

Vision Statement

"The vision for the Heritage Orchard is to preserve, in perpetuity, the rich agricultural history of Saratoga for the education, involvement and enjoyment of the community."

--Heritage Preservation Commission

This vision statement builds upon the achievements of the previous Master Plan for preserving this scenic symbol of Saratoga's agricultural history, as well as continuing to involve the residents of Saratoga in the unique life of a working orchard.

Introduction



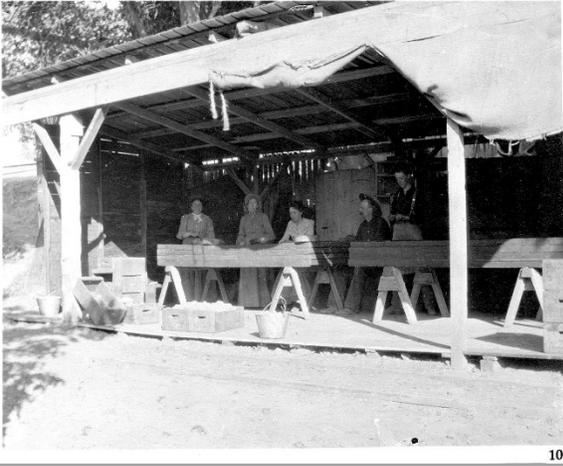
The Heritage Orchard is the only park in the City of Saratoga that preserves and celebrates Saratoga's rich agricultural history. The site is zoned R-1-20,000 and the General Plan Land Use designation is Open Space-Managed Resource Protection (OS-MR). It is recognized by the residents of Saratoga as a living jewel and community landmark. Historically the Heritage Orchard has also been known as Central Park. The working orchard is located at 13650 Saratoga Avenue on the Southwest corner of Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue, south of the Saratoga Library. The site is bounded by Saratoga Avenue to the North, Fruitvale Avenue to the East, Wildcat Creek to the

South, and Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School to the West. The land was purchased by the city in 1972 to construct the Saratoga Library and associated parking lot on 4.3 acres of the property.

The orchard was designated as a City park in 1984 to preserve the important agricultural heritage of Saratoga. As development encroached on the last remaining orchards in Saratoga, this site was chosen to represent the important early history of Saratoga and the role orchards played as the economic backbone of the town during the period of Horticultural Development (1869-1906). It was preserved as a working orchard, growing apricots, cherries, and prunes, because it was one of the last remaining orchards in the City of Saratoga in the 1980s. The orchard was placed on the City's Heritage Resource Inventory in 1988 (HP-88-01) and later designated as a Historic Landmark (HP-3).



Today, the Saratoga Heritage Orchard proudly stands as one of the last historic orchards in the Santa Clara valley. While the Open Space and Conservation Element of the City's General Plan continues to preserve the orchard under Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Goal OSC-3, Saratoga residents savor the orchard's beautiful setting, abundant fruit trees, community trail and annual Blossom Festival celebration. With an updated Heritage Orchard Master Plan, residents will benefit from new opportunities to participate in the preservation of this historic site.



With the assistance of David Gates and Associates, the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) created a Master Plan in 2001 that addressed: orchard preservation, educational opportunities, maximizing the views of the orchard, minimizing intrusion of site improvements, maintaining the orchard, and implementing a tree adoption program.

In March of 2019, the City Council asked the HPC to update the 2001 Master Plan for the Heritage Orchard. The HPC immediately began researching information, which included site

visits to Heritage Orchards located in surrounding cities. The commission toured the Saratoga Heritage Orchard with the current Orchardist and the Community Development Director. They also held meetings with the Public Works Director and the Orchardist regarding orchard production and maintenance.

The information contained in this report includes the history, vision, objectives and accomplishments of the 2001 Master Plan, key issues faced today and recommendations for updating the Heritage Orchard Master Plan for the continued success and protection of the Heritage Orchard using the best practices and standards of care used in the industry.

This Master Plan is a working document which provides the community and its partners a guideline for operations, maintenance and development of the Heritage Orchard, while minimizing disruption and safeguarding the existing unique character and health of the orchard.

