

Executive Summary

Introduction

Principles

Recommendations

Design Guidelines

Implementation

Appendices

Reach Recommendations

# Specific Reach Recommendations

Executive Summary

The San Diego River can be understood as a linked series of discrete reaches. The unique characteristics and opportunities of each reach suggests an approach that reveals their best qualities and showcases the changing visual and physical experience as one moves through the valley.

Introduction

Within the City of San Diego, the Plan identifies six reaches. Traditionally distinguished by hydrologic characteristics, these reaches are based upon distinct topographic condition, spatial experience and/or land use. Following the flow of water from the hills to the ocean, the reaches are the Plateau, the Gorge, Upper Mission Valley, the Confluence, Lower Mission Valley, and the Estuary. Specific actions needed to create the River Park are identified in each reach.

Principles

The pages that follow outline intent, condition and recommendations for each reach. The intent describes the Plan's specific goals for the reach, followed by an assessment of it's current conditions. The recommendations outline the broad strokes of the Plan for the reach. Where appropriate, key sites are identified where special opportunities exist or conditions and location define the site as a critical component of the River Park. This 3-part overview is followed by a map of the reach and a table of specific action items and their proposed implementation.

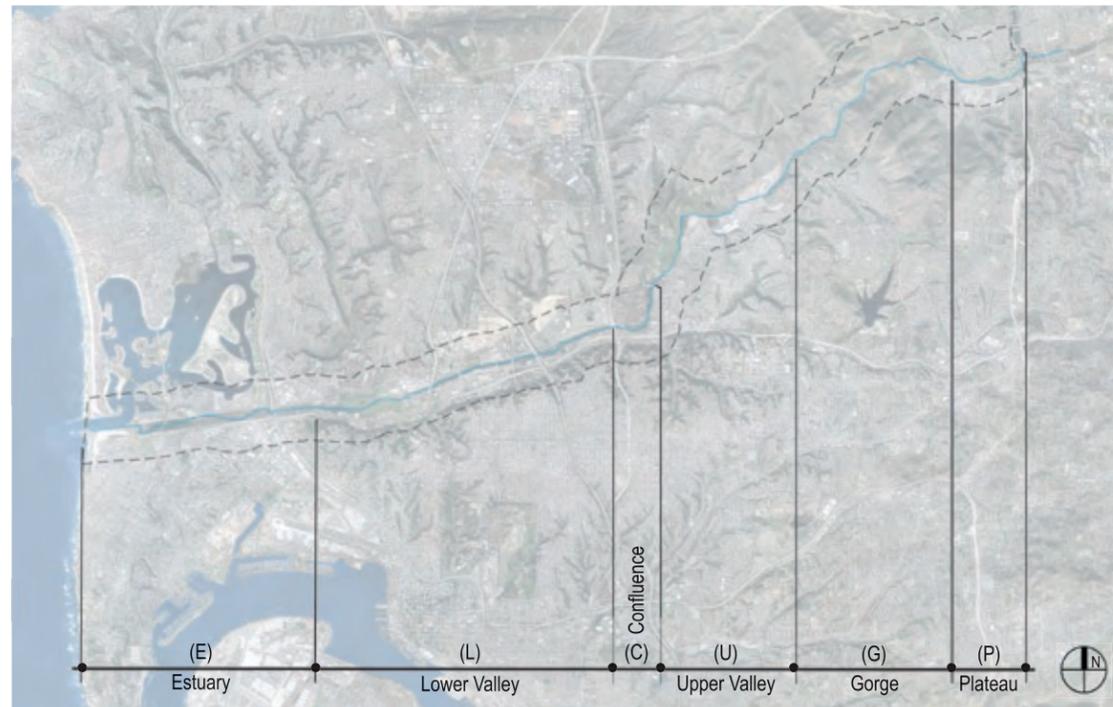
The benefits to hydrology, ecology, recreation and education of each action are described in detail in the matrices located in the appendices

