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**From:** Deborah Williams <deborah1518@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 13, 2022 2:45 PM  
**To:** City Clerk Group  
**Cc:** Jaime Valdez; JoAnne Plummer; DARYL WEST  
**Subject:** Comments on Agenda Item D.1 for the August 16, 2022 City Council Meeting  
**Attachments:** Stow Grove Park Consideration for Design Phase (2).pdf

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Thank you for considering my comments regarding Agenda Item D.1 ("Stow Grove Park Design Update") for your upcoming August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Unfortunately, I will be out of town, and not able to be at the Council meeting in person.

My comments are as follows:

I serve on the Goleta Parks and Recreation Commission, and am currently Vice Chair. I have attended all of the Commission meetings at which Stow Grove Park Design has been discussed; and I have also attended the Community Meeting about the Park Design. For purposes of these comments, I am not representing the Commission; I am solely representing myself.

As a resident of Goleta, I walk to and enjoy Stow Grove Park at least once a week. Like others, I deeply appreciate its natural and community gathering specialness, and consider it one of Goleta's greatest assets.

I personally strongly oppose the Staff Recommendation regarding the Stow Grove Park Design that is before you. It does not reflect what the Commission decided previously, nor the information upon which that Commission decision was based. It is also inconsistent with the commitment that the City Council has to the protection of ESHA, especially given the urgencies of climate change, biodiversity protection and 30x30 goals. I urge the City Council to adopt the "ALTERNATIVE" presented on the bottom of page 7 of the Staff recommendation instead.

History: On March 3, 2021, Staff came to the Parks and Recreation Commission to discuss Stow Grove Park. As part of the Staff Packet, there was a Memo to the Commission from Staff entitled: "Stow Grove Park Considerations for Design Phase" (attached). The Recommendation from Staff was: "Consider a recommendation requesting City Council to direct staff to prepare conceptual documents for the renovation of the Stow Grove Park, in its entirety, which may be phased for future projects." The short (2.5 page) report did not mention ESHA once. It did however clearly highlight the following: "It is important to note that many of the surveys received have requested that the park remain the same—very 'natural'. The recommendation before the Parks and Recreation Commission is not to create a brand-new Stow Grove Park, but to plan for future accessibility, efficiencies and more that will allow the community, of all abilities, to enjoy this beautiful space for years to come." (Bottom of page 2).

It was this statement upon which the Commission voted on the Recommendation; and unanimously adopted it. Specifically: "Approved Minutes from the Wednesday, March 03, 2021 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. Item C.2: VOTE: Motion approved by the following roll call vote: Ayes: Chair Jenkins, Vice-Chair Williams, Commissioners Holdren, Replogle-Purinton, Walton, and West. Noes: None."

Neither the 2021 Staff report, nor the Commission discussions, nor the adopted Commission Motion stated or even suggested that the Commission thought there were "deficiencies throughout the entire park site" that needed to be addressed (contrary to page 2 of the memo before you). It bears repeating what Staff said when we voted on recommending a Master Plan (and the Commission relied upon): "It is important to note that many of the surveys received have requested that the park remain the same—very 'natural'. The recommendation before the Parks and

Recreation Commission is not to create a brand-new Stow Grove Park, but to plan for future accessibility, efficiencies and more that will allow the community, of all abilities, to enjoy this beautiful space for years to come.”

Furthermore, the Commission was not ever asked to consider, and certainly has never considered or approved a recommendation that the Master Plans be developed “without restrictions both within and outside of ESHA” as Staff is seeking now from the City Council.

ESHA is very important; the special natural features of Stow Grove are very important; and our community’s commitment to meeting our climate change goals is very important. Violating ESHA will be counterproductive, lengthy, contrary to the public interest, contrary to the specialness of Stow Grove Park, and potentially result in community divisiveness and litigation. There is certainly no compelling reason to go down that path.

