

# Joaquin Miller Park Strategic Master Plan User Questionnaire Results

As of January 2, 2005

No. of Surveys: 131

No. of messages: 4

## 1. How do you now use the park? What kind of activities do you participate in at Joaquin Miller Park?

Use	Often 1x or more /week	Regularly 1x/month	Occasionally Few x/year	Seldom 1x or less/year	Never
Playground	8.5%	6.9%	6.2%	3%	75.4%
Ballfield	1.5%	3.1%	3.8%	6.2%	85.4%
Native Plant Nursery	3.8%	1.50%	15.3%	10.7%	68.7%
Community Ctr Events	1.53%	.77%	6.9%	13.1%	77.7%
Woodminster Theatre	1.6%	3.17%	16.7%	20.63%	57.9%
Cascade Area	7.7%	9.2%	20%	4.6%	58.5%
Walk/run trails	33.6%	18.3%	23.7%	4.6%	19.8%
Walk dog	22.3%	10.8%	12.9%	1.5%	52.5%
Bike Trails	21.3%	21.9%	9.2%	12.1%	35.5%
Castle Canyon	1.54%	1.54%	.77%	1.54%	94.61%
Birding				.8%	99.2%
TaiChi near Redwood Trail	1.5%				98.5%
HorseArena /Horseback Riding	5.3%	3.1%	3.1%		88.5%
Environment al Ed	.8%				99.2%
Picnic			2.3%		97.7%

### Primary issues identified in the survey:

- ◆ Safety and Security

- Trail safety (including Palos Colorados, which is very narrow).
- Three of the trails are too steep leading to erosion, the subsequent installation of water bars, and trail user conflicts. These trails would benefit from rerouting, with the installation of switchbacks, and maybe bridges across the adjacent creeks to allow more of the ravines to be used.
- Off-trail bikes and hikes create destructive social trails; trails need to be blocked and repaired.
- Safe equestrian trails to Sequoia Arena where dogs are in control
- Bike speed signs (with consideration for horses and dogs)
- Potential safety problem caused by parking along Joaquin Miller Road
- Increased traffic at the Robinson Road/ Joaquin Miller Road intersection caused by the park and community center and use of park as a police station.
- Put a sidewalk along Joaquin Miller Road. Pedestrians risk their lives approaching the Park. Both cyclists and motorists speed down Joaquin Miller Road. There is not a safe place to walk on either side of the street and pedestrians are forced into the road.
- Safety for single women. The way to address this is to use strategies to bring more people into the park.
- Vandalism
- Litter.
- Druggies (paint sniffers) sometimes use the park. It's better recently, but we all fear people using the park at night.
- No fence around the playground
- Men parking cars in the park for various illegal, illicit activities.
- Noise level from events at the Joaquin Miller Community Center—lack of monitoring of loud parties causes problems for neighbors.

#### ◆ **Pedestrian and vehicular access**

- Parking is often difficult, especially with kids. It would be nice to have off street parking available.
- Speed of cars from Joaquin Miller to and from the park

#### ◆ **Maintenance**

- Broken picnic tables, especially in the upper areas near Skyline
- Horse Arena bleachers
- Siniwik Cabin in disrepair
- Only 1 working water fountain in the meadow
- Worn out facilities, poor maintenance
- Improvements to the lighting, paving
- Improvements to the seats at Woodminster Amphitheater
- Provide clean picnic areas with tables/benches, and cooking/grill areas where appropriate. And, refuse barrels that are emptied regularly.

## ◆ **Environmental restoration and preservation**

### ◆ **Plants**

- Invasive plant species (Acacia, Eucalyptus, broom, Algerian Ivy and Ehrharta)
- Rare and threatened plants need more protection; many populations at risk of being eliminated.
- Grazing of goats and other fuel reduction needs to be managed in a way that enhances native plants and reduces annuals and invasives.
- Non-native canopy in places that should be open grassland, scrub or chaparral

### ◆ **Creeks**

- Erosion caused by overgrazing
- Trails are eroding into the creeks
- Runoff, storm drains, etc.
- Many culverts and crossings of creeks are blocked by debris, badly designed or crumbling from age.
- Silt and rock is washing downstream, being deposited in Dimond Canyon and the Bay.

