

**Project Name:** **Informational Briefing Session:  
Revisions to Previously Approved Master Plan to Expand  
Oakland Zoo (No Decision)**

**Location:** **9777 Golf Links Road (see map on reverse)**

**Proposal:** Revise the previously approved 1998 Master Plan for the expansion of the Oakland Zoo. The revisions would generally consist of the following: modifying and reducing the area of the proposed expansion from approximately 62 acres to approximately 56 acres; construction of a veterinary hospital to replace the existing veterinary hospital; modifications to the previously approved new animal exhibit area called "California!;" a new aerial gondola transportation system to replace the previously approved shuttle bus system; relocation of existing overnight camping activities to a new overnight camping area; and establishment of the specific location of the proposed perimeter fence with modifications from the previously approved 1998 general fence location.

**Applicant:** East Bay Zoological Society

**Contact Person/Phone**

**Number:** Nik Haas-Dehejia / (510) 632-9525 ext. 138

**Owner:** City of Oakland

**Planning Permits  
Required:** Major Conditional Use Permit to allow revisions to an existing Extensive Impact Civic Activity (zoological gardens) in the OS-SU (Open Space – Special Use) Zone and to a previously approved Master Plan; Creek Protection Permit

**General Plan:** Urban Open Space

**Zoning:** OS-SU (Open Space – Special Use) Zone

**Environmental  
Determination:** The City adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration when the Zoo Master Plan was previously approved by the City in 1998. The Mitigated Negative Declaration stated that the Master Plan would not result in a significant impact on the environment with the incorporation of specified mitigation measures. Staff is currently conducting an environmental (CEQA) analysis to determine the appropriate level of environmental review for the proposed revisions to the Master Plan; that analysis is not yet complete.

**Service Delivery District:** 6

**City Council District:** 7

**Date Filed:** April 20, 2009

**Status:** The Zoo Master Plan was previously approved by the City in 1998. The current proposal involves certain revisions to the Master Plan (as generally described above) and is currently under review.

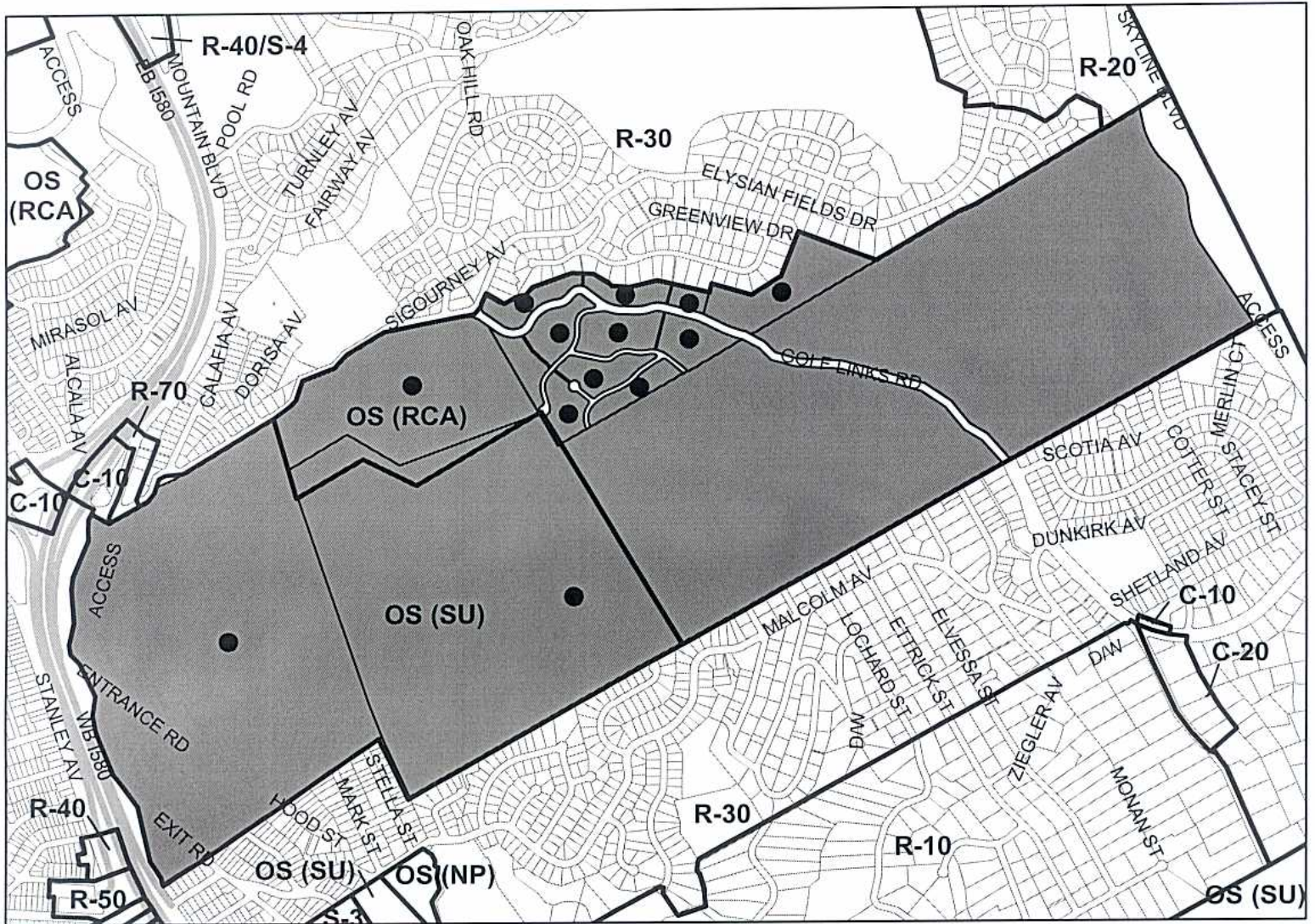
**Action to be Taken:** Conduct an informational briefing session on the proposal that will provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the public to receive preliminary information on the proposal and for the Planning Commission to provide any preliminary direction to staff and/or the applicant on the proposal. No decision on the proposal will be made at this time. The proposal will come back to the Planning Commission at a future public hearing for action, after completion of the CEQA analysis.

**Finality of Decision:** No decision will be made on the proposal at this time.

**For Further Information:** Contact the case planner, **Darin Ranelletti**, at (510) 238-3663 or by e-mail at [dranelletti@oaklandnet.com](mailto:dranelletti@oaklandnet.com).



# CITY OF OAKLAND PLANNING COMMISSION



Case File: CM09-085; ER09-005  
Applicant: East Bay Zoological Society  
Address: 9777 Golf Links Rd  
Zone: OS-SU



## **SUMMARY**

In 1998 the City approved a Master Plan for the expansion of the Oakland Zoo. The Zoo now proposes to revise certain elements of the approved Master Plan. The proposed revisions require approval by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

The April 21<sup>st</sup> hearing is an informational briefing session that will provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the public to receive preliminary information on the proposal and for the Planning Commission to provide any preliminary direction to staff and/or the Zoo on the proposal. No decision will be made on the proposal at this time. The proposal will come back to the Planning Commission at a future hearing before going to the City Council for a final decision. This report is a brief introduction to the proposal. More detailed information and analysis concerning the proposal will be provided when the proposal comes back to the Planning Commission.

## **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

The Oakland Zoo is located in Knowland Park, a City-owned public park located in the South Hills area of the city near the intersection of Interstate 580 and Golf Links Road. The park is bounded by Interstate 580 to the west and Skyline Boulevard to the east and by single-family residential development to the north and south.

Knowland Park is approximately 490 acres in size, including the existing Zoo facility and the adjacent Arboretum which together total approximately 93 acres and are located in the western portion of the park. The park outside of the existing Zoo and the Arboretum is undeveloped parkland with westward views of Oakland, San Francisco Bay, the Peninsula and the San Francisco skyline. The topography consists of a mixture of relatively level areas, rolling hillsides, and steep slopes. The vegetation consists of a mixture of grassland, riparian areas, oak woodland, and chaparral. There are a number of unpaved fire roads that crisscross the park which are used as public hiking trails. There currently are no park visitor facilities (parking areas, restrooms, marked trails, etc.) at the park aside from the Zoo and Arboretum. Under an agreement with the City, the Zoo manages all of Knowland Park.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The section below describes the previously approved Master Plan for the expansion of the Zoo and the current proposed revisions to the Master Plan.

### ***Background: 1998 Approved Master Plan***

In 1998 the City approved a Master Plan for the expansion of the Zoo. Certain elements of the approved Master Plan have already been completed, including the new Center for Science and Environmental Education, improvements to the Children's Zoo, restoration of Arroyo Viejo Creek, and various upgrades to existing Zoo facilities. The plan also included other proposed elements which have not yet been built, most notably the proposed new animal exhibit area previously called "California 1820" which would feature native California species present in California prior to the Gold Rush and be located to the east of the existing Zoo in an undeveloped portion of Knowland Park. The previously approved perimeter fence to enclose the California 1820 exhibit area has also not been built.



***Current Proposal: Revisions to Previously Approved Master Plan***

The Zoo currently proposes to modify the previously approved Master Plan to revise certain elements of the plan. The revised Master Plan would still include a new exhibit area featuring native California species (now called "California!") proposed to be located to the east of the existing Zoo in an undeveloped portion of Knowland Park, but the plan would also include some new elements not previously included in the 1998 Master Plan including replacing the existing Veterinary Medical Hospital with a new Veterinary Medical Hospital located immediately east of the existing Zoo parking lot and establishing a new overnight camping area located to the east of the existing Zoo in an undeveloped portion of Knowland Park. The current proposed revisions to the 1998 Master Plan are listed below. The project drawings showing the current proposal are attached to this report (see Attachment A).<sup>1</sup>

Proposed Revisions to 1998 Master Plan

1. Replacement of the previously approved loop road and shuttle bus system to transport Zoo visitors from the existing Zoo to the California exhibit with an electric aerial gondola people-moving system;
2. Reconfiguration of the previously approved animal exhibits within the California exhibit;
3. Relocation of the previously approved California Interpretive Center within the California exhibit area to a site approximately 300 feet northwest of the previously approved location, and redesign of the Center;
4. Elimination of previously approved off-site breeding activity, with incorporation of this area into the California exhibit;
5. Replacement of the existing Veterinary Medical Hospital with the construction of a proposed new Veterinary Medical Hospital located immediately to the east of the existing Zoo parking lot on a portion of the previously approved California exhibit area;
6. Relocation of existing overnight camping activities to a new overnight camping area located to the northwest of the California exhibit area;
7. Establishment of the specific location of the proposed perimeter fence with modifications from the previously approved general location;
8. Improvement of the existing emergency vehicle access road off Snowdown Avenue;
9. Provision of a public walking path located to the southeast and outside of the California exhibit to provide public access between existing fire roads and knolls in Knowland Park;
10. Elimination of the previously approved pedestrian hiking trail connecting the Arboretum meadow with the upper area of Knowland Park; and

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<sup>1</sup> The public notice for the April 21 hearing was based on project drawings submitted by the applicant on April 1, 2010. On April 12, 2010, the applicant submitted revised drawings (dated April 8, 2010) which are attached to this report. The April 12 drawings contain only clarifying revisions to the April 1 drawings; they do not any substantive changes to the proposal.



11. Paving of the existing zoo service road to provide service access to the California exhibit.

The size of the revised expansion area, as calculated by the area enclosed in the proposed perimeter fence, would decrease by six acres, from approximately 62 acres (1998 Master Plan) to approximately 56 acres (current proposal).

The project would be constructed in five phases over a total of approximately 42 months.<sup>2</sup> The proposed preliminary project phasing is listed below.

Proposed Preliminary Project Construction Phasing

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Construction Activity</u>	<u>Duration</u>
Phase 1	Veterinary Medical Hospital; perimeter fence; paving service road	12 months
Phase 2	Aerial gondola system; portion of California Interpretive Center; overnight camping area; exhibits/features within California exhibit	12 months
Phase 3	Exhibits/features within California exhibit	12 months
Phase 4	Remainder of California Interpretive Center; exhibits/features within California exhibit	8 months
Phase 5	Exhibits/features within California exhibit	8 months

**PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The Zoo has sponsored a number of recent community meetings during the past two years regarding the proposed revisions to the Master Plan, including meetings in February 2008, May 2009, September 2009, and March 2010. The Zoo has distributed regular project updates by e-mail to community members and interested parties and has held meetings with representatives of Friends of Knowland Park, a community group organized in response to the proposal. In June 2009, the City’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission held an informational session on the proposal. Prior to the Zoo submitting the current proposal, the Zoo sponsored a formal 30-day public review and comment period on the proposal during which it provided community members with plans for the proposal and solicited feedback. At the most recent community meeting on March 25, 2010, numerous people spoke, both supporters and opponents to the proposal. Some of the key issues of concern to the community are discussed below in the “Key Issues and Impacts of Proposal” section of this report. Written public comments received by staff to date are attached (see Attachment B).

