

April 24, 2024

Santiago Creek  
Commission Meeting

Written Public Comments

## April 24, 2024, Santiago Creek Commission Meeting

### Agenda Item

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

 1 Public Comment



**Adrienne Gladson** at April 24, 2024 at 4:41pm PDT

Neutral

I am sending this letter from OPA because I understand there is some power out there. They representative or President may not be able to attend. Thank you.

### Agenda Item

#### 3.2. Review of Ordinance No. 13-23, establishing the Santiago Creek Commission.

[Staff Report](#) [Ordinance No. 13-23](#)

 2 Public Comments



**Adrienne Gladson** at April 23, 2024 at 9:17pm PDT

Support

Congratulations to all of you as you start this long overdue effort. I am attaching the Natural Resource section of our General Plan. It provides background on some of the city's goals and policies for Santiago Creek. It's worth reading several times. I did it again this last weekend to refresh my memory.

One of the critical issues for Orange leadership is to solve is our embarrassing park land deficit (see page NR-39, 2nd bullet statement and NR-44, first full paragraph for specific numbers; 275 acres and 632 acres). It is my opinion that the Santiago Creek area could help a great deal in solving this shortfall.

I am happy to help you as you move forward with the efforts outlined in Ordinance 13-23.

Adrienne Gladson, AICP  
adriennegladson@gmail.com



**Guest User** at April 22, 2024 at 7:36pm PDT

Neutral

I am a resident and property owner in East Orange near Santiago Creek, and I am an advocate for protecting the Santiago Creek watershed area.

I have carefully reviewed Ordinance 13-23 (noted in Item 3.2 on the 4/24/2024 Agenda) for the Santiago Creek Commission as well as the staff report and documents connected to Item 3.3 of the Agenda.

The Ordinance refers to five planning documents named:

Lower Santiago Creek Specific Plan,  
Santiago Creek Greenway Study,  
Orange Greenbelt Committee,  
Santiago Creek Greenbelt Plan, and  
Santa Ana River/Santiago Creek Greenbelt Implementation Plan.

These foundational planning documents were not provided with the package posted for Item 3.2 nor was I able to find them in my search on the City website.

I want to read these critical documents (and I would assume so does the Commission and the public) ahead of the meeting on 4/24. It is clear these documents along with the East Orange Plan and Orange Park Acres Plan are the comprehensive vision documents for Santiago Creek.

Thank you in advance for letting me know when they will be posted.

Leslie Manderscheid

## 📄 Agenda Item

### 3.3. Review the Santiago Creek Vision Plan, 2018 City Staff Memorandum, and Santiago Creek Commission Recommendation Planning Sheet.

[Staff Report](#) [Santiago Creek Vision Plan](#) [2018 Staff Memorandum](#) [Draft Santiago Creek Commission Recommendation Planning Sheet](#)  
[East Orange 1975 General Plan](#) [Orange Park Acres Specific Plan](#)

🗨️ 4 Public Comments



**kim plehn** at April 24, 2024 at 8:55am PDT

Oppose

Good evening Creek Commission,

My name is Kim Plehn, and I am here tonight to welcome this new commission, and to say I am happy this commission was formed to protect Santiago Creek. Thank you for taking your time to serve on this commission.

I've lived in East Orange for 32 years and have come to love the creek. I also really appreciate the people that came before me and the passion they have had for protecting Santiago Creek. I am so impressed that citizens over 50 years ago had a vision to create the Santiago Greenbelt Plan.

They were really on to something. So much so, that the East Orange General Plan and the Orange Park Acres Specific Plan both supported the Greenbelt concept. It became a critical piece for each plan, and it has made our communities better, protected our environment and added value to our city as a whole.

I'm not sure the reason behind the Santiago Creek Vision Plan. It seems more focused on bike trails. There's limited information about East Orange. Most surprising is how many times Milan Capital is mentioned in the document and the outdated photos that are used. The mounds have been there for years. It's hard to understand what the motivation is and why this commission should even focus on this plan. We would be better served by starting over.

It seems only logical that you would use the adopted plans as the guide. Thank You.



**Adrienne Gladson** at April 24, 2024 at 8:54am PDT

Oppose

Knowing history is crucial! By knowing & remembering it, we hope will never repeat past mistakes. Such knowledge is paramount for understanding the history of decision-making surrounding Santiago Creek.

