



## **Master Plan for Los Gatos Creek County Park**

County of Santa Clara Parks & Recreation Department  
City of Campbell  
Santa Clara Valley Water District

October 29, 2002

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## 1 - SUMMARY

This *Master Plan* proposes various improvements to Los Gatos Creek County Park. The planning process, which has led to this document, has been sponsored by the County of Santa Clara Parks & Recreation Department and the City of Campbell, as well as partnered with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Information and proposals in this report are based on comments from public meetings, comments from sponsoring agency staff members, field investigations and review of previous reports, and documents. The Master Plan document consists of a Summary, Introduction, Project Analysis, Master Plan (proposals), Park Management, Implementation, and Appendices.

Los Gatos Creek County Park is located in the City of Campbell (City), in the southwest portion of the greater San Jose urbanized area between the cities of San Jose and Los Gatos and adjacent to State Highway 17. The 147-acre park site consists of 10.2 acres of land owned by County of Santa Clara (County) and approximately 137 acres of land owned by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) and leased to the County for park purposes. Land owned by the District encompasses a portion of Los Gatos Creek as well as seven man-made ponds used to transmit water via percolation for water storage in the aquifer under Santa Clara Valley. Site facilities within the land owned by the County include: large turf areas; parking lots; picnic facilities; a restroom; fly-casting ponds; paths and a portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail, a regional trail managed by the County and four other agencies. Facilities on the land owned by the District include the ponds mentioned above, as well as trails, a bridge over the creek, a two-story observation pavilion, and a portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail.

Goals for park development outlined in the master plan are:

1. Provide Facilities for Recreation That Take Advantage of Site Characteristics and Resources.
2. Protect and Enhance the Park's Natural Character and Scenic Quality.
3. Provide Safe Recreational Experiences.
4. Improve Recreational Facilities for a Better Visitor Experience.
5. Provide Recreation Facilities that are Easily Maintained and Cost Effective.
6. Enhance Park Identity.

### **Master Plan Proposals**

#### Active Recreation Zone (County Park Area, Noted as Zone 1 in Master Plan)

The active recreation area of the park will be modified to make it more attractive and permit greater use. One of the two parking lots will be relocated to the western boundary line thus reducing the park area affected by cars and provide a larger, contiguous pedestrian zone. This will be coupled with development of a picnic area with a pleasant view of the pond as well as an area near the pond for staging events. This area near the pond and the turf and trail will function as a kind of informal park center. In addition, a better water access area at the northeast shore of Pond No. 1 will be constructed.

The existing turf areas will be improved with additional shade trees, improved irrigation, and new drainage. A new turf mound will be constructed for use as an informal amphitheater for public gatherings such as dog shows or charity events.

A one-acre area north of the existing fly-casting ponds will be enclosed and designated as an off-leash dog area. Although small, this facility will provide an alternative for dog owners to

exercise their dogs without allowing them off-leash in the park's natural areas. The dog park will include a water source as well as shade.

#### Other Park Improvements

Signage and interpretation within the park will be improved. Opportunities will be explored for incorporating art as a means of enhancing the design of various park improvements such as the park entry and structures.

#### Other Park Areas (Noted as Zones 2 – 5 in Master Plan)

Proposals for other park areas include the following:

The existing trail system will be reconstructed to provide more stable and maintainable trails.

A potential node in the park will be provided at the west end intersection and at the existing pedestrian bridge which crosses over Los Gatos Creek. This node will include limited visitor amenities such as seating and interpretation.

Better fishing facilities associated with trails will be constructed around Pond No. 1. Two or three small floating fish platforms will be added. Each platform will be a minimum of 36 square feet.

At the recommendation of the Santa Valley Water District (The District) the shore of percolation ponds will be re-graded to flatten slopes, enhance vegetation, and provide pond/creek habitat rehabilitation.

The existing screen of trees along the west edge of the park, which visually separates the park from adjacent businesses, is inconsistent and has many open areas. The visual separation should be enhanced by replanting the open areas within the existing screen of trees and shrubs.

Riparian areas along pond edges and stream banks as well as upland areas will be replanted with native and/or other non-invasive, drought-tolerant plants. Vegetation will be used to control access to off-trail areas, particularly along pond edges.

Efforts will be increased to control illegal off-leash dog exercise around and within the percolation ponds. These could include increasing visitor awareness by posting signs..

Two small observation platforms will be constructed overlooking ponds from existing mounds. They will be partially screened from the ponds with vegetation. The observation platforms will also be used as a site for interpretation panels about bird-life. The existing observation tower will be removed.

The 1974 Master Plan for the creek and ponds designated the area on the east side of Los Gatos Creek as a zone for wildlife habitat. This master plan identifies the continued designation of the east side of Los Gatos Creek as a wildlife habitat area. With this goal in mind, only habitat restoration and interpretive improvements are proposed in this area.

#### Park Connection to the Surrounding Community

A series of metal directional signs at key locations around the park would help direct visitors to the park. These would be installed by the County of Santa Clara Roads Department. The signs will comply with State/County standards.

“Extend” the image of the park into the surrounding community by adding street trees, sidewalks, curb and gutter, on adjacent streets. These improvements would be made and maintained by the City of Campbell.

Simplify and strengthen the park entry.

#### Public Safety

County of Santa Clara Park Rangers could coordinate policing with the City of Campbell Police and County Sheriff Departments as well as other staff. Efforts should be made to more vigilantly cite off-leash dog owners.

#### Los Gatos Creek Trail

The existing trail is popular but has a number of problems, principally that the current width does not accommodate peak heavy use. Specific trail improvement proposals are:

Where possible, realign the trail to serve pedestrians and bicyclists better by using different surfaces.

Los Gatos Creek Trail will be widened to accommodate a minimum width of eight to ten feet paved tread, 12 to 14 feet where possible, with two to four feet soft surface shoulder.

The path should be resurfaced.

Add more amenities along the trail such as drinking fountains, benches, orientation signs, and interpretative signs.

#### Los Gatos Creek

At some time in the future, a portion of the existing creek that has been dammed and ponded could be returned to a more natural stream configuration with a meandering creek and riparian vegetation. If this proposal becomes a funded project, it would be undertaken by the District and would include any necessary CEQA documents and permits from regulatory agencies.



## 2 - INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and Scope

This *Master Plan* proposes various improvements to Los Gatos Creek County Park. The planning process, which has led to this document, has been sponsored by the County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department, the City of Campbell, and partnered with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Information and proposals in this report are based on comments from public meetings, sponsoring agency staff members, field investigations and the review of previous reports and documents.

The following Introduction includes information about the purpose and scope of the report, project background, a summary of the planning process, and a description of the general organization of this document.

### Purpose and Scope

This *Master Plan Report* represents the completion of a planning process for Los Gatos Creek County Park that will ultimately lead to improvement of park facilities. Specifically, the *Master Plan* establishes: a) the range of current and future recreational activities that are most appropriate to the park site; b) the general location, extent and potential cost of park improvements; and, c) specific solutions to achieve the best use of the park's recreational, environmental, and visual potential.

The *Master Plan* is designed to consider improvements over a period of 20 years, a sufficient time frame to allow careful and incremental change at the park.

### Project Background

Los Gatos Creek County Park is located in the City of Campbell (City), in the southwest portion of the greater San Jose urbanized areas between the cities of San Jose and Los Gatos and adjacent to State Highway 17 to the east and Camden Avenue to the north and west. The 147-acre park site consists of 10.2 acres of land owned by the County of Santa Clara (County) and 137 acres of land owned by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) and leased to the County for park purposes. Land owned by the District encompasses a portion of Los Gatos Creek as well as seven man-made ponds used for percolation into aquifers under the Santa Clara Valley.

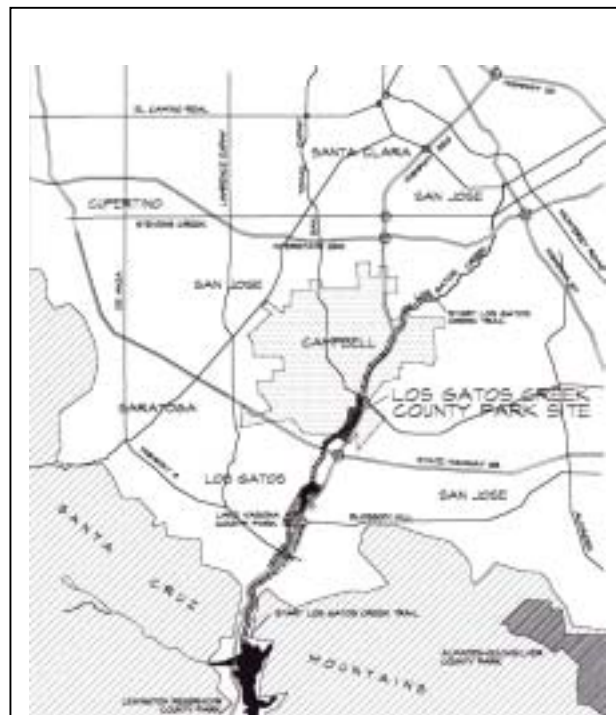
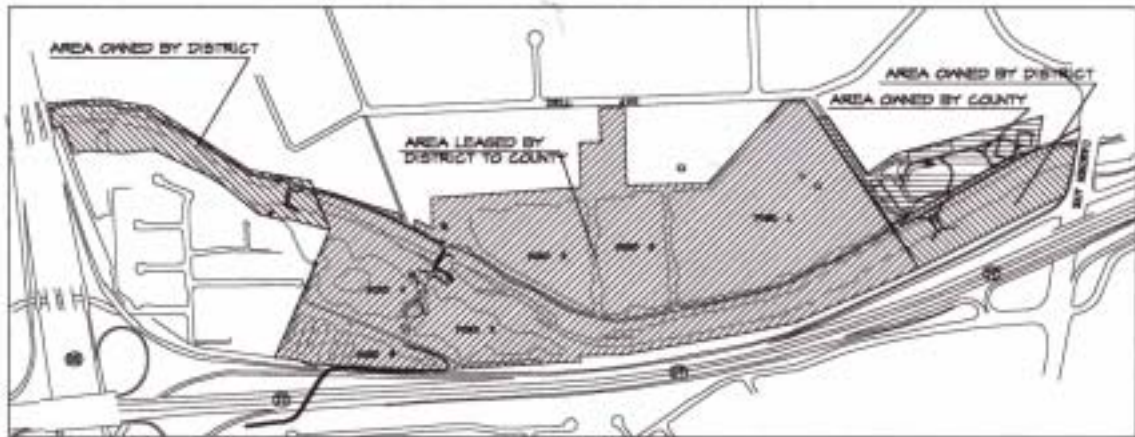


Figure 1 – Location Map

Other District facilities include maintenance roads and pipelines. County-owned facilities on the land owned by the District include the pedestrian bridge over the creek and a portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The City owns a two-story observation tower. Facilities within the County owned land include: large turf areas; parking lots; picnic facilities; a restroom; fly-casting ponds; paths and a portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail, a regional trail managed by five local agencies including the County, and the City.

As early as 1963, the County considered the idea of creating a linear park along Los



*Figure 2 – Property Ownership*

Gatos Creek, including the percolation ponds. Towards this goal, in March 1966, the County purchased 10.2 acres for the County Park site from the Santa Clara Valley Water Conservation District (predecessor to the Santa Clara Valley Water District). The Board of Supervisors approved the original master plan for the park on February 14, 1966, which included recreation activities such as sailing, fishing, and picnicking in a “waterside landscaped park.” A 60-foot long floating dock was envisioned along the north edge of Pond No. 1 to serve the small sail boats (El Toro Class). The existing park facilities, including parking, restrooms and turf areas were completed in 1967 at an estimated development cost of \$104,000 with the assistance of a Housing and Urban Development Grant of \$30,000 (1967 dollars).

Around 1974 the District and the Audubon Society created a master plan for Los Gatos Creek and the percolation ponds. Before 1974, this area was used as a ground water recharge facility and was not open to the public. This master plan for creek improvement, entitled: “Los Gatos Creek – A Master Plan for Environmental Development,” prepared by Royston Hanamoto Beck and Abey, was approved by the District in November 1974. Following the master plan, specific improvement plans for the construction and planting of the percolation ponds were prepared in the fall of 1976 by the District. As shown in photos in the 1974 master plan, the area of the percolation ponds was almost entirely devoid of trees or plants. There were so few plants, that the master plan noted the one tree on the site, a California sycamore. Although many of the newly planted trees and shrubs were not successfully established or were vandalized, the remaining ones have gradually matured providing habitat for birdlife and other wildlife species. In 1974, 30 bird species were documented on the site. In the years 2000 - 2001 89 species were observed. (See Appendices B and C.)

The streambed of Los Gatos Creek in the area of Los Gatos Creek County Park has been altered many times over the last 150 years to provide irrigation water and gravel for the development of the Santa Clara Valley. An elaborate series of ditches diverted water from this area of the creek to provide irrigation water to nearby orchards. In addition, the creekbed in the area of the park was the site of extensive gravel mining operations. In 1957 the District purchased the site of the Oka Lane ponds (Ponds No.s 4-7, Zone 3 of this Master Plan) and converted the gravel operations to percolation ponds. After the operations of the irrigation ditch companies were taken over by the District and phased out, the District pursued various flood control improvements along the creek starting in 1966. The last of the drop structures in the park area was completed around 1970. These concrete grade control structures, used to control creek erosion and sedimentation, span the creek and look like dams.

Los Gatos Creek was the alignment of the historic route connecting the Santa Clara Valley into the Santa Cruz Mountains and to the Pacific coast near the town of Santa Cruz. Indians, the early Spanish explorers, settlers, stage coach and trains have used the same route. The City completed several projects in the late 1970's for trail construction as well as planting at the ponds and the construction of the observation tower. In 1978, the County Board of Supervisors established a committee composed of staff members from County Parks and Recreation, the cities of Los Gatos, Campbell, and San Jose as well as the District, to coordinate planning for the Los Gatos Creek Trail. In 1985 Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey prepared "The Los Gatos Creek Trail Master Plan" for the City of San Jose, however, this plan only covers downstream areas below Hamilton Avenue.

