



REPORT

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

DATE ISSUED: February 7, 2017

REPORT NO: 101

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board
Agenda of February 16, 2017

SUBJECT: Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Natural Resources Management Plan and
Amendment to Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Master Plan –
Recommendation for Adoption

SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Park and Recreation Board recommend approval of the Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) and Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Master Plan Amendment?

Director's Recommendation – Recommend approval of the proposed Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Natural Resources Management Plan and Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Master Plan Amendment.

Other Recommendations –

On March 15, 2015, the Tecolote Canyon Citizens' Advisory Committee unanimously (9-0) voted to recommend approval of the NRMP. On January 20, 2016, the Tecolote Canyon Citizens' Advisory Committee unanimously (9-0) voted to recommend approval of the Master Plan Update.

On August 22, 2016, the Linda Vista Planning Group unanimously (12-0) voted to recommend approval of the NRMP and Master Plan Update.

On November 15, 2016, the Clairemont Community Planning Group unanimously (13-0) voted to recommend approval of the NRMP and Master Plan Update.

Fiscal Impact – Implementation costs will be funded by the Open Space Division's Operations and Maintenance budget which includes funding from the Environmental Growth Fund (EGF). In addition, grants will be pursued where possible. Implementation is not anticipated to be a significant impact to the Divisions budget.

Water and Energy Conservation Status – The proposed Natural Resources Management Plan and Master Plan Amendment for Tecolote Canyon Natural Park comply with all water and energy conservation guidelines contained in Council Policy 200-1.

Environmental – The City of San Diego as Lead Agency is preparing the Mitigated

BACKGROUND

In 1997, the San Diego City Council adopted the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) (R-288455). The goal of the MSCP is to maintain regional biodiversity and conserve viable populations of sensitive species and their habitats, and thereby minimize the need for future Endangered Species Act listings, while simultaneously supporting economic growth in the region. One of the actions required by the MSCP is preparation of Area Specific Management Directives (ASMDs), which are management guidelines tailored to individual parks and/or rare species populations within the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA).

The Tecolote Canyon Natural Park (Park) Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) was developed to provide ASMDs for the Park. The approximately 950-acre Park is a narrow, north-south trending, coastal canyon bounded by Interstate 8 on the south, Interstate 805 on the east, State Route 52 on the north, and Interstate 5 on the west. It is located within the communities of Clairemont and Linda Vista, and was initially recognized as a park due to the efforts of community members in the 1970s.

The NRMP is comprised of multiple sections:

- Existing Conditions describes baseline environmental data for the Park, including soils and geology, hydrology, and biological and cultural resources. The location, extent and quality of environmental variables is discussed in-text and depicted on maps.
- Threats to Natural Resources describes stressors to the long-term persistence of native species and habitats within Tecolote Canyon.
- Strategies for Priority Management and Priority Management Objectives develop and prioritize management actions to address threats and comply with the requirements of the MSCP.
- Implementation discusses known future projects and appropriate funding sources.

In addition, in May 1983, City Council adopted the Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Master Plan (R-258518) which contains development regulations, use guidelines and a trail plan for the Park. As part of the planning effort for the NRMP, it was determined that an updated trail plan based on a comprehensive trail analysis that surveyed and ranked existing trails by criteria such as habitat sensitivity (e.g. vegetation type, proximity to sensitive species, mitigation sites), erosion and other maintenance factors, redundancy, connectivity, and safety metrics such as steepness and sightlines. The resulting trail system reflects current conditions in the canyon, provides safe trails for the community, and supports protection of natural resources through closure of 8.5 miles of existing trails, maintenance of 13 miles of existing trails (including utility access), and development of 3 miles of new or rerouted trails. The Master Plan Amendment houses the proposed trail plan; main trails and trail segments of the proposed trail plan are listed in Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park is home to rare and endangered species such as wart-stem ceanothus, San Diego barrel cactus, and California gnatcatcher. The Park provides an important coastal refugia for species, and therefore represents a key conservation area within the regional open space network. In addition, the Park is an important destination for natural out-of-doors learning and recreational experiences for nearby residents and regional users. The NRMP and Master Plan Amendment will balance the needs of natural resources and passive human recreation through development and implementation of ASMDs as well as providing an improved recreational trail system that meets user expectations while

Natural Resources Management Plan and Master Plan Amendment for Tecolote Canyon
Natural Park

February 7, 2017

complying with MSCP policies. In addition, an adopted NRMP will improve the competitiveness of grant applications for species management and habitat enhancement.

