



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
District 8

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: December 1, 2022

Approved

Date 12/1/2022

SUBJECT: LAKE CUNNINGHAM FUNDING STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to produce a Manager's Budget Addendum that brings forward a funding strategy to implement the City's recent report on restoring Lake Cunningham, for Council consideration in the upcoming budget cycle.

BACKGROUND

For generations, Lake Cunningham served as the East Side of San Jose's access to open space and recreation. From going swimming, to learning to kayak, to even hosting triathlons, quinceñeras, weddings, and other special occasion, Lake Cunningham was a regional destination that provided access to recreation for families that could not afford to spend weekends in Tahoe or Santa Cruz.

However, for decades the water quality at this lake has been getting worse and worse. Swimming and other full-contact water sports have been prohibited since 1994 when a group of triathletes became ill. In 2007, major fish die-offs raised concerns that the water quality was slipping even further.

In 2010, a comprehensive study was completed that deeply researched the conditions of the lake and brought forward a comprehensive menu of potential solutions, as well as specific recommended actions. Unfortunately, since no substantial funding could be identified, no substantial action was taken.

Now, for the first time, we have a new study that shows us a path forward to restore the lake. We have \$3 million set aside from Measure T, and additional funding strategies that have been proposed by the Council – in particular, pursuing public-private partnerships and state and federal funding opportunities.

Both of those strategies have very real possibilities – and there are others available as well. For example, one of the report’s strategies involves tree planting, and the city now has an aggressive plan to prioritize tree canopy – right in the East Side where the lake is located.

So, I’m requesting the City Manager to use the Manager’s Budget Addendum Process to bring forward a funding strategy for Council to consider in the upcoming budget cycle.