Recommendations

Design Guidelines

Implementation

Appendices



Six Reaches



Estuary



Lower Valley



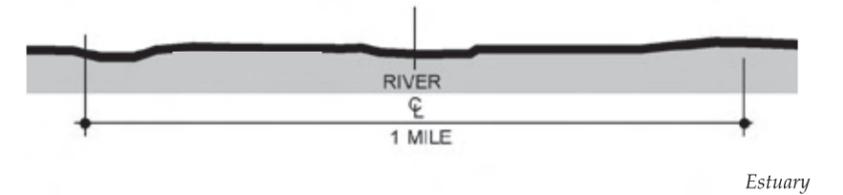
Upper Valley



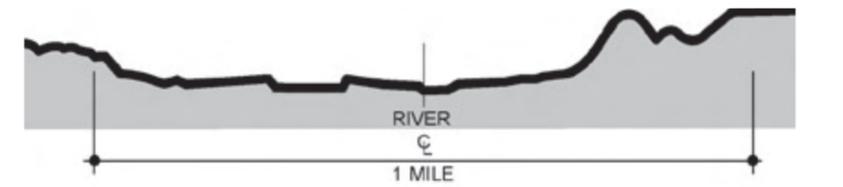
Gorge



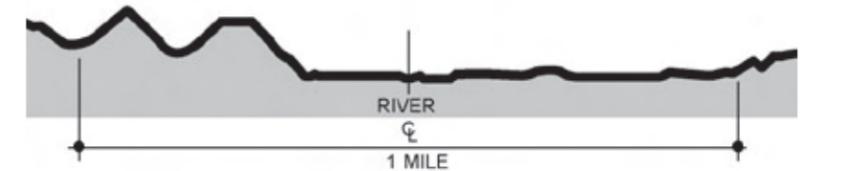
Plateau



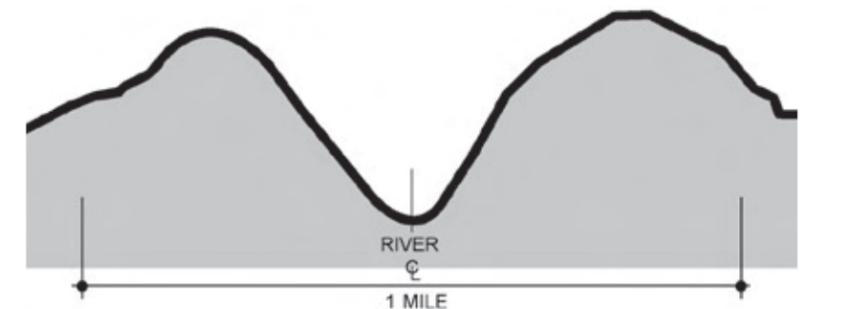
Estuary



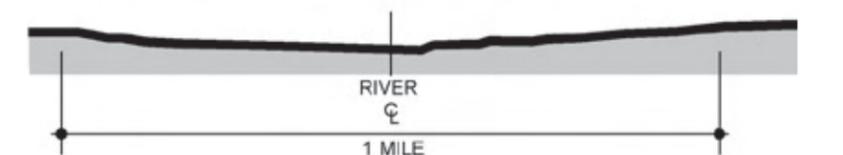
Lower Valley



Upper Valley



Gorge



Plateau

Typical Cross Sections of Reaches

## Estuary

**Intent:** Extending from Mission Valley Preserve to the Pacific Ocean, the Estuary reach offers an astonishing sense of openness, and a sense of release as one moves past the Linda Vista Terrace topped by the University of San Diego and Presidio Park. Only here and at the Plateau above Mission Trails Regional Park does the San Diego River Park have the potential to capitalize on long, picturesque views and the experience of vast, open space. In the Estuary reach, the San Diego River Park must strive to build upon this experience, and to protect and expand the unique wildlife habitats of the estuarine ecosystem. The San Diego River Park should also seek to educate visitors about the sensitivity of these ecosystems.

**Condition:** The estuarine ecosystem at the mouth of the San Diego River is remarkably healthy, but significantly smaller than its original extent. The Derby Dike on the river's southern edge is responsible for this reduction in scale, separating the river from its delta that



The estuary supports rich avian and aquatic species

historically (and alternately) included both Mission Bay and San Diego Bay. The dike has also restricted and concentrated pedestrian and vehicle circulation, resulting in heavy containment of boundaries to the river channel.

