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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
July 28, 2020  
Palo Alto, California**

**Commissioners Present:** Anne Cribbs, Jeff Greenfield, Jeff LaMere, David Moss, Jackie Olson, and Keith Reckdahl

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Council Member Kou

**Staff Present:** Kristen O'Kane, Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin

**I. ROLL CALL**

**II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

Chair Greenfield: Do we have any Agenda Changes, Requests, or Deletions to go over?

**III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Greenfield: Do we have any members of the public for Oral Communications? Is there anyone looking to speak on a topic not related to Foothills Park this evening? Thank you. We will move onto the main item for this evening, which is the panel discussion on Foothills Park Access.

**IV. BUSINESS**

**1. Panel Discussion of Foothills Park Access.**

Vice Chair Greenfield: I'll share a few introductory words and review details of the panel format. First, for members of the public, one more time, any of you who would like an opportunity to speak this evening, please either click raise hand via Zoom or press \*9 on your phone if you're dialing in. If you have access to the online meeting agenda instructions, it's page 2. Welcome everyone to this special panel discussion on Foothills Park access hosted by the Parks and Recreation Commission at the request of the City Manager. I first want to recognize and thank our group of five panelists who have graciously joined us. As experts in disciplines related to the question of increasing access



1 to Foothills Park and understanding potential impacts, we really look forward to your  
2 insights about this complex and challenging topic. We're extremely appreciative that  
3 you're here with us this evening. An overview of this evening's proceedings is now  
4 displayed. I'll run through some details on this, starting with a brief background  
5 summary to set the stage for our discussion this evening. The Foothills Park access issue  
6 has been vexing and divisive within our community for a number of years. Last  
7 November, our Commission voted to recommend a pilot program for City Council's  
8 consideration after discussing the matter and hearing public comment at two earlier  
9 Commission meetings. The pilot proposal is a fairly modest, one-year trial plan, which  
10 would permit up to 50 nonresident vehicles or bicycles each day via an online reservation  
11 system for a \$6 fee and encourage nonresident student fieldtrip access. Since the  
12 Commission has already forwarded this issue to City Council, we will not specifically be  
13 discussing or commenting on our recommendation and will focus primarily on hosting  
14 this evening's event. Next up, the City Council is scheduled to take up the  
15 recommendation as an action item at their next Council meeting on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Here are  
16 some simple goals for this evening. One, gain a deeper understanding and appreciation  
17 of the varied perspectives and complex issues related to Foothills Park access. Two,  
18 learn new expert information on potential impacts and park management issues if  
19 visitation changes significantly. Three, clarify some facts and learn new details about  
20 Foothills Park. Four, I want to emphasize the necessity for civility and respect for  
21 everyone this evening. Let's review the schedule. Many potential concerns about  
22 Foothills Park access are most appropriately answered by City staff. We'll start things  
23 with a staff presentation focused on providing facts to address some important questions.  
24 This will be followed by public comment. After we see the number of speakers, we'll  
25 decide if we have time for 2 or 3 minutes each or potentially less. Hopefully, we'll be  
26 able to give speakers a reasonable amount of time to speak. Given the distinguished  
27 panelists with us this evening, we want to make sure our discussion with them starts by  
28 7:15 or so. To ensure this, we will limit the initial public comment period to about an  
29 hour. If members of the public are not able to speak during this initial time block, we  
30 will provide an opportunity for additional speakers after the panel discussion provided  
31 they are already on the speaker list. This is important. Members of the public may  
32 request to speak up until 15 minutes before the end of the initial one-hour public  
33 comment period. We'll make announcements as we get close to this time, but we will not  
34 accept requests to speak after this cutoff. We're looking for members of the public to  
35 raise their hand to speak before that time. You'll be permitted to speak once, and staff  
36 will introduce and manage the public speakers using Zoom. Again, if anyone would like  
37 an opportunity to speak this evening, please either click raise hand via Zoom or press \*9  
38 on your phone if you're dialing in. Detailed instructions are on page 2 of the online  
39 meeting agenda. Let's move on to the panel discussion format details. Panelists were  
40 selected by the Commission Chair and Vice Chair and City staff to represent a balance of  
41 expertise related to Foothills Park ecology, operations, and access. Each panelist will  
42 introduce themselves after public comments; then we'll begin the panel discussion, which



1 I will moderate. We have ten questions we want to get through. These were prepared by  
2 the Chair and Vice Chair and staff with input from the Parks and Rec Foothills Park ad  
3 hoc committee. While a broad range of questions was considered, we want to take  
4 advantage of our panelists' expertise and focus on questions most appropriate for the  
5 panel to answer. Potential question details were shared in advance with our panelists to  
6 give them some opportunity to prepare quality responses. The first five questions will be  
7 directed first to a specific panelist, one each. After that, remaining questions will be open  
8 to all. Each panelist will have an opportunity to respond to each question requested via  
9 the Zoom hand raise. Although, not all questions will be related to each panelist's area of  
10 expertise. Ideally, panelists' responses won't exceed 2 minutes and hopefully will often  
11 be less than that. I will ask follow up questions or allow follow-up responses as deemed  
12 appropriate. Let's bear in mind this is a panel discussion focused on facts and expert  
13 opinion, not a debate. We'll try to average no more than 10 minutes per question,  
14 knowing some questions will take more time than others. After the prepared questions,  
15 Commissioners and our Council Liaison, Council Member Kou, will each have 5 minutes  
16 for panel follow-up questions or comments. Hopefully, this will be mostly questions to  
17 take advantage of the expertise that we're fortunate to have with us this evening. This  
18 round of questions will end the input from our panelists. As previously described, an  
19 additional public comment period may follow for members of the public that previously  
20 requested to speak but didn't have an opportunity to do so. No new speaker requests will  
21 be accepted. If the extra comment period is added, afterwards Commissioners will have a  
22 final opportunity to comment briefly. Finally, I ask for your patience with our online  
23 Zoom platform. We'll do the best we can. Again, I want to sincerely thank our guest  
24 panelists for joining us this evening. Now, the staff presentation please.

25 Daren Anderson: Good evening. I'm Daren Anderson with Community Services  
26 Department. I'm going to provide you with a brief background of Foothills Park and  
27 some facts that might be helpful. In 1941, Dr. Russel Lee and his wife, Dorothy Lee,  
28 bought the land that's now Foothills Park. In 1958, the Lees offered the land to the City  
29 at a special price of \$1,000 per acre so it would be preserved as open space. In 1959, an  
30 election was held on the proposed purchase. 6,542 people voted to buy the parkland, and  
31 3,997 voted against it. With 62% of the voters supporting to buy the land, the City  
32 purchased the property for \$1.3 million, and Foothills Park was opened on June 19, 1965.  
33 The public vote regarding the land purchase did not specify whether or not access to the  
34 park should be limited to residents. That was a Council decision that appears to be based  
35 on a couple of factors. The first is that Palo Alto fully funded the purchase. Palo Alto  
36 approached other cities, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, about sharing in the expense of  
37 purchasing the property, and both cities declined. The second factor is described in the  
38 article from December 10, 1980 in the *Stanford Daily*, which discusses the purchase of  
39 the park. The article states some residents believe that the City had no business creating  
40 a regional park. The group called Citizens for Good Governance formed to oppose the  
41 plan. They filed a taxpayers' lawsuit alleging that Palo Alto had violated the City Charter

1 by approving the land purchase without waiting 30 days for public examination of the  
2 expenditure. The lawsuit was rejected by the California Supreme Court after a  
3 referendum on park purchase was approved by Palo Alto voters. In what former Palo  
4 Alto City Manager Jerome Keith termed an attempt to salvage the project and to appease  
5 the regional park fears of the Citizens for Good Governance, the City Council announced  
6 in 1959 that the park would be open to Palo Alto residents and their guests. In 1969, a  
7 Municipal Code section was added that defined the residency requirements that limit  
8 access to Foothills Park to Palo Alto residents and their accompanied guests. In 2005, in  
9 exchange for a \$2 million grant to help purchase 13 acres of land adjacent to Pearson-  
10 Arastradero Preserve, Council voted to allow nonresident hikers to enter Foothills Parks  
11 via the Bay to Ridge Trail. Hikers can enter from Pearson-Arastradero Preserve and from  
12 Los Trancos Open Space Preserve. The current Municipal Code ordinance makes  
13 entering Foothills Park a misdemeanor for nonresidents unaccompanied. The fee for this  
14 citation is \$50. As a comparison, the fee for smoking on trails in Foothills Park is  
15 \$1,000. No misdemeanor citation has been issued in the last 20 years for violation of this  
16 ordinance, and only one administrative citation, the type of citation Rangers in Foothills  
17 Park issue, has been issued in the last 20 years. An administrative citation is not a notice  
18 to appear or a criminal citation. An admin cite is similar to a parking ticket. The  
19 Municipal Code also lists the maximum number of people who can be in Foothills Park at  
20 any one time. The current cap is 1,000 visitors at any one time. However, in 1965 the  
21 cap was 2,000. In 1976, it was changed to 1,600. In the late 1990s, it changed to our  
22 current status, which is 1,000. That cap has not been reached in 20 years, and that 1,000-  
23 person cap roughly corresponds to the available parking inside Foothills Park. There are  
24 approximately 375 parking spaces, and we estimate the average people per car on  
25 weekends is about 2.7, which gets you to about 1,000 people. The entrance station to  
26 Foothills is staffed only on weekends and holidays. We don't have a very effective way  
27 to estimate exactly how many people we have in the park at any one time. We aren't  
28 really able to track vehicles leaving as well as coming in. When we need to determine  
29 that, it's done by a Ranger driving through the park to analyze how much of the available  
30 parking has been used. In the last 20 years, visitation at Foothills Park has been fairly  
31 consistent at about 152,000 people each year. Historically, there have been higher  
32 numbers. In 1969, the estimate was 292,000 visitors and, in the early '70s, visitation  
33 peaked at approximately 372,000 visitors each year. Visitation declined in the late '70s  
34 and through the '80s and '90s. A \$2 vehicle entry fee was charged in the '80s and '90s to  
35 help recover costs for the Boronda Lake damn repair. The fee was removed in 2001.  
36 Visitation hit its lowest in 1998 at approximately 29,000 visitors. Here's a visitation chart  
37 showing 1998 to 2019. You can see that 2011 was a higher than average year with  
38 approximately 202,000 visitors. We don't know exactly why this year was higher  
39 visitation than others. The busiest days for Foothills Park are the holidays New Year's,  
40 Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and July 4<sup>th</sup>. The busiest  
41 months are late spring and early summer, and the slower time is the fall and winter. In  
42 addition to tracking the number of visitors, the Rangers also track the number of



1 nonresident turnaways. The 5-year average of nonresident vehicles turned away, from  
2 2015 to 2019, is approximately 3,100 per year. With our estimate of 2.7 people per  
3 vehicle, this is about 8,300 nonresidents turned away each year. Since the COVID-19  
4 pandemic began, we have seen a significant increase in park and open space visitation.  
5 Although this is a very small sample size of seven weekends, this slide shows the  
6 weekend visitation starting Memorial Day weekend for 2020, 2019, 2013, and 2011 and a  
7 136% increase from 2019 and a 95% increase from 2011. This is another slide for  
8 weekday visitation with a very small sample size of just June as July was a half month of  
9 data. This shows a 7% decrease from 2019, and a 58% decrease from 2011. Again, I  
10 think we need more data, which we will collect. This concludes the staff presentation.

11 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Daren. Now, we'll move onto public comment. Three  
12 minutes will be allowed for each speaker. Do we have some speakers?

13 Lam Do: Thank you, Chair. This is Lam. We had two speakers, one of which is Robin  
14 Ghosh. As I speak, one other hand has come up. It is Shani Kleinhaus. We can begin  
15 with those two speakers.

16 Chair Greenfield: Before you start, just a reminder. If anyone would like to speak,  
17 please click raise hand via Zoom or press \*9 on your phone. Thank you, Lam.

18 Mr. Do: We will begin with Robin Ghosh. Robin, I will start the timer in a second here,  
19 and you will have 3 minutes. You'll be followed by Shani Kleinhaus. Robin, are you  
20 able to hear us? Robin?

21 Council Member Kou: Lam, I think it's Rohin, Rohin Ghosh.

22 Mr. Do: I apologize for the mispronunciation. I'll move onto Shani Kleinhaus, and then  
23 we'll return to Rohin. It looks like there may be some technical difficulties. We'll try to  
24 return to you after Shani. Shani, if you're ready, go ahead.