History

Santa Clara Valley consists of most of Santa Clara County and a small portion of San Benito County. The valley, named after Mission Santa Clara, was known as the "Valley of Heart's Delight" from 1890 to the 1950s because of its high concentration of fruit orchards.



The Heritage Orchard site was originally part of Quito Rancho. In the 1880s it was owned by the Marian family. The site was purchased by FC Cox in the 1920s, who farmed apricots and prunes for 30 years. In the 1950s, the land was owned and farmed by three generations of the Seagraves family.

In 1900, Edwin Sidney (Everlasting Sunshine) Williams organized a citywide celebration when the two-year drought ended and called it the Blossom Festival. Wanting people to enjoy the blossoms of the orchards, invitations were issued as far away as San Francisco. Hundreds of attendees responded on foot, by stage, and by train. The day was filled with a parade, food, games, and a blossom and garden tour. Each succeeding year, the event grew in popularity with 20,000 attending one year. Due to its initial success, the Blossom Festival was held each year until WWII.

At one time, the Santa Clara Valley produced one third of the world's prunes. Saratoga had its share of contributions during this time, including Glen Una, the largest prune ranch, the Blossom Festival which ran for forty-one successive years, and inventions like the prune dipper by Luther Cunningham, whose company became FMC. The valley was the largest fruit producing and packing region in the world, with thirty-nine canneries. Innovations in the areas of planting, drying, canning, and care of fruit flourished.

After WWII, as men and women returned from the war, high tech firms were attracted to California. Orchards were removed to make room for homes and factories, and in the 1960s the Valley of Heart's Delight became known as Silicon Valley.

In 1972, the City of Saratoga bought 11.3 acres to build the Saratoga Library. In 1973, the City purchased 4.2 more acres, and in 1977, an additional 2.6 acres were purchased.

In 1988, the City approved the Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record (DPR) survey written by the HPC and placed the orchard on the Heritage Resource Inventory. The DPR is a standard survey form used by the State of California's Department of Parks & Recreation. This DPR referred to the site as Central Park Orchard. In 1986, a small sign was placed calling the land Central Park/Heritage Orchard. After that, the public began to use the name Heritage Orchard when referring to the site.

As land began to be developed, builders looked to use the Heritage Orchard for other purposes, including soccer fields, a gymnasium, and more. The community was opposed to these new uses, and they voted in favor of preserving the orchard as a piece of living history. In October of 2000, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 00-049 to block changes to the orchard, with the expectation that the orchard would be “maintained in perpetuity.”

The original Master Plan was then prepared by the HPC and David Gates & Associates before it was approved by the City Council in 2001. On April 3, 2002, the City Council approved Resolution 02-021 to remove specific trees from the orchard. In 2005, a gravel trail was added through the orchard connecting City Hall with the Saratoga Library. The trail has been used extensively by Redwood Middle School students.

Between 2000 and 2007, the orchard was the site for the Mustard Fair. In 2013, the festival resumed and was renamed the Blossom Festival in honor of the original festival’s name in 1900. The festival continues to this day as the community celebrates and draws visitors from all over the valley. If an agricultural structure is added to the site in the future, it will complete the setting of a typical orchard of the 1900s.



Review of 2001 Master Plan

The 2001 Heritage Orchard Plan provided an overview of the history and makeup of the Central Park Heritage Orchard, as well as guidelines for renovating the orchard and recommendations for its future use. The Plan included six goals:

1. Preserve the orchard as a functioning agrarian entity or enterprise.
2. Provide educational opportunities to learn about agricultural history in the area and orchard management and operations.
3. Maximize views of the orchard from the surrounding area to ensure the orchard is an important part of the community's image.
4. Minimize intrusion of site improvements into the orchard that may disrupt orchard maintenance operations or impact the 'natural appearance' of the orchard.
5. Ensure the orchard is maintained in optimum health by implementing necessary orchard maintenance and replacement programs.
6. Implement a Tree Adoption Program.

In the 2001 Master Plan, the HPC recommended the City replace any dead or declining trees. The Master Plan called for the immediate replacement of 298 trees that were either dead or missing and 154 that were declining. At the time the Master Plan was created, the Heritage Orchard included some native oaks and other, non-orchard trees. The HPC recommended the City retain these trees due to their historic relationship to the orchard, noting that only "orchard trees" (fruit) would be planted in the future.

