

City Council considers extending golf course

Last week I learned that the South Pasadena City Council is considering extending the golf course driving range into the piece of land adjacent to the Nature Park ([Item 6 on the Closed Session Agenda](#)).

It had been hoped that the land would become part of the park providing a buffer between the park and the golf course. I spoke at the public comment period on Wednesday, March 2nd prior to the closed session meeting.

My opposition to this proposal is based on the following considerations:

1. If the driving range (see map below) is extended there will be a tall fence adjacent to the path that goes down to the Sycamore Circle. The view from the Sycamore Circle will not be of an oak woodland (which it would become if weeds were removed and the existing trees were allowed to thrive), but of an unnaturally green field behind a tall fence.
2. There are several beautiful native trees in this fenced area including a large, mature western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) and several coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) of different sizes and ages. Even if the trees are not removed, the change to the land and the future requirement of ongoing irrigation, particularly in the summer, would likely be detrimental to the trees.
3. Converting this land into turf will increase water usage and urban runoff into the Arroyo Seco. It is a direct, downhill slope from the property to the Arroyo. Whether it is recycled or potable water, it will require an increase in water usage. Recycled water usually has more salts than potable water and may endanger any trees that receive runoff or direct irrigation. Runoff into the Arroyo Seco from irrigation of turf with recycled or potable water is definitely a concern and may require an EIR (Environmental Impact Report), or at least notification to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.
4. The city promotes itself as a "Tree City" and requires residents to go through an arduous and expensive process to remove trees, especially California natives. If it were necessary to remove any of the trees in that parcel to accommodate the driving range activity, this would leave the city open to criticism of having a double standard when it comes to its policy on the value and protection of urban canopy. Project managers sometimes agree to move trees from effected areas as a form of mitigation. This practice has been shown to be ineffective and expensive. It is a waste of money and worse than just chopping down trees with no mitigation at all.
5. The city sets a bad example by increasing turf when the public is being told to reduce water usage by removing lawn.
6. Looking at a map of the park land along the Arroyo Seco in South Pasadena, the small southwest tip (shaded in blue and red on the map below) is the only habitat that can be enjoyed by the public. It should also be noted that a large portion of the Nature Park is actually on LA City land (the extreme western tip, shaded in red) so that South Pasadena

land dedicated to natural habitat is even smaller.

Members of the South Pasadena City Council may be coming to the Nature Park for the next Friends of the Nature Park cleanup on Saturday, March 19th. It would be helpful if you could spread the word to anyone who might oppose the golf course extension. Ask them to contact the city council and to attend the March 19th cleanup to let them know in person how they feel.