The multiple crossings of Interstate 5, Mission Bay Drive and the railroad have had additional impacts on the estuary, creating an abrupt terminus and disrupting the gentle transition from estuarine to riparian habitat. The tremendous experience of boundlessness once expressed by the estuary and shoreline is now limited by views of development, the dikes, and by highways containing the river. Despite these alterations, the Estuary remains an expansive environment defined by horizontality.

The estuary includes, or is adjacent to several significant existing parks and open spaces including Mission Bay Park, Dog Beach, Robb Field, Southern Wildlife Preserve, Famosa Slough and Mission Valley Preserve.



Diverse estuarine vegetation

### Recommendations:

- Support the goals of Mission Bay Park, Dog Beach, Robb Field, Famosa Slough, Southern Wildlife Preserve and Mission Valley Preserve
- Create a continuous multi-use trail
- Improve connections to other open spaces
- Establish a minimum open space corridor equal to present dimensions of dike.
- Create passive component at Mission Bay Park
- Study potential to improve ecologic and possibly hydrologic connection with Mission Bay Park

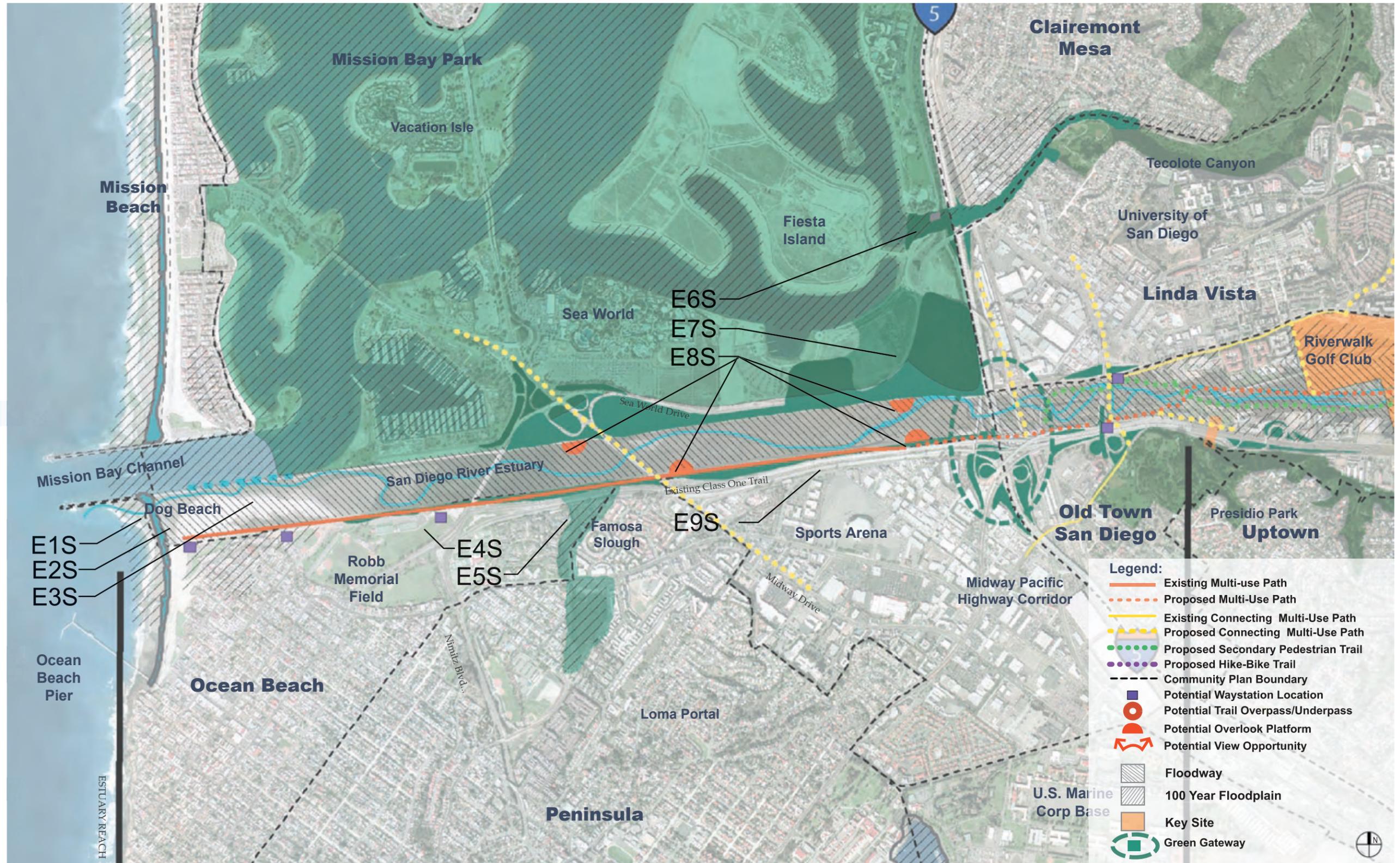
The Estuary Reach of the San Diego River Park must balance two primary needs: human interaction at an educational & experiential level and the protection and maintenance of sensitive habitat. Careful design can accommodate both elements in a manner that benefits the system as a whole. People must be both engaged and isolated within the estuary reach. Greater understanding of the ecosystem through interpretation will instill a sense of ownership and care for this delicate part of the river. A defined trail system and viewing platforms are part of this effort.