In 2000, the City contacted the County to partner in the planning to identify potential improvements for Los Gatos Creek County Park. As a result, a jointly sponsored master planning process was initiated by the two agencies and subsequently joined by the District in 2001. In September 2001 a joint funding agreement between the County and the City for the creation of the Los Gatos Creek Master Plan was executed.

## **The Planning Process**

The master planning process for Los Gatos Creek County Park has been fairly direct. An initial inventory of site elements was conducted in the fall and winter of 2001 / 2002. A public meeting to hear ideas and comments from various park users, neighbors and agency staff was held on February 8, 2002 and was attended by 35 people. Based on the site inventory as well as public and agency comments, a preliminary master plan document and drawing was prepared in March of 2002. Two additional public meetings were held on April 3, 2002 to present the draft master plan and hear public comments. Presentations before the County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Campbell Parks and Recreation Commission, and Campbell City Council were made in late spring and summer of 2002. The Master Plan was subsequently presented to the County of Santa Clara Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation Committee and to the County Board of Supervisors in the Fall / Winter of 2002.

## **3 - PROJECT ANALYSIS**

### Overall Park Site

Los Gatos Creek County Park is a regional park of approximately 147-acres within the City of Campbell and adjacent to State Highway 17 and the cities of Los Gatos and San Jose. The site is generally flat with a topographic range from elevation 210 feet at the Los Gatos Creek water level at the north side of the park to elevation 250 at the south end of the park. The dominant features of the site are Los Gatos Creek and seven large ponds, varying in size from 12.2 acres (Pond No. 1) to approximately two acres (Pond No. 7).

Of the total park area, the County owns 10.2 acres. The remainder of the park site is leased to the County by the District, including 120 acres near their seven large percolation ponds plus another 17 acres adjacent to Los Gatos Creek. Facilities on land owned by the District include the ponds, maintenance roads, pipelines and Los Gatos Creek.

### Los Gatos Creek

The park site and ponds are bisected by Los Gatos Creek, a year round stream which runs for 8,200 feet (1.55 miles) through the park. The Creek starts at Lexington Reservoir, to the south of the Town of Los Gatos, and runs north 12 miles to join the Guadalupe River. The total watershed is 55 square miles (46 above the park). Flows in the creek peak at 7000 cubic feet per second (cfs) for a 100-year flood with 1600 cfs for a ten-year flood. As the creek runs through the park it drops over three grade control structures with a fourth structure on the creek just to the north of the park site. These structures consist of a concrete wall (with side supports) built across the creek channel. The purpose of these structures, built around 1965, is to stabilize the creek bed, prevent down cutting of the channel and creek bank erosion with consequent downstream sedimentation. Prior to construction of the grade control structures, the creek had already cut a deep channel through the park site. This channel depth varies from a minimum of five feet or less at the southern end of the site to 25 or 30 feet just below (north of) the northern most grade control structure.

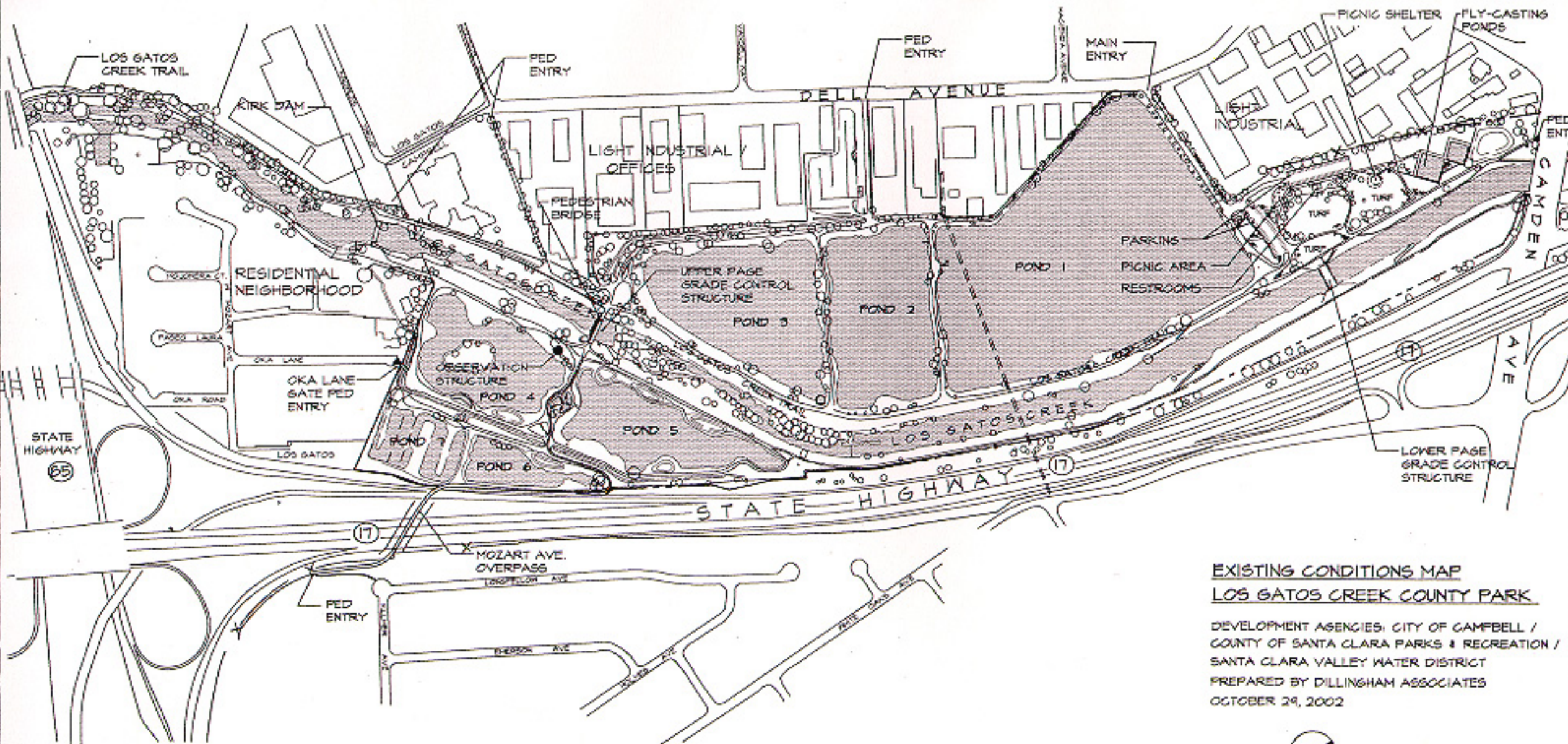
### Surroundings and Entries

Site uses bordering the park are:

- Light industrial and office on the west and north sides.
- Camden Avenue on the north.
- State Highway 17 (freeway) on the east side.
- Single family residential neighborhood on the south.

Vehicular access to the park through a light industrial and office area, near a confusing series of roads, expressways and railroad tracks, makes it difficult for visitors to find the park. Because the Board of Supervisors has established a fee for parking within the park, some visitors choose to park on streets near the park entry and walk into the park. There are no sidewalks along Dell Avenue near the park to serve these walkers and there is no specific pedestrian entry into the park at the main entry separated from the vehicular roadway. There is, however, a pleasant walkway along the northern edge of Pond No. 1 once a pedestrian has passed through the park entry gate.

FIGURE 3



**EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP  
LOS GATOS CREEK COUNTY PARK**

DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES: CITY OF CAMPBELL /  
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA PARKS & RECREATION /  
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT  
PREPARED BY DILLINGHAM ASSOCIATES  
OCTOBER 29, 2002



In addition to the main vehicular entry there are a series of formalized and ad hoc pedestrian entries around the park. These include: entries at either end of the park via the Los Gatos Creek Trail; two entries into the park from Camden Avenue on either side of the creek; two entries into the park from Dell Avenue; two ad hoc pedestrian entries from parcels fronting on to Dell Avenue; and an open boundary along a parcel devoted to offices fronting on to Knowles Avenue; a pedestrian and maintenance gate at the end of Oka Lane; and, the pedestrian / bicycle entry from the Mozart Avenue overpass.

### Biotic Resources

In 1975 the natural environment of Los Gatos Creek County Park was rather barren with limited biological diversity. Over the last 25 years, initial revegetation efforts have matured and the birdlife and other species have become more populous and diverse. The park has become well known in the Santa Clara Valley as an excellent site for bird watching. Observed bird species in the park have increased from around 30 in 1975 to 89 in 2000. There are currently no rare, threatened, endangered or sensitive animals, plants or natural communities near the park or creek according to the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Database.

### Operations of the Santa Clara Valley Water District

District water supply operations consist of the transmission of local and imported raw water for delivery to the groundwater percolation ponds adjacent to Los Gatos Creek. The delivery of the raw water occurs either through the diversion of local water from the creek into the ponds at Kirk Dam or by a turn out from the Central Pipeline. Maintenance and operational activities on the site consist of daily inspection of the groundwater percolation and pipeline facilities by automobile, occasional repairs of the pipeline and appurtenances, and the infrequent need to drain the recharge ponds for cleaning. Of these activities, the daily inspection poses the greatest potential for conflicting with pedestrians and bicycles. Additional maintenance activities consist of erosion repairs in Los Gatos Creek that would require the use heavy equipment and possibly the storage of supplies and materials on the site.

### Site Zones

The park site consists of five site zones with different characteristics: 1) the active recreation zone; 2) the Camden (large) ponds zone; 3) the Oka (small) ponds zone; 4) the upper (or southern) creek zone; and, 5) the east side lower creek zone. (See Figure 4 on following page.) The following text has a description of each of these zones, their size, features, resources and existing facilities. These zones will be used as the basis for formulating the master plan and setting resource management and operations policies for the continuing management of the park and its resources. Division of the site into zones is an appropriate approach to planning in this instance because resources management will vary from area to area. What is appropriate management or facilities in one zone may be environmentally destructive in another. The majority of the existing recreation facilities in the park are discussed in reference to the specific environmental zone where they occur.

### Los Gatos Creek Trail

The Los Gatos Creek Trail is one important recreation facility that crosses through the various zones within the park from north to south. The Los Gatos Creek Trail is a major regional trail,



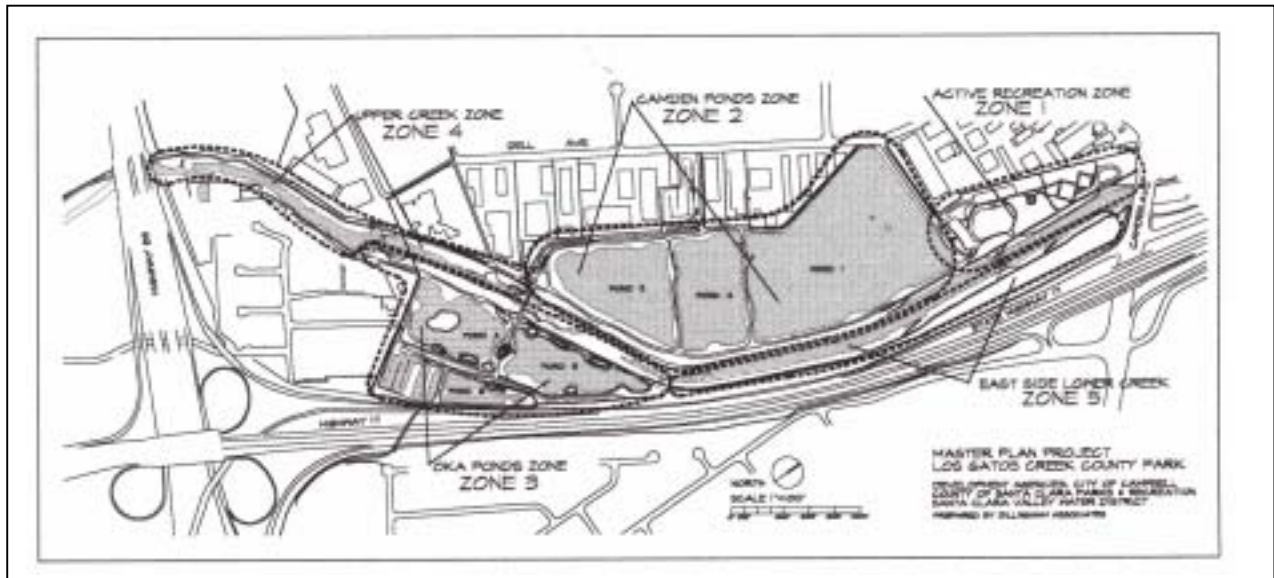


Figure 4 – Site Zones

designated in the County Trails Master Plan, running nine miles from Lexington Reservoir to a temporary terminus at Meridian Avenue. It is an alternative commuter route recognized within the County and is used by bicyclists as a means of commuting to work. In the future it will extend to the Guadalupe River Park in downtown San Jose, and eventually connect with the San Francisco Bay Trail via the Guadalupe River Trail. (See the County Trails Master Plan.) The portion of the trail within the project area is 8,400 feet long (1.59 miles) with 6,250 feet (1.18 miles) in the park proper. The northern portion of the trail, in the City of San Jose and beyond the park boundaries, was the subject of a master plan report prepared in 1985 for the City of San Jose. The trail consists of an eight to ten foot wide asphalt path, divided by a dashed yellow line that separates northbound from southbound users. The trail is heavily used on weekends because it connects a series of parks and other popular destinations along the creek corridor.

Trail users consist of:

- Walkers — Singly or in groups, with and without dogs, with or without small children.
- Runners or joggers — Singly, in pairs, and sometimes in larger groups.
- Skaters — On in-line skates.
- Commuter Bicyclists — Traveling longer distances at higher speeds.
- Recreational Bicyclists — Traveling shorter distances at slower speeds, mostly families with children.

The main issue to note about the trail is that the current width does not adequately accommodate the peak heavy use. In addition, because different users travel at different speeds, there is potential for accidents. Slower travelers such as walkers with children frequently need to move off the main trail to avoid blocking faster users and, as a result, have created a series of informal footpaths along the edges of the paved trail.

