

San Diego, 03-14-06

Park & Recreation Board

RE: *Strong Support, and petition to VOTE for, Recommendation No. 1, agenda Item-102.*

Honorable Chair and Respectful Member of the Board:

Since chances are that the Board chooses to hear Item-102, respectfully, on behalf of the Fox Canyon Neighborhood Association and the residents of Fox Canyon, My community is asking for your unanimous support and approval of **recommendation number one (1)**, i.e. *“Approve the park as recommended by the Park and Recreation Department for an approximately 1.9 acre park and the extension of Ontario Avenue as a two lane street.”*

Background:

1. Residents Profile:

- Our neighbors are a growing class of dispossessed people composed of the chronic poor, like: the elderly, the disable, the fixed income, the single parents, and an unusual growing numbers of legal and non-visa-holder resent immigrants from Somalia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, the Balkans, Mexico and Central America.
- The Community of Fox Canyon is all encompassed in one complete Census Tract. Census Tract [ct] **27.09** profiles the residents of Fox Canyon as being **87.6%** Low to medium Income with an MI of **\$26,049**. In addition **2005** figures from ct **27.09** places the **Hispanic** population at **51%**; **2,099** people from the entire Fox Canyon population of **4,174** are of Hispanic origin, and **83%** speak only Spanish at home. Hispanics, as a class of people, have the highest listed numbers of High School drop-outs, **43%**, compared to any other minority. We are your mechanics, gardeners, your hotel and household maids, your taxi drivers, the ones who polish your **Country Club** floors and welcome you [*as uneducated servants*] at the door.

2. Residents' Needs and Wants:

- As a class of people, we are the ones that keep your front lawns neatly manicured, the ones that keep your **Golf Course** greens and the flower beds beautiful right in front of your County Clubs, like: **Torrey Pines**. We do know how to keep, protect and grow, dream and care for the **“little flowers”** for your enjoyment and to beautify your environment. Certainly, we want to enjoy and keep a little bit of this panacea for us too, right in a park, in the middle of our own trash filled and impoverished neighborhood. In our own **“American Dream”** we want a neighborhood **PARK fronted** by the Ontario/Winona **street connection** and a **restored creek**, as we have always petitioned and the excellent Parks and Recreation Department staff so beautifully have designed for us.
- Needing, dreaming and proposing the **Ontario Avenue** street connection [*Ontario/Winona*] is **NOT** going against or being bad to the environment that **WE** pledged so seriously to protect, keep and make bloom.
- Wanting the street connection is the **necessity** of a **disable** class of people to have appropriate access right up to the park, with an appropriately built ramp.

- Wanting the street connection is the necessity of having appropriate **escape routes** to empty the neighborhood quickly in case of a natural or manmade disaster.
- Also it is the necessity of a better route to school to drop/pick our children to/from **Marshall Elementary** and the **Waldorf Academy** and the need to reroute some traffic away from these schools for the safety of our own children. But, also we have the need of better redistributed traffic patterns and a way to get/from our **low class** and **paying jobs**, on time.

3. Topography:

- Our entire neighborhood was developed atop the mesas formed by a five-finger canyon and one **1.5 mile** long street in the center valley of the canyon, Auburn Drive. Our neighborhood does not conform to the typical flat and square urban grid. The Ontario Avenue street connection has been promised to the settlers of this area, and was designed as a needed additional gate, since it was first dedicated in **1911**.
- It's not our characteristic to be insensitive to the environment, to the contrary, it might be of a complete surprise to you, that such an uneducated, accent distinctive, horde of people, could the proponents, supporters and the hard workers when imprinting their own vision, for their neighborhood, in the **Mid-City Communities Plan** of 1998, The **Euclid Avenue Revitalization Action Plan** of 2002, the **Chollas Creek Enhancement Program** of 2002, and the producers *[with spelling and grammatical errors]* of our own neighborhood vision, the **Fox Canyon Parks Subcommittee Report** of 2003. Therefore, we don't want to "**pave over everything in City Heights**", just the 24 ft wide *[down from 40ft]* of Ontario Avenue to harvest the promise of security and access made to us, since **1911**.

Clarifying Questions and Answers:

1. Was the **FCNP** afforded the opportunity to work in partnership with the Councilmember?

§ **YES!** The development projects identified within the **FCNP** have **endured** and **enjoyed** a long and intimate **PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS** since **1998** *[nine (8) years]*, since when former Councilmember **Judy McCarty** first appointed Aimee LaPour as Council Rep to Fox Canyon and present Councilmember **JIM MADAFFER, CD-7**, was her Chief of Staff. Since, the Fox Canyon Neighborhood Association *[FCNA]* has enjoyed the privilege and constant succession of **three** previous Council Representatives to present **Ms. Elyse Lowe**. During all these long many years these fine Reps have always attended **all** of the FCNA's monthly and special meetings. Some of which have been called by the Councilmember himself and attended by him.

