MISSION OAKS
RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT

Facilities Committee Meeting
Minutes
5:00 pm, Wednesday, January 30, 2024
Via Zoom Meeting ID: 829 0409 0273
4701 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael, 95608

Staff: Daniel Barton, J.R. Hichborn, Danny Curtola, Darren Woodland, Elle Lippold, Chelsey Adams, Brandon Stoakley, and Shayne Hawthrone.

Committee Members: Michael Alcalay and Robert Evans (Via Zoom).

Members of the Public: Robert Parish, Ryan O'Connor, Andy Brown, Angel Ball, Josh Thomas, Jamie, Christopher, Craig Gifford, Kevin Towne, Erik Gabele, Jasmine Gosney, Kari Jestes, Julie Gabele, Mario DeBernardo, Cheyanne Cook, Anita Bartlett, DJ Waldow, Delaney Phillips, Meghan Phillips, Lulu DeBernardo, Clara Masley, Miles Carney, Brooklyn Carney, McKay Carney, Kelly Cruchley, Shane Lavigne, Joe Castilone, Josh Wickland, Ryan Michalak.

Call to order: 5:00 pm.

1. Review and approve Minutes from the December 20, 2023, Facilities Committee Meeting.
Minutes moved to following meeting.

2. Presentation: Neighbor Concerns Valley Oak Park & Better Path Forward**.**

Public Comment: Staff reads submitted letter from Vita Wunschel.
Public Comment: Kari Jestes states that she lives near Valley Oak Park and wants to make sure no one is speaking for the entire street, since it has happened in the past. Jestes notes she loves the park and Little League and hopes that everyone can share the park. Jestes states she loves the nature area and doesn't want to see it go but also thinks that Little League is important.

Julie Gabele introduces herself and thanks staff for the opportunity to speak and be heard. Gabele states that the general feel with the neighbors she's spoken with is that everyone wants a better relationship with MORPD and the neighbors need to be better prioritized. Gabele states that she wants to make sure we have a safe park, we have access to our park, and that we have a good relationship and restore what a neighborhood park means. Gabele notes that the contention of who can use the space needs to be resolved. Gabele points out MORPD's boundary and the surrounding park districts and states that when it comes to usage the other districts need to start stepping up and its members should ask for solutions. Gabele states that the space proposed to hold the batting cage is used by families, event attendees, and the mailman on his lunch, noting that it is not a wasted space, since there is already very little space left for neighbors. Gabele states that we are having troubles with dirt piles in the parking lot that impede

other users and notes that she has seen the dirt flowing into the water drain. Gabele notes accessibility issues and hazards at the park including an unmarked trench created by the neighboring school, frayed wires in a puddle of water in the existing batting cage, and downed trees. Gabele points out another field in Arden Park that ALL uses who's general manager stated is never closed, however, the field at Valley Oak Park was closed for 41 days. Gabele states that the issues at the park are significant enough to have neighbors show up. Gabele gives a recommendation that things stop and take a moment since there is no vision for the park from MORPD constituents and that we want to form a council for Valley Oak Park with representation from the neighboring streets to incorporate a vision. Gabele notes that the neighbors she's spoken to agree that they do not want a sports complex.

Director Alcalay thanks Gabele for the presentation.

3. Discuss Arden Little League's (ALL) request to install batting cages at Valley Oak Park.

Public Comment: Staff reads submitted letters from Erik Gabele, Mercedes Anderson, David Anderson, Wendy Fruit, Dorothea Silva, Josh Thomas, Andrew Brown, Stephen Smith, and Julie Gabele.

Public Comment: Craig Gifford states she's lived directly adjacent to Valley Oak Park since 1967 and has concerns about item number 3. Gifford notes that the batting cages at Valley Oak Park are open 365 days a year and are the only free cages in Sacramento County. Gifford states that in Cook's presentation, she includes letters of support from politicians in District 6 and questions what knowledge people in District 6 have with items in District 3. Gifford notes that Cook states that 47% of ALL families are living in the district and pay taxes however she doesn't note the thousands of other families that live in the district whose taxes far outweigh the monies the 47% pays yet the neighbors remain unheard on what they want to see in their neighborhood parks. Gifford asks MORPD to not allow ALL to have any more power with what should be governed and enhanced by local residents, for we'd like to take back our fair share of the park. Gifford plays a recording of metal bat ping that can be heard from her deck 500 feet away.
Public Comment: Kevin Towne questions how the batting cages are to be monitored. Towne asks if the coaches are going to control the batting cages in which the teams are strictly using the cages or if they are going to be left unlocked for anyone to use. Towne notes that the park should be closed at dusk. Towne notes the sound of a metal bat and suggests ALL do away with the metal bats and batting cages and go back to using a Louisville Slugger, so the sound isn't heard.
Public Comment: Ryan Michalak states that he chose to live in a loud neighborhood and that others are complaining about choosing to live next to a park with noise of the youth. Michalak states that there is about 400 kids signed up for ALL every year, two cages, and three fields, which is a lot of kids and a lot of bats in one small area. Michalak notes that the proposed batting cage is in the existing bullpen area which will impede onto the field itself and will not take any more square footage of public space and will not bring additional noise. Michalak states the Sacramento County code for off-leash dogs.
Public Comment: Kari Jestes states she respects all the letters that have come in and that she is in support of the batting cages. Jestes notes that when she moved to the neighborhood her and her husband were excited to be living next to ALL. Jestes states that she grew up with baseball and the noise of the ball hitting the bat is the sound of kids playing baseball which she loves.
Public Comment: Josh Wickland states that the construction of the batting cage is being looked at in the wrong way and that ALL is really limited by the three fields to serve a rapidly gentrifying population. Wickland notes that servicing the kids safely, providing practice facilities, and areas where kids can learn the game within the confines that they already have is what ALL is trying to do. Wickland notes that when ALL does obstruct access it's either because they have dog owners that allow their dogs to run free or when the fields have been reseeded and fresh turf has been installed. Wickland notes that the new batting cage would be constructed in an existing ALL area where there are already bullpens, plates, and mounts and mentions that ALL doesn't want to encroach on the school or go into the nature area.

Public Comment: Joe Castilone states that he is a homeowner in MORPD and grew up playing in ALL and is now a coach. Castilone states that the most important thing to him is making sure to give the younger generation the best tools possible and believes that the interests of the kids should outweigh everything. Castilone notes that from a safety standpoint, having a second batting cage away from the current one makes it safer for coaches and kids.
Public Comment: Shane Lavigne states that he has lived on both sides of the park and when he moved to the neighborhood he knew what he was getting into. Lavigne states that he is in support of the batting cage but thanks Julie Gabele for presenting and caring about the topic. Lavigne states that his oldest child plays in ALL and has significant ADHD and getting him to be engaged and athletic is important to him. Lavigne notes that he supports baseball which organizes community, gets kids off electronics, off social media, organizes them to do something active, and engages teamwork. Lavigne states that there is communication that needs to happen and hopefully a dialogue can continue.
Public Comment: Kelly Cruchley states she has two children who are/have been involved with ALL and play at Valley Oak Park. Cruchley reiterates that the proposed batting cage will be in a section that is already used by ALL so it's not taking up more space. Cruchley notes that she is a big supporter of the batting cage and ALL.
Public Comment: McKay Carney states that she lives within the boundaries of the park district and notes that MORPD is a wonderful organization to work with. Carney notes that she wants to lend her support for the batting cage proposal. Carney states that she knows many of the folks on the ALL Board and there is great lengths to operate it with the utmost respect, so we can always try to be wonderful neighbors and accommodating. Carney states that she can attest to the fact that there is a need for the extra space so that the kids can get their time in the cages.
Public Comment: Brooklyn Carney states she is in support of the batting cages for ALL. Carney states she practically grew up at ALL and currently works at the snack bar. Carney states she feels the batting cages would be a great addition to the ALL community and would bring joy to everyone that uses it.
Public Comment: Miles Carney states that he loves the batting cages and ALL. Carney notes that he has been playing in ALL for a long time. Carney believes the cages are needed because it can be a long wait to get into one.
Public Comment: Clara Masley states she is a CIVITAS student attending in support of the batting cages for ALL. Masley states that the new batting cages would be a great add-on that would make a lot of people happy.
Public Comment: Lulu DeBernardo states she's in support of the ALL batting cages. DeBernardo states that her family has been involved with ALL for many years and loves the ALL community. DeBernardo states that she works in the snack bar, spends a lot of her time at the fields, and notes that the fields are a safe place for her to spend time with her family and friends. DeBernardo notes that the fields are a place where all girls and boys can play and have fun.
Public Comment: Meghan Phillips states she lives near the park and is a co-founder of Simple Summers which makes sure that every child has an opportunity to find a sport/activity that takes them outside. Phillips notes that one of the things she feels most comfortable with is knowing that her children are going to the park to be in the nature preserve or be in the little league field and has a safe feeling that there is a parent or kid there on those fields.
Public Comment: Delaney Phillips states she is a CIVITAS student attending in support of ALL getting a new batting cage. Phillips states she's played baseball for ALL for many years and has used the batting cages multiple times. Phillips notes that even after she's stopped playing she works in the snack bar, spends most of her time at the fields during the season, and brings the kids she babysits to the park.
Public Comment: Anita Bartlett states she lives adjacent to the park and that the proposed batting cages will be less than 200ft from her bedroom window. Bartlett notes she is opposed to the proposition for the cages because of the noise and clarifies she is not opposed to baseball or kids. Bartlett states that she walks in the open space and around the park and supports the baseball program but believes that it has outgrown the neighborhood park. Bartlett notes that the only reason she is attending the meeting is

because she heard about the proposal through the neighborhood grapevine and wants to know whose responsibility at MORPD it is to inform neighbors of important issues.
Public Comment: Mario DeBernardo states he is in strong support of the proposed batting cage. Debernardo states for six years he's been on the ALL Board, an ALL coach, and worked in the snack bar. DeBernardo states that during the season, six teams are trying to use the current batting cages, however, there are picnic tables in the same area and it becomes overcrowded with kids swinging bats. DeBernardo believes Cook and the ALL Board did a good job tailoring the design of the proposed cage to spread out kids and avoid safety risk. DeBernardo states the discussion is about accommodating the people who are already there in a safe manner, that organizes traffic and protects people walking or picnicking.

Cook introduces herself and states that she volunteers her time to ALL, has been on the ALL Board for four years, and has been ALL president for 2 years. Cook clarifies that there will be zero cost to MORPD and that ALL will incur all costs through money raised and notes that the existing batting cage is out of ADA compliance and to ensure that be fixed ALL would also incur that cost. Cook gives background and clarifying information on the fields and Valley Oaks Park. Cook states the park hours are sunrise to sunset and that ALL numbers have gone down since last year from 450 to 407. Cook shows an aerial view of the fields and points out where the batting cage would go. Cook explains that part of the partnership with Mission Oaks is that ALL pays for the maintenance of the fields which is around $25,000 a year which is unlike other rental groups, since ALL is the only volunteer organization that uses and maintains the park throughout the year. Cook notes that the proposed batting cage is being installed on the foul ball line of the blue field, by moving the field inward and placing the cage in the existing space which requires zero additional park usage. Cook states that Little League International rules require all bats to be USA stamped, which means players cannot use wooden or travel bats, however, the sound that a bat makes doesn't change if used in a batting cage or on a field. Cook shares pictures of MORPD boundaries and ALL boundaries and notes that ALL requires players to live within ALL boundaries to be able to play. Cook states that although 47% of ALL players live within MORPD boundaries, 75% of the families attend school within MORPD boundaries. Cook notes that these families are people who show up for field prep days, reseeding the fields, painting, and cleaning up, and mentions that they have never had a community member outside of ALL participate. Cook notes that dogs on the fields create liabilities and do not belong on sports fields. Cook states that no additional space has been taken away from neighbors and what ALL is asking for is that they place a batting cage on an already existing piece of land.

