

To: City of Tucson Mayor and Council

RECEIVED
23 JAN 30 AM 10:56

From: Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association (DSNA)

OFFICE OF THE
CITY CLERK

Approved by DSNA: 12/21/2022

Friends,

We write this letter to elevate the importance of rethinking the approach to processes currently underway regarding future use of a 27-acre site at the base of Sentinel Peak/A-Mountain. While this site is not in the Dunbar Spring neighborhood, we consider its significance as a cultural heritage site and open space to merit community focus and action. Further, we find the current ownership and approach to development flawed and strongly suggest that the site's history be re-examined in an open and public manner before any further actions be taken.

We also understand that the site was once offered to the Tohono O'odham Nation along with the stipulation that the Nation be responsible for the remediation of a Tucson City landfill that was active on the site in the 1950s. We celebrate the intention of this gesture but also suggest that the proposal of reparation, coupled with the requirement to also clean up the land, was insufficient. We encourage the City to work with the Nation to determine what level of landfill remediation is necessary for the Nation to welcome receiving the land back. We stand with the Nation and others to lift up the incredible history of people living and sustaining community in this place.

Further, we understand that the Menlo Park Neighborhood Association is undertaking a strategic planning process, and that this site is within their jurisdiction. We stand alongside our neighbors as they consider issues related to their well-being, their interconnection with other neighborhoods, and encourage and support their careful consideration of future uses of this site as part of their process.

We also understand that the current ownership of the land is held by the Rio Nuevo District and that this organization's reason for being is to support development that leads to tax revenue. There have been many mistakes made by civic leaders in the past regarding this site (displacement of Tohono O'odham in the late 1800s and putting a landfill there in the 1950s, just to name two examples) and placing this important culture heritage site in the hands of economic developers is one of them. We propose Rio Nuevo District immediately stop pursuing developers to develop the site and instead the City, the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Menlo Park Neighborhood Association engage in a process to reach an outcome that lifts up the cultural and environmental value of the site for generations to come. Framing this as an economic development project with a landfill remediation problem is a mischaracterization of what could and should happen with this land.

Many groups are organizing to oppose the development of this land and we are in alignment with a set of reasons to maintain open space, as outlined below:

*- Distribution on last page.

**Environmental protection, wildlife connectivity, archeological preservation,
cultural and ethnic continuity, historic preservation**

- Honor the Native American ancestors who historically and currently stewarded and cultivated this land for millennia
- Honor the cultural and religious importance of the springs and cienega which provided the essential water that led to Tucson's existence
- Protect the Santa Cruz River and its floodplain
- Protect the regenerative value of riparian vegetation for climate mitigation and riverbank stabilization
- Protect and assure safe habitat and wildlife corridors between the Santa Cruz River and the Tucson Mountains, which provides essential access to water for birds and all wildlife
- Potential to highlight the city of Tucson by creating a unique urban riverside park in the Sonoran desert
- Create a unique amenity that will attract and educate cultural and ecological tourists to generate and increase dollars from tourism
- Protect our Dark Skies

Neighborhood Improvement and Preservation

- Value the historic legacy of the landscape, viewscape, and land uses of the property
- Avoid further gentrification and maintain long-term residence
- Address the scarcity of green space and trees within Tucson's urban core
- Mitigate heat generation, provide shaded urban cooling, improve air quality, and increase carbon sequestration
- Provide outdoor recreation space for community enjoyment, health benefits, and quality of life
- Suppress additional traffic noise and disturbance to neighborhoods
- Provide learning opportunities for youth and students of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods
- Offer learning opportunities for visitors, and the public at large
- Offer job opportunities for youth to maintain vegetation and steward space
- Reflect community values as repeatedly expressed by Tucson voters (Prop 400, etc.) to support historic, cultural, and ecological restoration
- Maintain solar access for neighborhood homes
- Complement bicycle loop and Santa Cruz River path

In our discussions on this topic, it is nearly impossible to separate it from the acute need for affordable housing and other remedies to eliminate houselessness in our city. We encourage the City and all parties to prioritize affordable housing and the elimination of houselessness as it considers all land use strategies, at this site and across the basin.

Economic development drives many decisions in city planning. We suggest that an alternative approach be taken with this site. We encourage civic investment to fix wrongs of the past and to lift up the beauty of our desert basin and the rich history of people living here for more than 4,000 years.

In solidarity,

Dunbar Spring Neighborhood Association

Approved, 12/21/2022

LOG NO. 222223

DISTRIBUTION		PUBLIC RECORDS COPY
	City Clerk, City Hall	
Mayor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
City Attorney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
City Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
City Clerk	_____	_____
Posting	_____	_____
Public File	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _____	_____
EA	_____	_____
	City Deputy City Clerk	_____
	Asst. City Clerk	_____
	Records Manager	_____
	Mgmt. Asst.	_____
	Officer Supervisor	_____
	Systems Analyst	_____
	Liquor/Bingo	_____
	Agenda	_____
	BCC	_____
	Payment/Procurement	_____

Key
 Information Copy
 X-Action Copy
 O-Original

★ = Emailed

SM