25 Shani Kleinhaus: Good evening. My name is Shani Kleinhaus. I speak as a resident of  
26 Palo Alto who goes to Foothills Park quite often. Since the issue came up in the news,  
27 there are a lot more people there, at least in my observation. I see a lot more impacts of  
28 that, and I've heard people blasting music out of cars, and I've seen a lot more doggie  
29 bags with poop left on the trails. I'm very worried about intensification without proper  
30 mitigation and the cost to hire Rangers to make sure the resources we have there are fully  
31 protected. If the City moves forward with opening the park, you need to do a real CEQA  
32 analysis, probably an EIR, because an increase in public use needs to be compared not to  
33 what is allowed but to the actual baseline. I don't think the baseline is a lot of visitation,  
34 so you need to look at that. I don't really care and never did about who is there, but the  
35 number of people makes a difference to our resources and how much impact they have  
36 and what type of behaviors are there. Seeing more poop on the trails is not something we

1 should be willing to accept. The issue of whether or not we allow people to come in with  
2 dogs also needs to be address. While it's now only a few people, it can increase a lot.  
3 I've seen dogs off leash as well. I'm really concerned about this process, and I think it  
4 should go to the voters with an EIR if anything moves forward. Thank you.

5 Mr. Do: Thank you, Shani. We will try Rohin one more time. Rohin, are you able to  
6 hear us and speak?

7 Rohin Ghosh: I was able to hear you guys all along. Can you guys hear me now?

8 Mr. Do: Yes, we can.

9 Mr. Ghosh: My comment is this. Very important to the idea of public lands conservation  
10 as expressed by organizations that specialize in public lands conservation and natural  
11 resources conservation is that of public access. The idea of public access and  
12 environmental justice in this case means that the park should not be limited to Foothills  
13 Park [sic] residents. I may be wrong on this, but as far as I know the cost of buying the  
14 park has already been made up. We don't turn nonresidents away from our other public  
15 lands, like the Baylands and Arastradero Preserve. I don't think it should be any different  
16 for the Foothills. It's an amazing piece of public land. Preserving public land means  
17 allowing people to access it because once people have access to public land, they care  
18 about public land and the broader issues that affect the open space ecosystems that  
19 surround us. I care about the environment now largely because growing up I spent a lot  
20 of time going to places like the Foothills. It's very important that we open Foothills Park  
21 to people regardless of whether they're residents or not. I'm a student at Palo Alto High  
22 School. Thank you.

23 Mr. Do: Thank you for your time, Rohin. Next up we have speaker AL, to be followed  
24 by William G and Becky Sanders. AL, it looks like you just lowered your hand, so we'll  
25 move onto William G.

26 Chair Greenfield: William, could you please give us your full name? Thank you.

27 William Giardino: This is William Giardino. I'm a 7-year resident of the City of Palo  
28 Alto. I frequent all the parks and open space preserves in the mid-peninsula area  
29 including Foothills. I'm absolutely in support of opening Foothills to the public, not just  
30 Palo Alto residents. I've lived in several different cities, states all across the West Coast  
31 and visited many parks. I've never encountered a policy similar to that of Foothills,  
32 which engenders this attitude of elitist exclusivity in terms of who has access to open  
33 lands. Reiterating what Rohin mentioned about having access to public land makes you  
34 care about your public land and your environment. Excluding these 3,100 cars or almost  
35 10,000 people per year leads to the idea that the first speaker talked about in terms of  
36 complaining about people playing music, people leaving dog stuff. There's no reason to

1 believe that nonresidents would exhibit those behaviors at any higher rate than Palo Alto  
2 residents. It's completely ridiculous to think that that is any sort of concern for opening  
3 the park to the public. Of course, if there are more visitors, it might require more  
4 resources, more Rangers or staff at the park, but this is a natural thing that will go along  
5 with having increased visitation. There's no reason why it has to be any different than  
6 Arastradero or the Baylands. I just wanted to emphasize those points, that this is  
7 something that's extremely rare in parks along the West Coast. I've never heard of such a  
8 ridiculous policy. It's rooted in this idea of exclusivity. Given the demographics of Palo  
9 Alto versus surrounding cities, it really leads to this strong discrepancy in the  
10 demographic representation of who is able to access this public land. I strongly urge the  
11 committee and the City Council to consider what a bad look this is and how embarrassing  
12 it is for the region. Thanks.

13 Mr. Do: Thank you, William. Next up we have speaker Becky Sanders.

14 Becky Sanders: I want to take issue with what I'm hearing, this black and white, be-all-  
15 end-all, you're-right-I'm-wrong, you're-elitist-I'm-not. I really appreciated Roger Smith's  
16 op-ed in *Palo Alto Online*. I've lived in the area and have been refused entry to the park  
17 when I wasn't living in Palo Alto. I've lived here since 1990. There ought to be a way to  
18 be more inclusive and open it for a use fee or something to underwrite all the additional  
19 maintenance and things that have to be done for increased foot traffic and also just limit.  
20 I'm concerned about the animals because it's a very delicate balance up there. Just to say  
21 "all come" is fine, but we have to think about the animals, wildlife, plants, and increased  
22 wear and tear on this beautiful place. As Mr. Smith pointed out, we have 24 parks. This  
23 hysteria saying this is elitist is not justified. Thank you so much. I'll let you get back to  
24 your good work. I'm so excited you put this panel on for us this evening.

25 Mr. Do: Thank you, Becky. Chair Greenfield, I'm showing no other hands raised.

26 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Thank you to all the members of the public for your  
27 comments. We appreciate them and hearing from you. We'll now move onto the panel  
28 introductions. I'll ask each of the panelists to introduce themselves, talk a little bit about  
29 their background, particularly their relationship to Foothills Park and experiences there.  
30 Let's start with Taylor Peterson.

31 Taylor Peterson: Hello, good evening. My name is Taylor Peterson. I'm the Director of  
32 Biological Analysis at MIG, which is a planning and communications and environmental  
33 services firm. I have been working with Palo Alto park staff on various projects in  
34 various parks for quite a long time, including Foothills Park, Arastra, and the Baylands.  
35 MIG recently also helped the City with their Parks Master Plan for City parks, those more  
36 in the downtown areas. My experience at Foothills Park comes from doing work on trail  
37 access and the environmental impacts of trail work and the Fire Management Plan. At  
38 the moment, I'm also helping with some permitting for the Buckeye Creek ongoing

1 maintenance work. One thing I always notice about the park is you're typically bound to  
2 see some pretty amazing wildlife. The last time I was out there, turkeys were on display.

3 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Yes, the turkeys are quite prevalent these days. Professor  
4 Nicole Ardoin please.

5 Nicole Ardoin: Hi. Thanks for having me. I am Nicole Ardoin. I'm a faculty member at  
6 Stanford University. I have a joint appointment in the graduate school of education, and  
7 I'm the Faculty Director of the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and  
8 Resources in the School of Earth, Energy, and Environmental Sciences. I also have a  
9 joint appointment in the Woods Institute for the Environment. I've been working in the  
10 environment and conservation field for over 20 years now, primarily focusing on people-  
11 place relationships. I actually started my career working as a Park Ranger at the Grand  
12 Canyon. Thinking about parks and protected areas is something I've done for a long  
13 time. I am a huge fan of places like Foothills. I actually live on the Stanford campus.  
14 My daughter, who is now 12, has gone to camp at Foothills through the Palo Alto Parks  
15 and Rec Department for a number of years. We have been with friends out there to  
16 birthday parties and used the group camping facilities. We've been on the back country  
17 trails as well as those that are near. I'm aware of some of the wildlife you were just  
18 discussing and delighted to be here tonight. Thank you.

19 Chair Greenfield: Thank you for joining us. Lester Hendrie.

20 Lester Hendrie: Good evening. I am retired after 34 years as a Park Ranger. My first 6  
21 years were with the National Park Service. The past 28 years were with Palo Alto Open  
22 Space. Of that 28 years, about 12 years or so were as a Senior Ranger in both the  
23 Baylands and Foothills Park. As Daren said earlier. I was a Supervising Ranger for the  
24 last 13 years of my career with my office in Foothills and primarily responsible for  
25 Foothills Park and the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve.

26 Chair Greenfield: Thank you for joining us.

27 Mr. Hendrie: Thank you.

28 Chair Greenfield: Roger Smith.

29 Roger Smith: I moved to Palo Alto in 1964 when I got out of college and have lived here  
30 ever since and enjoyed all of our parks, all 36 of them. When I retired, Judy and I  
31 decided to form Friends of the Palo Alto Parks with the basic premise that the City would  
32 never have enough money to support our parks. That obviously has been very true. We  
33 redid Lytton Park. We're very proud of the Magical Bridge, and we raised \$3.5 million  
34 of private funds to do that. Those parks throughout the community are at least 50%, the  
35 big parks, nonresidents. I'm not a believer of being elitist. Foothills Park is special. It is



1 really special. I had occasion to get a call from Crystal Gamage yesterday, who turned  
2 101. She was on the committee to figure out what to do with the park. I think we made a  
3 great decision to have it as Foothills Park Preserve. I'm delighted to be here tonight.  
4 Thank you very much.

5 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Roger. Alex Von Feldt.

6 Alex Von Feldt: Thank you. Thanks for having me. I'm with Grassroots Ecology, and  
7 we're a nonprofit organization that educates and engages the public to restore local  
8 ecosystems. We've been partnering with the City of Palo Alto since 2013 to get  
9 volunteers out to Foothills Park to help learn about and restore the ecosystem there. A lot  
10 of it is pulling weeds and planting plants. A lot of the work we do is informed by the  
11 great work of the Friends of Foothills, and we work in a lot of the sites they identify. We  
12 also have a native plant nursery in Foothills Park. It's tucked away in the back section of  
13 part of the park that was just recently opened. At that nursery, we grow plants not only  
14 for our restoration but also for other large land managers like the Mid Peninsula Regional  
15 Open Space District and Valley Water. We also steward other sites within Palo Alto such  
16 as Arastradero Preserve—we've been working there since 1996—and many sites along  
17 the San Francisquito Creek watershed. We also provide a lot of pollution prevention  
18 education for Palo Alto students.

19 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Now, we'll move onto the interesting part that everyone's  
20 waiting for, the panel discussion. Before we start, do any panelists have any questions  
21 about the guidelines we've tried to setup? I will start off. The first questions I will target  
22 initially to one of the panelists and then others are welcome to chime in afterwards.  
23 Raise your hand via Zoom or, if that's not working, put your hand up, and we'll try and  
24 see it. We'll start off with Nicole. Why or why not is it important to open Foothills Park  
25 to all when access is available at other nearby parks and open space areas?

26 Ms. Ardoin: Thank you for that question. I spent a lot of time thinking about these kinds  
27 of questions especially, as I mentioned, as I've had the pleasure of using almost all the  
28 parks in the Palo Alto system and also having worked as a Park Ranger and collaborated  
29 with a number of groups on this call. As was mentioned, Foothills is a unique park  
30 within the Palo Alto system. There are many other parks in the Palo Alto system that are  
31 more managed parks. We have everything from baseball fields to Magical Bridge, which  
32 is one of my favorite places to go. Many places are just down the road here and provide  
33 this special kind of access. As somebody who studies connection to nature and  
34 opportunities for people to have these less-managed, more nature-rich experiences and  
35 wilder, closer to back-country wilderness experiences, that's also really special. We  
36 know this connection that comes from that is beneficial for emotional reasons and  
37 physical health reasons and mental health reasons. Yet, it can be challenging for a lot of  
38 people to access that. A place like Foothills, which has the access in terms of picnic

1 tables and more accessible trails closer to a parking lot area, is a really special place even  
2 within the Palo Alto system. It provides people with a nature-rich-setting experience  
3 while still being accessible for those less comfortable, perhaps, with going further into  
4 the back country. I also, as I mentioned, do a lot of work looking at these people-place  
5 relationships and think a lot about what motivates stewardship and motivates people to  
6 take place-protective behaviors. I've worked in places from the Grand Canyon to  
7 Yellowstone and Yosemite to Galapagos and to city parks. Interestingly, in all those  
8 places one of the things we find consistently is it's a little bit less about the place and a lot  
9 more about the kinds of experiences people have with their friends and loved ones in  
10 those special places. Being at a special place like Foothills with friends and family and  
11 having special memorable experiences is really critical to people being willing to take  
12 stewardship actions over time. One of the reasons having experiences in a place like  
13 Foothills is so critical is that is how we grow the current and next generation of people  
14 willing to protect these kinds of places for the future. It builds these lifelong connections  
15 with place protective behaviors through having these experiences. They take  
16 responsibility for them.

17 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Would any other panelist like to answer why it's  
18 important for all to have access to Foothills Park when there are other nearby parks and  
19 open space areas? We'll move onto the next question. This is for Taylor. What are  
20 likely ecological impacts to Foothills Park wildlife and habitat if visitation is increased?  
21 What is the best way to assess environmental impacts over time, and when could we  
22 expect to recognize these impacts? Let me repeat that. What are the likely ecological  
23 impacts to Foothills Park wildlife and habitat if visitation is increased? What the best  
24 way to assess environmental impacts over time? When could we expect to recognize  
25 these impact and potentially how quickly could they be mitigated?

