

## *DESCRIPTION OF DRAFT LAND USE PLAN ALTERNATIVES*

The following memorandum describes the draft Alternatives for Concord Hills Regional Park as developed by the PlaceWorks team. The two Alternatives, Alternative A and Alternative B, explore different approaches to circulation and access, resource protection, recreation, and interpretive programming. An overview of the Alternatives is provided below, emphasizing shared themes and concepts, followed by a description of distinguishing features within each Alternative. Key features of the Alternatives are summarized in Table 1, and the Alternatives are illustrated in the following figures:

- **Figure 1. Alternative A Site Plan**
- **Figure 2. Alternative A Visitor Center Complex**
- **Figure 3. Alternative B Site Plan**
- **Figure 4. Alternative B Visitor Center Complex**
- **Figure 5. Visitor Center Building**
- **Figure 6. Precedent Images for Visitor Center Building**
- **Figure 7. Magazine Reuse**

## **Overview of Draft Alternatives (Common Features and Themes)**

Common themes and features of the two Alternatives are described below.

### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

Public access points to the park are similar in both Alternatives, with vehicular access to the Primary Area provided from Willow Pass Road, Bailey Road, and Kinne Boulevard. Access to the Southern Area is provided via Bailey Road. There is no through connection from Bailey Road to Willow Pass Road in either Alternative, but maintenance roads do provide through-access for park operations, police, fire, and other staff along Kinne Boulevard and also from the northern staging area to the Visitor Center.

### **INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND PROGRAMMING**

The Alternatives identify different approaches to conveying the same interpretive topics, one focusing on thematic interpretive zones and the other on multi-thematic interpretive sites. However, both approaches would include interpretive features related to the complex cultural and natural history of the site and explore dynamic approaches of conveying interpretive elements.

### **PARK USES AND FACILITIES**

Key similarities in the park uses and facilities include:

- » **Recreational Uses.** Park uses in both scenarios include a Visitor Center (described below), a similarly sized trail network with connections to adjacent communities and regional trails, small and group picnic areas, outdoor classroom space, limited camping, an educational/event facility,

and interpretive programming. Park uses utilize footprints of existing development of road or rail corridors, wherever possible. Construction of new trails is necessary in some areas to create sustainable alignments or access key destinations, while development outside of existing footprints is only explored as a means of creating unique recreational experiences which are not possible in existing areas. For example, backcountry campsites are proposed in hillside areas that have not been previously developed. In addition, both Alternatives utilize magazines and existing infrastructure for both recreational use and as part of interpretive programming.

- » **Joint Use Visitor Center.** The existing Building IA-24 is reutilized as the Joint Use Visitor Center (Visitor Center) in both Alternatives. The building is an appropriate scale for a public space and exhibit area, has a large flexible interior space with large windows looking out on the park, and is reflective of the military past of the site. The industrial character would be maintained as part of the park experience and interpretive program, and the large existing industrial sash windows would provide views of the hills and the magazine district from inside the Visitor Center. While there are variations on the design and programming of the Visitor Center in the Alternatives, both utilize the mezzanine level for offices and classrooms, thereby freeing part of the ground floor space for other uses, such as a café or multi-purpose room. In addition, in both Alternatives, the main entry would be on the east side due to the fact that the east side of the structure is closest to grade and easiest to adapt for ADA-compliant access. The existing loading dock on the west side would be developed into a patio area, shaded with new shade sails and accessed through the exhibit area. Should the reuse of Building IA-24 be determined economically infeasible, however, a new Joint Use Visitor Center could be designed and constructed to reflect the industrial history of the site through its shape and scale and in the use of materials such as steel and concrete. Figure 6 suggests some architectural styles and features that are appropriate at the Visitor Center site.
- » **Corporation Yard.** The existing Southwestern Complex (Building 420 and associated buildings) houses District departments including Skilled Trades, Fleet Equipment Shop, Police, and Fire in both Alternatives.

## BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

In both Alternatives, Conservation Zone 1 represents areas where biological resources have high sensitivity, including all California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog breeding habitat; and Conservation Zone 2 represents areas where resources are less sensitive. The distinction between the two zones is that no park uses will be allowed in Conservation Zone 1, whereas trails and support features would be allowed in Conservation Zone 2, as illustrated in the Alternatives. Conservation Zone 1 dominates the upper hillside areas in both Alternatives, and also includes the cistern pond area. Developed Park Use Areas include facilities for recreation, education, and operations such as parking lots, the Visitor Center, and picnic areas, and in both Alternatives would be approximately one percent of the total site. Sensitive cultural resources are protected in both Alternatives.

## ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Under either Alternative, the new park will generate substantial economic benefits within the region, and will create value for the immediately neighboring parts of the city of Concord. From an economic perspective, the two Alternatives are more similar than they are different since they have the same general level of facilities and features. Additionally, Operating and Maintenance (O&M) costs will ultimately be

affected by the number of acres made accessible to the public, the mileage of trails developed, the number of picnic areas and restrooms, and other physical features. Since the two Alternatives have very similar inventories of park facilities and O&M costs are likely to be about the same as a result.

Preliminary assessments of the features that are unique to each alternative are provided for each Alternative to indicate where financial implications may differ.

## **Alternative A**

Alternative A is described below, emphasizing the key features that distinguish it from Alternative B.

### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

In the Southern Area, a loop public road provides access to small staging areas and picnic sites. A maintenance road provides access from Holly Drive to the loop road, allowing staff to access the community orchard. There are additionally two neighborhood non-vehicular access points in the Southern Area, at Holly Drive and Ayers Road.

In the Primary Area, there is a public road along existing Kinne Boulevard that connects to the Visitor Center from north and a public road that connects from Bailey Road to the overlook and associated facilities located in the existing Building 97 site. Staff can also utilize a maintenance road from the end of the public road from Bailey Road to the Visitor Center complex, but this will be closed to park users. A staging area is located in the northern area of the park off of Willow Pass Road. From this staging area, there is a maintenance loop road that connects to the caretaker's residence and overlook in the existing Building 87 site and the Visitor Center complex. There is spur connection off this maintenance road to the water towers and overlook above the Visitor Center complex. The trail network is described under Park Uses and Facilities.

### **INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND PROGRAMMING**

Recreational use areas are organized around thematic interpretive zones, consolidating key themes to the extent possible. These include "Landscape Ecology" located at the overlooks within the Primary Area; "Port Chicago and Military History," located at the Visitor Center Complex; "Agriculture and Indigenous People," located near the cistern and test forestry grove (and including the relocated cattle corral); and "Restoration and Transformation," located in the Southern Area. Although targeted, the zones are intended to be inclusive and other topics may be explored within the larger umbrella concept.

### **PARK USES AND FACILITIES (INCLUDING TRAIL NETWORK)**

In the Southern Area, Alternative A includes picnic areas within the sites of existing magazines, a backcountry campsite, a series of loop trails within the lower area, and a continuation of the ridge trail from the Primary Area. The Southern Area also includes a community orchard at the site of the historic orchard and homestead. Notably the trails in the Southern Area avoid Rattlesnake Canyon. Also, while rail lines are converted to trails in several locations, the rail lines are emphasized less than in Alternative B.

In the Primary Area, the existing loop road around the cistern pond is converted to a trail with picnic areas located at magazines along this loop. There is additionally a drive-to overlook and educational/event space are located at the existing Building 97 site. The educational/event facility could be an open-air site or a more developed area including indoor facilities.

The Visitor Center Complex would include the programming described above as well as a café, separate staff offices and/or archive area. The complex is illustrated in Figure 2 and would include the following components.

