

Susan Harris

From: richcris@hotmail.com
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2006 11:20 AM
To: Susan Harris
Subject: Draft Master Plan & EIR for Arana Gulch

All City Council Members & Parks Dept.

This is a follow up letter to the letter we presented at the March 28th, council meeting concerning Arana Gulch.

We are against any west entrance to Arana Gulch now and in the future. Once and for all put it to rest. The Arana Gulch property was purchased for a Green Belt for a reason, to protect the environment and habitat in its natural state. This park is already open from the harbor and the north end. Opening a west entrance will only bring more problems. More illegal camping, more trash, more drug and alcohol problems. The city and the parks dept. do not have the staff to patrol this area now. How can opening another entrance help this problem. As you know we live at the proposed west entrance site. Right now, Hagemann Gulch and its trees which are home to many birds and animals are in a protected area, as is our home. There are already maintenance and management problems in the existing parks and open areas due to lack of funds, and personnel, opening up Arana Gulch will only add to these problems. How do you protect a sensitive environment by allowing MORE people into it?

C16-1

Another issue is the property that the city owns adjacent to our home and the Santa Cruz Bible Church. Our house was moved from its original lot to an adjacent lot to allow for construction of the Broadway-Brommer road, that didn't happen, so for 35 years our property has been in a state of turmoil.

Since 1998 we have been trying to get back an approximately 1100 sq. ft. piece of property so that we can straighten our property line and install fences and improvements to separate us from the proposed path. Due to the "yet to be determined" path configuration, we are still in limbo about this small piece of property. Whether the city decides to put a West entrance to the park or not, we know that that this property will still have to be dealt with by the city. Security is a big issue to us as well as to the now relatively safe environment of Arana Gulch. We hope that you will consider carefully the information contained in both reports that have been presented to you. Managing and maintaining what you already have is great. DON'T ADD ANY MORE PROBLEMS, to an already stressed area. Again we invite any of you to view Hagemann Gulch and the proposed West entrance from our property.

C16-2

Respectfully,

Richard and Andrea Criswell

LETTER C16**Richard and Andrea Criswell**

- Response C16-1: Refer to Master Response No. 10 regarding the planning background and *The Greenbelt Master Plan – A Planning and Feasibility Study*. Refer to Response to Comment C12-1 regarding illegal camping. Funding for the implementation of the Master Plan is addressed in the Arana Gulch Master Plan and does not relate to the EIR.
- Response C16-2: According to City staff, the property in question is outside the boundaries of Arana Gulch.

JENNIFER GREENE
Attorney at Law

April 6, 2006

Ms. Susan Harris
City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department
323 Church Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Proposed Arana Gulch Greenbelt project

Dear Ms. Harris:

I am writing to oppose the development of the Arana Gulch Greenbelt as proposed in the City's tentative Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The primary reason for my opposition is economic.

The City is currently in debt more than \$1,000,000. Every City service is underfunded and understaffed. This includes police, public works, and parks and recreation.

The Police department is down 8 officers right now and the City cannot afford to hire as many officers as it needs. The downtown area, for example, desperately needs more officers. Moreover, there is a time delay created by training, which means that new recruits are not on the street for at least one year after hiring. Therefore there is no immediate relief in sight. Public Works is obviously underfunded and understaffed. The surface roads in Santa Cruz city are full of holes and sidewalks are poorly maintained. Parks workers are few and far between, spread out between all existing facilities. Although their duties are being shifted, there are still far too few to adequately service the existing parks.

Although the City may find the funds to build the proposed project at the Arana Gulch, it is asking for real trouble if it does so, because it cannot maintain or adequately monitor it. Even if the Environmental Impact Report is somehow found adequate (in spite of some pretty major flaws), going forward with this project is analogous to a young couple spending all their savings on a beautiful wedding and having nothing left to live after the one day of celebration.

If this path is built, it will increase the traffic to the area. Some of this traffic will be area folks or commuters on bicycles. Some of this traffic will be funneled from the mall downtown and from other area parks to the Arana Gulch to hang out or camp. Presently in Arana Gulch, there is one parks worker who very occasionally appears to empty trash. There used to be an interpretive sign at the opening of the gulch on Agnes Street which was taken down because

C17-1

C17-2

Parks & Recreation staff were unable to contend with occasional graffiti on the sign.