### ◆ **Habitat restoration throughout the park's varied ecological zones Grassland (and the rare Serpentine Grassland), Wet Meadow, etc.**

- Expand environmental education usage
- Improving habitat for California quail and information on signs to help dog owners/walkers understand importance of preventing dogs from disturbing birds

## ◆ **Wildfire safety and vegetation management**

- Grazing of goats and other fuel reduction needs to be managed in a way that enhances native plants and reduces annuals and invasives.

## ◆ **Activity/use conflicts**

- All trails open for bikers every other day
- Separate trails for bikers
- Illegal trail use.
- Dogs "on leash" but without owner/walker on the other end, ie., loose dragging leash.
- People that walk 6 dogs off leash
- Speed of cyclists
- Unruly and aggressive mountain bikers and dogs keeping the horseback riders away due to safety concerns. I used to ride 3 –4 times a week. Now it is unsafe because of mountain bikers and dogs.
- Poor communication between various user groups. Having knowledge of other user groups and improved communication between various organizations., ie. coordination between summer camp programs and winter school programs

- While some users may oppose bicyclists riding in the park, I believe that Joaquin Miller can be used as a model of how many different groups can successfully coexist in one place. Bicyclists play an important role in park functions. From trail building and maintenance to participating in park patrols, mountain bikers (especially those associated with the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay) provide a service which benefits all users of the park.
  - There are some issues of sharing the trails which I believe are caused mostly be people wearing ear speakers while listening to music—this makes it hard for them to be aware of what is happening on a multi use trail.
  - Bikes scaring dogs
- ◆ **Signage and wayfinding**
- Lack of signage, especially in Big Trees area—important historic site.
  - Signs that prohibit bikes are defaced (end of Joaquin Miller Ct., Junction of Fern Ravine and Sunset, et. al)
  - Lack of information about the park—no maps available
  - Lack of clear trail markings—especially in the upper area. I try to only ride on “legal” trails, but sometimes it’s hard to tell in the area I think of as “The Maze”, (Sequoia, Pine View area)
  - The color map hasn’t been available for some time
  - Increased signage may be necessary to help ban off trail use or “bootleg” trails as this activity is horrible for the undergrowth of the park.
  - Bike speed signs ( with consideration for horses and dogs)
- ◆ **Interjurisdictional coordination**
- Coordination of trails with East Bay Parks

## **Primary actions identified in the survey:**

- ◆ **Uses and activities requiring new facilities**
- I would like to have activities for pre-teens and teenagers—an outdoor climbing wall, roller blade area, skate boarding area.
  - An off-leash fenced dog park with separate small and large dog sections. It is so important for dogs to be regularly socialized with other dogs to help them be well-adjusted. For safety reasons, small dogs and large dogs should be in separate areas. A 100-lb dog playing with a 10-lb dog just isn’t safe, not so much because of aggression but because normal play for a 100-lb dog is too rough for a 10 lb. dog and the smaller dog can easily get injured.
  - A new horse boarding barn
  - Off leash place for dogs to swim
  - Water fountain for dogs and doggie bags for picking up
  - Horseshoe pit
  - Environmental education center at the native plant nursery
  - Bocce ball
  - Public art
  - A bathroom with baby changing area near the playground.

- A mountain bike skills park could be placed in the sacrifice area at the top of Cinderella trail
- Better setting for weddings

◆ **Improvements to existing facilities**

- Basketball, if the court next to the ball field were repaired.
- Expanded use of picnic tables in and around the park
- A water station for people, horses and dogs
- Re-alignment of Dimond Canyon: Dimond Canyon has a section of trail that remains difficult to negotiate on a bicycle due to steep concrete stairs. The alignment of this trail is also not sustainable. Removal of the concrete stairs, re-alignment of the trail and installation of a bridge across Sausal Creek at the existing crossing will make for a much more enjoyable route, combined with opening Lower Palos would create an uninterrupted riding corridor from the flatlands up to JMP.
- Benches overlooking some of the wonderful vistas the park environs offer.
- Water feature and sand box for playground

◆ **Additional programs**

- A women's walking/hiking exercise program
- Ranger led hikes
- More horse shows in Sequoia Arena
- Increased opportunities for horseback riding instruction at the Sequoia Arena
- Educational programs (nature study, etc.)
- Woodminster Theatre could be available for concerts, not just the musicals.
- A nature trail- something like a guided sign walk through the area with information about native plants and the history of the area
- Food concessions—invite pushcarts and other entrepreneurial food vendors. Can you bring the renaissance Fair? Bring back the Cajun & Zydeco Festival Concerts in the Theatre.
- Public sale of native plants from the nursery for people who live in the watershed
- Use the interior space of the Ranger Station for free public meeting space. Something as simple as a coffee klatch for different groups each day of the week
- Outdoor movies in the meadow or the dirt parking lots, or in the amphitheater.
- Simple arts and crafts projects for kids in the Ranger Building. One community has a tie-dye day every year. It could be a fund raiser or it can be funded.
- It might be increasingly important to have a place in the hills for older adult day care and/or recreation.
- Halloween party and spook house

