

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

Martial Cottle Park (the Park) is comprised of 256.6 acres of farmland, a remnant of Santa Clara Valley's agricultural history. The Park is the result of a generous gift from Walter Cottle Lester (the Donor) of 120.12 acres to the County, and the sale of 136.52 acres to the State. The Donor's vision for Martial Cottle Park is that it be jointly developed, operated and maintained as one park to promote and sustain farming traditions thereby displaying the agricultural heritage of Santa Clara Valley from the mid 1800s to the present. An additional 30.9 acre parcel referred to as the Life Estate Area remains in the Donor's ownership, but will ultimately become part of the Park. The Life Estate is not included as part of the Martial Cottle Park State General Plan/County Park Master Plan (the Plan) which will guide the long-term development and management of the Park.

The Santa Clara Valley's highly fertile soil once supported agricultural activities throughout the County, yet there are few pockets of agricultural land remaining. The Park remains undeveloped and is situated in an unincorporated area of Santa Clara County, while the surrounding land is within the City of San Jose's jurisdiction and supports developed residential and commercial uses. The Park consists primarily of flat, open fields punctuated with valley oaks. While the Park has long provided scenic views from surrounding areas, it has not provided any public access with the exception of a produce stand and a Christmas tree farm that is seasonally open for public sales.

The planning process for Martial Cottle Park was conducted over a four-year period from 2007 to 2010 and involved community members and local, state and federal agency representatives. To ensure an inclusive and informed planning process, three groups were formed to assist and provide input to the plan: the Project Team, Task Force, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The plan that resulted from this process will provide new and unique educational and recreational opportunities for local, regional and statewide visitors, while enhancing existing habitat and retaining most of the Park as active farmland.

B. Land Use Zones

The Plan establishes four land use zones for the Park, each with distinct management goals and objectives. These four zones include Park and Recreation, Leased Agriculture, Habitat Enhancement and Cooperative Management. Following are descriptions of each zone.

1. Park and Recreation

The Park and Recreation Zone is a broad management zone that encompasses all areas and facilities related to recreation and visitor services that will be managed by the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department (County Parks). Components within this zone are the Main Park Complex, which includes a visitor center, community pavilion and recreational amenities; the Western Use Area, which includes trails and picnic area; a perimeter and internal trail system that circulates the Park; landscaped areas that will provide a buffer between land uses; and park support facilities such as a corporation yard.

2. Leased Agriculture

The Leased Agriculture Zone will be the largest zone in the park. Most of the land within this zone will be leased for production agriculture. As active farmland, this zone will contribute to regional production and may provide park-grown produce for purchase by park visitors and other consumers. In addition, this zone will serve as a scenic backdrop for all park activities and provide interpretive elements for educational programs.

3. Habitat Enhancement

Habitat will be enhanced in all zones of the Park. However, there are several areas of the Park in which habitat enhancement is the primary focus. These areas will contribute to the area's natural communities and integrated pest management efforts for both agricultural and park areas, and will create recreational and educational opportunities. The key areas included in this zone are Canoas Creek and the land that surrounds it. Vegetative enhancements will be made to the Canoas Creek channel in order to improve its habitat

function and aesthetic value, and a seasonal wetland adjacent to the Canoas Creek channel will provide recreational and educational opportunities, enhance the habitat value of the Park, and contribute to stormwater management. Recreational amenities in this area will be limited to trails, picnic areas and parking, which may be closed when necessitated by flood conditions.

4. Cooperative Management

The Cooperative Management Zone encompasses areas that will be managed by entities other than County Parks, either through lease agreements or other arrangements, with the exception of the agricultural areas described above. There are six sub-zones within this management zone with unique uses and/or management, as described below.