The trail is managed by the Los Gatos Creek Trail Steering Committee composed of representatives from five different agencies: The Cities of Campbell, Los Gatos, and San Jose, the County, and the District. The portion of the trail that runs through the park is under the jurisdiction of the County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department.

The trail could be improved with additional drinking fountains, seating and other amenities. In the case of Los Gatos Creek County Park, adding drinking fountains at the south end of the park would be convenient.

### Public Safety and Emergency Vehicle Access

Campbell Police and County Park Rangers make routine patrols of all areas of the park. These include patrols in police and ranger vehicles and patrol by officers on bicycles, off-road motorcycles, and an all-terrain vehicle.

Physically threatening crime has not been a persistent problem in the park. Emergency medical services are occasionally needed along the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The northeast end of the park has been an attractive location for the construction of homeless encampments where brushy areas are secluded and otherwise infrequently accessed. Removal or clearing of vegetation to eliminate hidden areas is not entirely feasible since the zone has been set aside for wildlife.

Telephone access to public safety services is available in only two locations in the park. A payphone is located near the main parking lot. A cellular telephone "call box" is located along the Los Gatos Creek Trail near the pedestrian bridge at the south end of the park. No telephone service is available in any areas east of the creek.

### **Zone 1 – Active Recreation Zone (turf areas / entrance / parking)**

#### Recreation Facilities

This zone consists of 18.4 acres at the north end of the park site, of which 10.2 acres are actually owned by the County. Other land in this zone includes major setback areas along Camden and Dell Avenues as well as a large setback along the creek. Major features include:

- Entry road, 700 feet long past the northern edge of Pond No. 1, leading from Dell Avenue.
- Two parking lots for 106 cars (46 and 60).
- A small restroom building.
- Five turf areas of four acres.
- Two flycasting ponds.
- A group picnic shelter at the north end of the turf area to accommodate groups up to 75 people in size.

A portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail, 1,580 feet long (.3 miles) runs along the eastern edge of the Active Recreation Zone. (See discussion above regarding the trail.)

The existing turf area and former group picnic site (recently converted to additional parking spaces as part of the relocation / upgrade of the group picnic shelter) has been used on a regular basis for organized group activities such as dog shows (Furry Friends Walkathon, Golden Gate Akita Club, Golden State German Shepherd Club, Great Dane Rescue of Northern California, The Newfoundland Club of Northern California, and the Sun Valley Dog Fanciers Dog Show) for some years. This area has also served as a staging location for walking and running events associated with the Los Gatos Creek Trail (Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Practice Run, Multiple Sclerosis Society Walk, March of Dimes Walk America). It is also used as an active recreation area associated with family and group picnic activities.

The concrete flycasting ponds were built in 1995 and are kept full of water supplied by pipe from Pond No. 1, except when they are being cleaned. The flycasting ponds are operated by a local club, Flycasters, Inc. with 350 members and volunteers. The club use of the facility is through an annual permit issued by County Parks. The club performs pond maintenance. The ponds are drained and cleaned three times per year. In addition, the club provides classes and seminars once a month on flycasting to club members and/or to the general public. Weekday attendance averages 5 - 10 persons who stay around 3 hours each.

The area north of the flycasting ponds, two acres in size, has no developed recreation facilities or other improvements at present. It is largely covered with the earth fill excavated from the flycasting ponds. The park boundaries in this area, to the north and west, are screened by a row of trees.

## **Zone 2 - Camden Ponds Zone**

The Camden Ponds Zone totals about 80 acres. The principal features are three large ponds leased to the County for recreational purposes from the District. The ponds were constructed to provide a method for placing water into the large aquifer under the Santa Clara Valley through the process of percolation. According to plans provided by the District, the ponds measure 17 feet deep. Pond No. 1, the largest pond and labeled "Camden Pond No. 3" by the District, includes two islands created by the reshaping and grading of the ponds around 1975. These islands serve as bird habitat, a secure location away from predators. A tree that had once served as a perch has recently fallen and other vegetation on the islands appears to be in decline. Trees were planted around the ponds as part of the 1975 construction project, but some trees have been lost and others are exhibiting signs of stress. This may be due, in part, to the gravelly and rocky nature of the soils.

The ponds form the west edge of a portion of the paved Los Gatos Creek Trail and provide a scenic vista for trail users. Beyond the paved trail, the ponds are ringed on all sides by a series of dirt paths. There are occasional picnic tables and benches along these paths but they are limited in number. The fact that paths completely ring the edges of the ponds has brought heavy visitor use to the edge of the ponds creating erosion and further degrading the plant life at the pond edges. The public use of the pond edges has limited their value as wildlife habitat.

Pond No. 1, northern-most and largest of the ponds with 12.2 acres, has been used for fishing (fish stocked by the State Department of Fish and Game), for youth fishing events (Almaden Valley Rotary Kid's Fishing Weekend, "Fishing in the City"), for board sailing classes, and for canoe and kayak demonstrations. There is a small fishing dock resting on piles with a hinged approach ramp at the southwest corner of the pond. A second floating dock was located near the northeast corner of the pond but has been removed.

Pond No. 2, the middle pond with 9.9 acres and known as "Camden Pond No. 2" by the District, has been used for model boating activities associated with the Marine Modelers of Santa Clara County.

Pond No. 3, the southern-most of the ponds with 10.9 acres and known as "Camden Pond No. 1" by the District, has no current formal recreational use.

### **Zone 3 - Oka Ponds Zone**

The park zone around the small ponds is 37.2 acres in size and is located on the east side of Los Gatos Creek and south of the Camden Ponds Zone. 35.6 acres of this zone are located within the park. An area of 1.6 acres of this zone is outside of the park boundary but is part of the Los Gatos Creek right-of-way that is directly connected to the park by a trail. The major features of this zone are four ponds, Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7. The District labels these ponds Oka Ponds Nos. 1 through 4, in the same order as listed here and shown on Figure 3. The areas of these ponds are 6.2 acres (including an island of 0.8 acres), 5.6 acres, 1.8, and 2.0 acres, respectively. Pond Nos. 4, 5, and 6 are used as percolation ponds. Pond No. 7 is used as a siltation pond so as to enhance percolation in the other ponds. Periodically Pond No. 7 is drained so that the accumulated sediment may be removed.

In comparison with the larger Camden Ponds, these smaller ponds are visited less often and are consequently ringed with fuller stands of riparian vegetation, and, as a result, have greater utility as wildlife habitat. Like the Camden Ponds they also have a percolation function and have similar restrictions on their use for body contact with the water. This zone is quieter than other parts of the park and it is this quality that makes it attractive to park visitors.

The zone around the Oka Ponds is connected to the rest of the park by a steel pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the creek near the southern end of Pond No. 3. This bridge serves as a paved trail connection from Mozart Avenue, east of Highway 17, by way of a pedestrian overpass over the freeway. In addition to the pedestrian overpass and creek bridge access to this zone, there is a pedestrian entry into the park near the southern end of this zone at the end of Oka Lane. Local residents use this entry. There is no parking within the park at this entry and those park users that arrive by car must park on the street. A two-story wood observation tower was built around 1978 by the City to provide opportunities for wildlife observation. This structure has sometimes been the site of after-hours activity and has been vandalized occasionally. Currently, the ramp connecting the ground to the second floor platform is missing and as a result, the structure is closed. Other than the observation tower and trails, there are no developed recreation facilities in this park zone.

West Valley Sanitation District 4 has an easement for a sanitary sewer line passing from the Oka Lane neighborhood south to north between Ponds Nos. 4 and 5 and No. 6.

### **Zone 4 - Upper Creek Zone**

The majority of this zone is beyond the boundary limits of the park but is included here because it is contiguous with and functions as part of the park. This zone follows Los Gatos Creek upstream from the pedestrian bridge at the southern end of the Camden Ponds continuing southwards upstream until crossing under Highway 85. The Upper Creek Zone totals 16 acres with 3.7 acres inside the park with another 12.3 acres south of the boundary line. The west side of this zone is bounded by a vacant parcel and two properties used for offices. The backside of private residences in the Mozart Avenue neighborhood bound the east side. The east side of the creek in this area, upstream of the small "Kirk Dam," is not accessible to the public. The Kirk Dam is a flashboard dam that is installed on a seasonal basis and is used to divert water into the Kirk or Lower Page distribution systems. These systems supply the adjacent groundwater percolation ponds as well as ponds outside the park boundaries.

The natural features of this zone are all related to the creek environment, with tall trees and riparian vegetation it has a wild or overgrown quality. Vegetation along the stream includes willow, sycamore, coast live oak, buckeye, black cottonwood, coyote brush, snowberry, mugwort as well as ruderals and grasses. Birds found in the stream corridor include brown towhee, scrub jay, kingfisher, red-winged Blackbird, Caspian tern, barn swallow, and snowy egret along with dozens of others.

The principal recreational facility of this zone is the extension of the Los Gatos Creek Trail (3,300 feet or .6 mile). The path runs through the riparian environment with its tall sycamores and other shade giving trees. The southern-most creek grade control structure within the park is located in the middle of this zone creating a waterfall and the diversion point for carrying water from the creek into the series of small water channels that feed the percolation ponds.

### **Zone 5 - East Side of Lower Creek**

The last zone of the park is the east side of the Lower Creek, the area between Los Gatos Creek and Highway 17, extending from the southern end of Pond No. 2 to the northern end of the site at Camden Avenue. This zone, which totals 16.8 acres, is owned and managed by the District. It is undeveloped with the exception of a 4000-foot long dirt path that has been created by use rather than design. Topography above the creek bank is complex because it was graded during freeway construction. From the top of the creek bank there is a steep 20-foot slope down to the water level. Vegetation is a mix of scrub vegetation such as Coyote brush, grasses and hardy plants that grow in the dry rocky soil. The zone has limited recreation value other than for walking. However, as it is adjacent to the creek edge and is generally separated from the rest of the park, it has value as wildlife habitat.

Homeless encampments have been occasionally discovered in secluded areas of the park, particularly the east side of the lower creek. Park users are uncomfortable venturing into the areas where evidence of homeless occupation exists. Encampments have been removed as discovered by police or park ranger patrols.

### **Recreation Needs**

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Los Gatos Creek County Park, the adjacent trails, creek and ponds areas have been popular sites for recreation. Comments from the public have shown that the public values the park for its special facilities – the trail, the ponds, the fly-casting ponds, as well as the turf and picnic areas. But beyond these facilities, the public has indicated that it values the tranquility, distance and open space found in the park.

Based on observation, the most popular single recreation activity in the park is the use of the Los Gatos Creek Trail. Other popular activities are walking, fishing, dog walking, “birding,” and use of the fly-casting ponds.

Americans are participating in outdoor recreation in greater numbers than ever before. “*Outdoor Recreation In America 2000: Addressing Key Societal Concerns*” (September 2000 by Roper Starch) found that more than three-quarters of Americans (78%) are participating in outdoor recreation at least once a month. This number has been rising for several years and increased 11 percentage points in the last year alone. California State Parks reports similar attendance trends at its parks in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is clear that outdoor recreation participation

has increased across all age and income categories. At the same time, the changing demographics of an aging population and a growing sedentary younger population both herald opportunities for additional passive recreation such as fishing, bird watching and walking.

The impact of outdoor recreation's increasing popularity on Los Gatos Creek County Park will be seen in the years ahead with heavier demands on the Creek Trail, parking, use of other trails around the ponds, and increases in almost all other activities.

## **Goals and Objectives**

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Goals are a general statement of purpose. They represent the long-range direction of a planning project. Discussion and agreement on a clear statement of goals at the beginning of a planning process is helpful to focus the ideas and proposals that follow.

### **General Goals**

General planning documents for the County, City, and District spell out various long term objectives for planning and development of their respective areas of jurisdiction. Many of these are applicable to the planning of Los Gatos Creek County Park and are summarized below in order to set a general context for the master planning process:

- Preservation of the County's cultural, historical, archeological and natural heritage.
- Integration of the County's parks as part of a system of accessible wilderness, regional parks, trails and recreational facilities.
- Development of a regional emphasis for County parks so that they function to satisfy countywide recreational needs.
- Providing sufficient open space lands to satisfy the growing demand for outdoor recreation in the County.
- Development of District lands for wildlife habitat and trails.
- Support efforts to enhance, enlarge and provide public access to regional open space, parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of City residents.
- Continued interagency cooperation to renovate and improve access to the Los Gatos Creek Trail and Los Gatos Creek County Park.
- Emphasize, joint maintenance or use agreements.
- Encourage the District, County, City, developers and private property owners to plant and maintain native trees and plants and replace invasive, non-native species with native ones along creek corridors.
- Support District efforts in instituting an on-going program to remove invasive plant species and harmful insects from ecologically sensitive areas, primarily by means other than application of herbicides and pesticides.
- Coordinate efforts with the District to remove some existing concrete in the channels and utilize more natural alternatives.

## **Master Plan Goals and Objectives**

Specific proposed goals for Los Gatos Creek County Park are:

### 1. Provide Facilities for Recreation that Take Advantage of Site Characteristics and Resources

Los Gatos Creek County Park is a site with significant natural resources including the percolation ponds, and Los Gatos Creek. In addition, the Los Gatos Creek Trail passes through the park site. These resources should be acknowledged through recreational facilities that accentuate the natural characteristics, and provide for both passive and active enjoyment of the site.

### 2. Enhance Park Identity

The unique character of Los Gatos Creek County Park lies in its natural character and its accessibility to nearby residential areas. Planting of park areas and restoration of existing facilities, such as the turf and picnic areas could improve its recreational capability.

### 3. Protect and Enhance the Park's Natural Character and Scenic Quality

The natural elements of the site, such as wildlife habitat, creek and ponds and their shorelines, are important resources and should be protected. Sensitive wildlife habitat will be preserved through appropriate site design and development. Where habitats have been degraded, efforts will be made to re-create or enhance them. Screening of areas, such as the freeway and adjacent businesses, may enhance park vistas. Interpretive material explaining the natural resources and history of the site could be provided.

### 4. Improve Recreational Facilities For a Better Visitor Experience

Demand for recreational facilities is expected to increase in Santa Clara County over the next decade. This is a result of increased population in the County and the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation. Walking, biking, bird watching, and picnicking are popular in the park. Trail improvement, directional signs, and interpretive information would also improve the quality of the recreational experience by increasing awareness of the park and its resources.