2. Is the **FCNP**, and the other projects attached to it, a community based project?

§ **YES!** All these projects together certainly are **community initiated** projects designed to its present form by the need of each one of them, to help improve the indigent community in which we live.

3. A Fine **Park** Project Converted Into a **Road** Project?

§ **NO!** *Not at all*, this is the **convergent evolution** of **three** separate projects all rolled into one *[a bundle]*, at one particular location:

- a. *The Ontario/Winona Street Connection*
- b. *A Restored Portion of Auburn Creek.*
- c. *The Fox Canyon Neighborhood PARK*

a. *The Ontario/Winona Street Connection:*

- I. The **Ontario Rood Connection** is the **typical** case of one City Department **NOT** talking to another when considering and developing recommended projects.
- II. We are the **proponents** and **suppers** to the **Ontario Avenue street connection** as the **FCNA** first considered the solutions to the lack of secondary entrance/exit gates, the canyon's difficult traffic circulation patterns and the horrific traffic problems at the **Loop**. The considerations to all these solutions gave **genesis** to the park and creek restoration projects.
- III. Now Fox Canyon residents of the **One-way Loop** [*upper Auburn/Wightman*] strongly advocated closing the Loop at the **Pork-chop** latitude [*the fork, "Y" jointure, formed by the corner upper Auburn/Wightman to the east of Euclid*] in an intent to solve its horrific traffic problems. They gladly joined the foundation of the **Fox Canyon Neighborhood Association [FCNA]**, on **October 1997**, believing that more voices hold greater power, and that such could help them in their previous and failed efforts to close the Loop permanently. Through public meetings and workshops [*since 1998 to present*], the FCNA discussed the issues, and found and created consensus and support for all the projects now bundled together. Then, all proposed solutions were distributed to pertinent City departments for implementation.
- IV. On **Tuesday, February 09, 1999**, the **FCNA** issues the **first** call for a meeting, on these issues, to the Fox Canyon community. The question for the community's consideration at this point was: *Does **ONTARIO** need to be open to vehicular traffic to diminish the flow through Auburn and to provide a faster exit from the area towards University Avenue?* The community voiced a resounding **YES!** And it has worked, very hard, since then to implement the projects.
- V. On **March 1999**, the results of the **February's** meeting were forward to Councilmember **JUDY McCARTY, Retired**, and also to Mr. **Allen Holden**, Deputy Director, Transportation Department.
- VI. On **November 30, 1999**, [*nine (9) months later*] Siavash Pazargadi, Senior Engineer, **Transportation Planning** concludes the study titled "*Euclid Avenue Rezoning, Traffic Study and Ontario Avenue Connection Traffic*" and issues a Memorandum.
- VII. On **January 26, 2000**, Allen Holden, Jr., Deputy Director, **Transportation Department, Traffic Engineering** Division, issues a report titled **Ontario Avenue Connection**, File Number **TR 241, 250**, and issues a Memorandum to **Judy McCarty**.
- VIII. On **October 08, 2001**, Ron D'Argento prepares the first Preliminary Project Cost Estimate Summary Sheet, Project Name: **Ontario Avenue Extension to Winona Avenue**, Project Limits: **Auburn Drive to Winona Avenue**.
- IX. On **December 03, 2002**, Tim Dewey, Engineer, prepares the last Preliminary Project Cost Estimate Summary Sheet, Project Name: **Ontario Drive Connection**, Project Limits: Auburn Drive to Winona Street. This last Summary Sheet designs the Ontario Avenue Connection in its present form.
- X. With **all** engineering and transportation studies done, the Ontario Avenue street connection is given a **CIP 12-106.0** number and **shelved** awaiting the **PARK** project to catch-up in funding and design.

b. *A Restored Portion of Auburn Creek:*

- i. We, [the FCNA] are also the **proponents, supporters and participants** of the “**Chollas Creek Enhancement Program**”. Working in partnership and in conjunction with the residents of **CD-7, 4 and 8**, the association members [Fox Canyon] worked hard to see this plan approved by City Council.
- ii. We are extremely **proud** that **all** Fox Canyon proposals made their way into the program. Including renaming “**Phase IV-A**” from “**Fox Canyon**” to “**AUBURN CREEK**” as our research showed that early Spaniard settlers and first Californians named this Native Americans known creek “**Río Castaño**” [a tributary to greater Chollas Creek]. Name which, later, was translated by modern Americans to “**Auburn Creek**”.
- iii. Due to urbanization, when the creek was canalized to the west, the newly built street, atop the bottom of the creek, was named “**Auburn Drive**”, as it exist today.
- iv. Knowing that waterways run to the lowest point, we, the **FCNA**, have strongly supported to start all cleaning and restoration projects at the highest point [Auburn Creek Branch at University and 52nd Street, CD-7]. Presently, we are working hard to implement the Chollas Creek Enhancement Program by proposing and supporting projects like: our own originated **Auburn Park** and the **Fox Canyon Neighborhood Park bundle**. Others will follow as we complete present projects in the pipeline, and as our own Councilmember wishes to support in the future.