As a lawyer I suspect that the newly built path will attract new activity in the Greenbelt and in the gulch behind Hagemann Avenue. Some of this activity will be criminal and it is inevitable that some of this criminal activity will be directed to the innocent citizens who either live on Hagemann Avenue, or those who use the park. If the City fails to adequately staff the departments responsible for the oversight of the public use of the park, such as its police or parks departments, it will be exposed to liability for harm suffered by the public in the park. The City is exposing itself to the very real prospect of lawsuits by increasing access to an area it cannot adequately monitor. One successful plaintiff could cost the City millions.

It is true that the people who bicycle to and from downtown via Live Oak have no direct route, but the **solution is obvious!** Frederick Street Park is just 2 blocks over from Broadway. The stairs from the park to the harbor are fairly deteriorated. The board on the side which you can roll your bike wheels up is not continuous and it is a little bit too small. If you stand across the water from the park stairs, you can easily see that the hillside is amenable to a gently sloping ramp and stairs by beginning it slightly to the left of where it presently begins. It would involve a bit of the hillside below the condominiums, but it would be a good approach. The park already covers the entire top of the hill and there are nicely established paths circling the park to an easement to Harbor Drive and also proceeding straight through to Frederick Street. The City also has facilities and regular park staff working in this park. Its exposure to liability in this park, is far less than in the relatively remote Hagemann Gulch/Arana Gulch area. At night, that area is quiet for the very reason that it is undeveloped. Improving access through Frederick Street Park has been proposed before and must be re-examined. It simply would be fiscally irresponsible for the City to 'develop' Hagemann Gulch and Arana Gulch. The City should do only those projects which line its pockets and not those which do the opposite.

C17-3

It also seems obvious that the City could make up its budget shortfall by selling the easement currently used by the Santa Cruz Bible Church, to the church. The church has a large congregation and would appear to be able to purchase the strip of land for market price. It is currently being used as part of their parking extension area and would be a very straightforward transaction.

C17-4

The other access area from Live Oak to downtown is Capitola Road to Soquel Avenue. There is currently in place an approved plan for widening the road and putting in a bicycle lane. This has been needed for a long time and will be a welcome addition that will enhance safety on that intersection.

C17-5

On April 5th, the Sentinel reported the uptick of crime in the local parks. It described a burgeoning problem which would seem to indicate we need to put all our existent resources into existing parks and not develop new ones. The City's trend has been to put into place ordinances which protect the merchant corridor on Pacific by instituting setbacks and other limitations on panhandling. With our new District Attorney, the result has been that violators of these ordinances are cited and taken to court. There, restraining orders are imposed, banning violators from the downtown corridor. This forces them to the outlying areas, specifically San Lorenzo

C17-6

Park and the other parks mentioned in the article. Additionally, strategically placed ATM and change machines are appearing on Pacific (for example by Union Grove Music) which has forced regular groups of homeless people off the mall and into the parks.

Currently there are only a few people who regularly camp in the Arana Gulch greenbelt (under the large spreading tree by the tidal river and just down off Capitola Road). If access is opened up from downtown with this proposed plan, the situation will invite far more people to set up camp, making the park workers' jobs impossible and creating a very real public health hazard to the rest of us and our children.

C17-7

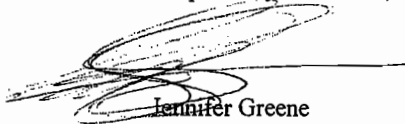
I therefore ask that you support a more economic alternative - both in the construction and the maintenance - of a bicycle path cross-county, by endorsing a make-over of the Frederick Street Park stairs to be a little more bike-friendly. The City cannot afford the alternative. This project got started because of some Federal money. That is a short-sighted reason to continue with this project.

