

Executive Summary

Design Guidelines

The purpose of the design guidelines is to provide written and graphic information to support the Master Plan's vision, principles, and recommendations, the goals of the Community Plans for Mission Valley, Navajo, Tierrasanta and East Elliot and to support the development regulations of the City's Land Development Code and the

Within this section of the guidelines is a discussion on how the River Corridor Area interfaces with the City's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), Wetland Buffer overlay and what takes precedence. Expansion of the river habitat area is encouraged where possible.

Regulatory Framework

The San Diego River Park Master plan is a policy document and provides recommendations and guidelines to be considered in concert with land use decisions within the River Corridor and River Influence Areas along the San Diego River. Future updates to Community Plans along the San Diego River may request amendments to the San Diego River Park Master Plan to ensure consistency. In addition, the river area is also governed by the policies and permits of the Federal, State and Local agencies. The regulatory framework section of the Master Plan provides details on the applicable citywide planning policy documents and applicable agency jurisdiction and permits for the San Diego River area.

1.0 Introductions

No revisions

2.0 Vision and Principles

2.6 Principle Five:

The reorientation of development towards the river park, through placement of cafes and plazas that open up to and capitalize on the river, as well as buildings that provide views of the natural river habitat, will inherently enhance property values. In the more urbanized reaches of the river, ensure that development occurs in a manner that can co-exist with the river's value as both a natural and an urban resource.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1.1

A. Augment Flows to the River Periodically

These seasonal pulse flows also offer the opportunity for sediment transport and would create disturbance/recovery cycles for ecosystems. The potential to augment flows should be fully explored with the Padre Dam Municipal Water District and Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Climate change impacts have the potential to further influence river flows due to warmer temperatures, drier weather, sea level rise and increasing storm surges. For information on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies, see <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/sustainable/eestf.shtml>.

3.1.4

A. Develop an Interpretive Program Based on the Historical, Biological and Cultural Resources of the River

Significant Historic Sites

- Midway Pacific area – the Derby Dike.
- Old Town area – Kumeyaay cultural resources, the San Diego Presidio and the original San Diego de Alcalá Mission site.
- Mission Valley area – Prehistoric Kosa'aay (Cosoy) Village site, the 1881 California Southern railroad, the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, and the Nipaquay Village site.
- Navajo and Tierrasanta areas – Kumeyaay cultural resources and Old Mission Dam and Flume.

3.1.5

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Treat the river as an amenity.
- B. Encourage development to provide active uses fronting the River.
- C. Encourage development to face the river.
- D. Include access to the river through new development.
- E. Integrate pedestrian and bicycle paths along frontage roads. Reclaim frontage roads as pedestrian and bicycle-only green buffers.

E. Integrate Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths along Frontage Roads

Frontage roads that are parallel to the river, ~~in some cases,~~ limit visual and physical access to the river. As these frontage roads are improved, ~~additional~~ assure that there is adequate right of way ~~should be acquired and developed~~ for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement. ~~Additional~~ Landscape areas should be provided to buffer pathways from adjacent roads and to provide access to the river pathway where appropriate.

3.2.1 Estuary Reach

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Create a San Diego River Park pathway kiosk at Dog Beach identifying the western entrance of the river pathway.
- B. Support the goals of Mission Bay Park Master Plan (including Dog Beach, Robb Field, and Southern Wildlife Preserve), the Famosa Slough Enhancement Plan, and the Mission Valley Preserve. Support the replacement and construction of the West Mission Bay Bridge that will contain class I bike lanes on both sides.
- C. Improve pathway and trail connections to Mission Bay Park, Famosa Slough, Tecolote Canyon, Southern Wildlife Preserve and other open spaces from the San Diego River pathway.
- D. Create a kiosk at Robb Field identifying the entrance to the San Diego River pathway and re-landscape the area adjacent to the river with natives that relate to the estuary and river edge.
- E. Support a river and estuary interpretive center in the Northern Wildlife Preserve of Mission Bay Park according to the recommendations of the Mission Bay Park Master Plan. Investigate options through a feasibility study to provide a river and estuary outdoor interpretive center along the north side of the river.

