



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 30, 2023

TO: Mission Bay Park Committee

FROM: Kelley Stanco, Deputy Director, City Planning Department

SUBJECT: De Anza Natural Amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan

BACKGROUND

The City is proposing an amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan (MBPMP) known as De Anza Natural. The amendment is a long-range vision for the redevelopment and enhancement of De Anza Cove and is part of the larger MBPMP policy framework that will guide development throughout Mission Bay. De Anza Natural builds upon and implements the recommendations of the adopted MBPMP as well as other Citywide guiding documents, including the Parks Master Plan (PMP), Climate Action Plan (CAP), Climate Resilient SD, Biodiverse SD, and Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP), to envision a future for De Anza Cove that provides recreational opportunities, preserves sensitive habitats and species, increases the City's resilience to the impacts of climate change, and honors the stewardship of the Kumeyaay people and their connection to the land from time immemorial.

The proposed amendment includes recommendations to serve local and regional recreation needs while preserving and enhancing the natural resources of the De Anza Cove area. De Anza Natural aims to expand the park's natural habitat and improve water quality through the creation of additional wetlands while implementing nature-based solutions to protect against the risk of climate change, in line with the Climate Resilient SD plan. The proposed amendment would enhance the existing regional parkland by providing a variety of uses, including low-cost visitor accommodations, active and passive recreational opportunities, and improved access to recreational uses. Finally, the proposed amendment provides opportunities to partner and collaborate with the Kumeyaay Nation on the planning and restoration of the area in a manner that recognizes their past and present traditional cultural use of the Mission Bay Park area and ensures continued traditional cultural use into the future.

Project Location

De Anza Cove is located in the northeast corner of Mission Bay Park in the City of San Diego. The project area consists of approximately 314 acres of land and includes approximately 191.2 acres of open water for a total of approximately 505.2 acres. The project area is bounded to the east by Mission Bay Drive, the north by Grand Avenue (on the eastern portion of the project area) and Pacific Beach Drive (on the western portion), the west by Crown Point

Drive, and the south by Mission Bay. The Rose Creek inlet bisects the project area into eastern and western portions.

The project area includes the Kendall-Frost Marsh Reserve/Northern Wildlife Preserve, Campland on the Bay, Pacific Beach Tennis Club, the McEvoy athletic fields, Mission Bay Golf Course and Practice Center, and the De Anza Cove area, including a vacated mobile home park and supporting infrastructure, Mission Bay RV Resort, passive-use park zones, public beach, parking, and water areas. The project area is located within the Coastal Overlay Zone. Additionally, Multi-Habitat Planning Area lands are located along a portion of Rose Creek within the project area.

The Role of a Master Plan in the Park Development Process

A master plan such as the MBPMP provides a long-range, high-level vision for the development or redevelopment of the area it covers, typically over a planned horizon of roughly 30 years. It lays out the general land uses permitted, as well as the policies that will guide future project-specific planning efforts and implementation. A master plan must also consider and implement other, higher-level guidance documents and master plans. With park and recreation facilities, master plan efforts are followed by a [General Development Plan](#) (GDP) where public participation informs the specific uses and improvements that will be constructed in a park. Once the GDP is approved, construction of the park facilities is subject to the availability of funding and other resources. When park areas are available for lease, those leases are managed by the Department of Real Estate and Airport Management (DREAM).

As part of a master plan document, the De Anza Natural amendment to the MBPMP must implement other guiding City documents such as the PMP, the CAP, Climate Resilient SD, and the MSCP by balancing local and regional recreational needs, climate action goals and resilience measures, and habitat and species conservation, all through a lens of equity and inclusivity. De Anza Natural accomplishes this by designating general land uses that further these goals, including Recreation, Regional Parklands, Low-Cost Visitor Accommodations, Open Beach, Uplands, and Wetlands. These are broad land use categories that can include a variety of recreation and visitor accommodation uses, including all existing uses within De Anza Cove. Examples of specific uses consistent with the land use categories identified in De Anza Natural include, but are not limited to:

Recreation	Regional Parklands	Low Cost Visitor Accommodations
✓ Softball/Baseball	✓ Walking, Rolling & Biking	✓ Camping
✓ Tennis/Pickleball	✓ Picnicking	✓ RVs
✓ Basketball	✓ Playgrounds	✓ Pool
✓ Soccer	✓ Coastal Access	✓ Concessions, Market, & Dining
✓ Golf	✓ Boating	

