CITY OF COSTA MESA

PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION

Agenda

Thursday, October 30, 2025 | **6:00 PM** | **City Council Chambers**
77 Fair Drive

SPECIAL MEETING

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PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

OCTOBER 30, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.

KELLY BROWN
Chair

SHAYANNE WRIGHT
Vice Chair

ELIZABETH DORN PARKER
Commissioner

CRISTIAN GARCIA ARCOS
Commissioner

JAKE HUSEN
Commissioner

JASON KOMALA
Commissioner

BRANDICE LEGER
Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

SPECIAL BUSINESS ITEM:

1. **DRAFT FAIRVIEW PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE: DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS** 25-562

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission: 1. Review and discuss attachment 1 - *Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update* prepared by consultant Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) and; 2. Develop and adopt Parks and Community Services Commission recommendations, based on the Fairview Park Steering Committee's recommendations, for forwarding to the City Council. (Attachment 2).

Attachments: Agenda Report
1. Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update
2. Fairview Park Steering Committee Recommendations

ADJOURNMENT

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

CITY OF COSTA MESA

Agenda Report

File #: 25-562 **Meeting Date:** 10/30/2025

TITLE:

DRAFT FAIRVIEW PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE: DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS

DEPARTMENT: PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION:

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77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

File #: 25-562 **Meeting Date:** 10/30/2025

TITLE:	**DRAFT FAIRVIEW PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE: DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS**
DEPARTMENT:	**PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**
PRESENTED BY:	**BRIAN GRUNER, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**
CONTACT INFORMATION:	**KELLY DALTON, FAIRVIEW PARK ADMINISTRATOR, (714) 754-5135**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Review and discuss attachment 1 – *Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update* prepared by consultant Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) and;
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BACKGROUND:

Fairview Park is the City's largest park, spanning 208 acres of open space. The park forms an integral component of the 1,000 acre lower Santa Ana River ecological corridor. Within Fairview Park, there are Nationally Registered Cultural Resource Historic Sites and five different habitat ecosystems which are home to a wide array of sensitive, rare and endangered plant and animal species. The City also manages various partnerships with non-profit organizations that conduct programming and activities in Fairview Park.

Several key factors establish Fairview Park as a cultural, ecological and recreational resource of regional significance:

- Cultural and historical significance: The park contains nationally registered cultural resource historic sites, and is a sacred site to the tribal community.
- Habitat diversity: Fairview Park encompasses several distinct habitat types, including wetlands, riparian areas, coastal sage scrub, coastal bluff scrub, and flower fields. These habitats support a wide array of plant and animal species, many of which are designated as endangered, rare, or special-status wildlife.

- Vernal pools: The park is home to rare vernal pools, which are ephemeral wetlands that provide critical habitat for a variety of unique and specialized organisms, including the San Diego fairy shrimp and Riverside fairy shrimp, both listed as endangered by the federal government.
- Wildlife corridor: Fairview Park serves as a crucial wildlife corridor, connecting the Santa Ana River system of trails and parks to other open spaces in the region, such as Talbert Regional Park.
- Wildlife refuge and human ecology: Fairview Park provides a valuable refuge for wildlife within the urban landscape of coastal Orange County, offering a unique space for people to connect with nature.
- Recreational trails, active transportation connectivity, and unique recreational activities: Fairview Park offers approximately seven (7) miles of trails, providing passive recreational opportunities such as walking, running, bicycling, wildlife observation, environmental interpretation and connectivity to the Santa Ana River bikeway system. The park also hosts unique activities including the narrow gauge railroad and model glider flying for hobbyists.

Original and Revised Master Plan Timeline

- 1996 to 1998: The City of Costa Mesa prepared and adopted the Fairview Park Master Plan ("Master Plan") to provide a framework for existing and future park improvements, public uses, interpretive elements, and restoration opportunities.
- 2000 and 2002: City Council subsequently adopted revisions to the Master Plan to address specific changes in park features, and in 2008 to account for an updated biological survey of the park.
- 2016: Costa Mesa voters adopted the citizen-initiated Ballot Measure AA, which became codified in the Costa Mesa Municipal Code. Measure AA requires that further development and significant permanent constructed improvements in Fairview Park must be approved by the Costa Mesa electorate prior to being constructed, with certain exceptions for purposes of restoration, public safety, preservation, and maintenance.
- 2017: the City Council established the Fairview Park Steering Committee, which is tasked with providing advice and recommendations to the City Council on the implementation of the Fairview Park Master Plan and on Measure AA.
- 2019 to 2020: City Council allocated funding for the Fairview Park Master Plan from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget.
- 2023: In January the City Council awarded the Professional Services Agreement to MIG for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update.

ANALYSIS:

Project Funding and Purpose

The primary objectives the Fairview Park Master Plan are:

- Incorporate mitigation commitments and new conservation obligations associated with restored areas and conservation easements. (e.g. wetlands and riparian habitat restoration projects,

Headlands coastal sage scrub mitigation, vernal pools restoration)

- Reflect Measure AA and its stated intent in preserving Fairview Park as a passive use park and protecting Fairview Park's unique natural heritage for future generations.
- Account for completed improvements, trails, and recreational access features (e.g. North Bluff stairs, Placentia Ave. bridge, Vernal Pool 1 boardwalk).
- Define resource protection measures based on regulatory requirements.
- Account for documented species and resources present within the site, and produce current biological and cultural resource assessments for the site which align the City's land management activities with current regulatory requirements.
- Carry out tribal consultation in accordance with new State requirements (AB 52/SB 18), which requires lead agencies to consult with California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with a geographic area of a proposed project.
- Utilize contemporary technology and asset mapping tools to support informed, resource-efficient operations and park management.
- Conduct community outreach and engage the local community in planning the future enhancement and improvement of the park.

Project Activities and Highlights

Since March 2023, the consultant team has gone through an intensive process of analyzing a large amount of information about Fairview Park, while evaluating conditions of the site and engaging with the site's diverse stakeholders through the community outreach process.

The key activities completed by the consultant team are:

- Review of historical biological reports, surveys, and other technical reports from the site.
- Conducted botanical investigations to develop a comprehensive list of plant species in the park.
- Review of relevant codes, regulations, and legal information pertaining to the site's biological resources, environmental resources and cultural resources.
- Conducted public outreach sessions including a combination of community workshops, informational sessions, and presentations to the Parks and Community Services Commission, Fairview Park Steering Committee, and the City Council.
- Consultation with representatives of the Tribal Advisory Group both in-person at the site and in virtual format.
- Conducted a series of site reviews at various times, seasons, and periods of the day and week to examine use patterns by park visitors throughout the 208-acre site.
- Evaluated recreational features, public use patterns, furnishings, amenities, and other features.
- Confirmed the presence of over twenty rare and endangered species including Western burrowing owl, Coastal California gnatcatcher, Least Bell's vireo, Crotch's bumble bee, San Diego Button Celery, Southern tarplant, and several others.
- Prepared and completed three technical reports addressing biological resources, vegetation community mapping and restoration opportunities, and cultural/historical resources assessment:

- Biological Resources technical report, prepared by Hamilton Biological, 2025.
- Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities Report, prepared by Land IQ, 2024.
- Cultural Resources technical report, prepared by Cogstone, 2024.

Findings and Recommendations

The project team synthesized the information gathered during these activities to develop a framework for identifying key findings and recommendations for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update. The consultant team relied on the following criteria in the development of the recommendations for the Master Plan Update:

- Community need and public benefit
- Scientific integrity
- Feasibility
- Sustainability (economic and environmental)
- Legal and regulatory implications
- Consistency with the stated objectives of the Master Plan Update

In July and October 2024, the consultant team presented the Master Plan Update findings and recommendations to the Fairview Park Steering Committee. During the meetings, the Committee discussed, revised and approved the recommendations.

Council Study Session

On January 28, 2025, staff presented to the City Council a Master Plan overview that included a community outreach summary, current ecological conditions, summary of historical documentation and completed restoration, and highlights of technical investigations and field surveys.

Release of Draft Fairview Park Master Plan and Remaining Steps

On October 3rd 2025, the City released the Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update for public review. The City is currently accepting comments and feedback on the Draft Master Plan during the 30-day public review period.

Parks and Community Services Commission Recommendations

A vital function of the Parks and Community Services Commission is to advise and make recommendations to City Council on matters pertinent to public parks, recreation programs, facilities, improvements, and related activities. In addition, the Commission's role is to advise the City Council on Parks and Community Services planning efforts as well as park projects. Therefore, staff is seeking the Commission's feedback on the Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update.

FISCAL REVIEW

There is no fiscal review at this time, as the Fairview Park Master Plan Update does not commit City funds towards specific projects at this time.

LEGAL REVIEW

There is no legal review required for this item as the Commission's recommendations will be advisory in nature.

CONCLUSION:

The Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update represents several years of research to develop a blueprint for future enhancement and improvements of Fairview Park. The Master Plan utilized contemporary technology, current data, and asset management tools to support informed and sustainable management practices of the park. In addition, the outreach process offered an educational opportunity for the community to provide input while learning about the unique features history, and the site's ecological role within the region and beyond.

Once adopted, the City will be in a strong position to implement the various elements of the Master Plan and enhance the visitor experiences at Fairview Park. The Master Plan will also serve as an important tool to acquire non-city funds to improve and enhance the park, including projects that have been conceptually identified in the original 1998 Master Plan but have not been implemented due to funding and outdated environmental documentation.

In conclusion, staff recommends the Parks and Community Services Commission:

1. Review and discuss attachment 1 – *Draft Fairview Park Master Plan Update* prepared by consultant Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) and;
2. Develop and adopt Parks and Community Services Commission recommendations, based on the Fairview Park Steering Committee's recommendations, for forwarding to the City Council. (Attachment 2).

Fairview Park

Master Plan Update DRAFT 2025-09-29

DRAFT

"The site could be planned as the City's premier park, to include a wide diversity of recreational opportunities encompassing natural passive park land. The Master Plan for this site must address the distinctive character of the location and its adjacencies providing a park with unique citywide significance. The Santa Ana River, Talbert Nature Preserve, and the bordering school properties all should influence the park design and layout. In addition, the park contains important cultural and natural features which should be planned for future protection."

City of Costa Mesa Parks, Recreation, and Open space Master Plan,
January 1996

Facing page photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Contents

*Appendices can be found at: www.costamesaca.gov/fvpmp

Contents

01 Introduction

Executive Summary

The Fairview Park Master Plan Update has attracted enthusiasm for the task of refining the master plan document to reflect current conditions and concepts for restoring and preserving the park as an environmental resource for study, interpretation, and education as well as passive recreation and a range of compatible public uses. These include walking and jogging trails, picnicking, wildlife viewing and nature exploration, unique hobbyist activities and other low-impact activities that connect community residents to the natural environment. Balancing resource protection and public use, which reflects the vested interests of the community and the City, is the essential purpose of this plan update. The Master Plan plays an important part in telling the greater story of this 208-acre parkland and conservation area. Fairview Park is a beloved cultural and natural resource asset for the community of Costa Mesa and the region and residents are deeply invested in preserving the region's natural and cultural resources and ensuring future generations have the same opportunity to enjoy this beloved and unique place.

Additionally, the Master Plan Update builds upon the success of the original plan and updates, but importantly maintains the momentum generated by recent initiatives to establish a more robust set of strategies to facilitate the continuing improvement of Fairview Park. By incorporating the information presented in this report, the Fairview Park Master Plan Update can effectively address the critical need for a Long-Term Management Plan that safeguards cultural resources and conserves biological resources, including the essential vernal pool habitat. This report serves as a valuable tool for informed decision-making and planning to ensure the future preservation and enhancement of Fairview Park's unique ecological features and cultural significance.

Facing page photo by City of Costa Mesa.

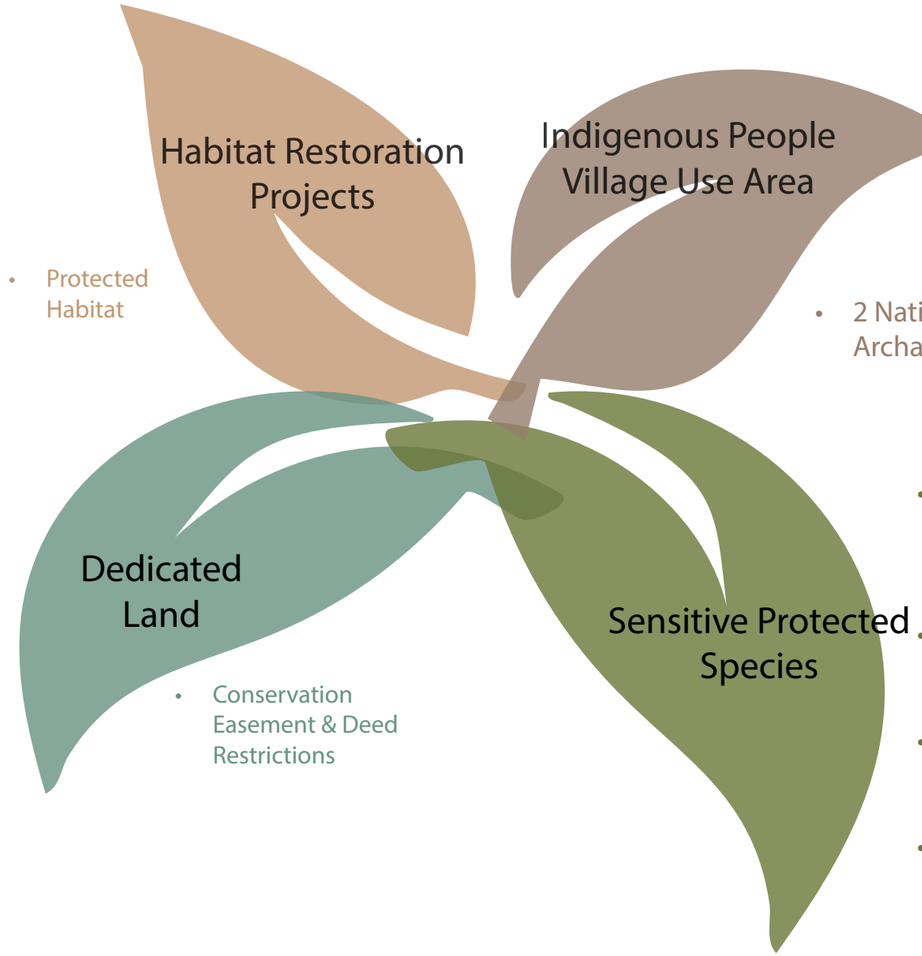
Photo by Robert A. Hamilton

Critical Themes and Initiatives

- **Findings from the technical investigations serve as a valuable tool for informed decision-making** and planning to ensure the future preservation and enhancement of Fairview Park's unique ecological features and cultural significance.

- **Fairview Park supports a remarkable array of special-status plant and wildlife species**, several of which are listed as threatened or endangered by state and/or federal governments. The park's combination of riparian habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, and vernal pools is unique in Orange County, and rare anywhere in Southern California. Fairview Park is a regionally significant biodiversity hotspot, supporting 197 plant species—including 10 rare species—18 vegetation alliances, and critical habitat for protected wildlife such as Least Bell's Vireo, Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Burrowing Owl, and Crotch's Bumblebee. Its federally protected vernal pools sustain San Diego and Riverside fairy shrimp and eight rare vernal pool plants, while over 220 bird species and 20 butterfly species underscore its importance as a vital wildlife corridor in Southern California.

- **Fairview Park provides an exceptional level of public access,** featuring approximately 6.5 miles of trails the park has one of the highest trail densities in the region. This allows residents and visitors to enjoy passive recreational activities while experiencing diverse habitats and biological resources, a level of public access rarely permitted in other regional natural open spaces with comparable ecological and cultural significance.



DRAFT

BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

197 Plant Species

10 Rare Plant Species

20 Butterfly Species

220 Species of Birds

18 Vegetation Community Alliances

Wildlife Corridor

Habitat for Protected Species, including **Least Bell's Vireo, Coastal California Gnatcatcher, & Crotch's Bumblebee**

VERNAL POOL

8 Special Status Vernal Pool Plants

Federally Protected Vernal Pool Habitat for **San Diego and Riverside Fairy Shrimp**

Least Bell's Vireo

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

Crotch's Bumblebee

- **Threats to sensitive biological and cultural resources in Fairview Park come from human actions that destroy, degrade, and fragment the park's natural communities and erode protective soil cover.** These threats should be mitigated with a combination of education, management and physical protection measures and actions.

- **Regulatory Protections and Resource Management:** Fairview Park's biological, cultural, and paleontological resources are protected under a comprehensive regulatory framework at federal, state, and local levels, including the National Historic Preservation Act, National and California Registers of Historic Places, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California's Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and Tribal Cultural Resource provisions. These laws require that projects consider, avoid, or mitigate impacts to significant ecological, historical, and cultural resources. Additionally, local regulations such as Measure AA ensure that major changes to the park's facilities and infrastructure receive community oversight, reinforcing the protection of sensitive natural and cultural areas.

- **Prevent further damage to cultural resources through site management.** Erosion, unauthorized trails, vegetation clearing, pedestrian and bicycle activity are degrading sensitive areas. Stabilization should be achieved through revegetation with no-till methods, signage, barriers, and raised walkways to protect sediments and prevent trail proliferation.

- **Honor Tribal stewardship and ensure respectful handling of cultural materials.** Any Native American cultural materials encountered will remain on-site for reburial in locations kept confidential, in accordance with law and Tribal consultation. Ongoing collaboration with Tribal representatives will guide all management actions to ensure cultural integrity.

Key Findings from Community Engagement:

- **Strong Support for Conservation and Education:** Community members, and representatives from local Native American Tribes, emphasized the importance of protecting Fairview Park's sensitive biological and cultural resources while balancing public access and enhancing opportunities for education. There was broad consensus on interpretive

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

signage, a central educational area, and guided or self-guided learning experiences focused on Tribal cultural history, ecology, archaeology, and biological resources.

- **Trail Management and Public Access:** Participants supported consolidating and maintaining well-defined trails including elevated walkways in vernal pool areas, while limiting off-trail use, motorized vehicles, and e-bikes. Fencing, natural barriers, and clear signage were encouraged to protect sensitive habitats while maintaining passive public access.

- **Resource Protection Measures:** The community supports science-based habitat restoration and enhancement strategies presented in the Master Plan Update, including natural weed abatement and minimal herbicide use, along with maintaining views and access for educational purposes. There was strong support for protecting vernal pools, sensitive flora and fauna, and cultural sites throughout the park.

- **Enhanced Park Operations and Amenities:** Feedback highlighted the need for increased ranger presence, ADA-accessible furnishings, additional dog waste receptacles, and improved trail and overlook access. The community endorsed the addition of a consolidated growing space on the east side of the park.

- **Conflicting Opinions on Recreational Activities:** While some stakeholders desired continued use of BMX trails, dirt bike mounds, and glider/model aircraft activities, others expressed concern over their impacts on biological and cultural resources. These conflicting viewpoints indicate the need for careful balancing of recreational activities with conservation priorities in the Master Plan Update and application of regulatory requirements.

Recommendations

- **Recognize and protect Fairview Park as a unified Tribal cultural landscape.** As the entire site has extremely high sensitivity for buried Native American origin cultural resources (not just recorded locations), additional signage and physical barriers to prevent the use of existing user-defined trails and new trails is recommended. All ground-disturbing activities must involve qualified cultural resource specialists and Tribal monitors, with an Archaeological Treatment Plan prepared in consultation with Tribes.

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- **Prevent Resource Degradation.** Reduce erosion, unauthorized trails, and impacts from pedestrian, bicycle, and off-trail activity through targeted revegetation, no-till stabilization methods, signage, fencing, barriers, and raised walkways. Protect archaeological sites from unauthorized collection or disturbance while maintaining public access where appropriate.

- **Restore and Enhance Habitat.** Implement 80 acres of habitat restoration and 14.5 acres of habitat enhancement to support native plants and wildlife, remove artificial fill where feasible, and improve ecological health and biodiversity over the long term.

- **Define and Manage Trails:** Establish a clearly defined trail system that restores eroded or user-created paths, uses natural materials for trail delineation, and incorporates physical measures to prevent the creation of new informal trails, particularly in sensitive biological and cultural areas.

- **Enhance Public Amenities and Accessibility:** Concentrate park enhancements—including nature play, outdoor educational spaces, benches, picnic areas, and accessible trails—within existing developed areas such as the central lawn and east side of the park, minimizing impacts on sensitive habitats.

- **Manage Recreational Impacts:** Coordinate with organized user groups (i.e. model gliders and trains) to allow the continuation of designated uses while mitigating potential environmental impacts. In accordance with Resource Agency recommendations, relocate the model glider flying field with the goal of reducing ongoing impacts to sensitive biological resources.

Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives were defined in the consultant's scope of work, and were adopted during the City Council meeting of January 17, 2023 when the contract was approved by the City Council.

01 Protect, preserve, and enhance the unique natural and cultural resources of Fairview Park.

02 To restore and enhance the park as an environmental resource, and provide interpretive opportunities to educate users of the park's unique ecology, cultural history, and resources.

03 To manage the park as a passive recreational opportunity.

04 To engage stakeholders, users, and the community at large in developing a blueprint to manage the park, which accounts for passive use recreation, environmental restoration and preservation, and funding considerations for years to come.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

The Master Plan Process

The Master Plan Update process recognizes the interdependence of meaningful stakeholder engagement, biological investigations, environmental documentation, and public use of the park. MIG staff has provided park planning, engagement, biological and environmental analysis and documentation. Land IQ has provided biological resource and restoration ecology services in collaboration with Hamilton Biological, who conducted several field investigations and provided an avian inventory and vegetation survey. Cogstone Resource Management Group led the Tribal Advisory Group, archeology, paleontology, and Tribal cultural resource services.

The project included the following tasks:

- Review of existing documentation
- Community outreach
- Resource assessment and analysis of existing conditions
- Update findings and recommendations
- Environmental compliance documentation

The project kicked off with the compilation and review of relevant project documents including the following: planning documents; existing biological surveys and observations; environmental documentation; relevant codes, regulations, and legal documents; and existing historical and cultural documents and reports. The MIG Team prepared a memo report summarizing the findings.

Community Outreach

Additionally, a Community Outreach Plan was developed, reviewed, and approved by City staff. General direction to the consultant team has been given by the general public in open meetings, and at city and community events such as Fairview Park Habitat Restoration Days and Earth Day 2024.

Below is a summary of community and stakeholder meetings conducted:

Fairview Park Steering Committee Meeting 1 (June 14, 2023) – The MIG Team presented an overview of the project scope, schedule, background documents, existing conditions, potential approaches and strategies for restoration and habitat enhancement. There was a facilitated discussion with the purpose of gaining an understanding of the committee members' vision for Fairview Park regarding elements for consideration in the Master Plan Update including lessons learned from previous restoration efforts.

Community Workshop 1 (August 31, 2023) – The MIG Team presented an overview of the project purpose, process, schedule, and background. Initial observations about existing site conditions and opportunities and constraints were presented. Small group discussions were conducted and were the primary method to capture community feedback to inform the Master Plan Update.

Fairview Park Steering Committee Meeting 2 (October 11, 2023) – The MIG Team presented findings from field investigations of biological resources, habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities. Public comment on items presented was provided.

Tribal Advisory Group (TAG) Site Visit (October 18, 2023) - The City and members of the MIG Team conducted a site visit so that representatives of local Native American Tribes can better understand project elements and potential impacts on sensitive cultural areas.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Tribal Advisory Group (TAG) Meetings – The MIG Team presented an overview of the Master Plan Update to obtain feedback from experts that have a local understanding of the potential impacts on park use and proposed restoration activities, or park improvements on cultural, archaeological and paleontological resources at the park.

Parks and Community Services Commission Meeting (June 27, 2024) - MIG presented progress on the Master Plan Update, an overview of public feedback, and summary of resource assessment findings to inform Commissioners of the progress of the work and present, discuss, and gather feedback about the emerging recommendations for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update.

Fairview Park Steering Committee Meeting 3 (July 10, 2024) – The MIG Team presented 20 recommendations for discussion to determine adoption of proposed recommendations.

Community Workshop 2 (September 4, 2024) – The MIG Team presented an overview of completed studies, resident feedback, selection criteria guiding recommendations and draft recommendations of the Master Plan Update. Interactive open house stations followed the presentation and covered the following: Trails and Public Access, Public Education and Interpretation, Resource Conservation and Preservation, Operations and Maintenance, Site Activities and Uses.

City Council Study Session (January 28, 2025) – The MIG Team presented progress on the Master Plan Update to inform City Council of the progress of the work and present, discuss, and gather feedback about the draft recommendations for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update and review next steps for environmental documents.

To complete resource assessments and analysis of existing conditions, site investigations began in the spring of 2023. A team meeting occurred on March 29, 2023 and biological field investigations began late winter and early spring of 2023 to provide the basis for the biological field surveys. Investigations of site cultural and paleontological resources and analysis of park resources, uses and activities were conducted in the summer of 2023 followed by a final field visit on March 25, 2025 and the final Biological Resources Technical Report dated May 8, 2025. This technical report can be found in Appendix B.

Botanical field investigations were completed by botanist James Bailey on April 28, May 21, and June 8, 2023, to develop a comprehensive list of plants in the park and to search all habitat communities for special-status species potentially present. Each botanical survey lasted seven to eight hours, and covered the western side of the park, focusing on the vernal pools, grasslands, and scrub-covered bluff. The northern riparian lowlands were visited on April 28 and the area east of Placentia Avenue was visited on June 8. Due to the extended rainy season, many plants flowered about a month later than usual during the first half of 2023. The earliest vernal pool indicator species detected was slender woolly-marbles (Psilocarphus brevissimus), and the latest was mud fiddleleaf (Nama stenocarpa). During the more typical year of 2017, James Bailey observed that these two species had reached maturity and produced inflorescences by early March and mid-April respectively. In 2023, however, these milestones were pushed back to mid-April for Psilocarphus and mid-June for Nama. Specifically, late-season showers on May 3, 4, and 5 refilled the vernal pools with nearly 1 inch of water. While early season species had already developed by this time, later season species were stalled by repeated submergence, until the ponds dried again in mid to late May.

Focused surveys in June and July, 2024, for Crotch's Bumble Bee were conducted by Endemic Environmental Services across 16.5 acres of the park planned for habitat restoration. These surveys produced photographic records of 13 Crotch's Bumble Bees utilizing a variety of native and non-native shrubs and forbs. (Endemic Environmental Services. 2024. Crotch's Bumble Bee photo-only survey report for the Fairview Park Mesa Restoration Project located in the City of Costa Mesa, California. Technical report submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Biologist Robert Hamilton conducted wildlife investigations on nine dates between February 10 and June 8, as summarized in Table A, below.

Table A: Wildlife Survey Summary

Date	Times	Temps (ºF)	Sky Conditions	Wind (mph)
2/10/23	1615–1700	66	80% overcast	2–3
3/28/23	1330–1730	58–59	50% overcast	3–5
3/31/23	1520–1700	62	90% overcast	4–8
4/7/23	1530–1700	64	20% overcast	4–6
4/14/23	1555–1645	63–61	40–80% overcast	2–5
4/28/23	0805–1205	57–65	100% overcast	1–4
5/19/23	1530–1655	64	100% overcast	3–5
5/28/23	0700–10:20	59–63	100% overcast	1–3
6/8/23	0905–1115	65	60% overcast to hazy	1–6

The purpose of the wildlife visits in 2023 was to collect current information on the distribution of plant and wildlife species across Fairview Park. Nearly all of the survey effort was expended west of Placentia Avenue, with an emphasis on attempting to detect (a) special-status species potentially present, and (b) species detectable only when the vernal pools have water (as they did during and after the exceptionally wet rainy season of 2022/2023).

MIG staff conducted a reconnaissance-level field visit in 2023 to prepare a current GIS-based map of vernal pools, wetlands, and other features that fall within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and areas within Fairview Park, but outside of existing wetland mitigation sites.

The project archaeologist requested a search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) from the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC), which included the entirety of Fairview Park. Results of the record search indicate that 17 previous studies have been completed within the Park; seven of these postdate the 2002 Fairview Park Master Plan. Additionally, the project archaeologist requested a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) The NAHC responded on December 4, 2023 with a positive search result indicating that a tribal cultural resource is located within the same township, range, and section as the Project Area. The NAHC recommended that the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, the Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation – Belardes be contacted for more information and provided a list of nine groups and individuals that may have information about the Project Area. Cogstone sent letters inviting all groups and individuals on the NAHC to engage in Native American tribal consultations under Assembly Bill (AB) 52 and Senate Bill (SB) 18 via United States Postal Service certified mail on October 7, 2024. Cogstone followed up via electronic mail (original consultation letter was attached) message on October 25, 2024 and by telephone call on November 8, 2024. (Appendix D). Cogstone also sent Native American Scoping letters to two individuals representing groups that are not on the NAHC list but may have information about the Project Area, on the same schedule. Cogstone is aware of five responses total.