3.2.3 Confluence Reach

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Pursue a class I path along Rancho Mission Road and Ward Road and coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Game for a river pathway connection ~~on their land along the~~ on the south side of the river just east of Interstate 15. If a pathway connection cannot be provided alternative connections will be considered. Ensure that trails are designed with safety in mind, and to encourage stewardship and litter prevention.
- H. Provide interpretive signage along the river pathway about the history of the Confluence Reach including; Mission San Diego de Alcalá and its role in building the first water conveyance system (San Diego Mission Flume), the Kumeyaay

village of Nipaguay at the historic mission site, the formation of the large Mexican land grants and the history of the sand and gravel mines.

3.2.2 Lower Valley Reach

Key Sites of the Lower Valley Reach

A. Riverwalk Golf Course Redevelopment Site

The Levi-Cushman Specific Plan for the Riverwalk Golf Course site was approved in 1987. As approved, the plan proposes would develop roughly 5.2 million square feet of mixed-use development including residential, retail, commercial, office and recreational uses for the approximately 200-acre site. The specific plan aligns with the San Diego River Park Master Plan in focusing development on the river, and this concept should guide any future amendments to the plan. The recommendations and guidelines contained in the San Diego River Park Master Plan, such as considering a more naturalized river pattern and increasing the channel width to allow the river to meander in a more naturally manner, should be considerations of any future amendments to the Levi-Cushman Specific Plan. ~~The specific plan departs from San Diego River Park goals in proposing a 12-acre island, as well as a 25-foot river planting buffer intended to “prevent direct access to habitat areas”. These goals could be modified, in an amendment to the plan, to favor a naturalized river pattern as suggested in this Master Plan, and increasing the channel width and areas for the river to meander naturally.~~

A future amendment to the approved Levi-Cushman Specific Plan should require implementation of the San Diego River Park pathway as recommended in this Master Plan. The San Diego River Pathway can serve the site by providing an amenity to people living and working within the proposed development, as well as providing pedestrian and bicycle commuter access to surrounding neighborhoods and the trolley. The trolley right-of-way may offer the opportunity for an interim trail alignment. ~~until a more defined redevelopment concept can determine the best permanent location.~~ Because the Riverwalk Golf Course is anticipated to provide new residential development, there is an opportunity to establish public community and/or neighborhood parks. As the site redevelopment plans evolve, space for a public park should be sought adjacent to the river where possible. The nearby YMCA is expected to continue its private, fee-based recreation facility. Sefton Field will provide public recreation including ball fields and children’s play areas. Connection to these public and private facilities could be strengthened with connected open space and a trail head near the YMCA.

Key Points for Levi-Cushman Site

- Create and maintain continuity of the river pathway for meeting transportation needs in Mission Valley.
- Seek opportunities to acquire land to establish a community/neighborhood park to meet community needs.
- If the Levi-Cushman Specific Plan is amended, work with the developer to improve river hydrology, restore habitat, and provide the river pathway.
- In the short term, the river pathway could be developed following the trolley alignment, within the trolley right-of-way. In the long term, the river pathway should be developed within the River Corridor Area.

Potential Park Elements

- Project Recreation Space may include more active recreation found in a neighborhood park
- Open Space Recreation may include pedestrian and bike paths, benches, and passive recreational areas
- Location visually or conceptually connected to the river
- Character reflecting the river's ecology and history

B. Qualcomm Stadium Site

The Mission Valley Community Plan locates a Community Park at the Qualcomm Stadium site. ~~Any potential redevelopment of the Qualcomm site creates the opportunity for a river-oriented approach that creates significant new open space and park land that could provide for active recreation. Any park land set aside should be adjacent to the river, but buffered with substantial naturalized open space that allows for a wider river channel and increased riparian habitat, transitioning to upland native vegetation at the trolley alignment.~~

This site is the last remaining city-owned property that is large enough to be in scale with the river valley. Careful consideration should be given to the intrinsic value of this place as a public green space and as an opportunity to create value to help finance redevelopment. A river-oriented community park could provide public recreation facilities adjacent to the naturalized open space San Diego River Park, ~~along the river,~~ which would complement Mission Bay Park and Mission Trails Regional Park.

