



---

# MEMORANDUM

---

Date: April 4, 2018

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

Re: **Green Valley Council Park Task Force Report dated April 1, 2018**

On January 2, 2018, the Green Valley Council (GVC) established a Park Task Force to evaluate and recommend appropriate action by the County regarding development of a natural resource park in the conversion of the Canoa Hills Golf Course (CHGC). The CHGC has been proposed for donation to the County for this purpose. The County has undertaken a series of technical studies to determine feasibility of this conversion and have been assisted by the GVC in gauging community preference regarding the proposed action.

Attached is the April 1, 2018 GVC Park Task Force Report for the Board's information. The findings and recommendations of the Task Force are appreciated. They will help guide County priorities with regard to accepting the donation and creation of a natural resource park; as well as, prioritizing capital improvements to improve safety and maintainability of the park and provide priority capital improvements for park amenities from corporate and/or nonprofit entities.

I very much appreciate the report and the assistance of the GVC in helping the County make an informed decision regarding accepting this donation and the conversion of a former golf course into a natural resource park for the Green Valley Community. Their efforts and suggestions have been very beneficial and will serve to inform and shape our decision and priorities regarding this action before the Board on April 17, 2018. Myself and department staff will take this Task Force Report and recommendations very seriously when formulating my final recommendation to the Board regarding acceptance of this donation, as well as recommendations regarding park funding going forward should the recommendation be to accept this natural resource park into our County park system.

CHH/lab

Attachment

c: Carmine Debonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works  
Suzanne Shields, Director, Regional Flood Control District  
Chris Cawein, Director, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation



# **PARK TASK FORCE REPORT**

**APRIL 1, 2018**

**Green Valley Council  
555 N. La Cañada Dr., Ste. 117  
Green Valley, AZ 85614**

## The Green Valley Council Task Force

On January 2, 2018, the Green Valley Council established a Park Task Force to determine if a park created by a 130-acre donation of the Canoa Hills Golf Course to Pima County, would be supported and appreciated by the residents and visitors of Green Valley. The Task Force was created at the request of the Pima County Administrator, Chuck Huckleberry, who was considering whether to urge the Board of Supervisors to accept or refuse the donation.

The Council appointed Gil Lusk and Jim Pinkerton Co-Chairs of the Task Force and Thao Tiedt, Vice-Chair for Organization and Information. The mission of the Task Force was to get community input on the park, gain an understanding of the support in the community for such a park and what desires or concerns the community might have in terms of use, needs and wants.

The Task Force objectives were:

1. Gather input from the HOAs adjoining the park and second tier HOAs near the park about their concerns, needs, wants and potential solutions.
2. Gather input from the business park across Camino Del Sol about their concerns about the park and potential solutions.
3. Gather input from groups of potential users of the park, including cyclists, walkers, gardeners, and birders and their concerns and wishes for the park.
4. Compile the data gathered from all the input groups and develop a report, including the above concerns, needs and wishes, for the County's consideration. The Task Force set a deadline for final report of April 1.

The Task Force consisted of the following Committees and Committee Chairs, all but one of-whom are seniors and residents of Green Valley:

1. HOA Committee--Keith Skytta and Don Lathrop, Co-Chairs.
2. Small Business Committee--Tom Sadowski, Chair
3. Park Users Committee--Laurie Lundeen, Chair
4. Design and Utilization Committee--Charlene Westgate (a landscape designer) and Collette Brown (Freeport McMoRan representative--not a senior or resident), Co-Chairs.
5. Pros/Cons Committee--David Buerstetta and Marcia Lickei, Co-Chairs

The Task Force reached out to the members of our community for their opinions, concerns, needs or wants for the park through: (a) several articles in the Green Valley

News; (b) asking for opinions via email, telephone call or visit to the Council's office; (c) obtaining the member opinions Green Valley Recreation received; (d) speaking at several HOA annual meetings and fielding questions about the potential park; (e) hosting a Community Forum on the Park attended by about 100 people who asked questions and expressed their opinions; (f) for 3 consecutive months on the Council's monthly KGVY AM/FM program discussing the park and soliciting opinions from the listeners; and (g) through our committees who met with a variety of community groups or institutions. We would like to thank Ms. Nanette Slusser of the Public Works Department for attending HOA annual meetings to field questions, headlining a meeting with the Presidents/Representatives from the HOAs that abut the park to hear their concerns and opinions and headlining the Community Forum where she answered the audience's questions. She was also incredibly responsive to our barrage of emails asking questions or requesting more information.

**We received well over 300 individual opinions. Only four of those opinions were that the proposed park should not happen. The HOAs abutting the park with whom we met have all voted in favor of having the park. The community is overwhelmingly in favor of the park and excited at the prospect of having a beautiful, quiet and passive area to walk, bike, take their dogs and just enjoy.**

## Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Green Valley Community Park (subheading-- an Open Space Park) will be the first large park in Pima County, and perhaps the nation, for senior citizens not participating in an organized sport. Pima County has an opportunity to create a national model of what might be done with a defunct golf course but also serve as a model for a park designed to be senior and ADA friendly. Such a park would be an excellent example for grant funding from several major park and recreation organizations.

In planning for the park, the County needs to take into account that the residents are in favor of a passive park, not an active park with sports fields, ATV, golf cart or motorized usage, although motorized wheelchairs would be permitted. They support limited development and cultivation of the natural flora and fauna.

A senior friendly park has a few required elements that should be in place early in the park's development. Restrooms will be needed given the length of the trails and the age of the users, along with water stations, shaded benches, trash bins and an occasional picnic area with tables. One Rotary Club has already indicated it might provide some memorial benches for the park. Other community organizations may well follow suit. Some sections of the cart path will need to be redesigned or specifically designated because of steepness and ADA compliance and for accommodating both bikers and walkers on the same path.

Parking for vehicles, both the number of spaces and the location of parking, is a serious concern for both users and the surrounding HOAs and businesses. Our Design Committee has identified two potential parking areas other than the driving range that could be fairly easily made into additional parking. The HOAs and businesses are concerned that overflow vehicles will begin parking in their streets and entrances and then the users shortcutting through yards for access to the park. If the surrounding HOAs receive a lot of adverse use for parking or access to the park, support for the park will dwindle. This will need to be monitored with particular attention to places that provide easy access to the park through neighborhoods. This issue is resolvable. Among the necessary startup items will be a comprehensive sign plan to direct and help users during the early startup months, particularly regarding parking, trail access and safety.

The golf cart paths that are covered by easements between fairways are considered important to the operation of the park. Some residents feel that the easements should be abolished, which would create problems for use of some areas. Even so, the recommendation is that the County work to secure those easements for the overall benefit of the park and its users.

Residents will expect some type of patrol activity to keep an eye on things and to be prepared for emergency response to injured or ill users at various locations in the park.

The Sheriff's Office or other appropriate group will need to prepare plans addressing this issue although they have previously addressed emergencies on the golf course. The Fire Department feels it can handle medical emergencies that might arise (see Small Business Committee Report). The Green Valley Sheriff's Volunteer Auxiliary may, with some additional funding for bikes, be able to offer more security support than the Sheriff's Office alone can provide.

Uses supported by the groups were: walking; use of non-motorized bikes (regular and mountain); picnics; bird watching; and dog walking (only on leash, no off-leash dogs). Because dog walking in the golf course is already popular, the park would need sufficient "dog stations" for disposal of dog poop bags and signage reminding dog walkers to "scoop the poop". There was also support for small portions of the park to be made available for garden clubs, cactus gardens and even some space for gardening. Also supported was a fenced and managed dog park, to allow off-leash dogs, spaced away from nearby homes.

Fairways and greens would be returned to desert over time. Given the length of the two nine-hole courses it might be helpful to create a few short-cut trails allowing seniors to complete circuits in less distance. Dry pond areas, rather than being refilled, could be developed as cactus gardens by local garden clubs. Use of water in the park will be very minimal for upkeep of the park, primarily for support of water stations for users. The water stations might be able to be supported by portable, refillable cisterns versus water lines, a technique already in use in Green Valley to support newly planted medians. Our Design Committee has identified several areas where water catchment could be used to supply water to surrounding areas.

The community understands and accepts the fact that the park will not be completed in one year and that development will be phased over the years and that items discussed as needs might not come for a year or two. They also understand that use of the park (amount, type, time of year, problems occurring) will determine how the park is managed and developed over time.

The Green Valley Council, in support of the Park, would help create a non-profit "Friends of Green Valley Community Park" within Green Valley. The Friends would be self-sustaining and self-managed. This group would help to provide funds for the park through donations, events and securing grants. They could provide volunteer assistance to the park on several levels including keeping their eyes open regarding the park. They would work with the Green Valley Council, which will provide information to the County on their projects so that there is no confusion or misinformation circulating.