On October 25, 2024, Juaneño Band of Mission Indians, Belardes Cultural Resources Director Joyce Perry responded via electronic mail indicating that Tribes want to engage in formal consultation on this project, noting, "this project is located in an extremely sensitive area to our tribe." Fairview Park is located on the sacred village site and known burial area of Genga. This place is also identified as the archaeological site CA-ORA-58, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On April 3, 2024, Cogstone archaeologists Pamela Gutierrez and Alyssa Polito conducted a field survey of the boundaries of the previously documented cultural resources P-30-000058 and P-30-000506 to assess damage to the resources caused by runoff, unauthorized "social" walking trails, vegetation clearing, etc. Ms. Gutierrez and Ms. Polito conducted the survey in 10-meter transects and by following the narrow, cleared paths along the park and site boundaries. Cogstone archaeologist Sandy Duarte

Photos by City of Costa Mesa.

returned to the park to complete the damage assessment survey on April 19, 2024 and was able to identify and quantify additional areas of disturbance to the cultural resources.

MIG staff has visited the site nine times to document and evaluate existing site uses and facilities. These visits occurred in a variety of seasons to observe and analyze site conditions during both wet and dry weather. Additionally, MIG staff visited the site during typical and high-use days to observe site usage patterns during events including OCME Free Train Ride Days. MIG recorded this data and developed an inventory of GIS based assets management inventory.

Together, these field investigations and mapping tasks informed the development and delivery of a Biological Resources Technical Report, a 2023 Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities Report and a Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources Assessment.

To complete the Master Plan Update findings and recommendations, the MIG Team evaluated the park's diverse resources and assets. Along with City staff, the team developed planning-level preliminary recommendations in accordance with findings and community input. Twenty-four recommendations were developed, presented to and approved by the Fairview Park Steering Committee. Recommendations were grouped by topic areas including trails and public access, public education and interpretation, resource conservation and preservation, operations and maintenance, and site activities and uses. The MIG Team developed plans, graphics and exhibits to illustrate the recommendations, which were presented during the outreach process. These findings and recommendations have been summarized and synthesized into the DRAFT Master Plan Update document. The next steps are to share the DRAFT Master Plan Update for public comment for a 30-day period and to receive and incorporate feedback into a final document.

The DRAFT Master Plan Update will be utilized to initiate the environmental compliance documentation phase of work. Because no specific development projects within the park are detailed in the Master Plan, it was determined that a programmatic Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) would be suitable for the Master Plan. The environmental impact analysis presented in the Initial Study will focus on those policies and programs in the Master Plan Update that could have a direct or indirect physical impact on the environment. In order for the City to approve the Master Plan Update with an IS/MND, all identified direct and indirect impacts must be mitigated to less than significant levels. The MIG Team will prepare the necessary technical reports to support the Initial Study. These technical reports will identify avoidance measures and Best Management Practices to be applied to each future project developed under the Master Plan to avoid significant environmental impacts, as defined by CEQA.

The MIG Team will prepare an Initial Study based on the City's Environmental Checklist to analyze the Master Plan Update's potential impacts and provide thorough and comprehensive answers to each checklist question including an environmental and regulatory setting discussion, impact discussion, and mitigation measures, as appropriate. The impact analysis will be supported by tables, figures, maps, and graphics, as appropriate. Source information will be referenced

The steps for preparation of the environmental documentation are outlined below:

- Submit draft project description
- Receive city staff feedback on project description
- Revise project description
- Submit admin draft IS/MND
- Receive city staff feedback on admin draft IS/MND
- Submit public review draft IS/MND
- 30-day public review of IS/MND
- Submit draft Response to Comments (RTC), Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), Notice of Determination (NOD)
- Receive city/staff feedback on RTC, MMRP, NOD
- Submit final RTC, MMRP, NOD
- Planning commission/City Council hearing
- Agency review meetings
- Prepare permitting flow chart document and narrative

The final deliverables for environmental compliance documentation will be new and updated environmental documents and a regulatory permitting memo.

Outreach Summary

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General direction to the consultant team has been given by the public in open meetings, the Fairview Park Steering Committee, City of Costa Mesa Parks and Community Services Department, and the City of Costa Mesa City Council. Additionally, input from local Native American Tribes has been provided separate from the general public in recognition of their standing as sovereign Nations. Due to the sensitive nature of the information provided, the reports and feedback provided by the Tribal Advisory Group will remain confidential and only shared with the City of Costa Mesa.

Community Workshops

As part of the community outreach strategy, two community workshops were conducted.

Workshop 1: On August 31st, 2023, the first workshop was conducted to introduce the community to the Fairview Park Master Plan and get initial feedback from the community, present initial findings from investigations, and learn from residents about their ideas on improving Fairview Park. Small group discussions were conducted and were the primary method to capture community feedback on items that will inform the Master Plan Update. Approximately 100 community members and park stakeholders turned out to participate in the workshop. Participants discussed six key features of the park including: Trails, Fencing, Signage, Furnishings, Nature Play, and a Museum/Field House. Emerging themes from the workshop regarding park features are summarized below. Full summary memos for each workshop are provided in Appendix A.

Trails: Consensus was generally formed around a desire for well maintained and clearly defined trails along with the removal of excess trails on the mesa to protect biological and cultural resources, while maintaining public access. Additionally, desires to utilize natural materials to define trails and prioritization of enforcement to control the use of motorized vehicles was emphasized. There was disagreement among attendees about the appropriate use of the dirt mounds as some expressed a desire to start allowing use by bikes and others expressed desire to remove the mounds and associated use.

Fencing: Most attendees agreed that fencing should enhance and improve clarity of public use for trails and that natural materials should be incorporated. Consensus around the need for fencing to protect biological and cultural resources was acknowledged.

Signage: Feedback centered around the need for upgraded and modernized signage that serves to increase appreciation of the park and park resources. Topics for signage include cultural, environmental and ecological subjects. All educational signage is to be presented in accessible and multilingual displays.

Furnishings: Community feedback centered around the desire for ADA accessible furniture and the use of natural materials for furnishings. Some respondents expressed a desire for existing park furnishings to remain, however, most respondents expressed desire for upgraded furnishings concentrated in the existing lawn area. Provision for improved and additional trash and dog waste receptacles throughout the park was identified as was the addition of benches and an accessible trail to the bluff overlook.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Nature Play: Some respondents expressed a desire for nature play opportunities to be incorporated into the Master Plan Update, while others opposed providing facilities for nature play activities at the site. Consensus was formed around the desire to not provide any traditional structured playground and if provided, nature play should be located in the lawn area and coupled with educational features to enhance stewardship and appreciation of park natural resources.

Museum/Field House: Consensus among attendees was formed that a traditional museum was not desired and should be removed from the Master Plan Update. Some expressed desire for a centralized outdoor area to serve the educational and orientation program of a museum/field house. Others expressed enthusiasm for a field house that offered educational opportunities on numerous topics related to the park.

Additional topics addressed related to park use included consensus that E-bike use should be prohibited and is not compatible with and impacts user experiences at the park. There was strong disagreement about the compatibility and continued use of glider activities at the park. The opinion that glider flights impact sensitive areas of the park and should be prohibited was voiced along with the position that glider flights have a history at the park and should continue.

Workshop 2: On September 4, 2024, the second workshop was conducted, and the design team presented the draft Master Plan Update recommendations to participants and gathered public feedback. The presentation included a project progress overview, discussion of the decision-making tree to evaluate recommendations, and an overview of recommendation categories. The five categories explored built on feedback received in Workshop 1 and included: Trails and Public Access, Interpretation and Education, Resource Conservation and Restoration, Operations and Maintenance, Site Activities and Uses.

Participant feedback on draft recommendations is summarized below.

Trails and Public Access:

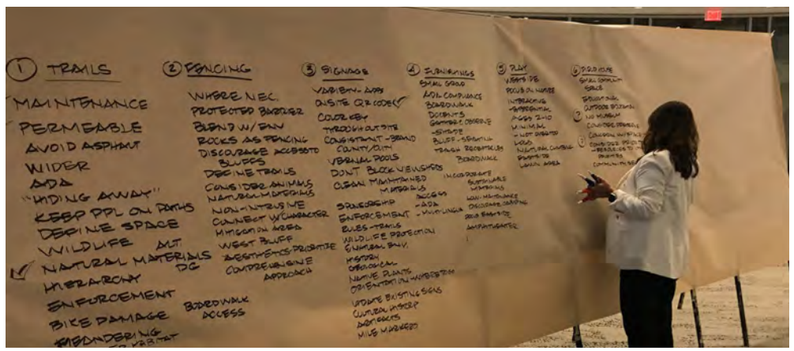
Consensus was generally formed around the following items:

- Retain access to the natural and vernal pool areas on the Mesa for passive recreation and educational purposes. Restore existing boardwalks and protect future trails on the Mesa and through the vernal pools with elevated walkways.
- Limit the use of vehicles on sensitive paths and develop protocols to regulate vehicle access to park trails.
- Regulate electric bike usage across the park.
- Utilize fencing and vegetation as barriers between sensitive habitat and trails.

Education and Interpretation:

Consensus was generally formed around the following items:

- Make signage accessible and multilingual.
- Provide a central interpretive area for education.
- Integrate self-guided educational opportunities through creative interpretive tools.
- Provide education on topics such as archaeology, geology, human/wildlife interaction.



Photos by MIG Inc.

Resource Conservation and Restoration:

Consensus was generally formed around the following items:

- Protect sensitive cultural and biological areas.
- Utilize natural non-native weed abatement strategies and limit the use of herbicides.
- Sustain and promote a balanced use of the park.

Operations and Maintenance:

Consensus was generally formed around the following items:

- Visitors would like to see an increased presence of park rangers at Fairview Park.
- Visitors understand the need for maintenance and emergency vehicle access to the park. Access protocols should be clear and work to protect sensitive areas.
- Provide more dog waste receptacles and protect sensitive areas from dog access.
- Maintain views within the vernal pool areas for educational purposes.
- Participants had positive feedback about the maintenance and growing space proposal and would like to see this space on the east side of the park.
- Participants find the presence of motorized bikes on sensitive trails and areas concerning. The Master Plan Update should outline specific enforcement and regulation of motorized bikes.

Site Activities and Uses:

Consensus was generally formed around the following items:

- Provide a dedicated educational space at the park.
- Program more guided educational opportunities.

Opposition and conflicting feedback focused primarily on the following items:

- Some attendees expressed the desire for additional active recreational activities at the park and to allow activities including BMX riding of the mounds and active sport activities in the lawn area. Others expressed concern that these uses are detrimental to both cultural and biological resources at the park and activities should be relocated to more appropriate park facilities.
- Attendees expressed strong desire to continue model aircraft flying at the park and questioned the validity of the biological resource findings and recommendation that the activity is incompatible with resource protection requirements. Other participants disagreed and expressed support for following the recommendation to remove the use from the park.

Fairview Park Steering Committee Meetings

Three public Steering Committee Meetings were conducted.

Meeting 1: On June 14, 2023, the first meeting was conducted with the purpose of presenting preliminary findings from research and obtain initial feedback from the Fairview Park Steering Committee to gain local and technical understanding of the project's impacts on the local community. The MIG Team presented an overview of the project scope, schedule, background documents, existing conditions, and potential approaches and strategies for restoration and habitat enhancement. There was a facilitated discussion with the purpose of gaining an understanding of the committee members' vision for Fairview Park regarding elements for consideration in the Master Plan Update including lessons learned from previous restoration efforts.

Meeting 2: On November 8, 2023, the second meeting was held with the purpose of presenting, discussing, and gathering feedback on the habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update. The MIG Team presented findings from field investigations of biological resources and habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities. Travis Brooks along with biologist Robert Hamilton provided a presentation that outlined a historical overview of Fairview Park, restoration opportunities, and recommendations. Fairview Park stakeholders were provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments and feedback.

Meeting 3: On July 10, 2024, the third meeting was conducted with the purpose of presenting Master Plan Update updates to the committee for member consideration and approval. The MIG Team presented draft recommendations and committee members commented and reviewed. Public comments were also provided and recorded. The approved recommendations are included in Appendix A.

Parks & Community Services Commission Meeting

This meeting was conducted on June 27, 2024 with the purpose of introducing commissioners to the Fairview Park Master Plan Update process and share findings for restoration and recreational opportunities. MIG presented an overview of the Fairview Park Master Plan Update Process including an introduction and purpose of the project, findings from outreach, surveys, paleontological research, and restoration opportunities. Meeting notes for Community Workshops and Steering Committee meetings can be found in Appendix A.

02 Existing Planning Conditions

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The Site & Adjacent Uses

The Fairview Park site is split into two distinct sections by Placentia Avenue. 155 acres lie to the west of Placentia, and 53 acres to the east.

West of Placentia Avenue

The western border of the western section of Fairview Park is joined by Talbert Regional Park (also referred to as Talbert Nature Preserve). At 180 acres, Talbert Regional Park consists of North Talbert and South Talbert, which is a restored natural habitat with public access trails. The park is owned and managed by the County of Orange, OC Parks. The presence of Talbert Regional Park is a strong influence upon the planning of Fairview Park. An opportunity exists to build upon the existing natural habitat at Talbert Regional Park as a crucial wildlife corridor, connecting to the Santa Ana River system of trails and parks to other open spaces in the region, including Randall Preserve and the Huntington Beach Wetlands. Talbert Regional Park has no parking facilities and is currently entered by trails only. A major access trail to north of Talbert Regional Park exists through Fairview Park along the northwestern bluffs. The County of Orange has expressed interest in a joint parking facility located off Placentia Avenue in the lowlands area with a new trail into Talbert, but this is not recommended in the Master Plan Update.

The bluffs to Swan Drive (Wetland and Riparian Area)

The northwest portion of the site, 45 acres, joins Talbert Regional Park to the west, private residences on Swan Drive to the north, Placentia Avenue to the east, and the park bluff to the south. This section of the site contains important plant species and soil conditions comprising alluvial scrub habitat. Habitat restoration projects have been implemented in northwest portion of the site including 35 acres of created wetlands and native scrub habitat as part of the Fairview Wetlands and Riparian Habitat Project and the Headlands Project Mitigation Area. Fairview Channel is a major storm drain structure which serves a broad area outside of the park boundary. The channel connects to the Greenville-Banning Channel to the west of Talbert Nature Preserve. The Fairview Channel lies approximately fifty feet from the backyards of adjoining residential properties on Swan Drive. The Swan Drive residents strongly oppose the introduction of active public use in close proximity to their backyards. The Placentia Drain, an earthen drainage channel created during agricultural use of the site, cuts diagonally through this area from northeast to southwest. Flows from this portion of the drain generally flow south along the border with North Talbert.

The bluffs area, south to Pacific Avenue (Bluff and Mesa Area)

Approximately 110 acres lie west of Placentia Avenue and are defined by bluffs dropping down into Talbert Regional Park to the west, into the Fairview Park lowlands to the north, and south to the residential community of Pacific Avenue and Canyon Drive. A parking area for 26 cars exists for park use at the north end of Canyon Drive. Waldorf School Orange County and Estancia High School form the remainder of the south border of the western area.

The southeastern portion of this area contains approximately 1.62 acres utilized by the Harbor Soaring Society for flying model aircraft. Model aircraft enthusiasts have been participating in this activity at Fairview Park since the early 1960s. Review of historical aerial imagery shows that the area devoted to the flying field has varied considerably from year to year, but has remained in the southern part of the western mesa. In 2005, a reconfigured fly field (approximately 150-ft by 470-ft) was graded within the existing vernal pool watershed, which the Harbor Soaring Society used with City's permission until the COVID-19 pandemic led to temporary closure of the park in March of 2020. In 2023, the City provisionally re-opened the fly field for use on weekends. Currently, flying is limited to non-powered gliders on the first and third Saturdays of the month.

Photo by MIG, Inc.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Facing page photo by MIG, Inc.

This area is also referred to as the Mesa, and is a vernal pool watershed. Several restoration projects have occurred in this area including planting of coastal sage scrub, purple sage scrub, and vernal pool habitats. Non-native grasslands on the Mesa occur on soils that have been historically disturbed, including areas impacted by grading for the fly field and numerous informal paths. Non-native cover exceeds 75 percent, with wild oats, annual bromes, and redstem filaree being dominant throughout. Nonnative weeds occurring in patches include fennel, black mustard, wild radish, cheeseweed mallow, and tocalote. Clustered tarplant, a disturbance-tolerant native herb, also occurs commonly in these grasslands along with scattered patches of coast goldenbush, big saltbush, mulefat, and California buckwheat.

While the entire park area should be considered a single unified Native American cultural landscape, the northwest bluff region contains the registered archaeological site CA-ORA-58, which is a well-documented and defined area to be protected and preserved. With the intent of capping the archaeological site prior to construction of new park amenities, fill material was placed on the Mesa in 1987 and 1988. The fill material did not, however, meet standards for capping an archaeological site, and included chemically active construction and paving debris that can degrade archaeological artifacts instead of preserving them. In addition to the fill material being improper cover for the protection of indigenous cultural resources, it also created three new threats to biological resources on the Mesa. First, the fill material covers and takes away habitat for native flower fields and fairy shrimp. Second, the fill material impairs the hydrologic function of the vernal pool watershed by reducing the amount of precipitation that would feed the vernal pool complex, which is especially critical in below-average rainfall years when the pools do not typically form. The fill was moved for study of the archaeological site limits in east to west strips in the 1993 investigation, resulting in uneven and unnatural topography. Portions of another archaeological site, CA-ORA-506, lie beneath the existing developed park and the area east of Placentia Avenue. This site has been the subject of far less research than ORA-58. Studies conducted in 1994 identified certain seasonally wet areas of the western area of the park as vernal pools. This identification was an important ecological discovery. Vernal pools were once widespread, but many have given way to development before their importance was fully understood; and very few remain in Orange County. The pools are a protected ecosystem and closely regulated. These resources will be restored and protected as described in the following chapters of this document.

Existing Developed Park (Lawn Area)

This section of the site contains the developed portion of Fairview Park consisting of approximately 13 acres of lawn and trees with restrooms, picnic facilities, and informal gathering areas and parking for 109 cars. These existing facilities are to be retained and improved.

East of Placentia Avenue

The entire eastern border of the park is bounded by Costa Mesa Golf Course, which is separated from the park by a fence. The eastern part of the park is cut into two sections by the Fairview Channel. The north and south sections created by the channel are joined by a foot bridge which crosses the channel. The east and west sections of Fairview Park are connected by a pedestrian bridge crossing Placentia Avenue.

North of Fairview Channel

The site slopes steeply up from Placentia Avenue and the Fairview Channel to join single family residential areas at Canary Drive. At the Canary Drive park boundary, there is a grade separation of approximately 15 feet; the park being higher. The slope varies, but averages approximately 1:1, or a 45-degree slope. This slope is currently used for park entry under hazardous conditions. Additional studies are required to find an entry solution acceptable to the City and the neighborhood. No parking facilities for park use exist in this area and the community opposes the creation of functions which may attract vehicles, and excessive traffic.

South of Fairview Channel (Model Train Area)

The southern portion of the east side of the park site contains approximately 45 acres and is currently utilized by the Orange County Model Engineers (OCME) railroad. Installed as a volunteer project over a ten-year period, with nearly five miles of narrow gauge rail track, the system is open to the general public at no charge one weekend each month. Other weekends are used for system maintenance and entertainment of private parties on a reservation basis. The railroad has become a popular feature, often attracting over 5,000 visitors on a weekend. The current parking is on unimproved soil and gravel. The Goathill Junction Station has a restroom, gift shop, and picnic tables. These facilities are used for gathering for train rides and private parties. The Chris Anten Memorial Compound is a train maintenance and storage facility and is not open to the public.

Previous Plans

The first Fairview Park Master Plan was adopted in March 1998. The Master Plan has undergone two revisions, the most recent update was completed in 2008. The open space of Fairview Park is included and referenced in other City and County planning efforts.

1977 General Development Plan - County of Orange

1984 General Development Plan - County of Orange and City of Costa Mesa

1988 Master Plan - City of Costa Mesa

1995 Fairview Park Development Plan

1998 Fairview Park Master Plan

2001 Fairview Park Master Plan Revised

2002 Fairview Park Master Plan Revised

2008 Fairview Park Master Plan Update

The Master Plan updates and related studies involved a range of activities gradually moving to more passive uses in each successive plan. The studied uses have included golf, baseball fields, extensive interpretive center buildings, and habitat restoration. The plans calling for more active uses and development met with strong citizen opposition. A plan for potential development of the sports fields of Estancia High School by Andrew Goetz & Associates, undated, was researched and determined to have no significant impact upon the Master Plan for Fairview Park.

Since the 2008 Master Plan, several changes to resources and management of the Park have occurred including the following:

1. In 2014, Phase 1 of the Fairview Wetlands and Riparian habitat Project was completed, and Phase 2 of the project to establish 35 acres of created wetlands and native scrub habitat in the northwestern portion of the park was begun and is ongoing.

2. In 2005, a reconfigured fly field was graded within the existing vernal pool watershed, which the Harbor Soaring Society has used with City's permission until the COVID-19 pandemic led to temporary closure of the park in March of 2020. In 2023, the City provisionally re-opened the fly field for use on weekends.

3. In 2016, Measure AA passed with over 70% of the vote, amending the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to subject certain changes to Fairview Park to voter approval.

4. In 2017, the City created and filled the Fairview Park Administrator staff position to help manage the natural and cultural resources provided within Fairview Park.

5. In 2017, the City created the Fairview Park Steering Committee to provide advice to the City Council on the implementation of the Master Plan and Measure AA. The Committee is comprised of seven members appointed by the City Council. The Committee meets bimonthly, complies with the Brown Act, and includes the Fairview Park Administrator and other City staff as City staff liaisons.

Fairview Park City of Costa Mesa Master Plan

Regulatory Framework

Planning for Fairview Park is shaped by an extensive framework of federal, state, and local regulations that protect cultural, biological, and historical resources while guiding responsible public access and use. These laws ensure that restoration activities, proposed improvements, and long-term management decisions avoid or mitigate environmental impacts, respect cultural and Tribal cultural resources, and preserve the park's unique character for future generations.

At the federal level, the National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Antiquities Act establish requirements to identify and safeguard resources of historic, cultural, and scientific significance. State protections, including the California Environmental Quality Act, Tribal Cultural Resources statutes, and the California Register of Historical Resources, require careful evaluation of potential project impacts and the integration of mitigation measures. Locally, Costa Mesa's Measure AA provides additional oversight by requiring voter approval for certain park improvements and changes in use.

Applicable laws protecting vernal pool species and their habitat include the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) provide for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and their ecosystems. These Acts prohibit the take of threatened and endangered species except under certain circumstances and only with authorizations from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Under CESA and ESA, take is defined as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

Together, these regulations provide the foundation for responsible stewardship of Fairview Park. They ensure that the Master Plan Update supports the City's commitment to preserving sensitive resources while balancing community access, environmental restoration, and long-term park sustainability.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) is the primary federal law governing the preservation of cultural and historic resources in the United States. The law establishes a national preservation program and a system of procedural protections which encourage the identification and protection of cultural and historic resources of national, state, tribal and local significance. A primary component of the act requires that federal agencies take into consideration actions that could adversely affect historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, known as the Section 106 Review Process.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts worthy of preservation because of their significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register recognizes resources of local, state and national significance which have been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards and criteria.

National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA directs federal agencies to use all practicable means to "Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage…". If the presence of a significant environmental resource is identified during the scoping process, federal agencies and their agents must take the resource into consideration when evaluating project effects. Consideration of paleontological resources may be required under NEPA when a project is proposed for development on federal land, or land under federal jurisdiction. The level of consideration depends upon the federal agency involved.

Antiquities Act

The Antiquities Act states, in part: That any person who shall appropriate, excavate, injure or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of the Government having jurisdiction over the lands on which said antiquities are situated, shall upon conviction, be fined in a sum of not more than five hundred dollars or be imprisoned for a period of not more than ninety days, or shall suffer both fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

Although there is no specific mention of natural or paleontological resources in the Act itself, or in the Act's uniform rules and regulations [Title 43 Part 3, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)], "objects of antiquity" has been interpreted to include fossils by the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and other Federal agencies.

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA states that: It is the policy of the state that public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects, and that the procedures required are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed project and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects.

CEQA declares that it is state policy to: "take all action necessary to provide the people of this state with...historic environmental qualities." It further states that public or private projects financed or approved by the state are subject to environmental review by the state. All such projects, unless entitled to an exemption, may proceed only after this requirement has been satisfied. CEQA requires detailed studies that analyze the environmental effects of a proposed project. In the event that a project is determined to have a potential significant environmental effect, the act requires that alternative plans and mitigation measures be considered.

Tribal Cultural Resources

As of 2015, CEQA established that "[a] project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (Public Resources Code, § 21084.2). PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE Section 5097.5: No person shall knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure or deface any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, or any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands (lands under state, county, city, district or public authority jurisdiction, or the jurisdiction of a public corporation), except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor. As used in this section, "public lands" means lands owned by, or under the jurisdiction of, the state, or any city, county, district, authority, or public corporation, or any agency thereof.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) is a listing of all properties considered to be significant historical resources in the state. The California Register includes all properties listed or determined eligible for listing on the National Register, including properties evaluated under Section 106, and State Historical Landmarks No. 770 and above. Per the California Register statute, historical resources listed, or determined eligible for listing on the California Register by the State Historical Resources Commission, must be given consideration under CEQA. Resources that meet the California Register criteria must also be given consideration under CEQA. Other resources, such as resources listed on local registers of historic resources or in local surveys, may be listed if they are determined by the State Historic Resources Commission to be significant in accordance with criteria and procedures to be adopted by the Commission and are nominated; their listing in the California Register is not automatic.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Measure AA

In 2016, Measure AA passed with over 70% of the vote, amending the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to subject certain changes in use at Fairview Park to voter approval. Changes including 1) construction of playgrounds, athletic fields, platforms/retaining walls for vista overlook, stairways to provide access to bluffs, new restrooms, parking lots, museum/multipurpose building, boardwalk and pedestrian bridges; 2) extended park hours for community events; 3) installation of parking lot lighting; or 4) other permanent structures are subject to voter approval.

California Endangered Species Act (CESA):

CESA prohibits the unauthorized take of any species listed as endangered or threatened under the Act. Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia) and Crotch's Bumble Bee (Bombas crotchii) are candidate species for listing under CESA and receive the same legal protections as listed species. California Orcutt Grass (Orcuttia californica) and San Diego Button-Celery (Eryngium aristulatum var. parishii) are listed as endangered and occur in the vernal pools. Any activity that may lead to take could potentially violate CESA. The City would need an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) or other authorization from CDFW to legally conduct such an action, but otherwise, such take is illegal under state law.

To obtain an ITP, the City would need to demonstrate that the take is "incidental" to an otherwise lawful activity, that any impacts from the take will be minimized and fully mitigated, and that adequate funding exists to implement minimization and mitigation measures. No ITP will be issued if CDFW determines that a project would "jeopardize the continued existence" of the listed species covered by the permit.

Citation: Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2050 et seq.

California Protections for Birds

The California Fish and Game Code (FGC) states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.

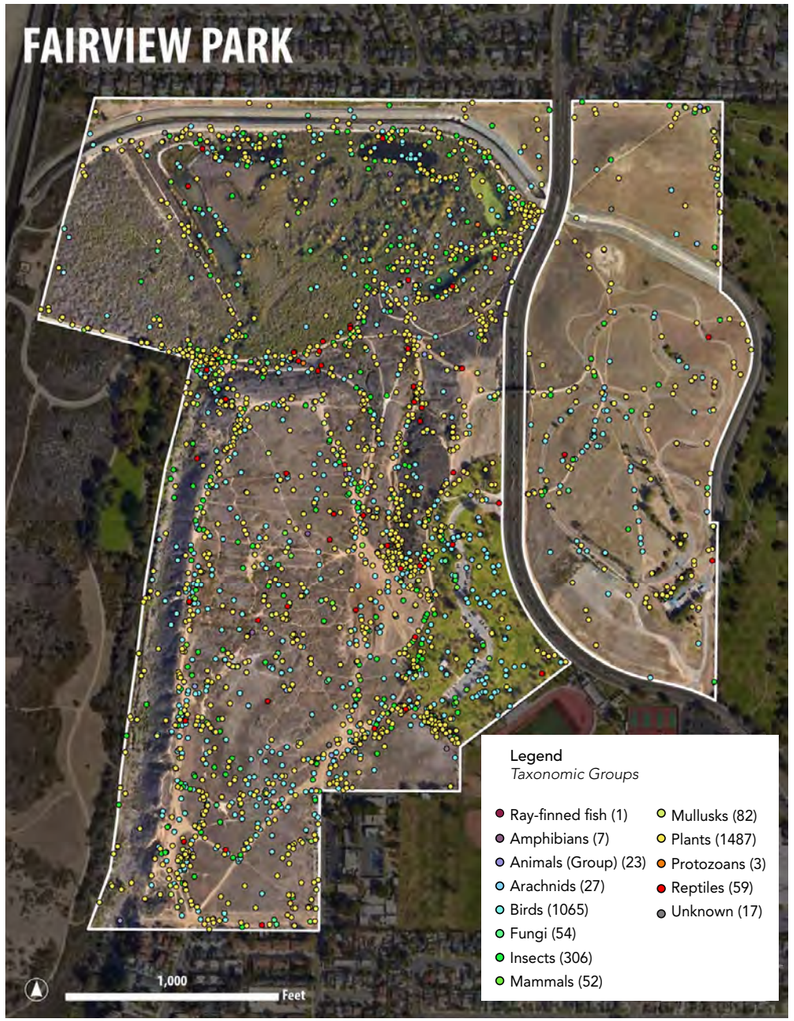
The FGC contains several sections outlining protections for birds, their eggs and nests. FGC section 3503 covers unlawful take, possession or needless destruction of nests or eggs of any bird. FGC section 3503.5 covers unlawful take, possession or destruction of birds of prey or their nests or eggs. FGC Section 3513 covers unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird.