Director Alcalay states that no action or vote will be taken today. Director Alcalay asked that the request for the Valley Oak Batting cage be included in the master planning process. Director Alcalay notes that there was a list of issues at Valley Oak Park, presented to staff, in which staff had addressed all issues and fixed most if not all of them.

Adjourned 7:08 pm

Neighbor Concern Valley Oak Park & Better Path Forward

Valley Oak is a small Neighborhood Public Park built by neighbors, for neighbors

Presenter: Julie Gabele

Valley Oak Park Neighbor, Homeowner in MORPD district, Constituent (Fund Park & Park District), & Neighbor who wants to use Valley Oak Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood Parks – Mean Something

Neighborhood public parks are small public parks meant to enhance the well-being, benefit, and enrich homeowners and residents within the public park district who live nearby.

These unique parks should align & support the vision and use of neighbors who fund them.

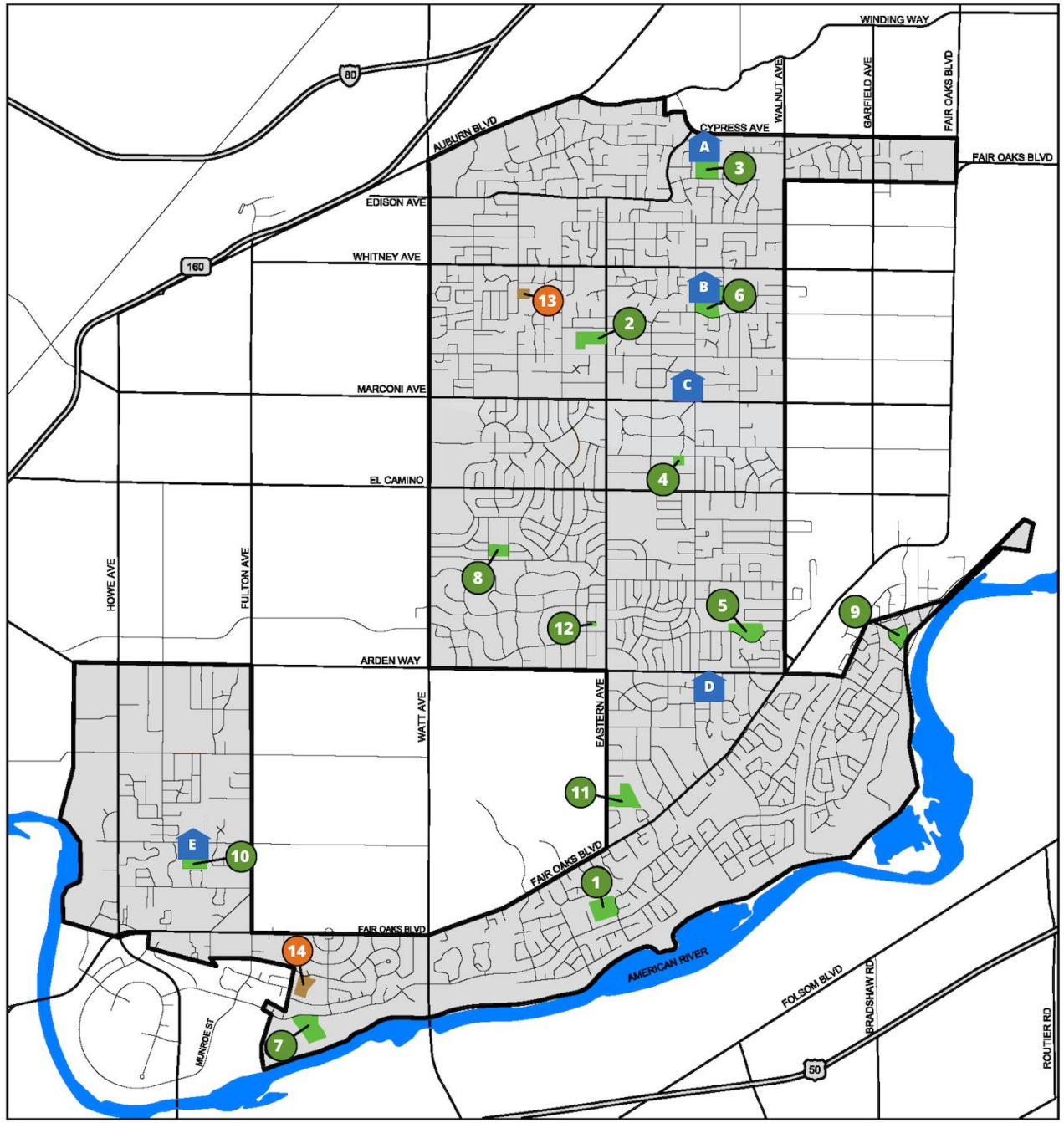
Offer varied uses (both passive and planned) for people of all ages.

And they should be compatible to the unique neighborhoods that surround them & be good neighbors.

Valley Oak Park is a small neighborhood public park built by neighbors for neighbors!

- **Publicly funded park paid for by neighbors (constituents) who live within the MORPD district**, through property tax and special assessment we approved to support our specific park district and parks.
- **Neighbors of Valley Oak Park value want to use their neighborhood public park daily**. We want our park to be welcoming for people of all ages, safe, professionally well-maintained park, open to neighbors and public throughout the park grounds year round.
- **Valley Oak Park is meant to shared by neighbors and those who live nearby for both planned, as well as passive use.** The park is meant to support varied interest and uses.
- **And while we have playing fields here, the park is NOT a sports complex and not to be directed to a singular use**.
- **The park sits in quiet residential area, surrounded by district residents on three sides (North, South, and East)** – homes in Arden Park (across Eastern Ave) are in separate park district (i.e. Arden Park).
- Valley Oak Park is funded by neighbors who the board and park district are obligated to serve.

While we welcome public and leagues to rents our fields (soccer, little league), the vision, guidance of use MUST begin with neighbors needs first, and not controlled or commanded by any user.



Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District Boundaries
- the area in gray represents the constituents who live in the park district who fun our parks.

MORPD supports:

8 neighborhood parks
3 Community Parks
And the district has additional MOU with some schools to maintain handful of school parks, and other sites


Arden Little League's demands for more of our small Neighborhood Public Park are not sustainable
Sign in
Proposed New
Batting Cage
Eastern Ave
Eastern Ave
Eastern Ave
Castec Dr
Entrada Rd
Valley
Oak Park
Valley Oak Park
Existing Double
Batting Cages
Google

So Why Are We Here?

Our Neighborhood Park is Broken!

Our Neighborhood

Park is Broken!

Neighborhood Park need to start with what neighbors in district want!

Why Are We Here?

Why are we paying for Park we can not use or enjoy?

No professional Maintenance & Care for entire Park!

League – message
Stay off *our* Fields, but be grateful you have them!

This is my neighborhood park, MORPD is not meeting my needs!

They are letting our Nature Area Die!

We want nature Area cared for & restored

Park does not understand demographic of who lives right on park – active adults, as well seniors

This is a neighborhood park, not sports complex!

Why can't I just take a walk

Soccer cleans up, why is Baseball equipment left everywhere – clean up & take it home! Never was like this

League is not a neighborhood park – but keeps taking more pushing everyone else out

Our Neighborhood Park is Broken!

Gates locked, Doors not working

Why are there ADA & safety hazards?

Weekends are never available to me

No Neighbors Allowed

Our Neighborhood

Valley Oak Park

Why is it so hard to have public safety hazards resolved?

Why are ideas not being considered?

Why is park not serving me?

We value Green Spaces and Natural Areas!

I am tired of being told what to do by league

Park is Broken!

Constant Noise in the best times to be at park!

Some families on our street and homeowners do not like coming here – they do not feel welcome!

Parks are for everyone, except ours

STOP Locking our fields!

Double Batting cages nuisance & noise! We don't want more!

I just want to walk my dog, which I am allowed to do & not be harassed!

Stop dumping & leaving Dirt Debris for weeks or months, or longer! You used to clean up!

Our parks must be shared, the little league is overrunning us and our public park ! Soccer is not doing that!

We NEED A Better Path Forward!

STOP! Moratorium on any new request (baseball or other) - we must restore focus & work toward a better path for this park, neighbors, and all other kids and adults being ignored and not served.

- **No more building, modifying, or changes to park/ park amenities in this park – until we can agree basics have been met, and they align to neighbors vision and plan**

Form Valley Oak Park Council – form council with neighbors on La Salle, Lantzy, and Mariemont who pay for & live in the district to help guide vision and understanding of neighbor needs for this unique park.

Neighbors of Valley Oak Park Must be Heart and Center of the Vision – for this park! Let us form our vision, for our park, and work with us in transparent manner.

Define & Fund a comprehensive proactive maintenance and care plan for the entire park - staffed by paid professionals MORPD directs. This does not exist today. There are gaps and current approach is causing issues that MORPD & others are not able to stay on top of.

Uphold and protect our public shared interest in our neighborhood public park asset – stop building over the last remaining space others are using – including the area suggested for batting cage. This is already being used, important to others, every inch of this park counts because of the pressure and space already taken!

Valley Oak Park is a public neighborhood park that should be welcoming! It is not the leagues park, it is our shared neighborhood public Park. We welcome the league teams to play and rent fields here – but a shift in attitude that this is their park is incorrect. And please stop hassling and running neighbors/ others off our park and playing fields.