C17-8

Finally, I want to point out that I realize Micah Posner and other avid bicyclists have been advocating for the Arana Gulch development. As a result of their efforts the rail trail seems to be becoming a reality. However, Mr. Posner has entertained council members by saying he can't make it up Frederick Street Park steps with his bicycle, his trailer, and his child. I feel that if a bicyclist has a trailer, he is no longer a 2 -wheeled vehicle, but rather belongs on a road where other 4 - wheeled vehicles travel. His argument is not compelling.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Greene

LETTER C17
Jennifer Greene

- Response C17-1: Funding for construction and ongoing maintenance is not an issue that the DEIR is required to be addressed. Funding possibilities are addressed in the Arana Gulch Master Plan.
- Response C17-2: Refer to Response to Comment C17-1 above regarding funding. The DEIR did not identify any potentially significant impacts related to the need to expand police services. Also, refer to Response to Comment C12-1 regarding reduced illegal camping.
- Response C17-3: Refer to Master Response No. 7 regarding Frederick Street Park and an off-site alternative.
- Response C17-4: Comment noted. This comment does not address the DEIR and therefore no response is necessary.
- Response C17-5: A connection to Soquel Avenue via Capitola Road was not addressed because such an alternative is not within the boundaries of Arana Gulch. Refer to Master Response No. 7.
- Response C17-6: This comment does not address the DEIR, and therefore no response is necessary.
- Response C17-7: Refer to Response to Comment C12-1.
- Response C17-8: Comment noted.

Susan Harris

From: Brian [brianholman@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2006 7:05 PM
To: Susan Harris
Subject: Stop this madness

Dear Susan,

Enough already with the attempts to destroy one of the last open spaces in Santa Cruz. Arana Gulch needs to be left alone and just how it is. There is no need for a new path or a bridge. And God forbid that they try to squeeze a few house in there at the same time!!

Arana is a nice place to meander through on warm sunny days or zoom down to the harbor on your bike to see the sunset. There is no reason to add a paved path or a bridge that the homeless will start to call home within minutes.

I bought my home near the gulch because its master plan has always been understood to be a open space for the public to enjoy. Other than the need for some dog-leash policing, it seems to sustain itself.

In a town that cant seem to keep a single road smooth, can't seem to meter lights effectively, and has more homeless per capita than any other place I have ever lived, I think our tax dollars could be used for much higher and better purposes.

I say NO, my neighbors say NO, my friends say NO, and you need to listen to the people who pay the taxes that support this town.

Sincerely,

Brian Holman

C18-1

LETTER C18
Brian Holman

Response C18-1: No housing is proposed within Arana Gulch, as addressed on page 4.1-9 (fourth paragraph) of the DEIR. Comments about the preferences for uses of Arana Gulch are noted. Refer to Master Response No. 10 regarding public uses proposed during the planning process.

REC'D APR 14 REC'D

H. Reed Searle
114 Swift Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone and Fax 831-425-8721
11 April 2006

Parks and Recreation Dept.
City of Santa Cruz
323 Church St.
Santa Cruz, Ca

re: comment on Arana Gulch draft EIR; qualified support

Dear Sir/Madam,

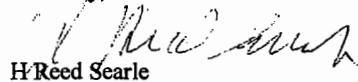
I write to support the construction of an east-west bicycle path in the Arana Gulch area. That path may need to go through the Gulch, as presently planned. I believe a bicycle path connecting Brommer and Broadway is an essential link for our City. Santa Cruz is a popular cycling area both for residents and tourists. An east-west path can only encourage more cycling both for commuting and for recreation. It represents the preferred route from the east of Santa Cruz to UCSC and from the West to Cabrillo College. The existing routes, Soquel and Murray, are overcrowded and dangerous for cyclists.

The plan suggests that the cycle trail should go through the Gulch. Although cost and the construction of a bridge are significant, the main (only?) environmental objection is possible impact on the tar plant. From the maps accompanying the EIR, it appears that the impact probably would be minimal, even if any impact would be not subject to mitigation. As with many similar decisions, this is a matter of weighing values. If the path through the Gulch is the only alternative, I think the balance tips towards the one that is proposed.

A possible alternate trail is shown on the attached map, which would avoid Arana Gulch, eliminate the necessity of a bridge over Hageman Gulch, bypass any tar plant colonies and be cheaper to construct. This route is minimally longer than the proposed route, but I do not think that is a material factor. The route from the Yacht Harbor up Frederick St. Park would require a ramp. The north-south portion would either go as on the attached, or could go up Frederick street, as shown on the second attachment. I understand this option was considered and disregarded years ago. It may well be that this alternative should be re-considered. If it is feasible, I should think this route would be preferred.

