

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 12, 2004
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: George Loveland, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: 2003 MSCP Annual Public Workshop - Summary Report

The attached Summary Report on the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is provided for your information.

Section 14.2 of the MSCP Implementing Agreement requires the City to prepare and submit to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game, a public report containing an annual accounting of habitat lost and conserved within the City's MSCP Subarea during the previous year. The City of San Diego, City of Poway, the County of San Diego, and wildlife agencies are also required to jointly conduct a public workshop to disseminate and discuss the annual report.

On May 25, 2004, the MSCP Annual Public Workshop will be held at the San Diego Zoo - Otto Center Auditorium, 2920 Zoo Drive San Diego, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Staff from the City of San Diego, City of Poway, the County of San Diego, and the wildlife agencies will conduct PowerPoint presentations on MSCP implementation activities for their respective agencies. There will be a question and answer period immediately following staff presentations.

For additional information please contact Keith Greer at (619) 236-7258.



George Loveland
Assistant City Manager

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Attachment: MSCP Annual Public Workshop - Summary Report

cc: S. Gail Goldberg, Planning Director
Ellen Oppenheim, Park and Recreation Department Director
Ann Hix, Open Space Division Deputy Director
Keith Greer, Deputy Director, Planning Department
Tom Story, Senior Policy Advisor to Mayor Dick Murphy
Planning Commissioners

2003 MSCP Annual Public Workshop - Summary Report

BACKGROUND:

On March 18, 1997, the San Diego City Council unanimously adopted the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), collectively referred to as the wildlife agencies, entered into an Implementing Agreement (IA) with the City of San Diego (City) in July 1997. The IA requires the City to prepare a report containing an annual accounting of the habitat acreage lost and conserved within the City's MSCP Subarea. In addition, the City and the wildlife agencies are required to jointly conduct a public workshop to disseminate and discuss the annual report.

The City's seventh MSCP Annual Report was submitted to the wildlife agencies on February 11, 2004. The report identifies, by project, the habitat loss and conservation from January 1, 2003 through the end of the 2003 calendar year.

In 2003, habitat conservation efforts within the City's MSCP preserve area, referred to as the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), were focused on acquiring critical areas of sensitive habitat and securing wildlife corridors within the MHPA, as well as initiating monitoring efforts. Acquisitions have been accomplished through public purchase and by directing private mitigation to parcels within the MHPA. The City and wildlife agencies have also acquired habitat within the MHPA with state and federal funding. The City is continuing to increase its efforts for the acquisition, monitoring and management of habitat within the MHPA as described below.

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY:

Within the reporting period (January 1, 2003 - December 31, 2003), 600 acres were conserved in the MHPA and 58.3 acres were conserved adjacent to the MHPA, compared to the loss of 122.8 acres of habitat inside the MHPA. Outside the MHPA, 692.5 acres of habitat loss occurred (85 percent of the total habitat lost). Habitat loss represents the acreage impacted by projects approved for construction within the reporting period.

As of the end of the 2003 reporting period (December 31, 2003), a total of 32,942 acres have been conserved in (31,664 acres) or adjacent to (1277 acres) the MHPA. This includes pre-MSCP (baseline) conserved lands totaling 22,141 acres.

The habitat loss and conservation for the 2003 annual reporting period is summarized as follows:

TABLE 1 - 2003 HABITAT LOSS AND CONSERVATION

(January 1, 2003 - December 31, 2003)

Habitat Type & Examples of Habitats	Habitat Loss (acres)		Habitat Conserved (acres)	
	2003	Cumulative	2003	Cumulative
Wetlands: Coastal Wetlands(Salt Pan/Salt Marsh) Riparian Habitats Freshwater Marsh Natural Flood Channel Disturbed Wetland Vernal Pools Marine Habitats(Pacific Ocean/Deep Bay) Eelgrass Beds (Shallow Bays) Open Water	17.1	64.3	24.2	4,844.2
TIER I (rare uplands): Southern Fore dunes Torrey Pines Forest Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub Maritime Succulent Scrub Southern Maritime Chaparral Native Grassland Oak Woodlands	32.5	352.2	46.1	2,111.5
TIER II (uncommon uplands): Coastal Sage Scrub CSS/Chaparral	173.2	1,162.9	278.3	11,594.8
TIER III A (common uplands): Mixed Chaparral Chamise Chaparral	21.9	548.9	135.5	7,044.5
TIER III B (common uplands): Nonnative Grasslands	179.1	2,751.6	95.2	3,256.8
TIER IV (other uplands) Disturbed Agriculture Eucalyptus	288.2	1,518.3	44.0	3,111.7
Others: Beach Urban/Developed	103.3	920.9	34.6	978.5
Total	815.3	7,319.1	658.3	32,941.8

