



July 10, 2022

Mr. Nicholas Arps  
Director of Facilities Construction & Modernization  
San Juan Unified School District  
3738 Walnut Avenue  
Carmichael, CA 95608

**RE: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the San Juan Unified School District Katherine Johnson Middle School Project**

Dear Mr. Arps:

Thank you for providing an opportunity for the Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District (FEC) to review and comment on the Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) Katherine Johnson Middle School Project.

FEC, in our mission and role to “Enhance the quality of life for our community by providing park facilities and recreation programs of exceptional quality while maintaining and protecting our park lands for future generations,” and in response to the Potential Environmental Impacts to be Evaluated, offers the following comments in ensuring the impacts of the proposed school site are adequately reviewed, discussed, and mitigated.

*Land Use and Planning*

The Creekside Nature Area is owned and managed by FEC. The park is located adjacent to the proposed Katherine Johnson Middle School site and is accessed by traversing the nature trail located on the school property. Residents have historically enjoyed all-day access to the Creekside Nature Area by using the nature trail.

The proposed site plan provides for the nature trail to continue to connect Belport Lane on the west side of the project site and Lacy Lane from the north side of the project site to the Creekside Nature Area. The current nature trail from Kent Drive to the park is not included in the site plan for public access.

Creekside Nature Area is situated in a severely disadvantaged community for park access and equity as identified by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (<https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities/?address=2641%20Kent%20Drive%20Sacramento%20CA&lat=38.61265000&lng=-121.39430600&overlays=parks>) and is included as one of three Sacramento County environmental justice communities. These reports indicate the neighborhood is under-resourced in access to parks, parklands, and open space.

With limited park land in the area, SJUSD has indicated to FEC that residents will continue to have all-day access to the Creekside Nature Area. While which entrance ways available to the public are still under discussion, FEC encourages SJUSD to explore ways to allow this public access to include the current entrances from the north, south and west neighborhoods to preserve reasonable access for all residents.

Wildland Fire Hazards

SJUSD indicates that as the project site is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, the EIR will explain why no significant impacts related to wildland fire hazards would occur.

Creekside Nature Area and the corridor along the Chicken Ranch Slough that borders the school site can present a wildland fire hazard. The natural vegetation and trees located in Creekside Nature Area and along the slough combined with the ongoing drought create a real potential for both natural and human-caused fires in those open space areas.

To mitigate this possibility, FEC requests SJUSD consider widening the existing nature trail to accommodate access for fire and emergency vehicles from Belport Lane and Kent Drive to the Creekside Nature Area. The tentative plan shared with FEC has the construction of a fence along the northern border of the proposed school site that will separate the nature trail from the school site to allow unfettered public access to Creekside Nature Area. Widening the nature trail, as well, can provide a fire and emergency lane to the park.

FEC appreciates our ongoing inclusion in San Juan Unified School's project development discussions and for the opportunity to provide comments.

If you have additional questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me on 916-927-3802, ext. 118 or via email at [eballus@fecrpd.com](mailto:eballus@fecrpd.com)

Sincerely,

Emily J. Ballus  
General Manager

cc: Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District Board of Directors