

## **Wilderness Park Master Plan**

23 October 2015

Dear Editor:

The Claremont Hills Wilderness Park—a passive park intended to preserve natural resources while allowing visitor access—could well have become an area covered with homes, fences, swimming pools and streets. It was privately-owned land.

The park was created through the efforts of people of good will and with imaginative, bold city policies. A “transfer of development credits” concept enabled a fairly dense residential development to be built along Baldy Road and Padua Avenue, in exchange for the dedication of hundreds of acres as permanent open space. Additional acreage was purchased with local bonds. About 40 percent was purchased with state and regional grants.

The only guarantee that privately-owned properties adjacent to the park will not be developed is the purchase as parkland (with the help of grants) or dedication as permanent open space through another transfer of development credits scheme, particularly on the west side of the park.

To support the idea that as much hillside as possible remains undeveloped, the master plan should include park expansion as a “desired outcome.” The Wilderness Park should encompass Claremont’s hillsides from east to west and become part of a region-wide open space corridor. The master plan should also emphasize coordinating with neighboring communities as well as regional agencies and the National Forest Service to ensure public access along the foothills while protecting watershed and wildlife resources.

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