**GENERAL PLAN INFORMATION**

The current General Plan land use classifications for Knowland Park and the Zoo have not changed since the previous Master Plan was approved in 1998. Knowland Park is divided into two different land use classifications in the Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan. The west-central portion of the park where the existing Zoo, the existing Arboretum, and the proposed Zoo expansion are located is designated as Urban Open Space. According to the General Plan, areas designated as Urban Open Space should be primarily used for active or passive recreation.

<sup>2</sup> The overall construction period of 42 months assumes that two or more construction phases would overlap.



The areas of Knowland Park located outside of the existing Zoo, the existing Arboretum, and the proposed Zoo expansion, in the far western portion of the park between Interstate 580 and the Zoo and in the eastern portion of the park, are designated as Resource Conversation areas in the General Plan. According to the General Plan, Resource Conversation areas are places where natural resources should be conserved.

Staff will provide a more detailed analysis of the proposal's consistency with the General Plan when the proposal comes back to the Planning Commission.

**ZONING INFORMATION**

The current zoning designations for Knowland Park and the Zoo have not changed since the previous Master Plan was approved in 1998. Knowland Park is divided into two different zoning districts roughly equivalent to the two General Plan land use classifications on the park. The zoning map for the site is included on page 2 of this report. The western portion of the park where the existing Zoo, the existing Arboretum, and the proposed Zoo expansion are located is in the OS-SU (Open Space – Special Use) zone. The area located between Interstate 580 and the existing Zoo is also in the OS-SU zone. The OS-SU zone permits or conditionally permits a variety of activities related to active and passive recreation, such as botanical gardens, athletic fields, recreation centers, sports stadiums/arenas, golf courses and zoological gardens (zoos).

The remaining areas of Knowland Park, meaning the portion of the park located east of the existing Zoo and the proposed Zoo expansion, are in the OS-RCA (Open Space – Resource Conservation Area) zone. The OS-RCA zone permits or conditionally permits a narrow range of activities related to open space conservation, such as hiking trails, picnic areas, unimproved camp sites, and wildlife preserves.

As stated above, the existing Zoo and the proposed Zoo expansion are located in the OS-SU zone. Expansions to existing zoos require a major conditional use permit in the OS-SU zone. The City issued a major conditional use permit in 1998 when it previously approved the Zoo Master Plan. The current proposed revisions to the 1998 Master Plan also require a major conditional use permit.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The City adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's environmental review regulations when the Zoo Master Plan was previously approved in 1998. The Mitigated Negative Declaration stated that the 1998 Master Plan would not result in a significant impact on the environment with the incorporation of specified mitigation measures. Staff is currently conducting an environmental analysis to determine the appropriate level of environmental review for the proposed revisions to the Master Plan; that analysis is not yet complete. The results of the environmental analysis will be made available prior to the Planning Commission taking action on the proposal.

**KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS OF PROPOSAL**

Below is a brief summary of some of the key issues and impacts of the proposal.

***Loss of Open Space and Habitat***

The upper portion of Knowland Park located outside of the existing Zoo and the Arboretum is undeveloped open space. The open space provides habitat for native wildlife and provides recreational opportunities for the public. Currently the public has unrestricted access to this portion of the park. The



size of the proposed Zoo expansion is approximately 56 acres, as measured by the amount of area that would be enclosed within the proposed perimeter fence. The previously approved expansion area was approximately 62 acres in size. The Zoo has revised the proposed location of the perimeter fence from the previously approved Master Plan largely by adjusting the perimeter fence inward for a number of reasons including preserving public access to a portion of an existing fire road, preserving vegetation, and moving the fence away from nearby houses. The Zoo also proposes to provide a new public walking path to provide public access between existing fire roads which would become disconnected with the expansion. The environmental analysis will assess potential impacts of the project on open space and wildlife habitat.

### ***Impacts to Neighbors***

Knowland Park is bordered on the north and south by single-family homes. Some nearby residents have expressed concerns about the potential impact of the project on their quality of life. The environmental analysis of the proposal will assess potential impacts of the project on nearby homes, such as air quality impacts and noise impacts, both during the construction phase of the project and the operational phase of the project.

### ***Transportation/Traffic***

Some community members have expressed concerns about the effect of the project on neighborhood traffic. The environmental analysis will assess potential impacts of the project on the surrounding transportation system.

### ***Visual Impacts***

Some community members have expressed concerns about the visual impact of the project in terms of the visibility of the Zoo expansion from surrounding viewpoints in the neighborhood and from viewpoints within Knowland Park. The project drawings for the proposal (see Attachment A) include preliminary visual simulations that show the expanded Zoo from various viewpoints. The project drawings also show the character of the proposed perimeter fence that will be visible from Knowland Park users. The Zoo is proposing to construct the perimeter fence in an engineered swale in an area where the fence would be located near the top of a knoll so that park users on the knoll would have views over the fence. The environmental analysis will provide a more detailed analysis of potential visual impacts of the project.

## **KEY CONSIDERATION FOR PLANNING COMMISSION**

As previously indicated, the City issued a major conditional use permit for the 1998 Master Plan and the Zoo has been implementing the approved plan over the last 12 years. The primary focus of the City is whether the proposed revisions to the already approved Master Plan meet current policies and/or regulations. Staff will provide additional information to the Planning Commission to assist the Commission in answering this inquiry, and the specific conditional use permit findings, when the proposal comes back to the Planning Commission.

## **OVERVIEW OF CITY REVIEW PROCESS**

Once the environmental analysis of the proposal is concluded, the proposal will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) which will provide a recommendation on the proposal to the Planning Commission. Following the PRAC's review, the proposal will return to the Planning Commission. Since the management agreement between the Zoo and the City states that revisions to the Zoo Master Plan must be approved by the City Council, the proposal will then go to the City Council for a final decision.



**CONCLUSION**

The April 21 hearing is an informational briefing session on the proposed revisions to the 1998 approved Master Plan. The Planning Commission has an opportunity to provide any preliminary direction to staff and/or the applicant regarding the proposal. In providing preliminary direction to staff and/or the applicant, the Planning Commission should consider the following questions:

1. Does the Planning Commission have any questions concerning the proposed revisions?
2. Does the Planning Commission need to see any additional information (aside from the forthcoming additional information already discussed in this report) before making a decision?
3. Does the Planning Commission have any preliminary feedback on the merits of the proposed revisions at this point?

No decision will be made on the proposal at this time. The proposal will come back to the Planning Commission at a future hearing before going to the City Council for a final decision. More detailed information and analysis regarding the proposal will be provided when the proposal comes back to the Planning Commission.

Prepared by:



Darin Ranelletti  
Planner III

Approved by:



SCOTT MILLER  
Zoning Manager

Approved for forwarding to the  
Planning Commission:



ERIC ANGSTADT  
Deputy Director, Community and Economic Development Agency

**ATTACHMENTS:**

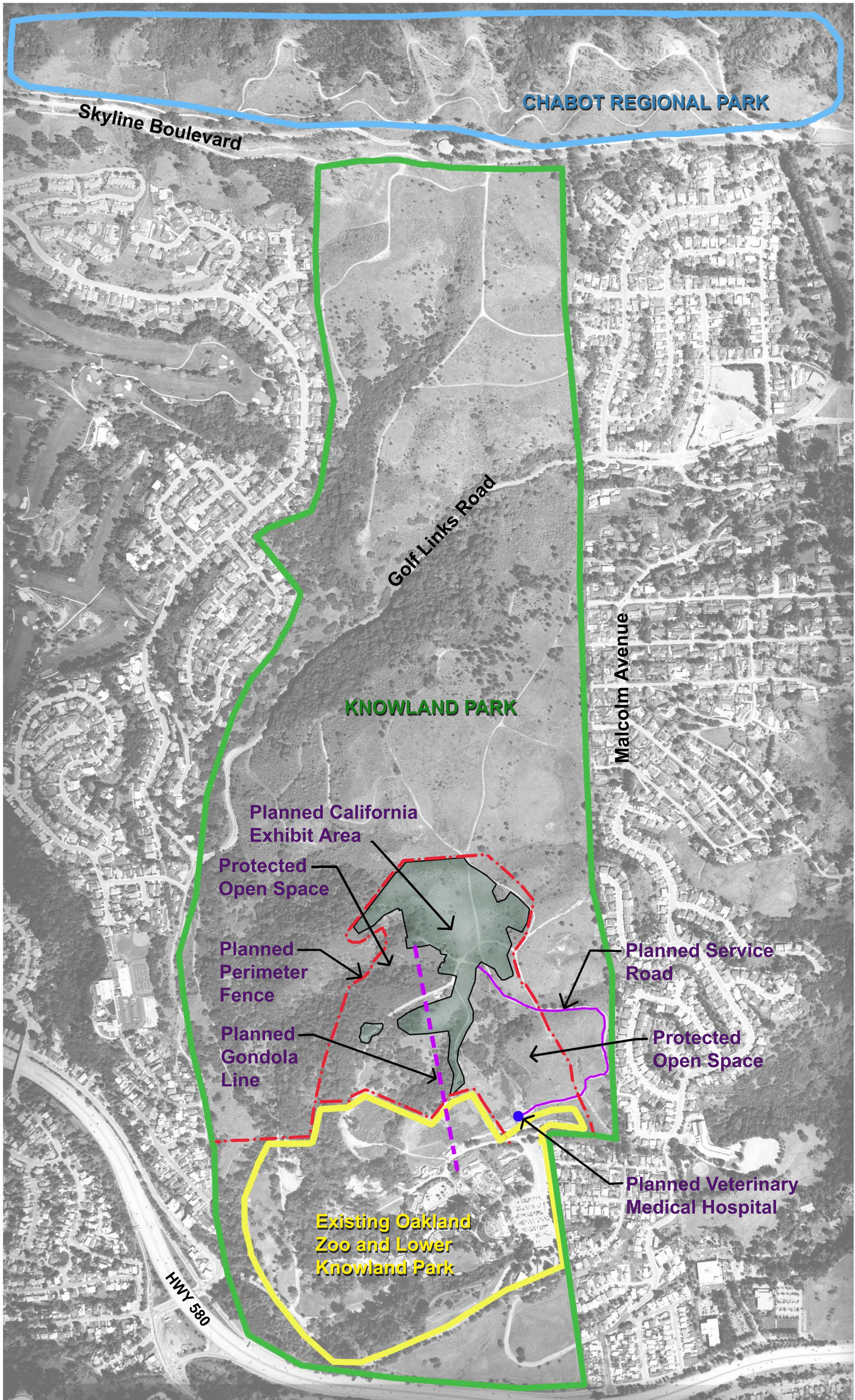
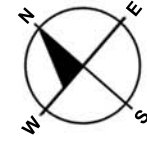
- A. Project Drawings (dated April 8, 2010; received April 12, 2010)
- B. Public Comments



ATTACHMENT A

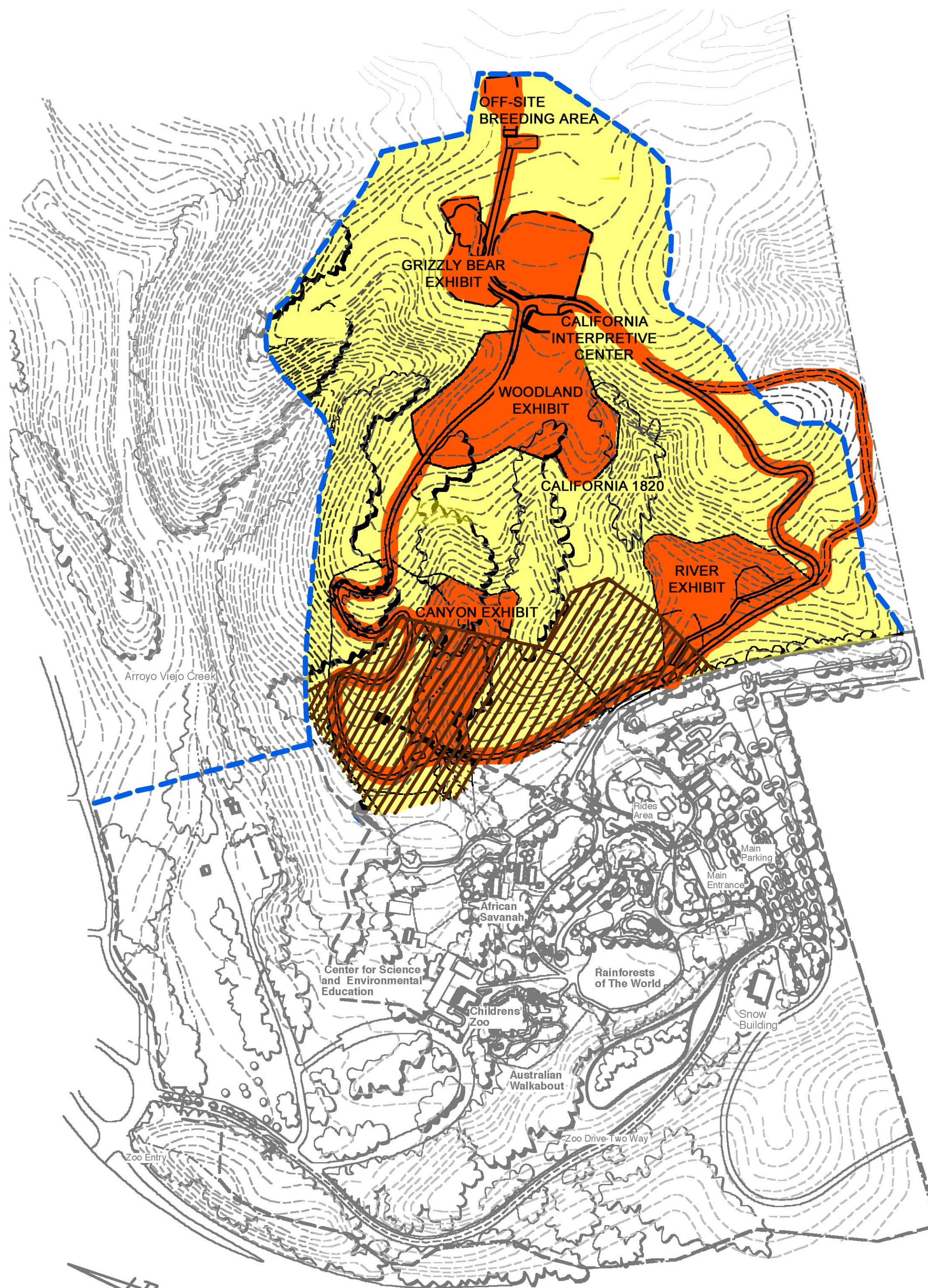
PROJECT DRAWINGS  
(DATED APRIL 8, 2010; RECEIVED APRIL 12, 2010)







