

## FIESTA ISLAND PARK PRECISE PLAN CONSERVATION GROUP MEETING MINUTES - August 25, 2010

### ATTENDEES:

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### GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mike gave a recap of the project process and next steps; he mentioned that the design team was holding a series of user meetings to get each group's design input on the latest master plan alternate 5e. These meetings will result in further refinement of the plan, before it goes back to the Mission Bay Park Committee on Sept. 7. The meeting will be open to the public and public comments are likely to be allowed. Mike reviewed the progression of changes on the different MBPC concept plans and why they were revised. He explained that technical studies will need to occur after the MBPC approves the plan, which could take up to six (6) months.

Mike described the revisions that were made to accommodate requests from FIDO, the bike coalition and the environmental group's from previous meetings. FIDO requested full beach access around the entire perimeter of South Beach. Since the pier and floating dock were blocking access parallel to the water edge, it has been removed. The Least Tern Stony Point Habitat area will not have a berm along its edge. The current and newly installed fence will be used to control access next to the preserve during nesting season. The berm was removed to eliminate birds of prey / raptors from perching in this area.

Another substantial change to the plan resulted from Jim's request to establish dune habitats in the central portion of the island. These dunes will help to reestablish a dune environment that was much more common on this portion of the coast. The dunes will be managed to be transitory and moving constantly in order to maintain dune habitats that are always in transition. There will be trails around the outer edge of these dunes.

### SPECIFIC INPUT:

1. Jim acknowledged that the existing and proposed habitat areas are fenced in the plan but the sensitive native vegetation areas are not. He asked if these areas will incorporate trails and interpretative signs (yes there will be). He is also concerned about dogs running off the trails into these sensitive areas and was inquiring if the dogs can be required to be leashed on these trails. Paul mentioned that this would have to be a City Council decision and that FIDO has previously opposed any restrictions on dog use on the rest of the island except for habitats.
2. Discussed the wetland habitats proposed for the north end of the island, which will be primarily saltwater marsh with some minor brackish marsh areas. Jim thought raptors could be attracted to the marsh, which could be an issue if in close proximity to the Least Tern site at the north end. KTU+A will have Merkel or RECON research this.
3. Mike indicated that the last rare plant survey was done approximately 2-1/2 / 3 years ago. Frank had a report from Vince Scheidt that walked the island recently and noted sensitive plant material locations. He submitted the report to KTU+A and suggested that things may have changed in the last three years.

4. Mike went over where non-native areas are intended to be replaced with native areas. The plan proposes new maritime scrub communities, more than native coastal habitats, and dune habitats in addition to the wetland based habitats. For those areas that were to be revegetated with natives, the group was not as concerned about. But for those areas that were to be regarded, the concern was that if the rare plant inventory is too old and does not capture the new site areas, then some of these rare plants would be lost.
5. Discussed the jet ski restrictions which were made because of the migrating birds (Redheads and Scaups) that sometimes use this area on the north side of the entry road. Jim would be interested in knowing if the Tecolote Creek Wetland Treatment Ponds proposed would interfere with these birds.
6. The group discussed the concept of bioswales along the edge of the road. The road is shown to be graded to drain away from the beach and slope to the interior of the island. Frank is concerned that the vegetated swale will become weed infested if there is not a continuous source of runoff. If in areas that can include saline waters and heavy saline soils, then cattails can be used. Recommended testing the soil for salts. Will also need to choose trees that are salt sensitive. Mike stated that the trees will be planted at higher points only except for lowland trees. Frank and Jim thought it may be better using trees that are not salt sensitive. including cottonwoods and elderberrys. Mulefat willows loves “high salt” water and soils and may be good for road run off in the bioswales. Discussed that bigger bioswales may need supplemental water. Bioswales will be used in addition to infiltration trenches. This will require maintenance to clean them out periodically. Jim mentioned that cattails are good to absorb nutrients if we can get them to survive in these conditions. They tolerate salt and will crowd out weeds in these bioswales.
7. Mike reviewed the road barrier control system proposed for road closures, which can occur weekly and/or seasonally. There are four (4) independent loops which can each be closed independently. Barriers are swing gates and cone dividers to direct traffic @ the loops. Plan proposes that circulation on the island be changed from counterclockwise to clockwise. There are some advantages for wildlife protection by reducing the number of users and vehicles next to the more sensitive wildlife habitats.
8. Reviewed the kelp drying area. Keith Merkel felt that this would be a good foraging site for birds at the kelp spreading areas since they will contain and attract insects. Jim wants to know if there is a concern that this feature would also attract raptors as it is in close proximity to the Least Tern protected area. He feels that the kelp storage area should be located on south side of island, away from the Least Tern site.
9. Mike presented the recent addition of floating boardwalks and trails through the sand dunes, per Jim Pugh’s suggestion. Frank mentioned that sand dunes are windblown from the prevailing winds and continually moving. Jim is concerned that the dune habitat can get trampled and get killed off if people and dogs wander off the trails too often. Would like to see light traffic in this area and maybe an interpretive signage program emphasizing staying on the trails. He would also like to see that dogs are only allowed in this area if they are leashed as they will disturb the habitat if allowed to run freely through the dunes. Discussed adding signs in this area to keep dogs on a leash. Mentioned that beach spurs can be found in the dunes and would be a good reason to keep dogs on the trails.
10. Discussed the 10’ wide hard surface multi-use trails. Jim asked how to keep this trail from being buried by the sand. Trails will be separated by the road (inland). Santa Monica is an example of a hard surface path that is successfully located and maintained on the beach. Will have to look at strategically placing trails and wind breaks in order to reduce sand build up on the trails.