Citation: Cal. Fish & Game Code § 3503 and § 3513

California Fully Protected Species

FGC Fully Protected species include White-tailed kite (Elanus leucurus), a raptor that forages in the vernal pool watershed and other areas of Fairview Park. Fully protected species cannot be taken or possessed without special authorization.

Citation: Cal. Fish & Game Code § 3511



Biodiversity Hotspot Map

Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA)

Notification to CDFW requires notification and an agreement for activities that substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow, or change or use material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake, including ephemeral bodies of water such as vernal pools and their flood plains.

Vernal pools are unique aquatic habitats that support sensitive species and are protected by CDFW regulations, which mandate an LSA Agreement if an activity could alter their flow, bed, banks, or channel, or adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

Citation: Cal. Fish & Game Code § 1602

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act is the primary California law for regulating water quality, establishing a comprehensive program to protect all state waters and their beneficial uses, including surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater, from both point and nonpoint pollution sources. Wetland protections include isolated and ephemeral waters, such as vernal pools and their watersheds. It grants the State Water Resources Control Board and nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards the authority to set water quality objectives, issue permits, and enforce regulations, including through various orders, civil liabilities, and court actions.

The Water Boards have the authority to issue permits, such as Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), and to enforce compliance through Cleanup and Abatement Orders, Cease and Desist Orders, Administrative Civil Liabilities, and Criminal Prosecutions.

Citation: California Water Code § 13000 et seq.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)

The MBTA implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered with Canada in 1916, Mexico in 1936, Japan in 1972, and Russia in 1976. It is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species. The law has been amended with the signing of each treaty, as well as when any of the treaties were amended, such as with Mexico in 1976 and Canada in 1995.

The MBTA prohibits the unauthorized take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by USFWS.

Citation: Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712)

Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The ESA prohibits the take of any species listed as endangered or threatened under the Act. Take includes harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting any endangered species. In this case, California Orcutt Grass, and San Diego Button-Celery, Riverside Fairy Shrimp (Streptocephalus woottoni), and San Diego Fairy Shrimp (Branchinecta sandiegonensis) are federally-listed endangered species, and any activity that may lead to take could potentially violate Section 9 of the ESA. Violation of this section may result in civil or criminal penalties.

The City would need an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA from USFWS, which requires developing an approved Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP details how you will avoid, minimize, and mitigate the impacts of the activity on listed species and must demonstrate funding for these measures.

Citation: 16 U.S.C. § 1531-1544

California State Wetlands and Riparian Area Protection Policy could be mentioned here, if not addressed in other regs.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/wrapp.html

California State Wetlands and Riparian Area Protection Policy

In California, wetlands and riparian areas are protected by the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) Wetland Riparian Area Protection Policy. In 2019 the State Water Board adopted the State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State (Procedures), and the Procedures became effective May 28, 2020. The Procedures consist of four major elements: 1) a wetland definition; 2) a framework for determining if a wetland is a water of the state; 3) wetland delineation procedures; and 4) procedures for the submittal, review, and approval of applications for dredge or fill activities.

General Plan

The Costa Mesa 2015-2035 General Plan sets forth the vision, goals, objectives, and policies for the City through 2035. Over the long term, general plan implementation will ensure that development decisions and improvements to public and private infrastructure are consistent with this plan. Included in the General Plan and relevant to Fairview Park is the Conservation Element, Recreation and Open Space Element, and the Historical and Cultural Resources Element.

The **Conservation Element** describes Fairview Park and its importance as an open space, linking to Talbert Regional park and the Santa Ana River system of trails and parks. Additionally, the Conservation Element identifies the ecological importance of riparian habitat restoration through the creation of wetlands within the north section of Fairview Park and the unique significance of the vernal pools. The document includes an inventory of biological resources found in Costa Mesa natural areas, many of which are found in Fairview Park. Included in the Goals, Objectives and Policies is, "Policy CON-1.A.4: Promote and protect native plant species within Fairview Park, and remove and control the spread of invasive species, including plants, animals, and fungi."

The **Open Space and Recreation Element** classifies Fairview Park as a Community Park, encompassing approximately 210 acres. The Open Space and Recreation Element describes the site in the following excerpt: "This passive open space park consists of bluffs, vernal pools, trails, native plant communities, and wildlife. Park visitors can also enjoy special events that occur at the park, as well as take a train ride on the Goat Hill Junction Model Railroad." Future classification of Fairview Park as an ecological preserve, rather than a community park, should be considered in future updates to this Element. As 195 acres of Fairview Park are dedicated to natural open space and wildlife habitat, it is among the largest urban parks in Orange County. The habitat diversity, unique vernal pools, and wildlife connectivity to the Santa Ana River system make this a significant regional natural resource to be recognized as such.

The **Historic and Cultural Resources Element**, generally describes the recorded and potential prehistorical archaeological and sites located within City limits and the paleontological resources located within City limits. Included in the Goals, Objectives and Policies is, "Policy HCR-1.DA.4: Require, as part of the environmental review procedure, an evaluation of the significance of paleontological, archaeological, and historical resources and the impact of proposed development on those resources." And, "Policy HCR-1.6: Encourage development of an interpretive center for paleontological, archaeological, and historical resources at Fairview Park. The center may contain resources found in the park area as well as resources found throughout the City."

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Open Space Master Plan

DRAFT

The City's Open Space Master Plan serves as a guide for the development and management of the City's park facilities. The original Open Space Master Plan was adopted by City Council in 1969 as a part of the Long Range Comprehensive Plan. It has been updated multiple times, including 1996 and again in 2003 and is currently in the process of being updated.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was adopted by the City Council in 1994 and 2002. The Plan established long-term goals for the City's open space and recreation needs and established priorities and implementation measures. The goals of this plan have been included as part of the Fairview Park Master Plan.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan calls for the Fairview Park plan to recognize the important adjoining uses, links to existing bike and walking trails, and stresses the need to preserve the important natural and cultural features.

Also proposed by the Open Space Master Plan was the potential for additional active ball fields in the area of Estancia High School. Alternative design schemes have considered this option. Ball fields have not been included in the Fairview Park Master Plan due to recent acquisition of land for this purpose, and citizen requests for a passive park at Fairview.

Photo by MIG Inc.

Local Coastal Program

Local Coastal Program

The Coastal Zone and Commissions were created in 1972 in order to protect the State's coastal resources. The Zone extends 1,000 yards inland from the mean high tide line. The California Coastal Act of 1976 modified the boundary eliminating the 1,000 yard boundary, but retaining portions of the Santa Ana River lowlands and most of Canyon Park. Fairview Park is not included in the Coastal Zone.

The 1976 Act mandated the preparation and adoption of a Local Coastal Program (LCP) by local governments for their areas of jurisdiction within the Coastal Zone.

The City of Costa Mesa has coordinated its efforts with the County of Orange. The County of Orange produced a coordinated plan in 1990 for a linked "stair step of parks" progressing from the coast up the Santa Ana River to Fairview Park. This Santa Ana River Mouth Open Space Study encompasses salt marsh restoration, wetlands, woodlands, and grassland for the open space along the southern side of the river. The elements of this plan involve the City of Newport Beach, the City of Costa Mesa (at Canyon Park and Fairview Park), the County of Orange and the Corps of Engineers. Restoration of the County's Talbert Nature preserve was an important link in this park system. Fairview Park is a significant piece of the plan due to unique ecological resources, its size and adjacency to Talbert Nature Preserve and the Santa Ana River. The completion of Fairview Park as anticipated by this master plan is consistent with the intent of the Santa Ana River Mouth Open Space Study.

Utilities & Easements

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Utilities & Easements

Public utility easements are limited to the north and south boundaries of the park. Domestic and reclaimed water lines lie along the extreme north property line. These lines are a barrier to creating a simple ramped connection from the park to Canary Drive. A regional gas main crosses in the east-west direction at the southern property line in the area of Parsons School. The gas main continues down the bluff into Talbert Nature Preserve and constitutes no obstruction to park planning.

A potable water line is in place for service to the park extending from Canyon Drive to Placentia Avenue. New potable water services are possible from mains located in Placentia Avenue.

Sewer mains exist off the site in Pacific Avenue and Canyon Drive. A study by the City Engineer determined that these lines are the only potential gravity flow source of sewer service to the park site. A preliminary plan indicates the potential to extend a gravity flow main from Pacific, across the western site, extending across Placentia to serve the train station site. This long gravity sewer appears to be more cost effective than a forced sewer main to the Estancia High School area. Electrical service is available along Placentia Avenue.

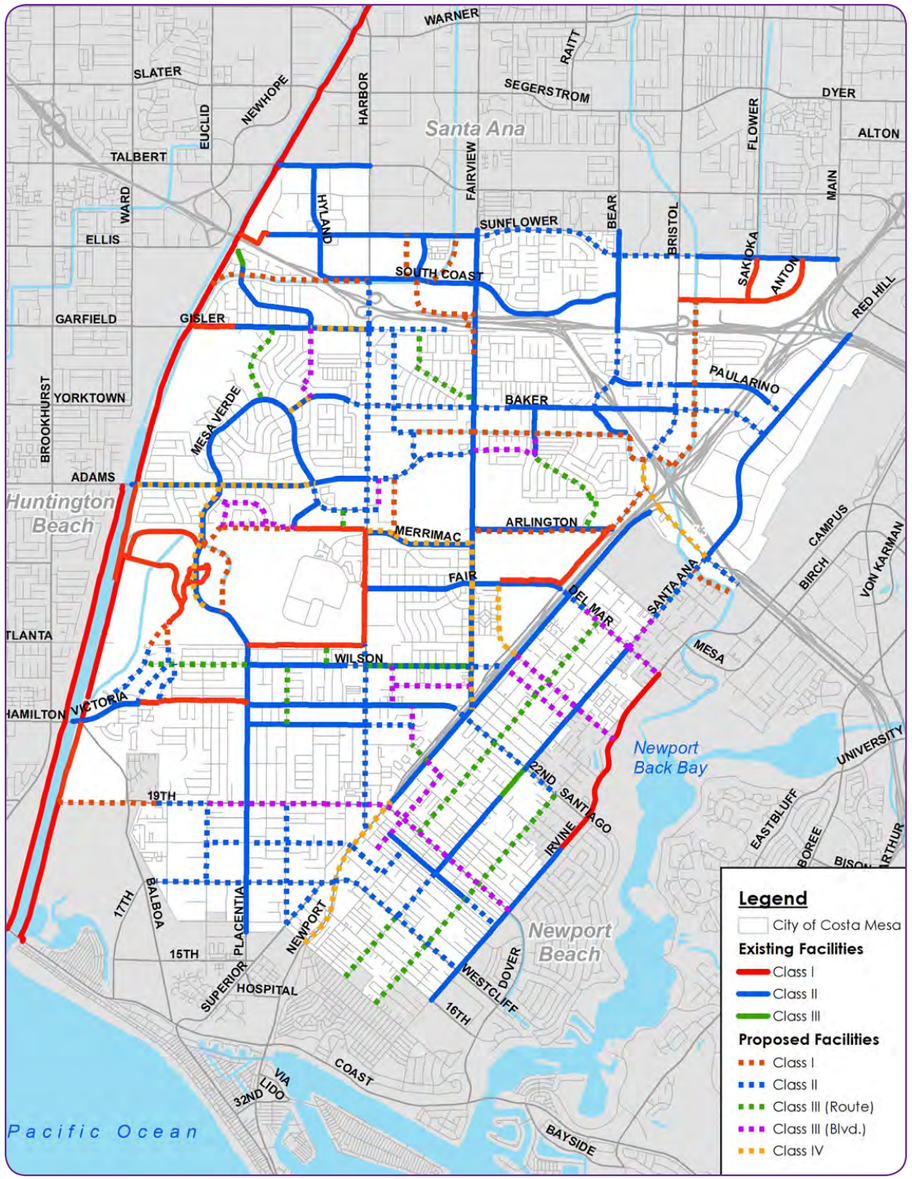
Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Transportation Plans

DRAFT

Fairview Park is served by only one arterial street, Placentia Avenue, which bisects the park. A park entrance from Placentia Avenue exists to the western section of the park. This intersection serving the western park entry is currently controlled by a traffic signal. The eastern section of the park (the train parking area) is entered by a signal-controlled intersection at the southern tip of the site at the entrance to Estancia High School. Both signal-controlled intersections are to be retained for access to Fairview Park.

Several local and regional bicycle routes are connected to Fairview Park including local routes to school and connection to the Santa Ana River Trail. Fairview Park provides Class I off-street bicycle paths within the park and Class II buffered bicycle lanes are located along Placentia Ave. The Costa Mesa Bicycle Master Plan DRAFT, prepared in 2017, outlines the vision, strategies, and actions that will be implemented to improve the cycling experience in Costa Mesa. This Master Plan focuses on the completion of the bicycle network by identifying existing and absent connectivity and providing recommendations for potential improvements to the system and programs.



Proposed Bicycle Facilities Map

03 Existing Site Conditions

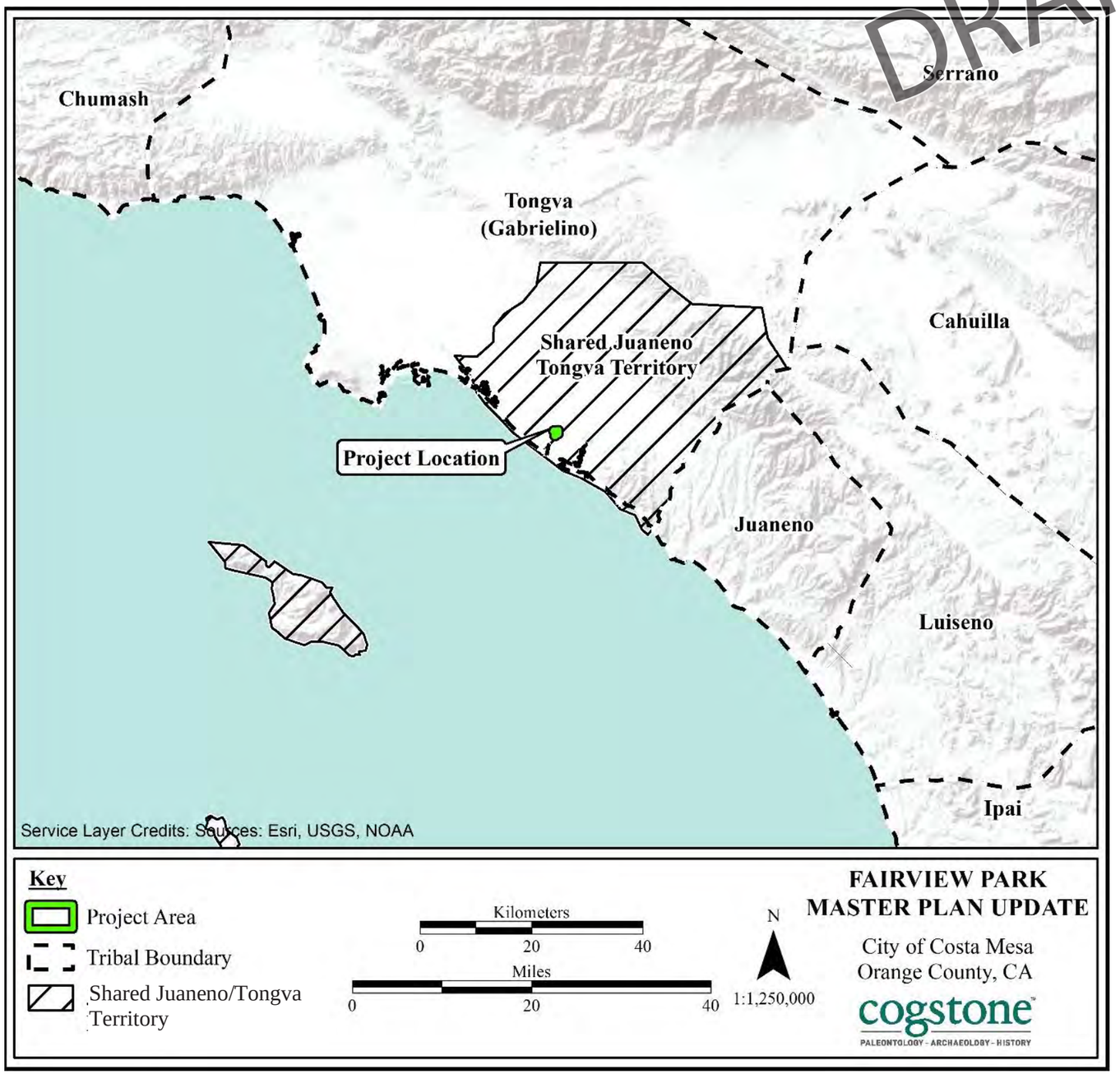
Site History

Prehistoric Cultural Setting

For thousands of years, indigenous peoples inhabited coastal Southern California, establishing a complex network of groups and villages. Their settlements were strategically situated near freshwater sources and ecosystems that provided essential resources, such as food and fuel (Anderson 2007). By the time Spanish explorers arrived, the region was already home to a well-established and thriving indigenous society. This historical context underscores the importance of considering long-standing human relationships with the natural environment when planning management and conservation of Fairview Park.

Prior to the Spanish Mission Colonization Period, which began in 1769 (Mooney and Zavaleta 2016), the Greater Los Angeles Basin, which extends to the San Joaquin Hills east of Fairview Park, exhibited a rich tapestry of diverse ecosystem types. These included coastal dunes and estuaries, fast-flowing and highly seasonal rivers, expansive flower fields, and southern California walnut (Juglans californica) and oak (Quercus spp.) woodlands (Ethington et al. 2020, Longcore and Ethington 2023). The varied landscape was shaped by the array of abiotic and biotic conditions characteristic of coastal southern California (Stein et al. 2007). Referring to the pre-colonial setting as the "Indigenous Landscape," Longcore and Ethington (2023) emphasized the role of humans in manipulating the region's natural communities during the long period that predated large-scale introduction of non-native plants and animals from Europe and elsewhere. This historical context serves as a reminder of the region's ecological diversity and the importance of human-environment interactions in shaping the landscape of Fairview Park and its surroundings.

Facing page photo by MIG Inc.



Tribal territories map

Spanish Period

Fairview Park was part of the 63,414-acre Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, granted to José Antonio Yorba and his nephew Pablo Peralta in 1810 by California Governor José Joaquin de Arrillago. Yorba built an adobe residence at what is now First and Sullivan Streets in Santa Ana. The site of the native Rancheria of Genga (Gena in Gabrielino) gave way to Spanish occupation. By 1780, records of Mission San Juan Capistrano indicate use of the site area by Mission cattle herds. The Yorba family re-established their own herds on the site by 1835.The Eduardo Polloreno adobe was situated on the northeast corner of the park in the area of Canary Drive. Only the foundations remain of this, the youngest of three adobe buildings in the immediate area, the others being the Estancia, or Diego Sepulveda Adobe, and the Rice Adobe. The Diego Sepulveda Adobe remains today and is located at Estancia Park.

City of Costa Mesa History

From 1810 to 1868, the majority of what would later become the City of Costa Mesa fell within the boundaries of the Spanish land grant Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. After the Mexican War of Independence, the land fell under Mexican governance and was retained by Yorba. Through California's Spanish and Mexican periods, the land was primarily used for the rearing of cattle. Following the annexation of California by the United States in 1848, the Rancho heirs began the process of breaking up the land into smaller portions and property was continuously sold and subdivided which made the area ideal for the California land boom of the 1880s. The three communities of Fairview, Polloreno, and Harper arose from this period and united to form Costa Mesa (Miller 1970).

With the expansion of railroads to the American west coast, affordable transportation and cheap land opportunities drove a flood of new settlers into California. As a response, various land syndicates formed which contracted survey teams to outline new land tracts. The Fairview Development Company (FDC) was one such entity which filed their plans for the Fairview Tract with the City of Santa Ana in 1887. FDC sales soared resulting in the rapid growth of the area near the corner of Adams and Placentia, restored by the City of Costa Mesa.

The land changed hands several times and was used for agricultural purposes, escaping development perhaps due to the topography of the eastern portions and the wet conditions of the western area. In 1926 the first documented archaeological remains were discovered during plowing operations. Important discoveries continued to be found and studied, and by 1935 State Emergency Relief crews began formal archaeological excavations. Federal Works Progress Administration crews were active in 1936 and 1937. In the 1970's the County of Orange and the City of Costa Mesa purchased the land of Fairview Park for park and recreation purposes.

A joint use plan was studied in the 1980's, which planned several active uses, which were met with strong objections by the residents of Costa Mesa. The City purchased 210 acres of the 300-acre site in 1985 in order to insure a lower level of development. The land purchased by the City site is now the subject of this Master Plan. The remaining 90-acre County of Orange site has been restored as the Talbert Regional Park.

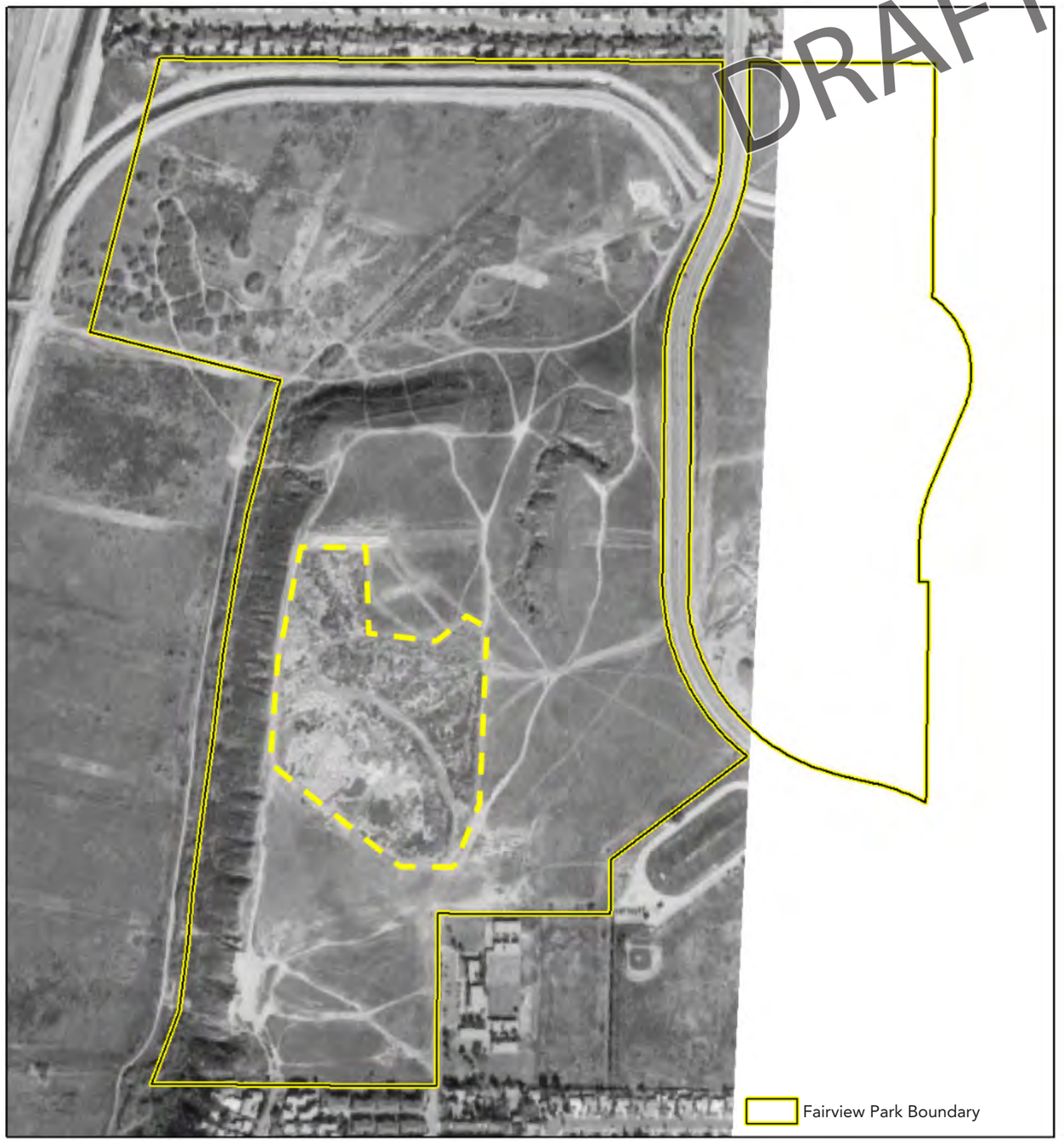
Project Area History

The earliest known U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map of the area shows no development in 1896 within the area which would become Fairview Park (Santa Ana, 1:62,500, 1896). By 1932, multiple unimproved roads are visible within the Project Area along with several large retaining ponds (Newport Beach, 1:31,680, 1932). By 1935, three buildings are visible within the northern half of the Project Area (Newport Beach, 1:32,680, 1935). By 1949, only one building remains near the center of the Project Area and a long intermittent stream cuts through the north/south on its western boundary (Newport Beach, 1:24,000, 1949). A 1953 USDA aerial photograph of the Project area depicts a single building with small ancillary buildings near the middle of the Project Area and a narrow water channel (NETROnline 1953). By 1963, the building in the middle of the Project Area is no longer extant (NETROnline 1963). A large concrete channel (currently extant) traverses along the east and northern boundary of the Project Area. By 1972, what is now Placentia Avenue is present, cutting through the eastern section of the Project Area (NETROnline 1972). Between 1987 and ca. 2000, a network of unimproved roads is established through the Project Area (NETROnline 1987 and 2000). Between 1987 and 1992, the facility near 2480 Placentia Avenue at the southeast area of the Project Area is extant (NETROnline 1987 and 1992).

1970

1980

http:// www.ocgis.com/ocpw/historicalimagery/



Geology & Soils

The broad, valley portion of the study area is called the Tustin Plain. The Tustin Plain is bounded by the Santa Ana Mountains to the east, the Puente and Coyote Hills to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the San Joaquin Hills to the south. Orange County is in the northern extent of the California Geomorphic Province known as the Peninsular Ranges. This geomorphic province is located in the southwestern corner of California and is bounded by the Transverse Ranges Geomorphic Province to the north and the Colorado Desert Geomorphic Province to the east. It extends from Mount San Jacinto in the north, through the tip of Baja California, Mexico in the south. The Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province is characterized by elongated northwest-trending mountain ranges separated by sediment-filled valleys. Faults branching off from the San Andreas Fault to the east create the local mountains and hills. The northwestwards motion of the Pacific Plate relative to the North American Plate has created these ranges and their corresponding valleys (Wagner 2002).

Topographically, the site is differentiated by a bluff 60 to 70 feet high creating an upper mesa and a lower flood plain. The Newport Mesa is comprised of deposits of clays, silty clays, silts, sands, and fine to coarse gravels of the Upper Pleistocene Lakewood formation. These deposits are of continental to very shallow marine origin. The Lakewood formation is underlain by the slightly upturned and truncated Lower Pleistocene San Pedro formation. The Lakewood formation is approximately 70 to 100 feet thick in the area of Fairview Park.

