



# NEWS RELEASE

Contra Costa County  
**JOHN GIOIA** (joy-a)  
District One  
Board of Supervisors

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 18, 2014

## Tour and Plan Unveiling of Mini-Park Project in El Sobrante

<b>What:</b>	El Sobrante Mini-Park Tour & Project Plan Unveiling
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>Saturday July 19, 2014; 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</b>
<b>WHERE:</b>	El Sobrante Library – 4191 Appian Way, El Sobrante
<b>WHO:</b>	Supervisor John Gioia, Contra Costa County Librarian Jessica Hudson, Contra Costa Public Works Deputy Director Brian Balbas, East Bay Regional Parks District Director Whitney Dotson

**El Sobrante, CA** – The public is invited to attend a special preview tour and plan unveiling of a nearly \$1 million mini-park renovation and preservation project in El Sobrante. The announcement is the result of a unique year-long collaboration between public agencies and community partners led by Supervisor John Gioia and including Contra Costa County Public Works, Contra Costa County Library, Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development, East Bay Regional Park District, El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council, SPAWNERS, El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce, El Sobrante Planning & Zoning Committee, and Citizens for a Greener El Sobrante.

“Our goal is to make the open space around the El Sobrante Library more accessible and user friendly for the entire community to enjoy,” said Supervisor Gioia whose West County district includes the unincorporated community of El Sobrante. “Public access to open space such as neighborhood parks improves our health, preserves our natural resources, and creates a stronger sense of community.”

Funding for the project comes from a combination of sources including \$641,740 in County park funds received from East Bay Regional Park District’s Measure WW; \$269,656 from the County’s Park Dedication Fees received from new housing developments in the area; and \$80,000 from Contra Costa County Library. As part of the project, the County teamed up with SPAWNERS, a citizen volunteer non-profit organization, to identify native and drought tolerant plants. For the last decade, SPAWNERS has been restoring the San Pablo Creek embankment behind the library by holding monthly clean-ups and planting native vegetation.

“With California experiencing a statewide drought, it is important to install plants that are able to withstand such low rainfall,” said Judy Ward volunteer with SPAWNERS.

When the project is completed next year, the creek will be vastly enhanced and restored. There will be interpretive displays along nature trails for park visitors, the flag pole along the Appian Way side of the library will be relocated to accommodate a children’s sensory garden, the parking lot will be expanded and resurfaced with pervious pavement to improve drainage, and new padding will be added under the play structure in the existing Children’s Reading Garden. But the biggest change will be the construction of a new amphitheater-style public plaza for group gatherings behind the library where there’s now a cemented walkway.

(more)

“It will be an amazing transformation,” said Supervisor Gioia.

The mini-park project is part of a community-wide improvement effort in El Sobrante.

The County will soon start sidewalk and streetscape improvements in the downtown corridor on San Pablo Dam Road between El Portal and Appian Way making that area more walkable for pedestrians. The project will include the removal of dead or dying street trees, the installation of new street trees, bus benches, historical markers, and community planter boxes. Supervisor Gioia has also been working with residents to create a demonstration Parklet program similar to the ones in San Francisco, Oakland, and Seattle, which replaces an existing parking space with dedicated public seating.

“I’m proud of the collective work of the El Sobrante community,” said Supervisor Gioia. “When we’re finished, El Sobrante residents will enjoy the benefits of a greener and more pedestrian friendly environment.”

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