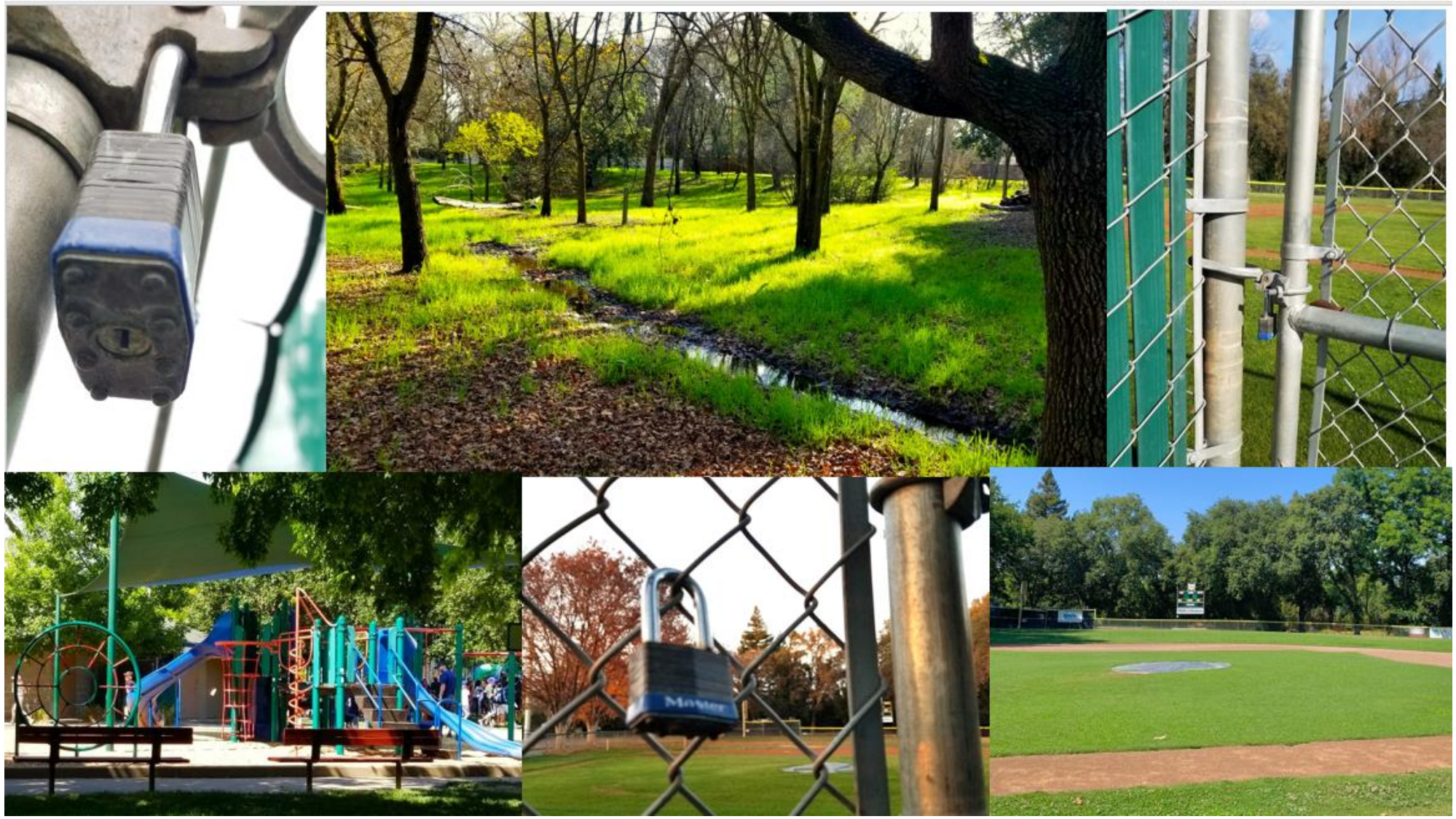
Start with – stop locking the public out of the park –fields need to be open to neighbors and public during park hours sunrise to sunset. **Remove all locks from the fields** (this one is free)– just get rid of the padlocks at this park fields.

What we're asking you to fix, the frustration you are feeling from your constituents and neighbors this park is meant to serve – are all Symptoms of broken park!

Appendix – background materials

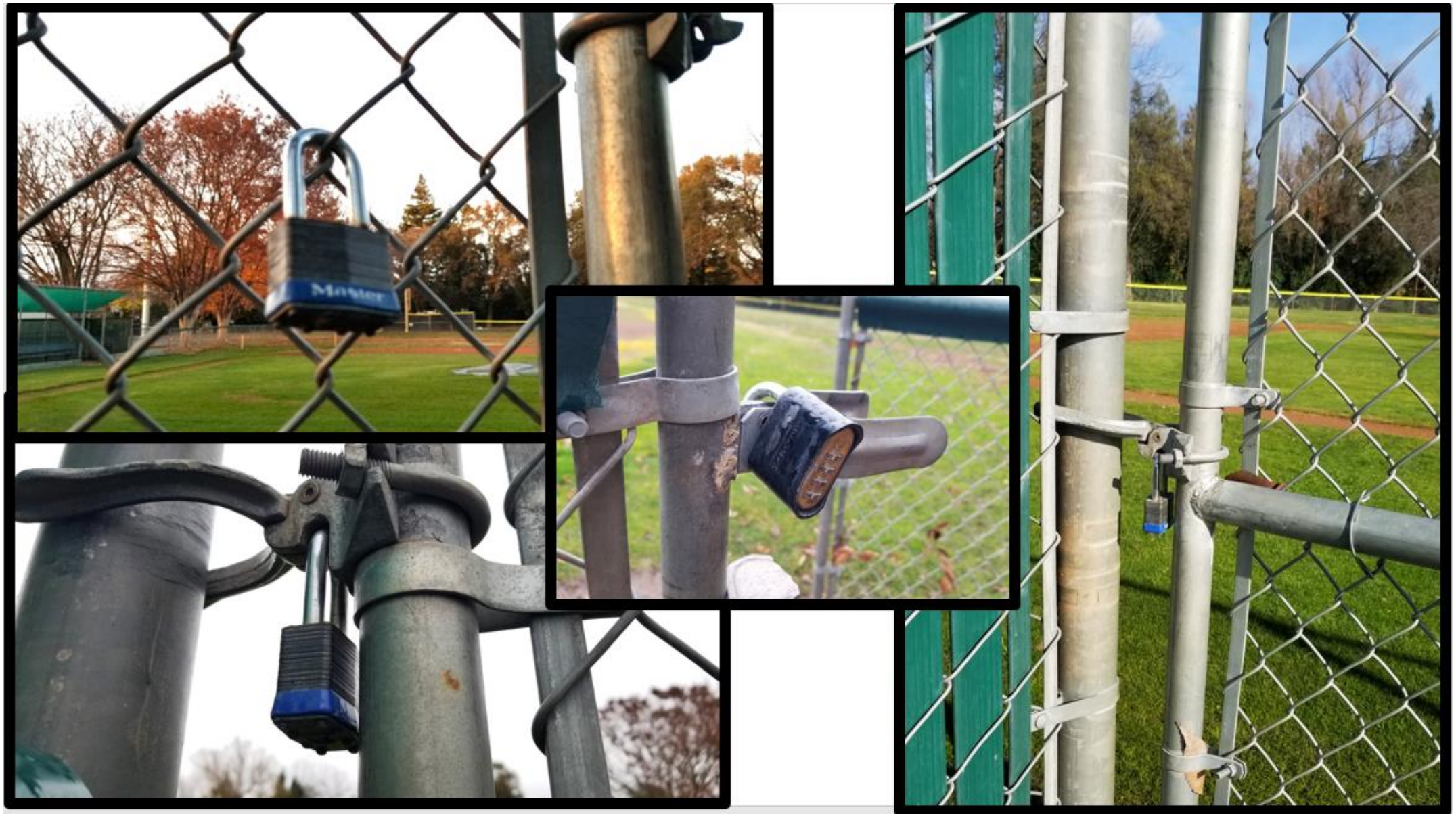

Sample of Public Safety hazards
& there are many more

This is existing batting cage where electrical risk persisted – It was finally changed 01/17/24 (41 days) after reporting concern on 12/7/23 walk through of park , but all throughout children, kids, people, pets, workers, moved through this high traffic area, played here, and kids used space well before it was changed – this electrical outlet is located by double batting cage – right next to playground structure. Water & electricity don't mix!



Locks & more Locks! The public is being physically locked off our playing fields for extended periods of time under multiple pretexts, there are locks in use, locks in waiting, and they move around get removed when neighbors or public complain & these are just some of the physical barriers and impediments – there are Multiple types of obstructions!

Stop locking neighbors and public off fields – this is a neighborhood public park!



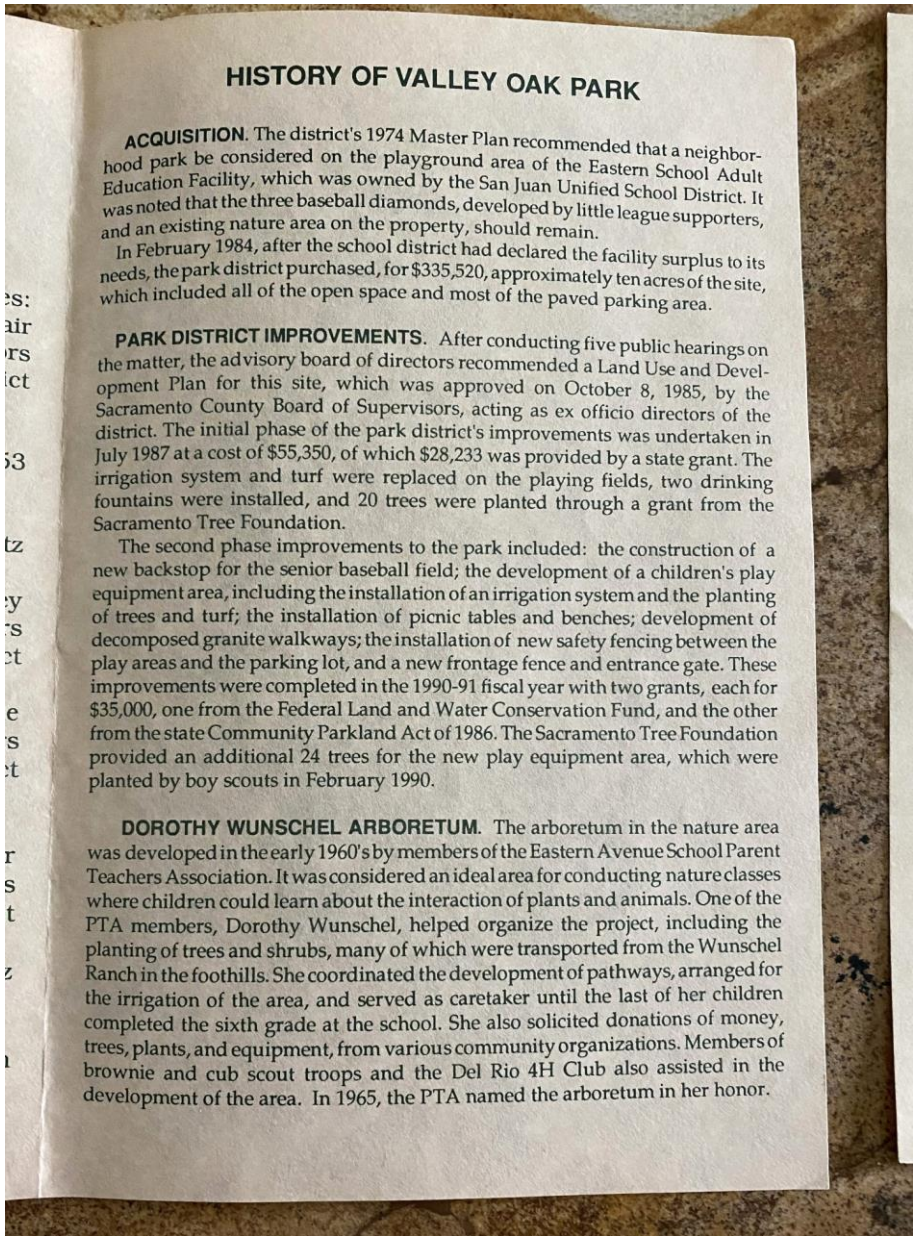
Examples of Various Issues is a neighborhood public park!

All three Valley Oaks playing fields were blocked with signs posted as closed for over 41 days– these obstructions were not removed until after member of public complained. This is the Blue field at Valley Oak Park.