### 5. Provide Safe Recreational Experiences

Along with the need to protect the park's natural character and scenic quality, areas of the park must be designed and managed to permit safe public access and thereby deter occupation by homeless persons. Agreements among the various responsible agencies to provide regular patrols of the park areas and timely responses to service requests will enhance visitor safety and improve park management.

### 6. Provide Recreation Facilities that are Easily Maintained and Cost Effective

Improvements to Los Gatos Creek County Park should be done as cost efficiently as possible. Where possible, existing amenities should be upgraded and used, such as the restroom and parking area. Facilities that are easy to maintain and operate as well as those that generate revenue to offset park expenses should be given consideration. Any new facilities should be accompanied by adequate staffing.

## Opportunities and Constraints

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### Purpose

The purpose of comprehensive assessment of the "opportunities and constraints" for Los Gatos Creek County Park is to give a clear picture of how the site encourages or limits recreation development. The term "opportunities and constraints" refers to the qualities of the site that will affect its ability to accommodate different recreational needs. "Opportunities" are those site characteristics that may encourage certain types of use or development. For example, a site that provides scenic vistas would be a desirable destination for both picnickers and hikers. "Constraints" are those characteristics that might limit or restrict use. Examples of these could include steep slopes or sensitive wildlife habitat. The following listing of opportunities and constraints consider both natural character and cultural resources.

The opportunities and constraints listed here are an important basis for the park master plan. It is the general intent of the plan, as reflected in the master plan goals above, to respond as closely as possible to the opportunities and constraints while avoiding all significant environmental impacts.

### Zone 1 - Active Recreation Zone

#### Opportunities:

- No close residential neighbors.
- Currently developed and has minimal potential for environmental impact from increased recreation facilities development.
- Has existing recreation support facilities including parking, restrooms and picnic shelter.
- Open areas that can accommodate large group gatherings.
- Fly-casting facility.
- Small unused area of approximately one acre available for new facilities.

#### Constraints:

- Zone has low visibility to areas outside of the site.
- Hard to find, difficult, or limited access.
- Potential public safety concerns.
- Poor soil and drainage conditions for planting.
- Little shade.
- Zone has relatively limited potential for new development due to current build out.

### Zone 2 - Camden Ponds Zone

#### Opportunities:

- Ponds, channels and surroundings are scenic.
- Ponds have some existing habitat as well as potential for creating more habitat.
- Three different ponds allow for various uses in each area.
- Earth mounds along edges of ponds offer potential for scenic viewpoints.
- Ponds offer opportunities for water-oriented recreation such as boating.



- Islands offer protected avian habitat.

Constraints:

- Poor soils limit potential for vegetation.
- Land areas around the ponds are limited.
- Development and use must conform to requirements of SCVWD and State: no full body contact with water; any non-removable structures in or on the water.
- Areas around ponds have limited visibility and have the potential for public safety problems.
- Limited potential for creating wildlife habitat due to small land area and prevalence of existing paths and trails.
- Slopes at the edges of ponds are steep and may be potentially dangerous.
- Ponds are slightly impacted visually by the freeway.
- Ponds are primarily for percolation.

### **Zone 3 - Oka Ponds Area**

Opportunities:

- Intimate scale is a nice contrast with larger scaled spaces of large ponds.
- Small ponds have better wildlife habitat value.
- Less use and more land area around ponds increases habitat value.

Constraints:

- Lack of information about wildlife does not encourage resource protection.
- Ponds are easy to misuse.
- Small pond area is impacted by adjacent freeway.
- Extensive trails and pedestrian bridge create heavy use.
- Recreational use of the Small Ponds area is limited by the same constraints listed above for the Large Ponds Zone.

### **Zone 4 - Upper Creek Zone**

Opportunities:

- Surrounding area including the creek is visually attractive.
- Shade from trees makes path inviting even in hot weather.
- Existing facilities / and asphalt path support a heavy walking, running and bicycle use.

Constraints:

- Pathway is too narrow to accommodate existing traffic from bikes and walkers creating use conflicts.
- Right of way area is narrow and does not accommodate furniture or other places for rest stops beyond the edge of the trail.

### **Zone 5 - East Side of Lower Creek**

Opportunities:

- Zone is cut off from most park areas and thus providing a wildlife habitat that is somewhat protected from active use by people and dogs.

- An existing dirt path provides access through the zone.
- Area is adjacent to Los Gatos Creek and has potential for enhancement of the riparian habitat.

Constraints:

- Zone is narrow and does not offer much space for potential recreation activities.
- Zone is next to freeway and impacted by freeway noise.
- Zone does not have an attractive vegetative cover.
- Zone does not provide screening of freeway to rest of park.

## 4 - MASTER PLAN

This master plan for Los Gatos Creek County Park is based on the premise that the existing park is appreciated as an important resource for its community. Primary among these resources are Los Gatos Creek, the seven percolation ponds and a portion of the nine mile long Los Gatos Creek Trail. While the resource protection and basic recreation facilities are in place, there are improvements that may enhance resource protection and provide better facilities to serve the recreational needs of a greater number of potential users.

Los Gatos Creek County Park has a visible public image from the southbound lanes of the adjacent freeway. The image of water and trees is powerful and a welcome change to the usual views from the car of offices, houses and industrial buildings. From public comments, it is clear that there is a general appreciation of Los Gatos Creek County Park as an attractive and quiet place to visit, a place to go to appreciate water, views, wildlife, and vegetation as well as other people. From a larger perspective, Santa Clara County is becoming more densely populated and there will be fewer places where people can go within the suburban county in order to easily experience nature. Closer to the park itself, there are no other places in the City of Campbell, or nearby, that fulfill this need for passive recreation.

Following below are a series of proposals for park improvements. Some came from public or staff comments, while others were from observation of the park site itself. Proposals are organized into six groups: those that pertain to the park as a whole, and those that apply specifically to one of the five zones described in the previous section of this document.

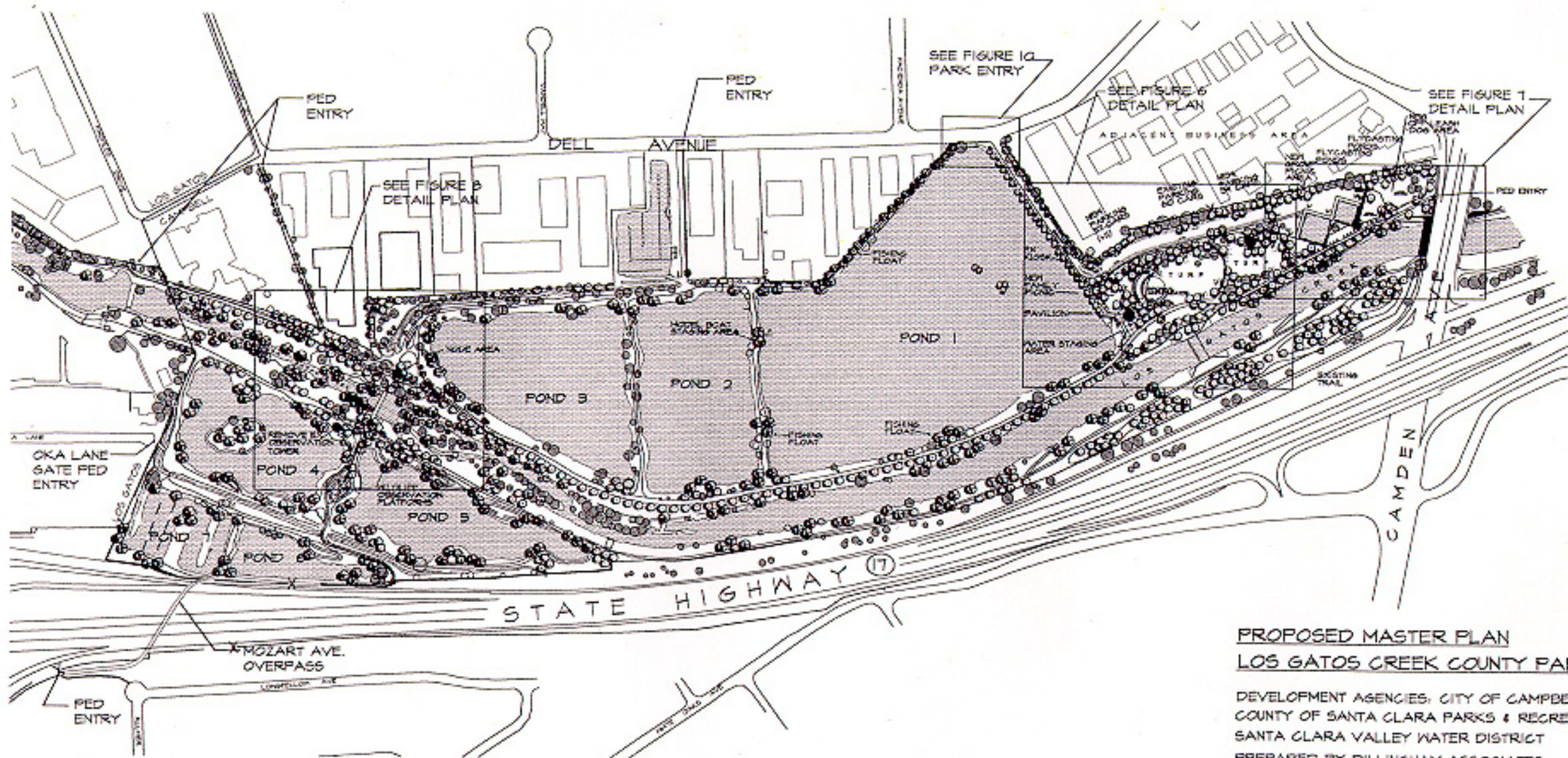
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## **ZONE 1 — ACTIVE RECREATION**

Although relatively small in area compared to other park zones, the Active Recreation Zone is the most visible because it provides the primary support facilities for the park – parking, restroom and main entry – as well as providing a setting for group events. The affect of a well-designed park area here will have a positive impact on visitors' perception of other park areas.

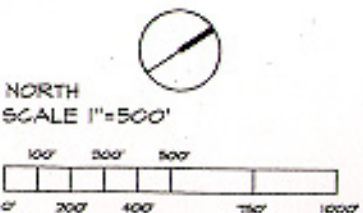
### **Basic Organization**

The existing layout of parking in this area includes two lots. The first, parallel to the north shore of Pond No. 1, has 60 stalls. The second, at right angles to the first and parallel to the western property line, has 46 stalls. The first lot, near the pond shore, separates the turf or active recreation zone from the pond. Relocation of this parking area to a position in line with the second parking area, adjacent to the western property line, will limit the park area affected by cars and provide a larger contiguous pedestrian zone. It will be natural, for example, to have a picnic area with a pleasant view of the pond. It will be desirable to provide an area near the pond for staging events such as boat demonstrations or fishing events. (See plan.) It is anticipated that this area near the pond, the turf and the trail will function as a kind of informal park center.



**PROPOSED MASTER PLAN  
LOS GATOS CREEK COUNTY PARK**

DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES: CITY OF CAMPBELL /  
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA PARKS & RECREATION /  
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT  
PREPARED BY DILLINGHAM ASSOCIATES  
OCTOBER 24, 2002



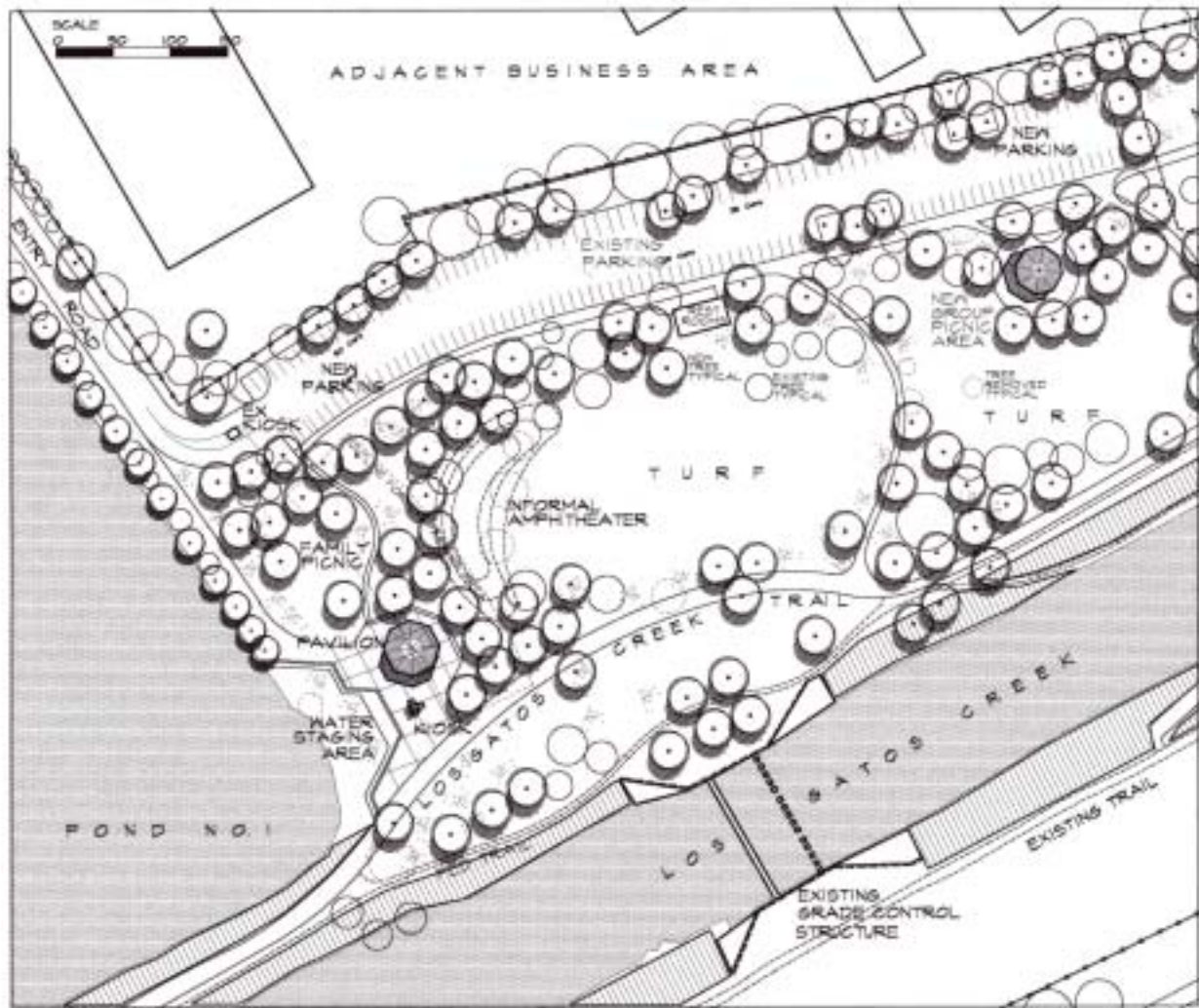


Figure 6 – Detail Plan – Zone 1 Active Recreation Zone – Part A

## Turf

One park user put it well when he described the grassy area as “an uncomfortable place to be.” Because of poor drainage the turf area is difficult to use easily for active recreation. However, its large open area has become useful for passive uses such as dog shows and charity events. Even so, the grassy area needs to be improved in several ways.