26 Ms. Peterson: The ecological impacts depend on the amount of human use and human  
27 behavior. If you have a lot more human activity, then the wildlife is going to be more  
28 secretive, and that is going to change the human experience in the park. It also can affect  
29 wildlife behavior in how they forage, how they breed, where they nest. Those are  
30 important considerations. As far as managing the ecological impacts, you would need to  
31 have some sort of baseline information, and maybe you already have this. You would  
32 need to continue to measure potential impacts. Maybe you would have camera traps or  
33 something, and you would measure the number of times that turkeys are in the main field  
34 or the number times mountain lions are sighted. The other potential impact is human and  
35 wildlife interactions. Mid Pen is about to launch a study in Rancho San Antonio because  
36 of the increased mountain lion-human connectivity there. When can we recognize  
37 impacts? That's simply by studying and observing and also the Rangers keeping track.  
38 They would have to patrol back trails and pick up dog bags and watch for off-trail use  
39 and even alongside trail use. I know Friends of Foothills has been concerned about  
40 impacts to vegetation right along the trails, especially some sensitive vegetation like

1 ferns. It's just by observation. That's what we do. To mitigate, it depends on what the  
2 impact is. It might entail re-vegetation. It might entail erosion control. It might entail  
3 more trash pickup, broader education, just more conversation or some signage. These are  
4 all manageable things, but you need to be very sensitive about what the potential impacts  
5 are.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Alex, could I get you to comment on the habitat side of  
7 this question?

8 Ms. Von Feldt: Thank you. I wanted to add a couple of items. As part of work at  
9 Foothills Park, we have been doing vegetation surveys throughout the park, so at least we  
10 know what vegetation is present. There are a couple of rare species. The main one is the  
11 Dirca, which is the western leatherwood. We've mapped all that throughout the park.  
12 Most of it is far off-trail. There's only one instance it's actually close to the trail, but at  
13 least we have some of that data, so we could see if that is being impacted. We've also  
14 been doing some things in the past to help mitigate the effects of some social trails, when  
15 people form trails where you don't want them. We've been trying out different techniques  
16 there. I did check in with our staff who's there all the time. I asked, "Where are people  
17 going when you see increase in use?" We've been out there in June and July, so we have  
18 some increased usage. Not surprisingly, most of it is at the lake and on the large lawn  
19 area there. Those habitats are already pre-disturbed, if you will. Those aren't quite the  
20 pristine areas, but there definitely are a lot of lovely areas throughout Foothills Park.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Roger, I see your hand's up.

22 Mr. Smith: One of the things that my wife, Judy, says to me is the real residents of  
23 Foothills Preserve is the animals. One of my worries is some of this that would happen  
24 couldn't be replaced. If we recognize it, it may be too late. That is one of my worries. It  
25 is special. People I talk to say, "If you lose it, it may be gone." Thank you.

26 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Lester.

27 Mr. Hendrie: I just wanted to echo what Tay and Alex said regarding wildlife  
28 observations. Throughout my career, we would notice a huge decrease in wildlife  
29 observations on the weekends and holidays. The deer aren't out; the turkeys aren't out.  
30 They quickly flee in the morning when the visitation goes up. You're much more likely  
31 to see them, and they have access to the lake without fear or grazing on the grass without  
32 hesitation during the weekdays when it's much quieter. Of course, increased visitation  
33 would impact that. The other thing that wasn't mentioned, that I've seen especially  
34 around more developed areas like Vista Hill, is significant erosion. When you have a lot  
35 of people concentrated in one area, they go off-trail. They go onto the hillsides, which  
36 are highly erosive, especially into the chaparral areas where the damage can be quite  
37 immediate short-term damage but can take decades to heal. I still remember an example.

1 This is very extreme, but when firebreaks were first created in Foothills Park, very early  
2 in its history in the '70s, a bulldozer was used. It went down the hillside from the  
3 ridgelines into Wildhorse Valley. Those scars are still there because it stripped enough of  
4 the topsoil away that the hillsides have never recovered. We do see that in erosion areas  
5 with just off-trail use. Thank you.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I'd like to follow up with Tay and ask a little bit more  
7 about the assessment of environmental impacts. You mentioned you weren't sure if we  
8 had a baseline. Maybe you could talk about how easy or complex it is to establish a  
9 baseline and what this would entail and some idea of expense or complication to the City.

10 Ms. Peterson: It sounds like Grassroots has quite a bit of data already. It depends on  
11 how many years because you would want more than one year of baseline data. Every  
12 year is different weather-wise and species-wise. You may notice some years you have  
13 more deer and less woodpeckers. It all depends on what's going on in the environment  
14 with their food and availability and other impacts. There's a tendency ...

15 Chair Greenfield: Maybe you could walk us through to help us understand what the  
16 mechanics are for ...

17 Ms. Peterson: Baseline?

18 Chair Greenfield: Yes.

19 Ms. Peterson: That involves going into the park and somehow measuring wildlife use.  
20 Having the rare plants mapped is very valuable because that can be an education piece for  
21 visitor use. The good thing about rare plants is they tend not to expand their footprint  
22 very rapidly, so you can tell what's going on with them much more easily than the  
23 wildlife. It's a matter of doing surveys. I mentioned camera traps before. You set out  
24 wildlife cameras and collect information on wildlife use in certain areas. You would  
25 probably want to do that for a full year to get all the seasons and more than one year, if  
26 you could. People are typically in a hurry, and they don't want to take the time. The  
27 more data the better. You could have a pilot period of increased visitor use or you could  
28 compare weekends to weekdays on wildlife use of the park and wildlife behavior to get a  
29 sense of where the impacts are happening, what might be causing them, and how to best  
30 manage the park as a preserve.

31 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. That helps us get more of a feel for this. I want to touch  
32 on something Roger said about the special nature of Foothills Park. We know that  
33 Foothills Park access has been limited for many years. Is there anything significant that's  
34 different to the ecology of Foothills Park as a result of that, specifically comparing it to  
35 neighboring regional open space areas?

1 Ms. Von Feldt: It does have some unusual habitats, like the blue oak woodland that's on  
2 the Los Trancos Trail. That's an intact ecosystem that's very important. We've been there  
3 about 7 years. Most of our work comes from invasive species coming from nearby  
4 construction sites. When people redevelop their property and grade and the trucks come  
5 in, we actually get a lot of what's called stink wort. We have a lot more workdays to  
6 remove that than we did at the beginning. Similarly, we noticed some dead bobcats that  
7 were emaciated because of rodenticide that people who live around the park put out to  
8 kill rats and it went into the food chain. We worked with some Stanford students a few  
9 years ago on an outreach campaign to the neighbors of Foothills Park and Arastradero  
10 Preserve to try to educate them not to use rodenticide because it really affects the  
11 ecosystem.

12 Ms. Peterson: That's a good point about invasive plant species. They come in on shoes  
13 and tires. Those are things to consider.

14 Chair Greenfield: Let's move onto the next question, which we'll start with Alex. It's  
15 kind of related. What protections or mitigations could we add to help minimize  
16 environmental impacts, for example Muni Code updates, engineered solutions such as  
17 boulders alongside roads to keep cars out, etc.? I'll repeat it. What protections or  
18 mitigations could we add to help minimize environmental impacts, like Muni Code  
19 updates or engineered solutions?

20 Ms. Von Feldt: The one that comes to mind is making the parking clearer because there  
21 is a lot of unlined parking spots, so people form their own spots. Making that clear and,  
22 yes, putting boulders on places where you certainly don't want people to park off the  
23 road. That's an easy one. The other aspect about mitigation is some of these items that  
24 we've pointed out, like some of the rare species and being able to protect them. We had  
25 to do it at one point along the trail to protect the Dirca. The erosion that Lester pointed  
26 out with the social trails along Vista Hill might be something that the City would have to  
27 put in a few barricades or something like that to try to limit that. As far as the Municipal  
28 Code goes, the third thing that pops into my mind is to have some restrictions on  
29 development in the Foothills, making sure that construction vehicles are washed off when  
30 they come in, that homeowners are responsible for keeping their site clear of invasive  
31 species for multiple years after the project is complete and keeping up on that.

32 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anyone else looking to comment on this?

33 Mr. Smith: There is one thing that I wanted to mention. Keep in mind that I'm the oldest  
34 person around here, 79 years old. I spend a fair amount of time down at Lytton Plaza  
35 helping with the ping pong tables. What is annoying to me is we have nice trash cans,  
36 and people throw things not in the trash cans but right in front of the trash cans. We  
37 would hope that additional people coming in would hit the trash can, but I really worry

1 about the effect of that on nature and the expense of trying to pick up that type of thing.  
2 Thank you.

3 Ms. Ardoin: Human behavior is one of the biggest challenges and perhaps also an  
4 opportunity. I love the example that you just used. People are more like sheep than  
5 wolves; we want to be part of the pack. There are great opportunities here for using some  
6 of the examples that Alex used earlier, whether it's natural barriers or having trails that  
7 are clearly marked, and then having other people use those examples to show people  
8 exactly how you want them to behave in these spaces. Rather than only shaming people  
9 or telling them what you don't want them to do, turning it around to the pro-social side.  
10 This goes back to my first comment around having people love a place and having people  
11 feel a sense of not only connection but also stewardship and ownership of a place, then  
12 they're more likely to want to do what's right for that place. We often see these trashing  
13 behaviors in places that people feel like it's not my place; therefore, it doesn't matter.  
14 Turning that behavior to the positive can be really helpful in these park settings.

15 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. We have a plug for modeling positive behavior. Lester, is  
16 your hand up to talk on this?

17 Ms. Peterson: I would like to say education is a component as well. Education through  
18 conversation and pointing out the good things, not just the bad behavior but what's there  
19 to value.

20 Chair Greenfield: Again, the positive approach. Let's move on. Lester, we'll start with  
21 you. What are likely infrastructure and safety impact concerns if visitation is increased?  
22 Infrastructure concerns could include trails and fire roads, parking areas, restrooms,  
23 picnic areas, the native plant nursery, Interpretive Center, etc. Safety concerns could be  
24 visitor and hiking wellbeing, fire risks, emergency response, etc. I can repeat that if you  
25 like.

26 Mr. Hendrie: I'm good. Thank you. One of the biggest concerns as infrastructure goes  
27 with increased visitation is some of the things listed right here on the example. That's  
28 restrooms. The restrooms have the same footprint they did when the park was developed.  
29 In fact, they're actually smaller. When we had ADA upgrades to two of the four  
30 restrooms in Foothills Park, I'm guessing about a decade ago, because of budgetary  
31 constraints the remodels had to remain within the footprint of the building. The entrance  
32 restroom went from two urinals and two stalls in the men's and two stalls in the women's  
33 to one stall each, one for women, one for men. It was a drastic reduction in capacity.  
34 The same with the Interpretive Center, they had to stay within the confines of the walls of  
35 the building so that the number of facilities were reduced. Those restrooms are very old,  
36 especially at the group picnic area, the Oak Grove restroom, which is on a septic system,  
37 which is often problematic when we get high visitation. Those are the biggest  
38 infrastructure impacts right off the bat, the restrooms. Increased visitation would mean

1 much more usage and much more impact on the Rangers to try and keep up with the use  
2 of the restrooms in keeping them clean and/or stocked. The other issue is also parking.  
3 That's a big issue. Alex hit the nail on the head with delineated parking since there is  
4 virtually no delineation in the park. Some of the original parking lots built around Vista  
5 Hill have some striping. None of the main portions of the park do. They're gravel pull-  
6 outs, and they have no delineation. More control of parking spots would definitely  
7 facilitate that. The increased traffic by virtue of more traffic on the roads breaks the  
8 roads down, especially on the edges of the road since a lot of the roadside parking is on  
9 slopes because the terrain is not flat. That breaks the asphalt down and causes the roads  
10 to erode further. Definitely the increased vehicular traffic would have an impact. Picnic  
11 areas, increased trash has been mentioned. We would have to have increased pick-up.  
12 Things like barbecues, which naturally wear out, would burn through quicker and have to  
13 be replaced more frequently. Picnic tables would wear out faster with increased usage.  
14 That's the primary infrastructure problems that I foresee in the developed areas of the  
15 park. We've already touched on trail usage. With more people comes more use of the  
16 trails. As far as safety goes, I'm not sure how to explain this. We really depend upon the  
17 public to notify us when there are hazards on the trails. With 40 miles of trails in the  
18 Foothills, it's not possible for the Rangers to regularly patrol all 40 miles of trails. We  
19 depend upon the public to let us know that there are hazards. If there is increased  
20 visitation, it's a double-edged sword. You'll get more notifications of a hazard, but that  
21 means more response from the Rangers, when it could be a minor hazard. A simple tree  
22 down, the Rangers might not get to it right away because people can step over it. We can  
23 question them and find out what the hazard is; we'll put it on the list and get to it as soon  
24 as we can. If it's life or death or an immediate hazard, obviously we'll respond  
25 immediately. Things like a small tree down that people just step over, more visitation  
26 means they might step over or they might go around, off-trail, breaking down the hillside  
27 or impacting the vegetation. Increased use of the park increases fire risk. Through the  
28 Fire Management Plan, we've done a lot of work on roadside clearing, high flammability  
29 areas, clearing picnic areas, clearing around facilities. Increased visitation would, of  
30 course, increase the fire hazard and chances of a fire in the Foothills. Most importantly,  
31 the biggest safety concern that I have with increased visitation is staff wellbeing. We  
32 have very limited staff. I understand one position has been frozen because of budget  
33 shortfalls. That makes it very difficult for staff to do just the daily work. When you  
34 increase visitation, it makes it that much more difficult. Staff wellbeing is definitely a  
35 safety concern of increased visitation.