For comparison – Another park district park public park – uses different approach & not under same control – field remains open

Double Batting Cages Already in Valley Oak Park – Built without Public Process, no Neighbor Notice, no consideration of other use

Valley Oak Park History - the park was built by neighbors and community working together



HISTORY OF VALLEY OAK PARK

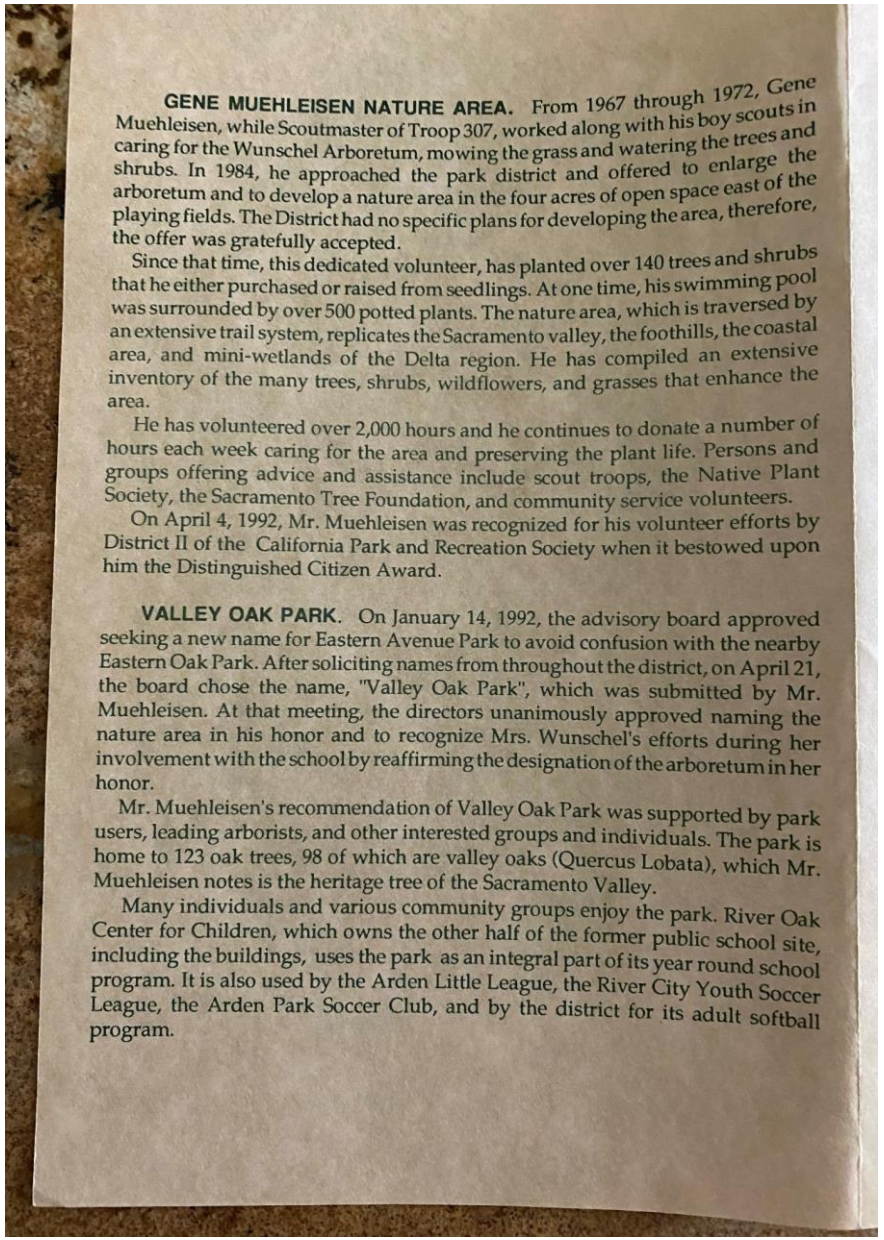
ACQUISITION. The district's 1974 Master Plan recommended that a neighborhood park be considered on the playground area of the Eastern School Adult Education Facility, which was owned by the San Juan Unified School District. It was noted that the three baseball diamonds, developed by little league supporters, and an existing nature area on the property, should remain.

In February 1984, after the school district had declared the facility surplus to its needs, the park district purchased, for $335,520, approximately ten acres of the site, which included all of the open space and most of the paved parking area.

PARK DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS. After conducting five public hearings on the matter, the advisory board of directors recommended a Land Use and Development Plan for this site, which was approved on October 8, 1985, by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, acting as ex officio directors of the district. The initial phase of the park district's improvements was undertaken in July 1987 at a cost of $55,350, of which $28,233 was provided by a state grant. The irrigation system and turf were replaced on the playing fields, two drinking fountains were installed, and 20 trees were planted through a grant from the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

The second phase improvements to the park included: the construction of a new backstop for the senior baseball field; the development of a children's play equipment area, including the installation of an irrigation system and the planting of trees and turf; the installation of picnic tables and benches; development of decomposed granite walkways; the installation of new safety fencing between the play areas and the parking lot, and a new frontage fence and entrance gate. These improvements were completed in the 1990-91 fiscal year with two grants, each for $35,000, one from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the other from the state Community Parkland Act of 1986. The Sacramento Tree Foundation provided an additional 24 trees for the new play equipment area, which were planted by boy scouts in February 1990.

DOROTHY WUNSCHEL ARBORETUM. The arboretum in the nature area was developed in the early 1960's by members of the Eastern Avenue School Parent Teachers Association. It was considered an ideal area for conducting nature classes where children could learn about the interaction of plants and animals. One of the PTA members, Dorothy Wunschel, helped organize the project, including the planting of trees and shrubs, many of which were transported from the Wunschel Ranch in the foothills. She coordinated the development of pathways, arranged for the irrigation of the area, and served as caretaker until the last of her children completed the sixth grade at the school. She also solicited donations of money, trees, plants, and equipment, from various community organizations. Members of brownie and cub scout troops and the Del Rio 4H Club also assisted in the development of the area. In 1965, the PTA named the arboretum in her honor.



GENE MUEHLEISEN NATURE AREA. From 1967 through 1972, Gene Muehleisen, while Scoutmaster of Troop 307, worked along with his boy scouts in caring for the Wunschel Arboretum, mowing the grass and watering the trees and shrubs. In 1984, he approached the park district and offered to enlarge the arboretum and to develop a nature area in the four acres of open space east of the playing fields. The District had no specific plans for developing the area, therefore, the offer was gratefully accepted.

Since that time, this dedicated volunteer, has planted over 140 trees and shrubs that he either purchased or raised from seedlings. At one time, his swimming pool was surrounded by over 500 potted plants. The nature area, which is traversed by an extensive trail system, replicates the Sacramento valley, the foothills, the coastal area, and mini-wetlands of the Delta region. He has compiled an extensive inventory of the many trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses that enhance the area.

He has volunteered over 2,000 hours and he continues to donate a number of hours each week caring for the area and preserving the plant life. Persons and groups offering advice and assistance include scout troops, the Native Plant Society, the Sacramento Tree Foundation, and community service volunteers.

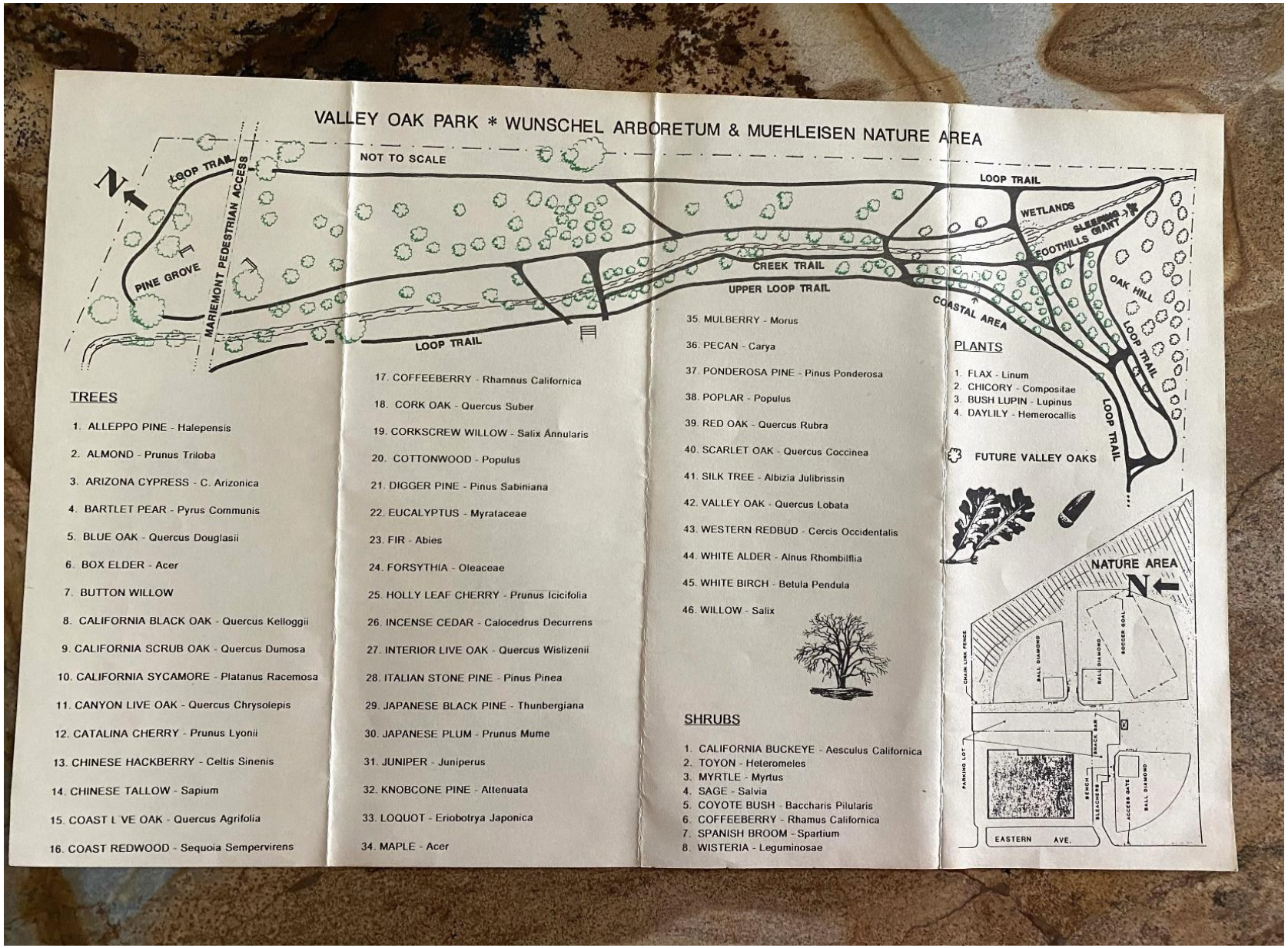
On April 4, 1992, Mr. Muehleisen was recognized for his volunteer efforts by District II of the California Park and Recreation Society when it bestowed upon him the Distinguished Citizen Award.

VALLEY OAK PARK. On January 14, 1992, the advisory board approved seeking a new name for Eastern Avenue Park to avoid confusion with the nearby Eastern Oak Park. After soliciting names from throughout the district, on April 21, the board chose the name, "Valley Oak Park", which was submitted by Mr. Muehleisen. At that meeting, the directors unanimously approved naming the nature area in his honor and to recognize Mrs. Wunschel's efforts during her involvement with the school by reaffirming the designation of the arboretum in her honor.

Mr. Muehleisen's recommendation of Valley Oak Park was supported by park users, leading arborists, and other interested groups and individuals. The park is home to 123 oak trees, 98 of which are valley oaks (Quercus Lobata), which Mr. Muehleisen notes is the heritage tree of the Sacramento Valley.