The turf grass, which is the main reason for being in this area of the park, is in poor condition. The problems with the grass are wet areas due to inadequate drainage and dirt tailings from gopher’s holes that make the surface uneven and hazardous. Several measures are needed to improve the situation. First, surface drainage will be improved by reconnecting existing catch basins and storm drainage lines. Second, the turf will be improved by adding fast-draining soil such as sand to create better pitches for surface runoff and to provide faster percolation. The soil mound north of the flycasting ponds (soil excavated during the construction of the flycasting ponds) may be suitable as fill in the turf areas. Finally, the existing galvanized iron irrigation and water supply lines are small and rusting. New water supply and irrigation systems are required. Water and irrigation systems must be separated with back-flow prevention devices isolating the irrigation system from domestic water.

## Picnic

With the relocation of the parking, as noted previously, a picnic area will be developed with strong pedestrian connections to the shore of the pond, to the Creek Trail and to the turf areas. This picnic area will replace the existing picnic area lost with the parking reconfiguration. The quality of the new picnic areas will be improved by adding trees and ornamental vegetation. This will also create a visual separation between the parking lot and the picnic areas.

## Public Events

Because the turf areas have been used for public gatherings like dog shows or charity events, they will be designed in such a way as to provide a simple low-key amphitheater in the form of a turf mound facing north. Some provision for electrical power, to be used by key and under permit, will be considered.

More trees will be planted around the edges of the turf to provide additional shade and to better define these activity zones.

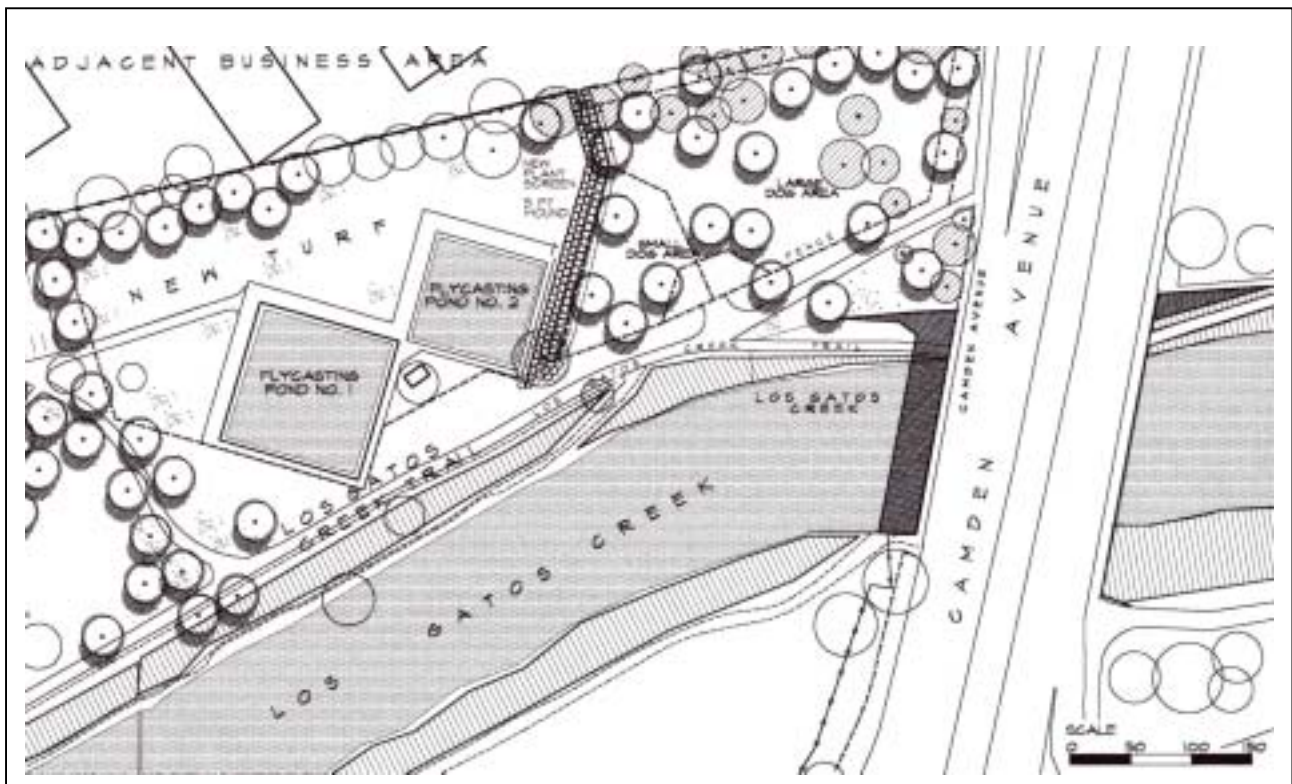


Figure 7 — Detail Plan – Zone 1 Active Recreation Zone – Part B

## **Off-leash Dog Area**

There appears to be considerable community support for an off-leash dog area. Off-leash dog areas can be important as they provide a much-needed place where dog owners can let their dogs run free. Considering that there are no other parks in the City of Campbell, or in the surrounding communities, with off-leash dog areas, it would be desirable if Los Gatos Creek County Park could accommodate such an activity. The addition of a well-located off-leash dog area will also reduce the conflicts between dogs and wildlife by containing the effects of the off-leash dogs to a specific location. The one site in the park that is adequate for an off-leash dog area, and is appropriately located, is a one-acre area north of the fly-casting ponds. A fence defining the Camden Avenue right-of-way will be moved to permit full use of this area.

The off-leash dog area will include a water source and trees or trellises for shade. The design may include an agility center. The fence will be a minimum of five feet high. The entry to the area will be along the side of the Los Gatos Creek trail near the Camden Avenue under-crossing. The dog area will be sufficiently separated / buffered from the fly-casting ponds so as to address potential conflicts of the two user groups. A layout for the off-leash dog area is shown in Figure 7. A bulletin board or kiosk of some kind will also be a point of communication between dog owners. Upon final design consideration, interested parties such as Flycasters Inc., will be consulted.

## **Entry Promenade**

The existing entry promenade along the north shore of Pond No. 1 is one of the attractive features of the park. Unfortunately, trees have not grown and filled in as well as they might. Additional trees will be planted between the existing trees, and additional benches, picnic tables and trellises will be added. The arrangement of trees and furniture will not limit the walking path for visitors walking into the park from Dell Avenue. Curbs and any other impediments to bicycle travel between Dell Avenue at the park entry and the Los Gatos Creek Trail will be removed so that bicyclists can travel rapidly and easily through the pedestrian zone and not be inconvenienced in any way.

## **Restroom**

Although older, the existing restroom structure appears to be well maintained and serviceable. No improvements appear warranted at this time. Unfortunately, inappropriate activity has been a problem in the restroom area. Frequent ranger patrols, signs, and lighting will help to deter these activities. The restroom structure should be reviewed for current ADA compliance.

## **Parking**

As discussed above, the existing parking area near the shore of the pond will be relocated to a site near the western boundary of the park. Since this boundary line abuts adjacent businesses, the parking is a suitable buffer activity between the property fence and active recreation. This relocation will create a rather long view of a linear parking lot. The plan for this area proposes removing three sections of about four parking stalls each to provide plant areas for trees and shrubs to interrupt the long view of the parking. After completion of the various proposed parking changes, there will be 156 stalls, of which 60 stalls in the existing parking area near the



western park boundary will remain. 39 stalls will be created at the end of the parking lot near the new picnic shelter and the flycasting ponds. The other 57 stalls will be part of the relocated parking area near the existing entry kiosk. (See Figure 6.) The size of the proposed parking stalls is nine feet by 18 feet. If demand warrants, the parking area will be re-striped to convert the 156 nine foot wide stalls to 165 stalls that are eight and a half feet wide. Due to the length of the proposed lot, speed bumps could be used to control the speed of cars. The current kiosk or pay station system of pay parking will continue and the kiosk will remain at its existing site.

## **Signs**

Additional kiosks or signboards will be installed at the “park center” area noted above. This site will provide brochures and a map showing the park and the surrounding zones as well as Los Gatos Creek Trail. Better signs at the flycasting ponds will help to explain the ponds and their use as well as provide information about the flycasting classes.

## **Screen Planting**

The western boundary of the Active Recreation Zone has an informal screen of trees visually separating the park from the fence and adjacent businesses. Unfortunately, many trees in this screen have died and there are noticeable bare spots or gaps. Additional trees will be added to this buffer. Care will be taken in the selection of trees that will be horticulturally suitable and provide rapid growth and a thick screen.

## **Riparian Vegetation**

Native riparian vegetation along the west edge of creek below the Los Gatos Creek trail will be added to improve bird habitat and stabilize creek banks. (See discussion of this topic under Zone 3 – Oka Ponds.)

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## **ZONE 2 - CAMDEN PONDS AREA**

With a major portion of this zone devoted to open water – 33 acres out of a total of 80 – most recreation activities are spread along the 10,100 foot shorelines of the three ponds. These narrow strips are often heavily used for fishing, walking and other activities. The result is a concentrated human impact in an area with a high habitat potential for birds and other wildlife. The major improvement issues for the areas around these ponds concerns ways to manage and control human use of the shoreline. Specific topics include: pedestrian trail improvements and use control, revegetation or other enhancement of habitat at shorelines, and construction of limited activity areas for model boating and fishing.

The ponds are aquifer recharge facilities operated by the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and as such, are subject to their management practices. Policies for use of the ponds are listed under Section Five – Park Management. All boating activities are by permit only.

## **Pedestrian Trail System**

The existing trails will be reconstructed to provide stable and maintainable surfaces. Trail edges will be controlled through planting or rail fencing to discourage off-trail short cuts. Trail gradients

will be limited to five percent or less where possible. Steep trail sections, where necessary, will be reconstructed to limit erosion potential and make them easily walkable. Where possible, provide alternate handicap-accessible routes for sections steeper than permitted under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Maximum trail widths will be no greater than six feet wide (except at the Los Gatos Creek Trail) unless needed for SCVWD or other service access and then only the minimum required. (See discussion of access to shorelines under "Fishing" below.) Benches at reasonable intervals along the trails, particularly along the west side of the ponds.

## **Recreation Access to Ponds**

Construct a better water access area at the northeast shore of Pond No. 1. (See Plan.) Although the existing small water access area at the northeast corner of the pond is a suitable location, this area will be redeveloped to make the gradients gentle, limit erosion and to discourage prohibited wading and swimming. The water access area will be posted against prohibited swimming and dogs entering the water. Grading and other construction will allow for wind and wave erosion of the shoreline. Although the water staging area will not be adjacent to public parking, a locked service drive could provide vehicular access. A key could be provided with a permit to use the pond.

Improved fishing facilities will be constructed near the trails around Pond No. 1. Concentrating fishing facilities in select areas will be balanced by limiting fishing in other areas of the pond perimeter. Non-fishing portions of the shore will be heavily planted and perhaps have access restricted by fencing. Fishing facilities will include:

- Two or three floating fish platforms reached by a hinged ramp from the shore. These will be similar to the existing float at Pond No. 1.
- Perimeter trails will be brought close to the water level for a distance of no greater than 20 or 30 feet in any one spot. Other portions of the trails will be kept away from the shoreline and access controlled with wood-rail fencing.

The District recommends that the shore of percolation ponds be re-graded to flatten slopes and enhance revegetation and wetland habitat rehabilitation.

A better activity area for the Model Boat users at Pond No. 2 will be built. The existing model boat dock will be relocated to a nearby level area with two picnic tables.

Signs and interpretive material will be installed at several locations near the ponds identifying birds, plants and the need to protect them and their habitat.

## **Planting and Revegetation**

The existing screen of trees along the west edge of the park, which visually separates the park from adjacent businesses, is inconsistent and has gaps. The visual separation will be enhanced by planting open areas with a screen of trees and shrubs along the park boundary.

Vegetation will be used to control access to off-trail areas, particularly pond edges. Where visitors, dogs or others create undesirable paths, use signs and fencing to restrict access. Add trees and snags at the islands in Pond No. 1 to improve bird habitat. (See revegetation proposals listed under Zone 3 – Oka Ponds Area for other proposals.)

Public access to the creek is controversial. On one hand, the wildlife habitat increases if public access is restricted, but on the other hand, a good way for people to learn about and respect wildlife is by actually experiencing it. A compromise will be to restrict pedestrian creek access with fences to two locations, thereby carefully controlling access and potential environmental impacts. (See Figure 5.) Signs will explain the creek ecosystem. This information will include the kinds of wildlife found in the creek corridor and its surroundings.

## ZONE 3 - OKA PONDS AREA

In contrast to the active recreation around the larger Camden Ponds, the smaller Oka Ponds are quiet and conducive as habitat for birdlife. The twisting paths and shorelines as well as the marginal pond vegetation all promote a sense of visual tranquility within a few yards of a major freeway. Major improvement issues in this zone concern ways to enhance the habitat value of the pond area. The ponds are aquifer recharge facilities operated by the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and as such, are subject to their management practices. All boating activities are by permit only.