The Green Valley Council appreciates the opportunity to have worked on this project and we find that, like our residents, we too are very excited about the many opportunities and values this park will provide.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### HOA COMMITTEE:

The HOA Committee focused on the abutting HOAs and the second tier HOAs that overlook the property. The Committee reached out to all of the HOAs that abut the park property, although a few only abut in a very limited area, and invited them to a "no holds barred" meeting with the Chairs and Nanette Slusser of the Public Works Department who Mr. Huckelberry tasked to head the due diligence for the potential park property. The HOAs that chose to attend were: Canoa Estates, Canoa Estates II, Canoa Hills Townhomes, Canoa Ridge, Canoa Vistas, Desert Hills III East, Desert Hills III West, Desert Hills IV and Encanto Estates. Canoa Canyon Estates has only a very small border with the property and said its concerns had already been answered. The same is true for Canoa Seca. They have indicated they favor having the golf course become a park. The HOAs that overlook but do not abut the park have indicated they are in favor of the park.

Over the course of an hour and a half meeting, each of the HOA representatives presented their concerns, needs and wishes for the park. The major issues were: parking, security, and trespass. Ms. Slusser noted all concerns, addressed them and answered all of the other questions. At the end of the meeting, the Chairs asked for the HOAs to vote as to whether they favor or disfavor the park. **All of the abutting HOAs that attended the meeting have voted in favor of the park, despite having some concerns.**

### SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE:

The committee contacted the businesses within the shopping center across from the park property for their views regarding the Canoa Hills golf course being converted to an open space park. The major concern for the businesses was that their parking lot would be utilized by park users.

The following responses were received from the Green Valley Water District and the Green Valley Fire Department:

#### Green Valley Water District

Overall, GVWD does not have any objection to Pima County converting the existing golf course into a "natural resource park". GVWD believes a park operation will have minimal impact on GVWD's business. As the park is now envisioned, adequate parking is a must and cannot include any parking in the strip mall parking area. There is already limited

parking for the existing businesses. Another aspect of this venture is GVWD has been and continues to be in discussion with Morgan North regarding the possible purchase of the existing Maintenance Building.

Finally, there is one aspect of the development of a "natural resource park" that needs to be discussed with GVWD and that is whether water is going to be required for the park. This discussion needs to be done early if there is going to be a water requirement for the park. Today there isn't any operable water irrigation infrastructure within the existing golf course. GVWD has removed all the meters associated with the restrooms and has also locked all the associated water lines.

The park will be considered a commercial account for which an application and deposit will be required before any water service can be established. GVWD is not interested in discussing any water requirement until the actual requirement within the park as it pertains to use, location, and water amount has been developed.

The Water District president also said It is important that the financial requirements to develop and maintain the natural resource park is well thought out and a plan developed by the County that outlines the County's responsibility and financial obligations. His biggest concern is that the cost to maintain the park becomes greater year over year and the County does not have the funds which results in a tax increase.

### **Green Valley Fire Department**

Chuck Wunder, Green Valley Fire Chief, explained that the Fire Department cannot express political views or opinions on the relative merits of the proposed park. Chief Wunder agreed that walking, biking, fitness stations, and a potential dog park could be potentially acceptable uses of this proposed County park. The Fire Department promotes defensible space initiatives, and they would be willing to conduct public education for the owners to help them understand how mitigation could be done.

GVFD is an urban district but does support the USFS with mutual aid resources in the event a wildland fire occurs on Federal lands. The GVFD has cooperative agreements for being reimbursed for these efforts. There are no instances in which GVFD has done any prescribed burning within their urban interface, and would not do so in the future.

Regardless of who owns the property, it will remain under the jurisdiction of GVFD. They will recommend voluntary compliance by the property owners for wild fire mitigation efforts. They do not have the staff to perform mitigation efforts. However, Pima County may have park or jail work crews who could perform these functions.

We discussed their ability to respond to emergency calls in the proposed park. Due to accessibility issues, they may need to acquire a ranger type ambulance, since they may not have the ability to get some of their equipment to remote areas of the park. In the past, they have been able to access emergency calls through homeowner's rights of way.

The GVFD is interested in assisting with pre-planning efforts, including in which ways the trails may be marked and in which direction they go. They gave the example of how Federal trails are marked with distance signs from the parking lot. They have worked with the Desert Hills golf course to star various locations so that they can easily find an injured party. However, without signs which identify the number of the former golf course hole locations, it may be difficult to locate an injured person. If part of the park is locked, the GVFD would require gate access so they would not have to cut locks or chains. They have located injured parties using GPS coordinates, and since I-19 has solar powered phones, this might have some benefit inside the park.

GVFD believes that Pima County may have access to State fire resources which may be able to assist in either mitigation or in the event of a potential wildland fire. GVFD reiterated its ability and willingness to provide public education and to explain mitigation and how it works with property owners. Finally, they would not want their parking lot used by park users since there may be liability issues, and from an operational perspective it may interfere with GVFD exercises or training which might be held in the immediate area.

### **THE POTENTIAL USERS COMMITTEE:**

The Committee asked members of the public and organizations about who or what groups might be the potential users of the park. The Committee members talked to Matt Zoli, Pima County Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager and J.P. Pilger, President of the Santa Cruz Valley Bicycle Advocate Committee. They found the following:

- By far, the most potential users are walkers and dog walkers
- The other large group of users is bicyclists. The Santa Cruz Valley Bicycle Advocate Committee provided extensive comments on what work needs to be done on the property to better accommodate bicyclists. See Appendix for complete comments.
- Birding is very popular in Green Valley and the park would provide an additional birding area
- The majority of people wanted benches along the walking paths and some wanted pavilions perhaps with solar powered fans and picnic tables

- As far as park art, the favored expression was a military tribute/war veterans memorial
- Bathrooms were a high priority
- People did want signage for plant species, a wildlife corridor, and a nature trail with scat and footprint identification signs and a map of the park as a whole. They also mentioned desert gardens built and managed by gardening groups
- Several indicated that organized walking and biking tours would enhance group experience
- Desert Hills IV had provided extensive comments to GVR when it was initially involved in the park issue. See Appendix for full comments
- A few people mentioned shaded chess/checkers tables, putt-putt golf, outdoor classrooms and flying drone aircraft
- Various organizations should be asked to participate in the final planning of the park. See Appendix for full list

The Committee Chair, a realtor, also did a survey of the Green Valley realtors that asked the following questions:

1. Are you in favor of the Park which would be maintained by Pima County? The answer choices were on a numeric scale with 1 being a strong no and 5 being a strong yes
2. Do you think it (the park) would help draw people to Green Valley? The answer choices were Yes, No and Neutral.
3. Will it (the park) positively or negatively affect the homeowners abutting the property? The answer choices were positive, negative and uncertain.

About 50 surveys were returned. The results of the survey were:

1. 88% in favor of the park, 5% neutral and 7% no
2. 55% said the park would draw people to Green Valley, 19% were neutral and 26% said no.
3. 77% said the park would positively affect abutting homeowners, 23% were uncertain and 0% were negative.

One Committee member took extensive pictures of features that people indicated would be desirable in the park. See Appendix for photos.

### **What Goals Our Physically Limited Residents have for the Park**

Because of the age of Green Valley residents, we have a much larger population of people with physical limitations than most communities. Residents often find their status

of "without" to "with" physical limitations changes overnight. However, most of them remain vibrant members of our community and want a park that allows them to most fully participate. The Americans with Disabilities Act sets a floor for accommodation of disabilities, not a ceiling. A Green Valley Community Park that creatively approaches accessibility could attract as residents more people who presently have limitations or are realistic and know it can happen to them in a heartbeat.

Sue Schlesinger, an advocate for those with physical limitations, contacted members of the community who have physical limitations, including veterans, persons in wheelchairs, those using walkers, those using canes, those using lift equipped vans, stroke victims, and those using oxygen. They provided the following input:

- Golf carts which have handicapped license plates should be allowed in addition to motorized wheelchairs. The golf carts would enable the rider to visit much more of the park. Safety/speed rules would need to be in place. The same is true for scooters used by those with handicapped licenses.
- Van accessible parking spaces should be reserved only for those vehicles. Because of the number of people here who have handicapped licenses/placards, too often the van accessible spaces are used by regular vehicles, depriving those that cannot use the regular handicap spaces from access. More than the minimum of handicap spaces should also be provided in the same way that Green Valley Recreation provides additional spaces.
- If at some point there is a small building with meeting rooms for birders, etc., there should be space for a group of volunteers who would assist scooter/wheelchair users with getting their transport out of a vehicle and the person into their specialized transport.
- The paved areas of the space seem adequate.
- Where shade, water or seating is provided, there should be room for wheelchairs (regular and motorized), assistive walkers and scooters.
- There are two categories of seniors in Green Valley--young seniors (the Boomers) and the elderly. There should be flexibility in parking so that the elderly, who just tire more easily, have designated parking closer to park access points.