A collaborative planning process with Mission Bay Park should also seek to expand the physical area of the estuary, in order to further diversify the wildlife habitat. This potential may exist at Famosa Slough and Mission Bay. Opportunities to explore the expansion of the estuary should be sought where possible, to further diversify the wildlife habitat. The potential to do so may exist at Famosa Slough and at Mission Bay. Planning efforts should also acknowledge that in the Estuary Reach, the entire corridor, proposed for the San Diego River Park, is within the boundaries of Mission Bay Park. Planning must integrate with and support the Mission Bay Park Master Plan.

The River Park must Support planning efforts in Mission Bay Park to provide a passive, ecology-based facility, which includes educational and interpretive opportunities, public art, and scenic overlooks. The Park should orient itself toward the river, and buffer the river edge with native upland vegetation.

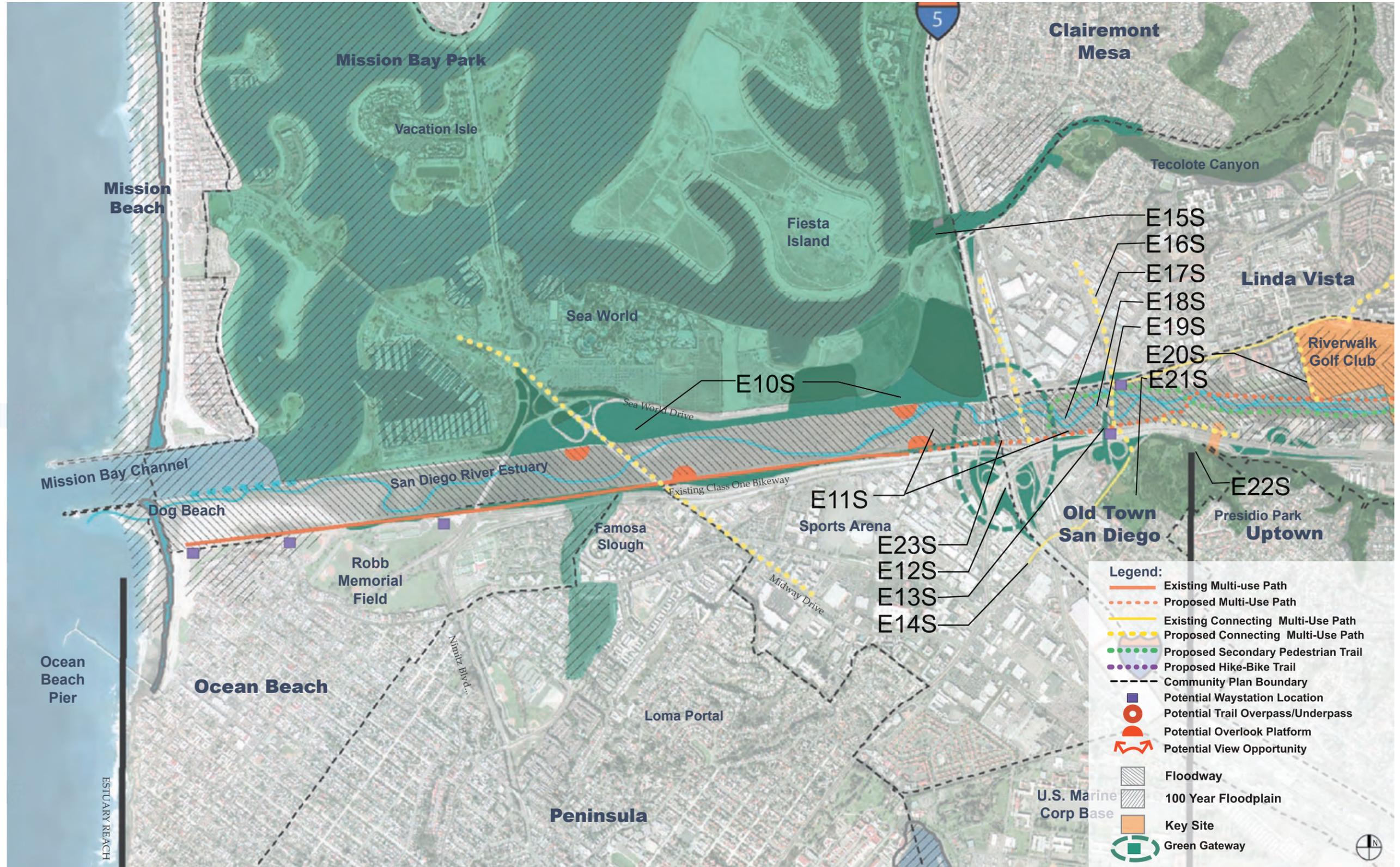


Estuary Reach Section



KEYNOTE	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION	BENEFITS				
			HYDROLOGY	ECOLOGY	RECREATION	EDUCATION	
<b>Short Term</b>							
E1S	Create San Diego River Park Trail trail head and waystation at Dog Beach.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to install signage, interpretive kiosks and furnishings in vicinity to provide information about estuarine function, wildlife habitat and trail system. Throughout the San Diego River Park, signage, kiosks, and furnishings should be unified by a continuity of materials and graphics while also incorporating materials that reflect the adjacent environment and neighborhoods. Link trail head and Waystation to existing bike lanes, bike routes, and trails in surrounding communities.	●	●	●		Executive Summary
E2S	Maintain Dog Beach as an off-leash recreational destination and community asset. Enhance existing Dog Beach signage to include information about the San Diego River Park.	Support appropriate community and special interest groups to manage Dog Beach and integrate it with the San Diego River Park.			●		
E3S	Coordinate with Mission Bay Park to support marsh restoration that is underway.	Collaborate with appropriate community groups to install signage in vicinity to provide information and create awareness about estuary function and wildlife habitat.		●		●	Introduction