# 1998 OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL APPROVED MASTER PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT



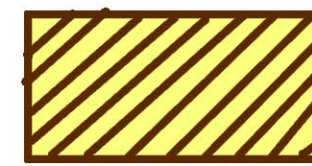
## LEGEND



APPROVED DECEMBER 1998  
ZOO MASTER PLAN AREA FOR  
CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT



APPROVED 1998 AREAS OF  
DEVELOPMENT



EXISTING BISON/TULE ELK  
EXHIBITS WHICH WILL BE  
INCLUDED IN CALIFORNIA  
EXHIBIT

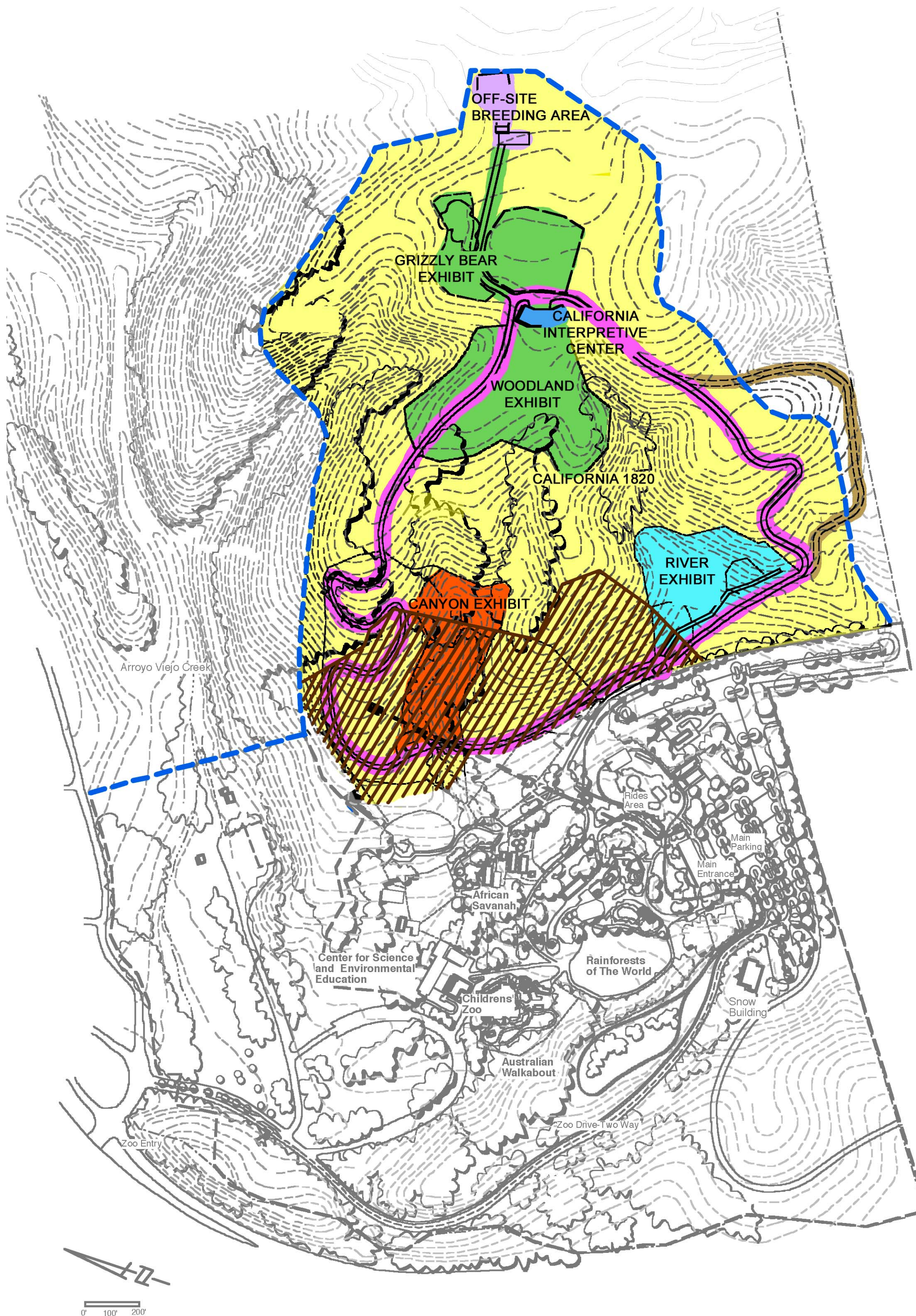


1998 APPROVED MASTER  
PLAN BOUNDARY AND  
PERIMETER FENCE

0' 100' 200'

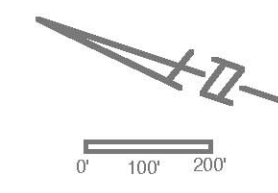


# 1998 OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL APPROVED MASTER PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT



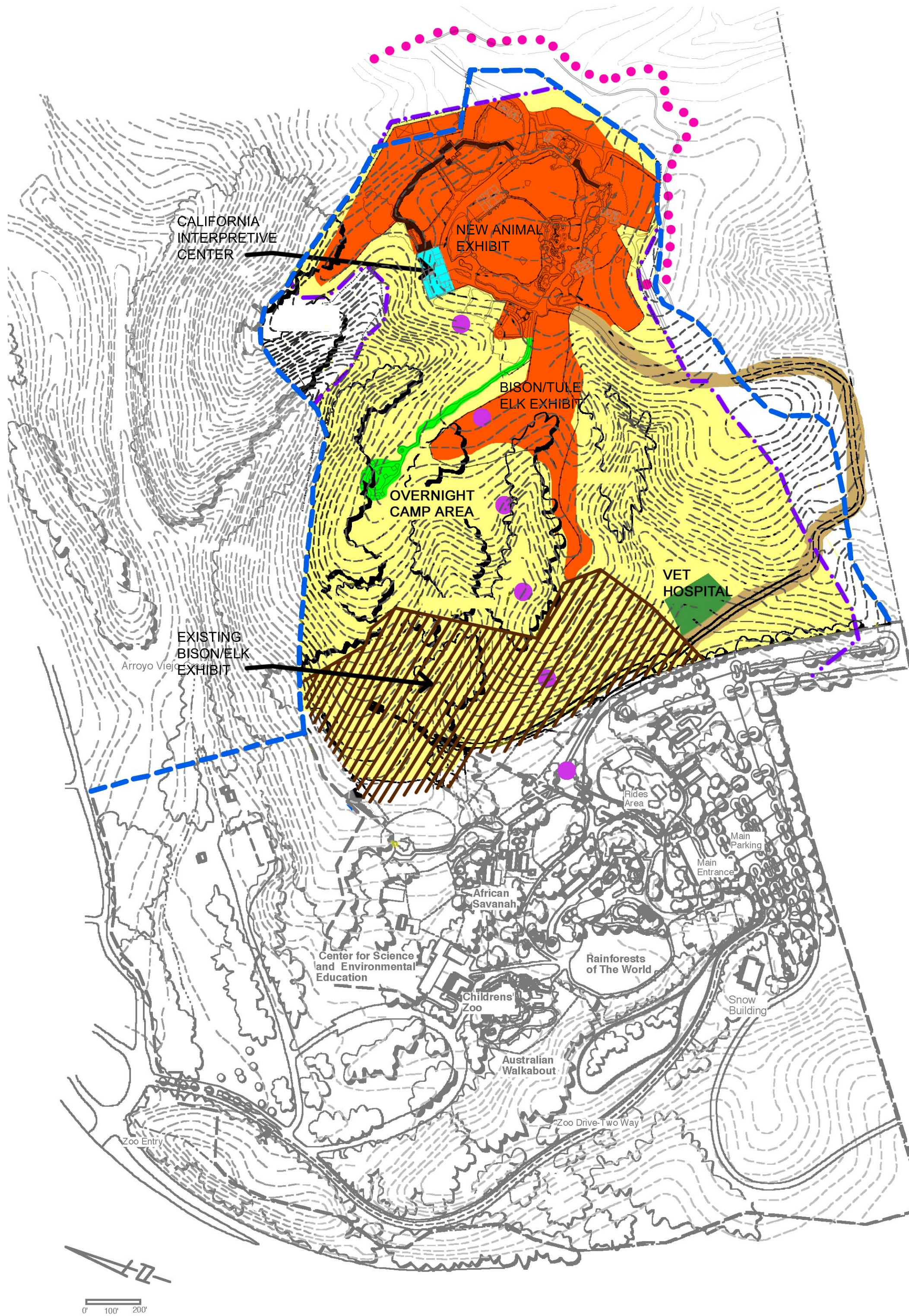
## AREA CALCULATIONS

61.54 A	APPROVED DECEMBER 1998 ZOO MASTER PLAN AREA FOR CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT
14.44 A	EXISTING BISON/TULE ELK EXHIBITS WHICH WILL BE INCLUDED IN CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT
3.3 A	CANYON EXHIBIT
3.7 A	RIVER EXHIBIT
9.23 A	WOODLAND EXHIBIT
0.23 A	CALIFORNIA INTERPRETIVE CENTER
0.54 A	OFF-SITE BREEDING AREA
5.70 A	LOOP ROAD AND SHUTTLE BUS SYSTEM
1.35 A	PAVING EXISTING MAINTENANCE ROAD





# 2010 MODIFICATIONS TO CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT



## AREA CALCULATIONS

56.26 A	MODIFICATIONS TO 2010 MASTER PLAN AREA FOR CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT
14.44 A	EXISTING BISON/TULE ELK EXHIBITS WHICH WILL BE INCLUDED IN CALIFORNIA EXHIBIT
18.07 A	PROPOSED NEW ANIMAL EXHIBIT AREA
0.36 A	CALIFORNIA INTERPRETIVE CENTER
3.25 A	PAVING EXISTING MAINTENANCE ROAD
1.00 A	VETERINARY MEDICAL HOSPITAL
0.72 A	OVERNIGHT CAMPING AREA AND PATH
0.02 A	PROPOSED GONDOLA ALIGNMENT (NOT TO SCALE)
0.26 A	PROPOSED ACCESS PATH
	PROPOSED PERIMETER FENCE RE-ALIGNED FOR 2010 PLAN
	1998 APPROVED MASTER PLAN BOUNDARY AND PERIMETER FENCE








