

The Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and Members of the City Council, City of San Jose  
200 E Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113  
via email, sent Sept. 14, 2018

re: Sept. 18th Council Agenda Item 4.3: "Purchase and Sale Agreement for Coleman Avenue Property" [and the soccer field complex issue]

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers,

On September 18, you will consider a number of issues related to soccer fields, parking, and property development, as discussed in [Kim Walesh's memo](#) dated Sept. 7 (file item 18-1217). The topic is complex and there has been inadequate outreach to the various stakeholders, and so I request that decisions be postponed until outreach is completed and the Council has had time for a study session.

As a schedule conflict regrettably precludes me from attending Tuesday's hearing, I am writing now, as an individual long interested in San Jose parks, primarily to ask a question:

**What is the status of the Properties in "Coleman East" (aka "Coleman Loop" or "Guadalupe Gardens Park") – are they park land or airport land?**

Page 2 of the above-referenced memo discusses how the city in early 2016 "evaluate[d] the potential to create a larger soccer field complex on the east side of Coleman Avenue within the city land known as Guadalupe Gardens Park." And yet, on page 7 of the same memo: "The City will facilitate Earthquakes efforts to enter into a lease Agreement on Guadalupe River Park master planned land owned by the Airport for parking on up to four acres of land in support of Avaya Stadium operations." (Question: has the city coordinated with the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy on this?)

It was my understanding that years ago the airport had bought out the numerous residences and businesses in the flight path of the airport (in the area then called "the Coleman Loop") for noise and safety issues, and then gave (sold? transferred?) the land to parks.

- If this is not the case and this is not park land, why did the Parks Department make plans for soccer fields on airport-owned land? And were any city-, county-, or open-space-district park-related funds used in the study or design efforts?
- If it is park land, why is the city and/or airport now working to sell off (or lease out) the land for the commercial purpose of becoming parking lots for the Earthquakes Stadium?
- Or did parks transfer the lands back to the airport sometime in the last couple years?

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I have two concerns as well:

**One:** It appears that "the tale of the soccer field complex" has been quite a saga: first it was to be by the Avaya Stadium west of Coleman, then in the Guadalupe Gardens Park (which, due to difficulties with the nearby airport runways, was not allowed), and now it is being considered for the Agnews-East site by Zanker Road. I fear that this third location also is not well-suited:

- From the preliminary plans I've seen, the site doesn't appear large enough for more than just two soccer fields – hardly a "complex".
- The site is not well-served by public transit: CalTrain and BART are nowhere nearby, and any access to the Light Rail stations on Tasman are precluded by the large existing Cisco complex.
- The surrounding high-density neighborhoods developing nearby need a proper "neighborhood park" – and not just a few picnic tables outside some facility that would be accessibly only to dues-paying league participants.

I asked about these issues at the recent Parks & Rec Commission meeting, and was told that the "North San Jose Study" had mentioned that there likely would be soccer fields in a park in the region. However, note that the fairly new Vista Montaña Park on North First Street is already comprised of two soccer fields – and little else. The residents of the North San Jose area should have some variety and not have to have every new park be primarily soccer.

From page 5 of the memo: “Staff recognizes that community engagement is critical and has not yet been completed around the Agnews site as of this Council action. If sale of the Coleman property is approved, PRNS will engage the North San Jose community, and the River Oaks Neighborhood in particular. PRNS needs to understand the community expectations for non-soccer related amenities and determine how these may be accommodated in the design.” – What if the neighborhood just does not want soccer there after the community engagement process? Why not do the outreach first? And,

**Two:** parking.

The goal of the Envision 2040 General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan is to move away from the dependence on private cars, to reduce traffic congestion and the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and to share parking resources so as to minimize the impact of cars. To me, it seems a shame to now consider paving over potential parkland for the occasional soccer game, especially when the CalTrain (and future BART) Station in Santa Clara is closer – and doesn’t involve walking or shuttling across I-880. The soccer fans should be able to share parking with the adjacent businesses: perhaps employees could be incentivized to leave early on game days with free transit passes or a share of the parking revenue. And concerns about the impact of potentially rowdy tailgaters or soccer hooligans should shape a city’s enforcement policies rather than its development plans.

**I ask that on Tuesday you defer your decision on this issue** until the city has completed outreach to the North San Jose community, the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, and the public, and until you have had a study session.

Please feel free to contact me to clarify any of these concerns. I look forward to reviewing the video of the Council meeting to see how these issues have been addressed!

Thank you,

~Larry Ames

Lawrence Ames, long-time park advocate.

cc: City Manager’s Office: Dave Sykes, Angel Rios  
PRNS: John Cicirelli, Nicolle Burnham; P&R Cmsns: chair Flores, Cmsnrs c/o Teresa Meyer-Calvert  
Director of Planning: Rosalynn Hughey; Director of Airport: John Aitken  
Office of Economic Development: Kim Walesh, Nanci Klein  
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority: Andrea MacKenzie, Mike Flaughner, Sequoia Hall  
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors: Cindy Chavez, Ken Yeager  
Interim County Parks Director: Don Rocha; SPUR: Teresa Alvarado; CGF: Alice Kaufman  
Guadalupe River Park Conservancy: Leslee Hamilton; SJ Park Advocates: Jean Dresden