The mesa portion of the park site is underlain by a layer of heavy clay, which provides the hardpan responsible for the creation of the vernal pools on the southern third of the mesa. The lower portions of the site generally consist of 8 feet of sand and silty sand fill. Care must be taken in the design of structures or bridges due to the potential for overlaying alternating beds of soft to medium-stiff silt/clay and loose to dense sand and silty sand. Ground water has been found at depths of 10- and 11-feet.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

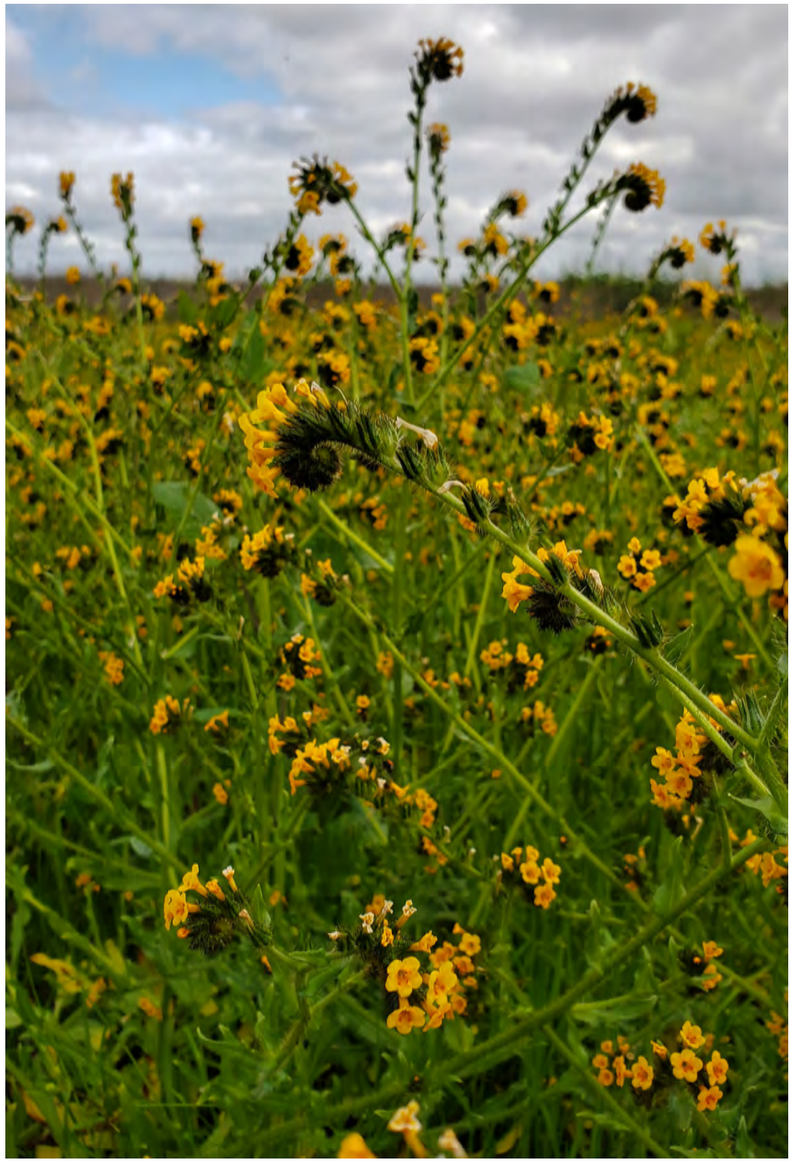
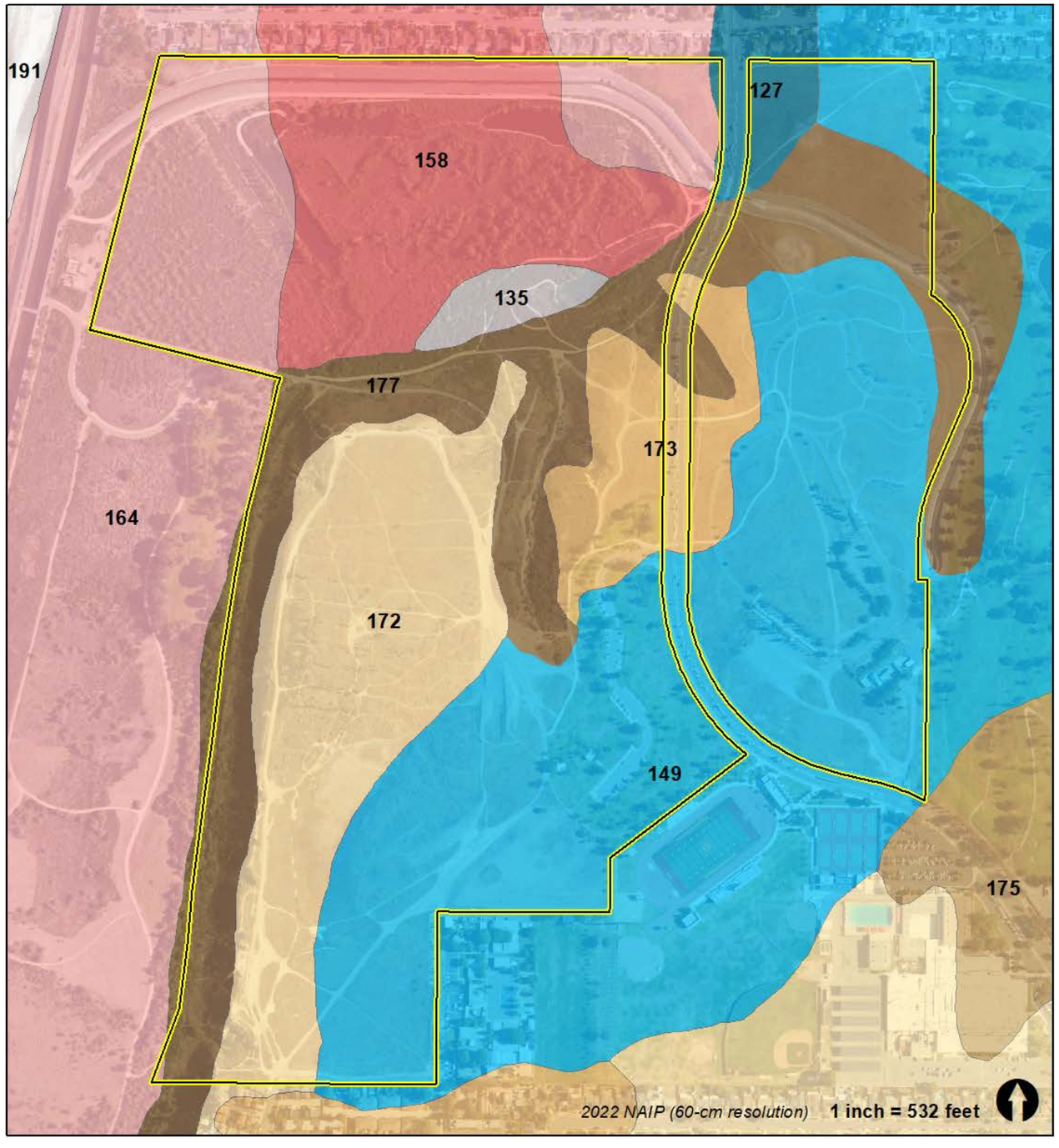


Photo by City of Costa Mesa.



Soils Map of Fairview Park.

Site Drainage & Hydrology

Fairview Park is predominantly vegetated with little impervious surfaces making it an important natural ecosystem for supporting water filtration, and flood management functions for the City. The deep, well-drained, carbon rich soils of the Fairview Park floodplain terrace can store a great deal of water, and the natural depressions of the vernal pools slow and store rainfall, helping reduce peak flows. Rainfall not absorbed into the soil eventually flows into the Santa Ana River and Newport Bay.

Fairview Park is located on a bluff and is not impacted by sea level rise or storm surges. The flat bluff and natural depressions characteristic of much of Costa Mesa's developed watershed tend to facilitate ponding and large storm events can overwhelm the exiting storm drain system and potentially cause pluvial flooding. The Canyon storm drain, which begins at the southern edge of Fairview Park near Pacific Avenue is identified in the 2024 Existing Conditions Assessment Report (ECAR) Storm Drain System Master Plan Update as an area prone to chronic ponding. The Canyon storm drain discharges near Canyon Drive in Canyon Park.

Fairview Park lies within the West watershed subarea studied in the ECAR. At the northwestern and northeastern portions of the park, Fairview Channel conducts flows from the northern portion of the West watershed to the Greenville Banning Channel, which drains to the Santa Ana River. The major portion of rainfall runoff from the site is collected in the Placentia Drain, a ditch created during past agricultural uses of the site. This drain cuts diagonally across the sandy soils of the northwest lowlands and runs south along the lower face of the bluffs to enter Talbert Regional Park. The drain is filled in places and currently has no clear flow line through its full length.

Erosion of the bluffs is attributed to the poor condition of the vegetation, pedestrian and wheeled traffic. Two areas, one at the north and at the south end of the bluffs, are generating small canyons as erosion removes the bluff soil.

Vernal Pool watersheds occur both on the west and east sides of Fairview Park. A large portion of the mesa, with a drainage connecting to the southern border of the site is included in the vernal pool watershed. This area contains large vernal pools features that support several rare and endangered plant and animal species. The vernal pool and a description of the depressional features can be found in Appendix B.

At the southern site border near Canyon Drive, rainwater collects on park property and extends into the adjoining residential property during heavy rain. This border flooding condition is south of the sensitive vernal pool watershed area. The City has reviewed potentially adding a new storm drain along the southern boundary of the park to divert flows west down the bluff into Talbert Regional Park. This potential solution needs further study.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Cultural, Tribal Cultural, Paleontological & Archaeological Resources

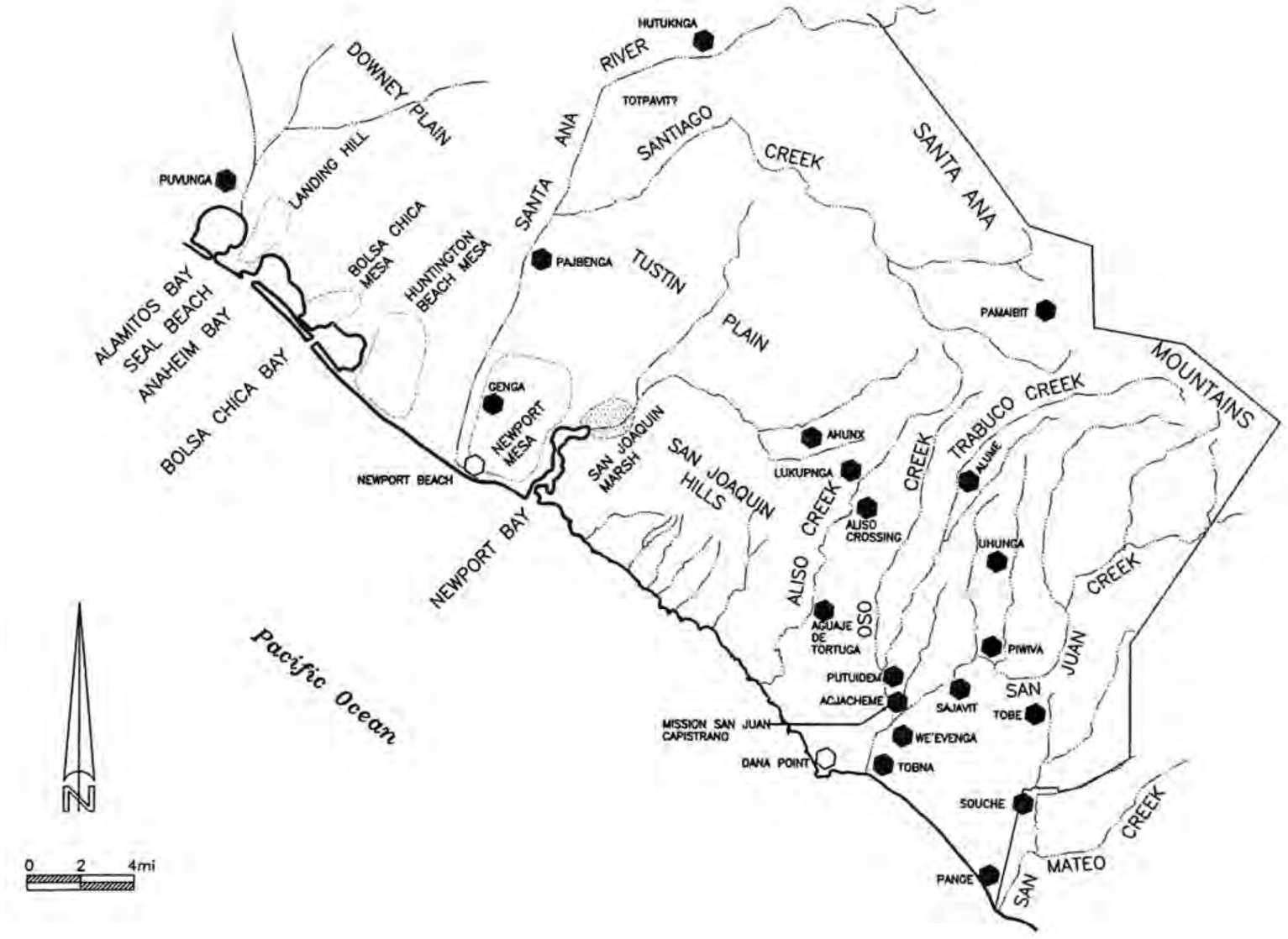
Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Based on the South Central Coastal Information Center records search conducted for this master plan update, especially the documented history of CA-ORA-000058, the positive Sacred Lands File (SLF) search, and informal conversations with local tribes, Fairview Park has an extremely high sensitivity for buried Native American origin cultural resources. The available data also indicate a low to moderate, patchy sensitivity for European-origin cultural resources.

The Project Area is within the traditional use area of both Gabrielino Tongva and Juaneño Acjachemen groups. A review of the site records for resources within Fairview Park indicates that the Park area should be considered a single unified Native American cultural landscape rather than as a place with four separate archaeological sites. Additional description of the Gabrielino Tongva and Juaneño Acjachemen in the region of Fairview Park can be found in Appendix D: Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources Assessment for the Fairview Park Master Plan.

The Project Area was not home to any known major villages. The closest known named Gabrielino villages are Lukupa and Kengaa which are 2.3 miles northwest and 3.7 miles southeast of the Project Area, respectively. However, Acjachemen villages, and smaller Gabrielino villages and seasonal camps may have been present closer to the Project Area.

The bluffs of Fairview Park in the prehistoric setting looked out over river bottomlands cut by meandering streams of salt water at high tide and fresh water when the tide was low. The environment



supported thousands of birds and an abundance of shellfish; and supported a village settlement whose remains indicate a very high level of social complexity. There were two periods of site occupancy by different cultural groups: at least 1500 BC, - AD 500 and AD 500 - the late 19th century.

The Fairview Park site contains two listed archaeological sites, arguably portions of the same general site, which have been investigated and documented. CA-ORA-58 occupies the northwestern bluff top of the site to the west of Placentia Avenue. CA-ORA-506 lies to the east of ORA-58 and is east of Placentia Avenue in the general area of the model railroad extending north to the Canary Drive area. Of the two sites CA-ORA-58, the bluff-top site, has been the subject of greater attention through archaeological study and preservation methods.

The City of Costa Mesa engaged The Keith Companies in 1993 to investigate the park site and to recommend protection and preservation methods. Their Report on Investigations to Delineate Site Boundaries and Further Characterize Cultural Remains at CA-ORA-58, Costa Mesa, California is a very comprehensive document which relates the history of archaeological study in the site, the significant artifacts which have been recovered and the boundaries if the site. The report recommended capping the CA-ORA 58 site with a layer of fill soil prior to the development of an active use park.

This Master Plan calls for the CA-ORA 58 site to be restored to its original natural plant communities and to be preserved as high-quality habitat in a combination of native grasslands and coastal sage scrub. The site would be accessible by trails, but general access to the archaeological deposit and the potential for artifact hunting is to be discouraged. The change of planned use of the site from possible active park to passive activities led the Consultants back to the author of the Keith Companies report, Dr. Henry C. Koerper, Ph.D., to update the protection / preservation recommendations. His report is presented in Appendix B.

A total of four cultural resources have been previously recorded within the park. These consist of two prehistoric archaeological sites (one NRHP listed and one unevaluated), one multicomponent archaeological site, and one historical archaeological site. This project is located in an extremely sensitive tribal cultural area. Surveys have been completed to assess damage to the resources caused by runoff, unauthorized "social" walking trails, vegetation clearing, etc. Disturbances identified were in the form of social trails that de-vegetated the ground surface and resulted in erosion due to water movement and pedestrian and bicycle-based travel. Disturbances averaged approximately two feet wide and five to eight inches in depth.

Most cultural resources, including burials, have been found within the areas currently recorded as P-30-000058, P-30-000506. As such, these areas are considered most sensitive within a highly sensitive landscape. Efforts to stabilize the sediments in these areas are most important. Stabilization methods include re-vegetation and keeping visitors from further eroding the site. Methods include barriers signing, physical barriers restricting social trails, and constructing raised walkways.

As the entire site has extremely high sensitivity for buried Native American origin cultural resources, additional signage and physical barriers to prevent the use of existing, and creation of new, social trails is recommended throughout the park. Additionally, re-vegetation of existing social trail areas, in coordination with plant biologists, with no till options is also recommended.

Mitigation Measures include the following:

- The City staff shall ensure that qualified cultural resources and Native American monitors are present for all ground disturbing activities, and all vegetation clearance that is beyond normal maintenance that occurs within Fairview Park.

- The City shall ensure that an Archaeological Treatment Plan including a presence/absence testing program and a contingent data recovery program is prepared by a qualified archaeologist in consultation with Tribes prior to ground disturbing activities that extends below the historic ploughzone.

- Native American-origin cultural materials encountered during ground disturbing activities, including vegetation clearing activities, shall be stored on site at Fairview Park pending reburial on site at a location not to be disclosed to the public.

Disposition of tribal cultural resources will be in accordance with applicable law and in consultation with the consulting tribes.

Paleontological Resources

Orange County has a complicated paleoenvironmental history which began at the age of dinosaurs about 250 million years ago. The past 250 million years has seen the region transition from marine in the Triassic through the Cretaceous, to coastal lowlands during the Paleocene to Oligocene, to shallow marine during the early Miocene, to deep marine during the early to early-late

Fossils from the vicinity of the Project from unnamed Quaternary deposits.

Common Name	Taxon	Depth below original surface	Age	Locality	Location	Reference
ground sloth	†*Megalonyx* sp.	unknown	Pleistocene	LACM 186	Along MacArthur Blvd. N of intersection with Jamboree Road, Irvine	Bell 2020
ground sloth	†*Paramylodon* sp.	unknown	late Pleistocene, Rancholabrean	LACM 1068	East of MacArthur Boulevard and north of what is now Bison Avenue, Irvine	McLeod 2018
California tapir	†*Tapirus californicus*					
horse	†*Equus* sp.					
yesterday's camel	†*Camelops* sp.					
deer	*Odocoileus* sp.					
bison	†*Bison* sp.					
rabbit	*Sylvilagus* sp.					
mammal	Mammalia	unknown	Quaternary	LACM 1069	South side of University Drive east of MacArthur Boulevard, Irvine	McLeod 2018
ground sloth	Edentata	unknown	Pleistocene	LACM 1089	General McArthur Blvd Bridge, Newport Beach	Jefferson 1991b
111 taxa of mammals, sharks, rays, fish, amphibians, reptiles, or birds, including fossils belonging to 17 extinct taxa	multiple	unknown	Pleistocene	15 localities with LACM	older Quaternary sediments on the eastside of Newport Bay	McLeod 2013
mammoth	†*Mammuthus* sp.	~15 feet	Pleistocene	LACM 1339	Adams Ave east of the Santa Ana River, Costa Mesa	McLeod 2011, 2017, 2018
camel	Camelidae					
proboscidean	Proboscidea	unknown	Pleistocene	LACM 3267	near 19th Street and Anaheim Ave., Costa Mesa	McLeod 2019
even-toed ungulate	Artiodactyla	unknown	Quaternary	LACM 3978	Adjacent to the SE side of the intersection of University Drive and MacArthur Boulevard	McLeod 2018
turkey	*Meleagris* sp.					
deer	*Odocoileus* sp.	unknown	Holocene or Pleistocene	LACM 4018	Oceanview High School, Seal Beach	Jefferson 1991b
mammoth	†*Mammuthus* sp.	6-8 feet	late Pleistocene	LACM 65113	Warner Ave, close to Bolsa Chica St, Warner	McLeod 2017
bison	†*Bison* sp.	14-20 feet				
horse	†*Equus* sp.	unknown	Pleistocene	LACM 6370	Hoag Hospital lower campus near Superior Ave. and the Pacific Coast Hwy, Costa Mesa	McLeod 2019
Harlan's ground sloth	†*Paramylodon harlani*	unknown	late Pleistocene, Rancholabrean	LACM 69121	Bolsa Chica State Park	Jefferson 1991b
mammoth	†*Mammuthus* sp.					
ancient bison	†*Bison* sp.					
Harlan's ground sloth	†*Paramylodon harlani*	12-20 feet	late Pleistocene, Rancholabrean	OCPC, no number as yet	North of Jamboree and Michelson, Irvine	Scott and Gust 2007, Gust 2010
ground sloth	†*Paramylodon* sp.					
sabre-toothed cat	†*Smilodon fatalis*					
carnivore?	Carnivora?					
western horse?	†*Equus occidentalis?*					
yesterday's camel	†*Camelops hesternus*					
ancient bison	†*Bison antiquus*					
bison	†*Bison* sp.					
Columbian mammoth	†*Mammuthus columbi*					
rabbit?	Leporidae?					
Botta's pocket gopher	*Thomomys bottae*					
gopher	Geomyidae					
squirrel	Sciuridae					
black vulture	†*Corygyps occidentalis*					
bird	Aves					
rattlesnake	*Crotalus* sp.					
pine snake	*Pituophis melanoleucus*					
snakes	Serpentes					
alligator lizard	*Elegaria* sp.					
oak	*Quercus* sp.					

† = extinct taxon

Miocene, back to shallow marine in the latest Miocene through the Pliocene, and finally to increasingly arid terrestrial deposits from the Pleistocene to the Holocene. In addition, younger sediments have been washed into the ocean by the action of streams.

The geology of the Fairview Park consists of middle to late Pleistocene old paralic deposits emplaced between 774,000 [774 ka] to 126 ka and late Pleistocene to Holocene young alluvial fan deposits less than 126 ka. No fossils were observed during the survey conducted for this project. Unnamed Pleistocene deposits have produced fossils of mammoth and camel less than half a mile to the north of the Project Area. While these fossils were approximately 15 feet below the surface, other nearby localities have been recovered from as little as six feet deep. Other extinct vertebrates recovered from unnamed Pleistocene deposits near to the Project Area include ground sloths, sabre-toothed cat, California tapir, horses, camels, bison, mammoths, proboscidean, and black vulture. Other megafauna recovered locally include deer and sea turtle, as well as a variety of small vertebrates that are found in southern California today.

Fossils recovered from the "Palos Verdes Sand" appear to have come from the old paralic deposits (Qopf) which are also mapped within the study area. This is a highly productive unit which has produced numerous marine and nonmarine fossils, many of which are still found in the California area today. Extinct vertebrates recovered from these sediments include ground sloths, dire wolf, tapirs, horse, llama, camels, bison, Pacific mastodon, Del Rey gannet, and flightless sea duck. Other megafauna recovered include mule deer, pronghorn, Steller sea lion, California sea lion, sea otter, elephant seal, whale, and sea turtles. The marine invertebrate record from these deposits is extensive with over 200 species known from the Newport Bay area.

Photos by Cogstone. Potential shell midden.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Biological Resources

The field investigations conducted, and resource reports developed for the Master Plan Update, build upon a tremendous body of scientific field work that has been conducted at the project site for decades. In October of 1995 the City of Costa Mesa engaged Robert A. Hamilton, Consulting Biologist, to survey the existing biological conditions, along with biologist Tony Bomkamp to survey the vernal pools section and to make recommendations regarding the planning of the park. In June of 2007 LSA Associates performed an update to the 1995 survey of existing biological conditions. These reports and recommendations guided the development of the 2008 Fairview Park Master Plan Update. Since the 2008 update, additional field investigations and summary reports have been developed including the following:

- 2015 LSA BUOW Management Plan
- 2017, Glenn Lukos Associates Wet Season Survey for Listed Branchiopods
- 2019 Endemic Environmental Services Branchiopods Wet Season Survey
- 2019 Endemic Environmental Services OCME Train Track Nesting Bird Survey
- 2019 Tania Asef Wet Season Focused Surveys for Listed Fairy Shrimp Species
- 2020-2022 Sea and Sage Audubon Society Fairview Park Point Count Avian Survey

Rather than repeat studies documenting existing conditions, this master plan update leverages current knowledge about the park and conducted targeted investigations focused on mapping existing habitat; evaluating habitat quality for targeted species; and specifying what measures to include to protect the species, minimize permit requirements, and improve overall habitat quality. Two technical reports were developed including:

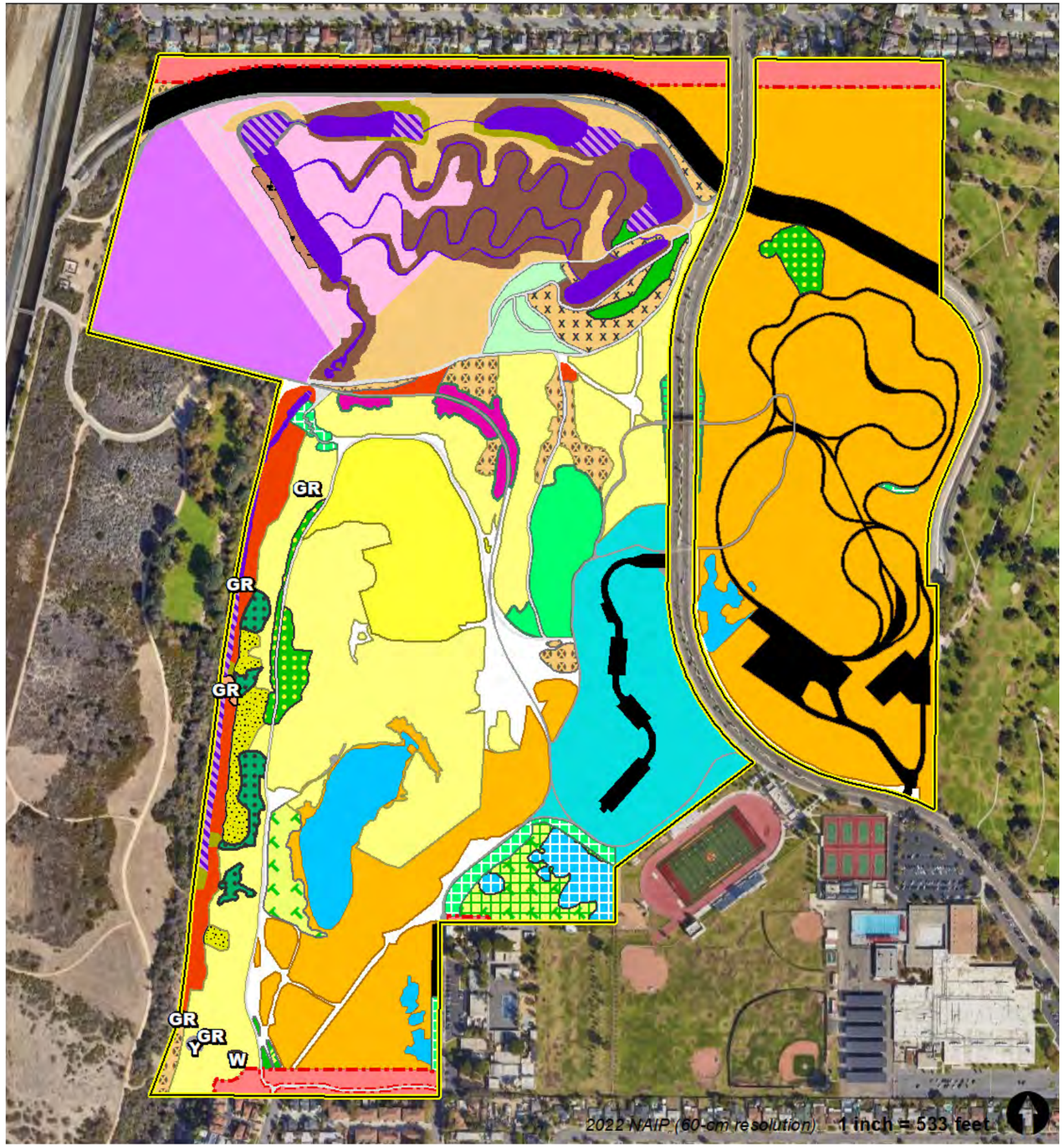
- 2023 Hamilton Biological Resources Technical Report Fairview Park (Appendix B)
- 2023 Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities for Fairview Park (Appendix C)

These technical reports support the Fairview Park Master Plan Update by offering an updated assessment of the park's vegetation communities, identifying appropriate habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities, and providing best practices for restoration projects. The report also presents invasive plant control guidelines to be integrated into the Long-Term Management Plan for the Fairview Park Master Plan Update to ensure the ongoing preservation of the park's resources. The report synthesizes biological resource findings made since the last Fairview Park Master Plan Update in November 2008, incorporating data from recent biological surveys conducted in winter, spring, and summer of 2023 by MIG, Land IQ, and Hamilton Biological.

Key components of the report found in Appendix B include:

- Description of 2023 vegetation communities in Fairview Park: Section 3 provides an overview of the various plant communities present in the park, including the unique vernal pool habitat, and highlights any changes observed since the previous Master Plan Update.
- Identification of ecologically appropriate habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities: Section 4 incorporates the vegetation assessment to identify targeted opportunities for habitat restoration and enhancement that will support the conservation of biological resources and protect cultural resources within the park.
- Best practices for restoration projects: Attachment A offers guidelines and recommendations to promote cost-efficient, high-quality outcomes for restoration projects in Fairview Park.
- Long-term invasive plant management plan: Attachment B provides recommendations for managing invasive plant species, which are crucial to maintaining the ecological health of the park and protecting its sensitive habitats.

