



**MINUTES**  
**JOINT MEETING**  
**PARKS & RECREATION/PLANNING/  
EQUESTRIAN COMMISSIONS**  
**TUESDAY, JULY 17, 2012, 6:00 P. M.**  
**STANLEY PLUMMER COMMUNITY BUILDING**  
**245 E. BONITA AVE.**

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**PRESENT**

**Parks and Recreation Commission**

Chair John Margis  
Commissioner Thomas Diaz (arrived 7:07 p.m.)  
Commissioner Jose Martinez (arrived 6:23 p.m.)  
Commissioner Frank Neal  
Commissioner Kathryn Perkins  
**Absent:** Commissioner Amanda Avery  
Commissioner Kevin Kenney

**Planning Commission:**

Chair Jim Schoonover  
Vice Chair David Bratt  
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg  
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi  
**Absent:** Commissioner John Davis

**Equestrian Commission:**

Chair Rebecca Pike  
Vice Chair Claudia Cook  
Commissioner Marca DeMonaco  
Commissioner Sonya Servier  
**Absent:** Commissioner Yvette Picconi

City Councilman Denis Bertone  
City Councilman John Ebiner  
City Councilman Jeff Templeman  
City Manager Blaine Michaelis  
Assistant City Manager Ken Duran  
Assistant City Manager of Community Development Larry Stevens  
Director of Parks and Recreation Theresa Bruns  
Administrative Aide Ann Garcia  
City Attorney Ken Brown  
Facilities Manager Karon DeLeon  
Recreation Services Manager Leon Raya  
Planning Commission Secretary Jan Sutton

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE**

Parks and Recreation Chair Margis called the joint meeting of the Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Equestrian Commissions to order at 6:03 p.m. He introduced Councilmembers Bertone, Ebiner and Templeman, and stated the Mayor and Councilmember Badar would be joining the meeting at the conclusion of the Public Safety Committee meeting, also occurring tonight.

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

No communications were made.

**3. REVIEW OF WALNUT CREEK HABITAT AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPT PLAN**

*Assistant City Manager Larry Stevens* stated this conceptual plan is the culmination of many months of work and input from several community meetings. The plan will cover the nearly 61 acre parcel which has been designated as the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space property. The project to date has been led by the Water Conservation Authority, which is a group made up of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFD), in collaboration with the City of San Dimas. He went over the process conducted by the consultant at the three community workshops, and stated the final report and tonight's presentation will be posted on the City's website for community review.

He stated that this is a Conceptual Master Plan, and that everyone needs to keep in mind that these are ideas that they want to try and achieve. A similar approach was taken with the development of Horsethief Canyon Park, and as they received grants, adjustments were made to the conceptual plan over the course of many years, so now they have lighted soccer fields, a dog park, and an expanded rodeo arena. Things changed over the years from the original plan, and they are still waiting to finish some of the phases. Staff expects the same thing will happen with this proposal, and it will be dependent on when funding is available and will be phased over a number of years. The consultant estimated that if everything were to be implemented today it would cost over \$8 million. While they expect the Master Plan will be similar as time goes on, especially in the overall passive recreation approach, there could be adjustments as they move forward.

He showed a site plan that outlined the 60 acres in the Master Plan located in the southern portion of the unincorporated area. It does not have frontage on San Dimas Avenue, and the Tzu Chi property is to the north, with Valley Center to the northwest, unincorporated county to the west, and Via Verde to the south. The dark blue line on the slide is Walnut Creek and the red line is the Antonovich Trail. There are a couple of existing buildings remaining on the site. Generally the Plan incorporates a 50-100 foot wide landscape buffer on the south adjacent to the residents. The meadow area is where the old orchard was located, with trails going through it on the west side. There is also the intent to connect to the Antonovich Trail to the east and west.

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Parks and Recreation Commissioner Martinez arrived at 6:23 p.m.

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**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated for many years there were attempts to develop this property with residential development through Los Angeles County, and one of the major constraints was lack of adequate access. Attempts were made to design a bridge to San Dimas Avenue, or access from Valley Center, both options being very expensive, difficult to achieve or extremely destructive to the natural environment.

The approach to access in this Master Plan in response to concerns expressed by the community is to be as benign as possible. They expect there will be low use of this parcel and it will not generate an excessive amount of traffic. The uses will be mostly pedestrian focused, with hiking/biking activity, and possibly some educational components. There are four access alternatives proposed.

- Alternative 1 is a one-way access entering from Loma Vista Park and exiting through the gate at Calle Bandera.
- Alternative 2 proposes Loma Vista Park as the primary entrance and exit.
- Alternative 3 proposes two-way access at Loma Vista Park and Calle Bandera.
- Alternative 4 proposes Calle Bandera as the primary entrance and exit.

