



COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLS



February 2, 2015

Dear Mayor Sinks and Cupertino City Council,

Re: Study Session on Creek Corridor Master Plan - Feb. 3rd Agenda

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS), Acterra, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Committee for Green Foothills, and the California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter (Conservation Groups) have followed the Master Plan for the Stevens Creek Corridor, advocating for nature and for the protection of biological and open space resources along Stevens Creek.

In meeting with Parks and Recreation Commissioners and with City Staff, we found common ground through an element-by-element analysis of the proposed design options. Our discussions allowed us to come to an understanding of how Cupertino may achieve project goals without compromising the unique natural qualities of the park.

We encourage you to look to the recommendations of Parks and Recreation Commissioners (Attachment J to the Staff Report) for guidance in your deliberations and move forward to an Environmental Impact Analysis with a Modified Alternative C (as explained on page 2-3 of the Staff Report) as the preferred alternative. In addition, we ask that you consider our Evaluation of Design Elements (see attached) and remove elements that we opposed from environmental review.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you drop the Stevens Creek Corridor Master Plan Alternatives A and B from consideration and choose a Modified Alternative C as the preferred alternative to move forward with an Environmental Impact Analysis. By choosing design elements that further enhance the tranquil atmosphere, vibrant ecosystem, and educational opportunities in the park, we may preserve these experiences for future generations in Cupertino.

We thank Parks and Recreation Commissioners and Staff for spending time with us and listening to our concerns. We enjoyed engaging with the Cupertino community, and hope to see Cupertino residents and nature continue to thrive together.

Sincerely,

Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Gary Latshaw
Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter

Terry Trumbull, Lecturer
San Jose State University

Joanne McFarlin, Senior Ecologist
Acterra

Alice Kaufman, Legislative Advocate
Committee for Green Foothills

Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair
California Native Plant Society

Stevens Creek Corridor Master Plan

Evaluation of Design Elements

In the past six years, the City of Cupertino restored sections of Stevens Creek, completed a trail along the creek, and crafted a unique urban park where birds and wildlife thrive among native plants and trees. The park successfully merged nature and agricultural heritage, history and recreation in this special place. In creating a new master plan, we hope Cupertino continues its focus on nature and education in the Stevens Creek Corridor.

We have evaluated design elements from MIG’s Design Options A, B, C, as well as from the environmental groups’ Design Option D. We hope you find the following evaluation helpful in informing your deliberations as you make critical decisions on the future of the Stevens Creek Corridor park.

STOCKLMEIR RANCH

Support	Neutral	Opposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legacy agriculture/farm (B, C) ▪ Educational programming /small event space (B) ▪ Habitat restoration (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orchard garden park (A) ▪ Native plant and tree nursery (B) ▪ Stabilize Stocklmeir house for public viewing only (C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special events venue for large events (A)

We support opportunities for education and habitat enhancement in the Stocklmeir Ranch area. We believe that programming/events should be related to Cupertino’s history, agricultural legacy, and the environment.

BLACKBERRY FARM

	Support	Neutral	Opposed
Stevens Creek Blvd entrance & park access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stevens Creek restoration at Blesch property (A, B, C, D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grand Park Entry (A) ▪ Trailhead Kiosk (B) ▪ Tank house restoration (A, B, C) ▪ New restaurant/clubhouse (C) ▪ Improved limited parking at Stevens Creek Blvd entrance without expansion into current natural or recreational areas (A, B, C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New “spine” road along creek (A, B) ▪ New trail along creek (C) ▪ Pedestrian and bike loop trail along perimeter of golf course (B) ▪ Bridge to Stevens Creek Blvd parking lot, unless required by a safety study (A, B, C)
SF Ave & pool		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintenance building at San Fernando entrance (A) ▪ Enhanced pool complex (C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Destination pool complex (A) ▪ Expanded pool complex (B)

olf course area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural oak forest, meadow and wetlands (D) ▪ Enhanced riparian area (A) ▪ Habitat feature at former ponds (B, C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New par-3 pitch & putt golf course (B) ▪ Enhanced golf course (C) ▪ New irrigation (B, C) ▪ Clubhouse/restaurant at the Blue Pheasant site (C) ▪ Some lawn areas (A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-use sportsfields (A) ▪ Clubhouse/staff offices near San Fernando Park entrance (B) ▪ Golf amenities at the Blesch property (A, B, C)
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We do not oppose a smaller golf course footprint and wildlife-friendly design as proposed in Design Option B, but prefer a nature park with forest, meadow, or wetland areas for walking, jogging, and enjoying nature.

RIPARIAN PENINSULA & CENTRAL CREEK CORRIDOR

Support	Neutral	Opposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave as is (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace existing playground with new nature play area (C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New trails (A, B, C) ▪ Seasonal bridge to peninsula (A, B, C) ▪ Enhanced vegetation in peninsula (B, C) ▪ Seasonal nature discovery area in peninsula (B) ▪ New play areas—adventure play, natural play area, obstacle challenge course, off-road cycling area (A, B)

The peninsula provides a unique resource for nesting birds and a refuge for wildlife, and should be left as is.

MCCLELLAN RANCH PRESERVE, including MCCLELLAN RANCH WEST

	Support	Neutral	Opposed
McClellan Ranch Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced/restored meadow habitat areas (A, B) ▪ Restore Stevens Creek (D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced 4-H facilities (A, B) ▪ Renovate barn (A, B) ▪ Enhanced community garden (B) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduction of meadow (A, B, C) ▪ Expanded community garden (A) ▪ Outdoor skills area in place of bee hives (A) ▪ Trails through the meadow (A, B, C)
McClellan Ranch West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restore Stevens Creek and riparian ecosystem along the creek (D) ▪ Small amount of unpaved overflow parking (B, C, D) ▪ Unpaved footpath along west side of MRW (B, D) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Native plant and tree nursery (C) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New bridge between MRP & MRW (A, B, C) ▪ MRW converted to large parking lot (A) ▪ Natural play area in place of nature preserve (B, C) ▪ Trail along west side of creek (B, C)

We strongly believe that the McClellan Ranch section of Stevens Creek should be restored and enhanced, as was planned in Phase III of the Stevens Creek Corridor Project. McClellan Ranch West should be restored and integrated into the mission of McClellan Ranch Preserve: “To maintain and protect the ecology of the area, conserve the natural features and scenic values, expand community awareness and understanding of natural history and the environment, and provide enjoyment of the resources present consistent with their preservation.”