## THE DESIGN COMMITTEE:

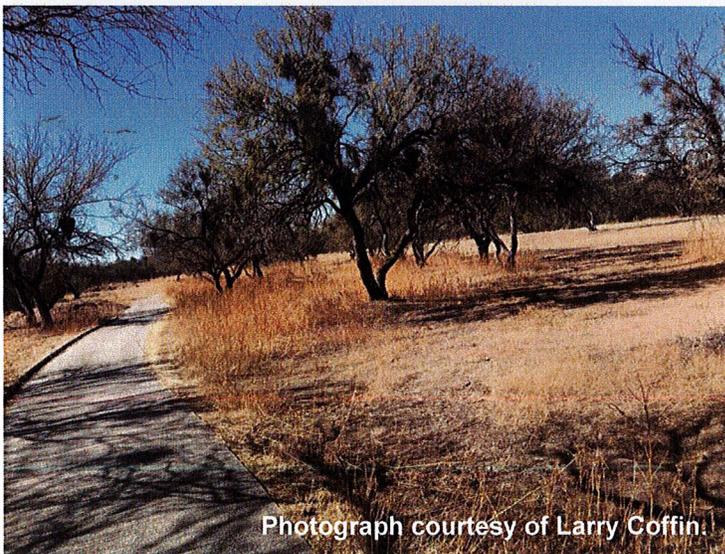
### The Community

Green Valley is situated in the Santa Cruz River Valley and hosts a population of 30,000 residents (including seasonal residents) living in numerous age restricted as well as some non-age restricted neighborhoods. The median age of Green Valley residents is 72 years and the median income is \$46,000 with a median income of \$54,000 among those 65 and older.

Green Valley boasts an active community with dozen of clubs and service organizations. Residents have a community choral and concert band, a performing arts center, two Rotary chapters and a chapter of the AAUW to name a few. According to Green Valley Recreation, Green Valley residents participate in six club categories—Arts and Crafts, Cards and Games, Dance, Sports, Special Interest, and Social—with dozens of clubs to choose from. Many Green Valley residents are also physically active, enjoying golf, pickleball, tennis and swimming. Green Valley hosts the Senior Games, their version of the Olympics, each year.

The area is also on a birding and butterfly corridor between Mexico and Canada. In addition to the active birding community here in town, Green Valley also attracts birding enthusiasts from around the world to view the native birds that stay year round as well as the rare birds that migrate through.

### The Space



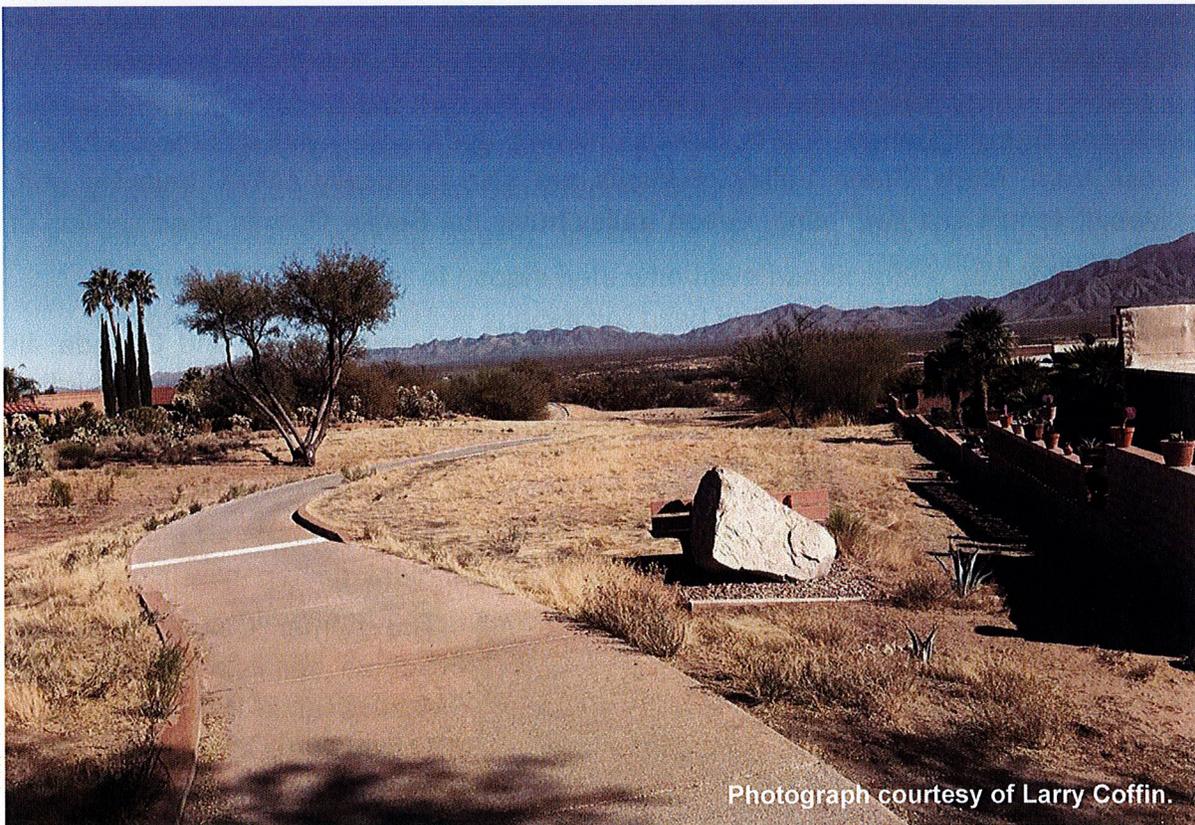
Photograph courtesy of Larry Coffin.

The former Canoa Hills Golf Course consists of 135 acres nestled amid 12 subdivisions. The course was a desert course that once boasted near championship standards and challenging holes.

This desert beauty remains with native trees, shrubs, succulents and wildflowers already growing throughout. This offers the perfect opportunity to protect and expand the natural,

desert vegetation to this wildlife habitat while providing recreation for Green Valley residents.

Built on a hillside, the space provides spectacular views of the Santa Cruz River Valley and the Santa Rita Mountains beyond. These areas should be protected and spots provided for seating to take in the views. Because of the rugged terrain, the course contains 5 miles of golf cart paths. Half are East of Camino del Sol and half on the West, joined by two culvert crossings that pass under the road. These make biking and hiking trails. The driving range and fairways are also suitable for a dog park(s) as well as picnic areas.



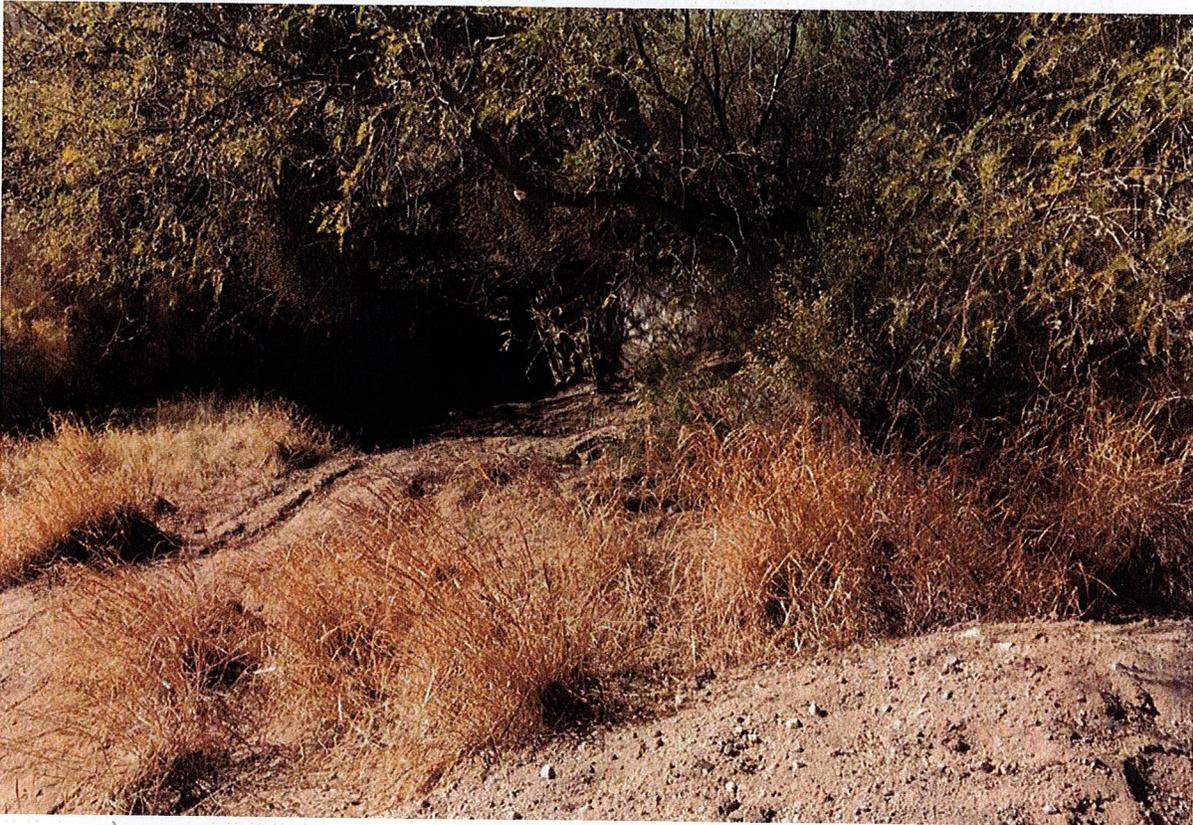
Photograph courtesy of Larry Coffin.

