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Lawrence Ames
1218 Willow Street
San Jose, CA 95125

Dear Dr. Ames,

Thank you for your comments regarding the future of the Parks Charter Fund. Before addressing your letter, I want to clarify my position on this issue. It has been portrayed that I am against any rural acquisitions and that I want the County Parks Department to only acquire urban pocket parks going forward. This is not the case. For a variety of reasons, many of which are stated in your letter, I want a balanced approach to parks acquisition that addresses the needs of all Santa Clara County residents. I believe that our opinions are closer than it appears.

Every park, both large and small, has regional significance, if not global significance. As you mentioned, the State is in the process of issuing directives to reduce vehicle miles traveled. The County will also be subject to those rulings. Therefore even smaller parks, especially those in unincorporated areas, have countywide significance by reducing the miles traveled to a park. Ideally, they would eliminate vehicle miles traveled by being close enough or accessible enough by public transit so that the vehicles are left in the garage, thereby improving air quality.

Furthermore, as the operator of Valley Medical Center, it is important to look at ways to prevent obesity, diabetes, and other health related issues. One avenue is by increasing the availability of parklands and recreational opportunities to our residents. This reduces health related issues by encouraging exercise and healthy activity, thereby having the countywide significance of reducing the strain on our public hospital system.

There are many other countywide benefits that apply to all parks, including but not limited to: reduction of the heat-island affect; carbon capture; capturing and filtering of storm water runoff; reduction of commutes; nature deficiency; and mental health.

Regarding your suggested additional criteria, opportunity and ephemerality, I agree there may be opportunities that arise that have not been planned. Those criteria were included in the larger plan that was heard by the Board of Supervisors back in March under the criteria of "Threat of Development." While that criterion should cover this aspect of the plan as well, I will ask staff to include those criteria.

Best regards,

Dave Cortese
President, Board of Supervisors

