

December 11, 2024

Gail Payne,
Project Manager,
City of Alameda

Dear Ms. Payne,

The Board members of the Jean Sweeney Park Open Space Park Fund do not believe that using the open space area of the park is a proper place to send brackish street runoff water. The Placeworks design for the park voted on by the City Council on July 5th, 2016 and the presentation by then ARPD Director Amy Wooldridge indicates that the area wanted for storage of the runoff water is planned for an urban forest of California native trees, especially California Coastal Oak trees.

The Alameda resiliency plan also directs the need for trees to be planted in Alameda to help with global warming. It is unfortunate that the lack of funding has delayed the final build out of this planned use for the Jean Sweeney Park.

Our concern for the plan to send street runoff water into the Park are 1st, it is a use that is not conducive with the vision Jean Sweeney had for open space, and 2nd it is not conducive for the long term plan to create this environment as a person friendly place for all of Alameda citizens to have to enjoy being outside.

Alameda Recreation and Parks Department studies report that during the rainy season the ground water level in the Park is only 18". That means there will not be room for the added street runoff water to properly dissipate into the soil in the 24 to 48 hours required by the present plan. If the street runoff water cannot dissipate, the Park will remain a swamp environment not conducive to public use. Street runoff water is not clean and will leave toxic substances on the surface of the Park land where children will be visiting to use the planned trails through out the Park. After years of sending street runoff into the Park, the soil used to dissipate the toxic water will need to be removed and the area completely re-soiled and replanted. We do not see any part of the proposed plan that provides funding for that to happen. As we know by the fact that funding has not been available for finishing the approved plan for the major portion of the Park, that funding is always an issue, and it is not assured that funding would be available to repair the Park in any future date. The soil left in the center of the Park, which is a major portion of the Park, would no longer be safe as a place for the public, especially children, to use for open space activities.

Since the vision of Jean Sweeney and the public, when they voted to protect this land to be usable open space, would no longer be a safe place for public use, we do not see this as a good plan for the use of the open space in the Jean Sweeney Open Space Park.

Respectfully,
Dorothy Freeman
Co-Chairman

Jean Sweeney Open Space Park Fund

cc: Justin Long ARPD Director

Design Development Plan