### **The Challenges**

On visits to the golf course, the Design Committee made the following observations that will impact the design of the new park:

- Trees and plants that are stressed by the lack of water caused by the irrigation from the golf course being cut off and the extended drought this winter.
- Steep areas that can be traversed only by those who are fit, but not accessible to the average senior or anyone with mobility issues.

- Barren fairways that were once watered, but that have died from lack of irrigation.
- The steep terrain and barren, grassy fairways create a wildfire risk.
- The steep terrain has created areas of erosion from storm water runoff.
- No water for irrigation.
- A few areas where the golf cart paths come close to homes and may create privacy concerns for homeowners.
- Limited parking unless the Club House and its parking do become part of the new park.



*Deep ravines and washes pose erosion challenges, but also provide opportunities for capturing rainwater to provide for native vegetation, Photograph courtesy of Larry Coffin.*

### **Park Design**

Good design considers the space being designed as well as its users and intended uses. The overview above along with our observations and feedback from the community informed the discussion below. Refer to Appendix for park diagram with additional details.

## **Users, Uses, and Their Needs**

In hearing from the community, the following park users were identified, along with what will be needed in order to enjoy the activity:

- Walkers/Joggers – wider paths and shade
- Birders – seating areas and shade, plus maintenance and expansion of the native desert vegetation to protect wildlife habitat and attract birds to the park.
- Cyclists – wider paths and shade. The terrain makes it possible to accommodate both road bikes and mountain bikes without conflicts. Gravel can be added to the side of the paved paths for mountain bikes.
- Dog owners/dog park – seating areas, shade, fencing, waste bags and trash bins
- Picnickers – tables and seating, shade (ramadas or shade trees), trash bins and, perhaps, barbecue grills.
- People with mobility issues – seating areas and shade, plus allowing motorized wheelchairs.

## **Design Solutions – Lack of Water**

The Design Committee highly recommends implementing rainwater harvesting/water catchment throughout the property. Use of swales and basins to capture rainwater around existing plants as well as those that will be planted, provides a source of irrigation for these plants while alleviating the erosion issues.

The Committee also recommends planting only low water, native plants that are better adapted to survival without supplemental irrigation once established. In addition, decorative elements that require no water such as boulders and sculptures can be added to enhance the beauty. The dry pond bed can also be converted into an arid cactus garden similar to what was done at Desert Hills Golf Course. Also, consider water stations to provide potable water to park users.

## **Design Solutions – Use of Space**

### *Limited Parking.*

The following areas have been identified to expand available parking (see park diagram in Appendix):

- Expand the parking at the driving range.
- Convert the golf cart parking lot South of the Club House into a parking lot for cars.
- Re-pave the service road on the East side of Camino del Sol between Canoa Estates and Canoa Seca Estates for vehicle access. The area at the end of the service road would make a good spot for a gravel parking area and picnic ramada.

*Steep Areas/Not ADA Accessible/Compliant:*

- Create winding paths with switch backs that are less steep and easier to traverse
- Connect golf cart paths when possible to create shorter loops.
- Provide signs (and brochures) that describe the difficulty of a hike. Descriptions of "Easy, Moderate and Difficult" can be adopted similar to state and federal park trails, so that users know the difficulty of the path before starting out.

*No Water for Toilet Facilities:*

- Use composting toilets

*Other Recommendations:*

- Widen paths to allow walkers, joggers and cyclists to easily pass.
- Make paths easier to traverse for elderly users by connecting the cart paths where possible to shorten the loops.
- Provide an ample amount of shaded benches along the way to allow people to rest along the way or to take in views.
- Address homeowners' privacy concerns with strategically placed vegetation, walls or other screening devices, or by relocating the paths.
- Make use of the steep terrain to implement water harvesting swales and basins to detain water. This will help prevent erosion as well as making water available to vegetation.
- Reintroduce native vegetation to the fairways. This will beautify areas that are currently eyesores while providing habitat for native birds and wildlife.
- Add a dog park(s) in one or both the following areas:
  - At the driving range
  - At the fairway East of Camino del Sol between the Clubhouse and the Desert Hills townhomes.

By including:

- Fencing
- Areas for large and small dogs
- Waste bags and trash cans
- Add picnic areas in the following places:
  - By the service road East of Camino del Sol between Canoa Vistas and Canoa Seca Estates. This would need a parking area.
  - Near the driving range (and proposed dog park). A parking lot is already available.
  - West of Camino del Sol on the fairway between Canoa Estates and the Recreation Center. This area has off-street parking available.

The following will be needed:

- Picnic ramadas and/or shade trees

- Picnic tables
- Barbecue grills
- Trash cans
- Parking as noted

*Final Thoughts.*

- Local ceramics and metalworking clubs could be asked to contribute artwork to beautify the park.
- Local clubs and individuals could be asked to sponsor benches.
- The Green Valley Gardeners could be asked to create a pollinator garden near one of the parking lots.
- Rock excavated while digging water-harvesting swales and basins could be used for erosion control or to fill gabion benches or towers.

**Priorities**

Priorities for the park project are as follows:

1. THE FIRST PRIORITY IS MAINTENANCE. This would include repair of cracked and damaged cart paths that could create a safety and liability issue. This would also include maintenance to native plants: cutting back limbs that have overgrown paths, removing dead and diseased limbs that could be blown off in heavy winds, removing mistletoe that weakens the tree, removing buffelgrass, etc.
2. THE SECOND PRIORITY WOULD BE FLOOD CONTROL. This would involve adding u-shaped basins around trees on hills sides, and adding basins and swales to direct and capture rainwater to prevent flooding and erosion while providing for existing and future vegetation. Additional vegetation should be added at this stage as it will help protect against erosion while enhancing beauty and wildlife habitat.
3. THE THIRD PRIORITY IS INFRASTRUCTURE. This would include widening paths to make them more user-friendly. While this is being done adding crossovers to shorten loops and switch backs to ease steep inclines should be handled. In addition, benches along the paths should be added at this phase with emphasis on locations that provide shade or viewing of vistas. Parking should also be handled in this phase, including expanding parking at the driving range and adding parking on the East side of Camino del Sol.
4. THE FOURTH PRIORITY WOULD BE TO ADD AMENITIES. This would include picnic ramadas, dog park, artwork, additional benches, etc.

The Canoa Hills Park is a unique space and with careful design can provide a treasure for Green Valley and Pima County, and serve as a model for other distressed golf courses.

## **THE PROS AND CONS COMMITTEE:**

The Committee met with people in the community, the Sheriff Auxiliary Volunteers, the Fire Department Chief, and La Posada executives. Most said they would like to be kept informed of the County's plans.