- » **Visitor Center.** Building IA-24 is repurposed as a Visitor Center that contains reception, exhibits, theater and multi-purpose room on the ground floor; staff offices and classrooms on a mezzanine level; and restrooms and storage on the ground floor. The multi-purpose room is positioned so that it could be operated while the Visitor Center is closed and therefore utilized for a wide variety of uses.
- » **Café.** Building IA-55 is repurposed as a café and public restrooms.
- » **Entrances.** Trellised gateways mark entrances to the Visitor Center Complex from the multipurpose trail along Mount Diablo Creek and parking lot.
- » **Courtyard/ Outdoor Exhibit Area.** An outdoor courtyard area is defined by plantings and overhead trellises and provides space for outdoor exhibits, event space, benches and tables for use by café visitors or others. The space emphasizes shade and provides an important respite from the sun on hot days which are common at the park site.
- » **Amphitheater.** An amphitheater located at the Visitor Center entrance provides a transition from the open grasslands and the Visitor Center while providing a flexible space for programs and events or casual picnicking. The amphitheater can be used for two simultaneous programs, or combined for large events where the central patio would provide additional seating.
- » **Shaded picnic areas and outdoor classrooms.** Shaded picnic areas and outdoor classroom spaces are located in close proximity to the Visitor Center, including one picnic area across Kinne Boulevard in proximity to the enhanced Mount Diablo Creek corridor.
- » **Irrigated Turf.** Irrigated turf is utilized for the amphitheater area and adjacent picnic area, as well as the picnic and multi-use space to the north of the parking lot.

Several potential variations have been identified for the complex, including construction of a new building in the IA-55 site as multipurpose room (in which case the café would be relocated to the Visitor Center building), and repurposing of the existing storage sheds as outdoor classrooms.

The Corporation Yard at the Southwestern Complex accommodates all Department needs (Skilled Trades, Fleet Equipment Shop, Police, Fire, and Park staff) with the exception of the caretaker's residence which would be located at the Building 87 site overlooking the park.

## BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Alternative A avoids park uses around the cistern pond area and within Rattlesnake Canyon. However, the ridge trail is identified as using existing roads to the extent possible and is therefore located in close proximity to sensitive resources including potential breeding ponds for California tiger salamander and an

existing eagle nest. New tree planting is limited to what would be needed to provide shade in new use areas, however the historic orchard site is replanted as a community orchard.

## ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Opportunities for revenue generation in Alternative A include:

- » **Rentable picnic sites.** Rentable picnic sites would allow for self-organizing groups to have some certainty of use (e.g., birthday parties), or private educational groups to conduct programs (e.g., pop-up operators), but it also generates modest revenue for the District.
- » **Amphitheatre and Turf Area.** The amphitheater facility might also be attractive to outside user groups on occasion, who should be expected to reserve the space and pay a fee for use. It is also possible that the irrigated turf area might be available on a reservation basis, at times, to accommodate small events organized by others, and thereby also generate modest fee revenue.
- » **Multi-purpose room.** The multi-purpose room would have separate access allowing it to be used at times when the Visitor Center is not open. In addition to use for District programs, a fee schedule could be established for outside user groups that considers profit/non-profit status, residency within the District, or other criteria. Depending on the quality of space, once it is built out, and the specific features and amenities included, such a multi-purpose room could become quite popular. Revenue would be generated by these users, although the expectation should be that revenues will be nice in offsetting the ongoing costs of upkeep around the Visitor Center complex and not that it will be a particularly “profitable” business venture.
- » **Café.** The revenue potential of a café will depend largely on the market demand that builds up at that location. Given an exciting Visitor Center, with constantly changing exhibits, and a rich program of events, at some point in the future there may be enough people on the site reliably to open a profitable commercial operation to provide food and beverage services to visitors. In earlier years, as the use of the park is ramping up and the Visitor Center is being developed, the market may not be strong enough to support a profitable operation.
- » **Educational/Event Facility.** Situated in a drive-to location with an attractive view orientation, this could start as an open-air site with the potential to program it for educational purposes or occasional event use. Over time, and with participation of partners, it is possible that the same site could be developed more intensely, including indoor facilities. Planned and executed properly, such educational/event facilities should have some revenue associated with them, even if only to recover a portion of operating costs.
- » **Operations and Maintenance.** As described before, the two Alternatives have very similar inventories of park facilities and Operations and Maintenance costs are likely to be about the same as a result. In Alternative A the park offices are proposed within the consolidated corps yard in the Southwestern Complex. The impact this might have on costs is hard to estimate, although there could be some increased efficiency of having all functions in the same geographic area. Additionally, with the exception of a small backpacking camp, located in a remote area oriented towards thru-hikers, and the educational/event facility, the vast majority of the uses in Alternative A are for daytime hours only, requiring minimal staff during night-time hours except during special events.