Over the past 50 years, many city and county land use planning documents and more recent documents for Santiago Creek have similar names or share similar elements in their titles. It's quite confusing and muddles up the dialogue when we talk about them. That makes it difficult to understand what to rely on or creates a barrier on how to use them. Plus, there is confusion when policies and actions are decided in a rush without a thorough review of history (and what was adopted), and when comments from community members are ignored or left out, or the process is circumvented.

I believe I can assume, for all members of this Commission, all facts must be provided before the members can make any recommendations. With apologies to our new staff and leadership, the institutional knowledge, surrounding applicable entitlements for Santiago Creek weren't passed on.

To be specific, the Santiago Creek Commission should not rely on the Santiago Creek Vision Plan (prepared by the Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance) in its present form, which is discussed in and attached to the staff report. Unfortunately, this vision plan, it is incomplete, has inaccuracies, is missing community participation, and it was never adopted by the City Council. Simply put, it has no authority. Some information may be helpful and could be extracted and used by the commission.

What this means, as Santiago Creek Commissioners, you will have to do some careful work to learn everything that has or hasn't happened around our creek. It's the only way to do your work correctly. I value what you are doing and want you all to have creditability and accomplish something meaningful. All of us want to do what is right for Santiago Creek and now we can because we are no longer turning our back on this treasured natural resource.

With this background, I suggest the Commission select a working group (three members plus staff) to work on compiling and sorting out a reliable source document to use as you tackle the assignment City Council has given you. Further, I suggest that this working group along with members of the community with institutional knowledge, bring that back that draft to the full commission at a Special Meeting, a working study session on or around June 26th (or another date the end of June). Then at the next regular meeting, July 24, 2024, you can get started doing all good the work.

Adrienne Gladson, AICP





**Guest User** at April 23, 2024 at 8:44pm PDT

Neutral

I have carefully reviewed the 4/24/2024 Agenda Item 3.3 for the Santiago Creek Commission as well as the staff report and documents connected to Item 3.3 of the Agenda and have the following comments.

The Agenda Item only references the documents listed below:

Santiago Creek (Greenway Alliance) Vision Plan,  
East Orange 1975 General Plan, and  
Orange Park Acres Specific Plan.

At this point, it is erroneous to rely on the Santiago Creek (Greenway Alliance) Vision Plan as the comprehensive plan for Santiago Creek. The Santiago Creek Vision Plan (SCVP) was not adopted by the City nor the National Park Service (NPS). The SCVP is a draft at best and has no legal standing, nor is it a legal "planning document." The SCVP is flawed with poor flooding plans, inaccurate existing conditions, and proposes various damaging activities along the Creek. Also, it is missing a discussion of the City's open space deficit. It is apparent this document had little public input and no community buy-in.

Listed below are four planning documents referenced in Ordinance 13-23 which are not included in the list of attachments nor are they listed in the Recommended Action which are applicable to your work:

Santiago Creek Greenbelt Plan,  
Lower Santiago Creek Specific Plan,  
Santiago Creek Greenway Study, and  
Orange Greenbelt Committee

It is important to review these critical documents prior to Santiago Creek Commission meeting on 4/24. It appears these documents, along with the East Orange Plan and Orange Park Acres Plan, are the most comprehensive vision documents for Santiago Creek.

Until these documents are made available for Commission and public review, Item 3.3 should be addressed at another time.

Leslie Manderscheid, MCRP



**Guest User** at April 23, 2024 at 5:22pm PDT

Oppose

Public Comment: Santiago Creek Commission Meeting April 24, 2024 Item #3.3

I am excited we finally have a City of Orange Santiago Creek Commission. Santiago Creek travels through my community. However, it is important that the Commission gets off on the right foot with a strong foundation and accurate information to be productive and effective in implementing the vision of the community along the entire length of Santiago Creek through the City of Orange for the benefit of residents and the health of the watershed.

I request that item 3.3 be removed from the agenda for the following reasons:

- The Santiago Creek Vision Plan (SCVP), although having some good ideas, was received and filed but never adopted by the City of Orange.
- The first sentence under #6 on the staff report is not entirely accurate. Although a collaboration between the City of Orange and the National Park Service began in 2001, the final SCVP document went through many iterations over the years. The document was taken over by the Santiago Creek Greenway Alliance and was not adopted by the City of Orange or the National Park Service.
- The Santiago Creek Vision Plan provides little information, and what is included regarding the Santiago Creek Watershed through East Orange and Orange Park Acres is not necessarily accurate. Santiago Creek Commission Members must remember that projects determined for one portion of the creek often impact other portions.
- The Santiago Creek Commission members should base decisions on adopted documents, including the Santa Ana River/Santiago Creek Greenbelt Plan (1971), the Santa Ana River/Santiago Creek Greenbelt Implementation Plan (1976), Orange Park Acres Specific Plan (1973), and East Orange General Plan (1975). These are still living plans and relevant to our community.
- It is important that the Santiago Creek Commission members have a good understanding of plans that have been adopted by the City of Orange before any decisions are made as to projects. These documents have been the guide for future implementation with the goal being the health of Santiago Creek and the human and environmental community that surrounds it.
- The Santiago Creek Vision Plan has no legal standing as it has not been adopted. The governing plans for East Orange and Orange Park Acres are the East Orange General Plan, Orange Park Acres Specific Plan and the Santa Ana River/Santiago Greenbelt Plans.
- The Santiago Creek Commission should become familiar with the goals of these plans by conducting study sessions before discussing any potential projects along the Santiago Creek. It is very difficult to undo the effects of a presentation of inaccurate or incomplete information once heard.

Let's get our new Santiago Creek Commission off to a great start with accurate information on which to base their brainstorming and decisions. I'm anxious to participate.

Thank you,

Bonnie Robinson



## Orange Park Association

PO Box 2293 Orange, CA 92859

April 24, 2024

To: Santiago Creek Commissioners

Re: Santiago Creek Commission meeting – April 24, 2024

3.2. Review of Ordinance No. 13-23, establishing the Santiago Creek Commission.

Orange Park Association is a non-profit organization, formed in 1960 to protect the rural-equestrian area that was established in 1928 known as Orange Park Acres (OPA). For over 80 years, OPA residents have been building and maintaining a network of trails. Volunteers have focused on the acquisition and maintenance of recreational trails in the City and County of Orange, which we currently oversee, maintain, and insure. Our nearly 25-mile public trail system traverses hills and lowlands, with paths following creek beds or snaking through developed neighborhoods.

In 1971, OPA supported the Santa Ana River/Santiago Creek Greenbelt Plan (Greenbelt Plan). A significant portion of Orange Park Acres is encompassed in the Greenbelt Plan for upper Santiago Creek. The Greenbelt document received unanimous governmental support and was adopted by the Orange City Council and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

In 1973, the County and the City of Orange adopted the Orange Park Acres Specific Plan. The OPA Specific Plan incorporates the portion of the adopted Greenbelt Plan within Santiago Creek to the north and east boundaries of OPA. This covers approximately 450 acres. The Santiago Greenbelt Plan is part of the Open Space & Recreation designation on the *Orange Park Acres Land Use and Circulation Plan* map.

In 1975, the East Orange General Plan was adopted by the City of Orange. That plan followed suit and incorporated the Santiago Greenbelt Regional Park corridor as well.

**We appreciate Ordinance No. 13-23 acknowledging that the OPA and East Orange Plans includes a “vision” for the Santiago Creek Area.** One of the policies for our plan is clear: “Preserve Santiago Creek as a balanced ecological system and riparian area, maintaining the diversity of plant and vertebrate species while allowing for light recreational use such as equestrian and hiking trails. Specifically, support the Santiago Creek Greenbelt Proposal by the County of Orange.” Furthermore, Santiago Creek is a valuable resource that provides a safety valve for inundation when the creek overflows or water is released from the two upstream dams. This helps prevent water from racing like a freight train along the creek and endangering homes downstream.

**Therefore, the Orange Park Association respectfully requests that this commission use the adopted plans referenced in the ordinance as the guiding documents for your work.**

The OPA Plan has been an important link in the overall comprehensive general planning effort of the City of Orange and has served as a valuable tool in guiding the OPA community. We have worked hard to implement our plan as written, which includes our vision for Santiago Creek. We have a long history of trail planning, building and maintenance. We are at the final phase of completing the Community of Orange Loop Trail (COLT), which is a 10.5-mile loop trail that will connect four regional parks. There is nothing like it in California.

**OPA wants to add our vision, voice and expertise to this commission.** We welcome all of the commissioners to tour Orange Park Acres, learn about our history, why our OPA Plan is so important and why we are so passionate about Santiago Creek, our lifestyle and treasure our animals, especially our horses.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this matter. Please include OPA in any future correspondence or notices.

Thank you,

*Sherry Panttaja*

Sherry Panttaja

President, Orange Park Association

[sherry@opaequestrian.com](mailto:sherry@opaequestrian.com)