### **What Issues Are Concerning People:**

- No contained dog park at all as it generates noise, smell (including dog waste) trash cans, need for water at the site, need for chairs, flies and paying for poop removal
- No playground or big pavilions. Dogs ok on walkways if leashed
- No sports fields, courts for tennis or pickleball--concerns with noise, trash, lights
- No increased County taxes or HOA fees
- No GVR involvement at all or ever
- No liability for neighboring HOAs
- No access from HOA property
- Easement issues

### **What People Wish For in the County Park:**

- Passive, natural, low maintenance park with native species, natural growth, no big development
- Walking paths
- Contained off leash dog park--note this is at odds with the concerns comments
- Safe accessibility--present ramps are steep
- Parking on driving range or clubhouse, not on nearby streets or in HOAs
- Posted hours and rules such as no grills, fires, off leash pets, alcohol, trespassing on private property, firearms
- No additional noise
- County to accept liability, cost, and maintenance--no dependence on volunteers, except where a specific group "adopts" an area

### **Why People Want the Park:**

- Encourage walking, fitness
- Nature helps mental health
- Assistance in buffelgrass removal/control
- Visual appeal of a park versus a building or neglected property--increase in property values
- Concern over what else might go onto the empty land

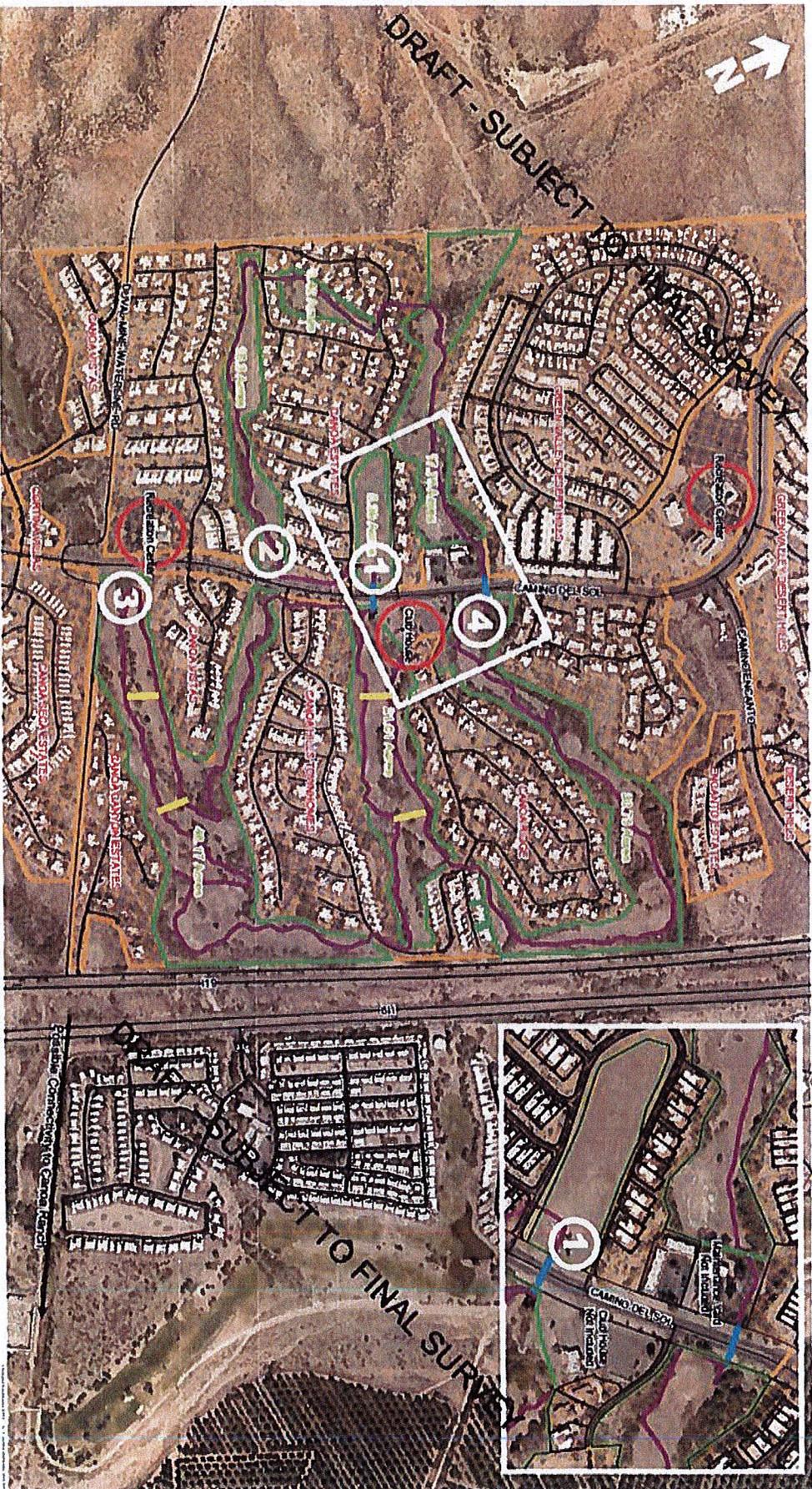
- Parks are better for the environment than buildings or other development--cleaner air, less urban heat, better storm water collection
- Natural areas are better for wildlife and bird habitats

**Majority opinion--Parks and open spaces are great for property values, mental health, physical health and the community as a whole.**

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **DESIGN COMMITTEE**

**Diagram of potential areas for picnic  
ramadas, parking, dog park(s)**



- Culvert Crossings
  - Golf Cart Paths
  - Streets
  - Path connections
  - Golf Course Parcels
  - Subdivisions
- 1 inch = 200 feet

**NOTES:**

- 1.) Driving Range. This area has parking that could be expanded to accommodate more vehicles. Buildings here could be used for future restrooms or vending. This area would also be ideal for a dog park(s) as well as picnic ramadas.
- 2.) This area would be suitable for picnic ramadas and a wide area is available just off Camino Del Sol for parking.
- 3.) The service roads into this area offer an opportunity for parking as well as for picnic ramadas.
- 4.) This area is an alternate location for a dog park(s) as well as for picnic ramadas.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

**Jim Nelson, President, Green Valley  
Recreation, Inc.**

**Joe Erceg, President/CEO, Green Valley  
Sahuarita Chamber of Commerce**

**Judy Barkley, Board President, Country Fair  
White Elephant**

**Mark D. Napier, Sheriff, Pima County  
Sheriff's Department**

**Nanette Smejkal, CPRP, Director, Parks and  
Recreation, Town of Sahuarita**

**Paul B. Schuman, Chair, Canoa Hills  
Redevelopment Committee *and*  
Phyllis A. Buchanan, President, Green Valley  
Desert Hills, No. 4**



GREEN VALLEY RECREATION, INC.

March 13, 2018

Dear Green Valley Council Park Task Force,

The Green Valley Recreation, Inc. (GVR) Board of Directors supports repurposing the former Canoa Hills golf course in Green Valley as an open space public park and natural area, and is supportive of Pima County accepting the donation of the former golf course property for this purpose.

Green Valley is under-parked. Having an open space park and natural area in the heart of unincorporated Pima County offers a wonderful opportunity for residents to enjoy benefits of natural open space, public recreation, and environmental beautification. A new public park in Green Valley will serve as a legacy for future generations.

Jim Nelson, President

Green Valley Recreation, Inc.



275 W. Continental Rd., Ste. 123  
Green Valley, AZ 85622

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 566 / Green Valley, AZ 85622  
(520) 625-7575 / 7594, Fax (520) 648-6154

Toll Free 1-800-858-5872

[www.greenvalleysahuarita.com](http://www.greenvalleysahuarita.com)

March 19, 2018

Don:

The Green Valley Sahuarita Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center applauds the efforts of the Green Valley Council, Green Valley Recreation, Green Valley residents, the Green Valley Council Task Group, involved Home Owners Associations and Pima County for working together to create and maintain the Green Valley Park developed from the former Canoa Hills Golf Course.

The Chamber's board of directors looks forward to learning more about the specifics of the proposal from a discussion with you at our April 24 board meeting. Based on the Task Group's final report you provided, we believe that many positive benefits may be realized by our business members and residents of Green Valley from a well-planned, easily-accessible, safe and well-maintained local park and, again, we are grateful for your efforts.

Good health is good business!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Erceg".

Joseph Erceg  
President/CEO

Green Valley Sahuarita Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center



*Country Fair White Elephant*

**March 19, 2018**

**Green Valley Council's Park Task Force**

**The Board of Directors of the Country Fair White Elephant supports the Green Valley Council in its bid to convert the abandoned Canoa Hills Golf Course into a public park.**

**Judy Barkley**

**Country Fair White Elephant  
Board President, 2018**



# PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

*Mark D. Napier, Sheriff*

1750 East Benson Highway, Tucson, Arizona 85714-1758

Phone: (520) 351-4600 • Fax: (520) 351-4622 • [www.pimasheriff.org](http://www.pimasheriff.org)

March 12, 2018

Green Valley Council  
President Don Weaver  
250 N. La Canada Dr.  
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Dear Mr. Weaver:

I recently became aware of your efforts to transition a golf course into a local public park in Green Valley. The Pima County Sheriff's Department has no objections from a public safety standpoint to the creation of a park.

Public spaces add to the quality of life in our community. I wish you the best in your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark D. Napier".