36 Chair Greenfield: Thanks for your input. Would anyone like to comment? Roger, your  
37 hand's up?

38 Mr. Smith: Yes. I was up there yesterday. I had occasion to drive through Paradise after  
39 the fire up there. I got to thinking if there was a fire, Foothills could really be a zoo  
40 trying to get out of the park with our one entrance, and then trying to get down Page Mill

1 Road. That is a real concern. In my opinion, with additional visitors that increases. Will  
2 there be a fire? I'm not sure, but we would have that possibility. It could be a real bad  
3 thing. Lester, I agree with almost everything you said. The other thing I worry about is  
4 the lack of staff. If there's an emergency there, how does one get help? Clearly, with  
5 increased usage, there'll probably be more 911 calls. Thank you.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Roger. Anybody else? Nicole.

7 Ms. Ardoin: I had a comment. I appreciate these comments so much. As I mentioned, I  
8 worked as a Ranger for a while at the Grand Canyon. One of my closest friends is  
9 actually a Park Ranger at Yosemite. His partner works for Mariposa County in the  
10 county office. One of the most challenging things about these issues, these decisions is  
11 there's not one right answer, which is why we're having this discussion. There are so  
12 many tradeoffs. One of the things that's really intriguing to me about an issue like  
13 wildfire, for example, is that we know from decades ago in the Oakland Hills fire, for  
14 example, that one of the strongest predictors of people who survived that fire and who  
15 were able to thrive afterward were the communities where people were more connected.  
16 I know that Palo Alto has really taken that to heart in terms of providing grants to  
17 community and to encourage neighborhoods to band together. The reason I bring this is  
18 up is I want to mention the work that Alex's group has done with restoration and invasive  
19 species work and bringing together young people and families and engaging people in  
20 restoration activities at Arastradero and Baylands. This is one of the challenges. There's  
21 not one right answer, but it is interesting to think about if people feel more engaged in a  
22 place like Foothills or Baylands or Arastradero or a city park and they feel more of a  
23 sense of community spirit, are they more likely to be safer when we have these potential  
24 challenges coming forward? I wanted to bring that forward. There are really interesting  
25 and challenging tensions, and I appreciate having this space for us to grapple with all  
26 these in, as my students call it, a hairball.

27 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Let's move on. We've been talking about environmental  
28 impacts and infrastructure and safety. Let's pivot to visitor impacts. Roger, how would a  
29 visitation increase impact the park visitor experience and how might impacts be  
30 mitigated?

31 Mr. Smith: One of the difficulties is back to budget. We truly don't have hard data  
32 because we haven't had the gates manned every day from early in the morning to late at  
33 night. If we wanted to do a pilot, I believe we would have to man the gates. Somebody  
34 threw out that it would be like \$90,000, which I can't imagine. That number seems  
35 \$200,000 maybe minimum. My understanding is we're minus the one Supervising  
36 Ranger. With the cutbacks in the budget, it's a tough time to be doing that. More  
37 visitors, as Lester said, means more staff time. A worry I have—I certainly agree with  
38 the experience—is how we're going to educate people. Clearly more staff time will be



1 taken away from things, in my mind, that are more meaningful to the preserve, the  
2 Rangers helping people out and showing them things. There clearly would be additional  
3 costs. In a sense, the preserve itself doesn't benefit from more people. The experience  
4 for people is fine. If you step back and say 1,000 more people, what does that do for the  
5 preserve? I think there could be some great impacts.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. It's a question of balance. Regarding the \$90,000 amount,  
7 if I understand correctly—Daren can let me know if I get it wrong—is what we spend on  
8 an annual basis to man the entry gate on weekends and holidays. Roughly two-thirds of  
9 that is probably attributable to checking the residency of entrants. Would anyone else  
10 like to comment on visitor experience impacts with increased visitation?

11 Ms. Von Feldt: This might be the right place to say it. When we have our volunteers  
12 come out, we usually have several volunteer events a month. We have upwards of 500 to  
13 800 volunteers that come out every year. A large part of them are not Palo Alto residents  
14 because we allow the volunteer events to be open to people. 80% of who we work with  
15 are under 18, so a lot of youth. I hear from my staff that works with these volunteers that  
16 kids will come up to this park and they're like, "This is amazing." When they hear about  
17 the restriction, it sort of takes the air out of it, and they're like, "I'm doing work to  
18 improve a park that really isn't that public." That experience from our volunteers isn't as  
19 positive as it could be.

20 Chair Greenfield: That is a little bit different answer, but we could pivot to ask a  
21 question on that as well. What would be some benefits to the community if the park were  
22 open to nonresidents? One sounds like we could attract more volunteers for the  
23 environmental support efforts within the park. Anyone?

24 Ms. Peterson: If more people are around the lake and more people are in the valley, how  
25 does that affect their experience of nature and wildlife? Is it more like being in an urban  
26 park or is it really truly like being in nature still, even with a lot of people around playing  
27 Frisbee and having a party?

28 Chair Greenfield: That's a good question to pose. Anyone else?

29 Mr. Smith: I was very impressed at the number of younger people in the volunteers.  
30 Greg Betz, I guess, started that with 35 people, and it was a bunch of young people then.  
31 They were only 72. Bob told me the other day that they're down to seven that go out on  
32 Sundays. He is 93. As a side note, I didn't realize that the lake was the old quarry, which  
33 made great sense to me. I had no idea of that. My friend, Crystal Gamage, said they  
34 were trying to figure out what to do with this land, and they met for a year. One of the  
35 things was making a Hollywood Bowl-type thing. Another idea was a shooting range.  
36 Another one was a motorcycle track. A couple of young people and I were at the park  
37 yesterday, and we were way up at the top. All of a sudden we heard vroom, vroom,

1 vroom, and there were two young people in a car deciding to have a quick drag race  
2 down the steep hill. I thought of the motorcycle track. Thanks.

3 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I think we can agree that we do need to work to replenish  
4 our environmental support effort within the park with a bit of a youth movement. We can  
5 thank Alex for getting us a good leg up on that. Let's move on. The next question has  
6 been addressed a bit already. We'll see if anybody has additional input on this. Under  
7 either the pilot program—I outlined that at the beginning when I was speaking. It's a  
8 one-year program that would allow 50 nonresident carloads of people into the park for a  
9 year. Under either the pilot program or a complete opening, what impact would a visitor  
10 increase have on staff, particularly when staff and funding resources are limited? Would  
11 anyone care to add something new on that subject?

12 Mr. Smith: I really admire the Commission working on that for a long period of time. It  
13 seems like if we did anything to control it, we would need to man the front gate all the  
14 time. In my mind, the existing program is working. We all know that people come  
15 through the gate during the week. The impact of having to check it to get really good  
16 data and, even if we did online reservations, we would still have to have somebody there  
17 to make sure that I wasn't coming into the park on my own so to speak. I worry about the  
18 cost, the time, the energy to do that.

19 Chair Greenfield: That's consideration of having someone at the entrance gate 365 days a  
20 year as opposed to something closer to 100 or so right now. Anyone else care to chime in  
21 on this? Lester, your hand is up.

22 Mr. Hendrie: Yes, thank you. The online reservation system is an intriguing idea as part  
23 of a pilot program. I recently visited a regional park near Auburn called Hidden Falls  
24 Regional Park. In a way it's very similar to Foothills. It's in the Foothills above Auburn.  
25 It's a Placer County park. They do require weekend paid reservations. There's no  
26 residency restriction. It's open to the public without reservation on weekdays, but on  
27 weekends and holidays you have to have a reservation. There is a staff member to check  
28 it. That might be a model to look at. Roger mentioned it; right now, the entrance station  
29 is not staffed. Other than Rangers driving around, we don't know when a nonresident  
30 drives in the entrance gate. Of course, anyone that is able to hike can hike in, as Daren  
31 mentioned, on the Bay to Ridge Trail. The park is open to the public by hiking. That's  
32 not an equity issue as far as obviously ADA. Somebody that isn't able to hike is not  
33 legally able to enter the park, but we know people do. Perhaps one way of mitigating it  
34 would be an online reservation system where you would have that number of nonresident  
35 people that would have the ability to enter. Maybe it's just on the weekends and holidays.

36 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. Nicole, did you want to?

1 Ms. Ardoin: I wanted to tie together some of the earlier comments about visitor impact  
2 and perhaps even looking at some of the baseline studies as well as staffing with some  
3 projects that we've been doing recently, looking at open space and linking with local  
4 universities. It doesn't have to be Stanford. There are many universities around here that  
5 have incredibly eager students and faculty members who are interested in thinking about  
6 everything from ecological studies to visitor studies. The area of visitor studies in parks  
7 has been rich and replete with research for over 100 years. I am sure there are many  
8 people who would be interested in working with a park like Foothills on any of these  
9 dimensions. I would put in a plug for thinking about some of the local students and  
10 universities that could be great partners in some of this.

11 Chair Greenfield: Great. That gets to the issue of if you're wanting to partner with  
12 people, they'd be more likely to partner with you if they have access to the park. I think  
13 it's implicit. Any other comments before we move on? The pilot program includes  
14 implementation of a new nonresident online visitor registration, which was just  
15 referenced. What additional infrastructure, operations, and maintenance resources would  
16 be important to successfully manage a pilot program or a complete opening of Foothills  
17 Park? Examples could include entrance and exit visitor monitoring, car monitoring, fee  
18 collection, parking management, restroom, trash, litter, maintenance, even removal of  
19 some barbecues. The question is touching back on some ideas we've talked about, but  
20 specifically what do we need to add to the park? Lester.

21 Mr. Hendrie: It's definitely the increased staffing that was mentioned. Otherwise, it  
22 would basically be the status quo with increased visitation, which is obviously not good  
23 for habitat or for staff health. If you have weekday staffing, that's something that literally  
24 has not occurred, continuous weekday staffing, since the '80s. Maybe the early '90s was  
25 the highest period of seasonal staffing that we had in my career. We've never had full  
26 weekday staffing since that period because it's cost restrictive.

27 Chair Greenfield: Any comments on how to monitor—we'll get to the next question in a  
28 bit—better count cars coming in and out and keep a handle on the number of visitors?

29 Mr. Hendrie: Daren and I have discussed this. That has been an issue for the last three  
30 decades that I worked there. It's really a challenge. We have these electronic traffic  
31 counters now that are petty state of the art and are probably the most accurate thing that  
32 we have. They're no more accurate than obviously having a Ranger working the entrance  
33 station and clicking off the number of visitors with a good, old-fashioned mechanical  
34 counter, and the same with the number of cars and keeping those statistics, which are  
35 invaluable. I know there were some comments expressed about the very early visitation  
36 numbers, the 300,000 numbers. I remember talking with Jerry Lawrence, one of the first  
37 or second Supervising Rangers for Open Space, that was my boss when I started. He said  
38 those numbers were not very accurate. Why they were never changed, I don't know.

1 That's lost to history. We did have an electronic loop system similar to a very old traffic  
2 monitoring system in the roadway to count cars as they went in and out. I know that had  
3 a lot of problems, which probably led to those very high numbers.

4 Chair Greenfield: Can you clarify? You think the numbers maybe weren't as high as  
5 suggested?

6 Mr. Hendrie: Correct. The 300,000 numbers for earlier visitation, I don't believe those  
7 were very accurate. It's really difficult to count. If the Rangers are at the entrance, can  
8 they also count the cars exiting? It's just not possible. When there's only one person  
9 working the entrance station, which is most of the time, you have your hands full just  
10 dealing with lines of cars coming in. You can't see, not to mention count, cars and/or  
11 visitors that are leaving.

12 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else care to add anything on that?

13 Ms. Von Feldt: While it's probably not directly related, about 2 years ago we opened  
14 what they call the 7.7 acres, the part in the way back. We were anticipating a lot of  
15 people, so we actually did changes to our nursery and made sure it was secure and things  
16 like that. Our nursery director says she basically sees maybe one or two hikers a day. It's  
17 nice because it's a flat site; it's not a steep trail, so you actually see people with some  
18 mobility issues having a nice little circle and coming back. It wasn't in as high demand  
19 as we had expected.

20 Chair Greenfield: Thanks.

21 Mr. Smith: How would I know that that's available to me?

22 Chair Greenfield: You're asking about access to the 7.7 acres?

23 Mr. Smith: Yes.

24 Ms. Von Feldt: I can't speak to how the City might have communicated it, but there's no  
25 gate or fence there now. You just continue walking along the main road. We have some  
26 interpretive gardens back there, like a native pollinator garden with signage and things  
27 like that. It looks pretty welcoming.