Once the public review and hearing process is complete and the De Anza Natural amendment to the MBPMP is adopted, it would be followed at a future date by the GDP process, per Council Policy 600-33, where members of the public and interested stakeholders would further inform and shape the specific uses and improvements that are most relevant and important to the community at the time the GDP process is ultimately initiated. Additional

technical analysis and environmental review will occur at the project-level once the GDP process defines those projects through public input. No significant changes to De Anza Cove or its existing uses are anticipated until the GDP process is complete, permits are obtained, construction documents are prepared, and funding is secured. Furthermore, given the scale of the envisioned improvements, it is highly likely that development will be phased over many years.

DISCUSSION

Development of the De Anza Natural Plan & Public Engagement Work

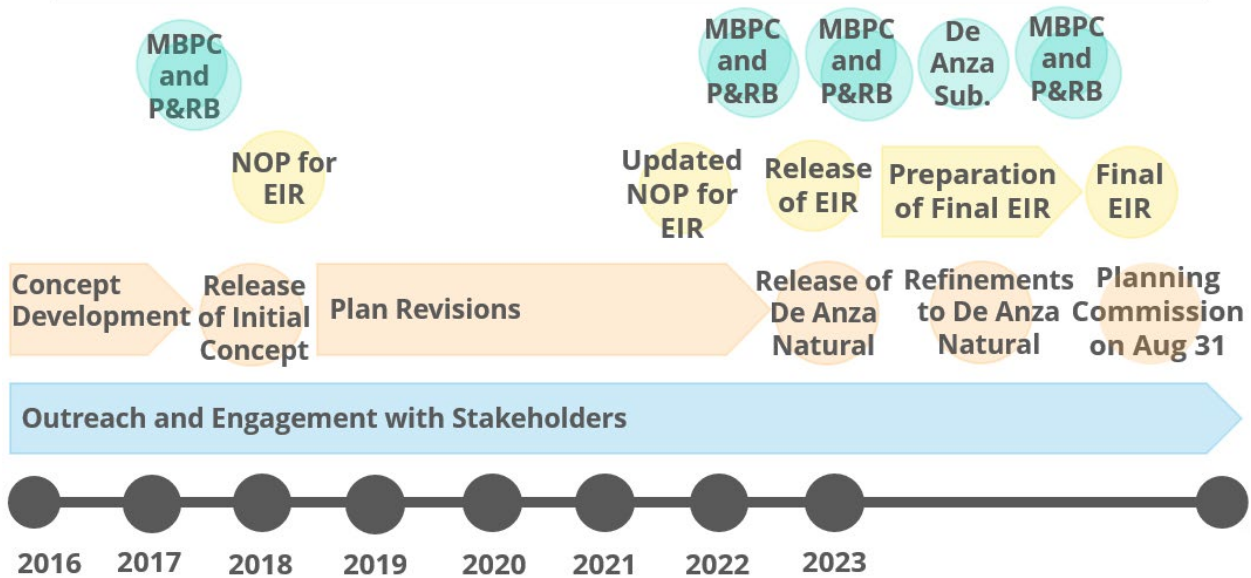
Work on the De Anza Cove amendment to the MBPBP, which has been undertaken as part of a settlement of a San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board enforcement action, dates back to 2016 and has included significant stakeholder and public outreach which has shaped the amendment through several evolutions into the current De Anza Natural proposal.

The initial concept proposal for the De Anza Cove area was released in 2018 and incorporated stakeholder outreach and feedback from the Mission Bay Park Committee. In June 2018, the City initiated the environmental review process with the release of a Notice of Preparation (NOP), which is the first step in the process of preparing a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The purpose of an NOP is to obtain early comments on the proposed project, alternatives, and potential environmental impacts. Based on feedback received, the City modified the project and in 2022 the Planning Department fine-tuned the land uses and increased the preservation of natural resources. The City received a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) grant from the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB) that funds the inclusion of an additional project alternative in the PEIR that would expand habitat restoration opportunities. The Wetlands Optimized Alternative proposes the creation of approximately 25.8 more acres of wetlands than the De Anza Natural Amendment, and it provides for approximately 9.4 more acres of upland habitats. Subsequently, future General Development Plan (GDP) public engagement efforts will yield development plans that include site design for circulation, grading and topography manipulation, recreation infrastructure, and habitat restoration plans. The future GDP will implement, per Council Policy 600-33, the goals and priorities of the Mission Bay Park Master Plan as amended by De Anza Natural.