E4S	Create San Diego River Park Trail head and waystation and historic and natural interpretation zone at Robb Field.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to install signage, interpretive kiosks and furnishings in vicinity to provide information. Coordinate with Community Plans in future to integrate park and river trail. Unify interpretive signage, furnishings, and construction with other San Diego River Park projects. Maintain Robb Field as multi-use recreational complex, and expand in future as community recreation needs increase.			●	●	Principles
E5S	Explore potential to improve and expand connection of the Famosa Slough with the San Diego River estuary. Investigate feasibility of augmenting the connection with appropriate engineering study. Potential conflict with Famosa Slough Master Plan.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups including friends of Famosa Slough to initiate feasibility study to explore benefits and impacts of replacing existing culvert with larger structure and improve trail connectivity between the San Diego River Park Trail and Famosa Slough. Consider linking existing Famosa Slough trail with the existing Class I Bike Path. Increase passive park areas into new river alignment and/or new link with Famosa Slough.	●	●	●	●	
E6S	Coordinate with Mission Bay Master Plan to consider modifications to Mission Bay and Tecolote Treatment Wetlands Plan.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to extend feasibility study to explore the potential to modify current plan to consider effect of improving the hydrologic systems of Mission Bay and the River. Such a study should identify and develop trail connections from the San Diego River Park to Tecolote Canyon and with Mission Bay Park.	●	●			Recommendations
E7S	Develop temporary multi-use programs for under-utilized lands that are proposed for other future uses.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to explore opportunities to fully utilize land for ecologic, educational and recreational uses.		●	●		
E8S	Create estuary overlook platforms along the San Diego River Park Trail at estuary surface level.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to develop, design, and select specific locations for interpretive overlooks on both the north and south sides of the San Diego River estuary.			●	●	Design Guidelines
E9S	Explore potential to create a new park with a recreational connection to the river and neighborhood as the Sports Arena redevelops. If possible, expand river into this area similar to Famosa Slough.	Collaborate with North Bay Redevelopment Plan to integrate its recommendations with the San Diego River Park. If the Sports Arena redevelopment plans move forward, seek opportunities to engage with the process to integrate those plans with the River Park by creating trail connections, installing interpretive kiosks, and potentially a Community Park.		●	●		Implementation