Mark D. Napier  
Sheriff  
Pima County Sheriff's Department

MDN/cre



**PARKS & RECREATION**  
375 W. Sahuarita Center Way  
Sahuarita, AZ 85629  
sahuaritaAZ.gov

March 14, 2018

Don Weaver, President  
Green Valley Council  
250 N. La Canada Drive  
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Dear Mr. Weaver;

I am happy to learn about the potential of an additional park to serve residents and visitors to our region. The acquisition of the closed Canoa Hills Golf Course by Pima County would vastly increase the availability of nearby and accessible outdoor recreation venues. The envisioned network of pathways are sure to receive a lot of use from persons wanting to be physically and socially active. As a parks and recreation professional, I am always interested in new recreational opportunities and increased leisure services for our communities.

Congratulations to the Green Valley Council for working on this project. I am pleased to add this letter of support to your advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nanette L. Smejkal".

Nanette L. Smejkal, CPRP  
Parks and Recreation Director

Phone: (520) 822-8894  
Email: nsmejkal@sahuaritaaz.gov



**Green Valley Desert Hills No. 4, Inc.**  
**2980 S. Camino del Sol, Suite 108**  
**Green Valley, AZ 85622-8200**

November 14, 2017

Mr. Don Lathrop, Planning and Evaluation, Chair  
Mr. Kent Blumenthal, CEO  
Green Valley Recreation, LLC  
1070 S. Calle De Las Casitas  
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Dear Messrs. Lathrop and Blumenthal:

**Subject: Canoa Hills Golf Course Redevelopment – Initial Input from Desert Hills IV Homeowners Association**

Thank you so much for meeting last week with us and the other dozen-odd Homeowners Associations (HOAs) that are potentially the most impacted by the possible donation of the Canoa Hills Golf Course to Pima County with its associated redevelopment. We understand that the County envisions some sort of natural resource open-space Park with passive recreational uses. We appreciate Green Valley Recreation's (GVR's) efforts to keep us informed of the status and details at this very early stage in the process.

You specifically requested the following: (1) an initial signal as to whether or not our HOA is in support of such a project; (2) our ideas for beneficial reuses of the property; (3) our ideas for possible in-kind contributions that GVR, the HOAs, and Green Valley residents could offer the County to support the acquisition, redevelopment, or ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) of the new Park; and (4) an initial signal as to whether or not our HOA would support an offer of financial contributions to the County by GVR or our HOA. Green Valley Desert Hills No. 4, Inc. (DH-4) Association is pleased to provide the following initial responses from our HOA, in response to your request.

**1. Do We Support the Project? Yes.**

In principle, DH-4 fully supports Pima County in accepting the proposed donation and converting the property to the types of beneficial uses discussed in Mr. Huckleberry's September 12, 2017 letter to GVR, and likewise supports GVR's interest in collaborating with the County per GVR's September 19, 2017 response. As discussed on November 7, we all recognize that the devil will clearly be in the details. That said, DH-4 offers its full support to help GVR work through those details.

**2. Ideas for beneficial reuses of the property**

As Mr. Huckleberry stated in his September 12, 2017 letter to GVR, the County clearly desires to repurpose this former golf course to beneficial public uses including natural open space; passive low-impact public recreation such as hiking, picnicking and bicycling using certain areas and trails in some (not all) portions of the property; establishment and/or restoration of wildlife corridors and habitat areas; and restoration of certain (not all) fairways to native Sonoran Desert vegetation. DHS-4 supports these ideas in principle, and offers the following ideas in addition.

- a. Development of the property associated with the first 9 holes into a 9-hole, daytime-only public golf course or, at a minimum, a nine-hole par three (3) course. The Canoa Hills Golf Course was always known for being easier to access and use compared to other courses in Green Valley. A nine-hole course would continue a current property use, and offer an accessible golfing alternative to certain older Green Valley residents who may have given up golfing because they no longer have the physical ability, interest, and/or financial resources to play the existing 18-hole courses. This may also be an attraction

to families visiting from elsewhere in the county. It would likewise offer the County a potential income stream that would help offset some of the future ongoing O&M costs of the new Park. Similarly, setting aside an area for Putt-putt Golf would make that activity accessible to visiting families and certain older Green Valley residents.

- b. Use of Park areas as "outdoor classrooms" for a wide variety of current and future GVR classes and workshops for club interests such as (for example) the GVR Camera Club.
- c. Development of a canopied lawn area as a possible outdoor venue for daylight-only group activities such as company or family picnics, music performances, etc. (the County might be able to charge use fees for such events). Note that the use of such a venue for music performances should not be pursued without the full consent and support of the nearby homeowners.
- d. Use of Park areas (for example, native plant interpretive gardens) as "outdoor classrooms" for academic institutions including District public schools, Pima Community College, and the University of Arizona, particularly for classes, workshops and field trips on such topics as wildlife and plant biology, natural history, Sonoran Desert biogeography, environmental sciences, and local history (note that doing so might encourage the University and the School District to sign on as partners in this process as well). For example, a partnership between the County and the Green Valley Gardeners could be used to develop a Sonoran Desert display or interpretive native garden.

### **3. Ideas for possible in-kind contributions**

Green Valley residents and GVR members like to volunteer, and do so eagerly. The primary currency we feel GVR can and should offer the County is members' time and effort. GVR members could choose to volunteer in a variety of capacities in such a Park, including maintenance; security; as docents or interpreters of displays; as Park guides and trail guides; and as operating staff for the public golf course and related concessions (if any). Many GVR members have decades of professional expertise and experience in careers in many of the very disciplines that will be needed to plan, design, build and operate a natural-resource open-space park, and have the professional qualifications to work alongside their County counterparts in every phase of the project.

All of these contributions would directly offset labor costs for the County on nearly a one-for-one basis, which likely would be the largest component of the Park's annual budget once design and construction are completed. Therefore, this is a very significant contribution for GVR to offer as a partner to the County.

While such contributions would be most effective in the operating phases of the Park, there are appropriate contributions GVR members can and will make during the initial planning, design, and construction phases of the Park as well.

As for DH-4 our Association, you may not be aware that for several years, has maintained the hillsides that border the Golf Course canyon area behind Placita Helada and Via del Tirol at the HOA's expense to make sure the area is clean and presentable and, more importantly, to hold fire hazards to a minimum. DH-4 would volunteer to continue this activity for the new Park, to the benefit of the County.

### **4. DH-4 does not support offering financial contributions to the County.**

As Mr. Blumenthal recounted in our November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the GVR long-term plan was passed with a caveat that future costs, including those for new projects and developments, would not cause membership fees to increase. DH-4 stresses that this same principle must be applied to any GVR partnership with the County to create and operate this Park. Similarly, DH-4 is unwilling to raise HOA fees on its members for the sake of offering financial contributions to the County. We are sure the other HOAs in Green Valley will feel the same way.

Note that GVR and its constituent members are far from being the most appropriate potential sources of financial contributions to the Park. Interested stakeholders other than GVR and the HOAs (for example, Caterpillar and Freeport-McMoRan) would be far more appropriate partners from whom the County should solicit funding for this project, as an example, this project may be eligible for certain grants from the Freeport McMoRan Foundation. Such entities routinely provide funding through grants and other mechanisms for worthy projects benefiting the public in southern Pima County. GVR should urge the County to seek their participation in this project.

At the end of the day, this Park will (and should) be another Pima County Park, administered and operated by the County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department, and possibly the Office of Sustainability and Conservation and certain other participating County departments. As such, we would expect the funding to develop, build, and operate this Park to generally follow the County's usual, well-established path. We strongly advise GVR to look carefully at other, similar Park projects the County has developed successfully, and to ask the County to educate us all on how those projects were initiated, developed, funded, and built – specifically, those projects that involved partnering with a private and/or nonprofit entity - because we would guess that none of them involved direct monetary contributions by those entities to the County. We urge GVR to carefully review other, successful examples of natural resource parks in Pima County and elsewhere (see, for example, the numerous case studies presented at Pima County's *Completed Bond Projects - Open Space and Habitat Protection* website at

<http://www.pima.gov/development/development/development/development>). We urge GVR to ask the County to educate us on the nature and details of their partnerships with nonprofits on other park projects before GVR, HOAs, or any other Green Valley organizations should be willing to commit to any monetary contribution to this project.

#### 5. Concerns to be relayed to the County

**Parking and access** - DH-4 believes it is essential that the Park be accessed by the public in one area only, and that this area be associated with the existing parking lot. Likewise, public parking for the Park should be allowed only in the existing parking lot. DH-4 is very concerned about potential impacts to neighborhoods that border the golf course (in terms of parking, noise, disturbance, potential damage to homeowners' property, and potential liability issues to homeowners and HOAs) if the public is allowed to park in neighborhoods and access the Park at other points in addition to the existing golf course parking lot. This is an extremely important issue to DH-4 and to other HOAs that border the golf course. Therefore, DH-4 strongly urges GVR to insist to the County that the existing parking lot must be part of the donation at all costs.

