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MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1985 . SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK

CONTENTS

History	Origins of Mission Trails Regional Park, 1976 Master Planning Process, Environmental Impact report, Formation of Regional Park Task Force, Citizens' Advisory Committee, Master Development Plan Approval - 1985, Master Plan Implementation - 1985 to 2008, Plan Update	I
Planning and Implementation	Regional Considerations, Environmental Factors, Jurisdictional Plans and Policies, Park Planning and Design	II
Master Plan	Objectives, the Concept, Assumptions, Overview of the Plan, Land Use and Facilities, Relationship to Proposed Highways, EIR Analysis and Mitigations, Boundaries and Edges, Major Park Entries and Circulation	III
Lake Murray	Concept, Entries/Parking/Internal Circulation, Uses and Facilities, Environmental and Architectural Design, Special EIR Mitigations	IV
Cowles Mountain	Concept, Entries/Parking/Internal Circulation, Uses and Facilities, Environmental and Architectural Design, Special EIR Mitigations	V
Mission Gorge	Concept, Entries/Parking/Internal Circulation, Uses and Facilities, Environmental and Architectural Design, Special EIR Mitigations	VI
Fortuna Mountain	Concept, Entries/Parking/Internal Circulation, Uses and Facilities, Environmental and Architectural Design, Special EIR Mitigations	VII

SUMMARY

Mission Trails Regional Park Didn't just "happen" - it is the result of maturing concepts over the years by City and County agencies, interested citizens, and park planning consultants.

The origins of the Regional Park go back to 1960 when the San Diego City Planning Department prepared the report, "Proposed Fortuna Mountain-Mission Gorge Metropolitan Park". In 1975, The Reynolds Environmental Group was retained to collate all available information, study the land in terms of changing public needs and values, evaluate alternative land use plans, and draft a feasible Master Plan which, with its subsequent EIR and this 1985 updating, can act as a long-term policy guide - a statement of direction - for the City and County of San Diego.

The Park is unique in many respects. It is an "urban regional park", only 8 miles and 15 minutes from downtown San Diego. Although largely surrounded by residential development, the Park contains mountains, valleys, two lakes, a major river and scenic gorge, historical landmarks, wildlife habitats, and cultural resources.

The Master Development Plan responds to the public's increasing need for "close-in" park opportunities by providing varied wilderness, interpretive, and active recreational facilities. Thus, the benefits of the Park will be not merely quantitative. It will significantly expand the range and quality of park experiences for residents of Metropolitan San Diego. In one park, an individual or family will be able to enjoy recreational and educational activities that would otherwise take them many miles to many different locations.

Because of its convenience and diversity, the Park is expected to serve a broad cross-section of the population - including people who are young, old, poor, or otherwise less mobile - who might not be able to participate in regional park activities because the rural locations where they are commonly found are simply out of reach.

As recommended, the ultimate Park is big; at 5,740 acres, the largest urban park of its kind in the West.

When initially drafted in 1976, the Master Development Plan, identified lands necessary to join what was then five separate parcels into one regional park that "works". Much of this land has since been added to the Park - set aside as a land bank to be improved as development funds become available. This phased acquisition has also made it possible for the City and County to effectively plan their future facilities, operations programs, and capital budgets in an orderly manner consistent with other competing public services. Fortunately, much of the Park land was already owned by the City, State and Federal Governments so that acquisitions have not placed an unreasonable burden on local taxpayers. In fact, Federal/State funding assistance for this type of urban park has been available, and may be expected to increase in the future as the cost of energy and transportation continue to

rise. Where feasible, certain recreational facilities within the Park (e.g., golf course, marina, and equestrian center) can potentially be developed and/or operated by concessionaires, thus reducing public expenditures.

Vital to the 10-year process that led to the adoption of this Master Development Plan has been the opportunity for public involvement through the Citizens' Advisory Committee (which recommends to the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force) and, earlier, by the Technical Advisory Committee and citizen organizations such as the Navajo and Santee community planning groups.

A well-conceived park improves with age. In Mission Trails Regional Park, the people of San Diego have a priceless open space resource that can grow and change as it keeps pace with the dynamic quality of the region – into the next century and beyond.