Many individuals and various community groups enjoy the park. River Oak Center for Children, which owns the other half of the former public school site, including the buildings, uses the park as an integral part of its year round school program. It is also used by the Arden Little League, the River City Youth Soccer League, the Arden Park Soccer Club, and by the district for its adult softball program.

History of Valley Oak Park Arboretum and Nature Area – began in early 1960s - this was planting map



Vita Wunschel

January 27, 2024

To Whom it may concern,

I am Dorothy Wunschel's daughter in-law and was fortunate to attend the Valley Oak Park Dedication Ceremony on October 10, 1992 dedicating The Gene Muehleisen Nature Area & The Dorothy Wunschel Arboretum. We were and are so proud of all Dorothy accomplished for her community. She and Gene, with the assistance of several service organizations, had carved out a small section of the community which would preserve nature and teach about our environment. Dorothy gave tirelessly to her community as a 4-H leader, Scout Leader, beloved neighbor and PTA member. Her children remember walking the path winding through the arboretum to attend school. They remember her countless hours working there.

My purpose in writing and asking my letter be shared at the January 30, 2024 meeting is that I want to make sure the community understand how we treasure the Arboretum and nature area. We would not want to see this treasure taken away from generations to come. I used to take my daughter there for visits when she was little. Now, the arboretum is visited by Dorothy's great grandchildren. On a recent visit I noted many people still visit and use the trail. We would love to see a service organization and Mission Oaks Recreation and Park District continue the tradition of maintaining this treasure. It is a vital part of the community history and should not be forgotten, abandoned or reallocated.

Thank you in advance for sharing my concerns.

Vita Wunschel

Batting Cage Proposal

Cheyanne Cook
President
Arden Little League

November 14, 2023

Arden Little League (ALL) Proposal

1. ALL will build second batting cage and incur all costs.

2. ALL will bring existing batting cage up to ADA compliance simultaneously.

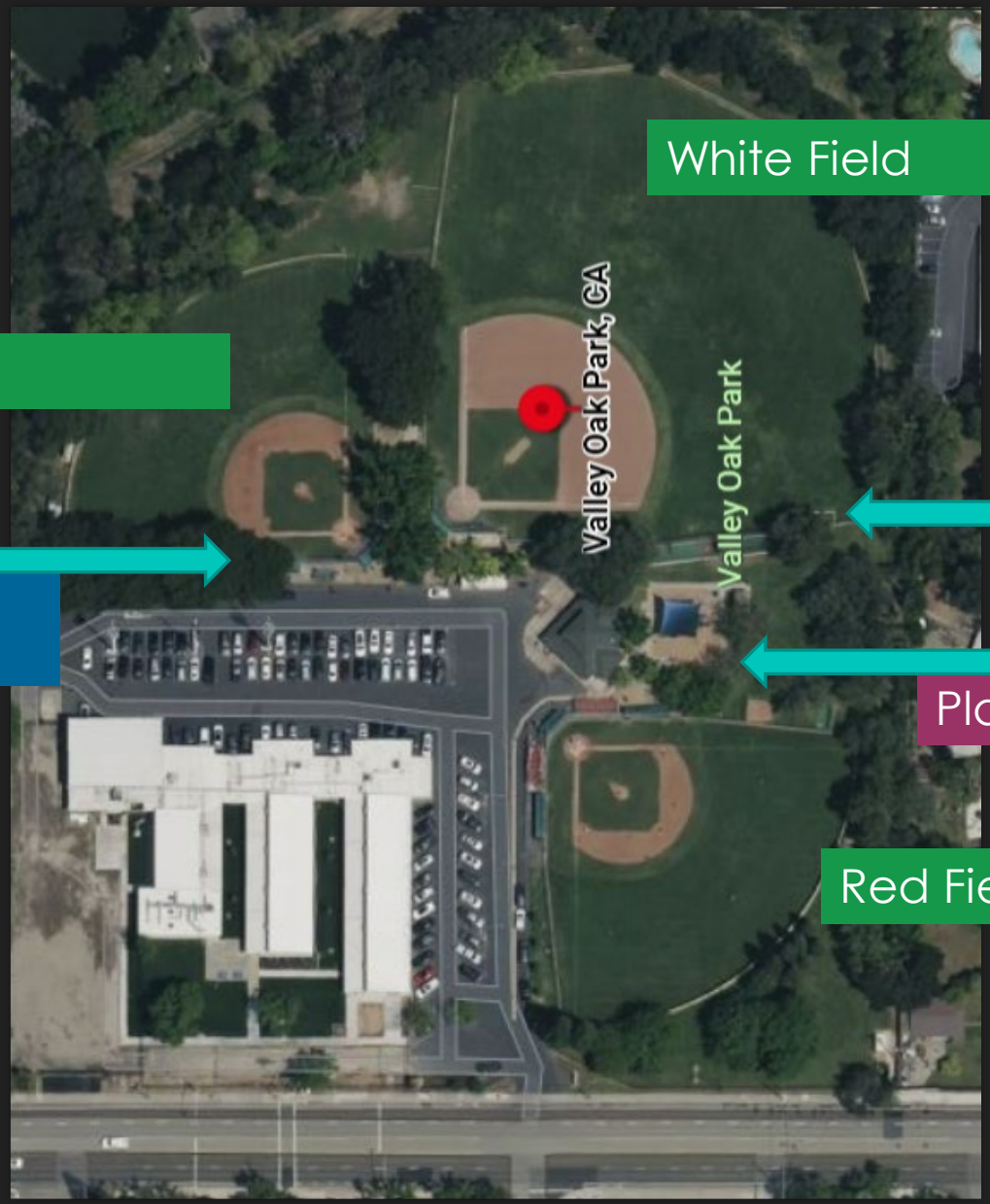
History of Arden LL at Valley Oak

- Arden LL founded in 1953
- 1953-1970: games played at Cresta, La Sierra, Arden Middle & Mariemont
- Fields built in 1971 & 1972 via donation (100% ALL)
- Snack bar & bathrooms built in 2001 (50/50 split between MORPD & ALL)

Arden LL Seeks 2nd Batting Cage

- Arden LL has grown to represent nearly 450 families
- Truncated time availability because of sunlight
- 6 teams of 12 kids play concurrently across 3 fields
- Bottleneck to access batting cages before game
- Too congested at playground

Second batting cage would dissipate both congestion and noise while allowing kids access to safely practice baseball.