The findings and recommendations made in these biological resources reports guide and inform the following chapters in this document including Chapter 04: Opportunities and Constraints, Chapter 05: Design Objectives, Chapter 06: Master Plan Recommendations, and Chapter 07: Implementation. By incorporating the information presented, the Fairview Park Master Plan Update can effectively address the critical need for a Long-Term Management Plan that safeguards cultural resources and conserves biological resources, including the essential vernal pool habitat. These reports serves as a valuable tool for informed decision-making and planning to ensure the future preservation and enhancement of Fairview Park's unique ecological features and cultural significance.



Map Code | 2023 Vegetation Map Unit Common Name

- 1720 | Black Willow - Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest
- 1740 | Fremont Cottonwood – Red Willow
- 1810 | Mulefat Thickets
- 1820 | Arroyo Willow Thickets
- 1830 | Southern California Walnut Groves (W)
- 1840 | Sandbar Willow Thickets
- 1845 | Sandbar Willow – Blue Elderberry Thicket (Habitat Creation Project)
- 1910 | Giant Reed (GR)
- 2310 | Coyote Brush Scrub
- 2315 | Coyote Brush Scrub (Disturbed)
- 3110 | California Sagebrush Scrub
- 3120 | California Sagebrush – California Buckwheat Scrub
- 3125 | California Sagebrush – California Buckwheat Scrub (Restoration Area)
- 3145 | California Sunflower Bush – Ashy Buckwheat Scrub (Disturbed)
- 3150 | California Buckwheat Scrub
- 3195 | Purple Sage Scrub (Introduced Vegetation Community/Restoration Area)
- 3330 | Coast Goldenbush Scrub
- 3335 | Coast Goldenbush Scrub (Disturbed)
- 4210 | Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grasslands
- 4250 | Upland Black Mustard and Tocalote Fields
- 4255 | Upland Shortpod Mustard and Tocalote Field
- 4270 | Poison Hemlock or Fennel Patches
- 4310 | Fiddleneck – Phacelia Fields
- 6135 | California Bulrush – Cattail Marsh
- 6500 | Clustered Tarplant Fields
- 6550 | Clustered Tarplant Fields (Restoration
- 6600 | Pale Spike Rush Vernal Pool Bottoms
- 6650 | Pale Spike Rush Vernal Pool Bottoms (Restoration Area)
- 8120 | Coast Prickly Pear Scrub
- 9100 | Introduced Trees (Y)
- 9150 | Irrigated Lawn and Ornamental Landscaping Trees
- 9300 | Urban/Disturbed
- 9310 | Urban-Sidewalk/Bridge/Trail
- 9315 | Natural Soil or Decomposed Granite (DG) Tra
- 9320 | Fuel Modification Zone
- 9330 | Anthropogenic Areas of Little or No
- 9800 | Water Body
- 9810 | Rip-rap/Concrete Pond Liner

- Fairview Park Boundary
- Improper Fill Material (Extent in 2023)
- Vernal Pool High Estimated High Flood Mark
- Vernal Pool Watershed (Remaining, Undeveloped Extent)

2023 Vegetation Communities

Botanical Resources

The botanical surveys in 2023 recorded 197 species of vascular plants in the park system, including several special-status species, most of them associated with vernal pools.

Plant Communities and Associations

Apart from 13 acres of turf and developed areas, vegetation at Fairview Park occurs within 195 acres of natural communities and vegetation associations, each hosting a suite of characteristic plant species.

Grasslands, which occupy the flatter upland portions of the park on either side of Placentia Avenue, consist mainly of non-native grass and forb species. A handful of native species are represented, including clustered tarweed (Deinandra fasciculata), great valley gumweed (Grindelia camporum), coast goldenbush (Isocoma menziesii), fiddleneck (Amsinckia menziesii ssp. intermedia), small-flowered microseris (Microseris douglasii var. platycarpha), and purple needlegrass (Nassella pulchra).

Scattered across the southern grasslands are vernal pools, the species composition and ratio of which varies considerably from pond to pond and month to month during the time of year when the soil is moist. All of the roughly 18 vernal pool indicator species previously recorded at Fairview Park were recorded during the 2023 field visits. The most widespread of these indicator species include low woolly-marbles (Psilocarphus brevissimus), common spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris), bigbract verbena (Verbena bracteata), water clover (Marsilea vestita), golden dock (Rumex fueginus), flowering quillwort (Trigochlin scilloides), California waterwort (Elatine californica), shortseed waterwort (Elatine brachysperma), pygmyweed (Crassula aquatica), Virginia cress (Planodes virginicum), American pillwort (Pilularia americana), and water starwort (Callitriche sp.). Rarer indicators of this sensitive habitat include San Diego button-celery (Eryngium aristulatum var. parishii), California Orcutt grass (Orcuttia californica), mud nama (Nama stenocarpa), little mousetail (Myosurus minimus ssp. apus), and prostrate vernal pool navarretia (Navarretia prostrata). Fairview Park supports the only Orange County population of several of these rare species.

Coastal bluff scrub, most of which shows signs of disturbance and invasion by non-native weeds, occurs on the west-facing slope above Talbert Regional Park. Characteristic native plants in this association include California boxthorn (Lycium californicum), bladderpod (Cleomella arborea), coast prickly-pear (Opuntia littoralis), and wishbone bush (Mirabilis laevis). Chilicothe (Marah macrocarpa) formed an extensive blanket over large areas of bluff scrub on this bluff in response to wet conditions in 2023. A few southern California black walnuts (Juglans californica) occur on the bluff in the southeastern corner of the park.

Alluvial scrub formerly occurred widely across the sandy northern lowlands of Fairview Park, prior to conversion of most of this area to created ponds and associated riparian scrub and woodland. Remnants of the alluvial scrub remain in the northwestern corner of the park, represented by sandbar willow (Salix exigua ssp. hindsiana), California evening-primrose (Oenothera californica), California croton (Croton californicus), Lewis's evening-primrose (Camissoniopsis lewisii), and coyote brush.

The **riparian woodlands and scrub** established around the ponds created in the northern lowlands include several species of willow (Salix lasiolepis, S. laevigata and S. gooddingii), yerba mansa (Anemopsis californica), California wild rose (Rosa californica), California bulrush (Schoenoplectus californica), California mugwort (Artemisia douglasiana), western sycamore (Platanus racemosa), marsh fleabane (Pluchea odorata), trailing blackberry (Rubus ursinus), and mule fat (Baccharis salicifolia).

Coastal sage scrub vegetation has been restored in the dry canyon north and west of the main park entrance off Placentia Avenue. Dominant species in this community include California Sagebrush (Artemisia californica), California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum), black sage (Salvia mellifera), purple sage (Salvia leucophylla), white sage (Salvia apiana), lemonade berry (Rhus integrifolia), coyote brush, coastal brittlebush (Encelia californica), and laurel sumac (Malosma laurina).

The 2023 surveys also recorded some expanses of non-native, invasive weed species that, in some cases, effectively exclude most native plants. These include black mustard (Brassica nigra), devil's thorn (Emex spinosus), sweet fennel (Foeniculum vulgare), artichoke thistle (Cynara cardunculus ssp. flavescens), and crown daisy (Glebionis coronaria).

Wildlife

Two federally listed invertebrates, San Diego fairy shrimp (Branchinecta sandiegonensis) and Riverside fairy shrimp (Streptocephalus woottoni), have been documented in some of the park's vernal pools. Their more common relative, the versatile fairy shrimp (Branchinecta lindahli), occurs more widely in pools

Map Code | Habitat Restoration Targets (Common Veg Name)

- 1810 | Mulefat Thickets
- 1830 | Southern California Walnut Groves (W)
- 3120 | California Sagebrush – California Buckwheat Scrub
- 3140 | California Sunflower Bush – Ashy Buckwheat Scrub
- 3190 | California Sagebrush – Coast Prickly Pear Scrub
- 3210 | Black Sage Scrub
- 4310 | Fiddleneck – Phacelia Fields
- 6500 | Clustered Tarplant Fields

- Fairview Park Boundary
- Improper Fill Material (Extent in 2023)

2023 Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities for Fairview Park

and small depressions. The two listed species were last observed at the park in 2017 (Glen Lukos Associates 2017); they were not detected during surveys conducted two years later (Asef 2019). Although it was not possible to collect and identify fairy shrimp during our field visits in 2023, fairy shrimp were observed in several ponds, and we consider it likely that all three species persist in the park.

Twenty species of butterfly were seen in Fairview Park during 2023, including the funereal duskywing (Erynnis funeralis), western pygmy-blue (Brephidium exilis), Reakirt's blue (Echinargus isola), Lorquin's admiral (Limenitis lorquini), American lady (Vanessa virginiensis), and western giant swallowtail (Papilio rumiko). Other invertebrates found in vernal pools at Fairview include unknown species of ostracods (Ostracoda spp.) and at least one species of copepod (Copepoda spp.).

Five species of amphibian have been reported in Fairview Park: Western toad (Anaxyrus boreas), California tree frog (Pseudacris cadaverina), Baja California tree frog (Pseudacris hypochondriaca), black-bellied slender salamander (Batrachoseps nigriventris), and southern California slender salamander (Batrachoseps major). Three species of snake and five species of lizard have been reported in Fairview Park: California kingsnake (Lampropeltis californiae), gopher snake (Pituophis catenifer), southern pacific rattlesnake (Crotalus oreganus), southern alligator lizard (Elgaria multicarinata), western fence lizard (Sceloperus occidentalis), common side-blotched lizard (Uta stansburiana), western skink (Plestiodon skiltonianus), and western whiptail (Aspidoscelis tigris).

Birds are the most conspicuous forms of wildlife at Fairview Park, where approximately 220 species have been recorded. Most have been reported to eBird; citations for additional taxa recorded during biological studies of the park are provided in the Appendix B species list. With the establishment of permanent ponds in the northern lowlands, various waterfowl have become regular there. Year-round residents include the Canada Goose, Mallard, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, various herons and egrets, Common Gallinule, and American Coot. Small numbers of White-faced Ibis, a special-status species, have nested in the created wetlands in recent years. Riparian scrub and woodland provide habitat for many species, including such special-status species as the Least Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Yellow Warbler.

During wet winters and springs, an array of waterfowl and shorebirds rely on the park's vernal pools for foraging and as resting areas. Ducks that use the pools include Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Gadwalls, American Wigeon, and Mallards. Shorebirds observed using the pools include Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Long-billed Curlews, Long-billed Dowitchers, Greater Yellowlegs, and Lesser Yellowlegs. Large flocks of swallows forage over the pools, including Barn, Tree, Cliff, Northern Rough-winged, and Violet-green.

Grasslands on either side of Placentia Avenue provide foraging habitat for several species of raptor, including Burrowing Owls, Northern Harriers, White-tailed Kites, and Red-tailed Hawks. Insectivores found in the park include Vermilion Flycatchers, Ash-throated Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds, Cassin's Kingbirds, Black Phoebes, and Say's Phoebes. Wintering species include various sparrows, such as White-crowned and Savannah, along with American Pipits, Western Meadowlarks, and other open-country species. Stands of non-native mustard that have developed on the mesa provide nesting habitat for Red-winged Blackbirds and Song Sparrows.

Coastal bluff scrub and coastal sage scrub in the park support small numbers of resident California Gnatcatchers, along with more widespread species, such as Song Sparrows, California Towhees, Spotted Towhees, Common Yellowthroats, and Orange-crowned Warblers.

Turf and trees in the developed parts of the park provide habitat for a number of species tolerant of humans, including Western Bluebirds, House Finches, Lesser and American Goldfinches, and wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers.

Sensitive Biological Resources

Federal, state, and local regulations exist to protect and conserve sensitive biological resources. For purposes of this report, a biologically sensitive resource refers to any of the following:

- A natural community recognized as having special-status by federal, state, and/or local governments, and requiring a permit or agreement prior to its disturbance.
- A plant or animal species identified by federal or state governments as endangered, threatened, rare, protected, sensitive, vulnerable, or a Species of Special Concern.
- A plant or animal species that is a candidate, or that is proposed for federal or state listing.

Sensitive Natural Communities

The State of California (CDFW 2023) identifies as "Sensitive" the following natural communities that occur in Fairview Park:

- Vernal Pools/Native Grasslands
- Coastal Bluff Scrub
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Riparian Scrub and Woodland

Special-Status Species

The special-status plants and wildlife that occur in Fairview Park, or that have realistic potential to occur there, are identified and briefly discussed are listed in Appendix B. To help determine which species warrant consideration in the report, the project team conducted a nine-quadrangle query of the California Natural Diversity Database CNDDB (2023), which yielded recent and historical records of 177 special-status species:

- 52 plant taxa
- 2 crustacean taxa
- 11 insect taxa
- 4 mollusk taxa
- 5 fish taxa
- 2 amphibian taxa
- 10 reptile taxa
- 72 bird taxa
- 19 mammal taxa

Through critical review of this extensive list, Hamilton Biological excluded numerous species that have no potential to occur at Fairview Park, except possibly very rarely. For example, the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel is a special-status bird of deep ocean waters that could conceivably be carried onshore by gale-force winds, but because Fairview Park provides no effective conservation value for this seabird it has been excluded from further consideration. Furthermore, some wildlife taxa are given special status only during certain parts of their annual cycle—usually on the nesting grounds. Such species are considered "sensitive" at Fairview Park only if they have potential to occur in the designated manner. For example, the Sharp-shinned Hawk is considered a Species of Special Concern on its nesting grounds, but this raptor occurs in Orange County only during migration and winter and so is not included in Table B in Appendix B.

For special-status plant species, Table B in Appendix B includes 10 taxa known to occur in Fairview Park; one taxon that occurred in recent years but that may now be extirpated; four taxa with moderate potential to occur; and five taxa with low potential to occur. Table B also includes one plant taxon that has been erroneously reported to occur in Orange County.

For special-status wildlife species, Table B includes 24 taxa known to occur in Fairview Park; two taxa apparently extirpated from the park; five taxa with high potential to occur; five taxa with moderate potential to occur; and 15 taxa with low potential to occur. Table B also clarifies that Fairview Park lies outside of the described range of one mammal taxon found within several miles of the park, farther north along the coast.

Resource Protection Recommendations

Fairview Park supports a remarkable array of special-status plant and wildlife species, several of which are listed as threatened or endangered by state and/or federal governments. The park's combination of riparian habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, and vernal pools is unique in Orange County, and rare anywhere in Southern California. In the past three decades, for reasons not fully understood but likely related to habitat degradation and fragmentation, at least two special-status species, the Cactus Wren and San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit, have become extirpated from the park and surrounding areas. Chaparral sand-verbena, a special-status plant species may also have died out, possibly due to brush clearance activities. Species that persist only in small numbers and/or in very limited patches of suitable habitat include southern tarplant, San Diego button-celery, vernal barley, little mousetail, prostrate vernal pool navarretia, California Orcutt grass, southwestern pond turtle, burrowing owl, and California gnatcatcher.

The most important threats to sensitive biological resources in Fairview Park come from human actions that destroy, degrade, and fragment the park's natural communities. The placement of numerous piles of fill dirt across the western mesa during the late 1980s, with the intent to cap archaeological resources prior to establishing sports fields that were planned but never built, created an ecological limbo for natural resources on the mesa. Approximately two acres of this fill were later removed to restore a large vernal pool that had been buried, but this left more than 20 acres of disturbed, weedy habitat, crisscrossed by an extensive lattice of informal trails.

Facing page photo by Robert A. Hamilton

Not only do the dense weeds in this area persist and spread to other parts of the park, but they render the northern half of the mesa effectively incapable of being maintained and managed through routine methods. In recent years, cyclists, e-bike riders, and remote-controlled vehicle enthusiasts have expanded a barren area on the east side of the mesa while establishing a new riding track farther west, in the middle of the fill-pile area. To prevent and reverse the loss of natural lands to such unauthorized active uses, the recommendations in Chapters 06 and 07 of this document provide guidance and a feasible approach to restoring and managing the most disturbed parts of the park to protect and enhance these unique resources.

Additionally, Hamilton Biological has documented evidence of intentional destruction of listed plant species in some of the vernal pools at Fairview Park. The Master Plan recommendations and implementation guidelines incorporate specific protections against such malicious actions including protective fencing and educational opportunities for the public to learn about the federal Endangered Species Act and consequences of its violation.

Photo by Robert A. Hamilton

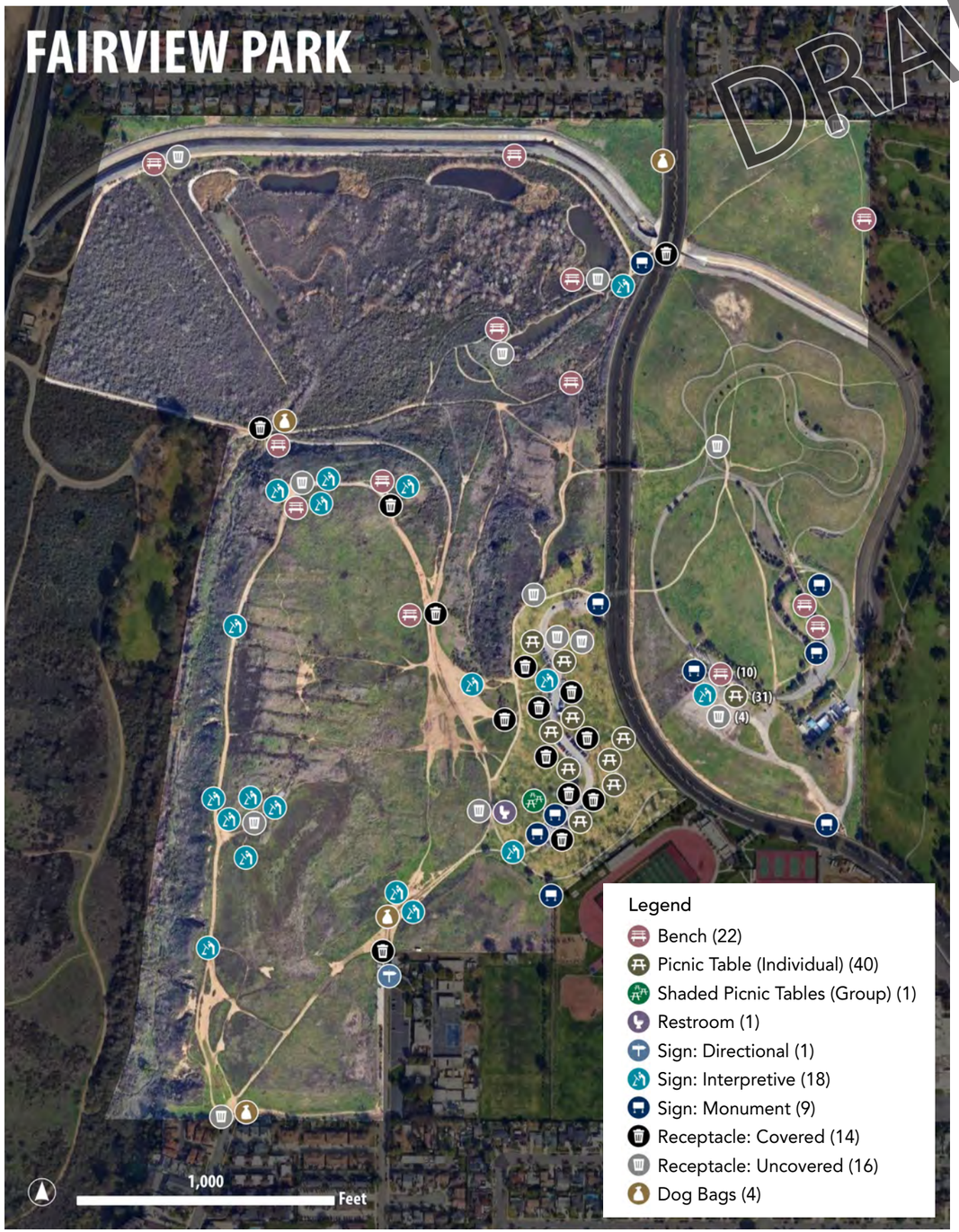
Site Features

Fairview Park offers a blend of natural open space, recreational amenities, and unique attractions that support passive recreation and community use. The park contains an extensive network of trails for walking and bicycling, which link to other recreational areas and provide access to diverse landscapes. Supporting infrastructure includes pedestrian bridges, benches, picnic tables, a shaded picnic pavilion, restrooms, interpretive and monument signage, trash receptacles, and dog waste bag stations, ensuring accessibility and user comfort.

Approximately 13 acres of lawn area provide more traditional park amenities within the predominantly natural setting. Two unique facilities are operated in partnership with non-profit organizations including a narrow-gauge miniature railroad, which offers an educational and recreational attraction for visitors, and a model glider flying field, which serves as a dedicated space for hobbyists.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Fairview Park Site Signage Maps



Fairview Park Site Furniture Maps

Fairview Park Site Existing Conditions

04 Opportunities & Constraints

DRAFT

Considerations

Alignment with goals and objectives

Fairview Park is a beloved cultural and natural resources asset for the community of Costa Mesa and the region. The park is a unique and culturally and ecologically valuable site for the region. Fairview Park has two Nationally Registered Cultural Resource Historic Sites and serves as the gateway to the Santa Ana River Trail and a connection to rich natural coastal resources for residents and visitors. The Master Plan Update presents the opportunity to play an important part in telling the greater story of this 208-acre parkland and conservation area. Restoring and preserving the park as an environmental resource for study, interpretation, and education as well as passive recreation is a challenging and meaningful goal in alignment with the project goals and objectives outlined in chapter 01 including:

- Protect, preserve, and enhance the unique natural and cultural resources of Fairview Park.
- Restore, and enhance the park as an environmental resource, and provide interpretive opportunities to educate visitors about the park's unique ecology, cultural history, and resources.
- Manage the park as a passive recreational opportunity.
- Engage stakeholders, users, and the community at large in developing a blueprint to manage the park, which accounts for passive use recreation, environmental restoration and preservation, and funding considerations for years to come.

Maximizing benefits

Protecting biodiversity is central to regional conservation and human well-being. In cities like Costa Mesa, nature regulates flooding, mitigates water pollution, and captures carbon from the atmosphere. Urban nature can improve human health by reducing air pollution and exposure to extreme heat, promoting active lifestyles, and improving psychological well-being. While traditional parks also can provide similar benefits, there is a wide range of positive health responses to cues from environments that are more natural and more biodiverse, such as lowered heart rates, increased concentration, lower cortisol levels and improved mood. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity at Fairview Park is critical for preserving natural spaces where people and other species can thrive. In addition to the human health benefits, exposure to wildlife can inspire awe and foster a sense connection to place for residents, which can motivate stewardship and investment in conservation of place. Evidence of this effect can be seen in the active community-based organizations supporting and invested in this special place.

Facing page photo by Robert A. Hamilton.

Balancing human activities with ecological process

Understanding and working within the natural, cultural, and ecological processes of the site will be a touchstone throughout the planning process. The Master Plan Update provides the opportunity to incorporate ecologically-friendly design and to strategically plan for the protection and enhancement of biological and cultural resources on the site. Achieving this objective requires planning and guidance informed by science including the following ecological principles:

- **Patch Size** – One of the most predictable patterns in ecology is the relationship between the size of a habitat patch and the number of species found within it. At 208 acres, Fairview Park is a large and ecologically important habitat, especially for the area-sensitive species that are restricted to this type of regional biodiversity hub for rare and threatened species. Preserving large habitat areas without human disturbance provides the opportunity to support the life cycle and habitat needs of substantial populations of plant and animal species.
- **Connections** – Features in the landscape that facilitate the movement of plants and animals and landscape with high connectivity support higher numbers of species. Opportunities to increase connectivity exists by filling in breaks where the continuity of vegetation is created either by human use, erosion or invasive species. Additionally, removing barriers, or increasing connections across existing barriers allow organisms to move freely to access resources and a variety of habitats during different life stages. By considering the vernal pool watershed as interconnected, rather than discrete features, we can enhance hydrological connectivity by removing barriers and reconnecting the entire watershed to the vernal pool features. This will enable movement of aquatic species among different habitat types across seasons and life stages. Opportunities exist to prioritize hydrological connectivity and connections between different habitats.
- **Management** – Improving the way humans manipulate the landscape can help support more species and strategic stewardship of vegetation can improve its habitat value. Avoiding vegetation removal during bird and mammal breeding seasons can help reduce the impact of these activities on wildlife. Retaining vegetative debris and leaf litter, seeds and fruit can also increase food availability and improve soil health. Soil compaction and degradation can impede native vegetation communities from establishing. Opportunities for soil quality improvements through mulching, soil decompaction, and in some cases removal of degraded soil, can benefit native plants and the animal communities that depend on them.

Constraints

Analysis of the overall natural setting and planning/jurisdictional context reveals many opportunities and constraints upon the planning of the park and the proposed uses. Many features considered are constraints to one form of improvement and opportunities for another and therefore are listed as both opportunities and constraints.

Placentia Avenue

The major vehicular arterial of Placentia Avenue divides the site into two distinct sections. This division has been somewhat relieved by the signalization of the existing park entrance intersection and construction of a pedestrian bridge connecting over Placentia Avenue. However, the road continues to physically separate the park for users and serves as a barrier for species that can not effectively cross the street, such as small ground-dwelling species.

The Fairview Channel

The drainage structure and fences of the Fairview Channel divide the eastern portion of the site into north and south sections. The opening of a pedestrian bridge to pedestrian and bike traffic creates a link between these two sections of the park. On the western side of Placentia Avenue the Channel imposes less of a divisive element, but does create a 50-foot-wide strip of land along the rear of homes facing Swan Drive, which is unsuited to public uses due to the proximity to those homes.

Steep Slopes

The topography of the western bluffs constrains development of park activities other than habitat restoration and enjoyment of the views afforded by their elevated position. These bluffs must be protected from erosion associated with pedestrians and wheeled traffic. The northeastern park area also contains steep slopes in the vicinity of the Fairview Channel.

Bluffs and Erosion

The bluffs contain several sites where erosion will require treatment to preserve the bluff and trails. With the absence of any restraint to traffic, vegetation has become compromised and erosion is developing deep canyons that threaten to continue to carve into the Mesa.

Archaeological Resources

The important resources of the archaeological sites require protection and preservation. Development of active uses or construction of fencing, signage and trail enhancements in the entire park site will require compliance with measures outlined in the Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources Assessment for the Fairview Park Master Plan including monitoring and study by a qualified cultural resources and Native American monitor.

Existing Park Entrance

The existing entrance represents significant prior investment and is located in a suitable location for traffic safety on Placentia Avenue. Improvement of existing signage and landscaping along with removal of traffic spike strips will improve visitor experience of the park.

Existing Fill Soils

The western portion of the site contains fill soils placed as a cap for the archaeological site CA-ORA 58. These soils were not graded smoothly when placed, and were further disturbed in the investigations to determine the boundaries of the site. The soils are known to contain asphalt, concrete, mortar and other construction debris in significant amounts. Prior to the discovery of the vernal pools as a sensitive natural resource, fill soils were placed in portions of the largest pool. Portions of this pool have been restored by removing the fill soil, and, as funds become available, this restoration of natural grade at the pools is to be continued. Due to the fill soils being contaminated and improperly placed, an acceptable protective cap for the archaeological site has not been achieved and is no longer required for protection as the old plans for development of sports fields and active recreation have been removed from the Master Plan Update recommendations.

Drainage and Flooding

The southern border of the site at Canyon Drive to Pacific Avenue experiences seasonal flooding, which extends into the rear yards of adjoining residential properties. Care must be taken in correcting this problem not to disturb the vernal pools or create bluff erosion.

Vernal Pools

The discovery of the vernal pool complex more than 30 years ago has significantly affected subsequent planning in the park. These resources fall under the protection and control of the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Not only are these important biological resources, which should be preserved and restored, but the regulatory agency restrictions on management and protection of these resources will guide the recommendations of the Master Plan Update.

Existing Park Facilities

The park contains an existing thirteen-acre area of lawn and trees with parking. The parking is centralized within the park; allowing access to all areas, and the parking area and lawn areas provide for picnicking and gathering within the park.

Existing Narrow-Gauge Railroad

Since 1988, the Orange County Model Railroad Engineers, Inc., a club open to the public, has been granted permission to construct and operate a rail system in Fairview Park, on the east side of Placentia Avenue. Over three miles of track have been constructed by the club. Free train rides are offered to the public on the third weekend of each month. Attendance at these weekends exceeds 50,000 persons per year. The presence of the tracks and the intermittent train traffic is consistent with the passive use goals of the park, and is compatible with other uses, such as walking, picnicking, and habitat enhancement.

Sewer Connection

The Costa Mesa Sanitary District installed sewer lines in Fairview Park on the east and west sides of Placentia Avenue in 2000.