The NOP was updated and released for public review again in January 2022. Since then, City staff has continued to collect and incorporate community member and stakeholder input during the development of De Anza Natural.

On March 1, 2022, a status report was provided to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Meeting materials, including the minutes that reflect feedback from the committee and the public, are provided as Attachment 1. On March 17, 2022, a status report was provided to the Parks and Recreation Board. Meeting materials, including the minutes that reflect feedback from the board and the public are provided as Attachment 2.

Project Timeline & Public Input



MBPC = Mission Bay Park Committee,
 P&RB = Parks & Recreation Board

On March 6, 2023, the Planning Department, based on stakeholder comments in the fall and winter of 2022, released new plan refinements to the De Anza Natural plan, which is the City’s proposed project. The draft PEIR was released concurrent with the revised De Anza Natural Plan. Staff presented an informational item to the Mission Bay Park Committee on April 4, 2023 and the Parks & Recreation Board on April 20, 2023. The agendas and minutes for the April meetings are provided as Attachments 3 and 4. During the meetings, staff, the Committee, and the Board heard from both wetland/conservation advocates interested in furthering environmental and conservation goals through increased wetland restoration, as well as recreation advocates interested in ensuring the preservation of existing recreational uses that are enjoyed by a variety of local and regional users.

At the Parks & Recreation Board meeting, the Board voted to establish an ad hoc subcommittee comprised of members of the Board and the Mission Bay Park Committee in order to hear from specific stakeholders in greater detail and provide a recommendation on the adoption of De Anza Natural to the Committee and the Board. Four meetings of the De Anza Ad Hoc Subcommittee were held in May and June of this year, which featured a presentation from the Planning Department on additional refinements made in response to the input received at the April meetings, as well as presentations from various stakeholders on their area of interest and concern:

- May 23: Park Planning/Public Spaces section of the Planning Department, ReWild, and San Diego Audubon Society

- June 13: Pacific Beach Tennis Club. Recreation Youth Fields, McEvoy Fields Association, Youth Sports & Recreation, Adult Sports & Recreation/San Diego Softball Association, and UCSD Natural Reserve System
- June 20: San Diego Boat & Ski Club and Campland on the Bay/Mission Bay RV Resort
- June 27: Renaissance Inc. Native American nonprofit, Pacific Beach Town Council, Santa Clara/ PB Community Recreation Group, Mission Bay Lessee Association, San Diego Municipal Golf Committee, and Friends of Rose Canyon

The links to the meeting materials for the De Anza Ad Hoc Subcommittee are provided in Attachment 5. The Subcommittee is scheduled to hold one final meeting on July 6, 2023 where the Planning Department will present final refinements made in response to comments and input from the Subcommittee and the public, and the Subcommittee will provide a recommendation to the Mission Bay Park Committee and the Parks & Recreation Board on the adoption of the De Anza Natural Amendment to the MBPMP.

De Anza Natural: A Balanced Approach

As discussed above, the De Anza Natural plan amendment to the MBPMP does not include detailed design for site-specific uses, but instead it provides policies to enhance recreational activities in the area with new and improved programs, such as an extensive multi-use waterfront trail, a nature center and a small non-motorized boat area on the cove. The draft amendment is posted on the De Anza park planning webpage and is provided as Attachment 6. The De Anza Natural draft plan and the three plan alternatives are posted on the De Anza Natural webpage and are provided as Attachment 7.

The area is envisioned to remain a recreational hotspot, offering a variety of active sports and recreation facilities. Examples could include golf facilities, tennis courts and ball fields. A recent test-fit plan exercise has shown that existing recreation uses could all fit into the Active Recreation area of De Anza Natural with minor reconfiguration. Included in the test-fit are ballfields (increase of one field to 2.5 acres), tennis/pickleball (increase of 2 courts to ~5 acres), and golf fitting into the remaining area with a slightly smaller footprint (to ~43 acres). The test-fit yielded space for the restaurant/clubhouse, parking, and a par 3 18-hole course with a netted driving range.