c. *The Fox Canyon Neighborhood PARK:*

- I. Late 1999, the FCNA successfully petitions to incorporate a park in the draft of the **E-RAP**
- II. Late 2001, Ms **Marcia McClatchy**, former Director, Park & Recreation Department, an entourage of City Officials, Council Rep **Ellen Agey**, retired, and **Jose Lopez**, President, **FCNA** toured the Fox Canyon/Chollas Creek areas identified as ideal for neighborhood parks and catalog vacant parcels as possible park sites, creating the inventory known as **Annex I** to the **Fox Canyon Parks Subcommittee Report**.
- III. On March 28, 2002, the Fox Canyon Community, local Landowners, representatives from Elected Officials, City Department Directors and local Nonprofit Organizations attended a Community Forum on the mission and work assigned to the **FCNA Parks Subcommittee**. Strong community support was established to continue the work on the **Fox Canyon Parks System** and the **Chollas Creek Enhancement Program**.
- IV. On December 12, 2002, the **FCNA** receives a grant from the **American Society of Landscape Architects [A.S.L.A] San Diego Chapter** for a **Community Parks Design Workshop**, and appoints **Laurel Hunter** [Vice-President Community Outreach] to form a committee of chapter members to assist the **Fox Canyon Parks Subcommittee** in planning the workshop.
- V. On January 14, 2003, the Fox Canyon Park is assigned **CIP** number **29-596.0**.
- VI. On March 18, 2003, the **Fox Canyon Parks Subcommittee** issues the first edition of the **Parks Subcommittee Report**.
- VII. On Saturday, June 28, 2003, the **A.S.L.A** conducts the first conceptual Design Workshop at Wrigley Hall, Christ Church Unity, 3770 Altadena Avenue, in the neighborhood of Chollas Creek.

VIII. On Tuesday, May 10, 2005, Councilmember **JIM MADAFFER, CD-7**, calls the community of Fox Canyon to a meeting, to announce the advent of the **FCNP** Project including the **Ontario Avenue** street extension.

4. **Is the FCNP [bundle] supported and described by any City Approved Plan?**

§ **YES!** The Fox Canyon community made sure to include the concept of the **Park bundle** in the **Euclid Avenue Revitalization Action Program [E-RAP]** approve by an action of **City Council** on **July 2000**, page **26**, **first row**, in the **cells** across, under **headings**:

- a. **Recommendation** – it reads: “*Develop a PUBLIC PARK in the vicinity of Auburn Drive and Winona Avenue*”.
- b. **Implementation** – it reads: “*Evaluate opportunities to develop a neighborhood park in conjunction with the CHOLLAS CREEK PRESERVATION PROJECT and street improvement MITIGATION for development of a STREET LINKING Ontario Avenue and Winona Avenue*”.
- c. **Lead** – it reads: the supporting and point of origination and lead is given to the [Fox Canyon] “**Neighborhood Associations**”.
- d. **Status** – it reads: “**Refer to Park & Recreation**”.

§ On October 12, 1998, The FCNA first proposed the idea of this *bundle* of projects previous to the enactment by City Council of the E-RAP. The description of the *bundle* did indeed found its rightful place into the E-RAP.

5. **No street connection at all in exchange for more Parkland?**

§ **NO!** The community of Fox Canyon needs, wants and supports the **FCNP** Project as presented and as currently designed, including the Ontario Avenue street extension, a restored Auburn Creek, at this location, and the Neighborhood Park, all together.

§ **NO!** Not building the Ontario Avenue street connection as the community wants and proposes is **NOT** going to increase the parkland substantially, and it’s negligible to the benefits achieved by the **24ft** wide street. The street connection is needed to provide a **frontage road** to the new park, to better neighborhood vehicular circulation and redistribution of traffic patterns. In addition to provide a secondary gate to the neighborhood and as an additional **escape/emergency route**.

6. **Does the proposed street connection expose children and the Elderly to great, present and imminent danger?**

§ **NO!** Not at all, every single City street presents every single [*let it be children, the elderly or English impaired*] pedestrian with great implied danger. Let it be that such a street be located in front of an elementary school, big apartment buildings, and residential developments, or in front of parks. The new Ontario Avenue street extension is **NO** better or any worse to this possibility. Because this future street will front a new park is **no** reason why it should not be built.

This information was compiled to provide some background information and to intent to answer some of the questions that you might have about the proposed project. I sincerely hope that if you have additional question, you will promptly request the answers from us.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jose Lopez, President
Fox Canyon Neighborhood Association