Measure AA/Costa Mesa Municipal Code

In 2016, citizens adopted Measure AA, which requires that new permanent constructed improvements and significant changes require approval by a majority vote of the Costa Mesa electorate. The Code also includes several exceptions to the voter approval requirement including changes for restoration purposes, preservation purposes, public safety, and other exceptions as defined in the code.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Opportunities

Remnant Native Plant Species

All areas of the site have been changed from their natural conditions by human activity. Pockets of remnant native plant communities exist on the site and the opportunity exists to preserve and restore these plant communities. These plant communities are described in Appendix B. Though all areas of the site are disturbed and contain many non-native species, remnant habitats and analysis of existing soils and historical ecology indicate the potential for restoration of healthy plant communities and wildlife habitat.

Archaeological Resources

The existence of documented archaeological sites within the park presents strong opportunities for education and interpretation. The fact that CA-ORA 58, the bluff-top site has been well researched and documented will allow a rich story to be told concerning the people who occupied this site three thousand years ago. The preservation and protection of the archaeological sites is compatible with the passive uses proposed by the plan.

Trail Linkage

The Costa Mesa General Plan includes a Master Plan of Bikeways that calls for connections to the Santa Ana River Trail system through Fairview Park. The Bikeway Plan also calls for a Class 3 bikeway connection in the vicinity of Canary Drive. In the north-south direction the park trail system can offer trails allowing pedestrian and bike traffic to avoid the heavily traveled Placentia Avenue. In the east west direction the park can provide access to the extensive pedestrian and bike trails along the Santa Ana River. These trails are reached through Talbert Nature Preserve trails which connect to bridges over the Greenville-Banning Channel and the Santa Ana River. By connecting to the Talbert trails system access is also provided to the extensive hiking and interpretive opportunities within the Nature Preserve. The Canary Drive pedestrian and bike trail connection is separated by a twelve to fifteen foot grade change at the park boundary. The opportunity exists for trail connection here if the obstacles of grade and water mains can be overcome.

The bridge over the Fairview Channel, which exists at the eastern tip of the site, allows for pedestrian and bike traffic. The connection of trails to this bridge provides an important link to the isolated northeast corner of the site from the railroad area.

Photo by MIG Inc.

Link With Adjoining Habitat Restoration

Talbert Nature Preserve is a 90-acre restoration of native habitat completed by the County of Orange. The opportunity exists to soften the hard-edge boundary between these two parks and to expand upon the work which has been established in Talbert Nature Preserve.

View Opportunities

The bluffs offer extensive views to the north and west over the Santa Ana River. These views can be enjoyed from trails along the bluff. The northeast corner of the park contains a high plateau, which can be reached by new trails from Placentia Avenue or from the train area via the bridge over Fairview Channel.

Existing Narrow-Gauge Railroad

The existing railroad operation is a popular feature of the park by providing free train rides to the general public and accommodating private gatherings. The low traffic on the rails and minimal impact upon the landscape, allow for the introduction of other low-impact activities such as walking, bicycle riding and a small picnic area. These added activities can share parking facilities with the train area and enhance the train experience as well as function alone in this area.

Existing Park Facilities and Parking

The existing 13 acres of lawn and trees with parking for 106 cars represents an open space asset for the Costa Mesa community. These facilities are able to accommodate picnicking and passive recreational activities as well as orientation and a trailhead to locations throughout the park. A centralized interpretive area for the entire park can be located within the developed park area.

Vernal Pools

The vernal pool watershed is a rare and sensitive biological area and is a constraint to park management and recreational activities. When viewed in the context of a passive park they can become an opportunity in that their restoration and protection as rare natural features offer unusual possibilities for observation and interpretation by the public. While the pools require protection from human disturbance, consolidated trails along their perimeter provide access and interpretive opportunities and enjoyment of these unique and interesting ecosystems.

Grades allow Placentia Avenue Crossing

North of the existing western entrance Placentia Avenue begins to descend in elevation. Approximately 300 feet north of the intersection adjoining grades in the park are 16 feet higher than the roadway. A pedestrian bridge was constructed in 2006 to connect the east and west portions of the park.

Photo by Robert A. Hamilton

Habitat Restoration

Fairview Park supports a remarkable array of special-status plant and wildlife species, several of which are listed as threatened or endangered by state and/or federal governments. The park's combination of riparian habitats, coastal scrub, grasslands, and vernal pools is unique in Orange County, and rare anywhere in Southern California. The most significant threats to sensitive biological resources in Fairview Park come from human actions that destroy, degrade, and fragment the park's natural communities. However, this Master Plan Update provides the tremendous opportunity to reverse those threats and conserve, restore, and enhance the astounding diversity and abundance that remains through strategic habitat restoration management and planning. Restoration efforts have been occurring on this site for decades and have made substantial positive impact on the people and plant and animal species that call Costa Mesa home.

Habitat Restoration Opportunities

Facing page photo by Robert A. Hamilton.

05 Design Objectives

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

The overall master planning goals and objectives are drawn from the writings, minutes and statements of the Fairview Park Steering Committee, the physical analysis of the site and current planning conditions, and from citizen comment during the Master Planning process. The overwhelming consensus is to continue a park for passive use by individuals and small groups and to enhance the natural environment of the park for those uses and as a habitat preserve.

Fairview Park is unusual in that even though the major portion of the site is undeveloped, it has been open to the public for many years. Thus, the public image of the park as being expansive, open, and natural is well defined. The work of the Fairview Park Steering Committee, biological and archaeological consultants and the master planning consulting team has developed scientific information about the site, documenting its valuable resources and its potential for habitat restoration. The conclusions of the research are in accord with the desires of the public for an open, natural site. The Master Plan Update chronicles the scientific basis for a naturally restored park, but in addition, a critical function of the Master Plan Update is to define ways of providing for public uses that are compatible with and complement the restored park concept. The following summarizes goals and objectives developed during the Master Plan process:

RESTORATION

PUBLIC USE

BIOLOGICAL

Public Use

1. **Allow the park visitor to interact with a natural landscape and to experience a level of solitude, which is rare in the urban environment.**

   - Provide opportunities for walking or bicycling throughout the site to experience a variety of landscapes and habitat areas.
   - Provide for visual continuity and continued openness so that the totality of the park site can be readily experienced.
   - Design park features to be subtle and low impact, so as not to distract from the natural setting.

2. **Inspire and educate the public regarding the historical, archaeological, and biological significance of the site.**

   - Develop an interpretive program including signing, docents, programs for schools, and the public.
   - Encourage the development of a continuing non-profit support group.
   - Provide interpretive signing in key areas of the park.
   - Provide a central interpretive area as an introduction to major park features.

3. **Provide for access, public facilities, and developed park areas in a manner, which is compatible with the natural habitat restoration and archaeological preservation to occur in the major portion of the site.**

   - Utilize the size and configuration of the site to separate developed recreational amenities and uses from the more natural portions of the site.
   - Provide features for more intensive public use (such as lawn, picnic, and nature play areas) within the existing developed park site or existing more developed uses (such as the model railroad site).
   - Provide for the continuation of the organized uses that have historically occurred on the site, including model railroading, model airplane, and model glider flying in accordance with resource agency recommendations for the protection and preservation of biological and cultural and Tribal cultural resources.
   - Provide for walking, running, and bicycling along defined trails.
   - Utilize and improve existing trails as much as possible.
   - Consolidate and define walking trails to minimize fragmentation of natural habitat communities and restrict public access and the establishment of user defined trails within the vernal pool watershed.

4. **Provide additional opportunities and services for low-impact park use.**

   - Provide an enhanced setting for the model railroad area and model gliders.
   - Provide a landscaped setting on the eastern area of the park that will enhance ecologically appropriate habitat and support conservation of biological species throughout the park and enhance the visitor experience.
   - Enhance existing picnic areas and provide additional picnic facilities for small groups and on the eastern portion of the site within the footprint of exiting developed landscape areas.
   - Provide nature play areas.

5. **Provide for public safety.**

   - Provide trail access for public safety and emergency vehicles.
   - Stabilize the bluffs and provide safer access across them.
   - Provide buffer areas for fire-wise planting adjacent to residential areas.
   - Provide increased opportunities for walking and bicycling away from vehicular roadways.
   - Maintain the open quality of the park that allows for visibility over the park area for observation of any public safety problems.
   - Design park improvements in conformance with public safety codes and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

Cultural, Tribal Cultural & Restoration

01 Remove existing artificial fill with minimal damage to the resources underneath.

02 Protect archaeological sites from unauthorized collecting and damage. Enhance and re-establish habitat for native plants and wildlife.

03 Base restoration plans on scientific recommendations related to the existing site characteristics and the best available information on pre-existing natural habitat areas.

04 Conform to the federal and state restrictions concerning existing ecological resources.

05 Coordinate restoration plans with regional and adjacent restoration and preservation efforts, in order to provide continuity of habitat and address endangered habitat concerns.

06 Protect restoration areas from damage and intrusion.

Photo by Robert A. Hamilton.

06 The Master Plan

DRAFT

The Master Plan presents a park for a multitude of passive recreational uses, and continued enhancement of the site's unique natural features. The large size of the park allows for multiple passive recreational uses. The landscape includes lawn areas for recreational play activities and picnicking, and large areas of restored native plant communities. The Master Plan provides designated areas for organized user groups (i.e. model gliders and trains) to allow the continuation of uses in accordance with current Resource Agency recommendations. A trail system will provide access by foot, bicycle, wheelchair, park maintenance vehicle, and emergency and security vehicles. Interpretive opportunities are to be subtly provided as part of the trail system. Defined trails offer the possibility for a roaming walk among undeveloped nature for those seeking solitude or to explore the varied terrain of the mesa, bluffs, and low alluvial plain. Natural areas will contain extensive areas of restored local native plant communities.

The Master Plan Update is intended to provide a framework for the habitat restoration and enhancement and improved trails and signage system. Completion of the recommendations of the Master Plan Update will undoubtedly be by phases. Some change in anticipated uses may be expected, however, the overall policy direction for passive, natural habitat preservation and restoration is to guide all detail development decisions. The Master Plan Update will guide the creation of a rich and varied park which will serve the residents of Costa Mesa for generations to come.

The following pages provides detail to the Master Plan Update by geographic section of the park.

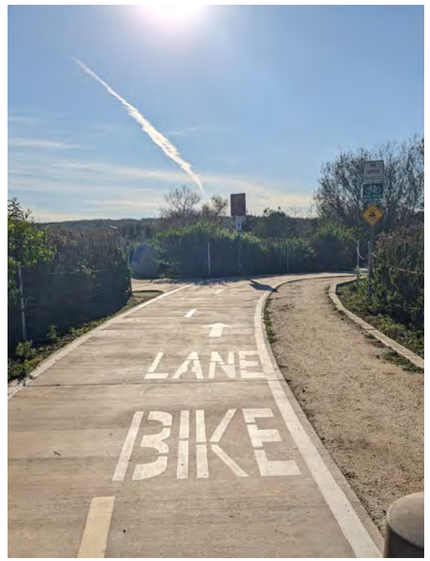
Park Entrance & Parking

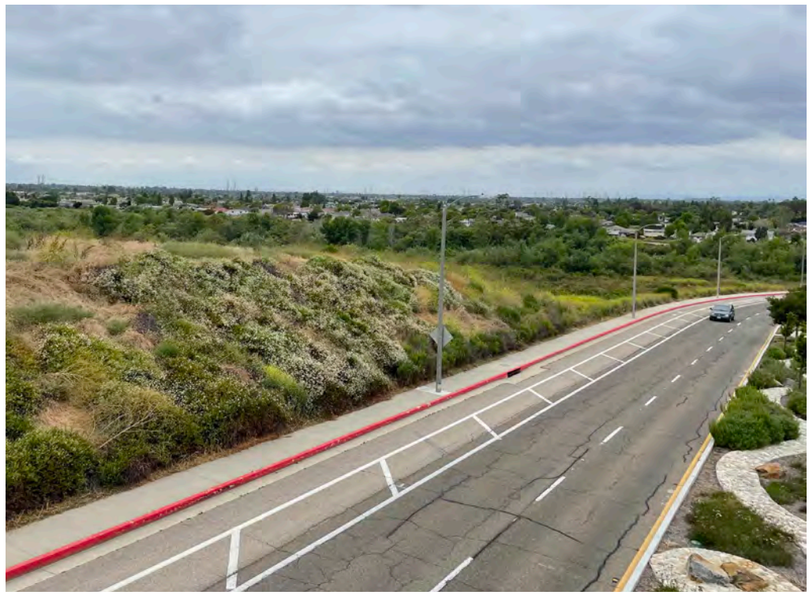
The main vehicular entrance to Fairview Park is located on the west side of Placentia Avenue near the north end of the lawn area, and can be accessed from northbound or southbound Placentia Avenue. This existing entrance to Fairview Park is currently controlled by a traffic signal. Parking for 106 cars is currently provided in the existing 13-acre park area west of Placentia Avenue. These spaces are to be retained. Existing parking for 26 cars opposite Waldorf School is to be retained.

The eastern vehicular entrance connects to informal parking for approximately 110 cars. This parking area will serve the train area, picnic areas, and trail system in the eastern park. This parking area is controlled by the traffic signal in the southeastern corner of the park at the Estancia High School intersection.

Buses unload in the paved parking areas near the interpretive area or near the train station. Buses park in car spaces or stage in nearby circulation areas. In order to make efficient use of parking and paving areas, no “bus only” parking is provided.

Park entrances and parking areas will be enhanced through the use of native vegetation, pollinator patches, and signage to reflect the unique identity of Fairview Park. Removing invasive ornamental species, such as Pride-of-Madeira, and replacing these areas with native species representative of the vegetation communities found within the park and applying a strong aesthetic composition will serve to enhance the street appeal of the park and entice exploration.





Photos by MIG Inc.

West of Placentia Avenue

Existing Park Improvements

The thirteen acres of existing lawn, trees, and parking are to remain. As funding or volunteers are available, additional trees should be planted to shade the parking lot to enhance human comfort. The addition of trees is not encouraged outside the parking areas west of Placentia. Trees are only to be replaced if removed at a one-to-one ratio. Open and unobstructed lawn is to be maintained for play activities and gathering spaces. The western edge of the existing lawn is to be bordered with native vegetation and delineated trailheads to create a sense of exploration and orientation to the park trails system.

Group Picnic Site and Restroom Facilities

This location serves the existing developed park area and users of the trail system, small group gathering spaces and the play lawn. Proposed nature play features, enhanced site amenities, and a central interpretive area will enhance and expand the educational and conservation goals of the Master Plan Update. Consolidating program spaces for passive recreational and educational activities in this area will focus energy and connection, while limiting the footprint of these activities.

A large picnic shelter provides shade and rain protection. Restroom facilities are also provided in this area of the park located near the central interpretive area on the route to and from parking. This location serves the existing developed park area, the trail system and visitors to the central interpretive area.

Central Interpretive Area

The proposed central interpretive area is located west of the existing park lawn, near the existing restroom and picnic shelter. This area is to serve as a starting point for learning about the Native American Tribes cultural history, European settlement history, ecology, archaeology and biological resources of the site. The center is not to contain buildings or other structures. The story of the site can be told through creative and low-profile signage elements. The site will allow for self-guided discovery suitable to children and adults. Additional signage should be located at key locations around the site to explain the life of the vernal pools, the various plant communities and habitats, the shell midden, the prehistoric river setting, and the Spanish Mission use of the site.

Glider Launching Sites

The existing fly field activity, currently located within the vernal pool watershed should be relocated due to detrimental impacts to sensitive biological resources associated with the activity and required maintenance of the fly field.

The Master Plan Update recommends moving the current site to another portion of the park to comply with resource agency recommendations. To avoid regular mowing and prevent colonization by ground-dwelling species, a compacted and stabilized decomposed granite paving area should be provided for the relocated launch site. Proposed improvements for the relocation site include an approximately 300-by-50-foot runway (partially surfaced with decomposed granite), pilot stations and pit area, a storage shed, an information kiosk, and installation of a low post-and-cable barrier.

Vernal Pools

The vernal pools are discussed in depth in Appendix B. The pools and basins are to be retained, restored, and protected. Protection involves prohibiting pedestrian and bicycle traffic from entering the seasonal boundary of the pool or basin with fencing and signage, while making only a limited visual intrusion. The plan calls for a fence to be located at the trail edge to keep visitors on established trails.

Archaeological Site CA-ORA 58

The very rich deposit of evidence of early human use of the site adds an exciting and interesting element to the Fairview Park story. The core area covers 14 acres of the northwestern bluff edge and yet many pass by without any knowledge of culture which once flourished here. A program of signage and display at the interpretive center is to make this story part of the Fairview Park experience.

Appendix D discusses the treatment of this important site in detail. Due to the mixing of construction debris and other contaminants in the fill cap, the existing fill deposits are to be removed. Restoration of the native vegetation to the site will not require the replacement of the protective cap fill soils. Access to the general area of the site is to be discouraged in order to protect cultural and Tribal cultural resources.

Trail Delineation

To protect sensitive cultural and biological resources within the park, large areas of the park will require enhanced protection from bike and pedestrian traffic. Where trails pass through habitat restoration areas the route is to be defined by post and rope, or post and rail fencing. This delineation system should be held back from the trail edge approximately two feet in order to recede into the planting as much as possible. All pet animals brought to the park are to remain on leashes at all times.

Access to Talbert Nature Preserve

Trail access is provided to Talbert Nature Preserve at two points along the western boundary of the site. At the north a pedestrian trail passes through the Sandbar Willow habitat to join the Talbert trail near the Greenville-Banning Channel. A constructed staircase located at northwestern portion of the Mesa connects Fairview Park to Talbert Nature Preserve across the existing bluff.

Bluff Erosion and Access

Improper use of the bluff face for recreational riding of wheeled vehicles and climbing has created numerous areas of erosion and defoliation. The short-term enjoyment which some derive from this destructive activity does not outweigh the need to restore and protect the remnants of sensitive coastal bluff scrub and the landform itself. Existing fencing along the bluff trail should be repaired and educational signage enhanced to further preserve and protect this unique natural feature.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Section 07 discusses structural management measures, which may be employed to control bluff erosion. The use of a "geoweb" or small check structure system will provide a measure of control without visual intrusion or heavy grading. The goal is to stabilize the bluffs at the current condition and allow for a vegetation cover and root systems to return.

Coastal Bluff Scrub Restoration on the Bluffs and Central Canyon

The slopes of the west facing bluffs are to be restored with Coastal Bluff Scrub and the north facing bluffs are to be restored as Black Sage Scrub. These plant communities reflect the natural vegetation for this soil, topography and exposure and is valuable habitat for the endangered California gnatcatcher. As a sensitive habitat area, and with respect to the erosion conditions on the bluffs, this is a sensitive area and is to be protected from erosion and further degradation.

Mesa Restoration

The southern portion of the Mesa from the bluffs to the existing developed park retains many species of the native grassland. This area is to be restored, as is the northern part of the mesa after the fill soil removal. The overall appearance of the restored area will retain the open flower-field-like feel of a broad open wild area. A portion of the Mesa Restoration includes the Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) and Flower Fields Restoration Project, which the City of Costa Mesa, in partnership with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), will restore 15.35 acres of critical habitat on the northern mesa. This initiative will fulfill mitigation obligations, improve conditions for native wildlife, and reinforce the City's commitment to the Master Plan. The project includes 11.91 acres of habitat restoration, 1.27 acres of habitat enhancement, and 2.17 acres of revegetation and weed management buffers to protect and improve ecological integrity. Restoration will focus on native plant communities such as Black Sage Scrub (6.78 acres), Fiddleneck–Phacelia Fields (7.3 acres), California Sagebrush–California Buckwheat Scrub (0.1 acre), and Purple Sage Scrub (1.17 acres), while ensuring protection of biological and cultural resources during implementation.

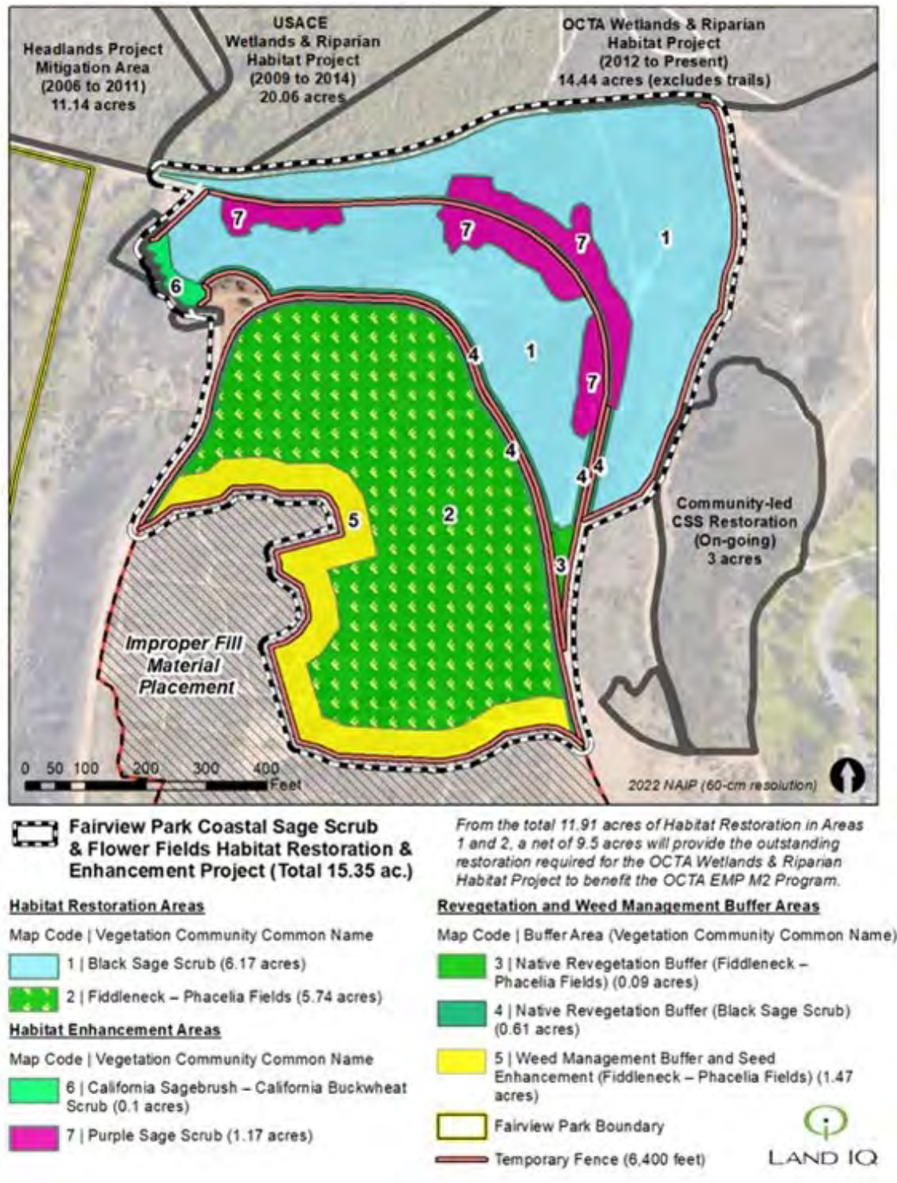
Photos by MIG Inc.

Although part of the site lies within the historic vernal pool watershed, decades of farming, grading, and improper fill placement have disrupted the hardpan soils, preventing seasonal ponding and vernal pool formation. Restoration of the watershed through fill removal is identified in this master plan as a key long-term goal. Surveys conducted in 2017 (Glenn Lukos Associates) and 2023 (Hamilton Biological) confirmed no ponding, rare plants, or fairy shrimp within the project footprint, though these species persist in nearby natural-grade ponding areas where openings in the fill allow for water to collect.

Execution of this project will contribute significantly to the conservation and restoration of critical habitats within Fairview Park. It is also a significant step toward park stewardship benefiting local wildlife, protecting Tribal cultural and biological resources and providing visitors a restored place to connect with nature.

Example of Native Common Fiddleneck on the Northern Mesa in Late Winter 2023.

Example of Nonnative Shortpod Mustard, Black Mustard, and Tocalote on the Northern Mesa in Spring 2023.



East of Placentia Avenue

Canary Drive Access and Facilities

The area of the park, which lies east of Placentia Avenue, is further divided by the Fairview Channel, a concrete-lined storm drain, which isolates the northern area of 9.8 acres. A trail connection to the end of Canary Drive provides for local community access to Fairview Park. Facilities in this area must be kept very limited in scope in order not to attract vehicular traffic for which there will be no suitable parking. Benches are to be provided which allow for enjoyment of the expansive views available from this site. No play equipment, restrooms or group picnic facilities are planned for this area. The trail system will connect three points: the point where Placentia Avenue crosses the Fairview Channel, the end of Canary Drive, and the bridge over the Fairview Channel. The northern boundary is to be connected to a water source providing irrigation within 100 feet into the park and following defensible space guidelines established by the Orange County Fire Authority and The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) .

Narrow-Gauge Railroad Operations

South of the Fairview Channel and east of Placentia is the site of the existing narrow-gauge model railroad operations. Over three miles of narrow-gauge track, bridges, station paving and a work area (steaming bay) are in place. The railroad is operated by the Orange County Model Engineers, Inc., a club consisting of enthusiasts who own the trains and have constructed all of the facilities at no cost to the City of Costa Mesa. The railroad is to be retained with its track system in its current location. The station area of the model railroad has been expanded to include permanent toilet facilities and a gift shop. Space is available for minimal expansion of the station, which provides shade for waiting passengers and small group gatherings. An additional rail line planned to be north of the existing northern extension of the railroad will complete the track layout on the east side of Placentia Avenue. The train tracks are not to extend their footprint into existing, or proposed habitat restoration areas. Development and implementation of an interpretive program is encouraged for the train operations offering passengers the opportunity to learn about the early human occupation of the site, the historic ecology and the native plant communities and wildlife of Fairview Park.

Bridge over Placentia Avenue

By connecting the east and west portions of the park with a pedestrian bridge, an iconic view and safe passage for pedestrians and bicyclists is created; overcoming some of the park fragmentation created by Placentia Avenue.

Trails for Cyclists and Pedestrians

Trails east of Placentia and south of the Fairview Channel link five points: Placentia Avenue at the point of crossing the Channel, the bridge over the Fairview Channel, the main pedestrian entrance and street level crossing to the western area of the park, the pedestrian bridge, and the Placentia Avenue, Estancia High School entrance at the southern tip of the site. Multi-purpose and pedestrian trails are indicated on the Trails Plan.

Archaeological Site CA-ORA 506

Approximately, 5/8 of the northern portion of the eastern site is identified as a registered archaeological site. This site has been the subject of less detailed study than CA-ORA 58, which lies west of Placentia Avenue. Any active development of the site would require environmental work in conformance with the City of Costa Mesa, County of Orange Public Facilities and Resources, Historical Programs, and CEQA. This plan calls for no active development in this site. Any ground disturbing activities require archaeological monitoring.

The Northwestern Lowlands

The Fairview Channel and Park Land to the North

The Fairview Channel has been the subject of studies to remove the existing concrete lining and create a more natural drainage (Project Report Fairview Channel Facility No. D04 from Greenville Banning Channel to Upstream Terminus, County of Orange EMA, August 1991). This project was not carried out after the raising of the bank of the channel, eliminating the threat of flooding to the north. The removal of the channel would be an expense, which is not necessary for the success of Fairview Park.

The northern park boundary lies approximately 50 feet from the protective fence of the Fairview Channel. This strip of land 50 feet by 1600 feet has no appropriate public use other than a visual barrier for the residences. An existing heavily used dirt path on the south side of the channel is included in the plan as a 3 feet wide pedestrian trail.

Sandbar Willow adjoining Talbert Nature Preserve

The permanent ponds in the northern lowlands of Fairview Park provide important habitat for wildlife associated with open water and emergent vegetation, supporting species such as the Mexican Amberwing damselfly, Western Toad, Baja California Tree Frog, Mallard, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, White-faced Ibis, Belted Kingfisher, Clark's Marsh Wren, and Great-tailed Grackle.

The retention pond receives water that circulates through this wetland system, with riprap channels connecting the ponds. Vegetation such as bulrush, cattails, pondweed, and algae frequently obstructs flow between ponds, reducing conveyance below design levels. To address this, the City annually removes emergent vegetation under a CDFW permit to prevent stagnant water and mosquito breeding, as required by the Orange County Mosquito and Vector Control District.

Additionally, a drain at the base of the bluff carries surface water from the southwestern detention pond, shaded by willow and blue elderberry. Further south, sediment accumulation forces water below the surface, creating subsurface flow.

The northern boundary where Talbert Nature Preserve meets Fairview Park contains Sandbar Willow and Sandbar Willow-Blue Elderberry Thicket plant communities. At the western boundary at the base of the bluff and along the naturalized drainage path and floodplain terrace is California Bulrush - Cattail Marsh and Poison Hemlock or Fennel Patches.

Photo by Land IQ.