De Anza Natural includes space for low-cost visitor accommodation like camping and recreational vehicle facilities. These spaces, set amid expanded and restored coastal wetlands, will provide exciting new opportunities for eco-tourism and environmental education. Further, the plan proposes a new boat/clubhouse facility, a non-motorized boat water lease, and an extensive multi-use path system for increased connectivity, recreation, and access.

The plan amendment recognizes the benefits of wetlands, which reduce the impacts of sea level rise and improve water quality. Sea level rise modeling developed by the United States Geological Survey for Mission Bay and De Anza has been considered during the development of De Anza Natural. Additionally, the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) has set a target to restore 700 acres of salt marshland and other associated tidal wetland and riparian habitats citywide by 2035. One of the primary goals of the De Anza Natural plan amendment is to identify wetland restoration areas, which will contribute significantly to meeting CAP

wetland restoration targets, increase Mission Bay's resilience to the impacts of climate change, provide critical habitat for sensitive species, and create passive recreation and educational opportunities.

In order to increase wetland habitat, acreage will be reduced for other uses, primarily Regional Parkland and Low-Cost Visitor Accommodations, as follows:

Land Use Category	Existing Acreage	Acreage Under June 2023 De Anza Natural
Recreation	66 ¹	66.5
Regional Parkland	89	23.4 ²
Low-Cost Visitor Accommodations	62 ³	48.5
Habitat (Wetlands & Uplands)	82 ⁴	261.8
Other (open water, beach, roads)	206.2 ⁵	105
TOTAL	505.2	505.2

Notes:

- Existing acreage of 66 acres includes the current Sd Boat and Ski Club lease.
- Regional parkland acreages for this comparison include the proposed boat facility and potential water lease.
- For the comparison table, the acreage area above for existing low-cost visitor accommodation (camping) does not include the vacated De Anza Mobile Home sites on De Anza boot that are currently in the 2021 City-Campland LLC lease.
- Existing habitat acreage from Table 9A, Bio Resources Tech Report, 2023/Harris & Associates (not incl. open water, eelgrass, or tidal channel). See also PEIR figure 2-3, Existing Land Uses.
- Other areas include open water, beach, roads, and the vacated former De Anza Mobile Home park site, including its boat launch, beaches, and other features.

It is important to reiterate that neither De Anza Natural, nor the alternatives that were studied as part of the draft PEIR, eliminate any of the existing recreational uses in the De Anza Cove area. The exact uses for De Anza Cove will be identified during future General Development Plan (GDP) public processes.

In response to concerns expressed by recreation stakeholders during the April 2023 Mission Bay Park Committee and Parks & Recreation Board meetings, policy language was added to De Anza Natural that states that the plan envisions maintaining or enhancing the existing community-serving public recreation facilities as part of a future GDP process that implements community-identified recreation needs. The City will work with the recreation groups to plan for the future of the facilities and will design and phase development in a manner that minimizes disruption to active recreation access. The policy language also states that buffer zones and other land uses proposed for the site of existing recreation facilities should be implemented after these facilities have been modified, moved, or replaced for continued use, unless imminent climate hazards necessitate more immediate mitigation. Additionally, in response to concerns about the conceptual alignment of the multi-use path, the path has been pushed to the edge of the golf course near the existing right-of-way. The precise alignment of the multi-use path will be developed during the GDP process and will be informed by existing and proposed uses.

The Draft PEIR

The draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the proposed De Anza Natural Plan Amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan was also released on March 6, 2023 for public review. The public review and comment period ended on April 20, 2023, and the March draft is archived [here](#).

As studied in the draft PEIR, the following are the basic objectives of the project:

1. Provide equitable access to De Anza Cove and the coastal landscape for all San Diegans, particularly communities that have historically experienced barriers to access.
2. Foster opportunities for members of local Tribal nations to reconnect to De Anza Cove.
3. Incorporate climate adaptation strategies to increase resilience to climate change and mitigate potential sea level rise impacts.
4. Embrace responsibility and stewardship of the environment by restoring and safeguarding natural habitats within De Anza Cove.
5. Diversify active and passive recreational uses that will serve a range of interests, ages, activity levels, incomes, and cultures both on land and in water.
6. Enhance public access and connectivity within De Anza Cove and increase connections to the surrounding communities, including opportunities for multimodal travel.