The HPC expressed concern for the impact of pedestrian traffic through the orchard and recommended that any pedestrian paths be "hard-packed, dirt paths" that would be created and maintained on a yearly basis.

The HPC recommended a spray irrigation system be developed in a "disking pattern" between the tree rows. It was recommended that the system not only make use of the local metered water, but also explore the creation of a sustainable well system that included a "booster pump or holding tank system." It was determined that a feasibility test would be needed to confirm the viability of a well at this site.

The following four HPC recommendations were not implemented, but are still recommended for accomplishment as soon as possible:

1. Construct an orchard maintenance/educational program "barn" on the eastern portion of the site.
2. Promote community involvement.
3. Implement a Tree Adoption Program.
4. Install a prominent sign at the corner of Fruitvale and Saratoga Avenues, to identify the location of the Heritage Orchard.

The proposed Master Plan of 2001 implementation was divided into two phases:

- Phase One: Several capital improvements, including the removal of dead/declining trees, determining the feasibility of a well, and designing an irrigation system.
- Phase Two: Planting bare root trees, constructing a well, and installing an irrigation system.

2001 Master Plan Accomplishments

1. Provided a Master Plan documenting objectives.
2. Preserved the orchard through City Council resolution.
3. Created a pedestrian path connecting City Hall with the Library.
4. Installed a permanent irrigation system in the orchard.
5. Installed a well with a booster pump for irrigation water supply.

Objectives of the updated 2020 Orchard Master Plan

Preserve & Protect

1. Preserve the 13.9-acre orchard as a working, productive orchard to engage and educate the community on Saratoga's agricultural heritage.
2. Protect the orchard in perpetuity.
3. Provide guidelines for the proper stewardship and best agricultural practices of the orchard.

Maintain

1. Maintain and improve the orchard's optimum health.
2. Ensure there is minimal intrusion of the site and orchard when improvements are made to ensure no disruption to orchard maintenance and little impact on the orchard's natural appearance.
3. Maximize views of the orchard from the surrounding area to ensure the orchard is an important part of the community image.

Educate

1. Encourage and provide educational opportunities and events for others to learn about the agricultural history of the area and pursue avenues for community involvement.
2. Install prominent signage on the corner of Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue, as well as signage within the orchard.
3. Incorporate an agricultural structure(s) for community education and engagement.

Outreach

1. Develop an outreach program to surrounding communities with heritage orchards in order to share ideas.
2. Foster and encourage a network program with other heritage orchards, orchard preservation programs.
3. Generate interest through social media and conventional media outlets.

Existing Conditions, Issues, and Assumptions

Preservation of the Orchard

- Existing Conditions: The Heritage Orchard is the only park in the City of Saratoga that preserves and celebrates Saratoga’s rich agricultural history. The site is zoned R-1-20,000 and the Land Use designation is Open Space-Managed Resource Protection (OS-MR).
- Issues: The public has limited knowledge of the orchard and is not engaged in its preservation. The City of Saratoga General Plan makes no mention of the Heritage Orchard Master Plan and there is a need to explore additional legal protections to ensure preservation of the orchard.
- Assumptions: The orchard will be secured for future generations. There will be outreach programs and events, such as the Blossom Festival, to engage the public and gain their continued appreciation of the land usage and history.

Size and Use of the Orchard

- Existing Conditions: The orchard is composed of approximately 13.9 acres and consists of fruit trees.
- Issues: Any use, such as educational opportunities, community events, marketing efforts, and campaigns, could impact the health of the trees and the harvesting and distribution/sale of the fruit.
- Assumptions: Decisions to place structures in the orchard, or community uses of the orchard, will consider the impact these changes might have on the current health or the future number of trees in the orchard. The site survey will be updated to represent the boundary and trees within the orchard.

Inventory of Trees

- Existing Conditions: Approximately 958 fruit trees grow in the orchard, consisting of 618 apricot, 255 prunes, and 85 cherry trees. There are spaces for another 384 trees. The orchardist recommends planting 274 apricots and 110 prunes. There are some mature coast live oak trees growing among the fruit trees.
- Issues: The non-orchard, oak trees and other tree types may provide habitat for wildlife in the area. These non-orchard trees may be threatening the health of the fruit-bearing orchard trees.
- Assumptions: When a non-orchard tree dies or needs to be removed, it will be replaced with an orchard tree. The City will continue annual thinning and caring for all non-orchard trees.