Passive Uses & Circulation Trails

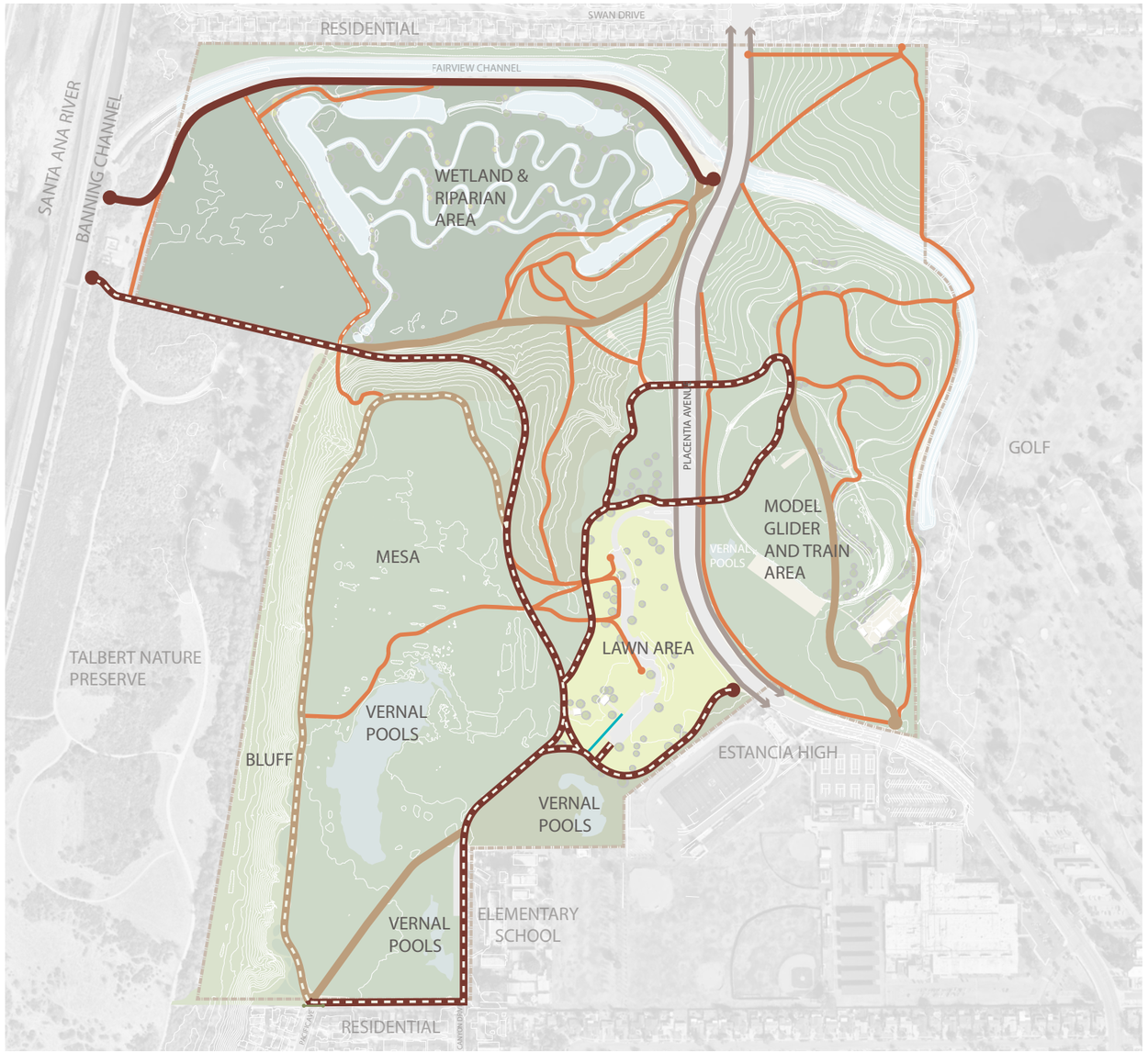
DRAFT

Passive uses of the park include walking, running, walking of leashed dogs, flying glider planes, model railroading, flying kites, picnics, and other small group functions. Organized team sports requiring formal facilities or sports operated as a concession are not included. The natural areas of the park are reserved for running, walking, limited bicycle trails, and interpretive uses. Trails in the natural areas are planned to offer access to each habitat type, in quantity and variety for frequent park visiting, but limited in order to provide large blocks of habitat undivided by trails or the interruption of human use.

The Trails Plan is a park-wide trail system intended to achieve the following:

- Provide clearly defined trails and establish a designated hierarchy of trails for the park.
- Developed design standards for the trail system, including widths, materials, and designated modes of travel by trail type.
- Removal of unauthorized user-defined trails that have formed through the vernal pool watersheds.
- Establish functional and pedestrian pathways allowing for pedestrian access in both wet and dry seasons for approved trails.

The diagram on the right illustrates the Trails Plan and the hierarchy of trails which are multi-purpose trails, designated maintenance and vehicular access routes, primary and secondary pedestrian trails. Multi-purpose trails are to accommodate both bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The maintenance and vehicular access routes occur on both multi-purpose trails and primary and secondary pedestrian trails. These routes are only to be used by vehicles for emergency access and approved maintenance activities. Primary



FAIRVIEW PARK
CITY OF COSTA MESA

Trails Plan

LEGEND

- Multi-Purpose Trail
- Maintenance/Vehicular Access
- Primary Pedestrian Trail
- Secondary Pedestrian Trail
- Existing ADA* Access Path
- Existing Sidewalk

*ADA : Americans For Disabilities Act

NORTH

0' 75' 150' 300' 450' 750'

pedestrian trails accommodate the highest use pedestrian routes and are designed to accommodate people walking side-by-side while secondary pedestrian routes are more meandering, less frequently used and designed for a single pedestrian. Primary pedestrian trails are surfaced with compacted soil, or decomposed granite. An existing boardwalk, located near the largest vernal pool, provides pedestrian access to this area while protecting biological resources. A proposed boardwalk along a portion of the existing trail running diagonally from the north terminus of Canyon Drive southwest to Pacific Avenue, allowing for pedestrian access in both wet and dry seasons is recommended. This will facilitate public access to the bluff and the Mesa trail loop. This pathway is periodically closed during the rainy season due to ponding water and shall be planned and designed in a manner that protects the integrity of the vernal pools and the vernal pool watersheds.

The bluff top trail is a primary pedestrian trail and does not accommodate bicycle traffic. The multi-purpose trails focus on connecting bicycle circulation through the park to adjacent destinations leaving pedestrian trails for exploration and meandering. Bicycle traffic should be limited to asphalt or concrete surfaces only to protect damage and degradation of site.

One overlook with one or two benches is recommended to be provided along the bluff trail. See also the Design Guidelines in Chapter 07 Implementation. No additional paved trails are proposed.

The hours of operation of the park are to be from dawn to dusk. No artificial lighting is to be provided in the restoration areas.

Photo by MIG Inc.

Interpretive Program

The Interpretive program for Fairview Park offers a unique opportunity to highlight the park's historical, ecological, and cultural and Tribal cultural significance in the region. The Master Plan Update recommends enhancing visitor understanding through updated interpretive signage and materials conveying the park's exceptional conservation value, its role in protecting local and global biodiversity, and its deep cultural history. Signage and interpretive elements should also recognize the site's significance to Tribal nations and native ecology.

Interpretive programming should emphasize the connection between ecological health, conservation of natural open space, and human well-being, fostering community awareness and stewardship. Partnerships with organizations invested in environmental conservation can be strengthened through involvement with the interpretive program. The design of interpretive features should be subtle and integrated into the landscape, following the guidance in Section 07, with signage that is simple, low to the ground, and informative. The central interpretive area can provide a broad overview while encouraging visitors to explore trails for deeper learning. Programs prioritizing self-directed discovery, and docent-led group tours are recommended. Given the size and diversity of the site, visitors should expect that multiple visits will be required to fully engage with all interpretive elements.

Interpretive content should convey the natural river setting prior to flood control projects and its influence on prehistoric and historic uses, including prehistoric village sites and areas listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The history of Spanish exploration and Mission and Rancho-era land use, the location of the Diego Sepulveda Adobe, the diverse native plant communities, resident wildlife species, and the history of archaeological research on the site should also be included. These measures will collectively enrich the educational, cultural, and ecological value of Fairview Park, providing visitors with a meaningful, multi-layered experience of the park's history and biodiversity.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Habitat Restoration & Enhancement

The City of Costa Mesa is a steward of Fairview Park. Restoration and enhancement of the park's diverse natural communities, and protection of the area's native wildlife populations, are the community's top priorities for this public resource. The habitat restoration and enhancement goals for Fairview Park are:

- Conserve natural vegetation communities and native wildlife populations.
- Protect archaeological and culturally significant materials (e.g., indigenous village use area, including two nationally recognized cultural resource historic sites).
- Restore ecologically appropriate and sustainable native habitat to benefit special-status plant and wildlife species.
- Provide low-impact recreational opportunities that promote human wellness and connecting with nature.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Habitat Restoration & Enhancement Targets

DRAFT

Utilizing the 2023 vegetation map and field observations conducted in 2023, ecologically suitable habitat restoration (Figure 6-1) and enhancement (Figure 6-2) targets for various locations within Fairview Park were identified. These targets were identified for vegetation map units that were highly degraded and in need of habitat restoration or would benefit from habitat enhancement, such as weed management and/or native seed addition.

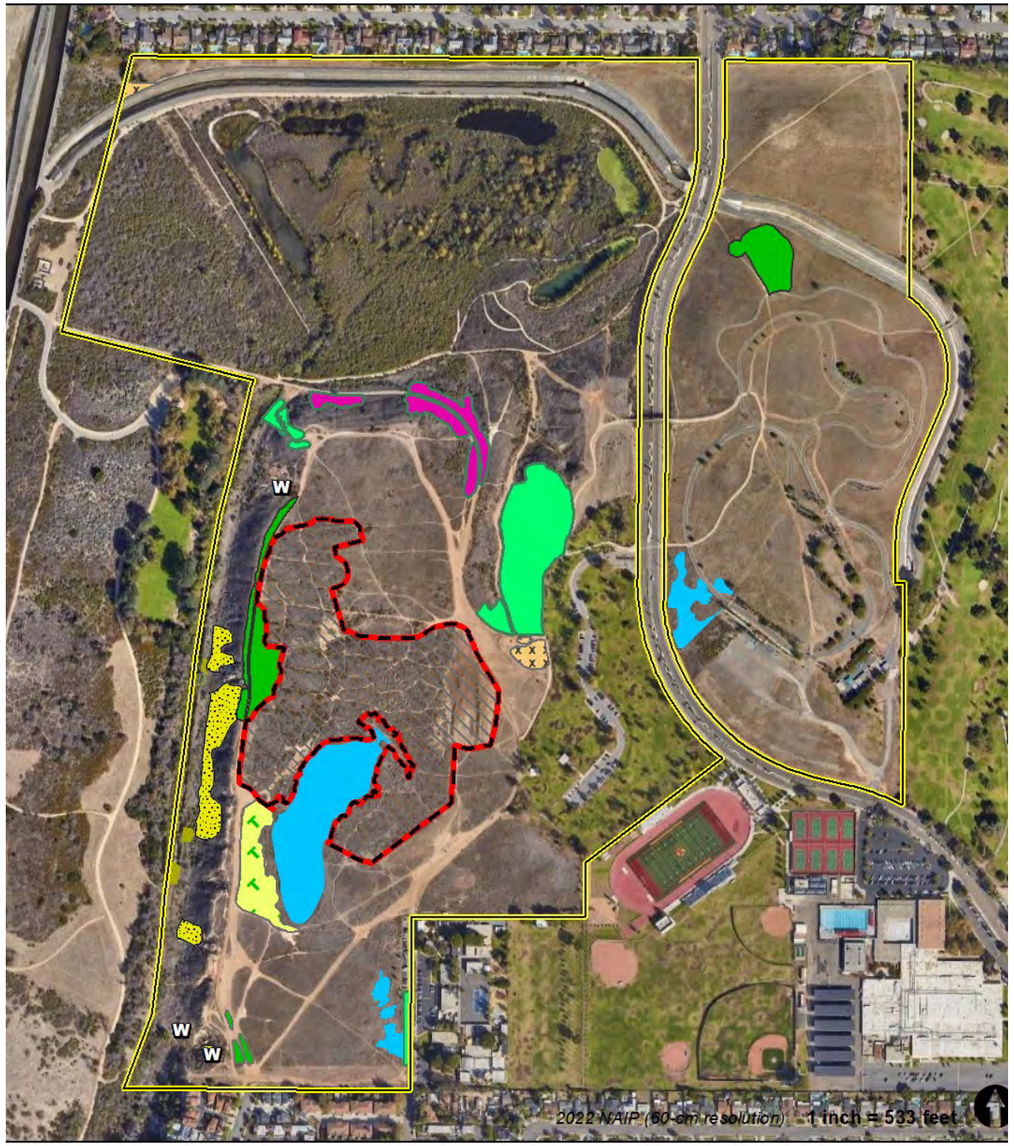
The selection of ecologically appropriate restoration targets was based on a thorough assessment of several factors including:

- Environmental characteristics (e.g., soil, landscape position, slope aspect, slope angle) in each location;
- Physiological or ecological relationships of the dominant or co-dominant species in each map unit;
- The identity of nearby vegetation communities, expert opinion based on habitat restoration experience; and
- A review of potential vegetation modeling outputs from the Nature Reserve of Orange County Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Plan Update (Brooks et al. 2019).

Based on this analysis, a total of 80.17 acres of habitat restoration opportunities and 14.52 acres of habitat enhancement opportunities have been identified within Fairview Park (Table 6-1). By focusing on these targeted areas and implementing suitable restoration strategies, the ecological health and biodiversity of Fairview Park can be significantly improved and maintained for the long term.

Habitat Restoration Guidelines for Fairview Park are provided in Appendix C.

Figure 6-1 - 2023 Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities for Fairview Park



Map Code | Habitat Enhancement Targets (Common Veg Name)

- 1820 | Arroyo Willow Thickets
- 1830 | Southern Californica Walnut Groves (W)
- 2310 | Coyote Brush Scrub
- 3120 California Sagebrush - California Buckwheat Scrub
- 3195 | Purple Sage Scrub (Introduced Vegetation Community/Restoration)
- 3330 | Coast Goldenbush Scrub
- 4310 | Fiddleneck - Phacelia Fields
- 6500 | Clustered Tarplant Fields
- 6600| Pale Spike Rush Vernal Pool Bottoms
- 8120 | Coast Prickly Pear Scrub
- Fairview Park Boundary
- Improper Fill Material (Extent in 2023)

Figure 6-2 - Habitat Enhancement Targets of Fairview Park

Summary of Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Opportunities in Fairview Park

Scientific Vegetation Map Unit Name	Map Code	Common Map Unit Name	Restoration or Enhancement Opportunities
Southwestern North American Riparian/Wash Scrub Group			
Baccharis salicifolia Shrubland Alliance	1810	Mulefat Thickets	3.5 acres of Restoration
Salix lasiolepis Shrubland Alliance	1820	Arroyo Willow Thickets	0.16 acres of Enhancement
Californian Broadleaf Forest and Woodland Group			
Juglans californica Forest & Woodland Alliance	1830	Southern California Walnut Groves	0.04 acres of Enhancement; 0.04 acres of Restoration
California Coastal Evergreen Bluff and Dune Scrub Group			
Baccharis pilularis Shrubland Alliance	2310	Coyote Brush Scrub	0.39 acres of Enhancement
Central and South Coastal Californian Coastal Sage Scrub Group			
Artemisia californica – Eriogonum fasciculatum Association	3120	California Sagebrush – California Buckwheat Scrub	3.48 acres of Enhancement; 22.46 acres of Restoration
Encelia californica – Eriogonum cinereum Shrubland Alliance	3140	California Sunflower Bush – Ashy Buckwheat Scrub	7.38 acres of Restoration
Artemisia californica – Opuntia littoralis Association	3190	California Sagebrush – Coast Prickly Pear Scrub	1.02 acres of Restoration
Salvia leucophylla Association (Introduced Vegetation Community/Restoration Area)	3195	Purple Sage Scrub (Introduced Vegetation Community/Restoration Area)	1.17 acres of Enhancement
Salvia mellifera Shrubland Alliance	3210	Black sage scrub	9.89 acres of Restoration
Isocoma menziesii Shrubland Alliance	3330	Coast Goldenbush Scrub	2.01 acres of Enhancement
California Annual Herb/Grass Group			
Amsinckia (menziesii, tessellata) – Phacelia spp. Herbaceous Alliance	4310	Fiddleneck – Phacelia Fields	0.13 acres of Enhancement; 7.64 acres of Restoration
Californian Mixed Annual/Perennial Freshwater Vernal Pool/Swale Bottomland Group			
Deinandra fasciculata Herbaceous Alliance	6500	Clustered Tarplant Fields	1.18 acres of Enhancement; 28.24 acres of Restoration
Eleocharis macrostachya Herbaceous Association	6600	Pale Spike Rush Vernal Pool Bottoms	4.5 acres of Enhancement
Coastal Baja California Norte Maritime Succulent Scrub Group			
Opuntia littoralis – Opuntia oricola – Cylindropuntia prolifera Shrubland Alliance	8120	Coast Prickly Pear Scrub	1.46 acres of Enhancement

Other Management Opportunities

In areas that would benefit from enhancement from higher native cover and diversity but are not suitable for habitat restoration (e.g., fuel modification areas, smaller areas, or areas mowed regularly, such as in the immediate vicinity of the narrow-gauge railroad tracks), other management opportunities have been identified (Figure 4-3).

Other Management Opportunity 1

To protect the resources in Fairview Park, highly invasive plants need to be controlled in perpetuity by the City. As an urban park with significant cultural and sensitive biological resources, new introductions of invasive plants and reintroductions of existing invasive plants will always pose ongoing threats. This includes areas that have already been restored or will be restored in the future.

The long-term management of the park should include control of high-priority invasive species following an adaptive management approach, as presented in Appendix C.

Other Management Opportunity 2

Prepare long-term management guidelines and actions to protect the vernal pools and vernal pool watersheds as described in this report, and as requested by the USFWS (2014) to conserve the San Diego fairy shrimp in compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act.

Other Management Opportunity 3

Approximately six acres of land within the 100-ft fuel modification zone are currently maintained along property lines with neighboring properties to the north and south of Fairview Park. Working with the local fire authorities, a fuel modification plan can be developed that will allow for increased native diversity and habitat structure while still achieving the fuel modification goals for fire safety.

Other Management Opportunity 4

Approximately 24 acres within the narrow-gauge railroad network east of Placentia Avenue that are not suitable for habitat restoration because of the current use and maintenance of the associated open space. These areas could be (a) enhanced with higher native cover and diversity using plants that are tolerant of periodic mowing, and (b) managed for highly invasive weeds, especially larger stature perennial weeds, such as black mustard, wild radish, fennel, and poison hemlock, to establish and maintain suitable habitat for grassland birds, including winter occupancy by burrowing owls.

Other Management Opportunity 5

There are about 11 acres of manicured lawn and landscaping trees, a small portion of which could be repurposed to create an area for "nature play" (e.g., soil mounds that can be manipulated for sensory and spontaneous, creative play) to maintain this activity at the Park, while moving it out of the vernal pool watershed where that use is not compatible with the protection of biological and cultural resources.

Other Management Opportunities

1 | High-Priority Invasive Plant Management (Entire Park Area)
2 | Long-Term Management Plan for Vernal Pool Habitat
3 | Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) Plan that Anticipates Native Plant Palette Tolerant of Annual Summer Mowing
4 | Native Vegetation Enhancement, Including Wintering Burrowing Owl Habitat
5 | Nature Play Programming for Portions of the Manicured Lawn Area

Strategic Habitat Restoration Project Opportunities

DRAFT

Based on the assessed constraints and opportunities, nine strategic projects were identified to achieve the habitat restoration and enhancement goals (Section 1). These projects are categorized into three main groups: habitat restoration (Projects 1 to 4), habitat enhancement (Project 5), and wetland and riparian habitat remediation (Projects 6 and 7), along with two projects dedicated to long-term habitat management (Projects 8 and 9).

The following objectives encompass the nine strategic project opportunities, each targeting multiple benefits and prospects to accomplish the habitat restoration and enhancement goals for Fairview Park:

- Habitat Restoration (Projects 1-4): These projects aim to restore degraded habitats, emphasizing improved ecological function and promotion of native biodiversity.
- Native Plant Enhancement (Project 5): This project focuses on boosting native plant species presence across the park, prioritizing species that are rare or that have distinctive ecological roles.
- Wetlands and Riparian Habitat Remediation (Projects 6-7): These projects address restoration and improvement of wetland and riparian habitats, supporting native species and ecosystem services.
- Long-Term Habitat Management (Projects 8-9): These projects will establish sustainable management practices, including monitoring and adaptive strategies, to ensure the success of restoration efforts and preservation of the park's ecological health in the long term.

By implementing these strategic projects, the City can make significant progress towards achieving its habitat restoration and enhancement goals in Fairview Park, ensuring the conservation of its unique biological and cultural resources for future generations.

Project 1. Mesa Habitat Restoration and Indigenous Village Site Protection

Objective 1a: Collaborate with tribal representatives on the development and implementation of the project plan.

Objective 1b: Remove the improper fill material to expose the natural soils and restore the historic viewshed of the Mesa without damage to the soil biota or archaeological resources (CA-ORA-58).

Objective 1c: Eliminate incompatible uses of the vernal pool watershed, including maintenance mowing of the fly field, to protect the hydrological connection and upland nutrient supply for the conservation of the federally protected San Diego fairy shrimp in the vernal pool complex of Fairview Park.

Objective 1d: Do not disturb the native soil on the Mesa by tilling, unnecessary grading, or digging, other than related to the removal of the improper fill material and to maintain the hydrological function of the vernal pool features.

Objective 1e: Provide appropriate fencing, educational signage, and trail improvements to organize human movement around the perimeter of the Mesa, with a suitable connection to the existing boardwalk and viewing platform adjacent to the large vernal pool.

Objective 1f: Design Mesa trail improvements to protect archaeological resources with an appropriate trail surface that can both adequately cap the natural soil and prevent further trail erosion (e.g., super-stabilized decomposed granite product).

Objective 1g: Construct an elevated vernal pool boardwalk with fencing to preserve the trail connecting the lawn area to the southwest corner of the Mesa while safeguarding the vernal pool watershed. The boardwalk will be raised above the grade of the vernal pool basins, and its supports will not have footings excavated in natural soils, thus preventing disruption of the underlying impermeable soil layer essential for the ponds' formation.

Objective 1h: Deplete the weed soil seed bank with a consistent, multi-year adaptive weed management program prior to installing new native seed material.

Objective 1i: Restore the native flower fields and vernal pool watershed habitat that were covered by the improper fill material with diverse, ecologically appropriate seed mixes, approved by USFWS and CDFW.

Objective 1j: Enhance the native annual herbaceous plant diversity of the remainder of the Mesa not directly impacted by the improper fill material.

Objective 1k: Assess and implement enhancements to the function and diversity of the vernal pool features, including east of Placentia Avenue, which is part of the historic extent of the Mesa.

Project 2. Bluff Stabilization and Habitat Restoration Project

Objective 2a: Develop and implement an engineering solution (see, e.g., Dudek 2003) to stabilize highly erosive features along the bluff, including restoration of ecologically appropriate native perennial plants in drainages (e.g., southern California walnut, blue elderberry). Prioritize the use of native plants and stabilizers that allow native plants to grow to stabilize the bluffs, rather than engineering solutions that eliminate habitat (e.g., use of shotcrete and concrete channels).

Objective 2b: Deplete the weed soil seed bank with a consistent, multi-year adaptive weed management program prior to installing new native seed material.

Objective 2c: Restore cactus scrub and maritime succulent scrub on the slopes using diverse, ecologically appropriate seed mixes together with container plantings of selected species (e.g., cactus cuttings, California boxthorn).

Objective 2d: Restore ecologically appropriate habitat along the drain at the base of the bluff, including mulefat scrub, willow scrub, and sandbar willow – blue elderberry thickets.

Project 3. California Coastal Sage Scrub Slopes Restoration Project (Slopes North of the Mesa and East of Placentia)

Objective 3a: Deplete the weed soil seed bank with a consistent, multi-year adaptive weed management program prior to installing new native seed material.

Objective 3b: Restore CSS on the slopes with diverse, ecologically appropriate seed mixes with the goal of providing sufficient resources to support a California Gnatcatcher population in the park and adjacent natural areas along the lower Santa Ana River that will be viable over the long term.

Objective 3c: Use limited container plantings and/or cactus cuttings to establish faster shrub cover to close informal trails, to manage erosive features, or to increase the frequency of plants that do not establish easily from seed and are either underrepresented in the community or provide an essential ecological service for wildlife.

Project 4: Community-Supported California Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS) Restoration in the Canyon

Objective 4a: Restore the native soil biota by consistent, multiyear weeding efforts led by the City, or an identified community organization, and supported by community volunteer events.

Objective 4b: Increase the diversity and cover of natives from seed and nursery grown container plants that are installed and maintained by the City, or an identified community organization, and supported by community volunteer events.

Objective 4c: Maintain the existing plantings by hand weeding around natives prior to significant seed set of the weeds.

Photo by Robert A. Hamilton

Project 5. Native Plant Enhancement of the Railroad Mesa

While the railroad improvements and the fragmentation of the open space precludes complete restoration of this area, the habitat can be improved by controlling non-natives and enhancing native diversity and cover with species that are tolerant of mowing.

Objective 5a: Deplete the weed soil seed bank with a consistent, multi-year adaptive weed management program prior to installing new native seed material.

Objective 5b: Seed the area with a native seed mix with primarily native herbaceous life-forms (e.g., perennial grass, annual forbs) that are compatible with burrowing owls and other grassland birds, along with low rates of native shrubs that can tolerate periodic mowing during summer dormancy (e.g., coast goldenbush, California bush sunflower).

Project 6. Wetlands and Riparian Habitat-Phase 2 (OCTA) 9.5-acre CSS/Grassland Restoration Project

Objective 6a: From the opportunities described above, identify 9.5 acres of habitat restoration to satisfy the outstanding obligation to OCTA, focused on CSS and flower field habitat restoration that is ecologically appropriate for Fairview Park.

Objective 6b: Prepare a Habitat Restoration and Monitoring Plan for approval by OCTA, CDFW and USFWS, which includes at least 3 years of natural rainfall-driven weed grow-and-kill prior to native seed installation (or at least, two years of weed grow-and-kill with a temporary overhead irrigation system, if feasible), followed by installation of a diverse locally collected seed mix following habitat restoration best practices described in Appendix B.

Objective 6c: Implement the Plan, and monitor post-seeding establishment for five years, or until all the success criteria have been met.

Objective 6d: Place the successfully completed habitat restoration areas in a conservation easement to benefit OCTA.

Project 7. Wetlands and Riparian Habitat-Phase 2 (OCTA) Water Conveyance Remediation Project

Objective 7a: Follow engineering recommendations to remediate flow through the pond and channel system to minimize maintenance costs for the City to annually remove emergent vegetation from the ponds to meet vector control requirements.

Project 8. Fuel Modification Plan

Objective 8a: Consult with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) and the Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue (CMFR) to develop a fuel modification plan for the existing fuel modification zones (FMZs) (i.e., 100-ft zones from the property lines of habitable structures) that balance the need for fire risk reduction and managed vegetation that complements the surrounding native habitat.

Objective 8b: Prioritize control of invasive plants, such as crown daisy, to meet fuel modification objectives for the Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ).

Objective 8c: Develop plant palettes of ecologically suitable large native shrubs that tolerate pruning (i.e., removal of lower limbs to create vertical fuel breaks on larger plants), and native grasses and forbs that tolerate annual summer mowing.

Objective 8d: Develop a typical planting plan that allows for groupings of native shrubs that are interspaced with native plantings (e.g., needlegrasses, Stipa spp.) that are mowed to within 6 inches of the ground to create at least 50 percent cover of horizontal fuel breaks in the FMZ.

Project 9. Long-Term Habitat Maintenance Plan

Objective 9a: Implement a weed management program to maintain the function and habitat quality of the natural communities in the park, as well as the visitor experience.

Objective 9b: Follow the approved Fuel Modification Plan.

Objective 9c: Provide patrols to manage impacts from off-trail activity and unpermitted uses of the park.

Objective 9d: Maintain conservation easements (e.g., Headlands Dana Point Project Mitigation Area, Wetlands and Riparian Habitat Project – Phase 1 and 2) by implementing an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) management program in Fairview Park to maintain the quality of the habitat and to manage costs by controlling invasive plant populations when they are small.

Objective 9e: Coordinate weed maintenance and biological monitoring with regional reserve and open space managers (e.g., Nature Reserve of Orange County, Randall Reserve, Talbert Nature Preserve, City of Costa Mesa Golf Course) to leverage resources and knowledge.

Objective 9f: Conform to federal and state environmental and wildlife laws.

Objective 9g: Prepare long-term management guidelines and actions to protect the vernal pools and vernal pool watersheds as described in this report, requested by USFWS (2014) to the San Diego fairy shrimp, and summarized in Appendix E.

