

The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Water plant could become regional tourist attraction

By Cody Kraatz
Sunnyvale Sun

Posted: 05/28/2009 02:23:20 PM PDT

Updated: 05/28/2009 02:47:35 PM PDT

Community leaders are working to turn a local water plant that serves more than 1 million South Bay customers into what could become a regional tourist attraction.

The city of San Jose recently held a public workshop to brainstorm new uses for thousands of acres at the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant near Alviso at the southern tip of San Francisco Bay that are no longer needed as a buffer area because of new technology.

Residents at the May 16 meeting told San Jose leaders that they would like to see a lot of the plant's 2,600 acres — including vacant buffer land and evaporation ponds — turned to more productive uses such as recreation, commercial and industrial development,

My City

- [Cupertino: News, reader photos, forums & more](#)
- [Other My City pages](#)

alternative energy generation and habitat restoration.

Trails, playing fields, a water sports area and a nature museum that could compare to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco were among

the top choices.

"I am really excited about the possibility of them creating a plant that in the future could become a tourist destination, more of a destination for people to come to instead of just an industrial area," said Saratoga resident Eve Matelan, who serves on the Community Advisory Group working on the plan. "We have an opportunity to dedicate a spot where people could see an estuary or kayak around."

Bhavani Yerrapotu, the environmental services department technical services manager, said the plant is in a "very unique situation. Usually the land is the limitation. We have enough that we can accommodate all of the uses. It's just a matter of prioritizing the public values."

Finding new uses for portions of the property is part of a 30-year Master Plan that includes a roughly \$1 billion rebuilding of the facility that opened in 1956. San Jose operates the plant on behalf of co-owner Santa Clara and the roughly 1.4 million residents and businesses of the other cities it serves: Cupertino, Saratoga, Monte Sereno, Los Gatos, Campbell and Milpitas.

The plant would retain ownership of any land developed, and plant officials said that development of the plant property may help pay for some of the repairs.

"Given the economic reality, we must first look to revenue-generating options to offset the cost of plant operations," said John Stufflebean, director of San Jose's Environmental Services.

"This is a significant opportunity to have a very far-reaching positive impact on the environment," said Bob Power, executive director of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and a Cupertino representative on the Community Advisory Group.

Advertisement

Find local companies rated Highest in Quality

Read rating scores and survey comments of top rated companies.



Quality • Satisfaction • Trust

Go To www.DiamondCertified.org



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

"And this is a very forward-thinking group, so they're going to be very creative about how to operate this plant in the future."

A final plan is scheduled to be presented in 2011.

Advertisement

Find local companies rated Highest in Quality

Read rating scores and survey comments of top rated companies.



Quality • Satisfaction • Trust

Go To www.DiamondCertified.org



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™