

Executive Summary/Position

Introduction

As awareness of the proposed Alpine County Park design and scope increases amongst Alpine residents, so does the opposition. The purpose of this document is not to outline or address the multitude of broadly acknowledged concerns regarding the design and location (see [PreserveAlpinHeritage.org](https://www.preservealpinheritage.org) for more information), but rather to evaluate the public outreach and needs assessment efforts by the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), as well as the community and local response to the proposed park design and location.

As illustrated by their own data, DPR's efforts to assess the broader Alpine community's views and needs have been superficial, misrepresentative, and biased in support of the proposed design and DPR organizational goals.

Instead of performing a valid needs assessment, DPR is favoring anecdotal data and minority and/or special interest voices. They have disregarded significant opposition and input provided by an increasing number of Alpine residents and are pushing forward with a park that is not aligned with the overall desires of the broader Alpine community; as illustrated in the data outlined herewith.

No Valid Needs Assessment and Biased Public Outreach¹

DPR states in its [FAQ document](#) that it has surpassed the Board of Supervisors policy requirements for public outreach. Although this may be true, their efforts to obtain representative public input remain weak and biased in support of the park design.

- Less than 200 unique individuals (several persons participated in both DPR outreach meetings and the online survey) provided input on the desired activities/facilities during the conceptual design phase in 2019.
- DPR's primary online survey generated 21 responses and did not include any of the active/sports facilities when asking which elements respondents wanted to see in a park (question 13).
- One of the four public outreach meetings was dedicated entirely to the skate/bike/all-wheel activities and run by an external developer/vendor with clear conflicts of interest. Furthermore, 49% of survey respondents were outside the Alpine community.
- Significant and disproportionate public concerns and opposition once the park design was released have been disregarded and not represented in any of the DPR communications or plans.
- DPR refers to several meetings with stakeholders, but provides only limited information as to input garnered during these meetings. No minutes, notes, or details are available.

The Public Outreach Data Does Not Support the Current Park Design

- DPR's meeting, questionnaire, and survey responses show strong support of nature-based activities. The highest ranked activity is multi-use trails and enjoying nature/outdoors; already existing activities in Alpine.
- Despite incredibly low support for many of the active sports and athletic activities, almost all are included in the proposed park design.
- Alpine residents express the need for facilities that are easily accessible for all residents. The current park design concentrates activities in one rural location approximately two (2) miles from the inhabited town center.
 - The park is recognized by DPR as a "drive-to" facility.
 - The location is not accessible by safe or ADA-compliant walkways, bike paths, or trails.
 - It fails to meet a new industry mission supported by leading organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in which, "All residents can access a park within a 10-minute walk".

¹ County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation, Alpine County Park, [Outreach Meeting Summary and Attachments](#).

Proposed Alpine County Park: County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation Public Outreach and Community Opposition

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Misleading the Community

The proposed 26-acre park plan goes far beyond the 12-15-acre community park concept originally presented to local residents. This unjustified increase has taken much of the community by surprise and is a fundamental source of dissatisfaction and distrust.

- The DPR states “Early conversations about the search for a park in Alpine may have referenced smaller acreage, however, the purchase of the 98-acre parcel made it possible to expand acreage opportunities for both active and passive uses.”²
- The community was also led to believe by local leadership that the park would be smaller and more nature-based. To illustrate, Back Country Land Trust board member and Alpine Community Planning Group Member George Barnett stated: “My understanding is that the County will also plan on passive uses, that is – no active sports playing fields. Maybe there’ll be picnic places, a pavilion, a kiddie playground, or things of that nature that town’s people want.”³

The County’s Easier Solution⁴

Alpine residents and taxpayers did not ask for a large, \$28 million, urban, all-in-one park; especially one located next to a cherished and popular ecological nature preserve. Nor does the aging demographic and currently stable population of approximately 15,000 residents justify the park scope and broad range of facilities. DPR readily acknowledges that this one-size-fits all approach, above all, satisfies their needs.