He explained the various options and improvements that would be made to support each of them. In all of these options the City is still proposing to continue limiting access to the Tzu Chi property to the north, and presented the history of the gate at Calle Bandera. He stated on occasion they have allowed the Tzu Chi limited access through Calle Bandera for certain equipment that cannot come in from Valley Center, but they need to get the City's permission each time. The City does not intend to accommodate any vehicular activity for any existing or future development on their property.

He stated while they have these four access alternatives, Staff does not believe it is necessary to determine which alternative should be used at this time. He suggested the Conceptual Master Plan should go forward with all alternatives as possibilities, and then as the project develops through the different phases, it can be determined what the appropriate level of access is. It could be several years in the future before the activity or improvement on the site will require providing one or more of these alternatives. The primary thing to understand is that at some point there should be a vehicular access and the most obvious is to take that access from one or both of the identified points.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated in response to the surrounding residents, a 50-100 foot landscape buffer was created on the southern perimeter, which will not include any trails through it. They will plant this area with an evergreen palette and showed how the buffer will grow over the years. The meadow area will be replanted with native plants, which will be mixed into the community garden and orchard areas. The remainder of the site on the east end is mostly Coast Oak and woodlands, and walnut woodlands with coastal sage scrub which will return it from the citrus program instituted by Cal Poly in the 1930's and '40's.

The trails will be a mix of uses, but largely focused on pedestrian, equestrian and biking, with no motorized use allowed. They will be relatively natural with some vista points and educational markers or trail guides. There is a proposed trail network and names have been given to the various routes to help distinguish them. The trails will also be constructed in phases, and he described each one shown on the slide. They are being sensitive to not provide visibility into the residential area and most of them are located on the northern side of the property. They

have also identified a 15,000 square foot area for a potential community orchard reflecting back to the history of the agricultural campus. Additional components could be a native plant growing area and a possible community garden area. In regards to the existing Auto Shop building, the WCA would like to preserve the building and use it for activities such as outdoor classroom activities for school field trips, or a ranger residence for security purposes.

He stated the existing Loma Vista Park is a small neighborhood park which includes some play activities mostly used by area residents. Depending on which access option is chosen, the play area is not planned to be relocated and some additional space to the north will be added to the park. It will also include a tree-lined approach so the residents will be less impacted, but there should be no net loss of useable park space.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated this is the first step in taking the Conceptual Master Plan to some conclusion. The Commissions should receive public comment, and provide their input as well, that will then be presented to the City Council. The WCA staff will be following the same process separately with their Board. He reiterated that implementation of the Plan would occur in phases over a lengthy period of time. A tentative proposal for Phase 1 would include environmental analysis through the CEQA process. Access would only be pedestrian through Loma Vista Park and the City will continue to control the gate at Calle Bandera. They are looking at doing the meadow trail and the general site trail, and connecting to the Antonovich trail. This would allow access from the north and the south to the trail system. They would also likely demo the buildings on the City's property which are deteriorated and an attractive nuisance, and start planting the perimeter buffer. All of this of course will depend on funding. Staff will continue to search for funding to develop other opportunities and other parts of the Master Plan.

**Commissioner Neal** asked if there were proposed hours of operation for the park.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated since the early phases will only be trail activities, the hours would be dawn to dusk like other City parks.

**Commissioner Ensberg** asked if Phase 1 would predetermine the access needed, or does it leave it open to all options; and would there be any benefit to making a choice now. He also asked if the WCA could override the City on a choice since they own the majority of the site.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated Phase 1 leaves all access options available, and there is no benefit to selecting an option now. Staff does not know which parts of the Plan will be developed when, and it could be 10-15 years before the main activities are done. He stated they have been working cooperatively with the WCA through this planning process and did not see that changing in the future, and they concurred with access options.

**Commissioner DeMonaco** asked if the buffer area would be implemented before pedestrian or other activities occur.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated he couldn't state that with certainty, but they have included a portion of the buffer area in Tentative Phase 1. As indicated, they may focus the buffer on the west first near the residences since the Auto Shop building will probably not be

utilized for quite some time. It may also depend on how much money they are able to acquire for landscaping whether they will be able to do the full width or just a portion.

In response to Planning Chair Schoonover, Assistant City Manager Stevens stated there has not been a final determination on how many spaces will be in the overflow parking area. This plan just shows a conceptual location that would be generally suitable, but it is not likely to be fully paved and would probably be decomposed granite like the trails. They also do not know how many people are likely to use these areas. They will probably try to anticipate traffic needs through the CEQA process, which should give them some guidance on where they think they will need parking.