Key Points for Qualcomm Stadium Site

- Critical location for meeting community-based park and recreation needs in Mission Valley, as identified in the Mission Valley Community Plan.
- No acquisition costs required; land is currently owned by City of San Diego.
- Critical location for creating continuity in San Diego River Park and San Diego River Park pathway.
- ~~Coordinate with any Qualcomm Stadium Site redevelopment plans to integrate active and passive park uses on the existing stadium site.~~
- Create primarily natural open space located between the trolley and the river.
- Extend open space corridor to create new habitat and trail connection to Murphy Canyon.
- Acknowledge environmental constraints with adjacent land uses.

Potential Community Park Elements for Qualcomm Stadium Site

- Ball fields/soccer fields
- Active sports complex
- Picnic facilities
- Amphitheater
- Children's Play area with "natural" character (wood, boulders, sand)

Potential San Diego River Park Elements for Qualcomm Stadium Site

- San Diego River Pathway
- Natural riparian and upland habitat areas
- Boardwalk/overlooks for viewing and interpretation
- Pedestrian linkage: park to river and Murphy Canyon
- Focus park toward river

3.2.4 Upper Valley Reach

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Coordinate with Navy Planners to explore opportunities to modify the Admiral Baker Golf Course, without impacts to the current recreational elements, to create a space for the San Diego River pathway, and to improve the relationship of the golf course with the river, such as controlling surface runoff from entering the river.
- B. Improve open space and trail connections to Elanus Canyon north of Admiral Baker Golf Course.

- C. Create public parks along the river pathway within the Grantville Area and explore opportunities for water recreation.
- D. Separate the river channel from the old mining ponds, where possible, as land is redeveloped to improve the hydrology of the river based on specific engineering studies.

Key Sties of the Upper Valley Reach Key Points for Admiral Baker Golf Course Site

- Continue on-going discussions with Navy Planners to find an appropriate level and means of integrating the golf course with the San Diego River Park.
- Expand critical habitat area and connections to Elanus Canyon north of the golf course.
- Create trail connections along the golf course.
- Establish habitat along the river for wildlife movement and habitat objectives.
- Create a trail connection from the Tierrasanta Community (adjacent to Tierrasanta Blvd.) to the river pathway with an overlook at the upper elevation.
- If the Admiral Baker Golf Course develops into something other than a golf course, the new development should provide trail connections from the San Diego River Pathway to the Tierrasanta community.

3.2.5 Gorge Reach

- H. Provide interpretive signage along the river pathway about the history of the Confluence Reach including; Mission San Diego de Alcalá and its role in building the first water conveyance system (San Diego Mission Flume), the Kumeyaay village of Nipaguay at the historic mission site, the formation of the large Mexican land grants and the history of the sand and gravel mines.

3.2.6 PLATEAU REACH

RECOMMENDATIONS

- B. Through a feasibility study and an associated environmental document determine the best location for the San Diego River Park pathway connecting Mission Trails Regional Park to the City of Santee, along with connections to West Hills Parkway. Include in the study where a soft surface trail could be provided separate from the paved pathway to accommodate a variety of users.

4.0 Design Guidelines

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Master Plan design guidelines is to provide written and graphic information to support the Master Plan vision, principles and recommendations, for development areas within or directly adjacent to the river within the Mission Valley, Navajo, Tierrasanta and East Elliot community plans, and the following Development Regulations in the City of San Diego Land Development Code:

- Mission Valley Planned District Ordinance (Chapter 15, Article 14, Division 1-4),
- Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 14, Navajo)
- Mission Trails Design District (Chapter 13, Article 2, Division 12)

All City of San Diego public projects conducting work in the river area and have an approved discretionary permit issued by the City prior to the adoption of this Master Plan, are exempt from the requirements of the San Diego River Park Master Plan Design Guidelines until such time that the permit is amended or expires. These projects however, are encouraged to comply with the Master Plan Design Guidelines were possible. In addition, all future private and public projects that propose or modify public utilities within the River Corridor or River Influence Areas must meet the requirements of the most current version of the City's Water and Sewer Design Guidelines. In addition, all future private or public projects adjacent to the shared railroad/light rail right-of-way will be planned with the safety of the rail corridor and the most current requirements of the California Public Utilities Commission.