OAKLAND ZOO MASTER PLAN PREVIOUSLY APPROVED (1998)  
 AND PROPOSED PERIMETER FENCE LINE  
 APRIL 8, 2010

KNOWLAND  
 PARK  
 CONTINUES

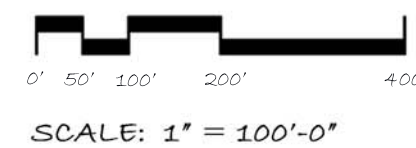
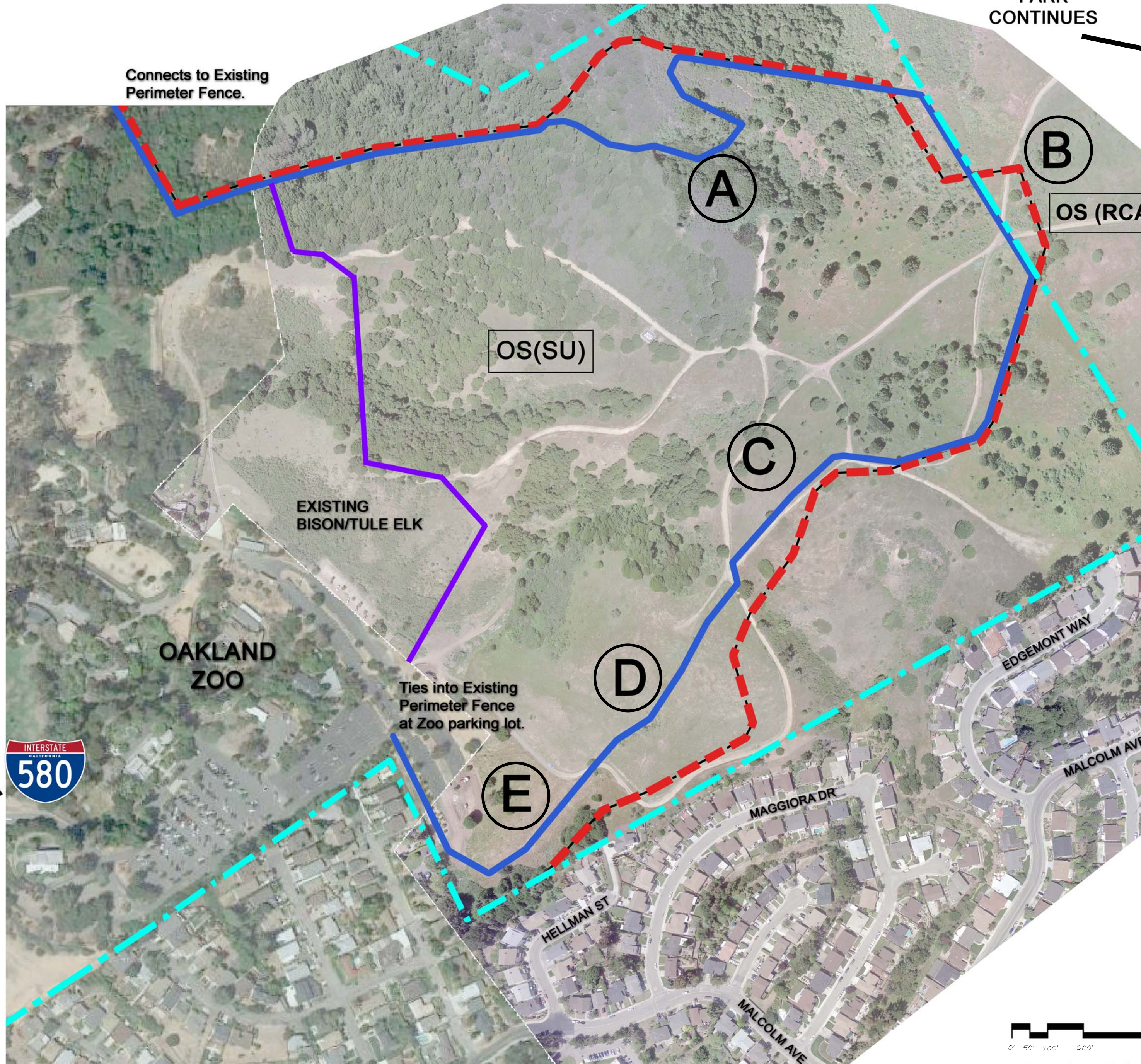
**OVERVIEW**

This perimeter fence line map has been prepared for the purposes of public review. The proposed 2010 perimeter fence line has been modified following careful review of site characteristics and informal input from the community and City of Oakland staff in efforts to refine the precise location of the perimeter fence.

**LEGEND**

-  PROPOSED 2010 PERIMETER FENCE LINE (56.26 ACRES WITHIN FENCE LINE)
-  APPROVED 1998 PERIMETER FENCE LINE (61.54 ACRES WITHIN FENCE LINE)
-  ZONING BOUNDARY LINE
-  OPEN SPACE (SPECIAL USE) ZONE
-  OPEN SPACE (RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREA) ZONE

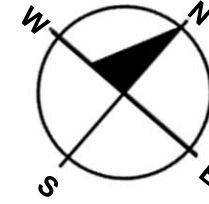
- A** Proposed fence line adjusted in to limit incursion into chaparral habitat. Fence line to follow the interface between chaparral habitat and oak trees.
- B** Proposed fence line to follow City of Oakland Open Space (Special Use) Zone boundary.
- C** Proposed fence line moved inward to preserve access for public on existing fire road to access knolls.
- D** Proposed fence line straightened and moved away from nearby houses.
- E** Proposed fence line moved inward and away from nearby houses and drainage area.





# 2010 Modifications to Oakland Zoo California! Exhibit

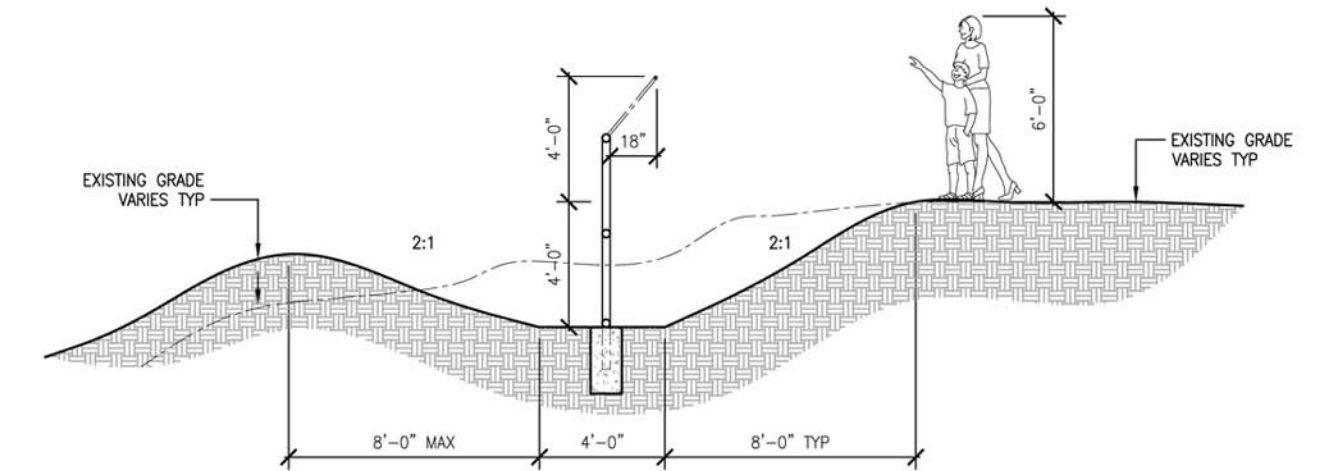
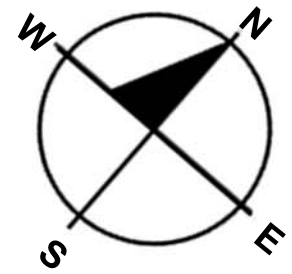
April 8, 2010





# 2010 Proposed Specific Location of Perimeter Fence

April 8, 2010



**Engineered Swale**  
Referenced in red on site.  
TYPICAL



**Perimeter Fence**  
TYPICAL REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE OF PERIMETER FENCE

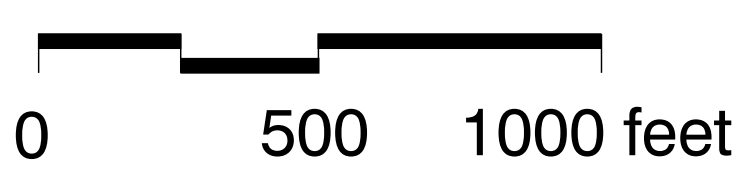
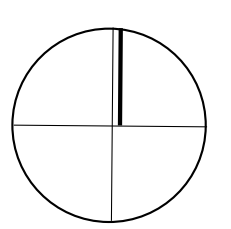




Planned Veterinary Medical Building  
South West Elevation: Shadows at Spring Equinox







1 ● → Simulation Viewpoint

**Simulation Viewpoint Locations**  
Oakland Zoo in Knowland Park





Existing view from Knowland Park trail looking west (VP 1)



Visual simulation of proposed project after construction





Existing view from Hood Street looking north (VP 2)



Visual simulation of proposed project after construction





Existing view from Golf Links Road looking southeast (VP 3)



Visual simulation of proposed project after construction





Existing view from Royal Oak Road looking southwest (VP 4)



Visual simulation of proposed project after construction





Existing view from I-580 looking south (VP 5)



Visual simulation of proposed project after construction



ATTACHMENT B  
PUBLIC COMMENTS



**Ranelletti, Darin**

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**From:** cecil grimes [clg\_grimes@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Friday, March 26, 2010 7:17 AM

**To:** Ranelletti, Darin

**Subject:** Oak.Zoo Master Plan

Good Morning Darin

I was at the meeting last night, the one who talked about concerns of peace. As someone who only has a chain link fence to separate me and my family from Knowland Zoo, we have concerns noise, safety, and traffic head the list. The Master Plan maybe good for visitors, but we have to live with the wild animals. We have to live with the bright light in our bedrooms in the winter and loud music in the summer.

The upper parking lot is where I lay my ahead for peace at night.

Surely we want to be made aware of the upcoming events, and be part of the changes that will a cure, please put on the list of upcoming meeting.

Thank You  
Cecil Grimes



**Ranelletti, Darin**

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**From:** vakhsh [cherma6@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 26, 2010 2:13 PM  
**To:** Ranelletti, Darin  
**Subject:** sad subject,copy of my letter to Zoo

Dear Zoo opportunists,

I have read your letter, and I am very alarmed. Let me begin with the words in your letter: "**The Oakland Zoo is breaking new ground** in science education and conservation that will help save California's rich and threatened natural history through education, exhibits, collaboration and awareness." This statement is supported by the following catch phrases:

- " Growing Education & Conservation Leadership"
- " Investing in Oakland & the Bay Area Economy"
- " Taking Care of Knowland Park & the Environment"
- " Enhancing the Regions' Cultural Assets"

My first scary thought on reading this was: **The Oakland Zoo is taking new ground**, literally. Unfortunately, I fear that you may accomplish just that, and that you may never cease taking new ground.

I decided to test your real intentions with the help of simple questions: are your intentions altruistic or not. My answer is they are not. Altruistic intentions and actions are usually modest in their manifestations and strong in results. The selection of your words is typical for propaganda cases, in short – brainwashing. For example, you tout an energy-efficient gondola in your plan to prove that you know how to conserve the energy, but if you were really so intent on Conservation and saving energy, you would not expand at all. I do not believe that through your actions the Oakland Zoo and Oakland will become a center of the universe as you are presenting it. And for Goodness sake, it should not be that way. I believe you are promising more than you really plan to deliver.

My next litmus test regards your integrity: You have been contractually obligated for decades to care for Knowland Park. I have lived next to Knowland Park for 18 years and I walk the park every day, and I can say that you have failed to care for Knowland Park. Knowland Park has been left unmanaged, and is not regenerating despite the efforts of local animals and birds. Goats destroy all new saplings of bushes and trees indiscriminately. Conifers – not native trees are dying of age and disease. Goats destroy the few young saplings that grow in the spring right away. Oak trees are very prolific but follow the same fate as the other saplings. I know why you did not maintain your duty: it is because it would be too altruistic to take care of the ground that does not bring you revenue. Now you are promising to do further damage to Knowland Park, and introduce captive animals by taking the space from animals living in freedom.

I think you are spreading propaganda for your own purposes, and I do not support your adventure. Knowland Park is a beautiful place. I ask you to truly collaborate with us in the community, and cease your efforts to expand into Knowland Park.

Sincerely  
Victor Ross  
10701 Lochard St., Oakland, Ca 94605



TO: Oakland Zoo, Councilmember Larry Reid, Darin Ranelletti, Oakland City Planning Department

FROM: Ruth Malone & Jason Webster, Co-Chairs, on behalf of Friends of Knowland Park

RE: Comments on Zoo exhibits and noncompliance with terms of prior approvals

March 25, 2010

1. Friends of Knowland Park observe that the Oakland Zoo has sent certified mail copies of three 1-page exhibits for comment to representatives of the Knowland Park Highlands Association and Friends of Knowland Park and invited comments on these within the following 30 days. While we appreciate the opportunity to comment these preliminary plans, this procedure does not satisfy the Conditions of Approval in Oakland City Council Resolution 74736, Exhibit C, Modifications to Conditions of Approval Attached to and Made a Part of Zoning Case No. CM97-25, Paragraph 4. The three drawings provided are woefully insufficient to constitute a "final plan" as specifically called for in the Conditions of Approval. We would expect that a "final plan" submitted to the city, as provided for in the Conditions of Approval, would include far more detail than three 1-page sketches and would include, for example, a fully developed drainage plan, grading plan, detailed building descriptions and drawings, and so forth. Indeed, in its February 25, 2010 Memorandum to the public, the Zoo recognizes that comment solicited as part of this process will help "finalize" its proposal to the City. When the Zoo does prepare its final plan, we expect that the notification procedures set forth in the Conditions of Approval will be initiated at that time. If the Zoo believes that it is submitting a perimeter fence plan only, we note that City Planning has assured us that there will be no approval of the fence plan alone in the absence of full review and approval of the contents behind the fence, including exact locations of all buildings, exhibits, and other planned alterations.