Irrigation

- Existing Conditions: There is currently a well in the orchard which is used to irrigate the trees. An above-ground sprinkler system is also installed.
- Issues: The current system is inadequate.
- Assumptions: An updated irrigation system will be installed, such as a system to support the new soil building strategy.

Climate and Air Quality

- Existing Conditions: Due to climate change, the area will continue to see warmer days and drier conditions.
- Issues: Air quality is a concern, for both trees and visitors.
- Assumptions: Climate and air quality will be considered when planning for the continued health of the trees and when timing educational activities and events in the orchard.

Soil Conditions

- Existing Conditions: The soil in the orchard is Sandy Loam soil. Weeds are managed with mowing and manual weed whacking.
- Issues: The quality of the soil in the orchard is impacted by climate, human and animal interactions, fertilizers, water, and conservation efforts.
- Assumptions: An evaluated and annually updated maintenance plan will be implemented and followed.

Pathways

- Existing Conditions: There is currently one path of travel into the orchard, from the southern corner of the orchard at Fruitvale Avenue, to the library.
- Issues: The current path, along with any additional paths taking visitors to a future structure, may impact the health of the orchard.
- Assumptions: Pedestrian paths in the orchard will have minimal impact on the natural appearance of the orchard and will not interfere with maintenance.

Wildlife and Domesticated Animals

- Existing Conditions: The existing orchard provides a habitat for a variety of local wildlife, including coyotes, deer, bobcats, raccoons, skunks, opossums, birds, squirrels, and gophers.
- Issues: Wildlife can cause problems for the trees and their fruit.
- Assumptions: Proper precautions will be used to deter unwanted wildlife at all times with an ongoing abatement plan. Signs will be placed to support the City's requirement for pets to remain on a leash.

Security

- Existing Conditions: The orchard is not fenced.
- Issues: When fruit is removed by pedestrians from the orchard, it decreases the amount of fruit available and could cause damage to the trees. People walking off the paths and taking the fruit could damage the trees and the soil.
- Assumptions: Programs and signage will be introduced to educate the public on the best practices of harvesting the fruit.

Adjacent Properties

- Existing Conditions: The site is bounded by Saratoga Avenue to the North, Fruitvale Avenue to the East, Wildcat Creek to the South, and Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School to the West.
- Issues: Any increased community involvement in the orchard could impact the surrounding properties.
- Assumptions: A communication network with the adjacent properties will be adopted to ensure there are no event date conflicts.

Structures

- Existing Conditions: Currently, there are no structures for educational programs in the orchard.
- Issues: The addition of a structure may impact the number of trees in the orchard.
- Assumptions: With the addition of an appropriate agricultural structure, programs could be incorporated to promote education and the engagement of the community. Any structure will be placed in such a way as to minimize impact on orchard trees.

Utilities

- Existing Conditions: There are no public utilities in the orchard.
- Issues: There are no public restrooms, other than those found in the library. People attending educational events will need restroom facilities. There is currently no drinkable water in the orchard for visitors participating in educational activities or events held in the orchard.
- Assumptions: If an agricultural structure is added, there may eventually be public restrooms and utilities brought to the structure to support this addition. The HPC expects those managing the placement of any utility lines (water, sewer, electrical, etc.) will be mindful of the location so they will not impact the success and operations of the orchard.

Signage

- Existing Conditions: One small sign is located in the orchard with the name "Central Park Heritage Orchard".

- Issues: There is not adequate signage within the orchard.
- Assumptions: Prominent signage will be added to the orchard educating the public on the history of the orchard and pet requirements.