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Parks and Recreation Commissioner Diaz arrived at 7:07 p.m.

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**Commissioner Bratt** asked once they are ready to move beyond Phase 1, how will that be communicated to the Commissions and the citizens.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated if they receive grant funding, that will typically go to the City Council for approval. Another option used in the past is as they define the phases to have a hearing at the Parks and Recreation Commission, which would provide the opportunity for public input there or at City Council. If anything was changing from the original Master Plan, then that would involve both the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council and allow for public input.

**Commissioner Rahi** asked if this area will be incorporated into the City limits. He also asked if they envision this ever becoming a regional park in nature.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated currently their approach is that this property will remain in the County and they will be processing any plans through County Planning and Building and Safety. Ideally they would like to annex it to the City, but in order to do so it may require including the Tzu Chi property under current regulations and you would need the support of all owners, which may not occur. LAFCO may also want them to include the homes to the west, and as a residential annexation, that has different regulations to comply with. If the opportunity arises they will consider it, but if not, they will process through the County. He felt the nature of park will be a mix of neighborhood and regional because of the trail system, but felt the people visiting it will be more local in nature opposed to the users of Bonelli Park. During the initial phase it will more likely be used by the surrounding residents on the north, south and west.

**Commissioner Diaz** stated he has been contacted by several residents near Calle Bandera and asked what type of studies have been done to analyze the traffic impacts under each of the access alternatives, as it appears some would have more impact than others.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated they have not done any detailed traffic analysis yet; that would be done through the CEQA process, which they hope to have funding for in Phase 1. Staff believes they can carry the Master Plan forward with all four options without making any final determination on the ultimate access to the site, especially since you won't need vehicular

access in the early phases. In general the belief is that some type of vehicular access from the south is reasonable and appropriate, and what they have done to address the residents' concerns is to maintain an extremely passive 60 acre park, which in and of itself will help to keep traffic to a minimum.

**Commissioner Diaz** stated in regards to the buffer area, at some of the meetings a progression was shown at what it would look like over the years and it appeared the desired growth wouldn't occur until 20-30 years. He asked if it was possible to use faster growing plants to improve privacy sooner.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated they have not picked a precise plant palette yet, but they will consider the species and size when they get into those details. The goal is to grow the buffer as quickly as they can as soon as they get the funding for it.

**Commissioner Martinez** asked if Phase 1 was only the CEQA process or all of the items listed.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated the order will primarily be as laid out in the conceptual chart shown in the presentation, so they will primarily focus on that. There is a mandatory component of CEQA to look at alternates of the plans they are considering to provide analysis of all of them, and further explained the process.

**Chair Margis** opened the meeting for public hearing. He stated he had one letter with comments from an absent Planning Commissioner and five letters from community members that will be made part of the public record (attached). Addressing the Joint Commissions were:

**Margaret Gonzales, 1388 Avenida Loma Vista**, stated she has lived in her home for 34 years. She understands how the residents on Calle Bandera feel about possibly having increased traffic, but they have been dealing with traffic issues on her street for years and even had speed bumps installed to control it. She felt the most effective entrance and exit to the park would be through Calle Bandera, and did not want to see a road coming through Loma Vista Park. She would also like to see a restroom installed at the park, and hoped it would not be installed down by the parking at Calle Bandera.

**Ed Corette, 1302 Paseo Encanto**, stated he attended all the community meetings and felt the majority wanted something that would keep the usage minimal and for local residents. Now the Auto Shop building is being proposed for classrooms when they thought it was only going to be used for a ranger residence, and opening it up for schools to visit, which will bring more people to the site. They should just call this Bonelli Park West as he felt having classes will just increase the number of people coming and the traffic.

**Ron Ketchum, 1307 Calle Caballero**, felt San Dimas was blessed with a mix of parks. He visited several parks on Sunday to see their parking; the neighborhood parks were being used but not many people were at the larger parks. He did not see anything in the Plan so far that would make this a destination park for people, and thought it would mostly be used by local residents as the trails are modest in size. He felt they did not need a road going into the park, an orchard or classrooms, and that pedestrian access would be adequate and people could park on the street.

**Mary Kennedy, 21436 Covina Hills Road**, stated this is the first meeting she has attended and was wondering why they were even considering a master plan and not just leaving it as it is.

