Williamson Act Program

The park property is considered under Williamson Act and would be required to retain commercial agriculture, such that the park would have to fit within a range of agricultural uses to comply. It is a question as to whether the Department will keep the park under the Williamson Act designation.

Sue Tippets: Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) Community Projects Review Unit

- Southwest of the park property, there are SCVWD-owned groundwater recharge ponds which percolate into the ground.
- The pond proposed on site shown as part of the Donor's vision would be of interest to the Water District as a potential recharge ponds for groundwater recharge. Soil has to be appropriate so a soils study would be needed.
- Canoas creek is not adequate to convey floodwaters so the site is subject to flooding. Much of the area experiences shallow and minor flooding. The District has reviewed the possibility of the site for flood protection and groundwater recharge, e.g., a detention pond. The proposed lake could be used for detention for overflow from the creek until the floodwater is released downstream. Issues with urbanized water need to be studied. The District has mapping that identifies less than one foot of flooding.
- The District revegetates using locally-grown vegetation types within that watershed. The District is seeking someone who can grow this native vegetation and have the space available for growing native plant materials. This type of program may be viable at Martial Cottle Park.
- The District owns the triangular piece of land adjacent to Highway 85. The District would be open for a land negotiation for that triangular piece of property.

Judy Ingols, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), Vegetation Management Unit

- Canoas Creek provides opportunities for revegetation. It can contain urban runoff, absorb with plant material, and provide a native plant nursery. Canoas Creek can be modified as long as it can work hydrologically.
- The SCVWD has a program on efficient water use in the landscape. This is another potential component of the park. The SCVWD is interested in helping with these discussions and potentially having its part be more of a feature of the park. The District can provide technical and financial assistance in developing this feature.

Aziz Baameur, Specialty Crop Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension Santa Clara County

Mr. Baameur recommended that the park not have the urban people come just as tourists, but also allow them to get something out of it by learning and participating. He also recommended including not only agriculture but also urban planting programs, such as water saving technologies, appropriate plantings, and teaching landscapers.

Ms. Ingols noted that the SCVWD Vegetation Management program is funding a program for landscape maintenance. Martial Cottle Park could include such a program.

Michael Kent, Master Gardeners Program Santa Clara County

The Master Gardeners Program is looking for a central location that could be the hub for the Master Gardener program. The Master Gardeners would like to see several acres for the program. Mr. Kent suggested that neighborhood community gardens should tie in with the Master Gardeners program.

General Discussion

During the open discussion, the following topics were discussed by members of the TAC and Project Team:

Equestrian use and livestock:

Equestrian uses and demand have yet to be determined. Livestock requires lots of pasture space and facilities for pulled horse trailers, which require two spaces, adequate turning radii, and clean-up facilities for the manure. High School vocational programs and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) might want to be contacted for this project. How to build crop-rotation into pasturing livestock could be a demonstration project.

Mr. Giordano stated that Mr. Lester's vision for equestrian use is more of a day-use area, or weekend event, rather than boarding horses there. It is up to the planning team to discuss how to integrate and make a workable an equestrian center.

The 4-H has a very large horse program, several hundred members, and limited facilities. Prusch Farm Park has discussed adding a covered arena facility. There is a demand from horse owners.

Miniature Train

The question is raised whether the miniature train as shown in the 1996 Donor's Vision is part of the plan. Nothing has been eliminated at this time and open for discussion. If there is a certain amount of railroad track, then it is considered an amusement ride with different maintenance regulations and jurisdiction.

Educational Component

The educational component was discussed and TAC members expressed enthusiasm for incorporating educational programs and providing educational outreach. One TAC member commented that from the beginning, the planning process should emphasize how to extend the education of agriculture to the outside.

Funding Sources

The deed required the Parks Department to set aside some amount of funding for the future operations of the park. The Department is hoping that the State can lead us to decision-makers to request for proposition funding.

Ideally the agricultural component would be self-sustaining in the long-term. That will help the Project Team sort out some of the programming decisions. It is considered important that the program is sustainable.

Wildlife

The County has heard of hopes that some of the property's "wildness" areas and "natural state" can be maintained with the foxes and raptors that roam freely. A wildlife management strategy will need to balance the desire for wildlife at the park and potential conflicts between wildlife and agricultural operations. The East Bay Regional Parks District re-introduced native grey foxes at Ardenwood to control rodents and ground squirrels. Wildlife management will also need to address other species such as quail and feral cats.

Adjournment

Steve Hammond thanked the TAC for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.