2. We believe that the CA! project as proposed, and as approved in 1998 Council Resolution 74736, should never have been approved to the scale noted in the Zoo application. The scope and scale of the proposed expansion must be reevaluated in light of the myriad major changes to the previous project as well as changes since 12 years ago in public attitudes toward and use of open space, pressure on existing wildlife, planned new developments in the area, and environmental change. This project will fundamentally alter the existing tranquil character of the park and its viewshed. No fenceline approval should be given until the entire project has been submitted for complete reassessment and full CEQA review, including the preparation of an EIR.

3. The Zoo does not have enough money to finance this project, nor are they willing to share with the public even the assumptions upon which they have developed a business plan for operational costs and maintenance of this enormous expansion. The Zoo should not be permitted to fence off any portion of parkland to open public use until it can



provide assurance that it can carry this project to full fruition, and has the means to make it successful longer term even in difficult economic conditions.

4. The fenceline approvals must be tied to final approvals for the plan in total, not piecemeal. The Oak Knoll project is a perfect example of what not to do: give approvals and begin tearing stuff apart, then the developer runs out of money.

5. The proposed fenceline violates the tenets of the Oakland General Plan, and violates the specific elements of the OSCAR that apply to Knowland Park, and which call for preservation of ridgelines. We strongly urge that the fenceline and the expansion area be moved westward to the next trail intersection, a distance of approximately 450 yards, which would preserve the park's magnificent viewshed and tranquil character while allowing a still significant expansion of the Zoo. Currently, the fenceline appears to run directly through an area that, prior to the last Zoo-initiated grading which unnecessarily cut a new track, effectively draining it, was a vernal pool used by breeding frogs and regularly visited in the rainy season by ducks. We believe this track of grading, which was completely unnecessary for any fire protection purpose, was done at the Zoo's behest to avoid having to protect the vernal pool. We request that the City perform a full investigation of this grading and that the Zoo be required to restore this seasonal pool and move the development area away from it.

6. To date, the impacts of a fenceline crossing the Knowland Park Open Space have not been analyzed under CEQA. Nor have the fenceline's effects on the existing ecosystem within the park been adequately analyzed and mitigated. The previous Mitigated Negative Declaration failed to adequately address these significant impacts, and a Supplemental EIR must be prepared, due to the extensive changes in the Zoo's plans, changes in Environmental Law, the increased value of natural ecosystems to society, and increased awareness of the value of Open Space to the regional community.

7. Due Process: If Planning were to approve the construction of fenceline prior to the approvals on the final plan, then our right to due process will have been circumvented because the location and scope of the fenceline will essentially dictate the outcome of the project as a whole. In addition, we strongly protest the Zoo's repeated dismissal of community concerns voiced over a period of several years and denial of the community's right to have a say in the multiple major changes made in the plans during the ensuing years. We also protest Zoo Board Members' characterizations of community concerns as essentially selfish and "ignorant". At no time has the Zoo made more than minimal cosmetic changes in response to repeatedly-voiced community concerns.

8. There is no such thing as "public parkland" if it is fenced and inaccessible to the public. The Grant Deed for Knowland Park requires that Knowland Park remain public parklands. The scope of the proposed fenceline far exceeds the scope of the Zoo's proposed usage. We expect that the final approved perimeter fence will be hemmed more closely to the footprint of space allocated for Zoo activities. Any portion of Knowland Park that is not specifically allocated out for Zoo Exhibit Use must remain unfenced. Any portion of Knowland Land that falls within a perimeter fence must be considered "used"



by the Oakland Zoo, and must be considered as an "impact" in the relevant impact studies and reports.

9. So-called "story poles" placed by the Zoo are completely inadequate to convey to park users the impact of the expansion. There is no explanation attached to them and they are not readily visible. A much more comprehensive set of story poles including attached photomockups is required to help the public visualize the impact of these changes on park use and on the character of the remaining parkland.



**Ranelletti, Darin**

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**From:** Peri Caylor [pericaylor@sbcglobal.net]

**Sent:** Saturday, March 27, 2010 8:47 AM

**To:** Ranelletti, Darin

**Subject:** Oakland Zoo Expansion

Dear Mr. Ranelletti,

Former Niles kindergarten teacher David Makki brought to my attention the proposed expansion of the Oakland Zoo to include California! among its wonderful exhibits. I would like to briefly express my support for this proposal, which would allow people to see and learn about the history and status of California native species.

Such an exhibit would illustrate the need to preserve and/or restore various animal habitats statewide. Urbanites young and old who otherwise see just a handful of animal species could learn about the diverse creatures that inhabit various regions of our state. Finally, the addition of such an exhibit would enable the Oakland Zoo to enhance the already stellar job it already does in teaching school children, day campers, and other young visitors about the roles that all creatures great and small play in our wonderful world.

My children spent several years attending camp at the Oakland Zoo, and I regularly brought my children and their friends to the zoo during the years we had a membership. Our involvement with the zoo gave us a wonderful introduction to creatures wild and domestic, from insects to rodents to large mammals. I would be delighted to have yet another reason to visit this outstanding institution.

Sincerely,  
Peri Caylor  
Fremont



**Stefanie Gandolfi**

81 Donna Way  
Oakland, CA 94605  
(510) 568-3972  
stef.gandolfi@sbcglobal.net

March 28, 2010

**Re: Plan to Expand Oakland Zoo in Knowland Park**

I am writing to express my chief concerns over the plans of the East Bay Zoological Society to expand the Oakland Zoo into Knowland Park. I live in a single-family home on a side-street off of Elysian Fields Drive, which is up the hill from the entrance to the zoo on Golf Links Road.

I want to say, at the outset, that I am not writing as what is derisively known as "NIMBY." I will not be able to see the proposed development -- or likely even hear it -- from my backyard, and I am not concerned about what it will do to my property values or about the introduction of unsavory persons into the area. But, I do know my neighborhood and my city intimately. I have read all the information publically available concerning the project and attended every community meeting sponsored by the Society, and I still have questions. I do not believe that I am raising them for purely selfish reasons.

The Society has been working on the design of this project for decades, yet its plans remain very fluid. The gondola ride, the campgrounds, the amphitheater, are all new elements. Since the perimeter fence includes something like 60 acres -- way more than the proposed facilities would seem to require -- what assurance do we have that there will not be further development, further "improvements," until all the 60 acres are built up? And what assurances do we have that the Society will not ask for more parkland in the years to come?

Even as presently configured, however, I am concerned about the loss of open space at or near the ridgeline of the Oakland hills. Although Oakland's master plan calls for the preservation of such land, the reality is that there is very little of it left. Moreover, in the time since the City Council originally approved the Society's "master plan" in 1998, our priorities as a society as a whole with respect to the environment have changed dramatically. While I am not a big hiker or bird-watcher myself, I appreciate the value of this rare and precious natural resource to everyone.

I am also concerned because there never has been a full environmental review of the project as a whole. In 1998, the City Council signed off on a mitigated negative declaration, not an EIR. Now, as I understand it, the city's Planning Department is reviewing the "addendum" to the Society's master plan under CEQA as well as city and county regulations. In view of new elements



introduced since 1998, and the changed needs and pressures in our community, including increased density, traffic congestion, air pollution, and noise pollution, as well as the accelerated loss of wilderness for native plants and wildlife, the cumulative impacts, if not any individual feature of the plan, compel further study.

Finally, I am concerned about public safety. There is, as you know, only one entrance to and exit from the zoo, at the intersection of I-580, Mountain Blvd, and Golf Links Rd., and this is not slated to change. Traffic congestion there is already a problem even on weekdays, let alone weekends and holidays. Cars get stuck on the off ramp from the freeway and on Golf Links Rd., which has a sharp curve just before the stop sign so that people coming down the hill can't even see if there's a back up. The Society is projecting that attendance at the zoo will double with this expansion from approximately 500,000 to 1 million people a year. This will create an incredibly dangerous situation under normal circumstances, but what is really horrifying is the prospect of a disaster such as a fire or an earthquake -- actually, the certainty of a disaster such as fire or earthquake -- where hysterical people will be trying to get out of the zoo and the neighborhoods above. One does not even have to go to San Francisco to understand what can happen; we have seen the consequences right here in the East bay.

The Oakland Zoo is a terrific asset not only for Oakland, but for the world. If we humans must keep wild animals in captivity, Dr. Parrott has done everything humanly possible to make the best of the situation, and there is no question that a high quality veterinary hospital is absolutely necessary if he is to continue to do so. Nevertheless, I question whether it is absolutely necessary to fence in this remnant of what we once were to preserve it.

I appreciate this opportunity to make comments on the project, and I look forward to participating as the public process unfolds.

Sincerely,  
Stefanie Gandolfi



## Ranelletti, Darin

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**From:** Thomas DeBoni [tomdeboni@mac.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 30, 2010 2:50 PM  
**To:** friends-of-knowland-park@googlegroups.com  
**Subject:** A message for supporters of Knowland Park

Dear Knowland Park Supporters,

There was a full house, Thursday night, at the Zoo's meeting and the vast majority of community members spoke out strongly against the Zoo's "California" theme park exhibit, raising questions about loss of existing wildlife habitat, traffic, noise, visual blight, and most particularly about the loss of access to the heart of our parkland open space. Thanks to all of you who turned out and spoke out!

By contrast, almost every person speaking in favor of the Zoo's expansion plan was either a Zoo employee, married to a Zoo employee, Zoo board member, or otherwise affiliated with the Zoo.

Repeatedly, community members also expressed anger over the Zoo's dismissive and disrespectful response to community concerns and asked why, if the Zoo cared about the community, it had refused, during the past 2 years during which this current plan was being developed, to work with community members on a plan all could support. Instead, the Zoo continues to simply announce what it has decided. Seeking community input, as one community member put it, was "a sham" under the circumstances.

Darin Ranelletti of Oakland's city planning department announced that the planning department has scheduled an informational briefing for the planning commission for April 21 at 6 pm at City Hall. PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW AND TURN OUT TO HELP US SAVE KNOWLAND PARK for future generations to enjoy.

Meanwhile, we continue to work to spread the word and engage more community members to defend the last, largest remaining piece of open space owned by the city. Please let us know if you want to get more involved, and thanks for helping keep our open space OPEN!

Best,  
Ruth, Jason, and the Friends of Knowland Park team  
[www.saveknowland.org](http://www.saveknowland.org)<<http://www.saveknowland.org/>>



**Ranelletti, Darin**

---

**From:** Nik Haas-Dehejia [Nik@oaklandzoo.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2010 11:46 AM  
**To:** Ranelletti, Darin; Miller, Scott  
**Cc:** Wald, Mark  
**Subject:** Letter to the Editor in Support of the Zoo  
**Attachments:** DavidLee\_ZooSupportLettertoEditor\_041210.pdf

Darin, and Scott –

Attached is a letter to the editor that was posted in today's (April 12, 2010) Bay Area News Group papers (Oakland Tribune, Tri-Valley Herald, The Daily Review, San Mateo County Times, The Argus, and Alameda Times Star). Please place this letter in the public file.

Let me know if you have questions or comments.

Nik

---

Nik Haas-Dehejia  
Director, Strategic Initiatives  
Oakland Zoo  
Post Office Box 5238  
Oakland, CA 94605  
Tel: 510.632.9525 x138  
Fax: 510.635.5719

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Oakland Zoo 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland CA. 94605



# OPINION

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FOR MORE GO TO [CONTRACOSTATIMES.COM](http://CONTRACOSTATIMES.COM) AND [INSIDEBAYAREA.COM](http://INSIDEBAYAREA.COM)

## NIMBYs on zoo expansion

SEARCHING FOR a useful post-judicial life, I became a docent at the Oakland Zoo four years ago.

During my tenure at the zoo, I have grown to have enormous respect for what it does for the region. I have personally educated school children from Oakland's flat lands and seniors on outings from assisted living facilities.

After a tour for cerebral palsy-afflicted visitors, a caretaker for one confided that a young man's laughter was the first he had heard in five years.

The zoo's 600,000 annual visitors learn about their environment, whether lost or unaccessible. The proposed California exhibit will add much to that learning experience.

I recently attended a community meeting at the Oakland Zoo. The difference between fear and fact is information. Most of the neighbors in attendance had fears; information can and will address most, if not all of them.

A few were more concerned with their "stop expansion" cause than getting information; much less the best interests of Oakland and its citizens.

This is the classic not-in-my-back-yard attitude. It was clear that they don't care about anything but crass personal interests; their panoramic views and public land backyards.

David C. Lee  
Oakland



**Ranelletti, Darin**

---

**From:** Nik Haas-Dehejia [Nik@oaklandzoo.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2010 7:40 PM  
**To:** Ranelletti, Darin  
**Subject:** Letters of Endorsement and Support for the Zoo - Please Place in Public File  
**Attachments:** LettersofSupportforZoo\_041210.pdf; LettersofEndorsementforZoo\_041210.pdf

Darin --

I am attaching two different sets of documents that I would like you to place in the public file:

- Letters of Endorsement for the Zoo from Bay Area and Oakland-based community organizations, businesses, and other thought leaders
- Letters of Support for the Zoo from Knowland Park neighbors, Zoo members, and other interested individuals

Please let me know if you have questions.