Flexibility in the Design Guidelines and actual site development can be achieved and administered through the Planned Development Permit (PDP) Regulations process, Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 4 of the Land Development Code. The intent of the PDP regulations is to accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, an equitable balance of development types, site constraints, development regulations and community and city benefit.

Where development constructs the River Pathway Corridor consistent with Design Guidelines Sections 4.3.2 through 4.3.4 and the Recreation Element of the City's General Plan, population-based park credit may be granted commensurate to the River Pathway Corridor area. Where development proposes to construct parks to address

population-based park requirements of a project outside of the River Pathway Corridor area, population-based credit may be granted if consistent with the Design Guidelines, the Recreation Element of the City's General Plan and upon approval as identified in the City Council Policy – Community Notification and Input for City-Wide Park Development Projects.

4.3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the River Corridor Area is to restore the health of the San Diego River by cleaning the river, improving its hydrologic function, increasing its length and recharge area, separating it from ponds, and creating opportunities for braiding and meandering. It will also enhance wildlife habitat by providing a continuous movement corridor that varies in width and provides diversity of habitat and native vegetation. The river habitat area should be expanded where possible on a project by project basis.

4.3.2.2 Path Corridor

- A. All drain pipes in this area should not be visible from the river pathway.
- B. Headwalls should be as small as possible and match existing soil color.
- ~~C. If the Path Corridor area is to serve as a population-based park for residential development, then the area should meet the Guidelines of the Park and Recreation Element of the City's General Plan (Table RE-2-3)~~

4.3.2.4 San Diego River Pathway

The San Diego River Pathway, a multi-use pathway for bicycle and pedestrian use, is to be located within the 35-foot Path Corridor and is considered the primary pathway for the entire 17.5 mile river park from the Pacific Ocean to the City of Santee. Where possible, the river pathway should occur on both sides of the river. In cases where site conditions, or topography, do not allow for the river pathway, a narrower pedestrian trail should be provided. The river pathway to include design treatments of all intersections with pedestrian sidewalks and vehicular travel paths (e.g. bike lanes, bike paths, streets), that appropriately address safety and access of all users, using current City of San Diego and Caltrans standards (i.e. Street Design Manual, Council Policy 200-07 and Caltrans Chapter 1000 Bikeway Planning and Design). If any part of the River Corridor Area is mapped MHPA, or determined to be within a wetland buffer area, the river pathway should be moved just outside of these areas. In these situations, the outer edge of the river pathway will be the new boundary for the River Corridor. The river pathway will connect to the existing Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) trail system on the west and east boundaries of the park. At this point the river pathway will collocate on a MTRP trail and be identified through signage. All trails within MTRP will be designed to the MTRP Park Master Plan requirements. The San Diego River

~~Pathway east of Mission Trails Regional Park should be considered an extension of the MTRP trail system and should be designed as a soft surface material to accommodate a variety of users.~~

- A. Creative elements such as leaf or animal imprints appropriate to each reach may be included in the river pathway paving material.
- B. The river pathway will be designed to meet ADA standards and guidelines and California Title 24 regulations for accessibility, which allows for flexibility in how trails are designed and used. ~~to meet ADA standards and guidelines and California Title 24 regulations for accessibility, unless impracticable because of existing site conditions and terrain that would prevent the incorporation of accessibility features.~~

4.3.2.5 Trails

- A. Trails should be a maximum of 8 feet wide and have a minimum vertical clearance of 8 feet. Trails within the MHPA, or a wetland buffer, should ~~be a maximum of 4 feet wide and~~ meet the requirements of the MSCP Subarea Plan, 'Land Use Considerations'.

4.3.4.2 Site Furnishings Benches

- A. Location: At overlooks, areas of shade, under shade structures, etc.
- B. Design: Should be simple in form, but designed to discourage extended periods of use or lodging. Offset benches a minimum of 2 feet from the edge of the river pathway, including its shoulders. The offset area may vary in surface materials, but should coordinate with the materials used around it. Where appropriate, low walls of concrete or stone could be provided at seat height and width in lieu of, or in addition to, benches.
- C. ~~Materials: Concrete or stone that have a natural earth brown or tan color of the river valley.~~

Picnic Tables

- A. Location: Along the river pathway and place perpendicular to the river pathway to reduce vandalism.
- B. Design: Offset a minimum of 4 feet from the edge of the river pathway, including its shoulders. The offset area may vary in surface materials, but should coordinate with the materials used around it.