28 Chair Greenfield: We did have some publicity when the area was first opened with a  
29 ribbon cutting. It's not the pristine area of the park by any means. That can speak in  
30 good part to why it's not so popular. It's a good place for an exercise in restoration.  
31 Anyone else? Taylor.

32 Ms. Peterson: There might be a way to use a road tube for measuring visitor use, but you  
33 have to use some human time with the road tube to count and figure out what the

1 accuracy is and then adjust it. Maybe your traffic department or a traffic consultant could  
2 help with that. Maybe in your baseline year, you can figure out more accurate numbers.

3 Chair Greenfield: You're suggesting a mechanical counting system that's calibrated and  
4 confirmed by human observation?

5 Ms. Peterson: Right.

6 Ed Shikada: Mr. Chair, if I might? Ed Shikada, City Manager. I really hadn't intended  
7 to weigh in, but I want to acknowledge that—first off, thanks to all the panelists and the  
8 Commission for hosting this meeting. Just very simply at this moment in time, I am sure  
9 we can figure out counting. I suspect of all the issues you've mentioned this evening,  
10 counting vehicles in and out of Foothills will not be an issue. I would be more than  
11 comfortable taking that on as a responsibility on behalf of the City organization.

12 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Ed. We appreciate the opportunity to host this forum this  
13 evening. Yes, Nicole.

14 Ms. Ardoin: Just to add that, if it's helpful, having been looking at visitor studies,  
15 journals, and outdoor recreation journals and working with the Park Service, there are  
16 entire conferences that deal with these challenges. The Park Service just closed Yosemite  
17 and reopened it, and they're trying to let a certain number of visitors in. As you all know,  
18 Muir Woods just made that change last year in terms of having a reservation system.  
19 They were grappling with all this probably about a year and a half ago, and they've also  
20 been trying to come up with some technological fixes that are not taxing on their  
21 Rangers. I'm positive they would be happy to share with you some of the ideas they  
22 cycled through that may be appropriate for Palo Alto.

23 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. Let's move on. Park visitor limits have gradually decreased  
24 since Foothills Park first opened, and current visitation numbers are below historical  
25 highs. What bearing does this have on the potential for environmental impacts if  
26 visitation were substantially increased today? Should we consider reassessing the 1,000-  
27 person limit? That's a concurrent limit for the park.

28 Mr. Smith: I'm glad the City Manager can figure out the count. If we count somehow  
29 the number of people in the car and then where they're coming from, what their licenses  
30 are, to me it's a law of numbers. More people, more impact on the preserve. What that  
31 number is I don't know. I feel strongly its working. I think it's a problem that doesn't  
32 need solved. Thank you.

33 Chair Greenfield: The question we're trying to ask is—there are people calling for  
34 opening and increasing access to the park. If we do that, what would the potential

1 impacts be and are the numbers we're talking about the right numbers. Anybody care to  
2 comment? Lester.

3 Mr. Hendrie: The 1,000 limitation, I think Daren mentioned in the opening information,  
4 is a pretty good number based on the current carload and the amount of parking spaces  
5 we have. Basically, the park is full. There isn't any more room to park with about 1,000  
6 people in the park. As I believe I mentioned, the best way to tell that is just for the  
7 Rangers to take a loop around the park and see how much parking is available. For most  
8 of my career, that happened very rarely. We had one brown bag concert that was highly  
9 publicized, Sista Monica, where we had people crawling out of the woodwork because it  
10 was open to everyone. We had to actually close the park. Other than that, having that  
11 many people is just a very rare occurrence, to have 1,000 people in the park at any one  
12 time. I think that number is accurate. I don't know if changing it would really make a  
13 difference unless you do have some sort of very accurate method of counting the current  
14 number of cars in the park at any one time.

15 Ms. Ardoin: I have a very odd technical question. Lester may have some thoughts  
16 around this based on his experience in the park. Something has been occurring to me that  
17 has been a little bit of a challenge in some of these other national parks. A lot of the  
18 calculations are based on, for example, the number of people in the park, as Roger  
19 suggested, to number of cars, number of people per car, and then it's often done by  
20 footfalls on trail. Sorry, Jeff. This may be one of your later questions. Something that's  
21 been happening around the COVID situation is that we have fewer people per car. There  
22 may be the same number of cars coming in, but only say one or two people per car rather  
23 than four people per car or six people per car or whatever it may be. I don't know, Lester,  
24 if you've dealt with that in the past in terms of footfalls or where people are having their  
25 activities in the park.

26 Mr. Hendrie: Not directly. Yes, we do. We would occasionally do surveys for our  
27 automated system, especially when we got these new electronic counters, because we had  
28 these counters throughout Foothills, Arastradero Preserve, and the Baylands. Some were  
29 designated to count vehicles that entered the park. One in Arastradero Preserve was  
30 specifically calibrated to count bicycles, and other ones count visitors, footfalls. For  
31 example, the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve entrance on the Bay to Ridge Trail has a  
32 counter to count people as they go through. We do have that data, but it's not real-time.  
33 The other point you mentioned was the number of people per car. Yes, we do the  
34 surveying, and we actually have two different numbers. We have a weekday number of  
35 the average number of people per car and a weekend/holiday number, and that makes up  
36 for a difference. There's much more family and fuller cars on a weekend or holiday than  
37 there is during the weekdays. I'd be real curious what the current numbers are with  
38 COVID.

1 Chair Greenfield: Good points. Anyone else?

2 Ms. Von Feldt: One other thing that came to mind. I'm sure you've all noticed that  
3 Arastradero Preserve has been really highly utilized during this time. The City has had to  
4 hire additional security to deal with the parking along Arastradero Road where there is no  
5 shoulder to park. There is a thought that opening Foothills Park a bit might take off some  
6 of the strain that's been on Arastradero Preserve as of late.

7 Chair Greenfield: All of these comments are presaging or following the question pretty  
8 nicely. Park and open space access is valued now as much as ever, and visitation has  
9 significantly increased since the onset of the pandemic. How can we balance this need  
10 while managing crowds appropriately at Foothills Park to maintain COVID-19 social-  
11 distancing and related guidance? How about if I repeat the question? Park and open  
12 space access is valued now as much as ever, and visitation has significantly increased  
13 since the onset of the pandemic. How can we balance this need while managing crowds  
14 appropriately at Foothills Park to maintain COVID-19 social-distancing and related  
15 guidance? Any takers?

16 Mr. Smith: I might just jump in on this. We are such good neighbors with Byxbee and  
17 the Baylands and Arastradero because these times are very, very unusual. Having this  
18 space is very valuable. As I think of the cities up and down the Peninsula, I think we're  
19 the best neighbor on the Peninsula with allowing the parks that we have. It is tough, and  
20 hopefully we'll get through this because we have the yellow tape on the tables.  
21 Hopefully, if we can get through this, the experience for our residents will be even  
22 greater. Thanks.

23 Ms. Peterson: We've been having some of this discussion internally at MIG because  
24 there are a lot of park planners in the company. They're trying to come up with creative  
25 ways to manage park use. Some of them are designing benches in a certain way or just  
26 moving the furniture around so that the park can be open with social distancing. Of  
27 course, with COVID-19 it goes back to education, rules.

28 Ms. Ardoin: I would also say our research group has actually been doing a lot of work in  
29 this area. It gets back to that hairball of challenges. This is exactly the time that we want  
30 people to be outside and connecting with the world around them. We know from the  
31 science that it's safer to be out and about and distanced from people and behaving in  
32 certain ways. It goes back to that earlier comment we heard around human behavior and  
33 helping people have a sense of agency and making positive decisions. Especially in  
34 parks, it is an opportunity for us to allow people to model that positive behavior when  
35 they feel they have an opportunity to feel it's their place. Therefore, they want it to be a  
36 place they can continue to visit. Especially a large park like this, there's plenty of space  
37 for people to be apart from each other and to still enjoy the outdoors. It's much harder  
38 when we're in these tiny, little pocket parks where there's not as much space for people to

1 get away from each other. I live right down the street from Kite Hill, which has been  
2 packed every single night. It's harder on these smaller, urban spaces.

3 Chair Greenfield: Let me pivot just a little bit, and ask you if you want to add anything  
4 about studies regarding open space access and children and the benefits of that.

5 Ms. Ardoin: There are lots of children behind me right now. We know that there are so  
6 many developmental benefits. There are a couple of really key times, especially early  
7 childhood. We've just completed a study in early childhood education that looks at the  
8 critical age from 0 to age 8 or 9 when there are so many things happening for young  
9 children physically, emotionally, and mentally. That's a key time when having access to  
10 nature-rich spaces is really essential, especially now when kids are not going to school.  
11 These are places they can visit with their caretakers and have these positive experiences  
12 that supplement other kinds of educational experiences they may have. We've been  
13 looking at that a lot. It's also a time in middle childhood where kids can have some  
14 autonomy. Whether it's walking down the street or it's a place like Foothills where there's  
15 a managed space where they can have some more experience in spaces that aren't  
16 dangerous but give them a little bit more freedom, it's really critical at that age as well.  
17 When we were trying to stay closer to home with the shelter in place a little bit earlier,  
18 we were trying not to go further than a couple of miles from home. Having these places  
19 close enough to home where people can still get out in these nature-rich, wilderness-like  
20 spaces is really important for children's developmental health.

21 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. That's interesting to hear how that impact varies today  
22 with the pandemic experience. Taylor.

23 Ms. Peterson: Children being out in nature teaches them so many things that a parent  
24 can't teach them, how not to trip over a tree root, what it feels like to fall down, climb a  
25 tree, or drop out of a tree. You learn so much about physics and math and all these things  
26 that are second nature to so many of us that grew up outdoors all day. As adults, a lot of  
27 us don't realize how important it is to be outside and just experiencing being out there.

28 Ms. Von Feldt: I agree wholeheartedly. To give a real world example, we're always  
29 going out to our sites with lots of youth. This year has been unlike any other, of course.  
30 When it turned out in June we could bring out small cohorts of students in these pods  
31 where you didn't have cross-pollination with other staff, we quickly rolled out a program  
32 and called it High School Intern. A group of ten high school students at each of our sites  
33 came out, worked with our staff on a weekly basis. Just hearing the stories that came  
34 back from our staff that were so happy to finally be out again engaging with people, the  
35 students were wearing masks, they were 6 feet apart, their buckets were all 6 feet apart,  
36 and all the protocols they had to follow. When they first came out, they were so shy and  
37 they couldn't quite walk that well. They were so used to being inside, and seeing that  
38 change over the 8 weeks that we've been out there has been huge. It's so urgent now.





1 Schools are asking us, "Are you going to do this more throughout the year? Could you  
2 take more students?" There's such a hunger for it.

3 Chair Greenfield: That's awesome. Anyone else?

4 Ms. Ardoin: I have a comment that I wrote at the beginning. I wasn't sure where to  
5 interject this. Let me just share it briefly now. As you've heard, I'm a fan of places like  
6 Yellowstone and Yosemite and Galapagos, which is near and dear to my heart. I had to  
7 mention this from a study that I did years ago. A student of mine, who was native  
8 Hawaiian, worked with me on a beach where she grew up. She still works there. It was  
9 really interesting. We were studying the difference between visitors and native  
10 Hawaiians who live in that area. We were trying to look at the way people spoke about  
11 this beach. Some of you may have been to it; it's Polihale on Kauai. It's a beach at the  
12 end of the road. The people who visited there found it to be this beautiful beach, and they  
13 talked about this idea of leave no trace. I think most of us are very familiar with the  
14 "leave no trace" concept. The difference was people who were from there and who felt  
15 this sense of stewardship for that place didn't talk about leave no trace. They didn't talk  
16 about packing out everything they brought to the beach. They talked about leaving the  
17 place better than how they found it. They talked about picking up other people's trash.  
18 They talked about looking around and seeing how they can improve this place today. We  
19 did that study 7 years ago, and that's always stuck with me, that difference between going  
20 somewhere else versus having a place close to home that feels like your place and you  
21 have responsibility not only for leaving it like you found but also for making it better than  
22 how you found it.

23 Chair Greenfield: Let's move onto our final question. I'll ask each panelist to comment.  
24 What are the three most important points you would emphasize to help the community  
25 and City Council with their decision about Foothills Park access? Please draw upon the  
26 important lessons you've learned from your personal experience from Foothills Park. I'll  
27 repeat it one more time. What are the three most important points you would emphasize  
28 to our community and Council as we look forward to making a decision about Foothills  
29 Park, drawing upon the important lessons and personal experience that you've had at  
30 Foothills Park? Does anyone volunteer to go first?