Recommendation: Please do not adopt the proposal before you that the Stow Grove Master Plans be developed “without restrictions both within and outside of ESHA.” Instead, adopt the ALTERNATIVE at the bottom of page 7, specifically: “Develop one conceptual plan to address only the existing deficiencies (ADA, pathways, aging infrastructure) and new amenities outside of ESHA and ESHA buffers.” This ALTERNATIVE will be able to result in a positive, community-building and needed plan for Stow Grove Park.

Thank you for your consideration of this comments.

Regards,  
Deborah Williams

*Deborah Williams, J.D.*  
*Lecturer, UCSB, Environmental Studies Department*  
Website: <https://50greatpubliclanddestinations.org/> (Note: Stow Park is one of the featured destinations)

*The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.*  
*- Winston Churchill*



**Agenda Item C.2**  
**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**  
**Meeting Date: March 3, 2021**

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**TO:** Chair and Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Jaime Valdez, Interim Neighborhood Services and Public Safety Director

**CONTACT:** JoAnne Plummer, Parks and Recreation Manager

**SUBJECT:** Stow Grove Park Considerations for Design Phase

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider a recommendation requesting City Council to direct staff to prepare conceptual documents for the renovation of the Stow Grove Park, in its entirety, which may be phased for future projects.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, the Multi-Purpose Field at the north end of Stow Grove Park was identified as needing renovation through the priorities listed in the adopted Recreation Needs Assessment. Understanding that the community values this park, the public outreach efforts launched with a survey asking questions that were inclusive of the entire park, providing information for future phases. The survey was released on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and comments were received through Monday, November 16, 2020. The results of this survey were provided to the Parks and Recreation Commission at their meeting of December 2, 2020.

The initial outreach process resulted in an astonishing community response with over 750 completed surveys received. The data obtained in this process confirmed the community's affinity for this treasured park location. The responses verified that there are many elements of the park in need of improvement.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City's adopted Recreation Needs Assessment identified a lack of available athletic fields for use by youth sports organizations. To address the deficiency, two field renovation projects were identified and placed as Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects #9074 and #9075 in the City's CIP budget. These two projects include the northern field at Stow Grove Park (9074) and the field at Evergreen Park (9075).

In addition, the City of Goleta added a new multi-purpose field with the development of Jonny D. Wallis Neighborhood Park and renovated the multi-purpose field behind the Goleta Valley Community Center in 2019.

The field renovation tentatively planned to improve the existing facility at Stow Grove Park would include new turf, irrigation, replacement and/or improvement of existing amenities, etc. However, since the primary access to Stow Grove Park comes from the parking lot located on North La Patera Lane, additional accessibility improvements will be required. Updating the field has triggered mandated upgrades to the parking lot, the creation of an accessible pathway from the parking lot to the field, the play features and possibly the restroom facility.

As the results of the survey are analyzed along with other documents, included but not limited to the Parks Master Plan, the Recreation Needs Assessment and the City's ADA Transition Plan, it appears that there are needs to address many of the same features for the remaining areas of the park. An example is the accessibility from the parking lot to the rest of the park. If the focus is on the improvements to the parking lot only for the renovation of the northern field, there may be a need to address the parking lot during the next phase as accessibility is needed for the rest of the park as well. In other words, each subsequent project may require additional adjustments to the parking lot.

Staff is requesting the Commission consider supporting a recommendation to City Council to direct staff to prepare conceptual documents for Stow Grove Park Renovation, for the entire facility, which could be phased for future projects. This process would require the solicitation of Requests for Proposals for a Landscape Architect to develop a conceptual plan to address deficiencies in the entire park, which could be separated into phases for construction as funding is available. Once the final conceptual plan is supported by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council, construction documents will be prepared for the phase recommended for improvement. This holistic approach to the park's improvements will allow for a plan to be developed, with the public's input, addressing needs for this facility. Understanding what will be modified in this park, even on a conceptual level, will also allow the City of Goleta the opportunity to explore grants and other funding opportunities for future phases.