◆ **Policy**

- Ideally, the ability to visit the park in the evening after dark, along the lines permitted in neighboring Redwood Regional Park, which is open until 10 p.m., but that's a minor concern.

- All trails in Joaquin Miller Park opened to mountain bikes. The fact that the park allows bikes on some single track trails is a distinct advantage for the park compared to other East Bay Parks.
  - Some trails that are safe for equestrians to get to Sequoia Arena from the neighborhood where they are stabled
  - Open community center to small groups (chess clubs, bike clubs) to rent one room at lower rates-- \$150 are prohibitive.
  - A more reasonable, effective policy for winter closure of Big Trees. Henry Coe State Park has a good model, where trails are closed for a certain number of days (48?) following a given volume of rain. This is more reasonable and effective than the park's current blanket closures, which can last seven months and cover weeks or even months when trail conditions are excellent and dry
- ◆ **Environmental restoration and preservation**
- Map rare native plants, extent of invasive plant, other information that will help manage restoration and native plant diversity
  - Develop a long-term native habitat restoration plan that includes removal of invasive non-natives
  - Repair and expand the Paul Covel Nature Trail, improve signage, reprint the brochure for the trail.
  - Day lighting Palos Colorados through the meadow would be a great improvement, though expensive.
  - Wooden bridge on Sunset Trail. This project would encompass placing a bridge on Sunset Trail to replace the current section of trail that crosses the drainage immediately south of Cinderella Trail. There is a chronic problem in the park and the installation of a bridge could correct it by replacing the culvert and allowing the stream to flow naturally.
  - Work with local schools on invasive plant removal
- ◆ **Park maintenance**
- Park notices about volunteer trail maintenance days, contact info., etc
  - Provide clean picnic areas with tables/benches, and cooking/grill areas where appropriate. And, refuse barrels that are emptied regularly.
  - No focused maintenance plan for the park as a whole
  - Drainage
  - Better clean up in the picnic areas-- more garbage cans and certainly more pick ups on busy Saturdays during the summer so that cans are available for Sunday picnic people.
- ◆ **Safety and security**
- Slow down traffic-- by the entrance to the community center (there should be a crosswalk there—nobody uses the one at Crane way) and in front of the playground and baseball field.

- Enforce no bikes on the lower half of the trail which is marked No bikes, especially in the stair section
  - Bikes scaring dogs
  - Speed of off-trail biking—erosion and collision potential
- ◆ **Wayfinding and signage**
- Put a good trail map of the park on City website
  - Publish a native plant species check list
  - Publish a mushroom checklist for the park
  - A bulletin board near the playground with information on events in the park (Woodminster, organized activities, etc)
  - Provide better signage to the four Joaquin Miller monuments (Temple of the Muses, Funeral Pyre, etc)
  - Every trail intersection have 4x4 post with trail name and explicit indicators for allowed and not allowed use.
- ◆ **Vehicular access and parking**
- Open road with a turn around so people can drive out the way they came in—on weekends only or pre-Woodminster performances
  - Pedestrian and bicycle circulation and access ((realignment of Dimond Canyon, Cinderela, Chapparal and Palos Colorados Trails, wooden bridge at Sunset Trail)
  - Bus service to the park
  - Paving roads and walkways
  - Provide off street parking at playground by opening lower park entrance to the play area
  - Provide parking and a turnaround behind the playground
  - At least provide handicapped parking place at the end of the Handicap ramp
  - Potential safety problem caused by parking along Joaquin Miller Road\
  - Increased traffic at the Robinson Road/ Joaquin Miller Road intersection caused by the park and community center and use of park as a police station. Intersection sight distance is poor for traffic making left turn onto Joaquin Miller Road from Robinson at the stop sign
  - Horse arena has inadequate parking and unloading space for events
  - Fix and open the roads again
  - Advertise the Fruitvale BART to Dimond Lower Park, up Dimond Canyon into the park with a bike.
  - Public transit into the park
  - A way for people to drive their picnic supplies, kids and elders to the Meadow.
- ◆ **Wildfire safety and vegetation management (1)**
- Fire danger
  - No smoking during fire season, especially at Community Center