Nik

---

Nik Haas-Dehejia  
Director, Strategic Initiatives  
Oakland Zoo  
Post Office Box 5238  
Oakland, CA 94605  
Tel: 510.632.9525 x138  
Fax: 510.635.5719

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Vice President, Policy, Government,

and Public Affairs

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JIM WUNDERMAN

President & CEO, Bay Area Council

201 California Street, Suite 1450

San Francisco, CA 94111

(415) 981-6600

# BAY AREA COUNCIL

March 4, 2010

Joel J. Parrott, DVM  
Executive Director  
Oakland Zoo  
9777 Golf Links Road  
Oakland, CA 94605

Dear Dr. Parrott:

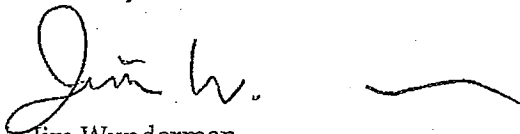
The Bay Area Council supports the Oakland Zoo's vision for improving and expanding the Zoo in Knowland Park.

Serving more than 600,000 visitors annually, the Oakland Zoo is one of the Bay Area's crown jewels – a cultural and educational asset for our region.

According to a recent economic impact report by the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, "the Oakland Zoo's operating expenses, revenues and planned capital expenditures will have a substantial and growing impact on local and regional economies. In 2009, the Oakland Zoo generated a total of 293 jobs and contributed \$ 19.4 million in expenditures in the region. In the next few years, the Zoo's future construction will bring \$111 million into the region with the construction of the 17,000-square foot Veterinary Medical Hospital and an approximately 20-acre California! Exhibit." Additionally, the project is anticipated to generate more than 200 construction jobs.

The Oakland Zoo's contributions to the local economy are as significant as any private sector organization. The Bay Area Council encourages the Zoo's plans for growth.

Sincerely,



Jim Wunderman  
President & CEO  
Bay Area Council





February 17, 2010

Honorable Mayor Ron Dellums  
One Frank Ogawa Plaza  
One City Hall Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mayor Dellums:

The Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce (OAACC) supports a proposal by the Oakland Zoo to complete a Master Plan for improvements to the zoo in Knowland Park.

One of Oakland's landmarks and a major regional attraction, the Oakland Zoo serves more than 600,000 visitors annually through educational programming focused on animals, ecology, and California natural history. The expansion project will provide enhanced educational opportunities for our students, families and other life-long learners.

Improvements to the Oakland Zoo are sure to bolster our local economy during a very difficult time. The project is expected to generate nearly \$90 million of total economic impact. Local businesses will benefit from the development, which also will create hundreds of local construction jobs, including "green collar" jobs.

Finally, by enhancing one of the regions cultural assets, the zoo will draw more visitors to Oakland and bolster the city as a premier educational, cultural, arts, and entertainment destination.

In addition, the zoo developed its Zoo to Community (ZTC) Program in October 2006 to serve the underserved populations Oakland. ZTC is a scholarship program for Title 1 schools including head start programs and child development centers. In FY2009, the ZTC program served more than 6525 students in East Oakland and other underserved areas of Oakland. We are proud of the zoo's effort to outreach to all communities of Oakland.

The OAACC encourages your approval of the zoo's vision and plans for growth.

Sincerely,

Wil Hardee  
President and CEO

449 15th Street, Suite 410  
Oakland, CA 94612-2831

Tel: 510-268-1600

Fax: 510-268-1602

www.OAACC.org

info@oaacc.org

President & CEO

Wil Hardee

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# Jobs and Housing Coalition

"Improving Oakland Together"

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February 1, 2010

The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums, Mayor  
The Honorable Members of the Oakland City Council  
City Hall,  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Re: JHC SUPPORTS OAKLAND ZOO EXPANSION**

**The Jobs and Housing Coalition (JHC) SUPPORTS plans to improve and expand the Oakland Zoo.**

The Oakland Zoo is one of Oakland's most successful and important tourist and educational institutions. Over the past 87 years, this revered institution has served Oakland and the entire East Bay well. The Zoo receives 600,000 visitors annually, drawing from across the region. The Zoo also serves more than 50,000 children through educational activities and programs each year, including a significant portion of free admissions through the *Zoo-to-Community* program.

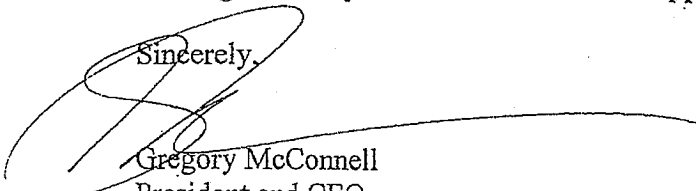
JHC supports the Zoo's expansion because it will provide new educational opportunities to a larger audience of people from throughout the Bay Area. As well, expansion will help grow our local economy and create jobs. Improvements to the Oakland Zoo are projected to generate nearly \$90 million in total economic impact. Local businesses and suppliers will benefit from the purchase of construction materials, supplies and services – generating significant economic growth in the area. Additionally, the expansion project is anticipated to generate more than 200 construction jobs.

As President Obama said in the State of the Union and as we in Oakland know so very well, economic development and job creation must be considered one of our top public policy priorities. In that regard, support for expansion of the Zoo is a double win – it improves an exceptional and vital institution, and it creates jobs and economic opportunities in Oakland.

Oakland is a wonderful city and the Zoo is one of our finest venues. Let's take this opportunity to show the Bay Area and the nation that we are committed to offering great tourism, exceptional educational venues, and outstanding entertainment to our residents and visitors.

**We urge the Mayor and the Council to support the Zoo's plans for growth.**

Sincerely,



Gregory McConnell  
President and CEO

CC: Dr. Joel Parrott, Executive Director, Oakland Zoo

---

350 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 703, Oakland, CA 94612 p. (510) 834-0400 f. (510) 834-3515





**Pacific Gas and  
Electric Company®**

Tom Guarino  
Public Affairs' Manager  
Government Relations

1330 Broadway,  
Suite 1535  
Oakland, CA 94612

December 2, 2009

Dear Mayor/Oakland City Councilmembers:

PG&E has been involved with the East Bay Zoological Society (aka Oakland Zoo) for many years and believes in the value of the Zoo's environmental, educational, and community-focused mission. The Zoo is presented with a unique opportunity to expand as a major regional resource and Bay Area attraction and this expansion will provide educational opportunities that will greatly benefit students, families and other life-long learners throughout the Bay Area. PG&E fully supports the Zoo's plans for expansion.

The Oakland Zoo serves more than 600,000 visitors annually through educational programming focused on animals, ecology, and California natural history. The Zoo also serves more than 50,000 children through these educational activities and programs each year, including a significant portion of free admissions through its *Zoo-to-Community* program, a program that takes teachers and small educational animals in a hybrid vehicle to underserved schools in the local community.

The Oakland Zoo's commitment to environmental conservation is to be applauded. The Zoo was amongst a small group of organizations to receive the 2009 PG&E Green Award. From building the largest LED energy efficient holiday lights show in Northern California to powering its education center with solar panels, to using hybrid vehicles and other vehicles powered by bio-diesel fuel, the Zoo actively demonstrates its commitment to energy efficiency. PG&E proudly underwrote many of these initiatives.

The Zoo and its future growth plans will expand and enhance opportunities for more than a half a million families each year that will serve as an important destination to learn about animals, ecology, the environment and conservation.

The Zoo has demonstrated that clearly the environment, education and economic development can all peacefully coexist.

PG&E applauds the Zoo's vision and plans for growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tom Guarino'.

Tom Guarino





OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

expect Success

ALISON MCDONALD Executive Officer, High School Network 1

every student. every classroom. every day.

April 7, 2010

Dear Mayor Dellums and Oakland City Council Members,

I am writing to express my support for the Oakland Zoo, most specifically its strong and consistent efforts around working collaboratively with the Oakland Unified School District on behalf of children in our city. The Zoo has a terrific "School to Community" program that brings children to the Zoo and animals to schools. This school year alone the Oakland Zoo has used a grant to fill up over 45 buses with students from Oakland Unified without charging admission to the youngsters to come to the Zoo and learn.

The Oakland Zoo has an Education Department that is staffed with employees who are dedicated full time to teaching the community about animals and about conservation. They are making a tremendous contribution to our city by focusing their efforts on young people and involving them with the important aspects of animal welfare, science and habitat conservation. They run programs for children who are very young, older children and teenagers who get involved in the Zoo as mentors to young Zoo campers, as volunteers and as employees through the "Mayor's Summer Jobs Program". The Oakland Zoo Education Department has also been working with Oakland Unified District Science teachers to help them become more familiar with the resources available at the Zoo. Science teachers have been meeting at the Zoo and developing curriculum that might inspire their students to pursue a future in a scientific field.

I fully support the efforts of the Oakland Zoo to expand and enhance the educational opportunities for Oakland youth through the "California" Project which will take the educational programs of the Zoo to new levels. The California Project will be one more way that young people can be introduced to animals from our state and learn about important features of our state's natural history.

The Oakland Zoo is a wonderful city resource with terrific educational potential for our children. Please support the on-going efforts of the Zoo to expand and thereby increase its mission of serving our community through its conservation and educational efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this letter and for supporting the educational efforts of the Oakland Zoo.

Sincerely,

Alison McDonald  
Executive Director, High School Network



# JACK McABOY

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March 14, 2010

The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums, Mayor  
The Honorable Members of the Oakland City Council  
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board Supports Zoo Improvements.

Dear Mayor and Oakland City Council Members:

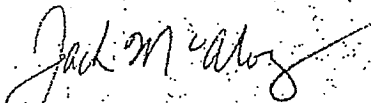
As a member of the East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board and an active volunteer in many Oakland community programs, I am writing to express my strong support for the Zoo's vision for improving and expanding the Zoo in Knowland Park.

The Zoo serves over 600,000 visitors annually. It is a magnet for families, including the most senior members of the families who love to bring their grandchildren to the zoo. The Zoo provides educational opportunities for more than 50,000 children each year, including many free admissions through its recognized *Zoo-to-Community* program. The proposed improvements will allow the Zoo to serve even more families with a richer variety of offerings.

At a time when Oakland desperately needs to create and retain jobs, the Oakland Zoo is poised to help grow our local economy and create hundreds of new jobs through construction of this project. With a projection of \$110 million of total economic impact, local businesses and suppliers will benefit from the purchase of construction materials, supplies and services.

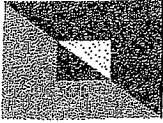
As the Zoo continues to invest in Oakland and the Bay Area economy, and continues to be a major attraction for Oakland, I offer my full support of the Zoo's plans for growth.

Sincerely,



Jack McAboy  
Chairman, Sylvan Learning Centers  
East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board  
Past President, Rotary Club of Oakland  
Past Chairman, Better Business Bureau of the Bay Area  
Past Chairman, Oakland Youthworks





# Pacific Publishing Company

636 South Alaska Street, Seattle, WA. 98108

1022 Grass Valley Road, Winnemucca, NV 89445

Peter Bernhard

*President*

(925) 683 0439

(925) 362 8228 fax

March 3, 2010

The Honorable Ronald V. Dellums, Mayor  
The Honorable Members of the Oakland City Council  
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board Supports Zoo Improvements**

Dear Mayor and Oakland City Council Members:

As a member of the East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board for over 15 years, and long time Bay Area resident, I am writing to express my strong support for the Zoo's vision for improving and expanding the Zoo in Knowland Park.

The Oakland Zoo serves 600,000 visitors annually, drawing youth, students, families, and seniors from across the region. I admire the Zoo's exemplary commitment to serving students throughout Oakland and the region, providing educational opportunities to more than 50,000 children each year, including many free admissions through its recognized *Zoo-to-Community* program. The Zoo's proposed improvements will only increase educational opportunities for a larger audience.

At a time when Oakland desperately needs to retain and add jobs, the Oakland Zoo is poised to help grow our local economy and create hundreds of new jobs through construction of this project. With a projection of more than \$110 million of total economic impact, local businesses and suppliers will benefit from the purchase of construction materials, supplies and services.

Over the years I have seen the Zoo grow and improve. When I think back to my early years on the Board and compare the Zoo experience then to the Zoo experience now I can't help but be impressed with the work done by Zoo management. Your support of this organization and its vision for growth is well placed. As the Oakland Zoo continues to invest in Oakland and the Bay Area economy, please know I offer my full support of the Zoo's plans for growth.

Sincerely,

Peter Bernhard

East Bay Zoological Society Foundation Board

Former President and Publisher, Alameda Newspaper Group and The Oakland Tribune



December 16, 2009

TO: Oakland City Planning Commission and Councilmembers

RE: Oakland Zoo's California Project Approval

I have studied the Oakland Zoo's plans for the California Project, toured the site they have selected, and talked with staff about the exhibits they wish to put in and the projected land use. I wish to express my genuine admiration and to register my whole-hearted and enthusiastic support for what they propose to do. I urge you to approve their plans as submitted and allow them to proceed with a project that will bring great benefit to us all.

