

Livermore Area Recreation and Park District

Staff Report

TO: Chair Pierpont and LARPD Board of Directors

FROM: Mathew Fuzie, General Manager

PREPARED BY: Marc Roberts, Land Agent / Planner

DATE: September 30, 2026

SUBJECT: Authorization to Accept Wentz Ranch Property as a
Regional Park for Maintenance and Ownership

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors acknowledge that the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) will accept the property for permanent maintenance and ownership upon acquisition.

BACKGROUND

On July 25, 2023, the City of Livermore (City) and LARPD entered into the current version of a Master Property Agreement. That agreement governs how properties jointly developed by the City and LARPD will be designed, approved, accepted and maintained. This property is being acquired by the City and LARPD and will be owned, operated and maintained by LARPD.

DISCUSSION

Section 10 of the Master Property Agreement describes the process of adding newly developed facilities to the Agreement.

It is a four-step process:

1. City and LARPD staff identify and agree upon the project.
2. LARPD Board supports the project and agrees to maintain the project when constructed and/or acquired.
3. LARPD Board accepts the project when it is constructed or acquired by the City and LARPD.
4. City and LARPD update the database and maps listing LARPD maintained/City owned improvements.

The Master Property Agreement process is used where the City will own the project and LARPD will operate and maintain the project. A similar process is used for projects like this where acquisition negotiations involve the City and LARPD and the land acquired will ultimately be owned, operated and maintained by LARPD, but those projects are not added to the Master Property Agreement.

Wente Ranch Property

Earlier this summer, City of Livermore and LARPD staff began meeting with a representative of the Wente family to discuss the possible acquisition of several parcels of open space totaling approximately 1,500 acres. On September 9, 2026, the LARPD Board received an update on negotiations and provided direction to staff negotiators.

The properties are located in South Livermore adjacent to Sycamore Grove Park. The City and LARPD staff have been coordinating negotiations. Since this property will be both owned and operated by LARPD, it won't be added to Master Property Agreement.

The project is almost double the size of Sycamore Grove Park and it would expand regional trail connections to three regional recreational areas, creating a larger, more connected system of parks, trails, open space, and visitor experiences in South Livermore. It would establish a contiguous publicly accessible connection between Sycamore Grove Park, Holdener Park, and Del Valle State Recreation Park, creating an integrated network of parks, trails, and open space. It would also connect to the South Bay Aqueduct and could facilitate implementation of the Brushy Peak to Del Valle Trail in the future. The property would enhance protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat through long-term stewardship and habitat and land management.

The expanded parkland and trail network would provide new opportunities for recreation, hiking, cycling, wildlife viewing, natural and cultural education and interpretation, and community gathering, while creating stronger connections among existing and future recreational destinations. Its location directly adjacent to Sycamore Grove Park, which would allow for the efficient operation of the two properties without significantly increasing staff.

Master Plan Consistency

Should negotiations with the property owner and application for funding be successful, escrow for the proposed property acquisition would likely close in January 2027. The existing Draft Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan 2026 (Master Plan) is scheduled for adoption in October of 2026, so it is appropriate to evaluate the proposed acquisition for consistency with the Master Plan that will be in effect at the time of acquisition.

The Master Plan includes policies that support the proposed acquisition.

Policy P.1.3 — Advance a Connected Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Plan for a cohesive and connected network that links neighborhoods to parks, schools, community destinations, open space areas, and regional systems

Policy P.1.5 — Pursue Strategic Land and Access Opportunities Pursue acquisition, easements, dedications, and partnership opportunities that expand recreation access, improve connectivity, protect significant resources, or address identified service gaps.

Policy P.2.2 — Support Stewardship of Open Space and Natural Resources Support acquisition and stewardship practices that protect habitat, scenic resources, grazing lands, waterways, and natural resources within the District.

Policy R.1.2 — Advance Regional Connectivity, Open Space, and Stewardship Opportunities Take an active District role in regional connectivity, open space preservation, environmental stewardship, and appropriate public access opportunities.