White Field

Blue Field

Proposed 2nd Batting Cage

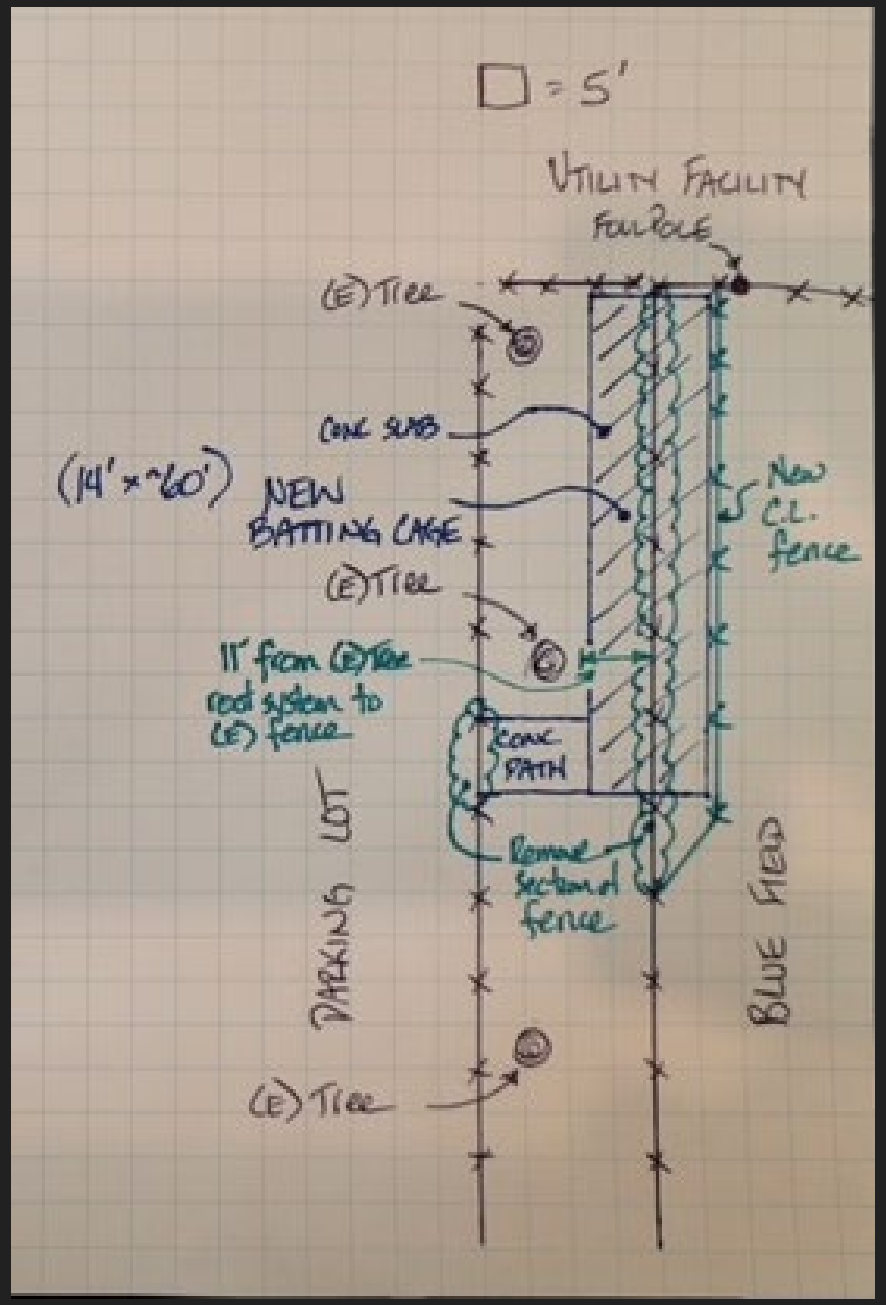
Current Batting Cage

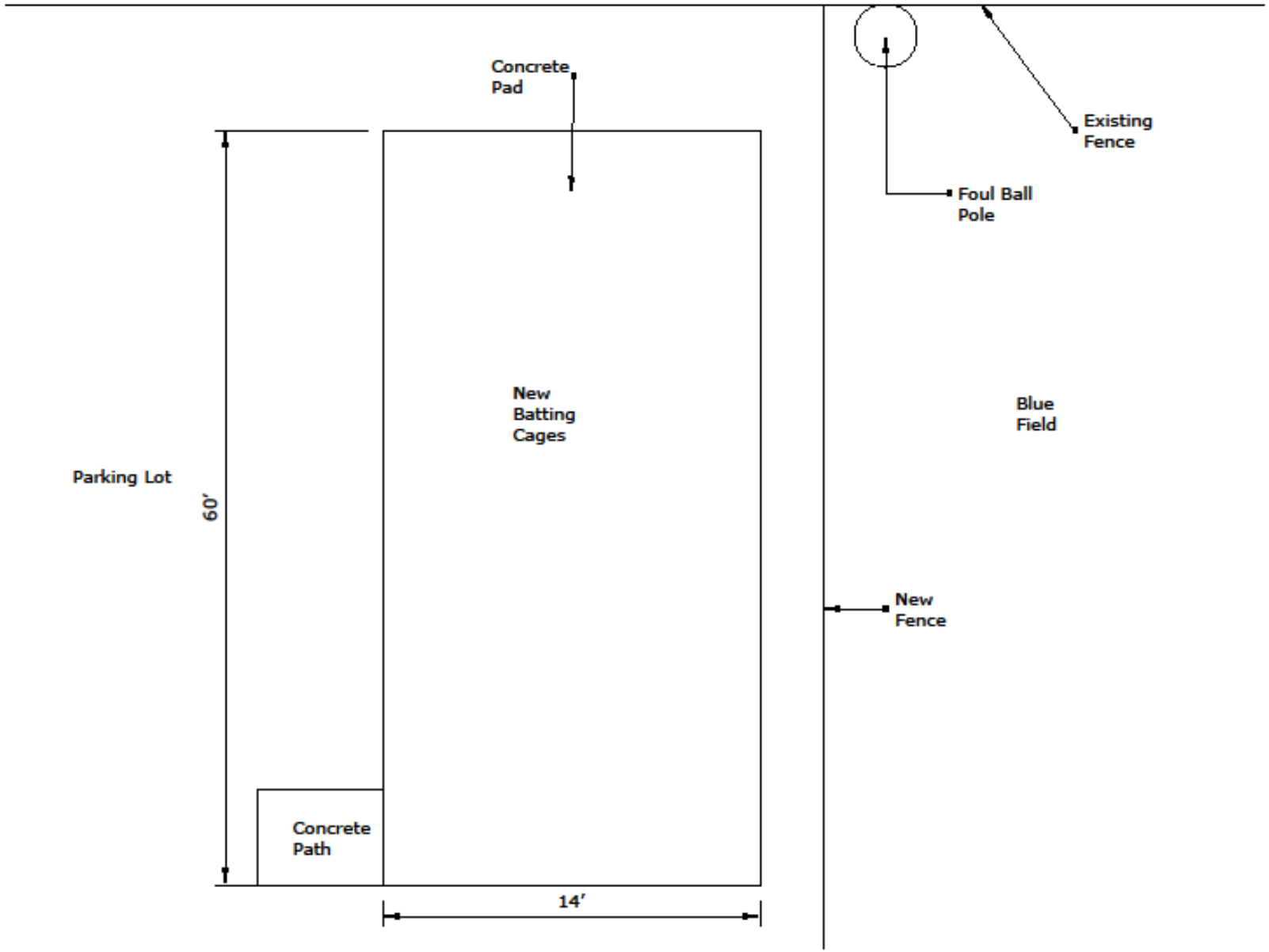
Playground

Red Field

Fair Oaks Blvd

Eastern Ave


□ = 5'
UTILITY FACILITY
FOUL POLE
(E) TREE
CONC SLAB
(14' x ~60')
NEW
BATTING CAGE
New
C.L.
fence
(E) TREE
11' from (E) tree
root system to
(E) fence
CONC
PATH
Remove
Sections of
fence
PARKING LOT
BLUE FIELD
(E) TREE


Concrete
Pad
Existing
Fence
Foul Ball
Pole
New
Batting
Cages
Blue
Field
Parking Lot
60'
New
Fence
Concrete
Path
14'

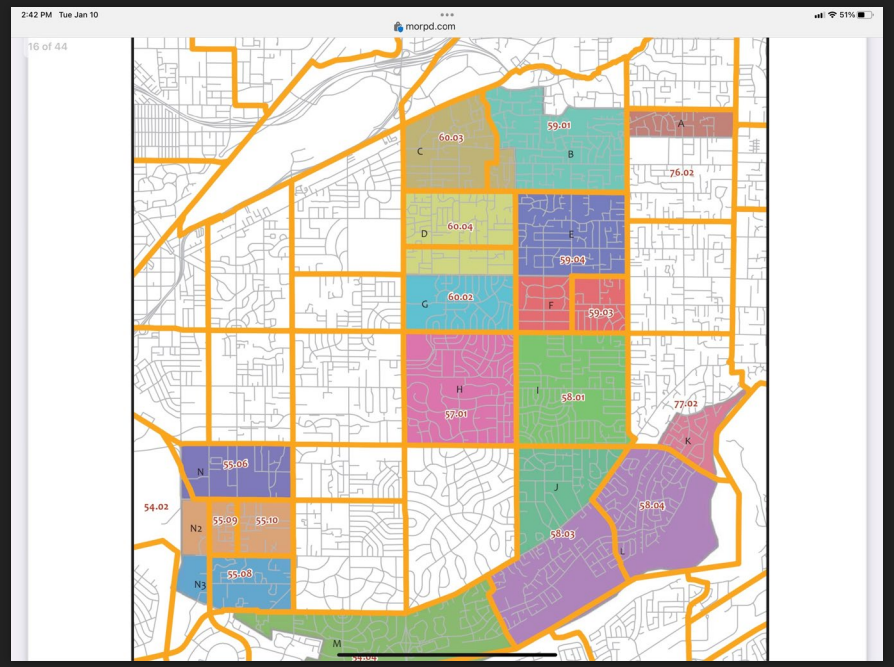
New Batting Cage at Blue Field

Existing Batting Cage ADA Compliance

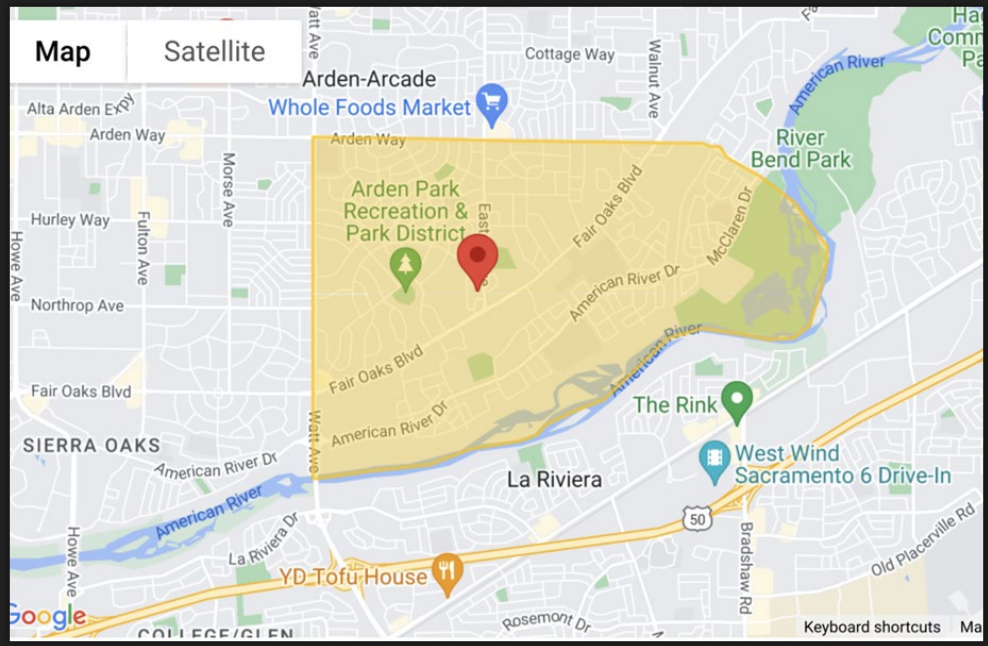
Existing Batting Cage Adjacent to White

MORPD vs Arden LL Boundaries

MORPD Boundaries

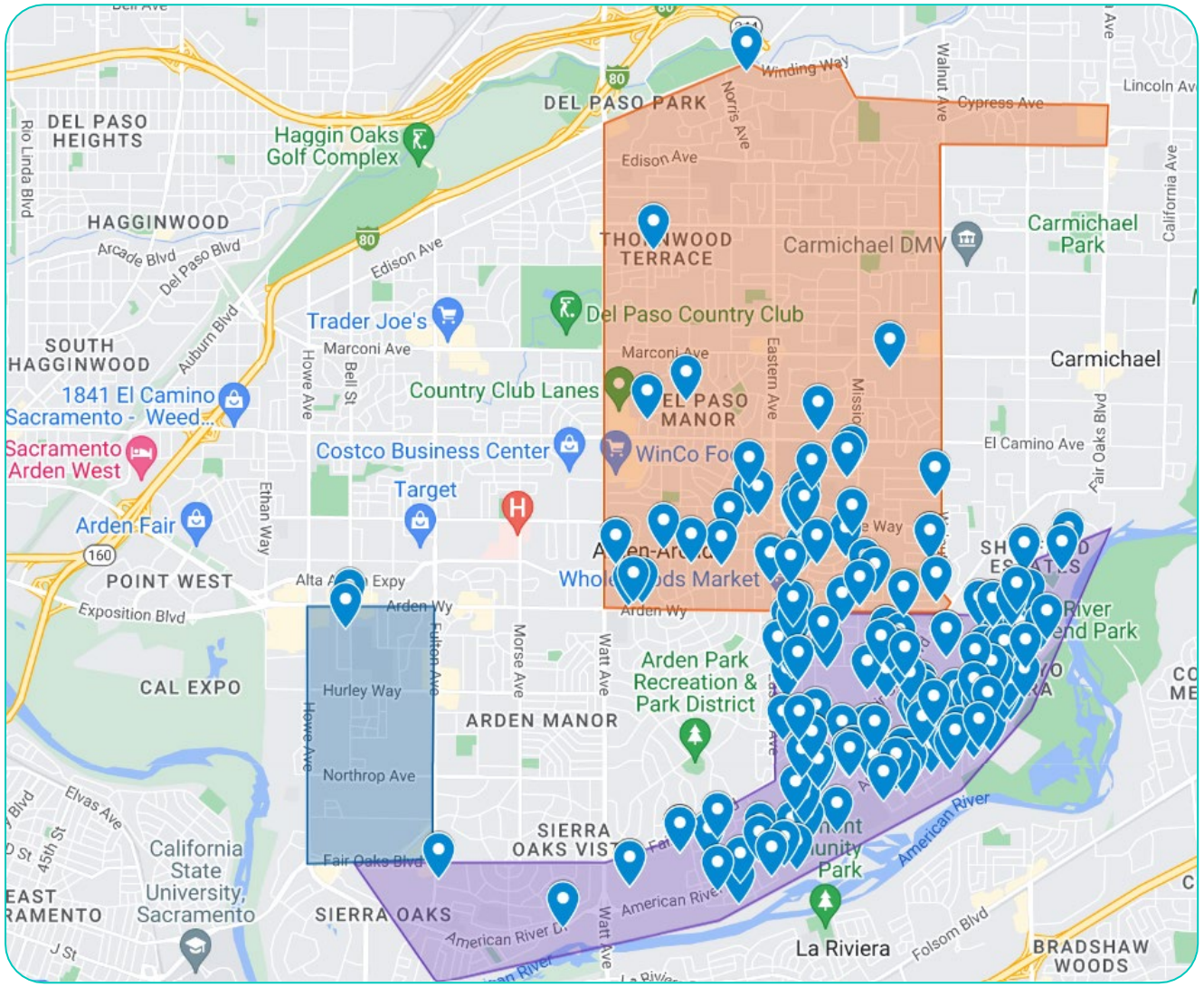


Arden Little League Boundaries



Nearly Half of ALL Families Reside in MORPD Boundaries

- Little League requires its players to be enrolled in a school (Mariemont, Del Dayo & Arden Middle) or live within boundaries.
- There are 198 players (47%) from the 2023 season that live within the Mission Oaks Park District boundaries.