### Visitor and Dog Control

One of the greatest threats to the wildlife, especially the birds, is dogs. Unfortunately some dog owners do not seem to understand the negative effects their off-leash dogs can have on wildlife. Off-leash dogs can disturb nesting birds, or cause added stress to wildlife that is already living under less than ideal conditions. One way to decrease this problem will be to increase visitor awareness by posting signs that make it clear why dogs need to be on-leash and the penalties for allowing dogs off-leash.

Due to limited staffing, enforcement of these rules is difficult, therefore signs will be critical to enhance enforcement through passive means. Specific proposals include:

- Develop a series of signs explaining the need for limited access to the Oka Ponds area. Use the entry into this area to alert park users, especially those with dogs, about the bird-life and the need to keep dogs on-leash and on-trail.
- Redesign the pedestrian trail system to eliminate

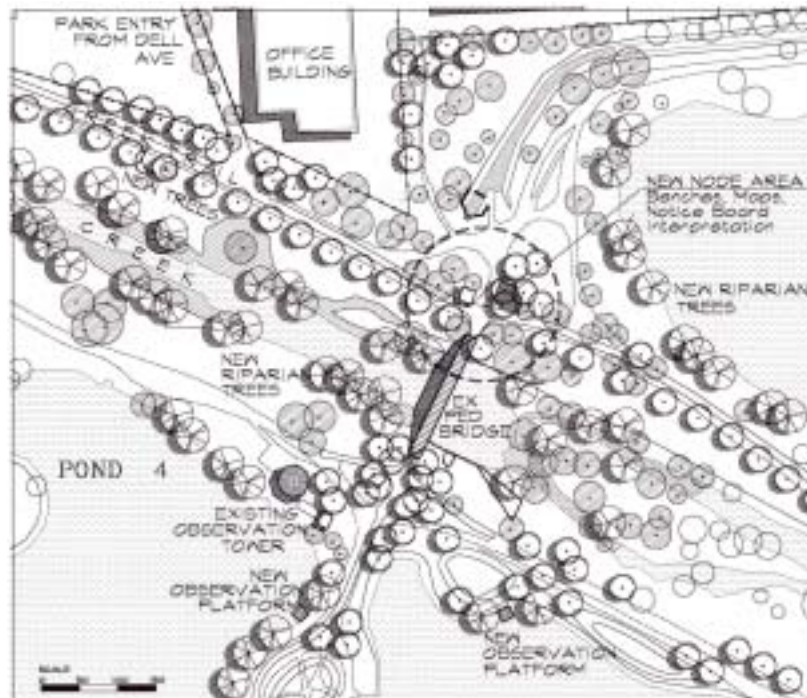


Figure 8 — Detail Plan — Zone 3 Node Point at Pedestrian Bridge

access to the water edge for at least half of the perimeter of each pond. (See plan.) Simplify circulation by eliminating trails that parallel or duplicate others.

- Reconstruct the pedestrian trail system to provide minimum width trails – no greater than six feet wide unless needed for the District or other service access and then only the minimum required.
- Use vegetation to control access to off-trail areas, particularly pond edges. Where undesirable paths are created, use fencing to restrict access.

### **Other Proposals**

Two small (36 square feet) observation platforms will be built overlooking the ponds from the existing mounds. They will be screened with vegetation from the ponds and will not create an apparent threat to bird-life. The observation platforms will be used as a site for bird-life interpretation panels, conveying information about various birds and their habitat.

The existing observation tower will be removed.

A map of the park will be installed at park entries such as Mozart Avenue pedestrian bridge over the freeway, and the park entry at Oka Lane.

### **Revegetation**

Unfortunately, revegetation is a difficult problem for this area. The park was planted in the 70's and some of this vegetation has died. It is apparent that park areas near the trails should be revegetated; however the soils are rocky and poor. The other issue affecting revegetation is irrigation. Due to the fast-draining soil, even native plantings will need to be irrigated for initial establishment.

The real issue for revegetation is careful plant selection for poor soils. It is important to determine what can and will grow in the area. By choosing the appropriate plant species the riparian habitat will be much improved. The appropriate plants will also help to provide habitat for the native wildlife. In addition, planting designs need to consider the potential for vandalism. Place plants in areas that are not too close to paths. Where plants are near high traffic areas use protective fencing to isolate them.

In discussions with the District it was agreed that using native indigenous plants would be preferred. It was also agreed that over the life of the plan (20 years) thoughts on what should be planted and/or what could survive would likely change. Therefore rather than including a plant list, plant lists will be developed working with a botanist and the District during each implementation phase.

### **Riparian Plantings**

In addition to revegetation of areas around the Oka Ponds, riparian species will be added to areas along the banks of Los Gatos Creek. In some cases, these species will be the same as those used around the ponds – for example Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*). The addition of riparian

vegetation will cool creek waters and improve fish habitat while providing better screening and habitat for birds and other wildlife species.

One of the goals of the park will be to educate the public about native plant and animal species of California. The riparian area of this park will be a great opportunity to do this, especially if it is replanted with native riparian species. For example, park users could look at a map of the park on an interpretive panel or on a printed map brochure then go on a 'tour' of the park. They will be directed to locations to look for a particular species such as willows. At that location there will be a small sign explaining important facts about willow trees, including Native American uses for willow trees, and what wildlife species use this habitat.

### **Control of Invasive Plant Species**

The County will develop a program, if possible, with the California Native Plant Society, California Conservation Corps or other local volunteer groups to eradicate invasive plant species such as Giant reed (*Arundo donax*), Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), Star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), and others. It is important to eradicate these plants as they provide little or no habitat for the native birds and other wildlife while out-competing and crowding native plants.

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### **ZONE 4 - UPPER CREEK AREA**

Much of this area is not within the park although it has a strong functional connection. For this reason, recommendations presented here are general in nature and are not part of the implementation proposals developed later in this report. Since visitor use of this area is dominated by trail use, trail recommendations outlined above would also be applied in this zone.

### **Recreation and Trail Facilities**

The connection of the Los Gatos Creek Trail and the west end of the pedestrian bridge is an intersection of several paths and is a potential node in the park for providing limited visitor amenities such as seating, drinking fountain and interpretation. This area will also be the site for a map of the park as well as a map of Los Gatos Creek Trail for reference of trail users. This site will also be appropriate for interpretive materials about such topics as bird life, Los Gatos Creek, the percolation ponds and history of the area.

### **Revegetation**

Where creek banks lack an overstory of riparian vegetation, particularly along the west bank just upstream of the pedestrian bridge, additional riparian plantings will be added. (See discussion above.) In addition, vegetation will be added in areas between the trail / park and adjacent businesses to provide additional screening.

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## **ZONE 5 — EAST SIDE LOWER CREEK AREA**

The east side of the lower creek, between the creek and the freeway, is the least used area of the park. There is an opportunity to make this part of the park a “wild” area and left in its undeveloped state. The earlier master plan for the creek and ponds designated this zone for wildlife habitat. This master plan and the agencies involved with planning support continued designation of this area as a wildlife habitat zone. With this goal in mind it is appropriate to do as little to this area as possible other than habitat restoration and interpretive improvements. The existing trail will retain its surface of packed dirt.

### **Revegetation**

The area will be planted to improve habitat value, particularly along the margins of the creek. Screening vegetation will be added to block views of the freeway from the park. Some view corridors from the southbound freeway lanes toward the ponds will be retained. The proposed screening and the view corridors need not conflict because the view corridors from the freeway will be at an angle related to the driver’s cone of vision, no greater than 30-degrees from the line of travel. Masses of screen plantings will be most effective when laid out at right angles to the view of the park user. (See Figure 5 Master Plan.) As discussed previously, a specific plant list will be developed working with a botanist and the District during the implementation phase.

Vegetation will be planted along the water edge to increase habitat for wildlife species. Vegetation will be used to block human access to the creek bank and water edge.

### **Public Safety Services**

Due to budget and operational constraints of the Park Rangers, the Campbell Police should attempt to patrol park areas more. The Campbell Police should coordinate park patrols with Park Rangers and other staff. Possibly such an arrangement should be formalized with a written agreement to maximize coverage and to cite offenders of leash laws, etc.

Control of transient and homeless persons will require a concerted effort by Park Ranger staff as well as City of Campbell Police and any other policing services.

The removal of vegetation not needed for wildlife habitat could improve visibility and improve public safety.

Vandalism in the park is high. Signs are reportedly torn out or vandalized shortly after installation. Plantings are particularly susceptible to damage. All improvements must be designed and installed with an awareness of this problem and plans for abatement included.

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## **OVERALL PARK PROPOSALS**

Proposals for overall park improvements, which do not apply specifically to one of the five site zones, include trail improvements, park orientation (how to find it), park entry, signs, interpretation signs / panels inside the park, and potential park expansion.

## Los Gatos Creek

During the 1960's, Los Gatos Creek was reconfigured into a channel, or "channelized," to provide space for percolation ponds as well as to control erosion of adjacent areas and the creek channel itself. Since that time, flows in the creek have been reduced 50 percent, from 14,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 7,000 cfs. Due to the reduction of peak flows, it would be possible to make channel modifications without an increased risk of flooding from the creek. The unused capacity of the existing channel could permit a return of the creek channel to a more natural and meandering alignment. The reach of the creek directly north of the pedestrian bridge shows such a naturally meandering configuration. The Master Plan recommends that the District extend this character further downstream along the creek areas near Zone 3 — Camden Ponds.

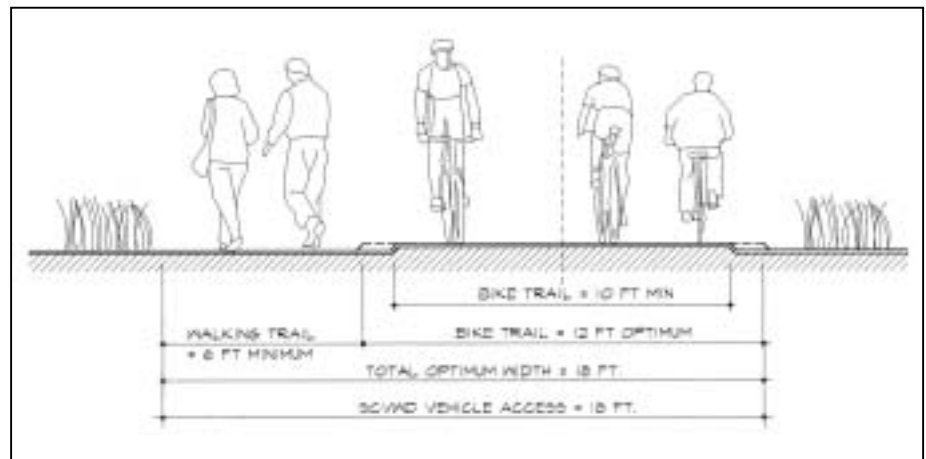
Re-creation of the natural channel pattern could be accomplished first by modifications to the grade control structures and channel. After grading, streamside areas would be planted with native riparian plant species. If this proposal becomes a funded project, it would be undertaken by the District and would include the necessary CEQA documents and permits from regulatory agencies.

## Trail Improvements

There are two types of trails in the park, paved trails such as the Los Gatos Creek Trail and its connector to the Mozart Avenue pedestrian overpass, and the dirt or gravel trails that spread throughout the remainder of the park. Paved pathways in the active recreation zone are discussed below.

### Paved Trails

Comments at community meetings identified the inadequacies of the existing Los Gatos Creek Trail. The surfacing is in poor condition and the trail is too narrow to serve the demands. The need for a wider trail comes from the variety of trail users: faster bicyclists, recreational bicyclists including smaller children, rollerbladers, runners, joggers, walkers (including ones with baby strollers), and dog walkers. Sufficient width would mean that there are zones for different speeds moving in opposite directions. Observation of the



*Figure 9 – Proposed Trail Improvements*

existing trail shows that foot traffic has spread out as much as ten or fifteen feet to either side of the paved trail where the terrain permits. Although this trail has a total length of nine miles and extends well beyond the limits of this project, trail improvements must begin somewhere, and the portion of the trail in the park is popular. Trail improvements in the park will serve as a pilot

project for improvements in other portions of the trail. Such a project will test a design for increased capacity to verify that is workable, affordable and meets the needs of an increasing group of trail users. The trail length within the project area is 8,400 feet with a 1,400 foot (.26 mile) paved connector to the Mozart Avenue pedestrian overpass.

Specific recommendations for trail improvement are:

- Where possible realign the trail to separate pedestrians and bikes into parallel and contiguous alignments. (See Figure 9.) Give runners, pedestrians and strollers a crushed rock surface (particles 1/8-inch and less), and give bicycles an asphalt surface. Use signing, striping and other elements to separate the paved and non-paved areas as well as indicate the travel lane and direction of movement.
- Widen the trail to accommodate (where space permits) a minimum of eight to twelve feet paved tread with two to six feet soft surface shoulder on the west side to accommodate the different user groups. (See recommended widths below.) Although these widths may not be adequate to prevent all conflicts between users – runners and walkers, for example – it will be difficult to get more space and these widths will be adequate in most circumstances. Trail widths and configuration will also accommodate District maintenance vehicles and operations. The asphalt trail surface must also accommodate loading by maintenance vehicles.

<i>Available Width</i>	<i>Bike Path</i>	<i>West Side Pedestrian Path</i>
10 ft.	8 ft.	2 ft.
12 ft.	8 ft.	4 ft.
14 ft.	10 ft.	4 ft.
16 ft.	12 ft.	4 ft.
18 ft.	12ft.	6 ft.
20 ft.	14 ft.	6 ft.