Appendices



KEYNOTE RECOMMENDATION		IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	BENEFITS				
			HYDROLOGY	ECOLOGY	RECREATION	EDUCATION	
<b>Short Term</b>							
E10S	Mission Bay Park interface zone.	Coordinate with appropriate community/special interest groups for the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and South Shores General Development Plan to ensure appropriate park and river interaction and possible interpretive opportunities.			●	●	Executive Summary
E11S	Continue San Diego River Park multi-use path east of the I-5 and create connections from Friars Road to Pacific Highway.	Coordinate with community plans, North Bay Redevelopment Plan and San Diego Bicycle Master Plan.			●		
E12S	Establish Green Gateway at interchange of I-5 / I-8.	Initiate dialogue with Caltrans, the City of San Diego and appropriate community/special interest groups. Plans to explore the methods for implementing native plant palette in rights-of-ways. Where appropriate, identify existing undeveloped parcels contiguous with rights-of-way and explore potential to acquire or establish open space easements to expand connectivity of Green Gateways.		●			
E13S	Create a waystation, trail connection and naturalized open space between Presidio Park and Old Town San Diego and the river corridor.	Prepare detailed design study for locating waystations, trail connections, bicycle staging areas and explore the creation of shuttle links from the trolley at Old Town San Diego/Linda Vista to Ocean Beach, Sea World and Mission Beach. Initiate dialogue with Transportation Department to create shuttle links from trolley at Old Town/ Linda Vista and Ocean Beach/ Sea World/ Mission Beach.		●	●	●	Introduction
E14S	Create recreational trail connection between the San Diego River Park and the San Diego Bay.	Implement Class 2 and Class 3 Bikeways along Rosecrans Street and Taylor Streets as proposed by the Plan Report City of San Diego Bicycle Master Plan			●		Principles
E15S	Improve trail and open space connection between Tecolote Canyon and Mission Bay.	Explore potential to reconstruct I-5 and railroad crossings over Tecolote Creek with larger bridges or culverts that can accommodate pedestrian movement. Consider multi-use path adjacent to riparian channel, and link to proposed City of San Diego Bicycle Master Plan recommended Class I Bike Path adjacent to railroad right-of-way.	●	●	●		
E16S	Create connection between the San Diego River Park and adjacent neighborhoods to the north, providing trail connection, way station and study possible interpretive opportunities.	Coordinate with San Diego Bicycle Master Plan and appropriate community/special interest groups to develop detailed study to confirm specific alignment. Implement Bikeway along Morena Boulevard to Taylor Street as proposed by the City of San Diego Bicycle Master Plan. Improve connection of existing Class I Bike Path (from East Mission Bay Drive to Fashion Valley Road) to Morena Boulevard and to Morena Linda Vista Trolley Station. Coordinate with Mission Valley Community Plan to include in update as amendment.			●		
E17S	Broaden river channel, meander, and potentially braiding of river through Mission Valley Preserve.	Collaborate with appropriate agencies and community/special interest groups to prepare specific plans and identify funding sources to modify river channel.	●	●	●	●	Design Guidelines
E18S	Connect Morena Boulevard Bikeway and proposed new segment of San Diego River Park trail.	Coordinate with San Diego Bicycle Master Plan. Study feasibility of connecting (future) Morena Boulevard bridge Bikeway (per Plan Report City of San Diego Bicycle Master Plan) and proposed San Diego River Park multi-use trail at south edge of Morena Blvd. bridge. The Bikeway is at street level; the multi-use trail is down in the river valley.			●		
E19S	Support and build upon access and interpretation zone at Mission Valley Preserve.	As San Diego River Park Trail is implemented, develop trail head with signage, interpretive kiosks and furnishings.			●	●	
E20S	Create short term bike trail alignments through Riverwalk Golf Club in trolley right-of-way.	Coordinate with the appropriate agency, community/special interest groups, land owners and golf course management to explore the potential bike trail. Trail would be relocated closer to river channel in the future when the golf course redevelops.			●		Implementation
E21S	Support efforts to create a Presidio Park Master Plan.	Coordinate with appropriate agencies, community and special interest groups to begin discussions about initiating a master planning effort and to identify potential funding sources.			●	●	Appendices
E22S	Create a Presidio Park entry monument on Taylor Street that incorporates its historic connection with the river.	Coordinate with appropriate agencies and community groups to initiate study to design and locate entry signage on north side of Presidio Park.				●	
E23S	Remove 1.5 acre area of cobble fill on south side of river under I-5.	Identify potential donors or funding sources to remove fill and lower grade to river channel level. Fill could potentially be used to fill undesirable ponds upstream or may have value as structural fill for development projects elsewhere.	●	●			



