



VEP Community Association

Representing More Than 2000 Families in the Blossom Valley Area of South San Jose Since 1969

February 3, 2009

Also transmitted via email

Martial Cottle Park Master Plan Task Force
c/o Jane Mark, Project Director
Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
298 Garden Hill Drive
Los Gatos, CA 95032

Honorable Task Force Members and County Parks staff:

At its January 27, 2009 general membership meeting, VEP Community Association unanimously re-affirmed its wish-list (enclosed herewith) for Martial Cottle Park, specifically including our community's request that you

1. Not include an automotive or other main entrance on Branham Lane [Ref: Wish-List Items 8.a, b, c, f, and g]; and
2. Establish a (minimum) setback between our neighbors' back fences of 50 yards (150-feet) for low-impact park uses and 100 yards (300 feet) for high-impact (active) uses [Ref: Wish-List Item 5.c].

Our wish-list was submitted one year ago in confidence that it would be employed by you in planning Martial Cottle Park. It was formulated after extensive outreach and open debate by a committee of VEP volunteers comprising our representatives on your Task Force and immediate neighbors of the Park who live in our own and in other adjacent neighborhoods. It was then unanimously approved by a vote of our membership at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Regarding a Branham Lane entrance, we have continuing well-founded concerns over both traffic and the potential impact of Park patrons parking on our neighborhood streets and in the typically crowded Branham-Snell Shopping Center. The fact that County Parks charges for automobile entry, but not for walk-ins, greatly magnifies this concern. The quality of our neighborhoods will suffer. That possibility should guide your decision. Moreover, none of Mr. Lester's original Park plans included a main entry on Branham Lane. Although he considered both Snell and Chynoweth Avenue entrances, we believe Snell is a more rational choice based upon the fact that this major thoroughfare is now planned for near-term widening to six lanes. Our members ask that you plan a main entrance on Snell Avenue.

City of San Jose Public Works just informed VEP's *Branham Lane Widening Committee* that funding for widening Branham Lane has just been put on indefinite hold. We've worked with Public Works and DOT for the past four years to provide the capacity needed to mitigate current congestion and safety issues on this two-lane facility. When our work with the City began on this project, we asked them not to widen to six lanes because we don't want Branham to become a mini-freeway through our neighborhoods. The City has agreed to a maximum of four lanes. We now fear those four lanes will not meet current needs in addition to those potentially imposed by the main entrance to a regional park and your recently proposed shopping facilities. This would be a major blow to our entire community.

Regarding the setback between active park uses and our neighbors' back fences, by asking for a buffer of 50 yards for low-impact and 100 yards for high-impact uses, we hope to protect their rights to quiet privacy. Those rights should be a high priority for you, as well. We clearly state that agriculture would be acceptable to us within that setback, so it *could* be much wider. Inexplicably, 10 yards (30-feet) is now being suggested, which is unacceptable to us.

As you are aware, VEP Community Association has for decades been an outspoken advocate of Walter Lester's dream for the people of Santa Clara County: dedicating his land as a park to serve as a lasting reminder of his pioneering family and the agricultural heritage of our Valley of the Hearts' Delight. We want that to happen and believe it can without doing harm to or creating conflict with any neighbor in the process.

In that spirit, please give priority consideration to the needs and desires of Martial Cottle Park's nearest neighbors. On behalf of VEP members and our Martial Cottle Park Committee, thank you for favorable action on this request.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Tajnai, President
(408) 578-5882

cc: Assemblyman Jim Beall, Jr.; Assemblyman Joe Coto; Santa Clara County Supervisor Don Gage; San Jose City Councilwoman Nancy Pyle; County Parks Director Lisa Killough.

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