



ECOS
ENVIRONMENTAL
♦ COUNCIL ♦
OF SACRAMENTO



Environmental Council of Sacramento
P.O. Box 1526, Sacramento, California 95812
Phone: 916-444-0022

April 8, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Dana Repan
Senior Planner and Parks Plan 2040 Project Manager
Department of Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment
Parks Planning and Development Services
915 I Street, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
drepan@cityofsacramento.org

Subject: Comments on the City of Sacramento's Draft Parks Plan 2040

Dear Ms. Repan,

Habitat 2020, the Conservation Committee for the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), and ECOS appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments on the above subject.

While the introduction of the Draft Parks Plan 2040 (Plan) acknowledges how important our parks are for people's health and well-being, and mentions the ecosystem services they provide, the document fails to set a compelling vision for a growing and sustainable park system that meets the City residents' imperative to address climate change and the economic resources and natural systems required to mitigate it. Our current parks system has seen Sacramento's ParkScore rating fall from #3 to #30 in just 10 years. The Plan must raise the priority of parks in the City to its rightful place.

Parks provides multiple benefits through Nature Based Solutions provided by natural areas classified as Open Space. It is telling that only 4% of the park system is comprised of Open Space (Plan, Page 65). The City has acknowledged that it does not manage Open Space areas for ecosystem benefits.

This Plan lacks a cohesive and ambitious goal for growth of parklands and trails and appears to rely only on Quimby funds to add to the Parks' system. Quimby funds will not meet the stretch goals for equity in particular. The Plan, Page 130, Table 5-7 does not appear to match the narrative.

Habitat 2020/ECOS makes the following recommendations to address the above concerns:

- 1) Restore the General Plan funding for Parks reduced when Measure U was approved by the voters. Measure U funds were intended to support park improvements and maintenance staff, not supplant the City's obligation to fund safe, clean, and accessible Parks.
- 2) Actively pursue multiple state and federal grant programs focused on acquiring and developing parks, especially in disadvantaged communities.
- 3) Create and implement a Natural Areas Program with an explicit goal in the Plan. There should be measurable objectives to convert underused turf areas to native oak and wetland habitats that expand the Open Space areas significantly over the life of the Plan. There should also be



ECOS
ENVIRONMENTAL
♦ COUNCIL ♦
OF SACRAMENTO



Environmental Council of Sacramento
P.O. Box 1526, Sacramento, California 95812
Phone: 916-444-0022

strategic acquisition and restoration of Open Space areas to the Natural Areas Program that increases the ecosystem services of these areas and compensates for population growth.

- 4) Adopt, as an explicit goal in the Plan, the ECOS/Habitat 2020 Campaign for Protecting Natural Areas in the City of Sacramento (PowerPoint Presentation delivered to the Parks and Community Enrichment Commission (PCEC) on 9/7/2023. Presentation begins at minute 1:04:45).
<https://sacramento.granicus.com/player/clip/5667>
- 5) The Sutter's Landing Park Master Plan Update should create and implement a nature-centric vision given the proximity of the park to the Lower American River Parkway. The Sutter's Landing Park areas immediately adjacent to the Parkway including the "Mound", the former Blue Diamond and SMUD properties offer unique and grand opportunities to develop natural areas through habitat restoration and nature-oriented activities including recreation appropriate in a natural environment. Sutter's Landing Park is one of the six parks identified in the ECOS/Habitat 2020 Campaign for Protecting Natural Areas in the City of Sacramento.
- 6) Valley Vision's Livability Poll indicates that residents are willing to invest in Natural Areas and Trails with cash as well as with volunteer help. Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment (YPCE) should focus upon building off 916 Day to launch a Friends of Parks group that works with the YPCE to increase funding and capacity for our parks. The recommended Natural Areas Program and Protecting Natural Areas in the City of Sacramento offer excellent opportunities for volunteer stewardship.

Finally, the attached comments from Mr. Tim Vendlinski, the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, Mr. Dan Meier, and the Habitat 2020/ECOS Campaign for Protecting Natural Areas in the City of Sacramento, provide more detailed information supporting this comment letter.

We greatly appreciate your time and consideration, and look forward to working with you on a final Parks Plan 2040 and the Sutter's Landing Park Master Plan Update.

Sincerely,

Sean With, Co-Chairperson, Habitat 2020

Susan Herre, President, ECOS

Cc

Victoria Vasquez, Chairperson, Youth, Parks & Community Enrichment Commission

[victoria | vasquez@live.com](mailto:victoria_vasquez@live.com)

Sean Ward, President, Friends of Sutter's Landing (FOSL) foslsean@gmail.com

Corey Brown Cibrownci@icloud.com