It is important to note that many of the surveys received have requested that the park remain the same—very “natural”. The recommendation before the Parks and Recreation Commission is not to create a brand-new Stow Grove Park, but to plan for future accessibility, efficiencies and more that will allow the community, of all abilities, to enjoy this beautiful space for years to come.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The cost to develop a conceptual plan for just the northern field, addressing the associated ADA improvements can cost \$40,000 - \$50,000, while a conceptual plan for the entire park will likely range from \$75,000 - \$100,000. These are just rough estimates from two different landscape architecture firms and amounts are contingent on the number of public meetings, amount of survey work needed, and extent of environmental documents required. It is unrealistic to estimate the costs associated with the creation of construction documents, construction itself or construction management, as those are all directly related to the scope of the project, which is undefined at this time.

In the City's Capital Improvement Project Program, Project #9074 has \$490,000 of approved budget for FY 20/21. Utilizing existing funds to create a conceptual plan for the entire park will require additional appropriation of funds in the future but will eliminate potential wasteful spending redesigning/reconstructing of a space multiple times as future phases are constructed.

**Reviewed By:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jaime Valdez  
Interim Neighborhood Services  
and Public Safety Director

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A. Stow Grove Park Survey Amenity Priority List Results

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Stow Grove Park Survey Amenity Priority List Results**

# STOW GROVE PARK SURVEY AMENITY PRIORITY LIST RESULTS

## ATTACHMENT A

TYPE OF RECREATION AMENITY*	ALL PRIORITIES	TOP 3 PRIORITIES
Additional Bathrooms	228	132
Benches	308	79
Bird Watching	191	94
Drinking Fountains	165	54
Fitness Equipment	107	46
Group Picnic Areas	243	100
Individual Picnic Areas	<b>328</b>	140
Landscaping	255	103
Open Turf	172	55
Parking Lot	103	27
Play Equipment	250	<b>178</b>
Recreation/Sports	151	62
Redwoods	<b>504</b>	<b>412</b>
Sand Volleyball	92	38
Security	174	77
Signage	35	5
Sports Fields	129	45
Tree Plantings	<b>367</b>	<b>200</b>
Walking Paths	<b>473</b>	<b>255</b>
Other: (See List Below)	107	74

A Park Ranger Presence	Frisbee Golf	Ninja Course
Access from Cathedral Oaks	Gardens	No Dogs
ADA Paths for Wheelchairs	Gopher Control	Old Wooden Fort
Add Shade over Play Structure	Horseshoe Pits	Paved Walking Path
Additional Parking	Interesting Plants	Pickleball Courts
Address the House	Keep it as a Neighborhood Parks	Protecting Redwoods
Basketball Courts	Keep it Natural	Restroom Upgrade
Bike Racks	Leave the Park as it is	Running Trails
Butterfly Watching	Mirrors in Bathrooms	Skate Park
Campsites	More BBQ Areas	Small Stage Area
Community Fruit Orchard	More Events	Splash Pad
Community Garden	More Native Plants	Tennis Courts
Covered Garbage Cans	More Sports Fields	Update Play Equip. for adults
Dog Poop Bags	More Trees	Water Bottle Refill Stations
Fenced in Dog Park	Natural Sanctuary	

\*The top four priorities are bolded in the numerical columns

August 15, 2022

Fermina and Stephen Murray

442 Danbury Court

Goleta, CA 93117

To: Goleta City Mayor and Council Members

Subject: Stow Grove Park Design Update – Agenda Item D.1 22-330

Dear Mayor Paula Perotte and Council Members:

We appreciate the hard work that City staff put in on this project to enhance Stow Grove Park. We have several suggestions that we would like to offer concerning the direction that this particular park might take.

This historic park developed by Edgar Stow in the early 1920s is unusual, even unique, among the parks of our city. We see it as the closest site we have that has the character of deep woods or a forest habitat, feelings created by the presence of large and tall conifers, especially its population of redwoods, varieties of pathways, open play spaces, plants and flowers, rustic furniture and fences: just enough dark and gloom to allow small children to picture their storybooks of Fairy Tales, and conjure up self-created, maybe even scary, tales that recall those of Hansel and Gretel, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, or Where the Wild Things Are. The benefit here, we think, is to remove adults from the temptation to closely supervise every idea or activity the children create in response to this unusual environment.

