From: Dee Swanhuyser
To: _CityCouncilListPublic
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Changes on Rosalind Creek Community Part plan and EIR needed
Date: Monday, September 23, 2024 10:45:27 AM

These changes are recommended by Dee Swanhuyser, a 45 year Sonoma County resident who has been following this park planning process for as long as you have been planning this park. Thank you and regards,

Dee Swanhuyser

[redacted]
Sebastopol, 95472
[redacted]

Requesting Changes on the Master Plan and Final EIR for

Roseland Creek Community Park

Request specific changes to the Master Plan

--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]-->Reduce the proposed parking from 36 to 19 spaces and keep the parking on the north side of Roseland Creek

--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->Reduce the number of bathroom locations to one central location and install more stalls

--[if !supportLists]-->3. <!--[endif]-->Use permeable materials for paved surfaces only

--[if !supportLists]-->4. <!--[endif]-->Minimize removal of native trees with rerouting of paths and access roads for minimum destruction of root systems.

--[if !supportLists]-->5. <!--[endif]-->Relocate Community garden to minimize agricultural runoff into Roseland Creek and provide for accessibility for gardeners.

--[if !supportLists]-->6. <!--[endif]-->Minimize removal of both juvenile and mature native oaks to protect air quality and reduce increasing air temperatures in nearby neighborhoods.

--[if !supportLists]-->7. <!--[endif]-->Full restoration and conservation of the three ecosystems present in the Park with involvement of the local community and resources.

The following organizations and individuals fully support these recommendations.

The Milo Baker Chapter of the Statewide California Native Plant Society, the California Wildlife Foundation and California Oaks Program, individuals who have signed the current petitions being submitted. David Self, MS retired restoration ecologist; Michael Lennox, MS restoration ecologist; Lynn Houser,

MS botanist; Trish Tatarian, MS wildlife biologist; Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, Certified California Naturalist retired environmental educator and museum curator.

Background of the NeighborWood/Roseland Creek Community Park:

1. What is the NeighborWood/Roseland Creek Community Park located in Roseland Santa Rosa?

A 20-acre plot of land in the Roseland neighborhood was originally slated for development. After years of lobbying by farsighted local residents who saw the potential for an urban nature park the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District purchased the land. They later turned it over to the City of Santa Rosa with a ☆Conservation Easement that emphasized restoration, conservation and education.

Locally known as the Neighborwood, the land is located between Burbank Avenue to the west and McMinn Avenue to the east. Devoted residents have conducted regular Earth Day cleanup activities and individuals regularly pick up and bag trash there. They also raised money for boulders placed on the park perimeters to discourage people from driving into the NeighborWood. Burbank Avenue is classed a scenic road, but has become a busy thoroughfare for commute and school traffic. Roseland Creek Elementary school and the new middle school are located almost directly across Burbank Ave on the West side. Most of the homes on Burbank were single family homes, some still with agricultural activities, but recent and much needed apartments and for-rent homes are quickly being developed on the east side of Burbank Avenue south of the park. McMinn Ave consists of single-family residences and apartment complexes across the street from the park. McMinn Ave has become another busy thoroughfare.

There are 7 public schools within walking distance of the NeighborWood ideal making it ideal for outdoor educational activities. The informal Friends of Roseland Creek Neighborwood group contacted the various Roseland School District schools with a formal presentation about the possible educational activities using the NeighborWood as an easily accessible resource. Presentations were done for faculty groups and greeted with considerable enthusiasm. Prior to the Pandemic two teachers from Roseland University Prep High School began using the NeighborWood for educational activities. They walked with their students to the site and back. No costly field trip busses or vans were required. A biology teacher and a language arts teacher had their students documenting what they saw in the NeighborWood with one class project resulting in a student created video about the park.

There are three distinct ecosystems located within the NeighborWood with each supporting important native plants, animals, insects that sustain and support our diminishing biodiversity.

●A meadow at the north and south boundaries of the NeighborWood containing remnant native grasses with their deep fibrous roots that prevent erosion and help filter water for our local aquifers. Those grasses include purple needle grass, our State grass, California brome and an Elymus species.

●A healthy juvenile oak woodland with some mature trees and remnant understory plants such as poison oak. The oaks include valley oak and valley oak hybrids as well

as coast live oak.

This juvenile oak woodland represents one of the richest and diverse ecosystems in the State, sustaining over 300 species of insects at varying times of the year. These insects then provide food for native birds, animals and other insects as well as pollinate our gardens and farms. Rich soils are produced by decaying plant life and the strong roots of the trees, understory plants help clean and filter water for our aquifers and prevent soil erosion. The tree canopies absorb pollution and provide clean air. There are few oak woodlands left in either Santa Rosa or Roseland due to commercial and residential, agricultural development.

● A reach of Roseland Creek with a mix of riparian habitat and invasive plants. Recolonizing native plant species include willows, rushes, sedges, box elder and some mature native trees used by roosting and nesting native birds. Bats, important insect predators, may also roost in the more mature trees.

Roots of these plants prevent soil erosion, cool and filter water, providing sustenance and shade for aquatic life.

2. Why is it important for the City to follow the recommendations made in the original Conservation Easement for restoration, conservation and education emphasis in the NeighborWood?

Urban nature is a critically important tool for climate resilience, biodiversity and the physical and mental health of cities and communities such as Santa Rosa and Roseland.

●Urban nature is disappearing at an alarming rate from our cities and the loss is felt most severely in low income communities, but affects everyone.

Access to nature is an EQUITY issue.

●By restoring and preserving urban nature close to where people live and work with the assistance of local nature based organizations such as the California Native Plant Society, the Xerces Society, LandPaths, students from high school and college environmental and biology clubs, Native American, Latino, African American Asian, the City and Roseland residents will help provide and sustain irreplaceable benefits including:

●Reduced urban heat island effects caused by pavement and building surfaces that retain heat.

● Reduction of air pollution that helps asthma sufferers everywhere, but especially low income communities where asthma rates are disproportionately high.

3. How does all of the above relate to the conservation and restoration of the three important ecosystems in the NeighborWood?

Nature Conservancy Science predicts that by 2050 20 billion people will be living on the Earth with 2/3rds living in cities. Today, 50% of the earth's population live in cities.

●Studies by the Hispanic Access Foundation and Center for American Progress find that lower income communities have fewer forests, woodlands, streams, wetlands and meadows near where they are located. People in these areas are more likely to

be deprived of nature.

●The community restoration and conservation of the Neighborwood/Roseland Creek Community Park represents a precedent setting opportunity for the people of Roseland and Santa Rosa to help alleviate the increasing problems related to global warming, loss of biodiversity and the need for urban related development density.

●New urban density must be accompanied by new or protected urban nature.

●Urban Nature provides measure able physical, psychological, social and environmental benefits including decreases in vandalism and crime.

●Community driven restoration and conservation activities will enable participants to learn and share their knowledge of the history and uses of both invasive and native plants, other life forms. It will enhance community ties and interactions.

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