31 Mr. Hendrie: Whatever changes are implemented, I think one of the most important  
32 things is to be very careful and cognizant of the actions that are taken. I can't emphasize  
33 enough staff wellbeing. I assume it's still printed, but I love our open space preserve  
34 map, the one overall map that shows all open space in relationship to the City. What's so  
35 impressive about that is when you look at the whole map, you see the green for the open  
36 space areas and the white for the rest of the city limits. What's so unique about that is the  
37 open space preserves are approximately one-third of the acreage of all the land in Palo  
38 Alto. You have a staff of approximately ten with seasonal, full-time staff to maintain

1 one-third of the City. Granted, a lot of that is undeveloped remote areas of the park.  
2 You're not going to have a Ranger go into the marshland of the Baylands to do much nor  
3 are they going to go up on the hillside of Foothills Park, but that's a huge amount of area,  
4 a huge amount of trails and resources for a small staff to maintain. Any significant  
5 changes to the operation of Foothills Park does have an impact on staff. Staff wellbeing  
6 is the first concern, and then just being very careful about implementing changes, very  
7 methodical so that we don't have the environmental impacts that could take decades to  
8 heal if you were to have damage to native habitat, rare plants, all of a sudden an increase  
9 of non-native seeds brought in by traffic that is not normal. That's probably my primary  
10 concern.

11 Ms. Peterson: Take care of the preserve. Spend the time and the money to do this right  
12 and to take care of the preserve. Make sure you have a program of adaptive management  
13 so that you can reverse issues, take care of them right away. Evolve this into a continued  
14 great community asset. You could open it to non-Palo Alto residents and still keep a nice  
15 preserve. I don't think where somebody comes from impacts the park.

16 Mr. Smith: I do not think additional traffic in the park helps anything. The park does not  
17 benefit from that all. I agree fully with the children that can come. I think that's a great  
18 asset that we're providing for our Palo Alto residents. We have to be very careful. My  
19 wife says, "Tread lightly." In other words, really think about what we're going to do and  
20 the effect. I had not thought about my shoes bringing in other things, or my tires. Again,  
21 that comes back to the increase in people is going to increase that. Being an old banker,  
22 I'm really concerned about the money. I went to visit with our friends at the Palo Alto  
23 Parks to maybe start a fund for things that need to be done at Foothills Park. Money is  
24 tight. We'd have to do it right, and it would be very hard to do this when we're laying off  
25 people in the City.

26 Ms. Ardoin: Thank you so much for a very thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion.  
27 I really appreciate all the points that have been made. As someone with a background in  
28 natural resource management and a Ph.D. is in forestry and social ecology, I completely  
29 agree that this is not a decision nor is any land management decision to be taken lightly.  
30 We have such a great benefit in all the nonprofits around here and our incredible parks  
31 team. My first point is to take full advantage of the incredible expertise we have here, to  
32 think about the ways to do this responsibly and also leverage the many people who  
33 clearly care about this. I'm blown away by how many people have been part of the  
34 discussion, which suggests to me that many, many people care about this. Turning that  
35 into an asset and thinking about engaging the community in the decision and going  
36 forward is really exciting. Think about, rather than imposing decisions, engaging people  
37 in decisions. My second piece of that is people, to the point Roger made earlier about  
38 behavior, tend to be much more likely to follow rules that they helped set themselves.  
39 Engaging people in how we think about what those rules should be and how they should

1 follow them and helping educate them on what comes in on our shoes and how we can be  
2 more responsible for that, things like erosion, etc. That leads to my third point. If we all  
3 feel like we're responsible for this together, then we'll act like we're responsible for this  
4 together. That comes back to the point Taylor and Alex were making around education.  
5 Those are my three points, engaging the community, making use of our expertise, and  
6 helping to educate people continuously.

7 Ms. Von Feldt: First, I'd like to echo what Lester said. If the City does decide to open it,  
8 we would be supportive of that. We definitely would want to make sure the Rangers  
9 have the support they need. We partner closely with them, and they are dedicated career  
10 professionals. We wouldn't want to add a burden to their already-full work schedule.  
11 They'll need some support there. My second point goes back to the first public  
12 comments, when the gentleman said engaging the public is the best way for people to  
13 learn about and love open space and, therefore, can vote in the future, change their  
14 behavior so that they have a more positive effect on it. We believe that opening Foothills  
15 Park and allowing more people to experience this will have a net positive effect on the  
16 overall ecosystem. The last point is that we need our wide-open public spaces more now  
17 than ever. It looks like it's going to be this way for a while. It would be a really great  
18 time to do it. Thank you.

19 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, again, to all the panelists for engaging in this round of  
20 questions. I really appreciate the thoughtful responses and the experience and insight  
21 you've shared with us and help provide more depth to this subject. You're not done yet.  
22 The next step is we're going to open the floor to the Parks and Rec Commission members  
23 and our Council Liaison, Council Member Kou. They're each going to have up to 5  
24 minutes to ask follow-up questions of the panelists or to make a comment. Hopefully,  
25 they'll primarily ask questions to take advantage of this awesome panel. Is there a  
26 Commissioner who would like to start?

27 Vice Chair Cribbs: I too would like to thank the panelists. I really learned a lot. It was  
28 so interesting to hear about the wildlife to the invasive species to the environmental  
29 education, everybody's very careful thoughts about the subject that we find very  
30 challenging. For me, it is simple. I will be very quick. Foothills Park is such a special  
31 place. We all want it to continue to be the place that it's been ever since I was a little kid  
32 and went there. There are two very simple things. One is the ordinance that exists now  
33 allows 1,000 people in the park, but it also dictates who those 1,000 people can be. I find  
34 that, as I've said before, to be not acceptable. We need to change it and open the park to  
35 our neighbors. That's first. Secondly, because it's such a special place, we need to take  
36 advantage of all the resources that we have, the staff, the nonprofits, to make sure  
37 everybody has amazing education so that they can continue to appreciate the park and  
38 take good care of it and be responsible for it. I actually loved some of the comments that  
39 were made tonight. I hope we can all take them to heart because we really are as a

1 community and a region all one family. Thank you again for letting me have a couple of  
2 minutes to speak. Again, thanks to the panel. Jeff, thanks to you. Thanks to the staff  
3 who spent so much time putting this panel together.

4 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, Anne.

5 Commissioner Moss: I'm going to use the 5 minutes in a similar way to the last question  
6 you asked about the three most important points because I've learned a whole lot. I really  
7 appreciate the panelists. Since I won't be able to speak in front of the City Council, the  
8 three things I'd like them to come away with is that—we talked over and over about  
9 this—this is a unique place. It's a biological preserve versus an urban park. As Roger  
10 said, we have many parks. Some of them are urban parks where you can have bouncy  
11 balls and boom boxes and all kinds of things that do not belong in an open space  
12 preserve. It's a place for peace and quiet. Right now, even Mid Pen doesn't allow picnic  
13 areas. They don't allow group picnic areas. They don't allow parking near their trails.  
14 They don't allow barbecues. They don't allow lake fishing and boating. To lump  
15 Foothills into all the other open space preserves—it's a hybrid. We have to be very  
16 careful. As one panelist said, mobility, being able to drive very near three or four or five  
17 trails is unique. I want to make sure that we're not talking so much about diversity here.  
18 We're talking more about numbers of people. When you look at that 1,000-person limit,  
19 let's just look at that for a second. Let's say 500 people visit the lake that day, and 200  
20 people are on the trails, and 200 people are picnicking down below, and 100 people are  
21 on Vista Point. That is a tremendous impact on this park. We've never had that before.  
22 You know the power of social media. I'm willing to bet you, just like Rancho San  
23 Antonio has suffered and San Francisco has suffered, the minute this gets out, social  
24 media is going to take it and run with it. We will have no problem spreading this word.  
25 That leads me to the second point, which is budget. We've been working on this plan for  
26 a year. We brought it out in November. We talked about it again in June. This idea of  
27 being able to use current staff to do the following: handle barbecues, fire protection,  
28 emergency protection, trail monitoring, traffic cops, outreach to underserved  
29 communities, clean bathrooms, pick up trash, fix the trails, front-gate managing, the  
30 reservation system. These are a big impact on budget. The plan says that we only have  
31 50 cars a day from outside residents. The plan says that if there are too many, we can  
32 lower that. It's a pilot program. It gives the City many options. I agree with Vice Chair  
33 Cribbs that we should go ahead with the pilot, see how this goes. We need some  
34 additional funding. We so appreciate Grassroots Ecology and Environmental Volunteers.  
35 The importance of a preserve is education. Even with Palo Alto only, we have been  
36 having summer camps where anybody can come. We have classes that come. We have  
37 Grassroots Ecology leading tours. We have many guests that come in and are non-Palo  
38 Altans, guests of Palo Altans. We need to continue that. We need to do a little bit more.  
39 Are we going to change everything upside down? No, that would not be good. Those are  
40 my points. Thank you.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, David.

2 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you, Jeff. I really want to thank the panel and Chair  
3 Greenfield and really thank Daren for organizing this. It's been tremendous, very  
4 educational. It's very enlightening what you guys spoke about. I'm very appreciative of  
5 the information that you provided. It's important to remember for the people that may  
6 have watched this and may have listened that what we are doing with this is trying to get  
7 information for a pilot program. We're not talking about opening the park and trying to  
8 reach limits of 1,000 people. We understand the impact that people have on the park and  
9 are in favor of people having the educational opportunities that the park provides, a lot of  
10 the social, emotional parts that are important. One question I have is for Lester. You  
11 have a very long history with the park. If you can talk about changes you saw within the  
12 park in your 25-plus years or 30 years there with habitat, with biodiversity, things that  
13 you may have seen as well as, perhaps, change in usage in the park. Have there been  
14 changes in the way that people chose to use the park that you saw later on versus how the  
15 park was used 30 years ago?

16 Mr. Hendrie: Those are actually very good questions. There have been significant  
17 changes in use patterns over my 30 years, primarily in families. Early on, even before  
18 my time, Boronda Lake was heavily used by the small sailboats. Think about early on,  
19 30 years ago, there weren't computers, there weren't video games, there weren't a lot of  
20 external recreational activities. Mountain bikes, when I was a Ranger at Redwood  
21 National Park, were just starting to be hand put together. There weren't mountain bikes,  
22 so there weren't mountain bike trails. Visitor use patterns have changed dramatically. It  
23 used to be that Foothills Park would close on Easter Sunday because it was so heavily  
24 visited. That's when we'd reach maximum capacity and would have to close for a period  
25 of time. That never happened in my career because the patterns had changed. We have a  
26 lot more family groups coming up to picnic, and they're concentrated in the lower valley  
27 of the park, around the lake, primarily Orchard Glen and Oak Grove group picnic areas,  
28 and out on the lawn. The hillside picnic areas are less desirable. We've actually reduced  
29 those picnic areas over the years because the Fire Management Plan reduced the number  
30 of picnic tables and barbecues against the woodland. Yeah, visitation has changed. Of  
31 course, we get newer activities, not that mountain bikes are an issue in Foothills Park, but  
32 they are an issue in the Pearson-Arastradero Preserve. There was always a concern that  
33 they would spillover into Foothills Park, the same for Los Trancos Open Space Preserve.  
34 There will be new recreational activities, I'm sure. I had asked Daren to make sure that  
35 off-road Segways didn't become a thing in the Bay Area because that was a concern  
36 before I left. They were just starting to come out with the big, knobby tires. Yes, I  
37 would say there are more family groups that concentrate on picnicking in the lower half  
38 of the area, and there are more hikers. We definitely have increased visitation in hikers.  
39 Luckily because of the work of our environmental groups, the habitat has improved over  
40 time. We as Rangers have become much more knowledgeable as time has gone on. We

1 have improved the habitat. The Fire Management Plan is much more careful than early  
2 fire clearing. Tay Peterson and her group have been involved in many projects that we  
3 do to make sure we do it right because we're not experts in all areas. Those are definitely  
4 improvements that have occurred over time.

5 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you very much. I don't know if I have any more time.  
6 This would be more for Nicole. What changes have you seen in recreational patterns  
7 over time or what concerns you have about what might happen with changes in  
8 recreational patterns for Foothills Park?

9 Ms. Ardoin: That's a great question. Lester can speak to the recreational pattern changes  
10 specifically for Foothills. It is interesting to think about overall national patterns and  
11 what changes have occurred. Certainly, they're different for different parks, and there are  
12 trends. I'm happy to share papers with you afterward if anybody is interested in this kind  
13 of stuff. I on weekends read these journals. There are changes that look at whether  
14 they're heavy adventure uses versus things like bird watching or walking or light hiking  
15 on trails, for example. That is different in different parks. What we heard Lester talk  
16 about with picnicking, we see that in the national park system. The size of family groups  
17 picnicking in different areas has changed over time. As some of you may have seen in  
18 Yosemite, for example, there have been substantial changes in how they've dealt with  
19 rock climbers and rock climbing in certain areas and trying to keep that in certain areas.  
20 There are also changes in how that impacts certain parts of parks. Parks have tried to  
21 separate the usages to keep certain areas more for restoration and other areas more for  
22 this intensive recreational usage.

23 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you so much.