- “While there are some privately managed recreational spaces, which are operated under joint use agreements or as non-profit facilities, there are currently no County-managed public parks for Alpine residents. These 98 acres bring us closer to reaching our park-per-resident goals.”
- “DPR can construct, operate and oversee a single property versus staff driving to and operating multiple locations.”
- A reasonable alternative of creating a network of smaller, local parks by developing existing/new sites for some of the active sports facilities (such as a skate park in the town center) has not been seriously explored. The concept was always to establish “one property that meets all the necessary criteria and can accommodate amenities for everyone.”

² County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation; [Frequently Asked Questions: Alpine County Park](#), page 3.

³ [Loving Life Alpine Facebook Group, 2019](#)

⁴ County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation; [Frequently Asked Questions: Alpine County Park](#), pages 3-4.

County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Public Outreach

**Note: The below is an outline of key points from information provided by DPR.
More information is available at the included links.**

Alpine Public Outreach Summary ([view here](#))

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been working with the Alpine Community Planning Group and other stakeholders to find a suitable park location within Alpine since the 1990s. On Feb. 27, 2019, DPR submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to request funds to purchase 98-acre parcel of land, with intent to build an active recreation area on site. ([Read the board letter here.](#)) The request was approved, leading to the purchase of the property on March 4, 2019. Public outreach, design, and environmental review began shortly thereafter.

DPR has held four public meetings. These events were publicized by mailed flyers to residents in the immediate vicinity (max. 1 mile from location), and by flyer on the DPR website and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). Outreach events were also shared with local media and in various stakeholder meetings.

To date, DPR has hosted 12 stakeholder meetings with groups like Alpine Community Planning Group and their Parks' Subcommittee, Preserve Alpine's Heritage, Backcountry Land Trust, Alpine Fire, Eastern Alpine Association, San Diego Mountain Biking Association, and Alpine Union School District. Feedback collected during these meetings contributed to the park design concept. Although detailed minutes or notes are not available for the meetings, DPR provided the following information.

Back Country Land Trust (BCLT)

- Generally supported park design
- Concerns: impacts to Wrights Field from increased users, access control, and number of parking spaces
- County reassured BCLT intent to be good neighbors as they are throughout the County by coordinating on preserve and trail plans, interpretative signage, user education, and managing trail and preserve impacts.

Alpine Fire

- Support park design
- Reviewed and commented on concept design and fire protection study
- Encouraged use of site as evacuation or staging site during wildfires

Eastern Alpine Association

- Support for the project

San Diego Mountain Bike Association (SDMBA)

- Alpine members expressed support for park and bike course and all-wheel area. The creation of the bike skills course is fulfilling a need in the Alpine community and would potentially take the pressure off BCLT from the rogue bike trail building.
- Concerns: more space for the bike skills course, they understand that this is not for a regional draw; construction material, and maintenance.
- SDMBA has had discussion regarding trails and bike trail users with BCLT.

Alpine Union School District (AUSD)

- Support park
- Expressed need for more sport fields (note: although requested, AUSD has yet to provide data supporting the need for more fields)

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Summary of votes from DPR's questionnaire/survey to measure public input on desired activities
 (details include further in document)