It is not really an urban park we think. The largest need for an athletic field and play sets and sporting activities the City met wonderfully by creating the Jonny D. Wallis Neighborhood Park in Old Town – a true urban park wonderfully realized, but by no means a woodsy forest with places to run and hide or enjoy a bucolic picnic ground. Despite the damage to much of Goleta Beach, it still provides some of the best open space we have for a gathering site suitable for picnics on pleasant grass with some shade trees, and offering plentiful table space and the special joys of playing in the surf.

We agree that the Stow Grove's north side athletic field is the best soccer field of the three parks and badly needs the planned repair of the field and renovation of the bathrooms, along with improved ADA access.

The natural shade offered within Stow Grove will be more welcome each year with climate change striking us so hard. We hope too that the important historic ties between the Stow Family and the community will be brought out clearly through signboards or some means of teaching newcomers or children the lessons of our past.

Finally, we think that the children's playground equipment at Stow Grove is probably sufficient for current need, especially with the play area of La Patera School immediately across the street from Stow Grove's playground equipment. It would alter the park significantly if it



started being chopped up into small particular spaces rather than left more open and spacious.  
Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Fermina and Stephen Murray

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**From:** Arthur Sylvester <sylvester@ucsb.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 16, 2022 9:47 AM  
**To:** City Clerk Group  
**Subject:** Comments on Agenda Item D.1 for the August 16, 2022 City Council Meeting

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Thank you for considering my comments regarding Agenda Item D.1 ("Stow Grove Park Design Update") for your August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting this evening. Regrettably I will be out of town and unable to attend the Council meeting in person or virtually.

My comments are as follows:

I strongly oppose the Staff Recommendation regarding the Stow Grove Park Design that is before you. Instead I urge City Council to adopt the "ALTERNATIVE" presented on the bottom of page 7 of the Staff recommendation.

I am a resident of Goleta having lived across the street from Stow Grove Park for 54 years. I have seen it evolve from a neighborhood park accommodating a few small groups of picnickers, to an extra-community park accommodating several hundred people at a time from communities as far as Ventura County; from a park patrolled by a deputized ranger living on site to one with occasional gardeners and trash sweepers and that is open all night thereby attracting houseless people sleeping in their cars at night.

The Goleta community has clearly expressed its support of renovation of the ball field at the north end of the park, improvement of the play area in the middle of the park, and maintenance of the redwood forest. *No more*. A vote in favor of continuing the formulation of plans to expand facilities at Stow Grove Park much beyond its present status just puts more good money after bad.

Therefore, on behalf of my neighbors on both sides of the park and myself, I urge the City Council to **reject** the Staff's recommendation regarding the Stow Grove Park Design but **adopt the "ALTERNATIVE"** at the bottom of page 7 of its recommendation instead.

This ALTERNATIVE will result in a positive, sensible plan for the park that the community will strongly support.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

- Arthur Sylvester

615 N. La Patera Lane

Goleta, CA 93117

**From:** katherine.emery@lifesci.ucsb.edu

**Date:** August 16, 2022 at 12:56:58 PM PDT

**To:** Paula Perotte <pperotte@cityofgoleta.org>, James Kyriaco <jkyriaco@cityofgoleta.org>, Kyle Richards <krichards@cityofgoleta.org>, Stuart Kasdin <skasdin@cityofgoleta.org>, Roger Aceves <raceves@cityofgoleta.org>, JoAnne Plummer <jplummer@cityofgoleta.org>, George Thomson <gthomson@cityofgoleta.org>, Jaime Valdez <jvaldez@cityofgoleta.org>

**Cc:** City Clerk Group <cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org>

**Subject:** SBAS Letter regarding Item D1 on the City Council Agenda - August 16, 2022

Dear Honorable Mayor Perotte, City Council Members, and City Staff,

I hope this email finds you well and that you are having a good summer. Thank you for your work and service. Please see the attached letter regarding the August 16th Agenda Item D.1 Stow Grove Park Design Update.

