

## **Environmental Platform**

### **Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Plan**

**1) Develop 20 Percent—a Huge Area—of the Concord Naval Weapons Station and Preserve 80 Percent as Open Space.**

We endorse the community of Concord's demand that 80 percent of the Weapons Station be preserved as public parks and open space. Approximately 65 percent of the Weapons Station should be included in a regional park and 15 percent in a community park. This would protect the Los Medanos Hills, the ridgeline between central and eastern Contra Costa County, and Mount Diablo Creek while buffering existing neighborhoods and protecting sensitive resources. Much of the Weapons Station is not developable, thus 80 percent is a reasonably-sized park area. Concord's hillside standards, which protect slopes, will require protection of a significant part of the site, and the federal and state Endangered Species Acts will require protection of large areas, as well.

Twenty percent (20%) of the Weapons Station, or approximately one thousand acres will be available for development. This is a very large development area. For comparison, the entirety of downtown Concord is well under 1000 acres.

**2) Create a Sustainable, Economically Viable Community.**

The Reuse Plan should strive to make the Weapons Station an economically viable model of sustainable development for the entire Bay Area, the state, and the nation. The Reuse Plan should include a high level of affordable and workforce housing. Concord's General Plan Housing Element states that 57 percent of new housing should be available for low-, very low-, and moderate-income households, and the Reuse Plan should support this goal while focusing on non-profit housing providers who maintain affordable housing in perpetuity. Construction firms should be required to pay prevailing wages guaranteed through Project Labor Agreements. The Reuse Plan should concentrate on green design, open space preservation, and natural resource restoration. It should also focus on renewable energy sources and remediate contaminated areas. The Navy's responsibility for remediation of contaminated areas must not be transferred to private owners without guarantees that remediation will be carried out and that it will meet the standards applicable to the land use specified in the Reuse Plan.

**3) Designate a World Class Regional Park: The Entire Area East Of Mount Diablo Creek Should Be Protected**

Concord, the largest city in Contra Costa County, is the only city in the East Bay without a regional park. Most of Weapons Station's open space should become a regional park for "passive recreation" (walking, biking, picnicking, etc.) and for the public benefit of the entire East Bay region. The natural landscape and wildlife corridor of the Los Medanos Hills as well as all land east of Mount Diablo Creek and south of Highway 4 should be permanently preserved as open space.

Open space and trails have been shown to greatly increase property values and improve residents' quality of life. Development of the Weapons Station must include a funding mechanism to support operation and maintenance of this new, much-needed regional park.

**4) Design a Diverse, Vibrant, Walkable, Bikeable Community.**

To make Concord a better place to live and to use our valuable resource of Weapons Station land wisely, all new development should be in the form of walkable neighborhoods that include a mix of jobs, shops, and homes people can afford. The developed area should include different types of homes to meet the needs of singles, seniors, and families, as well as people with a range of incomes. Development that includes retail and office space should be clustered around the North Concord BART station to create a vibrant new neighborhood and make it easy for people to commute and do errands near their homes. In areas farther from BART, development should remain compact and include plenty of homes to make it possible for bus service to be frequent and efficient. Throughout the area, trails and bike lanes should be included to permit residents to get around easily without having to drive for every trip. The developed area should include amenities and services to meet family and community needs including parks, schools, health clinics, libraries, cultural and community centers, historic sites, and small businesses. Additionally, a comprehensive parking management policy should be developed so valuable land is not wasted on empty, unused parking lots and more land can be saved for schools, open space, and community facilities.

**5) Build No New Roads East of Mount Diablo Creek.**

A road east of Mount Diablo creek would separate wildlife and recreational users of the creek corridor from the protected Los Medanos Hills. Any major vehicle roads or transit should be west of the creek except for regional park access. Non-motorized commuting and recreation can alleviate traffic. Multi-use trails throughout the Weapons Station, including the linear park buffer, should provide access to open space, recreation trails, and bike paths and extend beyond the Weapons Station boundaries to regional trail networks.

**6) Create Concord's Own "Golden Gate Park": A Linear Public Park Buffering Existing Neighborhoods.**

Central Park is 800 acres and Golden Gate Park is 1000 acres in size. A major linear park on 15 percent of the Weapons Station at its western boundary will buffer existing neighbors, who will face the worst impacts, and help integrate the project with the city. It will serve residents of the entire city and region, while enhancing economic values and connecting the North Concord BART station with the regional park. The park can be developed over decades and include cultural and other facilities such as museums and sports fields for the community.

**7) Protect and Restore Mount Diablo Creek and Other Wildlife Corridors.**

We endorse the ecological restoration of the entire length of Mount Diablo Creek and recommend at least a 300-foot buffer on both sides of the creek, including north of Highway 4. Mount Diablo Creek, an important wildlife corridor, should be preserved and restored without any major realignment. Any upgrades to roads and other infrastructure that cross the creek should be designed to ensure that they preserve and enhance wildlife corridors and that they do not create barriers to the movement of fish and wildlife. Wildlife passage and recreational trail crossings should be part of planning for the Reuse Area's transportation and road network.

**8) Integrate Reuse of the Weapons Station to Make Concord a World-Class City.**

The Weapons Station Reuse Plan should be integrated with existing plans for the City of Concord. Coordinating downtown redevelopment and urban infill with the reuse of the Weapons Station can work to make Concord a *world class city*. Onsite amenities and financial benefits should be utilized to integrate the Weapons Station with the rest of the city to avoid creating an island or a “New” Concord. The city should also consider implications of this reuse process on the greater East Bay region.

**9) Preserve Sensitive Resources and Encourage Environmental Education.**

Preserve the natural and cultural resources of the area—unique vegetation, heritage trees, endangered species, and sensitive habitats—that make it undeniably the “East Bay.” Use appropriate native plants and drought-resistant landscaping for development. Encourage education and interpretation of unique natural and cultural resources. It is especially important to survey, disclose, and research the historical, natural, and cultural resources north of Kirker Pass and south of Highway 4 and plan appropriately.

**10) Incorporate Community-Based Planning for Major Projects.**

In order to assure that all of the above goals are implemented and the Naval Weapons Station is planned according to the community’s needs, it is important that future land use decisions about the Weapons Station are made through a community-based planning process. An extensive community-based planning process, sometimes called a charette, should be conducted for the following specific areas: the half-mile radius around the North Concord BART station, the area north of Highway 4, any planned transit villages, and the area between Willow Pass Road and Bailey Road. During the reuse planning process, the city has been conducting a series of public workshops to solicit community input. This public community planning process should continue even after the land is transferred and development agreements are in place to ensure that the community has a say in the final design of the projects. Through this process, decision-making will be more transparent and will generate more opportunities for collective visions and aspirations for social and economic justice.

---

The 5,000-acre Inland Area of the Concord Naval Weapons Station is one of the largest remaining developable areas in the entire San Francisco Bay region. Much of it is relatively pristine habitat for native plants and wildlife that has been preserved due to its status as a military base. This natural treasure deserves our concerted efforts to protect its unique vegetation, endangered species, sensitive habitat, and open space value and to plan its development in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

The following recommendations have been developed by members from the California Native Plant Society, Friends of Mount Diablo Creek, Greenbelt Alliance, Mount Diablo Audubon Society, Save Mount Diablo, and Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter. As a coalition of environmentally-minded organizations and citizens, we support reuse of the Concord Naval Weapons Station to create a sustainable, economically-viable mixed-use development that preserves 80 percent of the land as open space and public parks and protects wildlife corridors, important plant habitat, and historical and cultural resources through a process that ensures environmental, social, and economic justice.