- ◆ **Demonstration gardens.** Gardens for experimentation, training and education related to sustainable farming and gardening practices.
- ◆ **Youth agriculture.** Programs and facilities that provide opportunities for children to experience farm activities such as raising and caring for animals, growing plants, and other farm chores.
- ◆ **Research.** Agricultural land and limited facilities for research in sustainable agriculture that will support on-site farming operations as well as those throughout the State.
- ◆ **Native plant nursery.** A nursery that propagates and grows plants that are native to Santa Clara County for restoration and habitat enhancement projects in the region.
- ◆ **Community gardens.** Publicly accessible garden plots for the use of City and County residents for raising fruit, vegetables, and ornamental plants.
- ◆ **Urban forestry.** Community-based programs and facilities that support the growth of native trees that will be planted primarily in urban and park areas throughout the region.

C. Financial Implications

Capital improvement costs for the development of Martial Cottle Park consistent with the goals and guidelines of the Park Plan are estimated at \$64,194,800 to \$85,593,800. Existing funding for Phase 1 capital improvements includes \$20,000,000 that has been set-aside by County Parks from the Park Charter Fund, \$300,000 earmarked by the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority and \$250,000 of approved FY2010 federal funding from the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations (California 15th Congressional District). Additional funding opportunities will need to be identified and secured to fully implement the Plan. This would include grants for capital projects, ongoing evaluation of userfees, potential marketing of Park-grown food and short and long-term lease revenues.

The annual operations and maintenance cost for the Park is estimated at \$4,404,530, assuming that all components of the Park have been implemented and are operating. However, some of the Park's program elements could generate a revenue stream to contribute to this operating budget. It is estimated that \$830,500 (2009-10 dollars) could be generated on a yearly basis. Assuming this revenue stream, the annual net cost for operating the Park would be \$3,574,000 (2009-2010 dollars).

Although County Parks will be responsible for operating and maintaining the Park, it is anticipated that cooperative partners will operate and maintain facilities for youth agriculture, agricultural research, demonstration programs, urban forestry programs, native plant nursery, and community gardens. Production agriculture will require a certain level of County coordination, but will also be managed by a cooperative partner/lessee.

D. Phasing

The phasing program recommended for the Park offers a strategic approach to implementation of the park development that is responsive to the availabil-

ity of funding and other resources, partnership opportunities, program needs and compliance with the Williamson Act contract requirements.

The Plan should be implemented in two phases. The first phase, which extends from 2010 to 2019, would take place during the Williamson Act contract non-renewal period and therefore must comply with contract requirements.

Phase 1 will recommend implementation of the following elements:

- ◆ Parkwide Circulation and Access
- ◆ Parkwide Utilities
- ◆ Park and Recreation Areas
- ◆ Leased Agriculture Areas
- ◆ Cooperative Management Areas

Phase 2 will include the remainder of the Master Plan elements:

- ◆ Habitat Enhancement Areas
- ◆ Native Plant Nursery
- ◆ Multi-Use Outdoor Pavilion
- ◆ Agricultural Marketing Area

E. Design Guidelines

The Plan is supported by design guidelines that will help to ensure that each phase of park development, as well as long-term maintenance, contributes to the agricultural character of the Park and to successful park and agricultural operations. Recommendations are included for park entrances and gates, architecture, fencing, roads, parking areas, trails and buffers, planting, landscape components, picnic areas and signage.

F. Future Planning

This Plan will guide the long-term development and operations of the Park. However, additional planning will be necessary in order to address future conditions. The incorporation of the Life Estate Area property into the Park under the County's ownership is a known future condition that will require additional planning and an update or amendment of this Plan. For purposes of the future Life Estate Area planning, the Donor's Vision identifies future interpretive uses and educational programming within the Life Estate Area, related to the historic and agricultural uses at the Park. While future planning efforts may expand upon the information put forward in this plan, all efforts should be consistent with the vision, goals, and guidelines described in this Plan.

As with Phase 1 improvements, design development for future phases at Martial Cottle Park will include opportunities for public input through community workshops, Advisory Committee meetings, and during reviews by the County Parks and Recreation Commission and County Board of Supervisors.