- ~~c. Materials: Picnic tables should be concrete and have a natural earth brown or tan color.~~

Drinking Fountains

- A. Location: In close proximity to picnic areas or at an entrance to the river pathway from an adjacent public street.
- B. Design: Should be simple in form.
- ~~C. Materials: Picnic tables Drinking Fountains should be concrete and have a natural earth brown or tan color.~~

Trash and Recycling Receptacles

- A. Location: In close proximity to picnic areas, overlooks, seating areas, path intersections and access points to the river and must be accessible to maintenance vehicles.
- B. Design: Receptacles should contain hood covers to prevent rummaging by animals. Trash and recycling receptacles should be located side-by-side.
- ~~c. Materials: Receptacles should be concrete and have a natural earth brown or tan color.~~

Information Kiosks

- A. Location: At all river pathway entrances from a public street right-of-way.
- B. Design: Consistent with City of San Diego standard design as used in regional parks and open space areas (contact the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department for the current standard detail).
- c. Materials: ~~Treated~~ Wood.

Interpretive Signs

- A. Information:
- Geography and Geology
 - Cultural and Historical Resources
 - Ecology
 - Restoration
 - Native Plant and Wildlife
 - Historic Water Resources

4.3.4.6 Fences

4.3.4.6 Fences

Fencing in the River Corridor between the river and the river pathway should only be provided to protect sensitive habitat and historic resources, while allowing for wildlife movement. To provide a consistent park identity and to blend with the natural environment fencing should:

- A minimum of five feet from the River Pathway or trails and follow the natural grade.
- A maximum of 42 inches in height.
- Fence rails to be horizontal.
- Fence to be a minimum of 75% open.
- Materials such as wood peeler log fencing or steel/steel cables.

Fencing in the River Corridor between the River Pathway and the River Influence Area should meet the Design Guidelines of Section 4.4.4.2.

4.3.4.9 River Pathway and Trail Safety

The river pathway and pedestrian trail development in the River Corridor Area should specifically address issues of safety and crime prevention through the following design considerations:

- A. Place removable bollards at strategic access points along the river pathway to prevent vehicular access and yet allow access for emergency and maintenance vehicles.
- B. Locate safety call boxes where appropriate and consider the use of solar powered call boxes in strategic locations. The San Diego Police and Fire-Rescue Departments should be consulted on the locations of these boxes.

4.4.2.4 Off-Street Surface Parking

Off-street parking should be sited to consider the sensitive nature of the river corridor but also promote a street scene that is conducive to pedestrians and responsive to principals of urban design. Off-street surface parking to be screened for the full length of the surface parking area with residential, commercial, industrial and/or mixed use.

4.4.3.3 Building Transparency

- A. Commercial and Mixed Use Zones: At least 50 percent of the ground floor building façade (between finish grade and the full height of the first floor) to be transparent. A minimum of 25 percent of each floor above the ground floor shall be transparent. Transparency such as: glass windows, or windows affording views into retail, customer services, office, gallery, cafes, lobby space or pedestrian entrances.

- B. Industrial Zones: At least 15 percent of the total façade must be transparent, such as: glass windows, display windows, or windows affording views into customer services, office, gallery, cafes, lobby space or pedestrian entrances.

4.4.3.4 Building Reflectivity

All building façades that face the River Corridor Area or face a street that is parallel to the River Corridor Area should incorporate non-reflective glazing types of materials to reduce the visible light reflectivity. ~~to be limited to glass and other materials with a visible light reflectivity of no greater than 10 percent.~~

4.4.3.6 Building Signs

- A. Within 100 feet of the River Corridor Area, ~~building signs to not exceed a height of 15 feet above finish grade.~~ signs on building facades fronting the River Corridor Area to not exceed a height of 15 feet above finish grade and to be face lighted or internally lighted.