Note: Includes land inside and outside of MHPA.

The acreages in the table were generated by a geographic information system, which tracks habitat loss and gain. This system, Habitrak, uses the regional Geographic Information System and the San Diego Geographic Information System land base in its area calculations. This is the fifth year that the Habitrak system has been used to compile the habitat loss/gain information and maps for the annual report. Habitrak was developed to facilitate and standardize the annual reports for each jurisdiction that participates in the MSCP. Funding for the software development was provided by a grant from the CDFG and was administered by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG).

PUBLIC LAND ACQUISITIONS:

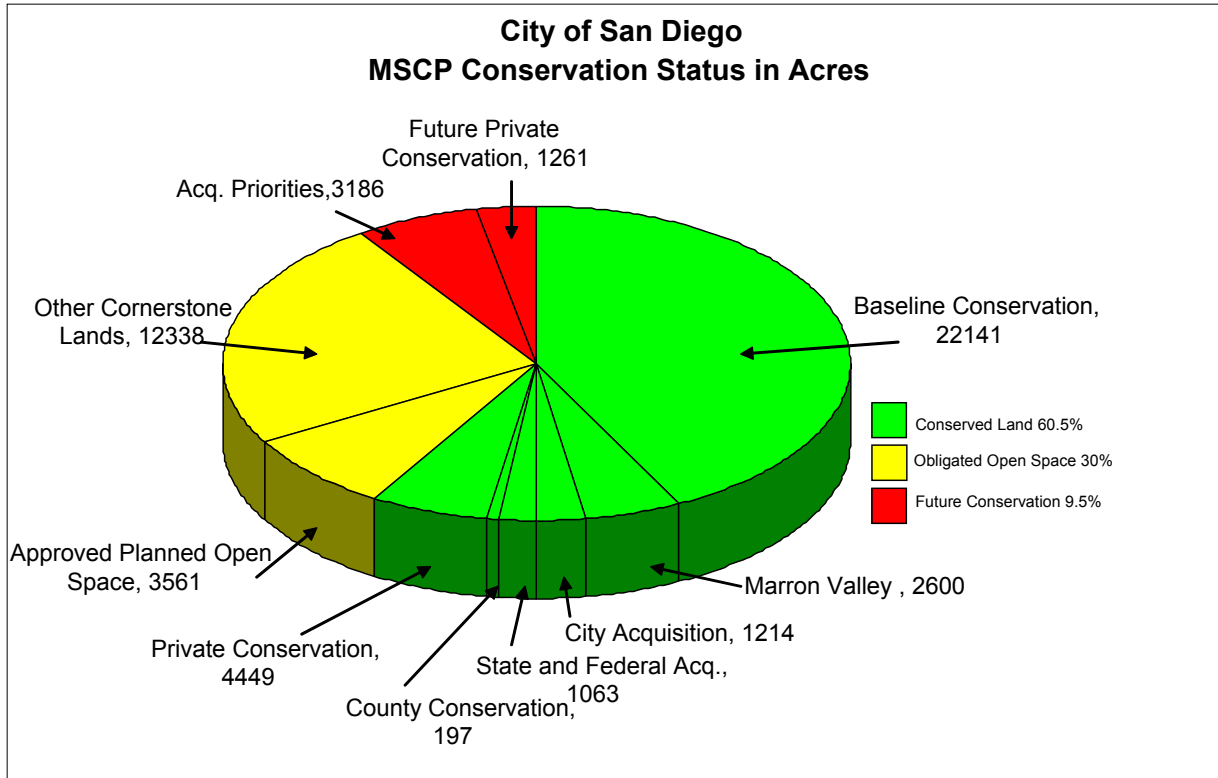
In April 2000, the City Council Rules Committee approved the City priorities for MSCP land acquisition projects. Four areas totaling 4,181 acres were identified:

- Montana Mirador – 100% Conserved (538 acres)
- Del Mar Mesa - 65% Conserved (566 acres)
- East Elliott - 13% Conserved (294 acres)
- Otay Mesa - 21% conserved (208 acres)

In April 2001, the City completed the acquisition of the 538-acre Montana Mirador parcel located within the Rancho Peñasquitos community planning area. Currently, 566 acres have been conserved within the Del Mar Mesa area. Offers were made on twelve parcels; seven have been acquired and five have rejected offers. Proposed development (Camelot Estates {33 acres} and Terrazo Bougainvillea {22 acres} projects) would be limited to 25 percent of four parcels. The remaining private parcel has no development plans. Three remaining properties have been identified for conservation through a proposed land swap or as mitigation. As proposed, an additional 243 acres will be conserved through the development entitlement process for a final projected conservation of 809 acres (92 percent).

Currently, 294 acres have been conserved as mitigation on East Elliot. Additionally, \$8.25 million of state grant funding and \$1 million of local funds have been encumbered for acquisition of property within East Elliott. An additional \$1.72 million of federal Section 6 monies has been approved by the state Wildlife Conservation Board in November 2003. To date, approximately 300 acres are in escrow. Three additional parcels (65 acres) have been appraised and acquisition is expected to be completed by summer 2004. Additional offers are on-going. Finally, in February 2003, 266 acres of Fortuna Mountain were granted to the City by SDSU helping to conserve additional land in Mission Trails Regional Park.

To date, 208 acres have been conserved within Otay Mesa. In 2003, Caltrans closed escrow on 80 acres of open space as pending mitigation for the I-905 project. In addition, City staff has been working with the county Otay River Park planners to acquire two parcels totaling 20 acres. These privately held parcels are located adjacent to Dennery Canyon and are connected to the Otay River Valley. Both parcels are being targeted for acquisition with existing Coastal Conservancy funding and both contain vernal pools.



Acquisitions on East Elliott and Otay Mesa are expected to continue through this next year through state and federal grants.

PROJECT REVIEWS:

In 2003, 127 new development projects were reviewed by the MSCP staff for consistency with the adopted MSCP Subarea Plan and implementing regulations. Since January 2004, an additional 33 new development projects have been reviewed. City staff continues to ensure that the MHPA preserve design, land use adjacency guidelines, mitigation requirements and specific area management directives have been evaluated and, as appropriate, incorporated into project designs. Projects that comply with the policies of the MSCP are afforded “Third Party Beneficiary” status as provided for in the City’s MSCP (Section 17.1).

Adjustments to the boundary of the MHPA are allowed on a project-by-project basis if the boundary adjustment is deemed functionally equivalent to the land that is proposed to be removed from the MHPA (see Section 5.4.2 MSCP Plan, August 1998). The wildlife agencies must concur with the adjustment. In 2003, 17 boundary line adjustment and 6 boundary line corrections were processed. This year, MSCP staff has continued to have bimonthly meetings with wildlife agency staff to discuss proposed MHPA boundary line adjustments and to obtain concurrence from the wildlife agencies during the preparation of the environmental documents for the boundary line adjustment. After each meeting, MSCP staff confirm in writing the determinations made by wildlife agency staff.

GRANTS:

Grant funding is a key component to the successful implementation of the MSCP Subarea Plan. Below is a summary of current grant projects. In 2003, the City has secured \$1,991,803 in grant funding for acquisition, management and monitoring of lands within the MSCP.

