

Notes from Black Diamond Mines Public Scoping Workshop
Antioch Community Center
Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Michael Kean

Comment: Concerning parcels 2 and 3 on the map, Suncrest Homes, what is the plan for staging for the area off of Foothill Drive?

A: The project proposes a walk-in entrance from the road with a pedestrian gate on street at the "P" on the map. No off-street staging area is proposed here. This applies to all "W" sites shown on the map. There are strategies that are sometimes used in specific situations to minimize public access to staging areas, such as not showing them on brochures or advertising them on the web-site.

Comment: What is the timeline for implementation of the regional trail through the Deer Valley area?

A: There is no timeline to open the trail. Acquisition for the proposed Deer Valley Regional Park is on-going. However, it is possible that constructing and opening the regional trail may precede opening the entire park; including the regional trail alignment in this project leaves this possibility open.

Rich Sexton

Comment: When do you anticipate opening the Clayton Ranch (southern) area of the project site to the public?

A: There are funds to prepare the EIR, but no funding has been allocated to implement the project including money to obtain local and regulatory permits, and fund capital projects. The Park District is discussing the possibility of opening specific walk-in entrances prior to constructing formal vehicle staging areas.

Comment: Will the Clayton Ranch area have the same curfew as the existing Black Diamond Mines park that is now open?

A: Regional parks typically have a curfew of 10 PM – 5 AM that prohibits public use; Black Diamond Mines has a stricter curfew (and is open from 8 AM – 5 PM in the winter and to 8 PM in the summer) because of public safety reasons related to underground mines. The East Contra Costa County HCP restricts dogs in areas purchased with HCP funds to leash only and during daylight hours because of the potential adverse impact of dogs on biological resources. The Park District would consider maintaining this more restrictive curfew throughout the entire project area. Staff needs to consider impacts to natural resources, the public and continuity of rules within the preserve.

Michael Kean

Comment: The Park District should prepare a mitigated negative declaration (MND) rather than an EIR. There is no need to prepare an EIR because until the 1950s the public could drive through park and cattle have used it for decades. Preparing an MND

would be quicker and if the project was broken into smaller elements the Park District could prepare a sequential project and open parts of the park to the public sooner.

Bruce Ohlson (Delta Pedalers):

Comment: Concerning trail #8 shown on the map, the regional trail alignment should be opened to the public sooner than later.

Rich Henderson

Comment: the speaker lives adjacent to the CC Water District property near the proposed regional trail alignment through Deer Valley and is concerned about visibility of bicyclists and other trail users on the trail, as well as staging at Briones Road.

A: There is the potential for visual impacts from the trail from private property. Prior to opening the trail, there needs to be safe access (staging) at the southern end of the trail segment at the future Deer Valley Regional Park near Briones Road. Furthermore, the Park District does not have access rights across CC Water District property and would need permission to cross it. The Park District continues to look at other alignments in this southern area.

Geena Reddow (sp ?)

Comment: How wide is single track trail? Are narrow trails usually open to hikers and equestrians?

A: Single-track trails are constructed at about five-feet wide and can be designed to accommodate multiple user groups (hikers, horses, bicyclists and dog-walkers). Where appropriate, the Park District accommodates multiple user groups on new trails that it constructs.

Kerry Motts

Comment: What is the timeline for opening the Arata Ranch site? There could be opportunities to partner with schools for educational programming. A good partner may be Cal State University, East Bay

A: Renovation will be expensive and there are no funds allocated for capital improvements. Later this year, the property will be transferred to the Park District. Once owned by the Park District, staff will prepare a list of treatment recommendations to stabilize and/or mothball structures. The Park District will stabilize and renovate buildings as funding becomes available, and will consider grant and partnership opportunities.

Juan Pablo Galvan (Save Mt. Diablo)

Comment: Why does the map show a walk-in entrance at the Arata property to the north next to the proposed Sky Ranch development in Pittsburg?

A: The entrance is shown as a future access from the Sky Ranch development in Pittsburg. Once the subdivision is built, the walk-in entrance will connect with a proposed linear park associated with the residential development.

Elissa Robinson

Comment: Will there be vehicle access at the proposed entrance off of Empire Mine Road? Why isn't this property open to the public now?

A: The road has not been open because in the past there was illegal dumping and partying in the area that spilled into the park. Also, until the recent Roddy property acquisition, the Park District did not own the easternmost end of the road, and public access was not allowed.

Comment: What is the status of AB 898, authored by assembly member Jim Frazier, to take Park District tax revenues?

A: This bill is currently dead for now.

Michael Kean

Comment: It would be great if the public could pay for a permit that would allow access to hike on landbank (closed) property.

A: There are periodically guided hiking tours of the landbank areas. Another issue to consider is that the Park District needs to ensure that there is adequate public safety staff prior to opening landbank areas.

Elissa Robinson

Comment: Markley Creek is an important natural resource and presents an educational opportunity that should be incorporated into the design of the Arata Ranch site. The creek flowed this winter.

A: Agreed. The creek presents an opportunity for restoration and interpretation that the Park District will consider. A low area along the creek has a history of flooding.

Rich Sexton

Comment: Is there an opportunity for a new access from James Donlon Blvd. connecting Somersville Road to the Arata Ranch site?

A: The Park District does not own the park entry gate to the north so the project does not include off-trail access by the public to the park. But there is an opportunity, once the Arata Ranch staging area is developed, to open access to the east side of the road at the River View Loop Trail.

Comment: Will there be vehicle access to the proposed camp site?

A: No. This would be a primitive, walk-in campsite, without public vehicle access.

Comment: Where is the trail on the east side that connects to the inholding in the middle of the park?

A: The Stewartville Trail turns at the wall (inholding).