Policy D.1.3 — Improve Trail and System Connectivity Support projects and planning efforts that improve trail connectivity, close key gaps, expand access to underserved areas, and advance opportunities that are feasible to implement and maintain.

Overall, the proposed property is consistent with and furthers the policies of the Master Plan.

Park Master Plan Process

When the property is acquired, the District would commence a comprehensive planning process for the park. The process would map resources, develop a resource management plan including grazing and fire management plans, complete public outreach, design park improvements, adopt a phasing plan for improvements and complete initial improvements to support public access. The park would then be open to the public.

Property Acceptance

If negotiations are successful, the Board will subsequently consider authorizing acceptance of the property, including any leases or agreements that would be necessary during the transition and planning period for the park property.

Financial Impacts

Costs for operating a regional park facility fall into two categories. Maintenance and operations. Operations include the cost for rangers, interpreters and other staff who interact with the public to create a safe and educational environment. In this case the existing staff that serve the public at Sycamore Grove Park would also manage the new facility since the amount of staff time is related to the programs offered rather than the size of the parks.

Maintenance costs for an open space facility are tied to both the size of the park and the level of improvements within the park. Initially the park would have very few facilities so the bulk of the cost would be related to property maintenance. This would include items such as fire management, fence maintenance, tree and vegetation management and path or trail maintenance. Staff estimate that initially property management would cost \$100,000 a year based on our experience at Holdener and Sycamore Grove Parks. A life cycle analysis would be completed as a part of any proposal to add facilities to the park. Revenue from the property such as parking fees, grazing fees or any leases for ag operations within the park could offset some of those costs.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board adopt a resolution agreeing to accept ownership of the approximately 1,500 acres of property shown in Exhibit A should negotiations and funding lead to a successful acquisition of the property. The project will subsequently return to the Board for consideration of final property acceptance prior to close of escrow.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution

IN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
LIVERMORE AREA RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

RESOLUTION NO. 28XX
SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION
OF THE WENTE RANCH PROPERTY AND
AGREEING TO OWN AND MAINTAIN THE PROPERTY WHEN ACQUIRED**

WHEREAS, On July 25, 2023, the City of Livermore (City) and the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) entered into the current version of a Master Property Agreement, which governs how properties jointly developed by the City and LARPD will be designed, approved, accepted, and maintained; and

WHEREAS, The proposed acquisition of the Wente Ranch Property is scheduled to occur in January 2027; and

WHEREAS, LARPD Board of Directors is in the process of adopting the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan 2026, which includes policies supporting acquisition of the Wente Ranch property and that Master Plan is expected to be adopted prior to the acquisition of the property; and

WHEREAS, The Wente Ranch Property is almost double the size of Sycamore Grove Park and it would expand regional trail connections to three regional recreational areas, creating a larger, more connected system of parks, trails, open space, and visitor experiences in South Livermore. It would establish a contiguous publicly accessible connection between Sycamore Grove Park, Holdener Park, and Del Valle State Recreation Park, creating an integrated network of parks, trails, and open space. It would also connect to the South Bay Aqueduct and could facilitate implementation of the Brushy Peak to Del Valle Trail (South Bay Aqueduct Trail – T15) in the future. The property would enhance protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat through long-term stewardship and habitat and land management; and

WHEREAS, The Master Plan includes policies that support the proposed acquisition, and the proposed property is consistent with and furthers the policies of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, City and LARPD staff have been coordinating on the acquisition of the property; and

WHEREAS, The Wente Ranch Property would be owned and operated by LARPD; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District that:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and hereby incorporate by reference;
2. The Board supports the acquisition;
3. The Board agrees to own the Wentle Ranch property; and
4. The Board agrees to maintain the property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board directs staff to return to the Board for consideration of final property acceptance prior to close of escrow.

On motion of Director _____, seconded by Director _____ the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted on September 30, 2026, by the following roll call vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTENTIONS:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

Philip Pierpont
Chair, Board of Directors

Mathew L. Fuzie
General Manager and ex-officio Clerk
to the Board of Directors

Exhibit A: Site Map