Activity / Elements You'd Like Seen in a Park	05/2019 On-Site Questionnaire	08/2019 Online Survey (Q13)	Total Votes	In Park Design?
Multi-use trails	127	14	141	existing
Bike park	86	not included	86	yes
Picnic shelter	23	17	40	yes
Dog park	35	not included	35	yes
Nature-based play	31	not included	31	yes
Shade garden / trees	5	17	22	yes
Amphitheater	21	not included	21	no
Bouldering	19	not included	19	no
Equestrian staging area	18	not included	18	yes
Restrooms	not included	17	17	yes
Skatepark	16	not included	16	yes
Natural areas	not included	16	16	existing
Drinking fountains	not included	13	13	yes
Paved parking	not included	12	12	yes
Exercise stations	11	not included	11	yes
Shade shelter	11	not included	11	yes
Mountain bike staging area	10	not included	10	yes
Butterfly garden	3	7	10	no
Community garden	8	not included	8	yes
Pickleball	6	not included	6	yes
Bird watching	5	not included	5	no
Picnicking	5	not included	5	yes
Field lighting	not included	5	5	yes
Soccer	4	not included	4	yes
Disc golf	3	not included	3	no
Manufactured equipment	3	not included	3	yes
Wedding pavilion	3	not included	3	no
Court lighting	not included	3	3	yes
Baseball	2	not included	2	yes
Basketball	2	not included	2	yes
Game tables	2	not included	2	yes
Geocaching	2	not included	2	no
Overlook	2	not included	2	no
Softball	2	not included	2	yes
Bocce	1	not included	1	yes
Shade sails	1	not included	1	yes
Slackline	1	not included	1	no
Arena soccer	0	not included	0	no
Horseshoe pits	0	not included	0	yes
Interpretative panels	0	not included	0	no
Learning circle	0	not included	0	no
Table tennis	0	not included	0	yes
Tennis	0	not included	0	no
Youth football	0	not included	0	no

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Public Meeting 1 and Onsite Questionnaire: May 15, 2019

- 80 attendees
- 77 respondents to on-site questionnaire
- Brainstorming session in which attendees were asked to rate potential amenities for Alpine County Park
- Activity ratings
 - Top five: walking/jogging, riding a mountain bike on a trail/in a park, nature, dog park, picnicking
 - Lowest five: swimming pool, football, softball, bocce ball, tennis/pickleball
- Element ratings
 - Top five: natural areas, restrooms, sidewalks/trails, shade trees, drinking fountains
 - Least preferred: court and field lighting
- Elements selected from the image boards
 - Top five: multi-use trails, bike park, dog park, nature-based play, picnic shelter
 - Least favored: horseshoe pits, table tennis, tennis, softball, youth football
- [View onsite questionnaire results](#)

Online Survey General Park Design: July 15-August 10, 2019

- 21 respondents
- DPR summary of results: “The top five activities revealed in the online survey were nature, playing at a playground, walking/jogging, riding a mountain bike on a trail/in a park, and restrooms. The least preferred was court and field lighting.”
- [View online survey results](#)

Most important recreational opportunity to have? (a place to...) (Q8)

Relax and enjoy the outdoors	29% (6)
Play or take kids to play	29% (6)
Multi-purpose trail	19% (4)
Place to exercise	10% (2)
Take my dog and socialize with other dog owners	10% (2)
Participate in or watch sports	5% (1)
Gather with friends	0% (0)

Do you agree/disagree that a new park should benefit the community in the following ways? (Q12)

	Agree	Disagree
Enjoy nature/outdoors	95% (19)	5% (1)
Protect natural environment	84% (17)	16% (3)
Help older adults and people with disabilities remain active	80% (16)	20% (4)
Improve health and wellness	80% (16)	20% (4)
Promote exercise and an active lifestyle	75% (15)	25% (5)
Connect people and build stronger families and neighborhoods	75% (15)	25% (5)
Children sports opportunities	53% (10)	47% (9)
Adult sports opportunities	47% (9)	53% (10)
Build character and sportsmanship	42% (8)	58% (11)

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Mark the elements you'd like seen in the park. (Q13)

Picnic shelters	85% (17)
Restrooms	85% (17)
Shade trees	85% (17)
Natural areas	80% (16)
Sidewalks and trails	70% (14)
Paved parking	60% (12)
Drinking fountains	55% (11)
Butterfly garden	35% (7)
Field lighting	25% (5)
Court lighting	15% (3)

What other activities would you like to see in the park? (Q14)