**Hours** - this Park should be a daylight-only facility, period. There should be no addition of lighting to any Park facilities and absolutely no after-dark access to this Park, ever. Doing otherwise would have a dramatic negative impact to every homeowner whose property borders the golf course, undermining for many the reasons they bought a home there in the first place.

**Planning**- How does this proposed Park fit into the Pima County Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan? Would creation of this Park require revision of either plan?

**Participation of other key nonprofits** - Note that other nonprofit entities such as the Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy have considerable expertise, experience, and interest in projects of this type. The Audubon Society, in particular, has a proven track record of participating in projects of this type redeveloping golf courses into natural conservation parks throughout the United States. We recommend that GVR urge the County to solicit their participation, as they could offer significant technical expertise to address key issues as they occur through the planning, design, and construction stages of the project.

**Including other facilities** - DH-4 strongly recommends that GVR urge the County to insist that the clubhouse and the maintenance building, like the parking lot, must be a part of the donation. These buildings offer important potential uses to the County and to the future Park. As an example, the club house could serve as a visitor center for the park. Adding

these facilities to the donation will in fact "sweeten the deal" for both parties, because it would provide a more valuable tax benefit to the donor while representing a more valuable, usable donation of property to the County.

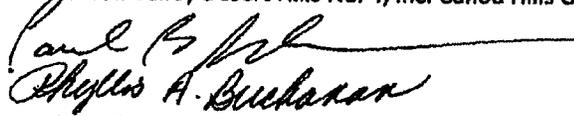
**Communication** – DH-4 recommends that GVR's partnership with the County include the establishment – as soon as possible – of good, clear communication mechanisms to keep the public – and all Green Valley residents in particular – of developments in this project on a regular and ongoing basis through every phase. GVR and the County, separately or together, could easily create a website as an information repository where anyone could access documents, studies, plans, meeting minutes, photographs, video materials, etc. any time. Email blasts – like the one the GVR sent out on November 10 regarding this project are one way to let the public know when new information is posted to the website and when public meetings will be held. Public meetings, mailings, and newspaper articles can reach residents who can't or won't access the internet. The County, the University of Arizona, and other entities have considerable knowledge and expertise in developing methods and tools to inform and involve the public in projects of the nature. Coupled with these tools, there must be a commitment by the project's major partners to maintain a good, clear, thorough flow of information throughout all phases of this project.

**Transparency** - Finally, DH-4 urges the County and GVR, as the primary project partners, to maintain the maximum possible level of transparency as decisions and commitments are made at every stage of the project. The November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting was a worthy and much-appreciated step in the right direction. DH-4 urges all parties to keep in mind that it was only the very first step in a long process ahead, and we welcome the opportunity to participate in that process as fully as possible.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this input, and thanks in advance for sharing it with the County. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of further assistance going forward.

Respectfully yours,

The Green Valley Desert Hills No. 4, Inc. Canoa Hills Golf Course Redevelopment Committee



Paul B. Schumann, Canoa Hills Redevelopment Committee, Chair

Phyllis A. Buchanan, President Green Valley Desert Hills No. 4, Inc. and member

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **USERS SUPPLEMENT**

**Recommendations of Bicycling  
Group and Matt Zoli**

**Organizations That Should Be  
Invited to Participate in Present  
Or Future Park Planning**

**Recommendations for Signage**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF BICYCLING GROUP AND MATT ZOLI**

This is a great place to ride and walk. There are no other places in Green Valley where you can walk or ride 4+miles on paved paths through quiet natural desert. Pima County has lots of experience managing bicycle and pedestrian use safety on their 120+ miles of paved shared use paths in the Tucson Metro Region called the LOOP. The following improvements would enhance the shared use of bikes and walkers:

- Signs to alert bikes to steep hills where they should consider dismounting and walking their bikes
- Signs to alert bikes of short sight distances and sharp curves on some hills and other locations
- Speed limit signs
- Signs to alert cyclists to watch for and yield to pedestrians
- Signing and marking the pathway for one-way bicycle riding due to the existing width. The path width in places is less than recommended engineering guidance for shared use (bikes and people). If funding can be secured in the future to widen the path it could be considered for two-way bicycle riding
- Condition of the pathway in some areas particularly where the path changes to asphalt concrete from Portland cement concrete, needs upgrading
- Erosion and other edge droff concerns need to be addressed and pedestrian railing may be needed in some locations
- The pathway needs sweeping in some locations and measures to help prevent sand and gravel from getting on the pathway undertaken
- Trees, shrubs and cactus encroaching into the pathway in locations needs to be trimmed or removed
- Where ADA improvements are feasible, ADA considerations need to be reviewed, including grades and need for detectable warnings at street crossings

## **ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN PRESENT OR FUTURE PARK PLANNING**

- The University of Arizona: Agriculture, Extension Service, Landscape Architecture and possibly the Carson Scholars
- Green Valley Gardeners--[greenvalleygardners.com](http://greenvalleygardners.com)
- Master Gardners--[extension.arizona.edu/gardening](http://extension.arizona.edu/gardening)
- Audubon Society--[tucsonaudubon.org](http://tucsonaudubon.org)
- Santa Cruz Valley Bike Group--[scvbac.org/rides](http://scvbac.org/rides)
- Running Groups--[azroadrunners.org](http://azroadrunners.org)
- Water Management Research Group
- Programs for the deaf--[copdaz.org](http://copdaz.org)
- Programs for the blind--[acbvi.org](http://acbvi.org)

*Presented by  
Mari Nelson  
Feb. 2018*

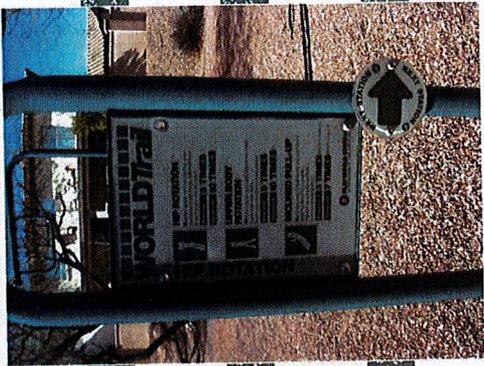
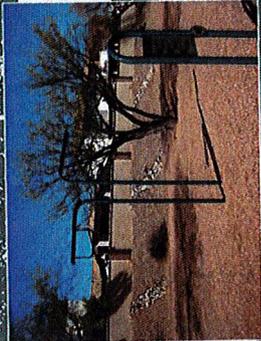
**FREQUENCY OF EXERCISE**