11. Mike went over the parts of the island that are staying the same and those that are changing. The public has made it clear that it likes the rustic nature of the island. They like to “pull up to the edge” of shoreline with trucks/car parking, jet skis trailers, small sailing craft, beach ski boats, and they like to tailgate picnic and use the fire pits. The more formal areas such as turf parkland are down from 100 acres to 28 acres in order to address this concern. Mike showed some images of the rustic nature of the proposed design concepts for native and near native vegetation around turfed parklands. Both Jim and Frank feel that Statice is not a good plant to have on the island. Requested to keep rustic nature adjacent to grass areas.
- 12.
13. Mike discussed the primitive overnight campground revised location, which is now closer to the entrance. This location allows blocking off the rest of the island at night. The group discussed the need for some edge definition and screening with the use of plant materials. A few plants that could work include Golden Bush and Oregon mulefat, although Jim is concerned about proposing mulefat too close to the campsite. Not good visibility over or around this species.
14. Reviewed the open culverts, north side of flap gates @ the entrance road. Difference of tidal elevation will drive the water through the pipes. Jim inquired if there is a counter weight on the flapper gate because without it, the tidal pressure may not be enough to open the flapper gates.
15. Jim asked about erosion control in dog area, especially the steep beach. Mike indicated that there will be native vegetation along road and in key areas of the leash free park. All detailed plans will need to include storm water treatments.
16. Tri-mounds concept – art in the landscape “Patterns in Nature”. Math expressed through nature. Jim inquired what type of bridge is proposed on these mounds and Mike answered it would be a pre fabricated bridge. Frank talked about Fractals and vortexes –indicating that they are mathematical formulas for marsh wetland areas and other areas formed by flowing water and tidal pressures.
17. Mike summarized the plan by contrasting the new plan with the adopted Mission Bay Park Master Plan. The Master Plan originally proposed that island be 1/3 habitat, 1/3 rustic uses, 1/3 developed parkland. Proposed GDP proposes ½ habitat, ¼ rustic uses, ¼ developed parkland.
18. Discussed run off, fertilizer and salt grass. Will we need to increase water service? Hopefully reclaimed water will be made available to the island in the future. Freshwater will be needed @ the restrooms. Frank asked if sewage or septic fields @ the restrooms. Mike responded that it would be connected to sewer system.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. KTU+A will have the team biologist (RECON) look into the saltwater marsh attracting raptors in close proximity to the Least Tern area at the north end of the site. Also, will verify if the kelp drying area with insects will attract other birds that may be a threat to the Least Tern site at the north end.
2. Mike stated that the following studies and reports are to be forthcoming once an alternative is approved by MBPC:
  - Water quality technical report
  - Traffic technical report
  - Noise study



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3. Jim requested that the sensitive revegetation areas require leashes for dogs. Need to sell to FIDO that it is a good idea. Need to convince MBPC and eventually City Council for this restriction.
- 4.
5. KTU+A to distribute the paper files obtained from Frank to RECON for their consideration and mapping review.
6. Jim would like to be notified of future meeting times and locations.

Prepared by: Mike Singleton / Cheri Blatner-Pifer

**All parties are requested to review these meeting minutes and report any discrepancies to the author prior to the next meeting.**