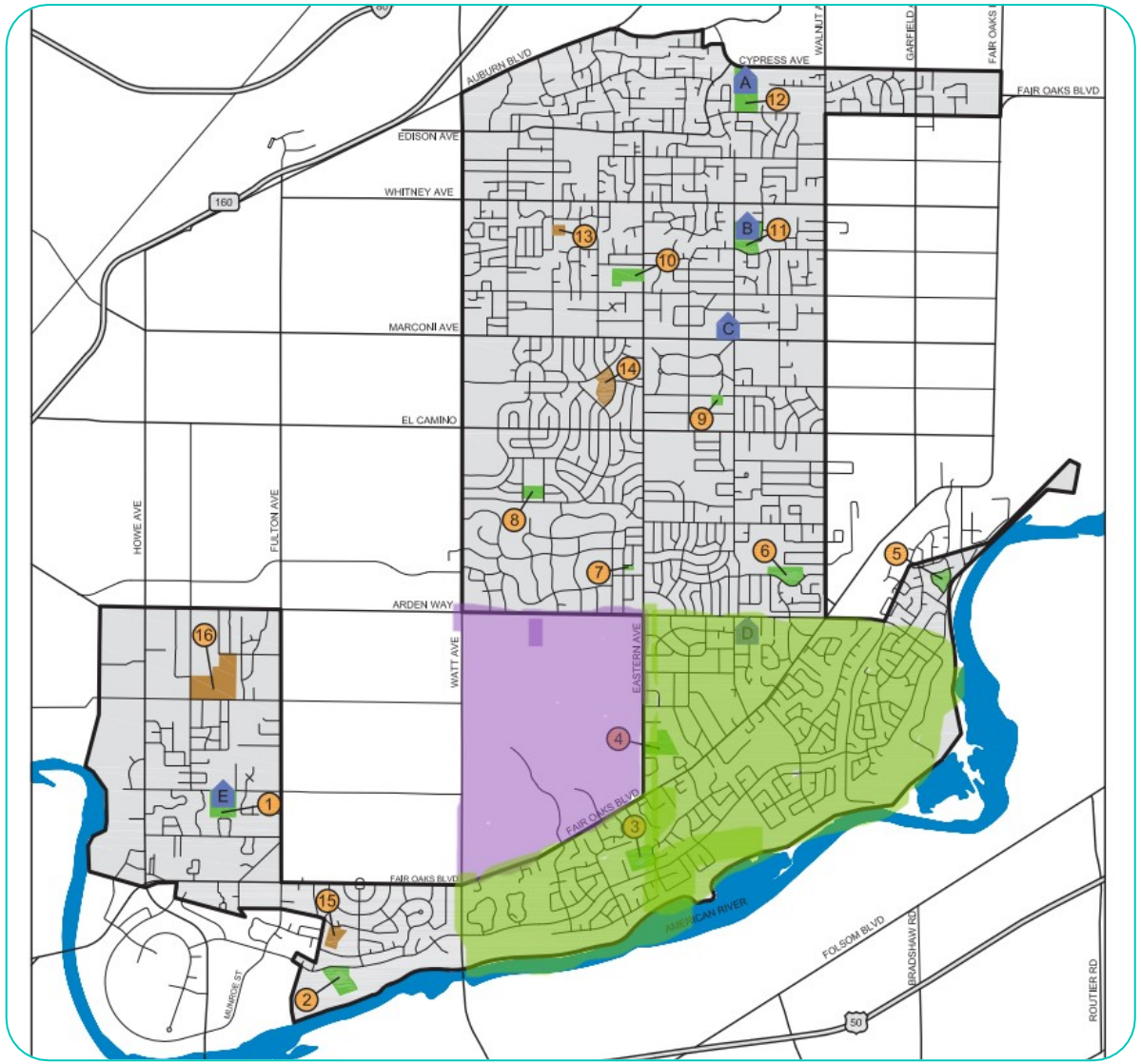


Arden LL Families' Residences within MORPD

Arden LL Boundaries Overlayed into MORPD Boundaries

- Arden Park vs MORPD
- More Arden LL Families live in MORPD than Arden Park
- Geography of families is larger in MORPD

These Arden LL families pay park district taxes & assessments



Aligned Values

District residents desire the maintenance of existing facilities, making improvements to parks, and adding new programs relevant to today's needs and future trends.

MORPD Master Plan Executive Summary 2013-2022, page 3.

Arden Little League needs a second batting cage to safely equip our players with access to the best baseball fields in the region. As the community's love for little league baseball grows, we need to maximize our space and usage responsibly.

Questions?

Advisory Board & Committee Members
Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District (MORPD)
3344 Mission Avenue
Carmichael, CA 95608

RE: Opposition Letter for Additional Batting Cage at Valley Oak Park

Dear MORPD Board & Committee Members:

Please read my letter into public comment during Jan 30, 2024 - MORPD Facilities Committee for Agenda Item# 3 – Discussion Arden Little League Request for More Batting Cages and enter it in its entirety to the meeting record and minutes. Please also forward my letter to all five MORPD Advisory Board Members in its entirety.

I oppose the construction of a new batting cage at Valley Oak Park. As a resident and neighbor of the park for over two decades I feel like the park has recently become a sole tenant, sole purpose park, with that tenant being Arden Little League. I understand that the Little League has played at the park longer than I have lived in the neighborhood, but within the last decade there seems to be a push for more conveniences for the Little League which were never needed before.

The existing batting cages are used continuously throughout the year and the constant noise of aluminum bats makes for relaxing in the back yard impossible. You can hear this throughout our neighborhoods, properties, and streets. Adding another batting cage will only increase the noise. “If you build it, they will come.”

Arden Little League has been pushing for more improvements within the park with the league being the sole beneficiary. They have been locking gates to keep the public out of the fields. Within the past ten years, the league had started to have a public address system set up for all weekend games, which was incredibly noisy and inconsiderate to the neighborhood. With some real effort, concerned neighbors were able to have that PA use reduced. Valley Oak Park is a neighborhood park but it seems to be turning into nothing more than Arden Little League ballfields.

How are neighbors, who fund and pay assessed taxes for the park supposed to get any enjoyment out of the park? What part of the park are we supposed to use? When? Where? What improvements have been made in the park in the last decade to benefit users other than Arden Little League? The park is already congested with features which are to the benefit of the League, with very little open space remaining. Please don’t approve the construction of the new batting cage which is for the sole benefit of the Little League and does nothing for the neighbors who may like to actually use their neighborhood park.

Thank You,

Erik Gabele
Valley Oak Park Neighbor

January 25, 2024

Dear Board Members, Please read aloud all of this at the January 30th meeting!

My name is Mercedes Anderson. I live on La Salle Drive and my property backs up to the ball diamonds right behind my house. I have lived here since 1961. I am now 87 years old. Over the years I have used the park as a place to go and enjoy, take my family, my kids, their kids, and many neighborhood children. I worked for years with children at a school and enjoy children very much. Baseball has been played in the park for many years and the teams playing there were happy. My boys grew up playing ball there and they didn't need all of the extra thing now there. They enjoyed the simple fields as they were. The league stuff has grown over the years, but in the last 10 years or so, the little league has taken over so much of the park that there is no place in the park to go and enjoy anymore. So much of the nature area and public area is in terrible shape and needs more of your attention! The little league has added loud speakers and batting cages and so many practice areas outside of the fields that there is no room for us. I no longer feel safe taking children to the park because the little league has created so much noise and has added so many building and league areas that it has attracted lots of people from outside our area. They are there all the time and you never know who you can trust. The noise especially from the batting cages is very disturbing and it is used all the time, not only by league people, but many strangers. Even people from way over on the other side of the park are complaining about the batting noise all the time.

I know you are thinking about putting in another batting cage. You do not need it, and we don't want it. Most of my neighbors do not want this. We don't want the added disturbance or noise or people attracted to the park by this. Please don't build another batting cage and add to our problems, or take up even more space in the park we can not enjoy.

Sincerely,

Mercedes Anderson
Jan 25, 24

Mercedes Anderson
La Salle Drive next to the park

January 26, 2024

PLEASE READ IN ITS ENTIRETY AT THE 1/30/24 FACILITIES MEETING TO BE ENTERED INTO THE MEETING MINUTES AS A WHOLE.

Dear Board and Committee members,

My name is David Anderson. I live on La Salle Drive which backs up directly to Valley Oak Park. I am very concerned about the management of the park as a neighborhood park. Arden Little League has been allowed to dominate the park, and there is way too much devoted to their desires, as opposed to those of the local neighbors. This is not a Community Park or a sports arena, it is a neighborhood park that is supposed to be devoted to the enrichment of the local area, and not the vast, outreaching community. Cheyanne Cook, President of Arden Little League, came to my house to try and get my support to install another batting cage near the blue diamond. After doing some research, I am totally opposed to an additional batting cage and the fact that it will take even more space away from our public use. My brothers grew up playing baseball back there, and they never needed all of these extra amenities, I am tired of Arden Little League, who is a tenant of Mission Oaks Park District getting everything they ask for, and the neighbors desires, health, needs, input, are not considered by MORPD. I realize that Arden Little League contributes a lot of volunteer work and spends enormous amounts of money to build and maintain the baseball diamonds, but MORPD needs to take into consideration the number of local residents that pay specific LLC taxes to MORPD every year. That money way out grosses the money Arden Little League contributes, and yet we don't see any results of it for the general public in our park despite several health, safety, any neighborhood enhancement we have requested in the years past. Arden Little League is a special interest tenant of yours that caters predominately to males. Is this something that MORPD has even recognized or addressed when considering giving the league more and more "power" and land in our park?

I STRONGLY oppose allowing them to put in, basically, a third batting cage on what public land is left in the park. The existing cage is already a double batting cage! The noise, congestion of outsiders, and the further expansion of Arden Little League is completely unacceptable. Please listen to your neighbors and stop catering to this special interest tenant!

David Anderson

1/26/24

David M Anderson

La Salle resident of 63 years

From: Wendy Fruit
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 8:17 PM
To: Nicole Friedrich; Shayne Hawthrone
Cc: Chair; Daniel Barton; jrhighborn@morpd.com
Subject: Opposition of Arden Little League Batting Cage Agenda Item

Dear Ms. Friedrich,

We've enjoyed having our own children participate in team sports and support our community's youth; however, consideration of usage of a community park needs to take into account the needs of all stakeholders. The nearby residents who have noise concerns surrounding the batting cages and the residents who want to use the park for various forms of recreation should be a factor in decision making.

With nearly 90% of the park being utilized by Arden Little League, adding more batting cages will only diminish the available park space that neighborhood residents can use. Valley Oak Park is a community park and as such the park must be available for use by the community without Arden Little League asserting authority over public land.

As regular attendees of the park, we are often approached by Little League agents who are assuming unwarranted authority on the right of usage and passage of the park. This makes for an uncomfortable atmosphere.

Thank you for considering in your planning the many neighbors in the Valley Oak Park community who feel as we do. We'd appreciate it if this letter was shared at the January 30th Facilities Committee meeting and entered in as a record of agenda item #3.

Let's come together to create a park where all feel welcome and where there is room for all seeking recreation and enjoyment from this facility.