5.0 Implementation

To implement the San Diego River Park Master Plan, both private and public landowners will need to partner and invest in the river valley. This partnership between private and public entities must remain solid and active to ensure the success and vitality of the San Diego River Park. The five principles of the Master Plan (Restoring and maintaining a healthy river; Unifying a healthy habitat; Create a connected continuum along the river pathway; Interpreting the river valley history; and Reorienting development toward the river to create value and opportunities for people to embrace the river) should serve as the guide for implementation decisions.

As stated in the Introduction Section of the Master Plan, one of the great challenges of implementing the San Diego River Park lies in the fact that much of the land along the river is in private, state, or federal ownership. It is anticipated that the River Pathway will be built through development of these private and state/federal lands and that there will be gaps in the pathway system as the River Park develops over the course of time. Where there are gaps in the pathway, it can be routed to a public sidewalk until it can be constructed along the river. In some locations the pathway gaps could be designed and built by the City working in partnership with the land owner and non-profit organizations by obtaining grant funding or other means. It is critical that efforts are made to work with the owners of these properties and the community to provide access along the river.

Within the following implementation section, these principles are translated into: an implementing framework; implementation strategies; maintenance, management and security; and public outreach and education. The implementing framework gives a summary of the river reaches, how closely they meet the Master Plan principles and what still needs to be accomplished. The implementation strategies section identifies potential funding sources on federal, state, and local levels, development tools, and required government approvals. Of equal importance are maintenance, management, and security for the River Park. Within this section are tools and programs for both private and public lands to ensure a pleasant, desirable, and safe experience for the users of the San Diego River Park. Looking to the future, this Master Plan must also consider public outreach and education as a long term approach to sustain commitment to the River Park.

5.3 Maintenance, Management and Security

In order for the San Diego River Park Master Plan to be successful, the river's long term maintenance, management and security must be a high priority. Maintenance and management activities could include: flood and drainage control, storm water management, invasive species removal, trash pickup and control, landscape and site amenities maintenance and general clean up. The security and safety of the public within the river area and private properties and neighborhoods adjacent to the river area are a real concern. Flooding, crime and other undesirable activities are issues that need to be addressed on public and private land. Security measures should ensure the enjoyment of the River Park, personal safety concerns while enforcing laws and regulations. Illegal uses and camping should be removed from the river area. The challenge to providing maintenance, management and security along the river is the diversity of land ownership and the amount of funding that is committed to these efforts. The following tools and programs begin to address these issues and it is expected that as the River Park is completed efforts will be made to work with the property owners on a comprehensive maintenance, management and security strategy.

5.3.1 MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY TOOLS

Maintenance, management and security tools for the river area can be based on permit conditions for new development or provided through various funding sources. Funding sources can include revenue generated from city general and enterprise funds, permit fees, fees from special assessment districts, and corporate or private donor programs. These tools could be used in certain areas of the river based on land ownership or provided in a combination when the River Park is completed.

5.3.1.1 City Funds

The City's General and Enterprise Funds provide for some of the maintenance and management of land adjacent to the river. City departments, including Park and Recreation, Real Estate Assets, Water, Environmental Services and Street Division, all own properties along the river and are allocated funds to maintain and manage the land through the budget process with approval from City Council. In addition, the Storm Water Division is provided with city funds to maintain and manage public storm drains in the river area to meet Clean Water regulations. The Waste Management Division is funded to implement the city regulation on weed, rubbish and waste abatement on private and public land. For security issues the City provides funding for the Police Department and a Ranger Program within the Park and Recreation Department.

5.3.2 MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY PROGRAMS

The following programs could all be funded from the tools listed above and provided all along the river area to ensure consistent maintenance, management and security of the River Park. These programs could be facilitated by the City, Private Land Owners, and the San Diego River Coalition or through other non-profit organizations. Maintenance and management programs could include the City's Ranger Program, Conservation Corps/Neighborhood Youth Corps and an "Adopt the River" program. Security programs could include a Ranger Program working in concert with a dedicated enforcement staff for the river area, a "Neighborhood Watch" program and/or private security companies.

6.0 Regulatory Framework

No revisions