- No community vegetable gardens that will become messy and useless over time. If the County won't maintain the park, no one else will.
- Keep it natural as is.
- While it is a community park, I'd like to see it maintain the connection to the BCLT part of Wright's field. The nice thing is much of the trail items needed for a community park are there- horse, bike, hiking, even long dog hikes. Though the park could provide the staging/parking for hiking, dog walking, horse trailers, etc. Though, the park should have a trail that is elderly ADA and stroller comparable, say paths that cross through and around. Wright's field has a lot of stones in the path, and ditches. Those same park paths can have those gravity type exercise systems, as well as any nature or interpretive signs at some point. And ideally pass-through native gardens. Native to help with the heat and drought tolerant, and provide shade and something to enjoy. It would be a good place to see what plants people can plant at home, meaning tags with names would be helpful. I think a dawn to dusk open period is good. Town goes to bed at sunset for the most part. Only lighting I would suggest is any needed for security, maybe solar powered? Some to hike at dusk, so some parking solar lighting might be a good idea. Water would be a good thing for our summer heat with a dog water station at the bottom. Not a must. Restrooms would be nice. Dog poop bag station would be nice too.
- Children's play equipment that more than just ADA compliant but accessible and useable by all children.
- DG parking, not paved. One loop trail with exercise stations. Leave the rest wild trails. No lighting. No bathroom facilities. No sports facilities. Possible dog park and place for horses. This is not the place for an active park!
- Keep it in its natural state, no ball fields, we have school grounds for that stuff.
- Play equipment that would also be usable for the disabled community, i.e., swings that support larger bodies with low muscle tone. Because the vestibular stimulation is so important.
- Running trails with mile markers
- Community pool
- I would like a place where my husband and friends could play soccer and not get kicked out just for playing.
- All items are great.
- Volleyball
- Golf driving range, band stage
- Motocross, off-roading

Community feedback: Please share any additional thoughts about the project.

- Plans to refurbish lacrosse, soccer and softball fields at abutting Joan MacQueen Middle School, plans that include a football field, render surplus such facilities at a community park.
- Small town alpine doesn't need a big county park.
- Parking is the big one, and while some should be paved, I think a bit could be improved to flat, accessible, and DG on top to address erosion. That would support trailered horses, dog walkers, and bikes to safely enter BCLT side of Wright's field.

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- It's a treasure as is... I'd like to see it stay that way.
- This is not the space for an active park! It is surrounded by homes on large parcels and on a twisting, narrow two-lane road with no walkability! It is not appropriate for paving. We have closed an elementary school because we don't have enough young children in the community to keep it open. We already have two parks geared toward young children. Why build another one when the kids clearly aren't here? Alpine is a rural community. This park should be geared towards rural activities like hiking, bird watching, riding horses, possibly mountain biking. We already have a park with picnic facilities that is rarely used. If people want more active parks, they can move to a more urban community. Your photo collages above didn't even give people a chance to choose something less active. Wright's Field is a unique treasure in San Diego County, as Dianne Jacobs herself noted. You pave over this native grass area and it will be gone forever. I do not like these ideas and choices you are giving us.
- One of the benefits of living in alpine is its natural beauty and open space, turning a natural area into ball parks and skate board parks is for the city.
- What cannot be built now should be built later. Don't put land into passive park. BCLT's Wright's Field is large enough for those who enjoy that activity. We want active park!
- I'm very excited this is happening.
- I think the sports complex at JMMS is so close that this park should have other activities and a community pool.
- Very excited but we do need a safe place where kids are welcomed with their scooters or skateboards and bikes.
- Vandalism should be monitored. Security cameras should be installed and should be well lit.