Table 2 - 2003 GRANTS

GRANT TYPE	GRANTOR	2003
Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP)	California Department of Fish and Game	Awarded three grants for MSCP management activities. Funding still pending.
Section 6 Grant	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	\$1.72 million awarded for acquisition of lands in East Elliott.
Environmental Conservation Foundation Grant	Environmental Conservation Foundation	Awarded grant for completion of the Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa Preserve Management Plan.
Total:		\$1,991,803

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

In accordance with the City’s IA, Section 10.6B, the City was obligated to prepare a Framework Management Plan within six months after the adoption of the MSCP Subarea Plan. The City’s MSCP Subarea Plan was adopted by the City Council in March 1997. A Framework Management Plan was included as Section 1.5 of the Subarea Plan; therefore, the City has fulfilled their obligations pursuant to Section 10.6B of the IA.

As part of the fiscal year 2003 budget, the City Council established a new Open Space Division in Park and Recreation. This newly formed division has taken on the task of managing the City’s existing open space system, including lands acquired under the MSCP. Park and Recreation has hired a Senior Planner to serve as the Urban Canyon Coordinator. This position is a liaison between the Open Space Division and the various departments working in the canyons on water and sewer projects.

Until a regional funding source is in place, management for biological resources has been focused on maintaining the existing biological values of the habitat land under City control. Opportunities for specific biological management activities have been pursued when local or grant funding could be obtained.

The following (Area-Specific) Management Plans are completed or underway:

Table 3 - AREA SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS

PLAN	STATUS
Mission Trails Regional Park San Diego Ambrosia Management Plan	The Final Plan was adopted by the Mission Trails Taskforce on May 15, 2000.
Pacific Highlands Ranch	Master Revegetation Plan for the entire Pacific Highlands Ranch Subarea was adopted by City Council along with the Pacific Highlands Ranch project in October 2000.
Rancho Encantada, a 1,500 acre parcel located adjacent to Sycamore County Park	The development project plans, including final habitat management plan, obtained Council approval in 2001.
Marron Valley Management Plan	The management plan was completed in June 2001.
San Pasqual/Lake Hodges Cornerstone	The management plan was completed in July 2003.
Western Otay River Valley Management Plan	The final draft management plan was completed in April 2001. Currently under review by wildlife agencies and subject to City Council approval. Estimated completion in 2004.
Carmel Mountain and Del Mar Mesa	A draft was completed in March 2002. Currently, the document is being revised based on comments from the wildlife agencies and the public. Estimated completion in 2004.
Black Mountain	A draft management plan was completed in June 2002. Currently comments from the wildlife agencies are being incorporated into the document. This plan is subject to City Council approval. Estimated completion in 2004.
Boden Canyon	The final draft management plan was completed in September 2001. Currently wildlife agencies are working on completing the plan. This plan is subject to City Council approval. Estimated completion in 2004.
San Diego River (West of Mission Trails)	Surveys for exotics and an exotic removal plan were developed for the San Diego River funded by the Metropolitan Wastewater Department. Additional surveys will be conducted prior to development of the management plan. Estimated completion in 2005.

The following Management Activities are completed or underway:

Table 4 - MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY

LOCATION	STATUS
San Pasqual River Valley Coastal Sage Scrub Restoration	The site was cleared and “imprinted” with seed from coastal sage scrub species in January 2000. Maintenance and monitoring will continue as funding becomes available.
Lopez Canyon – Willowy Monardella Protection	Construction of erosion protection measures to prevent undercutting of the alluvial benches on which the willow monardella occurs was completed in October 2003. Collected seed and other source material will be used to establish new populations.
Carmel Valley – Exotic Plant Removal	Exotic plant removal was conducted in 2001 and 2002. Maintenance continued until 2003 and many exotics have been successfully eradicated.
San Pasqual/Lake Hodges – Peppergrass Removal	Peppergrass removal began in Spring 2001. Maintenance and monitoring will continue as long as peppergrass still needs to be controlled and funding can be obtained.
Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve - San Diego Thornmint Management	Weeding around the San Diego thornmint was conducted in 2002 and 2003.
Sabre Springs - San Diego Thornmint Management	Weeding around the San Diego thornmint was conducted in 2002 and 2003.
Crest Canyon – Exotic Plant Removal	Plant removal and eradication began in August 2002 and demonstrated great success. Additional exotic removal and restoration will occur as funding becomes available.
Tecolote Canyon – Wetland Restoration	The riparian restoration began in 1994 and was completed in June 2001. The restoration site is being maintained as needed by Park and Recreation staff.
Rose Canyon Open Space – Wetland and Upland Restoration	Restoration efforts began in 1997 and were completed in 2002. The restoration site is being maintained as needed by Park and Recreation staff.
Marian Bear Memorial Park – Wetland and Upland Restoration	Restoration efforts began in 1997 were completed in January 2003.
Mission Trails Regional Park – Post-Fire Rehabilitation	Post-fire rehabilitation of the park is ongoing along with maintenance of volunteer trail closures and exotic weed removal.
Otay Valley Regional Park – Exotic Plant Removal	The exotic removal effort is ongoing. The exotic removal plan will identify tamarisk and arundo targeted for removal within the Park.
San Diego River – Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP)	NRMP under development. Draft baseline chapters expected in 2005.
Famosa Slough Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) – Wetland and Upland Restoration	Estimated to be complete in 2004.