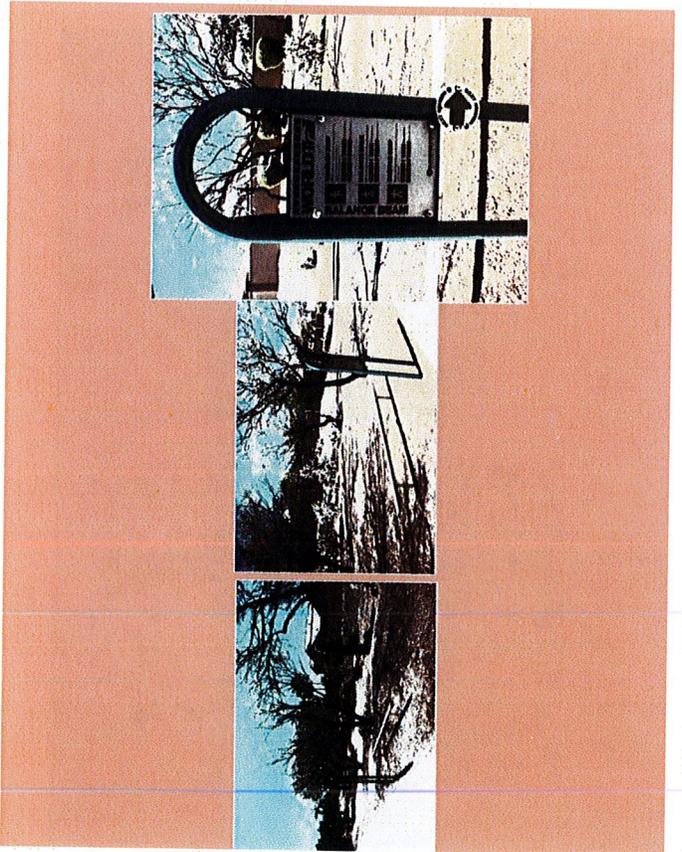
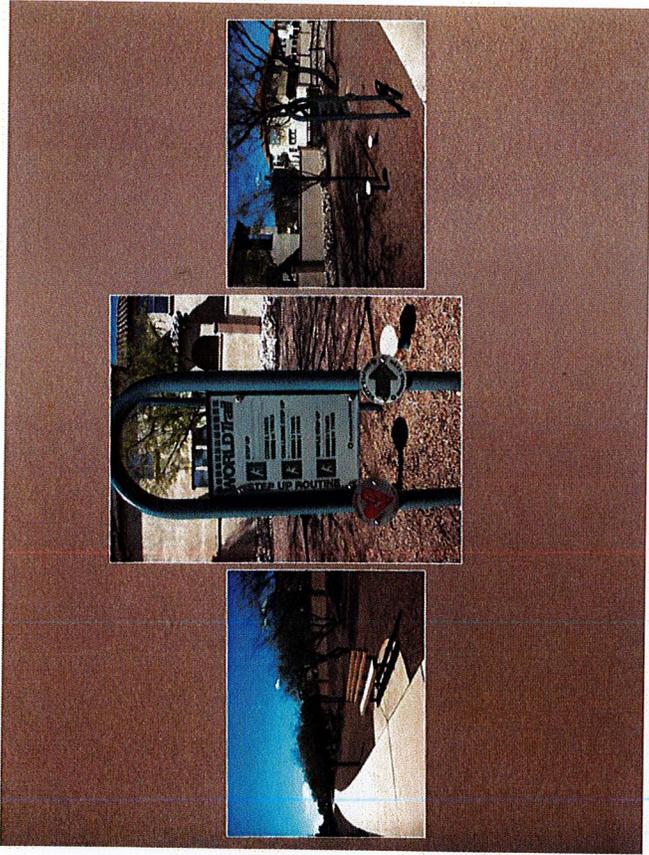
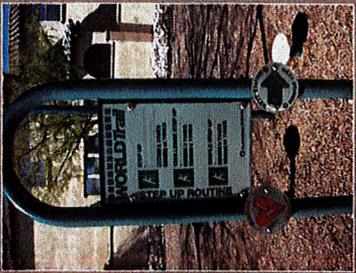
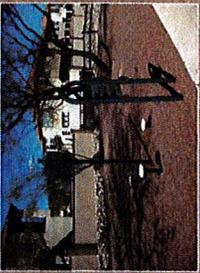
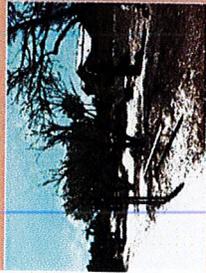
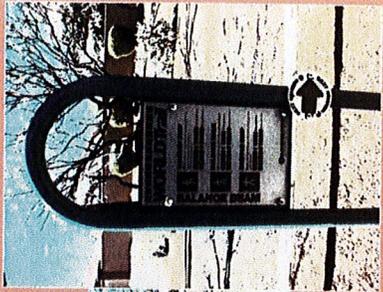
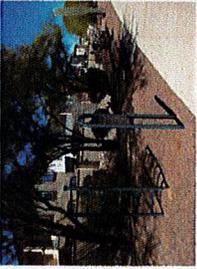
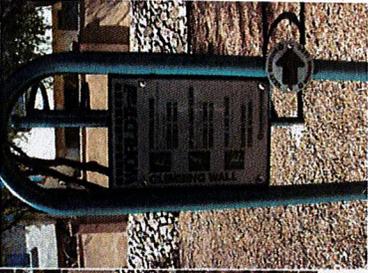
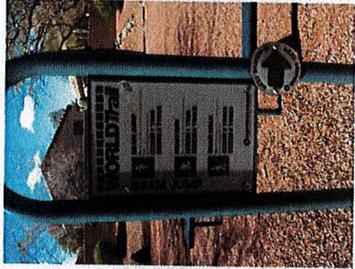
Frequency of exercise is the number of times you exercise each week. We recommend exercising at least 3 times each week. For example, you could exercise on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Or you could exercise on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Or you could exercise on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Or you could exercise on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise on Wednesday, Friday, and Monday. Or you could exercise on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise on Friday, Sunday, and Monday. Or you could exercise on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. Or you could exercise on Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Or you could exercise on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Or you could exercise on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Or you could exercise on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise on Friday, Sunday, and Monday. Or you could exercise on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. Or you could exercise on Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

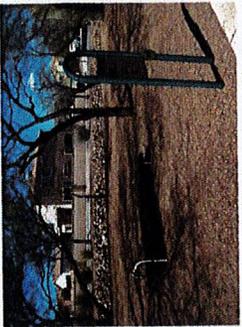
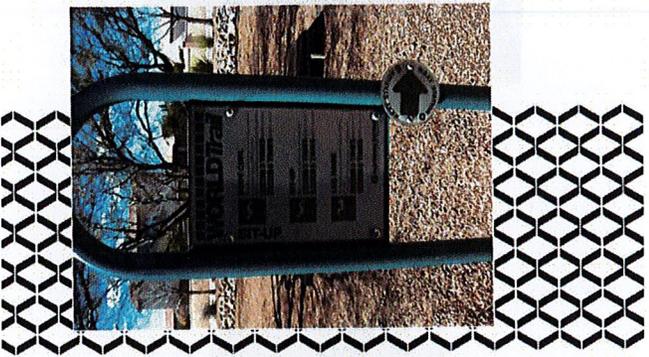
**DURATION OF EXERCISE**

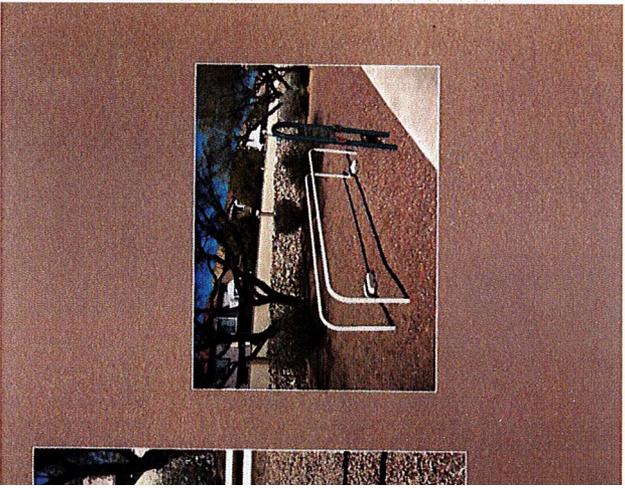
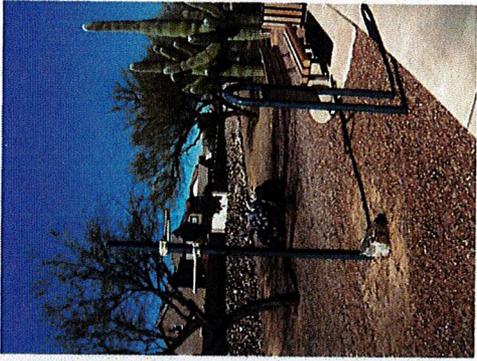
Duration of exercise is the amount of time you spend exercising each time. We recommend exercising for at least 30 minutes each time. For example, you could exercise for 30 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Friday, Sunday, and Monday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Friday, Sunday, and Monday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. Or you could exercise for 30 minutes on Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

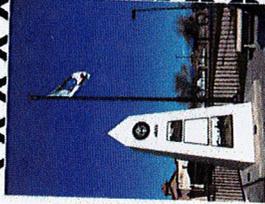
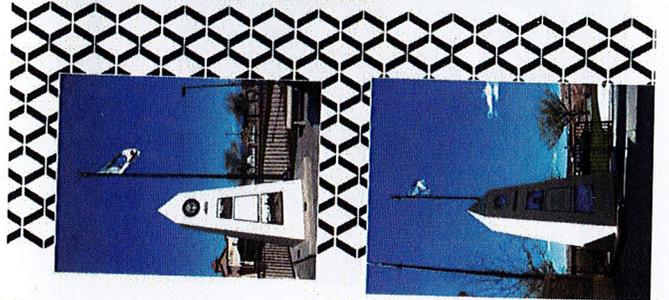
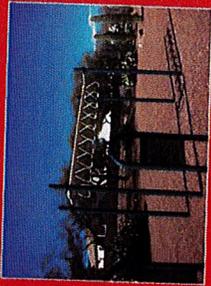
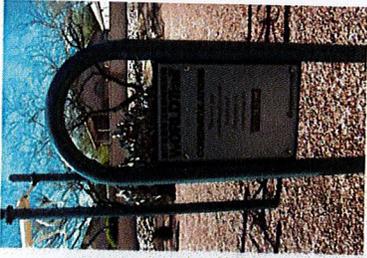
**ENJOY!**











*The Proud  
and  
The Brave*