## **Alternative B**

Alternative B is described below, emphasizing the key features that distinguish it from Alternative A.

### **ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

Vehicular access to the Southern Area is limited to a short road connecting to a staging area and trailhead. There are no maintenance roads.

In the Primary Area, there is a public road around the cistern pond that provides vehicular access to picnic areas located at existing magazine sites and trail access points. There is additional public road that connects from Willow pass Road in the north to the Visitor Center. This public road creates a loop that connects to the existing Building 87 site which is used as an event/educational facility. A maintenance road connects park staff from the public road at the Visitor Center to Bailey Road and also provides access to the existing Building 97 site, which serves as a caretaker's residence.

### **INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND PROGRAMMING**

Alternative B presents an integrated and flexible approach to interpretive programming, a key goal of which would be to provide a multi-layered perspective to telling the story of interpretive sites and key themes. All topics identified within Alternative A would be included but interpretation would be on a site-by-site basis. Permanent interpretive components would be designed to convey and illustrate the multiple layers of significance for each site. For example, an interpretive installation near a rail line could emphasize the role of rail in the late 19th and early 20th century expansion of industry and its key role in movement of munitions during the site's military phase. Integrated themes at this site could be civilian protests as well as the effect of the rail network on landscape and wildlife habitat.

Other key differences include that magazines near the Visitor Center are used for a variety of potential exhibits, including installation and performance art. Interpretation in Southern Area would give equal weight to restoration, rail, and agricultural/ranching history.

### **PARK USES AND FACILITIES (INCLUDING TRAIL NETWORK)**

A diversity of recreational, educational, and cultural uses are incorporated in the park programming. In addition to the picnic and trail uses described above, Alternative B identifies two hike-in group camp sites and a thematic rail-to-trail conversion trail route in the Southern Area, as well as a backcountry camping site located in the Primary Area. Magazines are utilized as picnic and camping sites, and the magazines in the Visitor Center Complex would be utilized for a combination of interpretive exhibits and art exhibits, and also available as event rental facilities. A drive-to overlook and additional an educational/event facility is located at the existing Building 87 site. Similar to the facility identified in Alternative A at the existing Building 97 Site, the educational/event facility could be either open-air or indoor facility.

The trail network in the Southern Area includes the rail-themed trail as well as a trail that extends into Rattlesnake Canyon, where it utilizes existing trails and avoids sensitive biological resources to the extent possible while affording a unique recreational and educational experience for trail users. The ridge trail

does not extend across the park, but instead would connect into neighboring properties as opportunities arise. However, a continuous trail is established from north to south using a lower route that crosses Bailey Road at an elevation similar to the Building 97 site.

Key features of the Visitor Center Complex are illustrated in Figure 4 and include:

- » **Visitor Center.** Building IA-24 is repurposed as a Visitor Center that contains reception, exhibits, theater and a multi-purpose room on the ground floor; staff offices and classrooms on a mezzanine level; and restrooms and storage on the ground floor.
- » **Restrooms and Concession Area.** The existing storage sheds are repurposed as a set of public restrooms and as a recreation concession such as bicycle rental.
- » **Amphitheatre.** An amphitheater provides space for programs and events, as well as casual picnicking. The back wall of the low-terraced amphitheater provides artistic entry sign for the complex.
- » **Courtyard and Outdoor Exhibit Area.** A series of courtyard and exhibit areas lead the way to the Visitor Center Entrance and provide flexible space for picnicking, exhibits and events.
- » **Port Chicago Interpretive Walk.** An interpretive walk from the Visitor Center to the Port Chicago Shuttle Stop allows for a progressive experience for those visiting Port Chicago National Memorial. An outdoor classroom area/gathering area is also provided along this walk.
- » **Shaded picnic areas and outdoor classrooms.** Shaded picnic areas and outdoor classroom spaces are located in close proximity to the Visitor Center, including one outdoor classroom area across Kinne Boulevard in proximity to the enhanced Mount Diablo Creek corridor.