LOCATION	STATUS
Chaparral Canyon SEP – Wetland and Upland Restoration	Estimated to be complete in 2004.
Adobe Falls SEP – Wetland and Upland Restoration	Estimated to be complete in 2004.
Black Mountain Open Space – Miners Ridge Loop Trail and San Diego Thornmint Management	Work on the Miners Ridge Loop Trail is currently in progress. Estimated completion mid- 2004. Weeding around the San Diego thornmint was conducted in 2002 and continued in Spring of 2003.
Mission Bay Park – Site Preparation for Least Tern Nesting	Site preparation was completed and the number of nests at Mariner’s Point and North Fiesta Island look excellent.

MONITORING EFFORTS:

City staff is initiating those elements of the MSCP Biological Monitoring Plan (CDFG 1996) that can be accomplished with currently available funding. The following summarizes the status of current and proposed monitoring activities:

Vernal Pool Inventory and Management Plan: The City received funding from the USFWS in the form of a Section 6 Planning Grant to complete a citywide inventory of vernal pools. The recorded data, such as basin location and biological surveys, will be used to develop a management plan for vernal pools within the City’s jurisdiction.

Between January and May 2003, City staff used Geographic Positioning System technology to determine the exact location of vernal pools within the City. Consultants also conducted vernal pool plant surveys to determine the vernal pool plant species within each vernal pool complex. City staff surveyed each site to determine the coverage of sensitive plant species within each vernal pool. Dr. Andrew Bohanak at San Diego State University (SDSU) and Dr. Marie Simovich at (University of San Diego) surveyed for fairy shrimp in many of the vernal pool complexes throughout the City and collected fairy shrimp for genetic testing.

Additional surveys have been conducted for the vernal pools affected by the October 2003 fires. The vernal pools in Mission Trails Regional Park and Otay Lakes appear to have suffered no ill effects from the fires.

A draft vernal pool inventory was released for review in December 2003. Comments received have been incorporated into the final document, which is available upon request. A draft vernal pool management plan is currently under development.

Post-Fire Monitoring: City MSCP staff is in the process of monitoring sensitive habitats and plant populations affected by the October 2003 fires. The following efforts are proposed or ongoing for 2004:

- San Diego thornmint in Mission Trails and Otay Lakes.
- Willowy monardella in Upper Sycamore Canyon.
- Variegated dudleya in Otay Lakes, Mission Trails, and East Elliott.

- Cleveland's goldenstar in Mission Trails and Otay Lakes.
- Otay tarplant in Proctor Valley.
- Vernal pools in Mission Trails, Proctor Valley, and Otay Lakes.

Habitat Quality Pilot Project SDSU: Working with Dr. Doug Stow of SDSU, this project evaluated remote sensing for monitoring existing habitat conditions and the detection of changes over time. Initial efforts in 2001 demonstrated that permanent plots were ineffective for habitat quality monitoring due to the limited area that could be sampled. Using Marron Valley as a pilot study site, City staff is comparing field data measurements of habitat quality with remote sensing imagery. The goal is develop a cost-effective methodology for evaluating habitat conditions across the MSCP study area. A draft report is being reviewed by MSCP staff.