Orchard Care and Maintenance

Yearly Tasks by Month

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Prune Plums	X	X										
Plant Trees	X											
Spray trees		X	X							X	X	
Thin Apricots				X								
Harvest Apricots						X	X					
Inspect Plums				X	X							
Prune Apricots							X	X				
Harvest Prunes								X				
Prune Cherries			X				X					
Harvest Cherries					X	X						
Sow Cover Crop									X			
Routine Tasks*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

* Routine Tasks (ongoing) –

- Remove dead or diseased trees
- Gopher and Ground Squirrel Trapping- weekly
- Irrigation checks- weekly
- Mowing/weed whacking- every 4-6 weeks (depending on cover crop)

Orchard Preservation Plan

A primary objective of the management of the Heritage Orchard is the preservation of the orchard in perpetuity. The HPC has also determined that the highest level of protection to preserve the Heritage Orchard in perpetuity requires an amendment to the original City Council resolution that includes a legal land survey showing the boundaries of the orchard.



The original City Council Resolution No. 00-049, adopted by the Council on October 4, 2000, noted that the orchard "should be maintained in perpetuity for the enjoyment of generations to come." However, the resolution did not specifically reference the necessary land boundaries, an official survey, acreage, or elements of the orchard.

In order to further ensure the protection of the orchard and provide important addenda to the Master Plan, it is recommended that the City of Saratoga commission updated boundary, topographic and intensive level historic surveys of the Heritage Orchard.

It is advised and imperative that the City Council issue an amendment to Resolution No. 00-049 that references the updated land surveys. The reference would ensure that none of the documented, surveyed orchard site would be vulnerable to sale or boundary limitation by future City Councils or adverse consequences due to actions by others. With the goal of protection in perpetuity in mind, it is strongly advised that an attorney review the options and documents, affording the strongest legal wording for the amended resolution.

Recommendations for Implementation

Orchard Care & Maintenance

1. Implement the orchard preservation plan using best agricultural practices.
2. Create a program to manage wildlife that may threaten trees.
3. Replace all dead/diseased trees accordingly.
4. Request City staff work with the orchardist to prepare quarterly reports and provide tours to the HPC regarding the health of trees based on annual orchard maintenance tasks, numbered tree records, new trees to be planted, and projects, such as new irrigation systems.
5. Implement a tree numbering system to keep better records on each tree and to assist when an "Adopt a Tree Program" is initiated.
6. Update the irrigation system.
7. Maintain existing paths and add paths in a mindful manner, especially if a new structure is installed, to ensure the health of the trees is not threatened.
8. Request Orchardist to work with the City to implement best management practices that ensure the health and longevity of the orchard through optimum orchard maintenance, tree replacement programs, and an accessible database that provides documentation of ongoing as well as planned maintenance and projects.
9. The Orchardist should provide quarterly reports to the HPC on the status of the Orchard.
10. Comply with the City's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for weed and pest control.
11. Introduce soil nutrients and fertilization when testing shows that it is necessary to properly care for the trees. A safe and effective weed control program should be utilized accordingly.
12. Ensure pedestrian access through the orchard will be limited to hard-packed, dirt paths created by dragging or rolling a disked area to create an even smoother surface. Paths will need to be recreated each year.
13. Periodically review and update policy and plans relevant to the care of the Orchard.
14. Seek out grant opportunities for building soil, providing habitats as part of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and irrigation repair/improvements.

Signage & Orchard Name

1. Install permanent signage with appropriate lighting on the corner of Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue and at the corner on Saratoga Avenue closest to the Warner Hutton House.
2. Provide signage within the orchard related to history, education, pet requirements, etc.
3. Recommend that the City officially rename the park "Heritage Orchard" for consistency. Remove the existing sign that reads "Central Park" and save for a future historic display.

Education and Community Outreach

1. Create educational and community outreach programs that engage the community in the

preservation of the Heritage Orchard.

2. Introduce education programs with the orchardist and the community to ensure the security of the orchard.
3. Add an agriculture structure (such as, but not limited to, a barn) to educate and engage the community.
4. Implement the Adopt a Tree Program recommended in the 2001 plan.
5. Hold an Annual Harvest Day to engage the community. Saratoga residents would be guided and allowed to pick the fruit on Harvest Day using best practices.
6. Request City communication channels (social media, newsletters, website, video tours, etc.) to be used to share this necessary information with the community, including any educational/outreach programs, special events, and orchard program information.
7. The City should continue to collaborate with non-profit volunteer organizations that work to provide food for people in need to harvest the fruit. In addition, fruit will be harvested at community picking events and as a part of the adopt a tree program.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION OF HERITAGE ORCHARD ANNUAL MAINTENANCE & REPORTING