**Vickie Monegan, 925 Avenida Loma Vista**, stated she has lived here since 1986 and was against any access from her street. She has witnessed many accidents and it takes several attempts to be able to exit her driveway because of the traffic. The street is winding and she can only see past three houses before her view is blocked, and if you add traffic from school buses and more cars, she will never be able to get out of her driveway. In the past they have petitioned for stop signs, and had speed bumps installed by the park to help. They do not need any further traffic on Avenida Loma Vista and she hoped they will not take this to the City Council for approval.

**John Berry, 1208 Paseo Sombra**, stated he lives 100 feet from the Auto Shop building. He knows there are no final decisions yet on the Plan, and felt they should not move forward with the Plan until they have more definitive answers on what the proposal is and when it will get built.

**Lily Tong, 1212 Calle Bandera**, stated she has lived here for 15 years and was worried about the community and her peaceful life. She felt instead of using funds for a park they should be assisting poor people. They should leave the animals alone and not develop a park.

**Rob Anderson, 1309 Paseo Corte**, stated he has lived there for 35 years. He stated Via Verde was underdeveloped by design; there are no churches, schools or industry and that is what people like about it. He doesn't think there was enough preparation done for this meeting and that they are proposing to bring in more traffic than can be handled on this street. He did not want to see the park extended, or money spent on a roadway or a parking lot for 30-40 spaces in this economy, and that they should make people park on the street.

**Wade Stevens, 1238 Avenida Loma Vista**, stated he is concerned about potential crime as there is already broken glass on the trailhead and graffiti, trash and signs of people living on the Antonovich trail and was concerned this will happen in the new park. He stated he is concerned about traffic and the speed people travel on Avenida Loma Vista, as he hears them going over the speed bumps too fast. He has lived here six years and the only people currently using the street are people who live there or are visiting residents, and now they want to draw people who do not live in the neighborhood. He felt if they develop the park, it will displace the animals, such as the coyotes, which could hurt someone on the trail. He wanted to know what kind of authority the ranger would have. He didn't think they needed to develop a new park so only wanted to see the minimum amount of development occur.

**Angela Varvi, 1721 Paseo Mundo**, stated she has lived near Ladera Serra Park for the past 18 years, and was in favor of the WCA and City preserving the 60 acres instead of having housing there. She was also concerned about the impact of traffic and felt vehicles should not be allowed into the park itself. She wanted to know the feasibility of only allowing pedestrian access from San Dimas Avenue and the Antonovich trail so people do not have to go through Via Verde. The buses can drop off the children and have them walk down to the park. She stated there is nowhere to park at Loma Vista Park so if people park on the street they are blocking the view because it winds so much.

**Jonathan Starr, 21258 Cloverland, Covina**, stated after attending the meetings he wondered what was the benefit of taking over an environmentally sensitive area to build another park, and at what cost. He felt there were minimal benefits compared to the cost of disturbing this area and it didn't make sense to him. He felt they were compromising what makes this area so special.

**Evelene Shehata, 850 Avenida Loma Vista**, stated she has lived here for 16 years and was opposed to the project.

**Angela Varvi, 1721 Paseo Mundo**, stated she understands the City of San Dimas is not the majority owner of the property, so she felt they should work with the WCA since ultimately it is their decision as the majority property owner.

**Jonathan Starr, 21258 Cloverland, Covina**, stated this is a landlocked parcel and not zoned for this so does not think they should make an exception and that they should have a voice in what happens.

**Gary Zorko, 821 Via Alameda**, stated this is not a natural area; it has been through a succession of owners and is partially blighted. He hopes it will be returned to a more natural state by removing the blighted buildings and planting natural vegetation. He felt it was important to have hiking trails. He understands the concerns about traffic, but would rather see this property returned to a more natural state, which it hasn't been for many years.

**Lynda Appleton, 21236 Cloverland, Covina**, has heard consistently in all the meetings she has attended in the past 30 years that there is a security problem and wondered why that wasn't being addressed in Phase 1 before anything else. She also wondered why the buffer wasn't being planted prior to adding trails.

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated in regards to the use of the Auto Shop building, the proposed intensity of the activity has probably changed in the course of the discussions. The WCA does not want to use it as an office and it is intended to be ranger quarters. There is not a large space for classroom activity; it may be reduced, but they can review that in the future when there is funding available for this building. These are very preliminary suggestions and they do not know exactly what the level of activity will be, they are just identifying it as a possible use.