The NRMP and Master Plan Amendment proposed trail plan was developed with input from community stakeholders including the San Diego Mountain Biking Association (SDMBA), Tecolote Canyon Citizens' Advisory Committee, Clairemont Community Planning Group, and Linda Vista Planning Group. The trail system was revised based on comments from SDMBA and the Tecolote Canyon Citizens' Advisory Committee, and both groups now support the current trail proposal. The Tecolote Canyon Citizens' Advisory Committee reviewed the draft NRMP and provided input at meetings on November 7, 2013; January 15, 2014; March 19, 2014; July 16, 2014; November 19, 2014; and January 15, 2015 prior to their unanimous vote in support of adopting the NRMP on March 15, 2015. They also reviewed the Master Plan Update on July 15, 2015, prior to their unanimous vote in support of adopting the Master Plan Update on January 20, 2016. The Linda Vista Planning Group reviewed and commented on the NRMP and Master Plan Update at their July 25, 2016 meeting prior to their unanimous vote in support of adopting both plans on August 22, 2016. The Clairemont Community Planning Group reviewed and commented on the NRMP and Master Plan Update at their September 20, 2016 meeting prior to their unanimous vote in support of adopting both plans on November 15, 2016.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration and Site Development Permit are being prepared for the Master Plan Update, including trail system development. Following a vote by the Park and Recreation Board, the project will be presented to City Council following a presentation at the Natural Resources and Culture Subcommittee.


ALTERNATIVES

N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Casey Smith
Deputy Director, Open Space Division



Prepared by: Kim Roeland

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Attachment: 1) Trails and Trail Segments
2) Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Natural Resources Management Plan
3) Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Master Plan Amendment

cc: Council District (6,7)

Trails and Trail Segments, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park				
Name	Existing Trail Segments (miles)	New or Rerouted Trail Segments (miles)	Total (miles)	Description
<i>Area A – South Tecolote Canyon</i>				
Eloise Battle Trail	0.7	-	0.7	Eloise Battle Trail honors community member Eloise Battle, and provides an alternative for park visitors to explore the canyon south of the main access road near the Tecolote Canyon Nature Center.
September Street Loop	0.7	0.2	0.9	September Street Loop Trail connects entrances on September Street and Gardena Street, and re-routed segments will improve safety and sustainability of the trail.
<i>Area B – East Tecolote Canyon</i>				
Kearney Mesa Recreation Center	-	0.4	0.4	This new trail will connect the Kearny Mesa Recreation Center to Tecolote Canyon Natural Park using a crossing at Genesee Avenue.
Linda Vista Loop	0.2	0.2	0.4	A new segment will create a loop offering interpretive and educational opportunities from Linda Vista Recreation Center. Connection to the Park from this loop is proposed on improved sidewalk along Genesee Ave.
Acworth Trail	0.4	0.06	0.4	Five proposed re-routes on the Acworth Trail will improve safety and provide benefits to sensitive wetlands resources.
<i>Area C – Central Tecolote Canyon at Golf Course</i>				
Golf Bypass Trails	-	0.2	0.2	New bypass trails alongside Tecolote Canyon Golf Course will provide an alternative to steep utility access roads.
Osler Loop Trail	0.6	0.1	0.7	A new entrance at Osler Street coupled with improvements to an existing trail will provide a new loop option for park users.

Trails and Trail Segments, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park				
Name	Existing Trail Segments (miles)	New or Rerouted Trail Segments (miles)	Total (miles)	Description
Balboa Undercrossing Approaches	-	0.2	0.2	New crossing at Balboa Avenue including new trail segments on both the north and south approaches will improve connectivity in the Park.
<i>Area D - Central Tecolote Canyon</i>				
Mt. Brundage Overlook	0.1	0.3	0.4	New trail segments connecting to existing trail segments will connect at a new Mt. Brundage Canyon Overlook affording sweeping views of the rugged Mt. Brundage Canyon.
Mt. Brundage Loop	0.1	0.04	0.1	Mt. Brundage Loop provides interpretive and educational opportunities from Mt. Brundage Ave.
Central Tecolote Reroute near Mt Acadia	-	0.05	0.05	Reroute of an existing trail near Mt. Acadia to improve safety and sustainability of the trail.
<i>Area E - North Tecolote Canyon</i>				
North Clairemont Trails	-	1	1	Two new North Clairemont Trails provides new access to the Park from two locations in the North Clairemont area.
Cindy Street Trail	-	0/2	0.2	New Cindy Street Trail (0.2 miles) provides new access to the Park along an easement from Cindy Street in the North Clairemont area.
Mt. Etna Connection	0.1	0.1	0.2	Re-routes to improve safety and sustainability of existing trail connecting to Mt. Etna Canyon along Balboa Ave.
North Clairemont Recreation Center	0.3	0.05	0.3	Re-route to provide a safe grade and sustainable trail from Clairemont Recreation Center.
<i>Entire Park</i>				
Other Existing Trails (including utility access)	9.8	-	9.8	Remainder of the trails in the park not mentioned above; mostly multi-purpose and co-located with utility access.

February 7, 2017

<u>Trails and Trail Segments, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park</u>				
Name	Existing Trail Segments (miles)	New or Rerouted Trail Segments (miles)	Total (miles)	Description
TOTALS	13 miles	3 miles	16 miles	