Sincerely,

Neighbors of Valley Oak Park

From: Dorothea Silva
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 8:58 PM
To: Nicole Friedrich; Shayne Hawthrone
Cc: Chair; Daniel Barton; JR Hichborn
Subject: PLEASE READ into public comment for Jan 30th MORPD Faculties Committee Meeting - Agenda Item 3 of MORPD Facilities Committee meeting – Opposition to additional batting cage at Valley Oak Park – Agenda Item #3.

Dear Nicole Friedrich and Shayne Hawthrone

Cc Michael Alcalay

Cc Daniel Barton

CC JR Hichborn

PLEASE READ into public comment for Jan 30th MORPD Faculties Committee Meeting - Agenda Item 3 of MORPD Facilities Committee meeting – Opposition to additional batting cage at Valley Oak Park – Agenda Item #3.

I oppose Arden Little League's request for building an additional batting cage at Valley Oak Park - Agenda Item # 3 Discuss Arden Little League request for more batting cages – Jan 30th MORPD Faculties Committee Meeting.

I am a homeowner on Lantzy court and my backyard backs to Valley Oak Park. I walk thru the park with my dog every day. Valley Oak Park is a park that gets a lot of use by community members of all ages throughout the day as well as many kids from the school that shares a parking lot with the park that enjoy the area and play and take walks through the green wooded space around the park.

It is my hope that we preserve as much park green space to be used by others in the community (not just the little league) and do not agree to allow an additional batting cage be built. I have concerns about the increased noise that would come with building an additional cage in particular since the cage will be built close to the fence line of the adjacent street's homes.

I just heard of this agenda item this past weekend and have not been able to find out much information, but I would be curious if an environmental impact study has been completed to determine the additional noise impact the new batting cages will have on the surrounding residents.

Please oppose the building of the additional batting cage at Valley Oak Park.

Sincerely,

Dorothea Silva

Resident Lantzy Court

Jan 29, 2024

Subject: **Letter of Concern & Opposition to Proposed Batting Cages at Valley Oak Park**

Dear Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District & Advisory Board,

Please read my letter during Jan 30th, 2024 Facilities Committee Meeting public comment for **Agenda Item 3: Discuss Arden Little League's request to install batting cages at Valley Oak Park**. Please include my letter in total to meeting record and minutes. Please also distribute to the five MORPD advisory board members

As a father and community member who cares for public parks (like Valley Oak Park), I'm opposed to the proposal to build more batting cages. While I played little league as a kid, and when my son is old enough, he may one day as well, I do not want our parks skewed to one choice (i.e. baseball). Children either too young to participate in sports or just not interested in baseball, what are they being left to do? Expanding sports amenities at the expense of general public park space is not wise nor what a shared park should be.

A large percentage of park space is already taken up by baseball, but the park is dangerously low on space for other users and uses. Informal space in the shade of trees like this, gives people a place they can sit comfortably and talk, whether watching a game or reading a book. All part of the experience.

Our small neighborhood parks bring people together, so it's important to consider the impacts on other park users. The noise will affect residential homes, other park users, and neighborhoods nearby. From playing with my son in the park or walking my dog in neighborhood parks or along the American river, I've made friends with elderly folk, refugees, fellow parents, and people I would not otherwise have met.

There will always be asks for more, but not all children or adults play baseball. I enjoy using our parks, too. Expanding sports amenities at the expense of general public park space is not wise nor what a shared park should be. For the greater good, we should preserve and protect general public space.

Please decline the request from Arden Little League to build more batting cage(s) at Valley Oak Park. The park is out of balance.

Thank you,

Josh Thomas
Sacramento, CA

Andrew B. Brown, Esq.
Adjacent Property Owner

January 30, 2024

Dear Mission Oaks Recreation and Parks District Facilities Subcommittee:

I am writing today to express my strongest opposition to the proposal to add additional batting cages approximately 143 feet from our home, one of the closest properties—if not the closest—to the proposed site.

First, there has been an extreme lack of due process. One would think that MORPD would reach out to the immediately adjacent property owners who would be directly impacted by the project. Yet it was only via outreach by other neighbors did we learn that this was under discussion today. This failure must be remedied going forward since the lack of real transparency undermines trust in local governmental organizations.

Second, there has been no analysis of the environmental impact of the project on neighbors. As all are aware, there is tremendous noise associated with the baseball facilities, particularly the "ping" of the aluminum bats. Besides the decibels from the bats, the baseball-associated noise happens during the season from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm on weekends, and the opening and closing events have recently utilized amplified announcers and music that vastly exceeds anything needed for the space. I don't believe that MORPD or the Little League appreciate how intrusive their activities are to the neighborhood and how much it extends to periods beyond practices and regular games. Coaches, including private coaching, regularly yell loud enough to be heard anywhere in the park—as well as the adjoining properties—taking away our peaceful enjoyment. In other words, rather than being a good neighborhood presence, the baseball enthusiasts dominate the neighborhood park to the detriment of the neighboring property owners. Right now, the little league leases the majority of the community park. There is also an absence of any showing how the incremental noise impact complies with CEQA.

Third, there is a safety concern. During non-little league hours other baseball enthusiasts like to use the Blue field to knock balls into the neighbor's yards and into the nature area, ripping drives through the trees. Their game seems to be "knocking one out of field" by using the smallest diamond's infield. There are also instances where the kids riding bikes and people walking on the trail are at risk of being hit by stray balls hit out of the diamonds or batting cages. The additional batting cages will not only greatly increase the noise in that portion of the community portion, but will also increase the nuisance activities throughout the year and increase the risk of park-goers being hit by stray balls.

Lastly, the proposal appears to violate the intent of the Mariemont/Gordon Heights Neighborhood Preservation Area (Zoning Code of County, Chapter 31, Article 2) and will incrementally harm the nature and property values of the protected community that borders most of Valley Oak Park, including our adjacent property:

> It is the intent of the Board of Supervisors in adopting this Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance to preserve and protect the existing single family residential estate atmosphere of the property described in Section 531-26, to preserve the unique social, architectural and environmental characteristics of the

Mariemont/Gordon Heights area, and to prevent further encroachment of commercial uses in the area. (§531-20)

MORPD should do its best to "preserve and protect" the existing, unique environmental characteristics of the Mariemont/Gordon Heights NPA. To uphold the Board of Supervisors' intent behind the NPA, MORPD should avoid adding additional batting cages or doing other incremental changes that are transforming a neighborhood park into a de facto sporting complex. Instead, I would request MORPD focus its Valley Oak Park efforts to enhancing the nature area and also ensuring that the drainage does not hold water (and mosquitos) throughout the year.

Accordingly, as an adjacent property owner most directly and negatively impacted by this proposal, I urge in the strongest of terms that the Facilities Subcommittee reject the request at today's meeting.

/s/
Andrew B. Brown
Adjacent Homeowner

Cc: MORPD Advisory Board members
Nicole Friedrich nfriedrich@morpd.com
Shayne Hawthrone SHawthrone@morpd.com
Brian Bannister: Seat1@morpd.com
Michael Alcalay: Seat2@morpd.com
Pati Brown Todd: Seat3@morpd.com
Jeff Rothberg: Seat4@morpd.com
Robert Evans: Seat5@morpd.com

MORPD members
Michael Alcalay chair@morpd.com
Daniel Barton dbarton@morpd.com
JR Hichborn jrhichborn@morpd.com

California Senator Roger Niello (senator.neillo@senate.ca.gov)
California Assembly Member Kevin McCarty (assemblymember.mccarty@asm.ca.gov)

January 29, 2024

To: Mission Oaks Recreation and Parks Department Administrators

Re: Valley Oak Park

What is known today as an Acton Academy was originally Eastern Avenue School (a K-6 school) which I attended as a student starting in 1957. What is known today as Valley Oak Park originally constituted the school grounds. Those old school grounds; now Valley Oak Park, have been used for recreation by local residents for many years now. As far as I know Valley Oak Park is still public land, my Sacramento County tax bill includes a $53.62 assessment for Mission Oaks.

While I am pleased that the collaboration between Mission Oaks Park administration and the Arden Little League has produced an excellent youth baseball facility, I see very little to nothing being done to enhance Valley Oak Park for any other use. I take two daily walks through the nature area and have observed that when a tree or large tree limb falls it is quickly surrounded with "caution" tape, and then lays there for months or even years (large digger pine in the North end of the nature area, and eucalyptus in the central area).

I am happy to yield to scheduled practice and game events, I heartly support organized youth sports and camps as having a very positive influence on the entire neighborhood. I am not happy to see gates locked to exclude any person who is not affiliated with baseball or soccer teams. I am also not happy to be told by Arden Little League Board members what I can or cannot do in the park outside of their scheduled events. I want to acknowledge that the parents of Little Leaguers that I have encountered outside of formal practice or game sessions have always been courteous and happy to share space with me.

For the reasons mentioned above, I am opposed to further Little League developments such as additional batting cages or lights for night games. I would also like to have the sound level of public address and especially music systems reduced. Would you like to have noisy events going on in your back yard?

Sincerely,

Stephen Smith

1000 La Salle Dr.

Sacramento, CA

Jan 30, 2024

Subject: Letter of Opposition to Proposed Batting Cages at Valley Oak Park

Dear Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District & Advisory Board,

Please read my letter during Jan 30th, 2024 Facilities Committee Meeting public comment for **Agenda Item 3: Discuss Arden Little League's request to install batting cages at Valley Oak Park**. Please include my letter as written in meeting record and minutes. Please also distribute all members of MORPD advisory board.

As a Valley Oak Park Neighbor, homeowner, and park user of Valley Oak Park; I strongly oppose the request from Arden Little League to build more batting cages at Valley Oak Park. Our park is significantly out of balance. MORPD is currently not meeting its mission and obligation to enhance the well-being and enrich the lives of neighbors was created for in the district, which includes people of all ages and varied interests. This unique park was built by neighbors, for neighbors.

The park district has lost focus on delivery of a neighborhood public park to Valley Oak Park to myself and my neighbors, so we are now seeking change. No one is trying to stop little league from playing at Valley Oak Park. But we are also deeply concerned with the formation of an obligatory relationship with Arden Little League, that supplants the best interest and vision of the public constituents like myself in the district, who are not being served.

Approximately 53% of the league's members (per the league president) do not reside in the political subdivision that aligns to the MORPD park district, yet the burden of that load is being pushed onto our small park. This must change. Members who live outside the park district must look to and work within their own districts for solutions.

Delivery of a small neighborhood public park for one sole use and user is not what the public had in mind or intended when funding and assessing ourselves in support of our parks. Parks are for everyone. And we dislike donations made in exchange to gain control of a public asset for your primary users benefit. The district would be wise to reject donations with strings attached in exchange to build amenities in our public park space for one group, while denying all others. This is not philanthropy we want our officials, board, or park district to accept or condone.

MORPD Advisory Board and park district must change course and work to meet the basic obligations we have entrusted you to and protect this public asset now for neighbors. We also want to build a relationship with you as neighbors, based on transparency and confidence that requires you to listen to what your neighbors (who are your constituents) actually want, work to understand what their vision is for their unique neighborhood parks, and align to this.

In support of your constituents, neighbors, children, and adults who are not served by the status quo, we ask you to reject the request from Arden Little League to build more batting cages at Valley Oak Park.

Thank you,

Julie Gabele
Valley Oak Park Neighbor
Sacramento, CA