In regards to the questions of why do anything, there were some references that this area was natural and some that it was disturbed. It is very clearly a disturbed area, and the reason for doing something is that this property was initially purchased jointly with the WCA with grant funds that were intended to provide some type of recreational activity, and to prevent a more onerous residential development on the parcel. This process is to identify what is a reasonable level of activity. They may be able to provide security sooner, or the buffer area sooner, depending on funding availability. The Sheriff's Department, who has jurisdiction over the area, will tell you they could better address security issues with better access. A ranger is also a law enforcement officer and is properly trained to carry a weapon. A suggestion was made to use San Dimas Avenue for access to the property, but it is not the safest place to pull a vehicle in

and out of the road, but they will review that further along in the process. There may be options for access from the equestrian staging area once some of the trails are constructed so it may be that no all traffic will be coming in from Avenida Loma Vista.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated as it was pointed out in the beginning, this is a conceptual plan, not a final plan, and before the project is completed there may be substantial variations from the initial plan. There may not be an orchard or community garden, or the Auto Shop building may be demolished. With the current uncertainty of public finances, it is very difficult to have a set schedule because they don't know when funds will be available, just as has happened with Horsethief Canyon Park. What they are creating is a guide and a starting point with the Conceptual Master Plan, and they feel in the first phase they will not need any parking or additional access. This is a very light use of a natural property and they will be returning some of the disturbed areas to a more natural state, while trying to minimize the impacts on the surrounding residents.

**MOTION:** Moved by **Chair Margis**, seconded by **Commissioner Neal** that the Parks and Recreation Commission, Equestrian Commission, and Planning Commission jointly recommend that the San Dimas City Council accept the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Concept Plan and support City Staff in the pursuit of funding to implement Phase I and in the definition and funding of additional phases with appropriate public review as the opportunities arise, with the exception of vehicular access which should be excluded.

**Commissioner Ensberg** stated the presentation made it clear that the options of vehicular access were not being recommended at this time and he did not think they should exclude that from future discussion. He thinks Phase 1 has all the things they need to address in the beginning and they should not rule out vehicular access as a future option.

**Chair Margis** stated he will amend his motion to delete the last phrase regarding vehicular access, which was seconded by **Commissioner Neal**.

**Commissioner Diaz** stated after hearing the comments from the public, he would like to recommend the Council to return the area to its previous state and preserve it with a minimalist approach, and have that added to the motion.

**Commissioner Neal** stated he did not see how that could be quantified.

**Chair Pike** stated if the trails shown on the Master Plan are developed, there will be three other parking areas for people to access the trail system, so not all of the access will have to come through Avenida Loma Vista.

**Commissioner Bratt** felt the motion was adequate as stated and they should let the plan take its own course. He felt it was important that the buffer area be developed before the trails.

**Commissioner Rahi** concurred.

**Chair Schoonover** stated he supports having a minimalist approach and that they should remember they are trying to keep it as open space. He did not feel that a community garden or classroom was needed.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated one of the things they could do in regards to these additional items is come up with a consensus position that could be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. The motion could be to send the Conceptual Master Plan to the City Council and then include the comments.

**MOTION:** Moved by **Commissioner Diaz**, seconded by **Chair Schoonover**, that in addition to the original motion to recommend the Conceptual Master Plan, that they take a minimalist approach to minimize the impacts to the community and restore the land to its natural state as open space.

**Assistant City Manager Stevens** stated in order to clarify minimalist, they could say as each phase goes forward that it contain no more components than are necessary to support that phase in and of itself; to not build to a grander plan, and how to deal with the access. However, the second part does not mean that the orchard or community garden ideas are being removed from the Master Plan.

**Commissioner Diaz** thinks it is addressed by having it as a natural state that there will be no orchard or community garden.

**Commissioner Ensberg** felt a community garden can be beneficial to the neighboring homeowners and would like to have that as a future option. He agrees that in executing Phase 1 a minimalist approach should be taken, but we don't know how, after these trails come together, it will be and he thinks the community should maintain the right to make a judgment at each phase. He is for preserving the options in the Conceptual Master Plan.

**Commissioner Martinez** concurred and felt Phase 1 was taking a minimalist approach. He felt the CEQA process will provide information that will allow them to make informed decisions in the future.

The second amended motion failed 5-8.

**Chair Margis** restated the original amended motion. Motion carried 12-1, with the following Commissioners voting in favor: Parks and Recreation Commissioners Margis, Martinez, Neal and Perkins; Equestrian Commissioners Pike, Cook, DeMonaco and Servier; Planning Commissioners Schoonover, Bratt, Ensberg and Rahi; and Parks and Recreation Commissioner Diaz voting in opposition.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Sutton  
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved by Planning Commission:	September 19, 2012
Approved by Parks and Recreation Commission:	September 18, 2012
Approved by Equestrian Commission:	September 4, 2012