Priority Plant Monitoring: In 2003, City MSCP staff and volunteers monitored the following covered plant species (copies of these reports are available) pursuant to the requirements of the MSCP Monitoring Plan. The following also provides information on those plants required to be monitored during 2004:

- | <u>2003</u> | <u>2004</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| • Orcutt's brodiaea | • San Diego goldenstar |
| • San Diego goldenstar | • Willowy monardella |
| • Willowy monardella | • Variegated dudleya |
| • Variegated dudleya | • Short-leaved dudleya |
| • Short-leaved dudleya | • Nuttall's lotus |
| • Nuttall's lotus | • San Diego thornmint |
| • San Diego thornmint | • Orcutt's bird's beak |
| • Orcutt's bird's beak | • Otay tarplant |
| • Otay tarplant | |
| • Del Mar sand aster | |

Coastal California Gnatcatcher: A county-wide survey effort for California gnatcatchers has been recently completed. Surveys were conducted from March 15 through April 18 for 213 points. Bird point counts were conducted for the species once a week over a five week period. Detailed protocol is available upon request. USFWS is currently compiling all the data regionwide and will work with the jurisdictions to provide results and a report by late 2004.

Burrowing Owls and Other Raptors: Funded by a Natural Communities Conversation Planning (NCCP) grant, the City has contracted Wildlife Research Institute to conduct burrowing owl and other raptor surveys in Otay Mesa. A final report of the survey effort was provided in March 2003. A copy of this report is available. The City has also received grant funding to construct burrowing owl dens and develop a burrowing owl management plan for areas where the burrowing owl dens are constructed. This grant project is currently ongoing.

Develop Monitoring Database: City staff is working with SANDAG, the county and the wildlife agencies on a pilot project for the development of a monitoring database to track the monitoring and management activities. This project is funded by an NCCP grant. It is proposed that the information from this database will be made available via the internet to interested stakeholders. A database format has been developed and is currently being tested.

TRAINING AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Since 1999, members of the public and government staff have been able to access information on the MSCP through the City's website. Located at www.sandiego.gov/mscp/ the site contains general information on the MSCP, as well as some program-related documents and maps, and City contact information. Mayor Dick Murphy's staff has designed a web page to highlight the Mayor's ten goals for the City. These goals are available for review online at <http://genesis.sannet.gov/infospc/templates/mayor/index.jsp>. Goal Ten is to "Complete MSCP Open Space Acquisitions." This web site provides information on the MSCP land acquisitions priority areas (Del Mar Mesa, East Elliott, and Otay Mesa), annual workshop reports, regional funding information and hyper-links to other state and federal web sites.

MSCP staff continues to participate in training of other City staff with the focus on education of regulations associated with the MSCP and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands ordinance. MSCP staff provided presentations to City staff at regularly scheduled Project Management Academy trainings given to City operational personnel. Additionally, MSCP staff has made presentations to various public organizations including SDSU, local high schools, Park and Recreation workshops, and the San Diego River group. Additional efforts are being discussed through the multi-jurisdictional MSCP Education Outreach committee, a formally recognized subcommittee of the MSCP Interagency Coordination Committee.

CONCLUSION:

Since the adoption of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan in July 1997, significant achievements have occurred which continue to contribute to the successful implementation of the City's MSCP Subarea Plan. During the 2003 reporting period, 600 acres of habitat were conserved in the MHPA and 158.3 acres were conserved adjacent to the MHPA. Of the 815.3 acres of habitat that was impacted due to project approvals within this same time period, 85 percent of the loss occurred outside of the MHPA. In 2003, 127 new projects were reviewed for consistency with the City's MSCP Subarea Plan.

The City continues to be successful in securing state and federal grants, many of which have been instrumental in providing for MHPA acquisitions and ongoing management and monitoring activities as described in this report. All key acquisitions, from willing sellers, in Del Mar Mesa have been completed since the last reporting period. Additionally, significant acquisitions of private land in East Elliott have occurred in 2004. Additional information on the status of the MSCP is available through the City's website at www.sandiego.gov/mscp. The City's MSCP Subarea Plan program objectives for the first seven years have been achieved.



Keith Greer
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