



September 13, 2022

City of Oakland
Public Works Department
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Suite 4314
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Comment on DRAFT San Antonio Park Master Plan

Dear City of Oakland,

First 5 Alameda County (First 5) appreciates the City of Oakland's (City) efforts to incorporate community input in the draft San Antonio Park Master Plan. **We encourage the City to continue to prioritize the San Antonio Neighborhood's recommendations and work with neighborhood members to finalize and implement a Master Plan that supports the health and well-being of children ages birth to 5.**

Our mission at First 5 Alameda County is to continually invest and innovate to support young children and their families and caregivers. Healthy thriving communities are crucial for developing young minds and family well-being. Over the years, First 5's [Alameda County Kindergarten Readiness Assessments](#) have revealed that **neighborhood assets, like parks and libraries, significantly boost children's school readiness**. Findings from our 2021/22 study, a *participatory research project that surveyed over 3000 parents/caregivers, early care and education professionals, TK and Kindergarten teachers in Alameda County*, support the advancement of policies that **promote family-friendly neighborhoods** including investments in safe, clean, green parks, playgrounds; accessible libraries; and extracurricular and out-of-school time activities that are affordable to all families.

Parks, playgrounds, schoolyards, and other public places are essential components of the built environment. [Research shows](#) that access to quality parks and recreation improves physical and mental health, reduces crime and violence, increases access to healthy foods, drives community connection, and boosts economic activity. This is especially true for young children where play is a developmental necessity that promotes healthy social emotional and physical development. For [children](#), safe green parks, and spaces for play help with improved attention, self-discipline, memory, higher standardized test scores, and promote health wellness. Neighborhood parks help cultivate feelings of safety and community.

With more than [80 percent of young children](#) in California ages birth to two, and approximately 40 percent of children ages birth to five receiving child care from family, friends, and neighbors, having accessible, welcoming, and culturally relevant community-based play and developmental experiences are crucial for school readiness, learning, and health.



In alignment with the San Antonio Neighborhood, we ask for your support in prioritizing the following community recommendations:

- Add a Community Center and Library in the park;
- Renovate the children’s playground and address safety concerns of families; and
- Improve lighting and pathways in and around the park to support safety.

We are grateful for your continued leadership and support for children, families, and communities. We ask for your support in ensuring that San Antonio Park becomes a safe, usable park for families with young children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin Spanos".

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County