The public comments received on the Draft PEIR are generally reflective of the input received throughout the process, and include comments advocating for additional wetland restoration and comments advocating for maintenance and possible expansion of active recreation and low-cost visitor accommodation uses.

Comment letters were also provided by agencies including the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW). The letter provided by the SDRWQCB is focused on the City's compliance with the terms of the SEP and notes the need for a technical analysis related to sea level rise. The sea level rise analysis is currently in process and will be included in the final PEIR. The City continues to work collaboratively with the SDRWQCB to ensure full compliance with all requirements of the SEP. The letters provided by CDFW and USFW request the preparation of technical reports and studies, including hydrology and sea level rise, as well as additional analysis in the biology report and more detailed mitigation measures. The additional analysis and mitigation requested is not appropriate at this stage, given the high-level nature of the De Anza Natural amendment as a long-range planning document. As the GDP process is undertaken and the specific improvements within the various land use areas are defined and shaped through public input, further environmental analysis will occur, and the wildlife agencies will have additional opportunities to provide input on the project. As with the SDRWQCB, the City continues to work collaboratively with the wildlife agencies on current and future planning efforts within De Anza, and the City is committed to compliance with all Federal, State, and local environmental and habitat/species conservation laws.

Staff is currently working to revise the draft PEIR and prepare the final PEIR, which will include responses to public comments on the PEIR which were received during the public review period. The final PEIR will be available prior to the Planning Commission hearing.

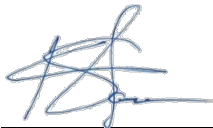
Hearings & Next Steps

Staff is scheduled to present to the Parks and Recreation Board on July 20, 2023 and to the Planning Commission on August 31, 2023. Subsequently, a presentation will be made to the Environment Subcommittee of the City Council. Public input on the De Anza Natural Amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan will continually be collected until the draft amendment and draft PEIR are considered for adoption by the City Council. Members of the public can review the draft plan and provide comments directly through the De Anza Natural website. Following adoption by the City Council, De Anza Natural will be submitted to the California Coastal Commission for final approval and certification. As funding becomes available, the City will gather additional public input and develop detailed design plans for site-specific uses through the General Development Plan process.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed De Anza Natural amendment to the MBPMP implements the recreation, sustainability, climate resilience, and conservation goals of the City's broader guiding documents, while considering and incorporating the wide range of voices and interests that have participated in engagement events and public meetings over the past 7 years. It envisions a future for De Anza Cove that serves the recreational needs of the Mission Bay community and the broader region through a range of recreational and regional parkland amenities and low-cost visitor accommodations and increases sensitive species conservation and wetland restoration in furtherance of our climate action and conservation goals, making Mission Bay and its recreational uses more resilient to the impending impacts of climate change. The Planning Department therefore requests that the Mission Bay Park Committee recommend to the Parks & Recreation Board and the City Council adoption of the De Anza Natural Amendment to the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and the associated Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (SCH #2018061024).

Respectfully submitted,



Kelley Stanco
Deputy Director, Planning



Scott Sandel
Parks Planner, Planning

KS/ss

Attachments:

- 1) Materials from the March 1, 2022 Meeting of the Mission Bay Park Committee (Links only)
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Minutes](#)

- 2) Materials from the March 17, 2022 Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board (Links only)
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Minutes](#)
 - c) [De Anza Natural Presentation](#)
 - d) [De Anza Natural Fact Sheet](#)
 - e) [Meeting Video](#) (Passcode: ^0xzT1R+)
- 3) Materials from the April 4, 2023 Meeting of the Mission Bay Park Committee
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Minutes](#)
- 4) Materials from the April 20, 2023 Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board (Links only)
 - a) [Agenda](#)
 - b) [Staff Report](#)
 - c) [Minutes](#)
 - d) [De Anza Natural Presentation](#)
 - e) [De Anza Natural Fact Sheet](#)
 - f) [Meeting Video](#) (Passcode: o!f5q!a@)
- 5) Agendas, Minutes and Meeting Materials from the De Anza Ad Hoc Committee of the Parks and Recreation Board [here](#).
- 6) Draft De Anza Natural amendment to the MBPMP ([Link only](#))
- 7) De Anza Natural draft plan and the three plan alternatives ([Link only](#))

cc: Randy Wilde, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Mayor Todd Gloria
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