Stow Grove is a gem. Thank you for your support in protecting the birds, other wildlife, and habitats there.

Have a lovely day,  
Katherine

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Katherine Emery, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Santa Barbara Audubon Society  
[SantaBarbaraAudubon.org](http://SantaBarbaraAudubon.org)

**\*\* We invite you to watch our brand-new short outreach film [Birds of Lake Los Carneros](#). This beautiful movie by Sage Hill Films celebrates local and migrating birds at the Lake Los Carneros Natural and Historical Preserve, raises awareness about the importance of this critical open space owned and managed by the City of Goleta, and inspires community environmental stewardship. [Click here](#) to join SBAS in protecting birds.\*\***



**SANTA BARBARA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 6737  
Santa Barbara, CA 93160  
[www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org](http://www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org)

City Clerk [cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org)  
City of Goleta

August 16, 2022

Re: August 16th Agenda Item D.1 Stow Grove Park Design Update

Dear Mayor, City Council Members, and City Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Stow Grove Park Design update.

Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society with approximately 1100 members in the Santa Barbara area. The mission of SBAS is to protect area birdlife and habitat and connect people with birds through education, conservation, and science. Our members, many of whom reside in Goleta, frequently use the parks, natural areas, and open spaces in and around the City of Goleta for recreational and outreach activities. Stow Grove Park has special significance to our members, not only as it is a great spot for bird watching with 130 different species reported, but also is the location for our annual meeting and picnic.

SBAS understands the usefulness of a Master Plan and agrees that certain elements of Stow Grove Park amenities could be improved and updated. We would be in favor of more accessibility and improvement to trails, better restrooms, and new interpretative signage. We also understand that the City's intent (and charter) is to listen to and be guided by the majority of the public who have clearly stated that they want the natural features of the park (mature trees, redwood grove) to remain unchanged. However, SBAS is very concerned about specific language regarding environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) used in several sections of the August 16, 2022 Design Update and recommendation.

This language includes the following:

"...with at least one plan designed to minimize impacts to habitat values or sensitive species associated with the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas of the park."

"It is important to note that staff is not asking City Council to approve a particular design currently, but to allow the process of developing a Draft Master Plan for Stow Grove Park to continue, **without restrictions both within and outside of ESHA** (emphasis added).

The crowning jewels of Stow Grove Park, and the main reason why so many people flock there, are the large mature trees. Why should any plan be developed that does not attempt to minimize impacts to these precious resources? SBAS firmly believes that any plan for the park consider all impacts to the ESHA. The City's own guiding policy documents require that developers and members of the public adhere to set standards for ESHA and ESHA buffer zones. Why should the City itself be immune to these requirements?

Moreover, SBAS has grave concerns that asking the City Council to approve the recommendation as written “without restrictions” suggests a carte-blanche, anything goes approach that will set a very bad precedent for city-wide future renovations or development in and near environmentally sensitive areas.

We know that for Stow Grove Park, there is a short list of specific renovations/upgrades that the public has asked for and that could potentially occur without major disruption to the ESHA around them. These include refreshing the parking lot, bathrooms, walking paths and playground equipment. If these are known features, then why ask for a (and what we feel to be dangerous) blanket exception to ESHA considerations? It would seem that a wiser approach would be to make a case-by-case argument for those specific elements that trigger General Plan and zoning review (i.e. renovation of the parking lot changes the footprint, thus counting as new development within ESHA; new bathroom facilities).

The City has taken a strong stance since its inception to protect ESHA and untold hours have been expended by non-governmental organizations, and City staff and elected officials, to ensure that ESHA policies are observed and followed, and these areas are preserved for this and future generations. Given all the time and effort that the City has expended on ensuring that its own environmental policies are observed by developers and others, we find it almost unconscionable that City staff, in contradiction to City policies, would ask for permission to ignore ESHA during planning, and to develop a plan that could impact ESHA.

We urge the City Council to observe their own policies and reject this recommendation as written. The Stow Grove Master Plan process should move forward but in strict adherence to existing City policy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Emery".

Katherine Emery, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Santa Barbara Audubon Society