24 Commissioner Olson: I want to thank everyone for their time. We're so fortunate to have  
25 each and every one of you. I also want to thank Lester for longtime service with parks.  
26 That's a wonderful career. It's so helpful to have your lengthy background. I've learned a  
27 lot, as all the other Commissioners have said. The thing that I've heard fairly consistently  
28 from everyone is a focus on the number of people in the park and what they're doing in  
29 the park as opposed to where those people come from. In my view, it's very important to  
30 separate those two things. Conservation is very different from who is able to conserve. I  
31 don't think that's based on anyone's ZIP Code and where they're from. I do think it's an  
32 equity issue. I appreciate all the views that when you open the park to more people, you  
33 will have more people. I do think we need a careful focus on even the existing number.  
34 Is 1,000 too many? I thought Lester's comment about the mental health of the staff is a  
35 really important one. I believe the pilot project that we have proposed is very narrowly  
36 tailored to test out some of these theories and to learn, and then we can expand from  
37 there. I would also be very comfortable if the Council decided to separate the two things  
38 and say, "Let's take away the ZIP Code requirement and focus on how many should

1 really be in the park and what they should be doing." I don't have any particular follow-  
2 up questions for folks. I appreciate your time, and thank you so much for contributing all  
3 your expertise and educating all of us today.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Thank you again. You've done a very good job. I am  
5 concerned about the additional visitors. I am more concerned about the number of the  
6 visitors than whether they're from Palo Alto or not. To me, this is an environmental  
7 issue. We have to be really worried about the impacts that these additional visitors will  
8 have on the park. Lester, I have a question for you. With your experience at the park,  
9 can you judge how a person impacts wildlife, whether they're on the lake or in the middle  
10 or on the trails? Do they have roughly the same impact on the environment or is one  
11 more impactful than the other?

12 Mr. Hendrie: That's a good question.

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: Is it apples and oranges?

14 Mr. Hendrie: I think it more of an apples and oranges issue. For example, dogs are  
15 allowed on leash on weekdays but are prohibited on weekends and holidays. Dogs have a  
16 huge impact on wildlife. Just the presence of a dog, being the natural predator for deer,  
17 will cause deer to flee or leave an area or not come into an area. Certainly, more people  
18 in one particular area is going to keep wildlife away, disrupt wildlife patterns from a  
19 quieter location, for example. Without analysis as Tay is talking about, I can only go by  
20 my observations.

21 Ms. Peterson: One reason it's apples and oranges, Keith, is that the trails are a very  
22 different environment than the open valley. You find different wildlife there, and you  
23 find the startle factor much greater. As you come around a bend, there's the deer that  
24 may bolt in the wrong direction, towards the mountain lion or something like that. That's  
25 why they're apples and oranges.

26 Commissioner Reckdahl: Bottom line, when we're evaluating the impact of these people,  
27 we should be counting how many people are at the lake and how many people are in the  
28 valley and how many people on the trails or do we just count the total visitors?

29 Ms. Ardoin: This is a really interesting place for a potential study, not to be the one  
30 who's promoting research. Maybe Lester said this earlier, and Jackie mentioned this too.  
31 It may also be the activity. For example, a small group of people who are respectfully  
32 and quietly moving along a trail may be less disruptive than one or two people who are  
33 acting disruptively in an open area by a picnic table. It's a combination of numbers and  
34 activities and whether the behavior is wildlife-appropriate in that particular setting.

35 Mr. Hendrie: That is a very valid point.

1 Ms. Peterson: I agree.

2 Commissioner Reckdahl: This is so hard to quantify.

3 Ms. Peterson: It is.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Ideally we would be able to quantify this and say this is the  
5 impact these people have, and we're going to count the numbers and estimate the impact.  
6 It's so qualitative.

7 Ms. Peterson: It is.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl: Taylor, did you have a comment?

9 Ms. Peterson: I would agree it is qualitative. You can try to quantify it. Animal  
10 behaviorists will sit and watch a behavior forever day after day to see what the patterns  
11 are. I guess you could do that with the humans rather than the wildlife. It's going to take  
12 a little thought, but I'm sure there's a way that you could measure it.

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: Right now, our visitation is very lumpy. We have this huge  
14 number of people on the weekends and not that much on the weekdays. It will get even  
15 more lumpy with additional people because most of the new people that we're attracting  
16 will be on the weekends. How does the wildlife respond when you have this lumpy  
17 visitation? Lester, you talked about how it's quieter during the week, and they come out.  
18 When we're trying to look at the impacts on the park, is it the average over the whole  
19 week? If you're looking at the long-term effects on the wildlife, is it average over the  
20 week or is it the peak day over the week or is it the peak hour? What would you look at  
21 to try and estimate the impacts that this would have on the wildlife?

22 Mr. Hendrie: My guess would be it would be the length of time that an area is occupied  
23 by whatever disruptive activity. Whether it'd be sheer numbers of people or people out  
24 on the lawn, for example, spread out, doing their social distancing, but then that prevents  
25 the deer from wandering through the meadow; or larger groups on a trail or a group  
26 picnic-area activity that's quite boisterous just because of the sheer number of people and  
27 the number of people talking would have more of an impact. I think it would be sheer  
28 numbers and activity-specific.

29 Ms. Peterson: Maybe also time of day.

30 Mr. Hendrie: Yes, of course. We have more peaks in the afternoon, less people in the  
31 morning.

32 Commissioner Reckdahl: Alex, from a plant standpoint, if people are hiking on the trails,  
33 I assume that would just be the number of people that would pass a certain point. Is it



1 linear or is there some point where you get such heavy traffic that you do more damage  
2 than if you have a smaller number?

3 Ms. Von Feldt: When you were asking these questions, I was thinking about that. From  
4 a plant perspective, having more people on the lawn or at the lake doesn't impact the  
5 native plants as much because most of the treasures are in the trails. Where it could be an  
6 issue as people are distancing 6 feet is some of these trails are one-lane trails. People will  
7 have to step off, and then they can do some damage there. There are some  
8 considerations. As we suspect and what we've been observing with this increase is  
9 they're primarily more on the lawn and the lake area, so not as big of an impact on the  
10 plants.

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: Thanks, Jeff, for organizing this, and Daren for organizing it.  
12 You did a lot of work. There was a lot of prep. We appreciate that.

13 Chair Greenfield: Council Member Kou, do you have any questions for our panelists?

14 Council Member Kou: No, I don't. It's a very interesting discussion. Thank you to all  
15 the panelists. Thank you so much to Mr. Hendrie for all your years of service.  
16 Everything you said in your observations has been very valuable to me today. Again,  
17 thank you, and happy retirement.

18 Mr. Hendrie: You're quite welcome. It has been my honor.

19 Chair Greenfield: I think everyone's heard enough from me this evening already, so I'm  
20 going to pass on the opportunity to speak further other than to thank this wonderful panel  
21 that we've been able to assemble this evening. It's been really important and insightful  
22 guidance from each of you in a lot of frankly unanticipated areas, which is exactly what  
23 we were looking for. I have to thank staff as well for all of the work they've put into this.  
24 For every hour I've put into this, staff has put in many more. Thank you very much for  
25 helping pull this off, and thank you to Ed and Kristen for your support of this event. It's  
26 been very productive and useful. I look forward to more opportunities like this and  
27 appreciate the time I've been able to spend with all of our panelists this evening. Thank  
28 you to the members of the public who commented. We'll see where we go from here.

29 Mr. Do: Chair, we do have two attendees with their hands raised.

30 Chair Greenfield: We had an opportunity for the public to speak earlier. I don't think it  
31 would be appropriate to hear from the public further at this point. Ed, did you have a  
32 comment?

33 Mr. Shikada: Yes, Mr. Chair, if I could. Perhaps independent of your decision with  
34 respect to the other commenters, I would like to offer an observation based on tonight.

1 I'll, once again, reiterate everyone's appreciation for the panel and the Commission  
2 holding this. I want to go back and perhaps put a, as I'll call it, staff context on the  
3 conversation tonight. To reiterate a point that Professor Ardoin made regarding the  
4 "leave it better than you found it" perspective, that's a tremendously insightful comment,  
5 especially as we're talking about this issue. I really believe it is a shared motivation for  
6 everyone involved in this conversation, whether it be from an environmental perspective,  
7 an environmental stewardship perspective and, as has been mentioned a couple of times  
8 this evening, from a social perspective. The question that ultimately the City Council  
9 will be wrestling with is how best to leave it better than we each found it. To a certain  
10 extent, it could be seen as a binary choice of whether it's to limit access to Foothills or to  
11 share access to Foothills, and the real question of how best to manage either of those, and  
12 perhaps there is a middle as has been suggested by the Parks and Rec Commission.  
13 That's a really helpful perspective for thinking about both the question ultimately before  
14 the Council and the information that this panel and discussion has brought forward for us  
15 as a community to consider. Thank you each and in particular for that comment to help  
16 us put this in context as we move this conversation to the next phase. Chair, I thought  
17 that might be an important comment to share.

18 Chair Greenfield: Very helpful and appropriate. Thank you for chiming in.

19 Council Member Kou: I would like to follow up with what the City Manager said. This  
20 has been an insightful discussion. At the same time, while it opens for Council to have  
21 further discussion, there is also the aspect of ensuring that we do have the funding in  
22 order to support all the infrastructure, the staffing that will be needed, to ensure that the  
23 tradeoffs in terms of mitigation and so forth will be there in order to ensure our  
24 environment is intact and in addition to all of that, nature, the natural aspect of this whole  
25 endeavor. While I appreciate the conversation, you have to have the conversation also in  
26 regards to funding, especially after our \$40 million, \$39 million budget reduction. I want  
27 to put that as a point to consider as well.

28 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. I'm going to go back on what I said before. We do have  
29 time for public comment. There are a couple of people—now we're getting a number of  
30 hands raised.

31 Mr. Shikada: The nature of an issue which people care passionately about. Thank you  
32 for your time.

33 Chair Greenfield: Let's allow public comments for the four people who have their hands  
34 up now. We'll give you 3 minutes. If you can keep it to less, all the better. Thank you.

35 Mr. Do: We have requesting to speak the following, and then we'll close the speaking  
36 period. It will be Winter Dellenbach, to be followed by Rabbi Amy Eilberg, to be

1 followed by Carlin Otto, and the last speaker will be Jill Onan. Winter, if you could  
2 begin your public comment please.

3 Winter Dellenbach: We just heard a litany of mitigations that would need to be made in  
4 order to protect the wildlife, the habitat, the rare plants, etc., to protect this park and  
5 preserve. We also heard and know that in Palo Alto we have about a \$40 million budget  
6 shortfall and cut back services, libraries, Children's Theatre, all kinds of very serious  
7 cutbacks. I don't see how we are even having this conversation in terms of simply  
8 opening the park in the broadest sense without strict controls on number of people. I am  
9 not tonight speaking to whether the park should be open to people living in other  
10 locations. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about keeping regulation of  
11 numbers of people using the park on a daily basis. It seems like a no brainer to me, and it  
12 seems like a really foundational regulation to keep in place. At this point, it's 1,000. It's  
13 worked for years. Whether that could be adjusted a little bit, time will tell, but I'm not  
14 sure we have the money to test that in a rational way that really makes sense. With time,  
15 there will be more and more people wanting to use this park as population increases. At  
16 this point, the 1,000 people a day should stay in place, no matter what other decisions are  
17 made about this park. I think it's vital. The wildlife and vegetation come first before  
18 human beings do there, frankly. If some decision gets made and sometimes Palo Altans  
19 can't get in, that might be just how it is. The 1,000-person top stays in place for now. I  
20 want to make one last point. I have for years fought to keep as much diversity in Palo  
21 Alto as possible. I heard some commenters say something about Palo Alto that is not  
22 true. We are a surprisingly diverse community. We are about 55% white Anglo and  
23 about 36% broad Asian, about 4.1% Latinx, and about 1.6% African-American. Yes, we  
24 could be more diverse, but we're a lot more diverse than a lot of local communities right  
25 around us. I'm proud of my community. I love my community, and I love Foothills Park,  
26 and I want to preserve it and make sure it is intact and we're taking care of it. We're in  
27 hard economic times in Palo Alto, so we can't be spending all of this money to mitigate  
28 all of this stuff. Keep the controls in place. Thank you.

29 Mr. Do: Thank you, Winter. Next we have Rabbi Amy Eilberg.

30 Amy Eilberg: I'm actually a resident of Los Altos, but I for 30 years have been a very  
31 active member, teacher, and service leader at Kol Emeth Congregation in Palo Alto.  
32 First, I want to echo what's been said about what an extraordinary learning opportunity it  
33 was. In these areas, I'm a layperson, so I learned a tremendous amount about land  
34 management on a whole host of issues. Thank you for the opportunity for learning. I  
35 heartily agree with everything that's been said about the profound need to protect the  
36 park. I do want to speak for the people. This park does not exist in a vacuum. This park  
37 exists in a town. I appreciate the number that the previous speaker articulated, but we all  
38 know that there are good historical reasons why Palo Alto is less diverse than  
39 surrounding towns. At this point in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we're in the middle of a civil rights

1 uprising, racial justice uprising in the Bay Area and around the community. It's really a  
2 stain on Palo Alto to have a policy that has disparate impact. Nobody who's studied the  
3 history at all thinks the original decision was made to exclude people of color, but the  
4 current policy without the proposed changes does have disparate racial impact because of  
5 the demographics of Palo Alto. I'm all for preserving this gem of the park, but we also  
6 must preserve the gem of the values and the people and the community of Palo Alto. To  
7 continue to have a policy that has racially disparate impact is simply unconscionable and  
8 reflects badly on us as a community. Thank you so much.