- The path will be resurfaced as normal wear and tear from tree roots and weathering have made the trail uneven in certain areas. Low areas with inadequate drainage will be raised or modified to eliminate puddles.
- One way to improve safety will be to add signs indicating maximum traveling speeds in certain dangerous areas. Paths can also be marked/painted with signs asking people to be considerate and to share the trail with other users.
- Improve the trail under-crossing at Camden Avenue to ease movement along the trail for bicycles and pedestrians and improve accessibility. The system of bollards where the trail crosses under the Camden Avenue bridge creates hazards and congestion for trail users.. The bollard arrangement needs to be redesigned to be safer, permit wider vehicles to pass, and to accommodate traffic. The City and the County will jointly pursue grant or other funding to widen or rebuild this portion of the trail.
- Add amenities along the trail such as drinking fountains, benches, orientation and interpretative signs. (See discussion below under Zone 4 - Upper Creek Area.) Benches will



be located at intervals along the trail where space permits. Benches will be set-back from the trail to avoid use conflicts with trail users.

- Review bike routes through the park to eliminate unnecessary curbs or other impediments to smooth bike travel. Bike lanes will be extended to neighboring streets.

## **Park Orientation**

The street pattern in the neighborhood around the park is confusing for anyone not familiar with the area. This confusing situation is created by the nearby intersection of State Highway 17, the San Tomas Expressway (which becomes Camden Avenue) and the railroad tracks as well as the various necessary overpasses, underpasses, ramps, and realigned streets.

### Directional Signs

A series of metal directional signs at key locations around the park will help direct visitors to the park. Visitors traveling south on Winchester Boulevard or San Tomas Expressway will be routed to the intersection of Winchester Boulevard and Hacienda Avenue, a key point from which to access the park by vehicle. Northbound visitors on Highway 17 and Camden Avenue need to be directed off Camden before the railroad overpass. Specific proposed sign locations include:

#### *Visitors Exiting from Northbound Highway 17 and traveling North on Camden Avenue*

- Left-turn sign at end of off-ramp as it meets White Oaks Avenue (exists).
- Left-turn as White Oaks Avenue meets Camden Avenue (exists).
- Right onto Dell Avenue as it loops under the Camden Avenue / San Tomas Expressway overpass at the railroad tracks (exists).
- Left-turn from Dell Avenue into the park entry.

#### *Visitors Traveling South on San Tomas Expressway or Winchester Boulevard*

- Right-turn sign from San Tomas Expressway onto loop off-ramp to southbound Winchester Boulevard.
- Right-turn sign as off ramp from San Tomas Expressway meets Winchester Boulevard.
- Left-turn sign for southbound visitors on Winchester Boulevard at Hacienda Avenue.
- Left-turn sign as Hacienda Avenue meets Dell Avenue (exists).
- Right-turn sign from Dell Avenue into park entry.

#### *Visitors Traveling North on Winchester*

- Right-turn sign at Hacienda Avenue.
- Left-turn sign as Hacienda Avenue meets Dell Avenue (duplicates above).
- Right-turn sign from Dell Avenue into park entry (duplicates above).

Signs such as these are typically aluminum panels mounted on a single metal post. A color scheme of white letters on a brown background is commonly used for directional street signs to parks although any readable combination could be used. Signs need to be sized and lettered appropriately for legibility at common travel speeds on the indicated roads. Sign placement and design will be coordinated with appropriate agencies such as the County of Santa Clara and the City of Campbell.

Once visitors have arrived at the intersection of Dell Avenue and the park entry road, the design of the park entry will clearly denote this as the park entry. (See Park Entries discussion below.)

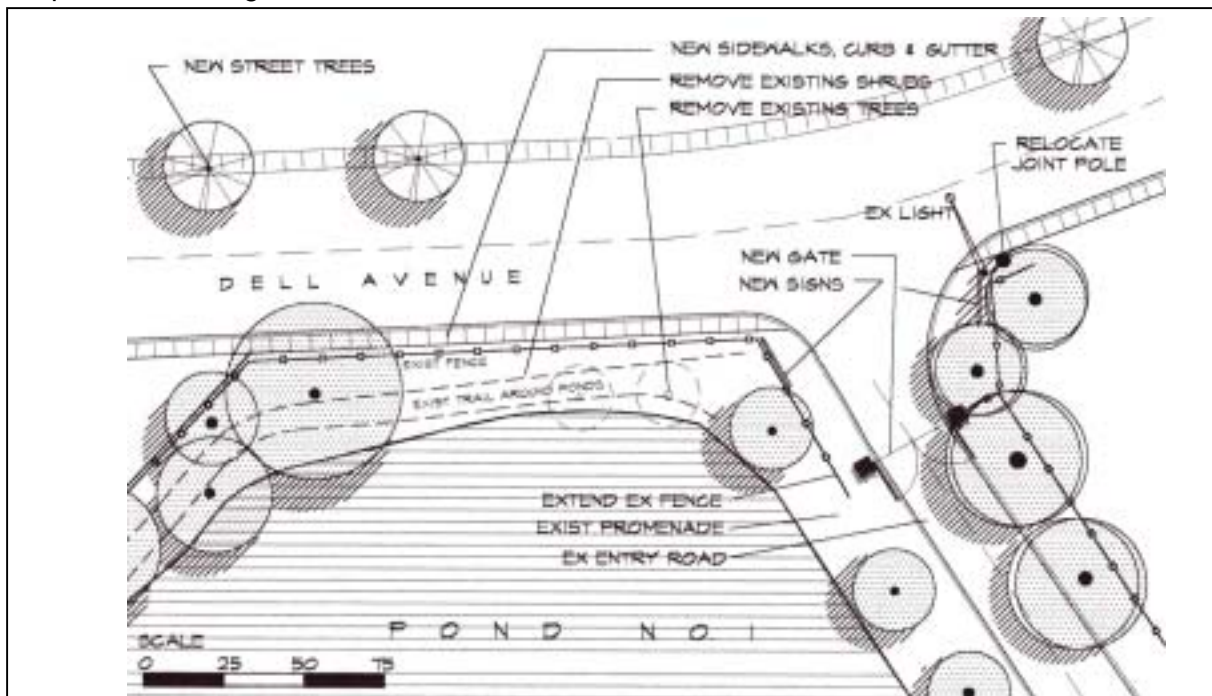
### Green Streets as Park Extensions

The Campbell Community Design Study prepared by Sasaki Associates in 1991 advocated development of “gateways” to the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The report never gave any information about the “gateways,” however, one plan prepared as part of the report proposed the addition of street trees in the vicinity of Los Gatos Creek County Park. This idea will reinforce the orientation and directional signing measures mentioned above by using the street trees to “extend” the image of the park into the surrounding community. Street trees will be planted and maintained by the City of Campbell within the public right-of-way on Dell Avenue, Hacienda Avenue, Knowles Drive and Division Street from Winchester Boulevard to Dell Avenue. Street tree planting will be combined with other street improvements such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, and bicycle lanes, as noted below.

## **Park Entries**

### Main Park Entry

As currently developed the park entry is not particularly inviting or visible to park users. A joint utility pole to the right of the entry road detracts from the entry and matches the somewhat industrial character of the area north of the park entry. Fencing and shrub planting block a potential view of Pond No. 1. While the existing Eucalyptus and pine trees do act as a general marker for the park, their layout is not strong enough to actually suggest a park entry. Simplification and strengthening of the park entry elements will help. Proposed entry improvements might include:



*Figure 10 — Park Entry*

- If possible, relocated existing overhead utilities to an underground route. Alternatively, relocate the existing joint utility pole at the left of the entrance to a site on the north side of the entry road where it will be less visible among the eucalyptus trees and will not block views of the park from the street.
- Installation of curb, gutter, bicycle lanes and sidewalk along Dell Avenue.
- Removal of large shrubs which block visitors views of the ponds and park entry road.
- Installation of a prominent park sign with a size sufficient to be seen by northbound or southbound travelers on Dell Avenue.
- Installation of a new gateway, perhaps with vertical column or gate post elements that will be integrated with the design of the fence and the actual park gate. Consider use of public art as part of the design for the new gate.
- Installation of a new metal park gate and replacement of fencing will be desirable but the existing gate could continue to be used.

Use of public art, especially at the entrances to the park, will be a good way to give the park a stronger identity. The general nature of the art should be integrated with the design of park elements as well as respond to the park's natural character. Using an artistic theme for all of the entrances to the park and at some key areas will help to enhance the character of the park.

### Other Park Entries

The pedestrian entrances to the park will be improved to be visually appealing. The widespread use of chain-link fence surrounding the pedestrian entrances contributes to an overall feeling of isolation and uneasiness. If at all possible alternative fence materials will be used or the chain link will be softened and screened with additional planting. An attractive entry sign or other constructed elements that is repeated at each of the entries will build a common theme and recognition of entry for park users. Ad hoc entries (those without a dedicated public right-of-way or access) will be reviewed and closed if they have created problems in the park or caused resource impacts.

### **Signs and Interpretation Inside the Park**

A set of consistently designed directional and identification signs within the park will provide accessible information with greater clarity. Because there is jurisdictional overlap between the County of Santa Clara Parks & Recreation Department and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, directional and interpretive sign styles are inconsistent. Existing signs in the park are vandalized and the design of new signs must anticipate that situation. Use metal signs rather than wood. Locate signs where they are visible to passers by. Fabricate signs so that they are easily replaced or repaired if vandalized. Specific recommendations are:

- Sign layouts and designs will be consistent throughout the park. A typical sign layout with a color theme and logo will be chosen by sponsoring agencies to help standardize the signs. There are standard existing signs along the Los Gatos Creek Trail that have been agreed upon with the various sponsoring agencies. These standard signs will be retained but coordinated with other park signs, improvements and plantings.
- The signs will be clear, easy to read and written in a positive tone; the first thing you see when you enter the park will be a welcome, and an orientation map. Signs should be located

where they are visible for visitors seeking information, but not so obvious that they detract from the surroundings.

- Develop an interpretive plan and program for the park. Interpretive signs within the park will provide an opportunity to educate the public about the wildlife in the natural areas of the park and the purpose of the percolation ponds. Interpretation will be focused on and located near site resources. Topics might include: percolation ponds, Los Gatos Creek, grade control structures, riparian plants, commonly sighted bird species (perhaps several at different locations within the park), ground mammals and maps.

## **Public Art**

Public art provides an excellent possibility to enhance and clarify the character of the park. Recently, the City of Campbell completed Edith Morley Park adjacent to the McGlincy Percolation Ponds, and incorporated a metal-art wall sculpture installation on the blank rear side of a warehouse building. The wall sculpture is reflected in the water of the pond and adds a dimension to what would otherwise be a drab façade. Public art will be incorporated into signs, fences, and new building designs. By adding interesting texture to a flat façade, a new dimension is added. There are numerous possibilities at this site that will help to unify disjointed elements while repeating particular visual themes. It is important to add one caution, and that is that the art, like all other constructed park elements, must be designed and implemented specifically for the park in a way that enhances the natural character of the park. Any elements that overwhelm or distort the basic sense of place will detract from the park and the visitor's experience and will not be used. The use of art in park improvements is not intended as freestanding art pieces, but rather as a means to enhance other elements that are otherwise necessary such as gates. Like signs, any public art may be subject to vandalism and accordingly will be designed to be vandal resistant.

## **Potential Park Expansion**

Due to the small size of the park, the County or the City should consider ways of increasing the overall size of the Park. Although developed parcels, including light industrial, office, residences and roadways surround the park, it may be possible to acquire a few in critical locations, should they become available. Although the Active Recreation Zone is limited, the platting of adjacent parcels, a series of long narrow lots abutting the park, would not make it easy to make a meaningful acquisition. One limited goal for acquisition might be to expand the park's visible frontage on Dell Avenue.

## **5 – PARK MANAGEMENT AND POLICIES**

## **PARK MANAGEMENT AND POLICIES**

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Los Gatos Creek County Park is maintained by the staff of the County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department (County) as well as the staff of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District). In general, County staff will continue to maintain the County-owned area, known as Zone 1 – Active Recreation Zone in this report as well as recreation facilities in other areas of the park. The District will maintain water features, levees and vegetation in other areas, Zones Two through Five. General park management and maintenance practices at the park will be continued and expanded under this master plan.

In addition to specific construction proposals contained in the Master Plan section of this report, this section proposes a series of policies for park management and maintenance. The intent of the policies is to indicate general intent rather than specific means and methods for achieving the desired goals. Policies are organized into a series of convenient topic-related sections. These are intended for the general reference of the reader rather than separating or excluding one policy from another.

### **Visitor Support Facilities**

- Evaluate any proposed construction activities to verify that appropriate water quality protection standards are maintained, including erosion and sediment control standards.
- Maintain park orientation signs on surrounding streets.
- Maintain park identification and interpretation signs.
- Maintain visitor serving facilities such as parking, restroom, picnic areas and shelters, turf areas, pathways, furniture, etc.
- Provide and maintain adequate trash containers for visitor use. Install signs reminding visitors of the need for using trash containers.
- Maintain current system of activity use permits as a way to monitor and control public activities in the park. Coordinate activity requests with the District when proposed activities impact the ponds and creek.

### **Off-leash Dog Area**

- Manage the off-leash dog area to maintain cleanliness. Provide plastic bags and trash receptacles for owners to use for dog waste. Control run-off from this area to Los Gatos Creek. Verify that appropriate water quality protection standards are maintained.

### **Dogs**

- Permit dogs within park areas when they are accompanied by their owners and are controlled by a leash except within the fenced off-leash dog area.
- Dog owners should be especially cautioned with signs to keep their dogs well controlled and out of the water in the area of the Oka Ponds.

### **Park Entries and Boundaries**

- Monitor park boundaries and fences to limit access to designated park entries.

- Monitor park access fences to limit visitor access to areas designated for visitor use.

## **Trails**

### Paved Trails

- Adhere to the policies of the County of Santa Clara Trail Master Plan Policies document.
- Improve trails to better accommodate public use.
- Maintain trails for safety and ease of use.
  - Resurface and re-stripe paved trails on a regular basis.
  - Monitor trails for hazards.
  - Provide and maintain support services and facilities for the public along the length of the trail through the park.
  - Periodically clean the paved trails to prevent build-up of gravel and sediment on trail surfaces.
- Use vegetation and fencing to guide trail users on the trail and to discourage visitors from trespassing on off-trail areas such as creek and pond banks.
- Post and maintain signs and other controls to limit bicycle speed and promote safety.
- Continue coordination with Los Gatos Creek Trail Coordinating Committee to deal with issues along the length of the trail.