Public Meeting 2: August 29, 2019

- 103 attendees
- The online survey responses were combined with the public meeting questionnaire data, and the results were quantified, summarized, and then presented at a second public outreach meeting held at the Alpine Community Center on August 29, 2019.
- Following the presentation, attendees were provided site plans, scaled cut-outs of a variety of potential park activities, pens and paper, and were asked to create their preferred park design.
- [View attendee mock site plans](#)

Public Meeting 3 (virtual): September 23, 2020

- Focused on specific all-wheel skate and bike park design (run by external contractor/vendor)
- The third public meeting was held to collect feedback on two specific amenities within the park – the all-wheel and bike skills areas. The contracted design teams shared options for these amenities, and the DPR project team presented information about Alpine County Park's overarching design. Those who could not attend were provided with a link to an online survey, where they could rate options, amenities and provide comments – this survey was specific to the all-wheel and bike skills areas.
- [View survey data](#) specifically related to all-wheel and park design
 - 242 completed survey
 - 51% Alpine residents
 - 49% outside the community
- [View bike park skills course meeting recording](#)
- [View all-wheel area meeting recording](#)

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Public Meeting 4 (virtual): January 14, 2021

- Approximately 300 attendees (includes staff, speakers)
- This meeting was set up to share updates on the overarching park project and final design concept; some preliminary plans were not yet completed, including environmental processes and traffic studies
- Comments/concerns/questions limited to chat functionality only (analysis below)
- [View Q&A/public comments](#) and [meeting recording](#)

Number of unique commentators	91
Number of commentators in support of park	15
Number of commentators with questions/concerns	76

Number of total comments	395
<i>(breakdown totals more than 395 as some chat entries included multiple comments)</i>	
Number of comments in support of park	25
Number of general questions (timelines, etc.)	78
Number of comments related to questions/concerns	327

Concerns/questions	#
Size/scope of park	41
Traffic	24
Location of park	21
Lack of transparency by County	21
Access to park/private property used as access	20
Safety (lack of sidewalks, South Grade)	17
Access to Wright's Field	17
Water (landscape, fields, bathrooms)	15
Lack of opportunity for input/input ignored	14
Types of plants/trees for proposed park	14
Concern for health of Engelmann Oaks	12
Lighting (current and future)	11
Impact on surrounding neighborhoods/streets	11
Upkeep/costs/taxes	10
Fencing (location, height, access, amount)	10
Environmental studies/Biological concerns	9
Impact to Wright's Field	8
Outsiders having input into park amenities	8
Possible fees for park and/or amenities	7
Parking (number of spaces, material)	7
Sewer	6
BBQ/fire pits	6
Security (surveillance, sheriff patrols, surrounding area)	5
County priorities	4
Types of hardscape	3
Noise	2
Hours of operation	2
Plan for horses	2

Community and Local Opposition to Proposed Design and Location

Preserve Alpine's Heritage

[Preserve Alpine's Heritage](#) (non-profit status pending) is a group of dedicated community advocates representing all areas and demographics of Alpine. We promote meaningful collaboration and creative partnerships with public representatives and other stakeholders. We embrace a diversity of views as we work 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.

- Created as a [Facebook group](#) on September 27, 2020 in response to the release of the proposed park design by the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Core Mission: Contributions should be in support of the group's core mission to preserve Alpine's unique natural, cultural, and rural heritage as an integral part of the quality of life of Alpine residents.
- Current Focus and Purpose: We are focused on opposing the current park design being proposed for the location next to Wright's Field Preserve.

Position on Proposed Park

- Opposing the scope of the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation's proposed \$28-million, 26-acre, all-in-one regional sports complex park with extensive athletic and active recreational facilities attracting potentially thousands of visitors a day to the location next to Wright's Field Ecological Preserve off South Grade Road.
- Recognizing there are too many serious concerns and unanswered questions regarding the current park design to justify proceeding as proposed.
- Developing a nature-based park at the location adjacent to Wright's Field Ecological Preserve that minimizes the impact on the environment and rural setting, provides appropriate recreational activities that respect and complement the preserve, and protects the preserve from habitat destruction due to fragmentation, encroachment, and overflow use from a park.
- Developing other existing or new sites for active sports facilities (including an all-wheel park, athletic fields and courts), thus creating a network of local Alpine parks that offer unique recreational activities throughout town connected by a system of safe walkways, bike paths, and trails.