9 Mr. Do: Thank you, Rabbi. Looks like we did lose one speaker, so our final speaker will  
10 be Jill Onan.

11 Jill Onan: Thank you so much for hearing me tonight. I want to speak about my  
12 experience as a regular hiker in Foothills Park. It's a really magical place for me. Back  
13 in the day, I was a fit and able-bodied person, so I hiked there regularly on long trails.  
14 Unfortunately, I became disabled through inflammatory arthritis, so I'm now only able to  
15 do short trails with trek poles. On a daily basis, I am confronted with unsafe situations as  
16 a disabled person at that park. There is no handicapped parking at the entrance to the  
17 park, which are the only trails that I can use. I can't use the steeper ones in the back.  
18 There are people feeding the wildlife even though there are signs everywhere saying not  
19 to feed the wildlife. There are people picnicking right over the caution tape that's on the  
20 picnic tables. There are people barbecuing when barbecues are not allowed because of  
21 fire danger. There are people smoking and throwing their cigarette butts out. For me  
22 personally, the most terrifying experience for this whole summer has been a number of  
23 bicyclists who came barreling down the trail on their bicycles and forced me to either  
24 jump into the poison oak to one side or risk falling into the ravine on the other side.  
25 There are no Rangers there. I can't emphasize this enough. There is no one there  
26 protecting or enforcing anything. That park is rapidly deteriorating. I know that this  
27 discussion was more visionary, and you're thinking about the future of the park. I want  
28 you to understand, though, from a practical perspective what it's like day to day for a  
29 handicapped person trying to access this place, which is so special and important to me  
30 because I cannot walk well on pavement. The dirt trails we have at that park are really  
31 my last refuge in this COVID crisis to get outdoors and walk. There are other people,  
32 stroke survivors, people rehabbing from various injuries, who do the same thing I do.  
33 They take the easier trails at the entrance to the park. All of us are feeling very forced out  
34 right now. Whether or not we open the park, I have no problem with that. We need to  
35 address the lack of infrastructure because someone is going to get hurt at some point soon  
36 if things are not addressed the way they are now. Thank you very much for letting me  
37 share my experience with you.

38 Mr. Do: Thank you, Jill. Chair, that concludes the final speaker.

1 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, again, to all of the superb panelists we've had and to the  
2 staff for your support and to the Commission members as well. I started out saying I  
3 hoped we'd gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of varied perspectives and  
4 complex issues, and we can definitely check that box. Thank you, again, everyone.

5 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes from the June 30, 2020 Special Parks and**  
6 **Recreation Commission meeting**

7 Approval of the draft Minutes was moved by Vice Chair Cribbs and seconded by  
8 Commissioner Moss. Passed 6-0

9 **3. Other Commission Ad Hoc and Liaison Updates**

10 Chair Greenfield: Next order of business is the Commission Ad Hoc and Liaison  
11 Updates. I thank everyone for going through the panel discussion. I think this is worth  
12 talking about for a couple of minutes. I would like to recommend the creation of a new  
13 ad hoc group to support the Baylands tide gate project. This is a matter that Keith, David  
14 and I have been participating on and meeting with the Valley Water folks in discussion of  
15 the plan, which would potentially shut down the Baylands Loop Trail for over 3½ years.  
16 We're working with them to see if we can find a mitigation that would reduce the  
17 shutdown. It's a maintenance project that absolutely needs to be done, but we're engaging  
18 with them about how to minimize the impacts to our community. I'm recommending that  
19 Keith, David and I form a Parks and Rec ad hoc to continue a dialog with this group. If  
20 no one has any comments about that, we'll move forward with that. Are there any other  
21 comments or updates from the ad hocs?

22 Vice Chair Cribbs: It's really important to reiterate some of the work that's been done  
23 this summer while we've been working on ad hocs. I know they're on the list, but it's  
24 important for the Commission to take a couple of minutes, if we don't mind, to talk about  
25 what's been done.

26 Chair Greenfield: Catherine, can you display the ad hoc reports?

27 Vice Chair Cribbs: If I may, let me start with the Cubberley ad hoc. We did have a  
28 couple of meetings, and Kristen brought us up to date with the lease so that we all  
29 understand the City's responsibilities and Palo Alto School District's responsibilities. We  
30 first thought it would be wonderful to have some sort of workday to spruce up Cubberley,  
31 and there are some discussions going on about that. There are a lot of restrictions, but I  
32 have no doubt we can continue to pursue that whole matter. Kristen also asked if we  
33 would take a look at the rental policies and the criteria for renters, who is renting  
34 Cubberley, who wants to rent Cubberley, and that kind of thing. That will be quite a  
35 project and pretty useful to think about Cubberley and what's going on with Cubberley.  
36 Finally, the ad hoc doesn't want to lose the idea that perhaps we could brainstorm about

1 how to get a gym that Palo Alto desperately needs on the Cubberley land that we own.  
2 As a reminder, we don't have a gym; we just use the School District gyms. Those were  
3 the three issues that we talked about at our meeting. All three of them are pretty  
4 important, so I wanted to mention them.

5 Chair Greenfield: I agree. Sometimes the work of the ad hoc groups does get buried  
6 without getting proper attention and mention.

7 Vice Chair Cribbs: I'd like to mention one other thing about the dog owners who we  
8 have had several communications with. We've stalled due to COVID and staff  
9 responsibilities, but there is a request that we look again as quickly as possible at the off-  
10 leash pilot program for a park in north Palo Alto and a park in south Palo Alto. We're  
11 hoping that we can work on that in August and keep that at the forefront, especially  
12 during the time of COVID when people want to be out with their dogs.

13 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Any other comments and updates?

14 Vice Chair Cribbs: Can I add the one about our community funding? We put together a  
15 couple of meetings for the ad hoc committee with specific goals about fund development,  
16 which is something we've been talking about since the Master Plan. The first goal was to  
17 create a comprehensive summary of opportunities for Palo Alto residents and businesses  
18 to provide funding, just to make sure we had the list. The second one was to investigate  
19 funding opportunities from local foundations, specifically for larger projects, to  
20 encourage the community to support different opportunities, especially when we're at  
21 public meetings and people say, "I'd like to contribute to the park" or "I'd like to  
22 contribute to this dog park, but how do I do that?" It's really important for everybody to  
23 know about that because there are people who would like to do that. We have a  
24 wonderful community who still have many resources even during this time.

25 Chair Greenfield: Thank you. Anyone else?

26 **V. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

27 Chair Greenfield: Normally we have the Department Report early in the meeting. Given  
28 the nature of this evening's meeting, Daren sent out his Department Report in advance for  
29 review. Does anyone have any questions for Daren about the report?

30 Commissioner Moss: I had two questions. You mentioned something about a safe  
31 parking program. I want to know what a safe parking program is.

32 Mr. Anderson: Thanks, Commissioner Moss. This was brought up at one of the previous  
33 Commission meetings. It's a planning endeavor looking at a lease with the County to run  
34 a safe parking program where vehicles could be parked 24/7 in this area. The area that

1 they're looking at and working with is in the Geng Road site, near the Baylands Athletic  
2 Center and closest to the temporary Fire Station. This is a fenced-off area separated from  
3 the Baylands Athletic Center. They're working right now with the County on the lease  
4 and the details on what that might look like.

5 Commissioner Moss: Who would use that?

6 Mr. Anderson: Program participants, people who sign up that don't have homes and live  
7 out of their vehicles.

8 Commissioner Moss: You made very clear the two requirements for camps that have  
9 sprung up this summer, many camps, many participants. Adults must wear masks, and  
10 participants must stay 6 feet apart. From personal observation, staying 6 feet apart is  
11 very difficult for children. I want to know how we're monitoring that. Is there some top-  
12 down directive that you're giving to, say, Palo Alto Soccer or some of those other camps?

13 Mr. Anderson: There's a mix of different ways that we try to inform the leagues and  
14 coaches about the updates on County guidelines, which evolve frequently. Our recreation  
15 staff pushes out the latest as reminders to those coaches and leagues. To your point, not  
16 everyone is following that. I don't know necessarily if it's the leagues we're reaching out  
17 to; it could be other users of the park. I hear plenty from park users that there are issues  
18 with people on closed playgrounds or not wearing masks when they think they should be.  
19 What we've done is share problem sites with PD, asking for their help, and then inform  
20 people who are reporting these concerns to call the non-emergency police line if they are  
21 seeing something that they think needs to be addressed.

22 Chair Greenfield: Anyone else?

23 Commissioner LaMere: Thank you to staff for working with the tenants at Cubberley. It  
24 looked like the tenants that needed space were able to get space. That's great to see with  
25 some of the changes in the lease with the District. It's nice that those that needed space  
26 seemed to have been able to retain space.

27 Chair Greenfield: I agree. I know Kristen's worked hard on this and has done a great job  
28 in finding a home for everyone who needs a home as far as our Cubberley tenants go. I  
29 think this was sprung on her without a lot of warning. It sounds like a great success.

30 Kristen O'Kane: Thanks for that. I wanted to say thank you also to the School District  
31 because they did initially state they weren't interested or didn't have the capability to rent  
32 space or lease space to some of the tenants that were on their property. They realized that  
33 it was quite a hardship for these tenants and for the City to find space for them. They  
34 actually ended up leasing some space to tenants, and they're also renting space to some of  
35 the hourly tenants. That has been a huge help for us.

1 Chair Greenfield: It's great to see the partnership working. Anyone else? Thank you,  
2 Daren. Appreciate the detailed report.

3 Mr. Anderson: If you don't mind, I want to acknowledge the Chair and Vice Chair. We  
4 spent a lot of hours planning and talking together. They did so much, so I just wanted to  
5 thank you both as well as the ad hoc and all the other staff.

6 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR AUGUST 25, 2020 MEETING**

7 Chair Greenfield: Next up is our Tentative Agenda for our next meeting, which will be  
8 August 25<sup>th</sup>. Daren, we have some prospective items on the agenda. Would you like to  
9 review those?

10 Mr. Anderson: Thanks, Chair. I know we'd like to have the GIS and Ramos Park items  
11 come and potentially Cameron.

12 Commissioner Moss: GSI.

13 Mr. Anderson: GSI, pardon me. The two park ones I referenced are CIP improvement  
14 projects.

15 Chair Greenfield: In addition to that, we're looking to have a presentation from the  
16 funding ad hoc on the items that Anne was talking about in terms of putting together a  
17 first pass information sheet for opportunities for funding for the community. Would you  
18 like to add anything on that, Anne?

19 Vice Chair Cribbs: No.

20 Chair Greenfield: We have plenty on tap for a very full meeting next month.

21 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

22 Chair Greenfield: Moving onto Comments and Announcements. Does anyone have  
23 anything they would like to share this evening? Lydia.

24 Council Member Kou: I just wanted to mention to the Commission that I've been hearing  
25 from residents in Ventura that Boulware Park needs to be observed. It's slightly  
26 unsanitary. If you guys could keep an eye on that and maybe reach out to some of the  
27 community leaders in Ventura and see what their concerns are, that would be great.

28 Chair Greenfield: Thank you.

29 Commissioner Moss: Because of the budget cuts, the maintenance in all of the parks has  
30 had to be reduced. We have to make sure that we make the best use of that funding even



1 though there will be reduced trash collection and weed suppression and things like that.  
2 It's worth noting that we have that condition.

3 Council Member Kou: I appreciate that. All I'm suggesting is for the Commission to be  
4 reaching out to the residents that utilize the park and find out more information from  
5 them.

6 Chair Greenfield: Thanks. We'll work with staff to decide the best approach on that.

7 Vice Chair Cribbs: Chair, maybe we could adopt the wonderful comment we heard  
8 tonight, "leave things better than we found it," as a community-wide effort for the parks.

9 Commissioner Olson: I like that.

10 Vice Chair Cribbs: And mount a quick public relations campaign maybe in response to  
11 the Ventura residents but to other people as well because we did hear some things about  
12 Foothills Park tonight that need to be addressed right away. Staff is already  
13 overburdened and absolutely stretched. As a community, it's important to figure out how  
14 to fix it using the slogan, of course.

15 Chair Greenfield: Modeling positive behavior, we can take a page out of the positive  
16 coaching manual. Anyone else?

17 Commissioner Olson: I have a minor comment. I really do like the earlier start time.

18 Chair Greenfield: Something to consider.

19 Vice Chair Cribbs: Good point.

20 Chair Greenfield: Thank you, everyone, the Commissioners, staff, and members of the  
21 public who are with us still. We appreciate and enjoy having an audience. Let's all go  
22 into the community and leave it better than we found it.

23 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

24 Chair Greenfield adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.