While the Corporation Yard is located at the Southwestern Complex in both Alternatives, in Alternative B the existing Building 97 site and/or building are also utilized for park operations. Park staff offices and archives are identified as appropriate uses, with the potential for a caretaker's residence to be incorporated. This separate facility offers better park views than the Southwestern Complex, which could be advantageous for park staff who could benefit from being able to survey the site from above as well as pleasant views of the surrounding area.

## BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

While the Conservation Zones in Alternative B are similar to those identified in Alternative A, there are several distinctions in the relationship between biological resources and recreational features, including:

- » Trails in proximity to sensitive habitat along the existing ridge road are minimized by proposing that the ridge trail connect south through the city of Pittsburg within habitat proposed to be preserved per draft agreement with the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan or land designated as Open Space per the City of Pittsburg General Plan.
- » The trail within Rattlesnake Canyon may require significant restrictions to ensure protection of resources.
- » A more extensive tree planting program that establishes new trees in association with park use areas as well as the Mt. Diablo Creek corridor and along other drainages.

- » The bunker complex immediately south of the northern staging area is a focus area for restoration of oak savannah.
- » Camp uses would result in increased night time uses.

## ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Opportunities for revenue generation in Alternative B include:

- » **Group camps.** These have been highly popular in other EBRPD parks and, within relevant seasons, highly utilized on weekends. Fees are charged and some revenue is generated.
- » **Rentable Picnic Sites.** As with Alternative A, there would be rentable picnic areas, some of which could be subject to reservation fees.
- » **Amphitheater.** The amphitheater facility might also be attractive to outside user groups on occasion, who should be expected to reserve the space and pay a fee for use.
- » **Multipurpose Room.** Alternative B also includes a multipurpose room, and the revenue potential of this facility should be essentially the same as was discussed for Alternative A.
- » **Concessions.** Alternative B reserves a space for a recreation concession, visualized as a bike rental operation. Somewhat analogous to the comments made on the café in Alternative A, this will depend on the market support that grows for such uses at that location. Many users may arrive on bikes, or bring bicycles on their vehicles to the park in order to ride the trails, but out of town visitors and others would appreciate the ability to rent a bike for a few hours or participate in a bicycle tour. It is also possible that other forms of recreation will emerge in the next few years that could generate new recreation demand.
- » **Educational/Event Facility.** Situated in a drive-to location with an attractive view orientation, this could start as an open-air site with the potential to program it for educational purposes or occasional event use. Over time, and with participation of partners, it is possible that the same site could be developed more intensely, including indoor facilities. Planned and executed properly, such educational/event facilities should have some revenue associated with them, even if only to recover a portion of operating costs.
- » **Operations and Maintenance.** As noted, the Operations and Maintenance costs for both Alternatives are likely to be about the same as a result. In Alternative B, staff offices are located at the existing Building 97 site, which could result in reduced efficiency by decentralizing staff structures. Additionally, Alternative B includes two group camps in the Southern Area and an educational/event facility in the northern end of the Primary Area. The presence of these uses could have implications for hours of staffing onsite or night time patrol patterns, which could increase Operations and Maintenance costs slightly beyond what is envisioned in Alternative A.



