

PROPOSED ALPINE COUNTY PARK: POSITION AND CONCERNS

May 17, 2021

PRESERVE
ALPINE'S
HERITAGE

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www.PreserveAlpinesHeritage.org

OUR POSITION

Preserve Alpine's Heritage is a group of diverse community advocates working toward the common goal of designing innovative, sustainable, and financially-responsible solutions that bring desired facilities and services to Alpine, while preserving the unique natural, cultural, and rural heritage of our community. Herewith, a concise summary of our position and concerns regarding the proposed Alpine Local Park.

- We oppose the scope of the 26-acre, all-in-one regional sports complex with extensive athletic/active recreational facilities.
- We recognize there are too many concerns and unanswered questions to justify proceeding as proposed.
- We support developing a nature-based passive park at the location adjacent to Wright's Field Ecological Preserve.
- We support revitalizing existing or developing new sites for some of the active sports facilities, such as a skate park, in the town center.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The proposed park plan calls for \$28 million dollars of taxpayer monies, during a pandemic, to build a sports complex with redundant facilities that already exist in Alpine. The Alpine Community Plan and Alpine Community Plan Update (COS 4.5) calls for the support of joint powers agreements for park and recreational facilities. The current park is incongruent with Board of Supervisors Policy F-26 which allows for "PLDO-funded projects to proceed only after capital, operation, and maintenance funding is identified...[this] Board policy also encourages joint-use of publicly-owned lands and facilities." San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has not provided details for how the upkeep and maintenance costs for this park will be generated. Alpine already has several active recreational fields (built with public funds) that are in disrepair, decay, or closed to the public. Current recreational assets in Alpine include: seven (7) baseball fields, seven (7)-eleven (11) soccer fields (different AYSO ages), four (4) softball fields, two (2) Lacrosse Fields, fourteen (14) Basketball courts, one (1) tennis court, and two (2) parks.

PUBLIC SAFETY: TRAFFIC AND FIRE

South Grade Road is designated as a light-collector/rural light-collector with no sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, shoulders, or trails. Reported dates of recent deaths on South Grade Road include: February 2010; June 2013; June 2016; December 2017; and most recently, a hit and run of a teen on February 21, 2021. Every road leading to this proposed park is failing. Evacuation to and from the park is limited by the conditions of the surrounding roads. South Grade Road is the only fire-exit route in a very high-fire severity zone for more than 500 lots in adjoining local neighborhoods. The situation could become dire if a fire evacuation were needed while a large sporting event or gathering was going on at the proposed sports fields or pavilion. If a fire event occurred (West Fire 2018 et al), the 300+ cars allowable in the plan parking area would add one mile of traffic during a State of Emergency.

MISLEADING AND MISREPRESENTING THE BROADER ALPINE COMMUNITY

The proposed park goes far beyond the 12-15-acre community park concept originally presented to local residents. DPR's efforts to obtain representative public input remain weak and biased. The County's own data shows disproportionate support of passive nature-based activities, with little or no support for many of the active sports/athletic activities. DPR and local leadership have consistently disregarded the significant community opposition, as well as, written and verbal input of a growing number of constituents in favor of minority or special interest voices.

CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND WATER USE

Unless the park is designed to be carbon neutral and sustainable now, it will require future carbon emissions for maintenance and upkeep. This conflicts with County climate action plans. The current park design is not sustainable for water use or wastewater management. The planned seven (7) acres of natural turf grass and over 300 new trees and shrubs will require a significant input of water. Our estimates indicate that this park will use 10-15 million gallons of potable water per year with an estimated cost of \$130,000 annually for irrigation alone. Clay soil across the site provides insufficient drainage. The septic system planned for the site is situated in a headwaters tributary of Alpine Creek with runoff draining into El Capitan Reservoir. Wastewater infiltration basins on the site will be atop clay substrate and will not likely drain sufficiently, causing a vector issue for mosquitoes and algae. DPR's own Water Conservation Plan, adopted in 2010, does not support the intensive water usage proposed, and proposed wastewater management is insufficient.

DESTRUCTION OF HIGH-QUALITY NATIVE HABITAT

Deleterious impacts to listed Endangered Species and Species of Special Concern are unmitigable. Habitat type-conversion and impacts from active recreation on this site will cause irreversible loss of unique habitats and sensitive species of flora and fauna. Proximity to Wright's Field Ecological Preserve will trigger Land Use Adjacency Guidelines due to intensive land use for active recreation abutting existing protected lands within the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). Significant indirect impacts to preserved lands and covered species therein are not compatible with the spirit of the MSCP Subarea Plan. In a letter to the Alpine Community Planning Group dated October 27, 2006, DPR Director Renee Bahl stated, "As you know, the County has previously evaluated Wright's Field as a potential site for park and determined that Wright's Field is not suitable for the development of an active recreation park...Our concerns regarding the biological sensitivity of the habitats within Wright's Field have not changed and we do not believe that Wright's Field is suitable for active parkland development."