Whatever route is chosen, I am hopeful that this link in the cross-city bicycle network will finally be constructed.

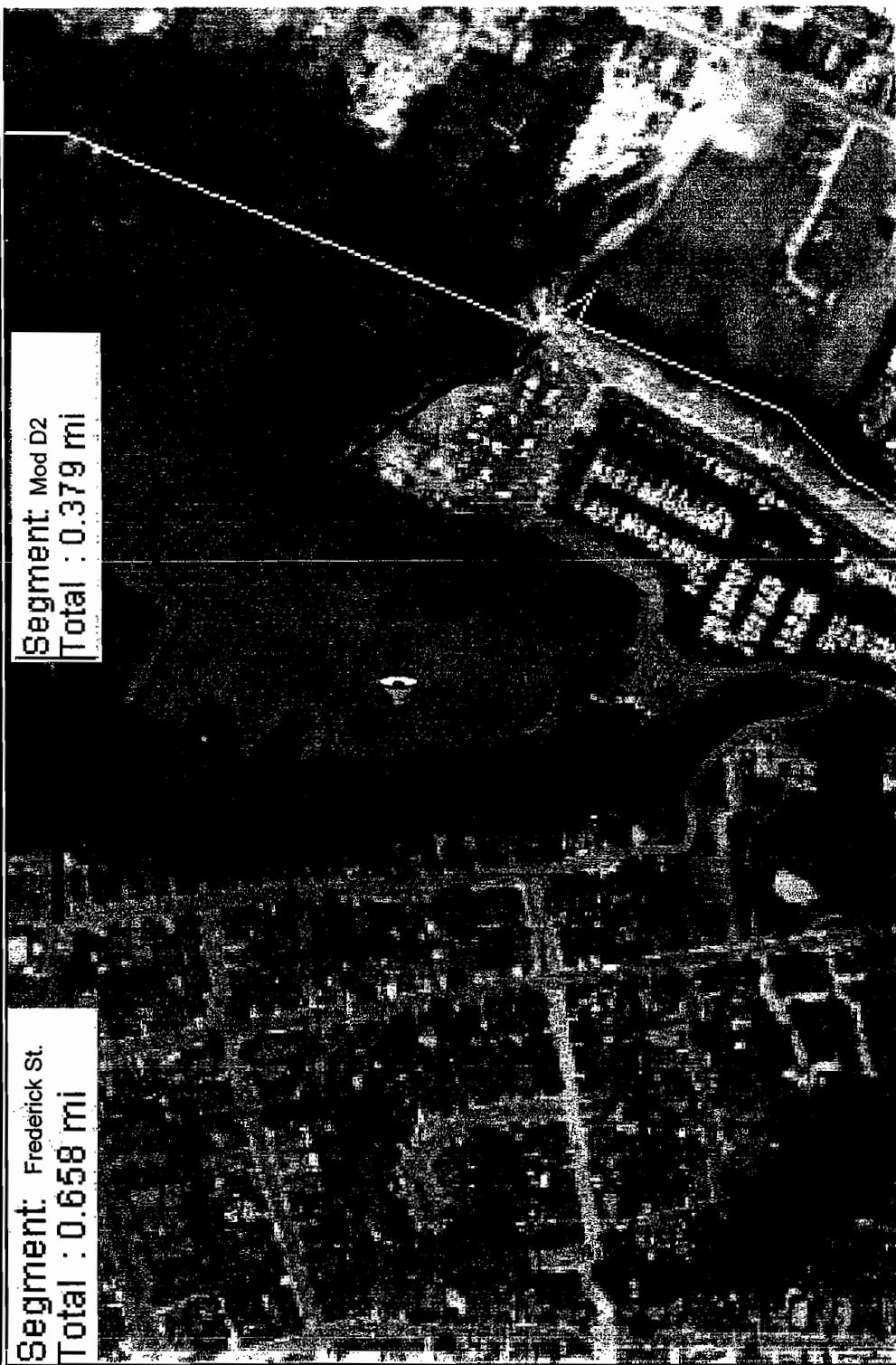
Sincerely,


H. Reed Searle

C19-1

Segment: Frederick St.
Total : 0.658 mi

Segment: Mod D2
Total : 0.379 mi



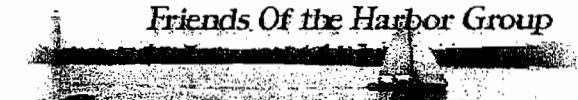


LETTER C19
H. Reed Searle

Response C19-1: Comment noted. Refer to Master Response No. 7 regarding an off-site alternative.

FOHG.org

Friends Of the Harbor Group



Located at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor

P.O. Box 2711 Santa Cruz, Ca. 95063

www.fohg.org

info@fohg.org

April 12, 2006

City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation
Department, 323 Church Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Arana Gulch Master Plan Draft EIR – Public Comments

The Friends of the Harbor Group was formed in May 2004 to advocate on behalf of the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor community. Our function is to educate the community and government representatives about the critical problems threatening the future of the harbor. Our sole mission is to keep the Santa Cruz Harbor open and to ensure continuous, safe navigable access to the Monterey Bay for all harbor slip renters, launch ramp users, and most importantly, rescue & vessel assist services. We support:

- (1) An environmentally safe and effective sediment removal program, and
- (2) The restoration of the Arana Gulch Watershed in order to reduce sediments entering the harbor.

We support the activities by the Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance and the Santa Cruz Port District to mitigate and correct the increasing upstream erosion problems, which are leading to the harbor being filled with ever-increasing amounts of sediment. The sediment-clogged berths are costing the harbor over \$90K annually in lost revenues. In addition, the removal of these sediments is costing harbor users over \$500K each year. Our harbor is in a slow death spiral resulting from the Arana Gulch sediments clogging more berths each year which leads to higher revenue losses and higher dredging costs.