# Concord Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan

## DESCRIPTION OF DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

Table 1: Summary of Key Features

	Alternative A		Alternative B	
<b>Land Use Zones</b>				
<b>Conservation Zone 1</b> (No developed park uses or trails)	53%	Located as shown in figure	49%	Located as shown in figure
<b>Conservation Zone 2</b> (Includes trails and support features)	46%	Located as shown in figure	50%	Located as shown in figure
<b>Developed Park Use Areas</b> (Facilities for recreation, education and operations)	1%	See below and Figure 1	1%	See below and Figure 3.
<b>Vehicular Access and Circulation</b>				
<b>Vehicular Access Points</b>	4	Kinne Boulevard, Bailey Road (2), Willow Pass Road	3	Kinne Boulevard, , Bailey Road, Willow Pass Road
<b>Public Roads</b>	4.1 miles	Staging area access and overlook in Primary Area; loop road in Southern Area	7.25 miles	Staging area access and loop road in Primary Area; Staging area access in Southern Area
<b>Service and Emergency Vehicle Access Roads</b>	6.8 miles	Access to corporation yard, water tanks, caretaker's residence, and orchard site; connection from Bailey Road to Willow Pass Road.	3.1 miles	Access to corporation yard, caretaker residence (Bldg 97) and water tanks; connection from Bailey Road to Willow Pass Road.
<b>Parking</b>	Up to 4 Acres	Primary staging at Visitor Center Complex; secondary trailhead staging off of Willow Pass Road; two small parking lots along loop road in Southern Area and at overlook north of Bailey Road	Up to 4 Acres	Primary staging at Visitor Center Complex; secondary trailhead staging off of Willow Pass Road; small parking areas around loop road in Primary Area and along public road north of Bailey Road
<b>Non-Vehicular Access and Circulation</b>				
<b>Creek Crossings to EDC Area</b>	3		3	
<b>Neighborhood Access Points from Southern Area</b>	2	Holly Drive and Ayers Road	1	Holly Drive
<b>Rail to Trail Conversion</b>	3.5 miles		6.5 miles	
<b>Other Trails</b>	17.2 miles		13.9 miles	
<b>Visitor Center and Associated Facilities</b>				
<b>Building 1A-24</b>	Reused	Exhibit Area, theatre, classrooms, offices, restrooms, patio area, multipurpose room. ( <i>Variation: Café instead of Multipurpose</i> )	Reused	Exhibit Area, Multi-purpose room, theatre, classrooms, offices, restrooms, patio area
<b>Bldg IA-55</b>	Reused	Reuse as Café and restroom. ( <i>Variation: reconstructed as multipurpose room and restrooms</i> )	Removed	Removed
<b>Parrallel Sheds</b>	Removed	Removed ( <i>Variation: outdoor classroom facilities</i> )	Reused	Reused as Restrooms and Concessions
<b>New Construction</b>	1 Building	New archive building to north of IA-24 ( <i>Variation: reconstruction of multipurpose room in proximity to removed 1A-55</i> )	None	None
<b>Other Recreational and Educational Facilities</b>				
<b>Interpretive Programming</b>		Distinct interpretive zones focus narrative		Interpretive themes integrated throughout park
<b>Outdoor Classroom Areas</b>	Multiple	Located near Visitor Center and along railroad trail; opportunities also near group picnic sites and at overlooks	Multiple	Located near Visitor Center and along cistern loop road; opportunities also near group picnic sites
<b>Picnic Sites with Parking (at existing magaizine site)</b>	6	Located in Southern Area	6	Located in Northern Area
<b>Small Picnic Sites</b>	7+		7+	
<b>Backcountry Campsite</b>	1	Located in Southern Area	1	Located in Primary Area
<b>Group Hike-In Campsite</b>	0	None	2	Located in Southern Area; one uses magazine
<b>Outdoor Facilities within Visitor Center Complex</b>		Amphitheatre, plaza area, group picnic, outdoor classrooms, irrigated turf		Amphitheatre, plaza area, group picnic, outdoor classrooms,
<b>Magazines Incorporated into Programming</b>	31	Interpretive and recreational use	25	Interpretive, recreational, and community uses (art exhibits, rental space, etc.)
<b>Operations</b>				
<b>Corporation Yard</b>	1	Located at Southwestern Complex	1	Located at Southwestern Complex
<b>Park Staff Offices/Archives</b>	1	(Consolidated at Southwestern Complex)		Located at Bldg 97 site
<b>Caretaker Residence</b>	1	Potential caretaker residence at Bldg 87 (above or in proximity to other facility uses)	1	Potential caretaker residence at Bldg 97
<b>Other</b>				
<b>Oak Woodland Enhancement</b>		Limited		More intensive tree planting; restoration of bunker complex near the northern staging area
<b>Cattle Corals (for grazing and restoration/land management)</b>		Relocated to Ranching Interpretive Zone		Remains in place