### Other Trails

- Redefine existing trails so that pedestrian trails are no wider than six feet unless used for maintenance by the District, in which case the trail width should conform to the minimum width permitted by the District, 18 feet in most cases. Redefine these unpaved trails through revegetation and fencing to restrict trail use to designated trail widths.
- Use vegetation, signs and fences to control access to off-trail areas, particularly pond edges.
- Coordinate with other agencies in terms of needs for maintenance access and emergency vehicle access. These agencies include West Valley Sanitary District, the County of Santa Clara Fire Department, City of Campbell Police Department, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

## **Public Safety**

- Maintain emergency call box.
- Monitor park areas for homeless encampments and remove them when found.
- Provide regular patrols of park areas by park rangers.
- Coordinate park entries and trails with Campbell Police and County Fire to ensure that adequate access is maintained for emergency vehicle service.

## **Vegetation Management**

- While generally maintaining screening between the park and Highway 17, maintain view corridors into the park so that motorists can see the park and the ponds.

- Plant and maintain buffer screens of trees and shrubs along the edges of the property that are adjacent to other uses such as light industry, offices and residences.
- Whenever possible, use plant materials for revegetation that are native to similar ecological situations in the Santa Clara Valley. When these plants are not available, use plant materials native to northern and central California in similar ecological situations. If neither of these sources provide suitable plants, use other riparian or drought tolerant materials, depending upon proposed plant locations.
- Eliminate existing invasive and non-native plants such as Giant reed (*Arundo donax*), Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), and Broom (*Cytisus* species).

### **Wildlife Management**

- Manage ponds and designated shore areas to provide supportive habitat for bird life.
- Plant and maintain riparian species in shore areas to provide habitat for bird life.
- Use fencing and signs to restrict park visitors from designated habitat areas.
- Where appropriate, provide additional elements to support bird life such as perches or shelters.
- Maintain the east side of the Creek as a wildlife habitat protection zone. Other than the existing dirt-surfaced foot trail for pedestrians, do not encourage or permit other uses. Install fencing to discourage bicycle use of the trail on the east side of the creek.

### **Los Gatos Creek**

- Work to return the channel of Los Gatos Creek to a natural-appearing configuration, one similar to existing natural creek channels in the Santa Clara Valley. Within this general guideline, work to meet the following criteria:
  - The creek channel will continue to accommodate flood events up to the level of 7,000 cubic feet per second.
  - The channel will be stable and creek flows will not cause undue erosion of channel banks nor down cutting of the channel bottom.
  - The channel area will support and foster a rich and diverse stand of riparian vegetation and aquatic life.
- Limit access of park visitors to the creek channel in order to promote wildlife habitat and riparian vegetation.
- All recreation and management activities related to Los Gatos Creek will fall within the requirements of the District.

### **Pond Management**

- All boating activities in the park are by permit only.
- All uses in the ponds are subject to District approval and revised regulations may preclude or terminate current or future uses.
- Maintain bank areas of ponds to maximize potential for ground water recharge.
- Clean ponds periodically to improve ground water recharge capability.
- Where possible, manage riparian plantings to minimize debris from falling into the pond water.
- Manage shore areas to provide defined areas for recreational fishing.



- Continue to work with the State Department of Fish and Game to stock Pond No. 1 with fish for recreational fishing.
- All recreation and management activities related to the ponds will fall within the requirements of the District.

## **6 – IMPLEMENTATION**

## IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

Implementation and completion of projects described in this Master Plan for Los Gatos Creek County Park will come in a series of phased construction projects. Different portions of the park are under the jurisdiction of the County of Santa Clara Parks & Recreation Department (County) and the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District). Although the City of Campbell (City) does not have jurisdiction over the park site, it maintains an interest in the project due to its importance in the City as a park and recreation resource. One or more of the three agencies will complete the various implementation projects outlined in the report.

Following is a list of improvement projects outlined in Section 4 — Master Plan together with a suggestion of which agency should take responsibility for specific planning and funding. Following is an estimated cost for the project. At the time that the project is to be implemented, a specific design and cost estimate should be prepared as a guide to project construction documents. The following Estimated Costs are for use in developing capital improvement budgets and plans. There is no estimated schedule for completion of these projects due to lack of information about funding capability for each of the three agencies, and no account has been taken of potential inflation of costs between the year 2002 (present) and the time of actual construction. For purposes of grant funding, it would be best if the three agencies apply jointly to demonstrate coordination and maximization of resources. Despite this, each project should have a lead agency that will coordinate approach to grant writing and implementation of the actual project.

Because the proposed construction projects will be completed by three different agencies, it is not possible to give a precise sequence of phasing. Instead, a general indication of priority for construction has been listed. This priority is based on perceived need or general urgency. Final sequencing and scheduling of construction must be decided cooperatively among the three agencies.

<i><b>Project</b></i>	<i><b>Responsible Agency</b></i>	<i><b>Priority</b></i>	<i><b>Component Cost</b></i>	<i><b>Total Project Cost</b></i>
<b>Improvements to Zone 1</b>				
Relocate And Reconstruct Parking	County	1		\$500,000
Construct New Family Picnic Area	County	1	\$80,000	
Construct Off-Leash Dog Area	County	1	\$125,000	
Screen Planting At Western Boundary	County	1	\$50,000	
Replace fencing along western boundary	County	1	\$60,000	
Add Planting To Entry Promenade	County	2	\$20,000	\$335,000
Construct Paving And Shelter At North Edge Of Pond No. 1	County	2		\$350,000

<b>Project</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Component Cost</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
<b>Improvements In Zones 2 Through 5</b>				
Construct Water Staging Area	County	1	\$20,000	
Fishing Platforms	County	1	\$25,000	
Removal Of Invasive Exotic Plants	District	1	\$30,000	
Prepare lists and supporting data for appropriate revegetation plantings (consultant contract)	County	1	\$20,000	
Remove Existing Observation Pavilion	County	1	\$10,000	
Construct New Observation Platforms	County	1	\$40,000	
Pedestrian Trail System Around Ponds	County	2	\$80,000	
Pedestrian Access To Pond Shores	County	2	\$25,000	
Screen Planting At Western Boundary	County	2	\$15,000	\$265,000
Revegetation Around Ponds And Along Creek	District	2		\$250,000
<b>Improvements To Overall Park</b>				
Los Gatos Creek Trail Renovation and Widening	City & County	1		\$1,750,000
Directional Signs	County	1	\$6,000	
Signs And Interpretation – Planning & Design	County	1	\$60,000	
Park Entry Improvements	County	2	\$100,000	
Pedestrian Entry At Mozart Ave Bridge	County	2	\$10,000	
Oka Lane Entry	County	2	\$10,000	
Signs And Interpretation – Zone 1	County	2	\$50,000	
Signs And Interpretation – Other Zones	County	2	\$50,000	\$286,000
Curbs, Gutters, Sidewalks And Street Trees On Dell And Hacienda Avenues	City	3		\$1,250,000

## APPENDICES

***“Birds and Other Vertebrates Which Presently Inhabit the Area”***

(from Royston Hanamoto Beck and Abey, Landscape Architects for the 1974  
“Master Plan for Los Gatos Creek – Environmental Redevelopment”)

**Appendix A**

**“Birds and Other Vertebrates which Presently Inhabit the Area**

*(By Diana Matthiesen and David Nauer from “Los Gatos Creek – A Master Plan for Environmental Redevelopment” Royston Hanamoto Beck & Abey, 1974)*

**Birds**

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American Coot	Mourning Dove
Black-Phoebe	Pied-billed Grebe
Brewer’s Blackbird	Red-tailed Hawk
Caspian Tern	Red-winged Blackbird
Cliff Swallow	Ring-billed Gull
Common Egret	Rock Dove
Common Goldeneye	Rough-winged Swallow
Common Crow	Ruddy Duck
Foster’s Tern	Sandpiper
Greater yellowlegs	Snowy Egret
House Finch	Song Sparrow
House Sparrow	Starling
Killdeer	Turkey Vulture
Lesser Scaup Duck	Violet-green Swallow
Mallard Duck	
Mockingbird	

***“Birds Observed in Los Gatos Creek Park During the Year 2000 – 2001***

(from Freddy Howell, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society)



**Appendix B**

**“Birds Observed in Los Gatos Creek Park During the Year 2000 – 2001**

*(from Freddy Howell, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society)*

American Coot	Lesser Scaup
American Crow	Mallard
American Goldfinch	Marsh Wren
American Kestrel	Merlin
American Robin	Mourning Dove
American Widgeon	Northern Flicker
Anna's Hummingbird	Northern Mockingbird
Barn Swallow	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Belted Kingfisher	Northern Shoveler Duck
Bewicks Wren	Nuttall's Woodpecker
Black-crowned Night Heron	Osprey
Black-Phoebe	Pacific Loon
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Pied-billed Grebe
Brewer's Blackbird	Pine Siskin
Bufflehead	Plain Titmouse
Bullock's Oriole	Red Phalarope
Bushtit	Red-breasted Sapsucker
California Gull	Red-shouldered Hawk
California Towhee	Red-tailed Hawk
Canada Goose	Red-throated Loon
Canvasback Duck	Red-winged Blackbird
Caspian Tern	Ring-neck Duck
Cedar Waxwing	Rock Dove
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Clark's Grebe	Ruddy Duck
Cliff Swallow	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Common Goldeneye	Snowy Egret
Common Loon	Song Sparrow
Common Raven	Sora
Common Snipe	Spotted Towhee
Copper's Hawk	Townsend's Warbler
Dark-eyed Junco	Turkey Vulture
Double-crested Cormorant	Violet-green Warbler
Downy Woodpecker	Western Grebe
Foster's Tern	Western Gull
Gadwall Duck	Western Meadowlark
Golden-crowned Sparrow	Western Scrub Jay
Great Blue Heron	White-crowned Sparrow
Great Egret	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Greater Scaup	
Greater yellowlegs	
Green Heron	
Horned Grebe	
Hooded Merganser	
Hooded Oriole	
House Finch	
House Sparrow	
Hutton's Vireo	
Killdeer	
Lesser Goldfinch	

**“Checklist of Birds which will be Found in Area”**  
(By Frank Farran from “Los Gatos Creek – A Master Plan for Environmental  
Redevelopment” by *Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey, 1974*)

## Appendix C

### Checklist of Birds which will be Found in the Area

(By Frank Farran for "Los Gatos Creek – A Master Plan for Environmental Redevelopment"

Royston Hanamoto Beck & Abey, 1974)

#### Birds

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Grebe, Horned	Willet
Eared	Yellowlegs, Greater
Western	Lesser
Pied-billed	Sandpiper, Least
Cormorant, Double-crested	Dunlin
Heron, Great Blue	Dowitcher, Short-billed
Green	Long-billed
Egret, Common	Sandpiper, Western
Snowy	Godwit, Marbled
Heron, Black-crowned Night	Avocet, American
Bittern, American	Stilt, Black-necked
Goose, Canada	Gull, Western
Mallard	Herring
Gadwall	California
Pintail	Ring-billed
Teal, Green-winged	Tern, Foster's
Blue-winged	Caspian
Cinnamon	Pigeon, Band-tailed
Widgeon, European	Dove, Rock
American	Mourning
Shoveler	Owl, Barn
Duck, Wood	Screech
Duck, Ring-necked	Great Horned
Canvasback	Burrowing
Scaup, greater	Swift, White-throated
Lesser	Hummingbird, Anna's
Goldeneye, Common	Rufous
Bufflehead	Allen's
Duck, Ruddy	Kingfisher, Belted
Merganser, Common	Flicker, Red-shafted
Vulture, Turkey	Woodpecker, Acorn
Kite, White-tailed	Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied
Hawk, Sharp-shinned	Woodpecker, Hairy
Cooper's	Downy
Red-tailed	Nutall's
Red-shouldered	Flycatcher, Ash-throated
Eagle, Golden	Phoebe, Black
Hawk, Marsh	Say's
Hawk, Sparrow	Flycatcher, Wetsern
Quail, California	Pewee, Western Wood
Pheasant, Ring-necked	Flycatcher, Olive-sided
Rail, Sora	Swallow, Violet-green
Gallinule, Common	Tree
Coot, American	Rough-winged
Killdeer	Barn
Snipe, Common	Cliff
Curlew, Long-billed	Jay, Steller's
Sandpiper, Spotted	Scrub

Crow, Common  
 Chickadee, Chestnut-backed  
 Titmouse, Plain  
 Bushtit, Common  
 Nuthatch, White-breasted  
 Creeper, Brown  
 Wren  
 Wren, Bewick's  
     Long-billed Marsh  
 Mockingbird  
 Thrasher, California  
 Robin  
 Thrush, Varied  
     Hermit  
     Swainson's  
 Bluebird, Western  
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned  
     Ruby-crowned  
 Pipit, Water  
 Waxwing, Cedar  
 Shrike, Loggerhead  
 Starling  
 Vireo, Hutton's  
     Solitary  
     Warbling  
 Warbler, Orange -crowned  
     Yellow  
     Myrtle  
     Audubon's  
     Black-throated Gray  
     Townsend's  
     MacGillivray's  
 Yellowthroat  
 Warbler, Wilson's  
 Sparrow, House  
 Meadowlark, Western  
 Blackbird, Red-winged  
     Tricolored  
 Oriole, Hooded  
     Bullock's  
 Blackbird, Brewer's  
 Cowbird, Brown-headed  
 Tanager, Western  
 Grosbeak, Black-headed  
 Finch, Purple  
     House  
 Siskin, Pine  
 Goldfinch, American  
     Lesser  
 Towhee, Rufous-sided  
     Brown  
 Sparrow, Savannah  
 Junco, Oregon

White-crowned  
 Golden-crowned  
 Fox  
 Song

Sparrow, Chipping

**Listing of Persons, Agencies and Groups Contacted**

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**Listing of Persons, Agencies and Groups Contacted**


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The list below is a summary of the various persons, agencies and groups contacted in the course of preparing the Los Gatos Creek County Park Master Plan.

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**Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society**

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**Canoe Demonstrations**

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