

# **Position Paper: Stanford C1 Trail**

**Endorsed by Stanford neighbors and the environmental community**

April 10, 2003

## **Executive Summary**

We, **Acterra, Committee for Green Foothills, Committee to Save the Stanford Golf Course, Families for Fair Government, Ladera Community Association, Mid-Peninsula Action for Tomorrow (MPACT), People for Access to Trails in the Hills at Stanford (PATHS), Santa Clara County Green Party, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Stanford Greens, Stanford Open Space Alliance, and Stanford Weekend Acres Neighborhood Association**, endorse the C1-B (Community Endorsed Trail) alignment for the trail Stanford University is required to provide on the northwest side of campus under the terms of the Stanford General Use Permit (GUP). This trail alignment is required as mitigation for Stanford's 5 million square feet of development over the next ten years, and is required to be safe and recreational as specified through the conditions of the GUP and Countywide Trails Master Plan.

Trail alignment C1-C (Stanford Roadside Route) is unacceptable because of its documented risk to public safety, environmental impacts, and minimal recreational value. Trail alignment C1-A, and any other alignment alongside the eastern banks of San Francisquito Creek, is unacceptable because of negative impacts on the environment and irreconcilable use conflicts with the Stanford Golf Course and the Native American sweat lodge area.

## **Background**

On December 12, 2000, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved Stanford's General Use Permit (GUP) and Community Plan, granting the University approximately 5 million square feet of development over the next ten years. In exchange for this development entitlement, Stanford agreed to meet all the conditions of the GUP as set by the County. One condition reads: "Stanford shall dedicate easements for, develop, and maintain the portions of the two trail alignments which cross Stanford lands shown in the 1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan (Routes S1 and C1)..."

On June 25, 2002, the Board of Supervisors agreed to move forward with environmental review for two alignments for the C-1 trail (in the area of San Francisquito Creek and Alpine Road). Environmental groups, hikers, neighbors and community associations have endorsed the C1-B (Community Endorsed Trail) alignment. This alignment would provide a safe, recreational trail as required by the GUP and Countywide Trails Master Plan, and would help mitigate Stanford's 5 million square feet of development. Trail alignment C1-C (Stanford Roadside Route) is unacceptable because of documented risks to public safety and minimal recreational value.

## **C1-B "Community Endorsed Trail" Desirable Features:**

- Has "Medium to High" recreational value as assessed by County staff.
- Has low environmental impact as determined by County staff.
- Requires no negotiation with San Mateo County or other landholders.

- Has no impact on private property owners in the Stanford Weekend Acres neighborhood.
- Avoids unsafe crossings with roadways and driveways.
- Avoids the entrance and exit ramps of Highway 280 by utilizing a service tunnel under the freeway.
- Provides recreational opportunities to the residents of proposed new faculty housing development adjacent to the Stanford Golf Course, as intended by the GUP mitigation.

**C1-C “Stanford Roadside Route” Undesirable Features:**

- Creates unsafe conditions, as two-way trail traffic would have to negotiate vehicle traffic from numerous driveways and roads in the Stanford Weekend Acres neighborhood.
- Provides minimal recreational value due to its close proximity to busy roadways for the entire length of the trail. With 31,000 vehicle trips per day, the noise and exhaust from traffic on Alpine Road does not create a pleasant environment for trail users.
- Requires the removal of more than 40 trees, including some heritage oaks that are as large as 48 inches in diameter.
- Requires fortification of creek banks.
- Calls for widening the existing neighborhood footpath along the lower reaches of Alpine Road to 12-16 feet, creating more impervious surfaces and causing increased run-off into Los Trancos and San Francisquito Creeks.

We note that our concerns about the C1-C alignment are shared by Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation staff. In its report to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors dated April 30, 2002, staff noted that the C1-C alignment would have “High impacts” on private homeowners in the Stanford Weekend Acres neighborhood. Staff also characterized the C1-C alternative as having “Medium to High” risks to public safety as a result of close proximity to Alpine and Sand Hill Roads. Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Menlo Park, and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District also have expressed concerns about the C1-C alignment.

**This position paper has been formally adopted by the following 13 organizations:**

Acterra, Committee for Green Foothills, Committee to Save the Stanford Golf Course, Families for Fair Government, Ladera Community Association, Mid-Peninsula Action for Tomorrow (MPACT), People for Access to Trails in the Hills at Stanford (PATHS), Santa Clara County Green Party, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Stanford Greens, Stanford Open Space Alliance, and the Stanford Weekend Acres Neighborhood Association.