

Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo, and Members of the Council, City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara St., San José, CA 95113
via email, sent September 10, 2019

re: Agenda Item 7.1, Green Stormwater Infrastructure Plan

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I'm writing as one who has attended a number of the Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) public meetings. As I said in my letter to GSI Plan Staff last May (see attached letter), I support the overall goals of the GSI Plans but I am concerned about the plans to use city parkland for some of the projects.

I am especially concerned by the GSI Project Prioritization Methodology. As explained on p. 36 of the Plan, prospective projects are given scores based on various criteria, the higher the better. Sites are given an extra 5 points if it uses Parks or Open Space, and an additional 5 points if the site is "Within DAC [Disadvantaged Community] or MTC Community of Concern". What is the message the City is sending – "let's take away the parks from the poor and change them into filtration sites"?

I don't object to the current plans for one or two "pilot projects" to try the planned methods of stormwater treatment at non-parkland sites. The River Oaks Pump Station seems to be a suitable place where the City can study the effectiveness and the maintenance issues, and, if successful, this site might be improved and may eventually become a public asset. The Kelley Park Stables may be another site, so long as it doesn't interfere with the Water District's flood-control plans: we in the community have been waiting since the 1990 Coyote Creek study for a trail to be built through here, and perhaps the GSI project could be the impetus for finally building it. However, I strongly object to the future plans to take acres of publicly used parkland from Kelley Park or elsewhere and permanently remove them from the public's current or future use for recreational purposes. And what is the meaning of Point 4 in the Mayor's memo?— I've attended nearly every Diridon Area meeting and I don't recall any discussion about using the open space or greenways there for GSI .

The goal of GSI – to reduce bacterial contamination of the bay – is most worthy. The problem is caused in large part by the unsanitary conditions of the "unsheltered community" that often camps along the creeks. It would appear to be far more cost effective to mitigate the root cause and try to shelter or otherwise accommodate this community rather than spending a fortune and commandeering publicly used parkland for the treatment of relatively benign runoff from streets and parking lots.

Please make appropriate amendments to the Staff Recommendation prior to approving it.

Thank you,

~Larry Ames

longtime stream and park advocate

cc: GSI; City Mngr; PRNS Dir. & Staff; Parks & Rec Cmsn; SJ Park Advocates; Cmte for Green Foothills