

- (From the last 12 hours) [RSS](#)
1. One arrested in DUI crash that injured two girls
 2. 3 shot in Richmond drive-by
 3. Ineffective Huff is sent to bench
 4. Coroner identifies bicyclist killed in crash
 5. Stretch of Willow Pass Road closed after fatal Bay Point collision
 6. Police seek two after Antioch neighborhood dispute escalates into...

Environmental groups react to Naval Weapons Station proposals

By Tanya Rose
 Contra Costa Times
 Article Launched: 10/03/2008 06:04:42 PM PDT

CONCORD — Environmental groups watching over Concord Naval Weapons Station reuse plans want the city to be more creative in its planning and to consider anything from high-rise buildings with hanging gardens to something akin to Golden Gate Park.

But city leaders have hesitated to get too specific, having just released two general proposals showing possible breakdowns of open space versus housing and commercial growth on the base's 5,028 inland acres. They say it is too early in the process to start naming detailed projects. That, they say, won't happen until well after the city, along with the public, picks a preferred blueprint in early 2009.

But environmental experts argue that some of the specifics — such as whether to put a mall on one spot, versus putting a bio-research center on the same spot — will determine how the area will feel, and what should be built where. This is the largest land use project the region has ever seen, they say, and needs to be done right.

"You have to incorporate some ideas early on; otherwise, you just end up planning the same kind of Mediterranean stucco strip malls we're used to seeing everywhere else," said Ron Brown, executive director of Save Mt. Diablo, a 37-year-old environmental advocacy organization in Contra Costa County.

"There are smart people out there who have great ideas, but I don't know that they've really been heard."

He referred specifically to the Community

Advisory Council, a citizen-led group charged with recommending a blueprint for the former base to the City Council.

The advisory council has operated for more than a year and put together the two proposals now on the table. Yet members just received information about environmental constraints on the land — spots hosting endangered species, for instance — in the past few days, Brown said.

"In our minds, that information should have been available to the CAC all along," said Seth Adams, director of land programs for Save Mt. Diablo. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service can step in and reject these plans, Adams said, and having information early on matters.

At the same time, both Adams and Brown said they like the general look of both proposals on the table — one contains 73 percent open space, and the other contains 50 percent. Other groups, some of them part of the Community Coalition for a

Advertisement



Sustainable Concord along with Save Mt. Diablo, have been asking for 80 percent open space.

Christina Wong of Greenbelt Alliance wants more assurances open space stays open permanently and that the entire development, whatever it is, is supported by public transportation.

She referred to an East Bay Regional Parks District proposal for the base, being considered by the city along with other public benefit-type proposals, and said the park district proposal should be incorporated into the plans now rather than later.

"The city has some development in spots that the parks district is incorporating into its plans, which is obviously in conflict," said Wong, adding the city and park district need to discuss that further.

Concord Mayor Bill Shinn said the city has indeed been listening to comments from the environmental community.

Early on, development was slated for south of Bailey Road, in an environmentally sensitive area, and organizations such as Greenbelt Alliance asked that it be removed from the plans. The city did that, Shinn said.

Shinn said he supports making any open space designations permanent.

"Legally, I'm not sure how much we can handcuff future councils, but I am very supportive of that idea," he said. "We want to make sure that what we say we want as open space stays (open)."

Planning is going well, Shinn said, but the process is evolving. "The elements that are being presented will move around. We may have a park right now being proposed for 120 acres, and maybe that goes to 200 later, and that's

DIAMOND CERTIFIED
 Need a Top-Rated Contractor, Car Repair Home Service?
FREE!
 Click here to find one

PONTIAC
 3 PONTIACS WITH 32 EPA EST. HWY MPG OR BETTER.

Learn More ▶
 Locate Dealer ▶

fine. The point is that the foundation is being laid."

Wong said that overall, her organization is happy with the changes the city has made, but said there's room for improvement.

Perhaps more pressing at the moment, Wong said, is a LAFCO meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Wednesday regarding potential future development on the Pittsburg hillsides. Because those hills border the weapons station, decisions made about the hills are paramount, she said. The meeting will be at the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors chamber, 651 Pine St., Martinez.

Reach Tanya Rose at trose@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Reprint
 BOOKMARK
 Print
 Email
 Font Resize
 Return to Top

Comments

Please keep your comments respectful of others by avoiding name-calling and other inappropriate remarks.

[FAQ: Article commenting how-tos and tips](#)

Recent Comments

Be the first to post a comment.

Post Your Comment

[Log in to forums](#) to post a comment.

Politics

[Latino Protestants shift toward Democratic Party](#)

[Shielding budget a big issue for park district candidates](#)

[Five running in Dublin school board race](#)

[Andal, McNerney spar over federal pork](#)

[Two environmentalists, one open parks board seat](#)

[Economy, experience issues for fire board](#)

[Letters to the Editor](#)

[Same-sex marriage measure mobilizes congregations](#)

Ads by Yahoo!

[Republican Political Robo Calls](#)

Deliver thousands, or even millions of voter calls a day for only www.gopcalls.com

[Contra Costa Hvac](#)

Find prescreened hvac contractors in Contra Costa in just one click. contractors.clicksmart.com

[Political Surveys](#)

Simple data collection to complete survey and methodology design via www.conquestgroup.com

[Shop Local](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Homes](#)



[Advertise](#) | [News Staff](#) | [Help](#) | [Terms of Use & Privacy Statement](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Site Map](#) | [About MediaNews Group](#) | [About Bay Area News Group](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)

Copyright © 2008 - Contra Costa Times