I've long admired the splendid work of the Oakland Zoo in public education and conservation. While world class, the zoo also serves the regional community in significant and exemplary ways. High standards and broad vision manifest themselves in programs that attract and instruct a range of people from toddlers to professional biologists. The opportunity to admire animal life and to wonder at its beauty and diversity is eagerly embraced by thousands. The popularity of the Zoo has been achieved not through hype, advertising, and false promises but through the honesty, integrity, and genuine value of what it offers. They have created an institution that is advanced, sophisticated, and scholarly yet still filled with excitement and popular appeal.

I feel that the California Project is not just an add-on or an afterthought, but it is essential to the mission of the Oakland Zoo and of huge importance to Oakland and Bay Area residents. A deeper understanding and appreciation of California's environmental history is necessary to the state's understanding of itself and the caring of its natural heritage. The California Project offers zoo visitors an opportunity to reflect not just on animals from exotic places but on the land we live on, the people we are. It will serve an essential role in inspiring and educating thousands of school children, local East Bay residents, and will attract widespread attention and audience. It will be a significant asset to Oakland and indeed the entire region.

Please do approve this promising project.

Kindest regards,



Malcolm Margolin  
Publisher





February 22, 2010

To the Members of the Oakland City Council:

I am writing to express my strongest support for the Oakland Zoo and its new California Project. I am the Founder and Executive Director of Felidae Conservation Fund, a locally based conservation organization dedicated to protecting wild cats and their habitats worldwide. Because we are based in the Bay Area, we have a special concern about preserving the California mountain lion and the ecosystems they live in. As we and many other conservation organizations have learned, a big part of achieving our goals involves informing and educating the public about the natural balance of local ecosystems, and the importance of protecting them before it is too late. The Oakland Zoo's California Project promises to do just that, at an unprecedented level, by providing a powerful new platform for raising public understanding and awareness about natural habitats in our state and the critical challenges now facing them.

In the Bay Area, and all over the planet, rapid human development has been reducing and fragmenting wildlife habitat at an alarming rate, raising significant concerns for the health of our natural environments and the species that inhabit them. While scientific studies are an essential foundation for conservation success, the most critical and elusive piece is a well-informed and concerned citizenry that is willing to support measures and policies to ensure the health of our natural world for future generations. However changing public attitudes is a slow and difficult process. The tools that are generally available - community meetings, educational presentations, school programs, informational videos, online activities, etc. - are inherently limited to words and images which all too often have little impact in our media-crazed culture. This is where the California Project is different. It offers a unique opportunity to teach about the environment in a direct and dramatic way that will affect people on a lasting basis.

The California Project redefines the learning experience by immersing it in the actual ecosystems being studied. The educational impact of its innovative programs, workshops and exhibits will be significantly enhanced by the sights, sounds and smells of the species and habitats being studied. This direct connection to the natural world through native ecosystem exhibits will affect people on an instinctive level, and impress upon them in a powerful way that our local ecosystems are both incredibly precious and extremely fragile, and must be protected while there is still time.

I've personally met with the management at the Oakland Zoo to discuss ways that Felidae can provide content and guidance for the mountain lion exhibit. I am excited that they will be including this species in the exhibits, because of the growing importance of teaching effective co-existence with this keystone predator. I came away from my meetings at the Zoo extremely impressed with their vision, commitment and knowledge, and their ability to deliver great educational experiences to thousands of visitors. In particular, the importance of educating schoolchildren about ecological issues cannot be overstated, because they will be the future conservationists and educators responsible for preserving our natural heritage in years to come.

I am fully confident that the California Project, once completed, will set new standards in environmental education and on-site conservation, and will establish a leadership role for the Oakland Zoo and the City of Oakland in the growing movement to protect our natural environment. I fully and strongly support this project and encourage you to do the same.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Zara McDonald, Executive Director

**Felidae Conservation Fund**  
zara@felidaefund.org www.felidaefund.org  
Excellence in Wild Cat Research, Education and Conservation

415.229.9335 • BUILDING 1062, FT CRONKHITE, SAUSALITO, CA 94965  
INFO@FELIDAEFUND.ORG • WWW.FELIDAEFUND.ORG



# VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

*Conserving Native Wildlife and their Habitats*

19045 Portola Dr., Ste. F-1

Salinas, CA 93908

P 831-455-9514

F 831-455-2846

[www.ventanaws.org](http://www.ventanaws.org)

April 12, 2010

To the Members of the Oakland City Council:

I am writing to express my support for the Oakland Zoo and its new California Project. I am the Executive Director of Ventana Wildlife Society, a California nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of native species and their habitats.

All over the planet, rapid human development has been reducing and fragmenting wildlife habitat at an alarming rate, raising significant concerns for the health of our natural environments and the species that inhabit them. While scientific studies are an essential foundation for conservation success, the most critical and elusive piece is a well-informed and concerned citizenry that is willing to support measures and policies to ensure the health of our natural world for future generations. However, changing public attitudes is a slow and difficult process. The tools that are generally available - community meetings, educational presentations, school programs, informational videos, online activities, etc. - are inherently limited to words and images which all too often have little impact in our media-crazed culture. This is where the California Project is different. It offers a unique opportunity to teach about the environment in a direct and dramatic way that will affect people on a lasting basis.

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I am fully confident that the California Project, once completed, will set new standards in environmental education and on-site conservation, and will establish a leadership role for the Oakland Zoo and the City of Oakland in the growing movement to protect our natural environment.

I fully and strongly support this project and encourage you to do the same. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

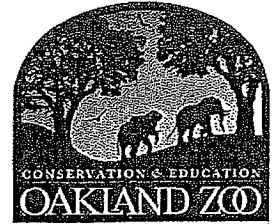
Sincerely,



Kelly Sorenson  
Executive Director







January 9, 2010

POST OFFICE BOX 5238  
OAKLAND . CA . 94605

T (510) 632-9525  
F (510) 635-5719

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

On behalf of the Executive Board of The Docent Council of the East Bay Zoological Society, I am writing to express our strong support for the Zoo's California Project, which was approved by the Oakland City Council in 1998 and will once again come before the City Council in Spring 2010. As volunteers who have dedicated many hours to the Zoo's mission and its valuable education and conservation programs, we fully support the Zoo's plans for growth and encourage you to once again approve this important project that will greatly benefit the citizens of Oakland and Northern California.

A successful 87 year-old East Bay Institution with a history of progress and growth, the Oakland Zoo serves more than 550,000 visitors annually, welcoming guests from across Northern California as well as from Oakland. The Zoo also serves more than 50,000 children through educational activities and programs each year, including the underserved of our community, and provides a significant portion of free admissions through the *Zoo-to-Community* program.

The California Project will expand and enhance opportunities for more than half a million families each year, including thousands of school children. Docents and Zoo Ambassadors are on the frontlines with these school children and other visitors, teaching them about our animals, educating them about our conservation efforts, and enhancing their visitor experience.

The California Project was approved in 1998 and the proposed modifications, including an overnight camp site that will serve students and families and a new veterinary medical hospital that will enhance the Zoo's ability to care for its animals, is smart growth that will benefit the entire community of Oakland for generations to come.

As the project moves through the approval process, we urge you to consider the benefits the Zoo and this project promises to Oakland and Northern California.

Sincerely,

Loretta McRae  
Docent President

[www.oaklandzoo.org](http://www.oaklandzoo.org)



**communityinput**

---

**From:** Kristin Dwelley [kristinlorralne@yahoo.com]  
**To:** Blake.Huntsman@seiu1021.org  
**Cc:** communityinput  
**Subject:** Support for expanaion of the Oakland Zoo  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Fri 4/2/2010 11:48 AM

Dear Planning Commllsioners,

I would like to inform you of my support for the growth and Improvement of the OAKland zoo.

The LEED certified Veterinary Hospital will be a proud addition to the sustainable leadership Oakland and the SF Bay Area are providing for the state as well as our country.

The extraordinary California exhibit will be a draw for tourist as well as locals.

As an Oakland native I am very pleased with the plans for expansion. Unfortunately, I will be out of town during the City of Oakland Planning Commission on Wednesday, April 21st, so I will not be able to express my support in person.

Sincerely,

Kristin Dwelley  
(510)530-8113



## Nik Haas-Dehejia

---

**From:** Ken Benson [kenbenson@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 25, 2010 1:27 PM  
**To:** Nik Haas-Dehejia  
**Cc:** dinah\_benson@msn.com  
**Subject:** Re: Oakland Zoo Public Meeting tomorrow the 25th of March

Nik,

Here from Ken and Dinah Benson:

We wanted to be there tonight but due to other volunteer commitments and duties we are unable to attend. We would have spoken up in support of Our Oakland Zoo. The Zoo has through it's present leadership and community support become truly a beacon for and about our city. The Zoo has grown in recognition and value within the natural and animal conservation world and it's plans for the expansion would further this development.

The proposed expansion based upon a decade old agreement with the community will not create or eliminate park and trail access to those of us that live nearby or who come to Knowland Park with their dogs to walk the trails. Instead, the Zoo is and will continue be an economic and educational magnet for Oakland. This project will create work for Oaklanders and when finished will add to the Zoo's reputation and by default help with raising the perception of Oakland. A worldclass facility such as the Zoo adds so much to our City and it's marketability to businesses, educational insstitutions, and to attract visitors that can and will get to know our City better and perhaps spend more time and money here as well.

Thank you,

Ken and Dinah Benson



**communityinput**

---

**From:** dtred811@comcast.net [dtred811@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Fri 4/2/2010 12:24 PM

**To:** communityinput

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Zoo Expansion

**Attachments:**

I grew up in San Francisco and was disheartened on recent visits to not see a lot of improvement. Once I moved to the East Bay I have found the Oakland Zoo very enjoyable. I have liked the new exhibits and improvements. I would love to see a modern Vet center along with other new exhibits. I feel all cities should have a zoo and the best zoo that they can get. We owe it the next generation.

Thank you



**communityInput**

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**From:** Jason Knight [jason@gelatoclassico.com]  
**To:** communityInput  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Zoo Expansion  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Tue 3/30/2010 3:34 PM

Hello,

I am a fervent supporter of the Oakland Zoo's expansion plans. My family and I have enjoyed the zoo for many years and believe that it not only represents an avenue for conservation, but education. My daughters are more interested in the environment, global warming issues and animal conservation because of the time we've spent at the Oakland Zoo.

It would appear that a relatively small number of neighbors are fighting very hard against the expansion to preserve their right to frolic on city land. I believe this is a selfish approach that will cheat thousands of children (and adults) from learning more about animals in general and California wildlife in particular.

I support the zoo expansion!

Jason



**communityinput**

---

**From:** David Abel [dabel35@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Sun 3/28/2010 10:43 AM

**To:** communityInput

**Cc:**

**Subject:** wonderful ideas

**Attachments:**

A short note of total support for the new add ons to what is already a special place to go to. Hope it all goes well and look forward to the finished project. Julie Steinberg and David Abel



**Nik Haas-Dehejia**

---

**From:** Peri Caylor [pericaylor@sbcglobal.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 27, 2010 8:46 AM  
**To:** Nik Haas-Dehejia  
**Cc:** dolphinca@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Oakland Zoo Expansion

Dear Mr. Haas-Dehejia,

Former Niles kindergarten teacher David Makki brought to my attention the proposed expansion of the Oakland Zoo to include California among its wonderful exhibits. I would like to briefly express my support for this proposal, which would allow people to see and learn about the history and status of California native species.

Such an exhibit would illustrate the need to preserve and/or restore various animal habitats statewide. Urbanites young and old who otherwise see just a handful of animal species could learn about the diverse creatures that inhabit various regions of our state. Finally, the addition of such an exhibit would enable the Oakland Zoo to enhance the already stellar job it already does in teaching school children, day campers, and other young visitors about the roles that all creatures great and small play in our wonderful world.

My children spent several years attending camp at the Oakland Zoo, and I regularly brought my children and their friends to the zoo during the years we had a membership. Our involvement with the zoo gave us a wonderful introduction to creatures wild and domestic, from insects to rodents to large mammals. I would be delighted to have yet another reason to visit this outstanding institution.

Sincerely,  
Peri Caylor  
Fremont



You replied on 3/1/2010 10:08 AM.

**communityinput**

**From:** kensf25@aol.com [kensf25@aol.com]  
**To:** communityinput  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Planned California Habitat & Veterinary Hospital  
**Attachments:**


**Sent:** Thu 2/25/2010 7:54 PM

Hey you all,

I have been a member of the Oakland Zoo now since my first visit in 2004. I must say, I was very impressed with it then, even though the new Valley Children's Zoo was still under construction. When I came back a year later, I was blown away by what I saw! I've seen the plans for California and the new Hospital and it is definitely a step in the right direction for the zoo, the community, the entire bay area and for all zoo's around the world. I know there has been some concern from neighbors who live next to the zoo property about land that will be lost to them who are used to walking their dogs or watching the sunset over the San Francisco Bay in the evening or just taking a nightly stroll. But those things can be done in any park in the city or any neighborhood street for that matter. This project, along with the impending Giant Panda exhibit currently being occupied by the Baboons, will help increase attendance to the point where additional staff can be hired and will help create new job opportunities, and as you all know by now, jobs are becoming harder to find as the recession shows no signs of improvement in the early part of 2010. The Hospital especially is a must. The old hospital is long outdated and needs to be better suited for the current zoo population as well as the future animals of CALIFORNIA. I am excited for this project and can't wait for it to get started assuming there is no further delays. Good luck!