KEYNOTE	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION	BENEFITS				
			HYDROLOGY	ECOLOGY	RECREATION	EDUCATION	
<b>Long Term</b>							
E1L	Explore potential to remove lowered portion of jetty wall. Although not consistent with Mission Bay Master Plan, removal of this barrier has the potential to better integrate the hydrologic function of bay and river.	Suggested for feasibility study purposes only. Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to initiate a feasibility study to explore the benefits and impacts of removing the jetty through hydrologic modeling and other methods.  Potential to develop study through a joint science program related to the San Diego River.	●	●		●	Executive Summary
E2L	As Robb Field is improved in the future, create a landscape that relates to estuary and river edge.	Coordinate with appropriate agencies and community/special interest group plans for future improvements.		●			
E3L	Explore potential to realign and terrace south river edge and expand estuary. These areas serve as refuge for wildlife and as seed sources for native re-vegetation in the event of major floods	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to initiate feasibility study to modify the river channel embankment to create a varied edge with native vegetation.	●	●	●		Introduction
E4L	As Sea World may evolve in the future, encourage redevelopment that engages San Diego River Park and estuary and creates trail connection to San Diego River Park Trail.	Collaborate with Sea World to engage in their planning process to create awareness of the goals of the San Diego River Park. Encourage better connections and access, use of native vegetation, education about the river, and integration of Sea World as one of the linked amenities of the San Diego River Park.		●	●		
E5L	Explore potential to realign and terrace north river edge and expand estuary.	Collaborate with appropriate community and special interest groups to initiate feasibility study to modify the river channel embankment to create a varied edge with native vegetation.	●	●	●		Principles
E6L	If results of feasibility study proposed in short term recommendations are positive, implement improvements to estuary between Mission Bay and the San Diego River.	Collaborate with appropriate agencies and community/special interest groups to prepare specific plan and identify funding sources to improve estuarine environment.	●	●	●	●	
E7L	Investigate potential for locating a River and Estuary Interpretive Center that supports the Mission Bay Park Master Plan interpretive program.	Initiate dialogue with appropriate community and special interest groups to explore potential to consider another location for the Nature Center or to develop an additional Interpretive Center associated with the river and estuary.		●		●	Recommendations
E8L	Collaborate with Mission Bay and Land Fill Study to explore the potential to expand estuary.	Collaborate with appropriate agencies and community/special interest groups to initiate feasibility study to create an estuarine link between Mission Bay and the San Diego River. Extensive study and modeling will be required to fully understand the impact of linking the River and the Bay on flows and water quality. Engage the Mission Bay Landfill Study in the process. Could be explored through a joint science coalition.	●	●		●	Design Guidelines
E9L	Explore potential to create a greenway connection with San Diego Bay.	Collaborate with North Bay Redevelopment as it evolves.			●	●	
E10L	Create major San Diego River Park access node at Linda Vista and integrate with potential Green Gateway at I-5 and Friars Road.	Coordinate with Community Plans to identify sites and land owners to explore potential acquisition or to establish easements for access and interpretive trail head locations.		●	●		Implementation

Appendices