Task	City	Orchardist	Other	Q1 Jan- March	Q2 April- June	Q3 July- Sept	Q4 Oct- Dec	Ongoing
Identify and implement best agricultural practices	X	X	Share with HPC					X
Orchardist to work with City to implement best management practices	X	X	Share with HPC					X
Choose organization to harvest fruit	x	x			x			
Implement tree numbering and create database		X		X				
Update irrigation system		X						X
Maintain paths in orchard	X	X						X
Create program to manage wildlife		X						X
Introduce soil nutrients		X				X		
Replace all dead/diseased trees		X		X	X	X	X	
Plant cover crops/grasses		X		X	X	X	X	
Quarterly report to the City/HPC		X		X	X	X	X	

Recommended Timeline for Implementation

Task	City	HPC	Other	2020	2021	2022	2023
Preserve and Protect Make an amendment to the original City Council Resolution 00-049 that includes a legal land survey showing the boundaries of the orchard.	X				X		
Immediately update boundary, topographic and intensive level historic surveys of the Heritage Orchard as addenda to the Resolution 00-049 to ensure the Heritage Orchard will stand as is in perpetuity.	X				X		
Maintain Implement the orchard preservation plan using best agricultural practices as agreed by the City and Orchardist	X				X		
Periodically review and update policy and plans relevant to the care of the orchard.	X			X	X	X	X
Educate Install permanent signage with appropriate lighting on the corner of Saratoga Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue & at the corner on Saratoga avenue closest to the Warner Hutton House	X	X			X		
Provide signage within the orchard related to history, education, pet requirements, etc	X	X			X		
Recommend that the City officially rename the park "Heritage Orchard" for consistency. Remove the existing sign that reads "Central Park" and save for a future historic display.	X	X			X		

Community Outreach Create education and community outreach programs that engage the community in the preservation of the Heritage Orchard	X					X	X	X
Introduce education programs with the orchardist and the community to ensure the security of the orchard.	X	X					X	
Add an agriculture structure (such as, but not limited to, a barn) to educate and engage the community. Barn could contain educational displays	X						X	X
Implement the Adopt-A-Tree Program as recommended in the 2001 plan	X						X	
Purchase a kiosk for listing those who have adopted a tree and have an audio and map of Orchard highlights	X						X	
Create a video of the Heritage Orchard	X						X	
Hold an Annual Harvest Day to engage the community. Saratoga residents would be guided and allowed to pick the fruit on Harvest Day using best practices.	X		orchardist			X	X	X
Create outreach to managers of other heritage orchards locally as well as historical orchard managers for information exchange. Meet once a year or organize presentations to the public	X	X				X	X	X
Request City communication channels (social media, newsletters, website, video tours, etc.) to be used to share necessary information with the community, including any educational/outreach programs, special events, and orchard program information.	X				X	X	X	X

Establish communication network with adjoining properties to alert them of events, etc.	X			X	X	X	X
Financial Assistance Research grants available for historic properties to offset costs.	X			X	X	X	X

Summary

The Heritage Orchard is living history and considered a piece of agricultural history in Saratoga. The preservation and maintenance of the Heritage Orchard will continue to be associated with the early twentieth century horticulture and fruit growing agriculture industry, that once flourished in the Santa Clara Valley. This can be accomplished by:

1. Providing permanent protection using revised and updated surveys and documentation.
2. Utilizing and annually reviewing the best agricultural practices.
3. Recognizing the orchard with attractive and educational signage
4. Implementing educational and outreach programs, including Adopt-a-Tree, news articles, a web site, video tours, for the community.

“The best friend on earth of man is the tree. When we use the tree respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources on the earth.”

— Frank Lloyd Wright

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• Los Altos	
Civic Center	
51 S. San Antonio Road	
Los Altos, CA 94022	
• Sunnyvale	
Heritage Orchard Park	
560 Remington Drive	
Sunnyvale, CA 94087	
• San Jose	
Martial Cottle Park	
6283 Snell Avenue	
San Jose, CA 95136	