Our concerns with the Arana Gulch Master Plan Draft EIR are specifically with the environmental impacts described in Section 4.3 under the headings of GEO-2, GEO-3, HYDROLOGY-1, and HYDROLOGY-2. These sections discuss the potential for new serious erosion problems to be created as a result of these projects. We urge the city to be extremely careful in undertaking these projects to prevent any further erosion. Our concern is a result of the erosion problems caused by the city's 2004/2005 DeLaveaga Golf Course renovation. We had met with the city in October 2004 to express our concerns about erosion issues and we were assured that all proper erosion control measures would be taken. Unfortunately, the erosion control plans were not properly executed and this resulted in the City being fined \$135,000 by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Furthermore, we do not see a specific plan to address the serious pre-existing erosion sites that have been already described in the Arana Gulch Watershed Enhancement Plan. We believe the city's Arana Gulch Master Plan must address the complete restoration of the Arana Gulch Watershed. We ask that the city join with the Port District and the Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance to implement timely solutions for the already existing erosion sites that are negatively impacting our community's navigable waterways and steelhead fish habitat.

To allow the already existing erosion problems to continue unchecked while new potential erosion sites are created, would likely lead to additional enforcement actions as has already occurred with the 2004/2005 DeLaveaga Golf Course renovation.

Thank you for considering our concerns regarding erosion in the Arana Gulch Watershed.

Friends of the Harbor Group

Lorenzo Rota – President
Barbara Karleen – Vice President
Hank Cureton – Secretary/Treasurer

C20-1

C20-2

LETTER C20**Friends of Harbor Group**

- Response C20-1: The mitigation measures recommended in the DEIR related to increased erosion would be required to be monitored and are addressed in the Mitigation Monitoring Program contained in Chapter IV of this Final EIR.
- Response C20-2: The DEIR is only required to address project-related impacts. Existing erosion problems outside of Arana Gulch are outside of the responsibilities of the City are not directly related to the proposed project. It would be beyond the responsibility of the City to address the entire Arana Gulch watershed as part of this proposed project. Nevertheless, the Parks and Recreation Department is committed to minimizing erosion from implementation of the Master Plan and would ensure that recommended mitigation measures are completed.