Kenneth Pearson II-Redding, Ca  
Zoo member since 2004!



 You replied on 3/1/2010 9:51 AM.

**communityinput**

**From:** Maya Eberhard [Maya.Eberhard@efl.com]

**Sent:** Fri 2/26/2010 8:29 AM

**To:** communityinput

**Cc:**

**Subject:** New zoo Input

**Attachments:**

Not much more to say other than; We are so excited about these additions and can't wait to see it completed!

Hopefully a tram ride of some sort will also become available (besides the sky tram) as it would be great to be part of a guided tour.

Thank you for making an exciting and affordable family option in the East Bay!

Sincerely,

Maya Eberhard

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Confidentiality notice: This message may contain confidential information. It is intended only for the person to whom it is addressed. If you are not that person, you should not use this message. We request that you notify us by replying to this message, and then delete all copies including any contained in your reply. Thank you.



**communityinput**


---

**From:** David Abel [dabel35@gmail.com]  
**To:** communityInput  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** wonderful Ideas  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Sun 3/28/2010 10:43 AM

A short note of total support for the new add ons to what is already a special place to go to. Hope it all goes well and look forward to the finished project. Julie Steinberg and David Abel



 This message was sent with high Importance.

**communityinput**

**From:** Stewart, Bruce [Bruce.Stewart@bankers.com]

**Sent:** Thu 3/25/2010 4:17 PM

**To:** communityinput

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Plan for Oakland Zoo

**Attachments:**

I just wanted to lend my support for the planned design for the Oakland Zoo. I live in the area and feel that the Oakland Zoo is another underdeveloped and under promoted gem for this city. My line of work has me traveling and meeting people all over the bay area. I find myself constantly amazed at how many people don't realize that Oakland has a zoo, even though some drive by the area everyday. People that I have met that have been to the zoo have expressed how much they like it in comparison to San Francisco's Zoo. They also believe that there is under utilized potential.

In the past, the city of Oakland has had numerous opportunities to emerge from the "shadow of San Francisco" by creating its own identity. However, Oakland has allowed itself to be mired down with trying to please every person in the city. It's a noble cause, but also an impossibility. It seems as though everyone wants change, but is unwilling to do anything different. Unfortunately, Oakland will only be afforded a certain number of opportunities and based on its track record they soon will become few and far between. Oakland no longer has the luxury of selectivity. It is at a point where it must show that it is serious about meeting its potential. Once that potential has been met, it's my belief that Oakland will be able to accomplish all the idealized goals for every resident.

Oakland MUST shed itself of the fear of being GREAT. The plans for the Oakland Zoo are the first steps toward greatness.

Regards,  
Bruce Stewart  
Bankers Life & Casualty  
985 Atlantic Ave., Ste. 200  
Alameda, CA 94501  
Office: (510) 521-1521 x102  
Cell: (510) 414-4184  
Lic. #: 0G06101  
bruce.stewart@bankerslife.com



**Nik Haas-Dehejia**

---

**From:** David Makki [makkiburger@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 26, 2010 11:37 AM  
**To:** Nik Haas-Dehejia  
**Cc:** Dr. Parrott  
**Subject:** A message from David D. Makki

Dear Nik,

Thank you for an informative and productive meeting last night. I am excited about the proposed expansion and know in the long run the "common good" will outweigh minor detractors. Below is a statement I released to parents of my former school in Fremont asking them to support the expansion plans of the Oakland Zoo. I would like to take the opportunity to meet with you next week to brainstorm ideas on garnering more support for expansion of the zoo. Usually I visit the zoo in the afternoons for lunch and a walk. If we could meet at a mutually agreeable time next week that would be great. I realize your time is valuable and don't anticipate our brief conversation taking longer than 15 minutes. My schedule next week is not clear yet and I will try to call you Monday morning to set up a convenient time during the week. Please feel free to send me any advice or feedback.

Warm Regards,

David D. Makki  
510-396-7643

Dear Families and Community members of Niles,

During my nine years of teaching at Niles School the Oakland Zoo was a valuable resource for me and my students. Each year they visited our classroom and brought animals to share with our students. This gave our students more meaningful learning and inspired many of my students to want to learn more about animals. My 2 nephews, sister, parents, and I enjoy visiting the zoo often and the learning opportunities and leisure it affords us any many of the 7 million Bay Area residents.

I am writing to you as a voluntary advocate to support expansion of the Oakland Zoo. The zoo is proposing expansion with a new area entitled California which would have animals native to California like the wolf, grizzly bear, and jaguar in large natural exhibits. The issue is not money as most of the money has already been made through bond measures, grants, and donations over the past 10 years. The current hurdle is to get enough public support for the city council and zoo to approve the expansion project. There is a small group of local residents who believe of the 400 acres in Knowland Park, that an additional 5 acres of new structures is not warranted.

Please show your support for the expansion of the Oakland Zoo that would bring more learning opportunities and joy for children, jobs, and economic development to the city of Oakland. You can send a statement of support to Mr. Nik Haas-Dehejia at [NIK@Oaklandzoo.org](mailto:NIK@Oaklandzoo.org) and Mr. Darin Ranelletti at [dranelletti@oaklandnet.com](mailto:dranelletti@oaklandnet.com). If you are as passionate about the idea as I am you can contact Nik about speaking at a public meeting as I do.


Thank you for your consideration,

David D. Makki

Former Niles School Teacher  
Voluntary Advocate for the Oakland Zoo Expansion

3/29/2010



 You replied on 3/1/2010 10:01 AM.

To help protect your privacy, links to images, sounds, or other external content in this message have been blocked. [Click here to unblock content.](#)

## communityinput

**From:** Carrie Thompson [carrieec@hotmail.com]  
**To:** communityinput  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Input  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Thu 2/25/2010 8:10 PM

Dear Oakland Zoo,

I am very impressed with the future plans for the zoo. I noticed that the plan involved expansion into Knowland Park and neighborhood. I'm not very familiar with the area but does that involve local residences? If so, has the input of the residents been solicited? Also, we love the zoo and are excited about the upcoming exhibits. While not to sound ungrateful for what you are planning, it would nice at some point in the future to consider a hippo exhibit. We really miss seeing them.

Thanks so much for all your wonderful dedication to the zoo patrons and local community.

Sincerely,  
 Mike, Carrie, & Nicholas Thompson

---

Date: Thu, 25 Feb 2010 19:39:28 -0500  
 From: memberships@oaklandzoo.org  
 To: carrieec@hotmail.com  
 Subject: A Special Message From Dr. Parrott

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

## OAKLAND ZOO SEEKS COMMUNITY INPUT

Dear Members and Friends of the Oakland Zoo -

2010 promises to be a monumental year for the Oakland Zoo as we set the stage to extend the Zoo's footprint, beginning with the construction of a new 17,000 square foot Veterinary Medical Hospital -- the first US Green Building Council LEED certified facility of its kind in California. Our vision also includes a new 20-acre California exhibit, featuring native California animals and the protection of 30+ acres of open-space California habitat.

In 1998 the Oakland Zoo obtained Oakland City Council approval of a Master Plan for the Zoo. Many elements are completed, including the Maddie's Center for Science and Environmental Education and the Wayne and Gladys Valley Children's Zoo. Today, the Zoo is preparing final details for the remaining elements of the Master Plan - the California exhibit, including a relocated Veterinary Medical Hospital, and the associated perimeter fence that will expand and improve the existing Zoo for children, families, seniors, and other wildlife enthusiasts.

In accordance with the Zoo's 1998 Master Plan approval, for the next 30 days, the Zoo will accept written comments about three exhibits. To download the documents for review, please click "[Oakland Zoo Improvement Plans for Community Input.](#)"



**communityinput**

---

**From:** Sarah Robson [sarahr66@gmail.com]  
**To:** communityinput  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** zoo development  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Sat 3/27/2010 8:10 PM

Last weekend, I hiked the trails of Knowland Park for the first time. Though I've lived in the East Bay for seventeen years and have been an Oakland Zoo volunteer for several years, I have never been in the part of Knowland Park above the zoo before. It was only an orienteering event which my family attended which introduced me to the other wild side of Knowland Park. It is a truly beautiful space.

While in the park I had a conversation with volunteers from Friends of Knowland Park about their views on the zoo's plans to expand into part of the upper part of the park. I understand their concerns about losing to development a piece of land that is beloved to them. If Knowland Park was my neighborhood open space, I would certainly want to preserve it as it is. Open space preservation is something my husband and I value greatly. We decided to stay in the bay area in large part because of the high quality of life made possible by all the open space that has been preserved around us by citizens during the last century. We are committed to preserving open spaces and have made provision for the support of that goal in our estate plans.

In spite of my general attitudes towards open space preservation, I support the Oakland Zoo's development of the California exhibit in Knowland Park. I believe that it is worth sacrificing the relatively small area of land which would be built on, in pursuit of the larger goals of promoting knowledge of and respect for California's natural environment in a large and diverse population.

At present, it seems that upper Knowland Park is not truly accessible to all. There seems to be no signage at entrances to the park and no trail maps, either on signage or otherwise. It is a lovely piece of open space but, it seems, accessible to only those in the know presumably mostly those who live in the hill neighborhoods surrounding it. In contrast, the zoo's plans would make it accessible to a much larger and more diverse population.

The California exhibit would promote knowledge and respect for local wildlife, habitats and the enjoyment of wild open spaces. We need all parts of our citizenry to care about their local environment in order for its preservation to be prioritized. I believe that that kind of caring only comes about through experiences in and education about the natural environment. The zoo is in a unique position to offer those kinds of experiences to the broad population which it attracts.

I wish the Oakland Zoo well in their efforts to develop the California exhibit for the benefit of the people and natural environment of the bay area.

Sincerely,

Sarah Robson

Albany, CA



**Ranelletti, Darin**

---

**From:** Nik Haas-Dehejia [Nik@oaklandzoo.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 13, 2010 10:34 AM  
**To:** Ranelletti, Darin; Miller, Scott  
**Subject:** Another Letter to the Editor in Support of Oakland Zoo Expansion Project  
**Attachments:** DavidMakki\_ZooSupportLettertoEditor\_041310.pdf; DavidLee\_ZooSupportLettertoEditor\_041210.pdf

Darin and Scott –

Attached is the second letter to the editor that was in today's (April 13, 2010) Bay Area News Group papers supporting the Oakland Zoo's expansion. I have included the first letter from David Lee to this email as well.

Nik

---

Nik Haas-Dehejia  
Director, Strategic Initiatives  
Oakland Zoo  
Post Office Box 5238  
Oakland, CA 94605  
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Oakland Zoo 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland CA. 94605

4/13/2010



# OPINION

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Support the Oakland Zoo

FOR MORE than 85 years, the Oakland Zoo has been one of the Bay Area's crown jewels. The zoo is a place where families go for recreation, leisure and educational activities. It is a tourist destination and a source of pride for the region.

As a teacher with the Fremont Unified School District for 12 years, the Oakland Zoo was a valuable teaching tool. Each year, the zoo's education specialist visited my kindergarten classroom to explore animals, such as the cockatoo, turtle and chinchilla.

As school budgets continue to be cut — reducing learning opportunities for our children — the zoo allows lower-income families, as well as students from both public and private schools throughout the East Bay, to benefit from its quality programs.

Oakland residents have voted on multiple occasions to support the zoo. We also should support the proposed new California project, which will enhance environmental science learning opportunities on native California plants and animals, including the grizzly bear, wolf and jaguar.

The proposed design offers something for everyone, while also preserving recreational opportunities in Knowland Park.

As an educator, I am excited by the endless possibilities of growing the Oakland Zoo.

David D. Makki  
*Fremont*



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## NIMBYs on zoo expansion

SEARCHING FOR a useful post-judicial life, I became a docent at the Oakland Zoo four years ago.

During my tenure at the zoo, I have grown to have enormous respect for what it does for the region. I have personally educated school children from Oakland's flat lands and seniors on outings from assisted living facilities.

After a tour for cerebral palsy-afflicted visitors, a caretaker for one confided that a young man's laughter was the first he had heard in five years.

The zoo's 600,000 annual visitors learn about their environment, whether lost or inaccessible. The proposed California exhibit will add much to that learning experience.

I recently attended a community meeting at the Oakland Zoo. The difference between fear and fact is information. Most of the neighbors in attendance had fears; information can and will address most, if not all of them.

A few were more concerned with their "stop expansion" cause than getting information; much less the best interests of Oakland and its citizens.

This is the classic not-in-my-back-yard attitude. It was clear that they don't care about anything but crass personal interests; their panoramic views and public land backyards.

David C. Lee  
Oakland