## Stewardship and Fundraising

- 32 people expressed interest in participating on an Advisory Council
- 47 people expressed interest in supporting a trust for the Joaquin Miller Park

### **Additional comments or suggestions:**

- This park is a treasure
- I have very serious concerns regarding the community center, apparently individuals who rent this facility often have parties that impact this residential community in a very negative way. With no supervision, individuals play music that is so loud it exceeds permitted decibel levels in residential areas. These unruly parties attract people who drink in excess and drive their cars in a reckless manner. The Community Center needs to serve the Local Community.
- I'd like the wild nature of the center of the park and hope it continues to be maintained in this fashion. Increased usage of periphery is great, but the center core of redwood forest is the heart of the character of the park--our own Muir Woods.
- Having responsible user groups using the trails at night would do more to limit 'unsavory' folks from loitering at night, than closing the park in name, but not spending the money and man-power to enforce it. Redwood Regional Park closes at 10 p.m.
- There needs to be more patrols and real tickets issued instead of the useless "warnings". If there was a leash law with all dogs on leash, tickets could be given easily to off leash dogs. There could be a test where trained dogs could be issued permits for off leash.
- I hope there is still bus service to the park.
- For 39 years, Woodminster summer musicals has produced family entertainment enjoyed by over 21,000 people every year. Woodminster is a tremendous asset to the community.
- Install sidewalk from north side of Joaquin Miller from Mountain to Sanborn
- The new playground is too close to Joaquin Miller Road—speeding cars are a hazard to children
- Install a traffic light at Joaquin Miller and Sanborn.
- Control SPEED on Joaquin Miller at Robinson. There are at least 6 speed limit signs completely ignored, including being ignored by the police and park staff. This is an accident waiting to happen.
- Needs Pedestrian crossing paint and speeding sign. No stop sign or lights, which would cause more noise and pollution.
- I would love for there to be one trail—e.g. Sequoia Bayview—where horses could go without the hazards posed by mountain bikes.
- The recommendations of An Assessment of Trails, Watercourses, Soils and Redwood Forest Health in Joaquin Miller Park should be followed: The process for this report began in November of 1999. Then Park Supervisor

Tony Acosta formed a Trails Working Group of any and all concerned citizens to meet and work on improving the problems found in the park. The City of Oakland commissioned an environmental study from William Lettis & Associates which was one of the five proposals for the study that were submitted to the group. The report makes it quite clear that rainwater, above-grade (10% slope) trails, poor design, landslides, non-native plant species and trampling from park users were the major environmental problems facing the park. Working on fixing these problems would go a long way to reducing environmental problems in the park.

- I feel very strongly that our trails need to remain open to everyone who uses them, hikers, runners, horses and bikers. I am okay with some restrictions such as hiker/runner only trails (would love to see bike/horse only trails)...most importantly we must remember we are a community with a wide variety of people who choose to use our park in many different ways and we must all be included.
- I feel strongly that all users of park trails can co-exist without negative consequences. As a hiker and biker, I completely understand the importance of sharing the trails. I am glad that there is a group like Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay(BTCEB ) teaching bikers the basics of bike riding and trail etiquette. I feel that all bikers should take part I a training session before being allowed on the trails.
- Continue to allow bikes to ride trails. Do not restrict single track to hikers only.
- The JM Community Center, although lovely, is NOT a community center. It's a rental facility for special events. It costs community groups about \$500 to use for one evening event. This prices itself out of our world and creates resentment among those of us taxpayers who helped pay for it. Certified community groups should be able to receive a discount. Also, the charge for set-up and breakdown of chairs is ridiculous. Volunteers could do it.
- It is my belief that mountain bikes make up a large percentage of the population that uses the park. I also believe that, per user, mountain bikes create less wear than horses. Sadly, horse owners have a better lobby and deeper pockets.
- Having such a beautiful park in the heart of Oakland is one of the reasons I have lived her for over ten years. To ban bicyclists from Joaquin Miller would be very unfortunate as a large number of local residents ride these trails., as opposed to diving to Marin or Santa Cruz. We are very much in favor of keeping the park as a multi-use trail system.
- I would like more people to know about the park and use it. For the size of the park, the use per acre must be pretty low.