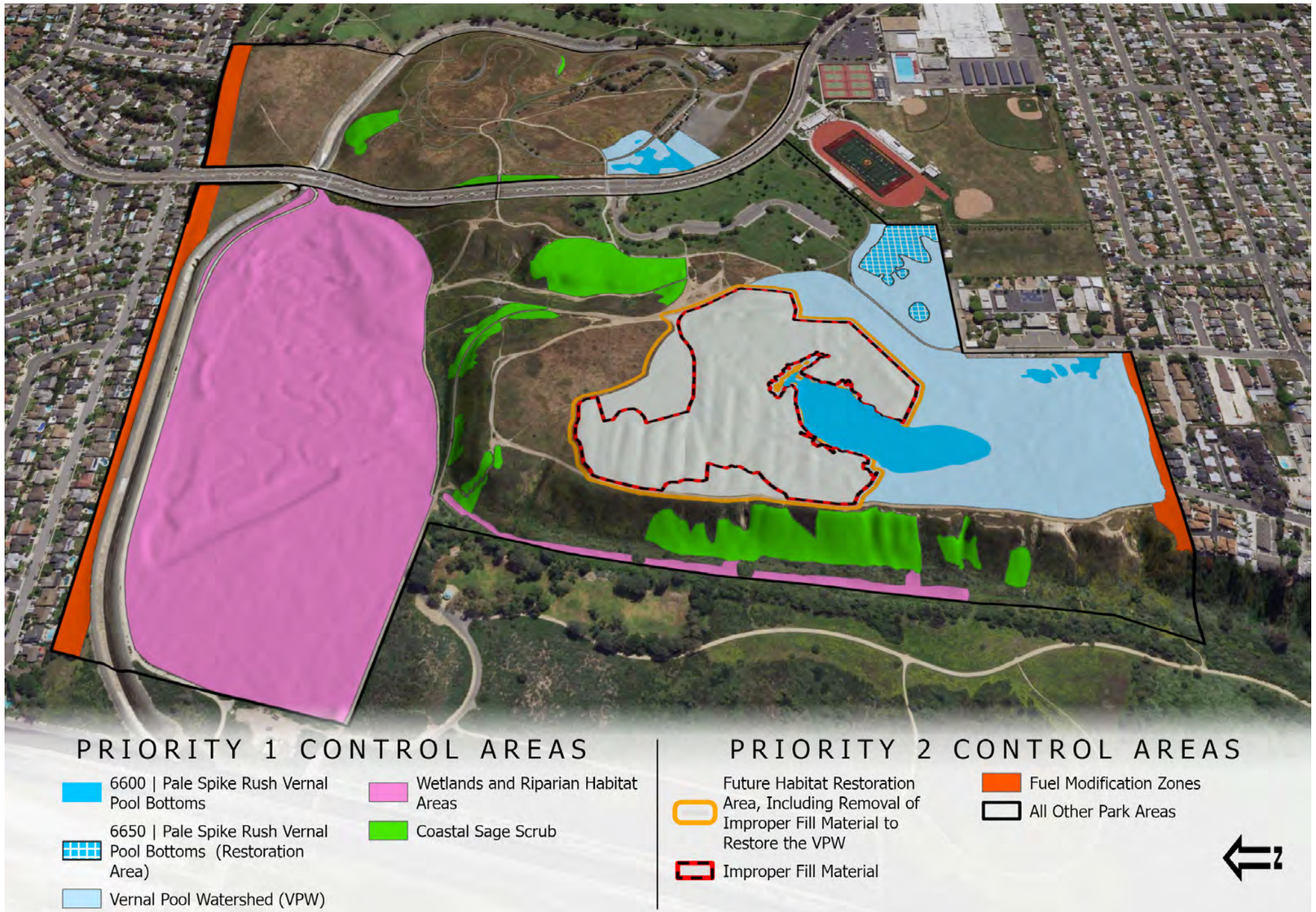
Photo by Robert A. Hamilton

Long-term Invasive Plant Management Plan

DRAFT

To protect the sensitive vegetation communities, rare plant populations, and important wildlife habitats in Fairview Park, it is crucial to implement a sustained control program for high-priority invasive plants. These invasive species have significant negative impacts on the park's biological resources and should be a primary focus of ongoing maintenance efforts. While numerous non-native plants are present in Fairview Park, prioritizing the control of highly invasive species is essential for effective biological resource protection. Some invasive plants may require only one treatment per year while others may necessitate repeated treatments, depending on factors such as plant traits, phenology, weather, and suitable treatment methods. Any constraints, such as avoiding herbicide use in vernal pool inundation areas, must also be considered.

Consistency and appropriate timing of invasive plant treatments are key factors in successful control and the protection of native habitats. The primary goals are 1) to prevent excessive biomass production from invasive plants that could displace native species, and 2) to control invasive plant populations before they produce viable seeds, ensuring their long-term management. By prioritizing the control of high-priority invasive plants, the City can work toward maintaining and restoring the ecological health of Fairview Park. A Long-Term Invasive Plant Management Plan is presented in Appendix E.



High-Priority Invasive Plant Control Priority Areas

Existing Fill Soil Removal

Fill Placement on the Mesa

With the intent of capping the archaeological site on the Mesa (CA-ORA-58), prior to construction of new park amenities, fill material was placed on the Mesa in 1987 and 1988 (see Figure 2-14). The fill material did not, however, meet standards for capping an archaeological site, and included chemically active construction and paving debris that can degrade archaeological artifacts instead of preserving them (City of Costa Mesa 2008).

Not only was the fill material improper for the protection of indigenous cultural resources, but it also created three new threats to biological resources on the Mesa. First, the fill material covers and takes away habitat for native flower fields and fairy shrimp. Second, the fill material impairs the hydrologic function of the vernal pool watershed by reducing the amount of precipitation that would feed the vernal pool complex, which is especially critical in below-average rainfall years when the pools do not typically form. Third, the fill material creates an unnatural state of low soil microorganism and plant diversity, which sustains large infestations of invasive plants (e.g., black mustard, poison hemlock) that produce large quantities of seed, which is then transported into other locations in the park, threatening the diversity and function of native habitat.

In 1993, The Keith Companies dug east/west-trending strips in the fill to allow study of the archaeological site limits, resulting in the topography of the fill area today (see Figure 2-16) (City of Costa Mesa 2008). Between 1996 and 2009, improper fill material that covered a significant portion of Vernal Pool 1 was removed as part of two restoration efforts. It is not well documented whether this fill material was disposed of offsite or moved to another location on the Mesa. Today, significant portions of the historic vernal pool watershed remain covered by the improper fill material, degrading significant cultural and biological resources in Fairview Park (Figure 2-21).

The hydrological function, biodiversity, and extent of the Mesa vernal pool watershed and the vernal pools would be significantly improved with the removal of the improper fill material. Remove the improper fill material to the natural soil grade with special attention to not disturbing the natural soil and protecting the cultural resources. Fill removal should be completed in combination with native habitat restoration efforts as described in Strategic Habitat Restoration Project Opportunities.

Fill material may be compatible for re-use in the creation of natural play features, or soil mounds that can be manipulated for sensory and spontaneous, creative play within the footprint of the narrow-gauge railroad track located outside of culturally and biologically sensitive areas.

Fill Placement in the Canyon

During the construction of the Fairview Park Wetlands and Riparian Project, the bottom of the canyon was filled with material excavated to create the wetland features. The material used to fill the bottom of the canyon has not been analyzed but is presumed to be natural alluvial soil material. The fill areas are primarily dominated by nonnative plants with some recruitment of native vegetation, including from the adjacent community-led CSS habitat restoration work. Habitat restoration targets for this area are identified in Section 04.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Drainage Issues

The site contains two areas where erosion is a concern. Both areas are discussed in Chapter 03. The bluff erosion can be addressed by discouraging park users from walking on the bluff faces at points other than stairs or trails (e.g. by using fencing and signage), and by implementing a combination of engineered bluff stabilization and natural revegetation methods in areas showing persistent erosion issues.

The flooding of the southern boundary of the west side is addressed by installing a drain at the base of the bluff, or to Canyon Drive where it may be drained off of the site. Care must be taken in any drainage measure to study possible effects upon the vernal pools and their drainage and watershed.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Erosion Control Measures

Bluff Erosion

The erosion of the bluff face is a natural process, which has been accelerated through public use and activities within the park. The characteristics of the bluff affecting erosion include the soil type and topography. Additional runoff tributary to the bluff face will also accelerate the development of erosion features. The exposed face of the bluff area is naturally susceptible to (1) sheet erosion, (2) rill erosion, and (3) gully erosion. Pedestrian traffic along the bluff face and mountain bikes have caused additional aggravation of the erosion process, mechanically dislodging the material of the bluff face.

Erosion Control Measures and Suggested Recommendations

Erosion control features can be installed as part of the park master plan implementation, which will assist in minimizing the amount of erosion of the bluff, bluff canyons or arroyos, and the natural canyon areas. The bluffs are important natural features to be preserved. The amount of erosion, which occurs to the bluffs, is partially dependent upon the amount of runoff which discharges over the bluff face or tributary to the bluff erosion features. Runoff over the bluffs is partially a natural feature of the site and is unavoidable. Restoration of the site to its historical grade elevations will relieve existing drainage patterns caused by the placement of fill soils. A management measure is to minimize public access to the bluff face and direct foot traffic to specific access point down the face of the bluffs. This is accomplished through defining the trail along the top of the bluff and by the addition of wooden stairway systems. Vegetation of exposed earthen areas and slopes will greatly assist in maintaining the natural areas, which are experiencing, surface erosion. In addition, the vegetation can also be reestablished within the arroyos or bluff erosion features to provide ground cover and reduce the velocity. A summary of the management principles associated with erosion control for the site include:

- Retain the natural vegetation
- Minimize grading
- Vegetate denuded areas
- Divert runoff away from exposed slopes where consistent with natural grade
- Keep runoff velocities low
- Prepare drainage systems to handle the concentrated flow

The existing natural arroyos, which have eroded within the bluff areas, can be protected through structural management measures in order to prevent continued erosion. Two different treatments are recommended which will have a low visual impact upon the site. These control measures include:

Geoweb: This is a material which can be utilized to stabilize the bluff face and the bluff erosion features. The material is a plastic interlocking web consisting of diamond shapes, which are about 8 inches square, creating large connected cells.

The material is placed on the slope or drainage courses to provide a flexible revetment. The cells are then filled with soil or gravel and then vegetation is established in the cells. This material has recently been applied on a large slope failure in the Newport Beach back bay area adjacent to the bike trail. After completion,

Photos by MIG Inc.

it is not possible to see the material, however, it provides an excellent stabilization system, which would also integrate well with the natural park setting.

Check Structures: A "check" is a small grade control structure placed across the stream, which slows the water velocity and creates a permanent stream elevation at that location which cannot be eroded. A series of checks can be constructed along these drainage features to maintain a low velocity. A new material, which has been implemented to construct the checks, is a vinyl interlocking sheet pile. The vinyl material is lightweight, which allows the material to be installed by hand, and is inert so that it has a high longevity. The checks can also be constructed of rock, timbers, or other material.

Photos by MIG Inc.

Developed Park Drainage & Hydrology

Proposed or Modified Drainage Patterns

The park master plan proposes to perform minimal grading to implement the proposed facilities and maintain the existing topographic/drainage patterns as much as possible. One of the primary considerations for maintaining the natural drainage patterns is associated with the bluff top area and the existing vernal pools. The vernal pool habitat is extremely sensitive to surface drainage and is dependent upon this runoff to sustain itself. It is critical within this area that the natural drainage boundaries, which have been identified, be maintained to the maximum amount possible. There are some disturbed areas of deposited fill soils within these areas. It is proposed as part of the grading for the park that these areas would be returned to the original historic condition with the natural drainage patterns.

The only significant change through the grading involves the establishment of the riparian area in the location of the existing Placentia Drain. This earthen ditch drain was created during agricultural uses of the site collecting water from the northern low areas and draining south along the bluff face to what is now the south end of Talbert Nature Preserve. The drain has not been maintained and is filled at several trail crossings. A riparian area in the drain is to be enhanced in the south and created in the north by connecting the drain to a constant water source in the Fairview Channel, and restoring the flow line of the Placentia Drain.

Existing Identified Drainage Deficiencies

The primary drainage deficiency, which has been identified through this qualitative evaluation, is an area located in the southern portion of the site, near the existing residential area at Pacific Avenue. The runoff generated from a 16-acre portion of the bluff top area drains toward the residential area at Pacific Avenue. The natural topography within this area causes the runoff to be directed towards a low point near Canyon Drive and Pacific Avenue. This area does not have any direct outlet and has caused flooding problems for the adjacent buildings, which appear to have been constructed below the grade of the park.

The remainder of the park site appears to be adequately drained through the natural topography. The vernal pools are self-contained drainage catchments and do not have outlets, but this is an integral part of this natural feature. Regional flood protection for the area is provided through the Fairview Channel and the County of Orange has prepared a preliminary design study, dated August 1991, which has evaluated the flood protection levels provided by the channel. The projects contemplated in this report have been permanently shelved due to the fact that flooding in the area of the Channel is not a high risk and not related to channel capacity, but to backing up in the Greenville Banning at times of maximum flow.

Recommended Drainage Features

Proposed permanent public facilities constructed as part of implementing the park master plan should investigate the local drainage requirements and ensure that the proposed grading provides positive drainage. The fill removal activities should maintain the natural drainage patterns and reduce the potential for erosion. Any large proposed impervious areas, such as parking lots, should include appropriate surface drainage collection facilities which may only require curb and gutters. New active park areas, which are grassed for public use, such as picnic areas, should be graded to ensure positive drainage and should have a slope greater than 2%. Erosion control features and best management practices should be applied during the construction period in order to minimize the sedimentation impacts.

It is recommended that the existing surface drainage deficiency be corrected that has been identified as part of this evaluation. Construction of an underground storm drain is feasible to achieve the desired level of flood protection, and should prove to be desirable in consideration of the vernal pools.

Security & Fire Prevention

Security

Designated trails are wide enough to allow for patrol vehicles to reach most areas of the park. All trails are accessible by foot and bicycle patrol. The hours of the park are to be from dawn to dusk, and security lighting is not to be provided with the exception of the train station and maintenance yard, and museum facilities.

Fire Prevention

Fire vehicles will be able to utilize the designated wide trails in the event of medical aid or fire emergencies. Gates are to be placed at intervals in the trails delineation system for emergency fire access to restoration areas. At the time of detail design of the infrastructure water system, hydrants are to be provided over mains.

The plan calls for irrigated zones to join the residential interface at Canary Drive, Swan Circle and at Pacific Avenue and Canyon Drive. The strip of land between the Fairview Channel and Swan Drive is to be disked periodically to prevent the growth of seasonally dry vegetation in the vicinity of the residential community on Swan Drive. The trail system breaks the restoration areas into segments that will replace the current practice of disking bands of vegetation

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07 Implementation

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The detailed design decisions are critical to implementing the Master Plan Objectives and assuring that the vision of Fairview Park is fully realized. The following guidelines are intended to serve as parameters for future designers and City decision makers during implementing phases of the park plan. They are both reminders of the types of features discussed to be included in the park during the Master Plan process, and further elaboration from a design standpoint on methods for achieving the intent of the Master Plan. The overriding factor to be considered in the design is the desired natural, low-key character of the park. The man-made features and improvements should, as much as possible, allow nature to speak for herself. The recommended materials and design suggestions are intended to allow the designed features to blend with the natural areas, to be substantial and functional while providing a consistent, quality appearance. In laying out trail routes, the existing pathways are to be utilized wherever possible.

TRAILS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

SITE ACTIVITIES AND USES

Facing Page Photo by City of Costa Mesa.

Design Guidelines

Trails

Trails facilitate movement around Fairview Park and are extensively used by the public to enjoy the unique resources and features of the park. Preserving and enhancing passive use recreation is a central goal of the Master Plan Update and trails are the primary method for accommodating park access. During public outreach activities conducted during the Master Plan Update process, consensus was generally formed around a desire for well maintained and clearly defined trails along with the removal of excess trails on the Mesa to protect sensitive biological and cultural resources. Additional desires were expressed to utilize natural materials to define trails and the prioritization of enforcement to control use by motorized vehicles were emphasized.

Key Master Plan Update recommendations regarding trails are the following:

- Provide clearly defined trails and establish a designated trail system for the park.
- Develop and adopt design standards for the designated trail system, including widths, materials, and designated modes of travel by trail type.
- Establish functional and pedestrian pathways allowing for pedestrian access in both wet and dry seasons for approved trails, including from the north end of Pacific Avenue to the north end of Canyon Drive.
- Pathways shall be planned and designed in a manner that protects the integrity of the vernal pools and the vernal pool watersheds.
- Provide for long-term preservation of the vernal pools and their associated watersheds by using suitable fencing, interpretive displays, and the removal of unauthorized user-defined trails that have formed through the vernal pool watersheds.
- Provide ADA-accessible pathway(s) from the main parking lot to the existing paved multi-purpose path west of the main parking lot.
- Provide an emergency and service vehicular access point into the park from Pacific Avenue. Develop protocol guidelines for vehicular use of this access point. See Attachment # for reference.
- Remove excess trails on the Mesa.
- Include multi-use, possibly separated trails.
- Ensure wide trails for loop, narrow trails for others.
- Utilize natural materials for trail rather than synthetic.
- Prioritize enforcement or prohibition of motorized bikes on park trails.
- Create improved connectivity to key adjacent sites such as the Santa Ana River.
- Ensure regular maintenance to trails.

Trail design varies depending on type and intensity of use and location.

Trail Delineation/Fencing

Trail delineators shall be utilized to protect and preserve sensitive cultural and biological resources by directing human movement around these areas. Because of the dynamic nature and seasonal movement of vegetation and sensitive wildlife species, trail delineation locations should be regularly evaluated for effectiveness in protecting resources.

Key Master Plan Update recommendations regarding trails are the following:

- Incorporate natural materials for fencing.
- Apply research-informed strategies for locating fences across the park.
- Fence-off biologically sensitive areas.
- Provide wildlife-friendly fencing.
- Ensure fencing allows for natural plant growth.

Trail delineators should be constructed of natural materials such as post and rope, or post wire materials. Wood post and rail fencing may be required in high traffic areas. To limit ground disturbing activities, posts are to be driven into undisturbed soil and not excavated or placed in concrete footings. When trails cross the vernal pool, alternative trail delineation is to be used that does not penetrate the soil including gabion baskets, or stacked wood fencing design.

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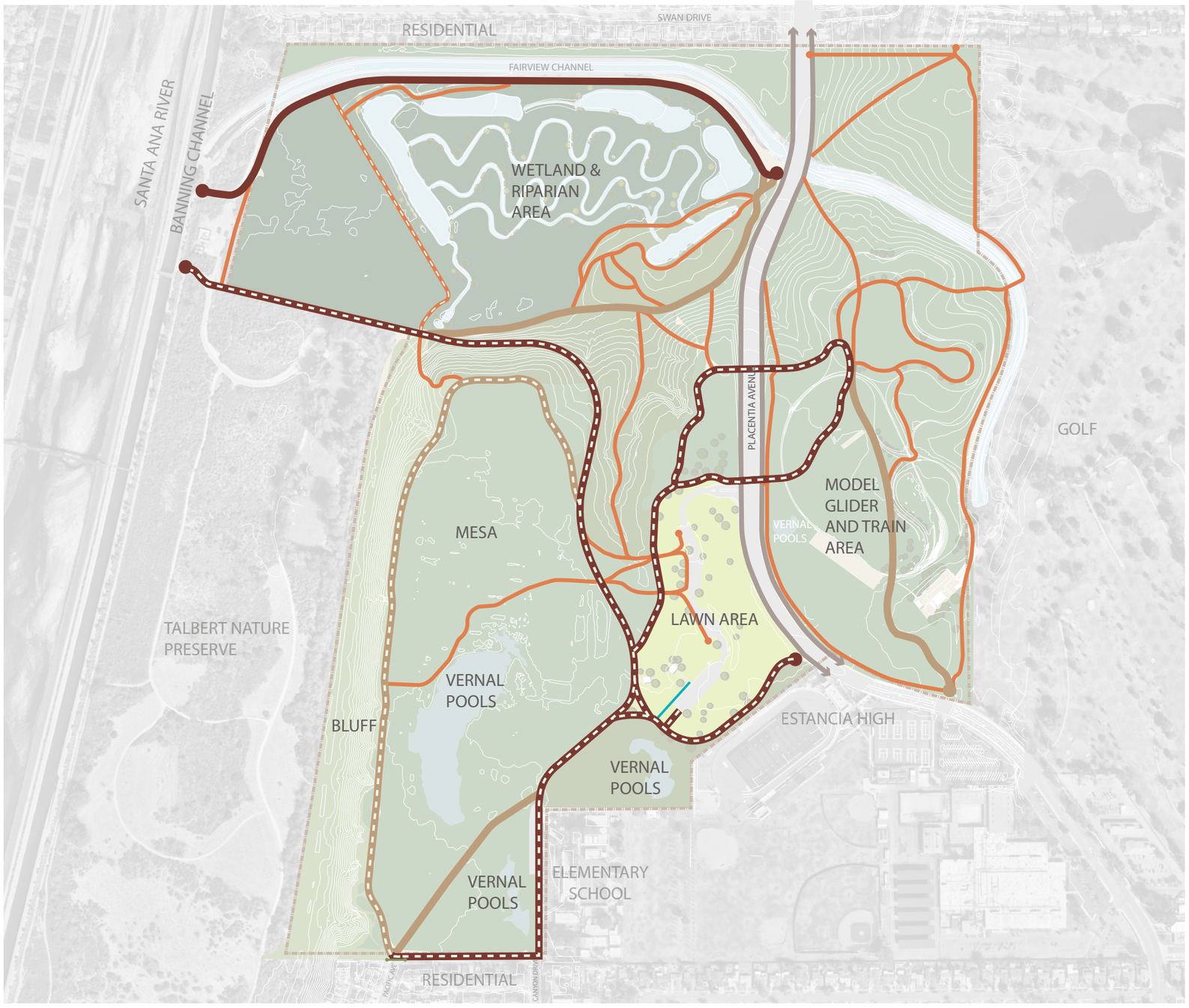


FAIRVIEW PARK
CITY OF COSTA MESA

Trails Plan

LEGEND

- Multi-Purpose Trail
- Maintenance/Vehicular Acces
- Primary Pedestrian Trail
- Secondary Pedestrian Trail
- Existing ADA* Access Path
- Existing Sidewalk

*ADA : Americans For Disabilities Act

NORTH

0' 75' 150' 300' 450' 750'

Trail delineators are to be placed two feet off the edge of trails. If no significant intrusion is apparent into the restoration areas, vernal pool areas, archaeological areas, vernal basins, or sensitive restoration areas, the delineators may be removed. Annual monitoring of intrusion into restoration areas should be implemented by the City of Costa Mesa with a biologist in order to evaluate the need for trail delineation. Each year sections of the delineator may be removed on a trial basis. The goal for this program is to maintain vigorous vegetation, stop erosion, and protect the vernal basins and archaeological sites with as little physical intrusion on the natural environment by way of delineators as is possible.

Park Furniture

Benches and picnic tables should be rustic in character and should be able to be installed without concrete footings, in order to avoid excavation into the archaeological remains. Wood and concrete should be the predominant materials. Wood should have a stained rather than painted surface. The same furniture should be used throughout the park. Trash receptacles should be simple metal trash cans with restraints. Drinking fountains should be sandblasted exposed aggregate concrete.

Key Master Plan Update recommendations regarding park furniture are the following:

- Use natural materials for park furniture.
- Retain and repair existing park furniture.
- Provide additional trash and dog waste receptacles.
- Ensure ADA accessible furniture.
- Install bike racks at park.
- Include benches to enhance the experience of views at the bluffs.
- Concentrate most furniture in the lawn area.

Lighting

Pedestrian scale security lighting should occur only in the developed parts of the park site (the entrance and picnic areas on the west side, and the parking lot and train station area on the

Trail Type / Mode of Travel	Width	Material
Pedestrian Trails / Walking and running	3’-4’	Compacted earth, decomposed granite
Multi-purpose Trail / Walking, running and non-motorized bicycle riding	8’	Compacted earth, decomposed granite, concrete or asphalt
Bike / Safety / Maintenance Trail / Walking and running and non-motorized bicycle riding and maintenance vehicles	8’ paved trail with markings separating movement /	Concrete, or asphalt
Separated Bike / Safety / Maintenance Trail / Walking and running and non-motorized bicycle riding and maintenance vehicles	8’ paved trail with 4’ vegetated separation and 4’ wide pedestrian trail	Compacted earth, decomposed granite, concrete, asphalt
Boardwalk / Walking and running and non-motorized bicycle riding and maintenance vehicles	8’ wide	Wood or composite boards
ADA Accessible Pathways	6’ wide paved trail	Stabilized decomposed granite, asphalt or concrete

east side). The remainder of the park should not be lighted and should be closed to the public after dark. Light fixtures should be chosen which repeat the sandblasted exposed aggregate concrete and wood materials of the other park furniture.

Stairways

Existing stairway down the bluff should be repaired and maintained in good condition to match original design intent. Signage and adjacent trails should be designed to discourage use of informal trails on the bluff surface.

Nature Play

Play areas at the park should enhance the educational goals of the park and develop future community stewardship and appreciation of the unique features of the park. Traditional structured playground features are not desired at the park.

Key Master Plan Update recommendations regarding nature play are the following:

- Locate nature play features on the lawn or on the east side of the park.
- Create a centralized natural and educational play area.
- Utilize the site to enhance community education about the nexus between (1) human health and (2) ecological health and (3) conservation of natural open spaces.

Site Activity and Uses

Interpretive Area and Signing

The central interpretive area is intended to serve as a starting point for learning about the archaeological and natural features of the site. This area is not to contain buildings or tall structures. It is intended that the interpretive information be conveyed through low-level signage, castings at ground level and limited modeling. These components should be integrated into a flowing sculptural design that will draw visitors easily through the space. It should provide seating and provide space sufficient for small classes to gather and listen to a docent or experience the features being displayed. Signing throughout the site should be low level, visible, but inconspicuous. Low tilted bases of sandblasted concrete with brass or porcelain enamel signing should be considered.

Park Structures

No new park structures are planned on the west side of the park. Instead of a park structure, a centralized outdoor area can serve the educational and orientation program function for education and interpretation on numerous topics related to the park.

On the east side, provide for a potential native plant growing space in a location that avoids impacts to native habitat. The growing space shall be planned and designed in consultation with a qualified restoration ecologist. Additionally, provide for an on-site maintenance and storage facility, or designated area for efficient storage and use of Fairview Park restoration tools and equipment, and to support the operations of the native plant growing space.

Entrance

The design vocabulary of park entrances should be further refined to highlight the unique features of the park. The entrances, both to east and west should be designed to echo the other designed elements such as signage and site furnishings. Ornamental planting areas around the entrances and the developed portions of the site, on both the east and west, should be replanted with a variety of Southern California native and pollinator plant species. Introduce plantings that will occur in the naturally occurring habitats of the rest of the site. Priority should be given to removing invasive species, such as Pride of Madeira, from these high visibility areas.

Parking lots

No new parking is proposed in this Master Plan Update, but the character of the parking lots should be maintained as rustic as their function will allow. For example, existing railroad tie boundaries should be replaced in kind. In the parking areas on the west side bordering the lawn, new trees should be incorporated to relieve the urban appearance and to mitigate the urban heat island effect. This is an ideal location for donated trees to be planted as all other locations of the site are not appropriate for tree donations.

Irrigation

Temporary irrigation systems will be needed to establish the native habitat areas.

These systems should be installed with pipe on grade so that excavation in the archaeological area will not be needed, and so that the piping can be removed without damaging the plants when the growth is established. Where permanent irrigation system is to be installed, monitoring of the trenching should occur per the recommendations of the archaeological report. The City standards for irrigation equipment and installation will be applied.

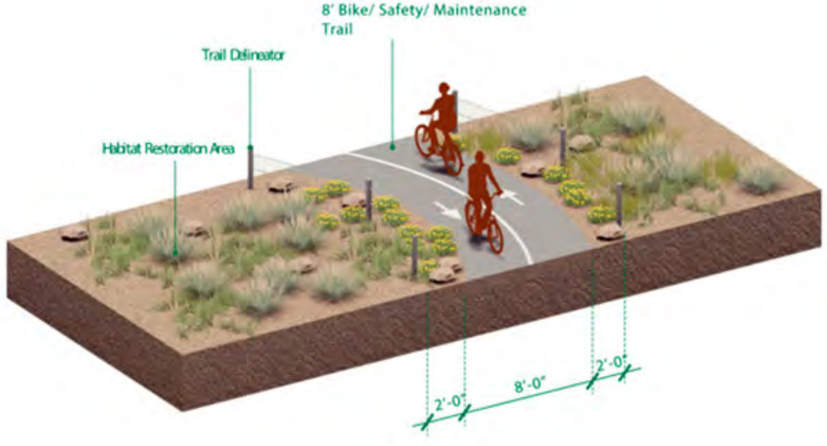
Erosion and Drainage Control

Construct erosion control measures along the western bluff. This measure will arrest the deteriorating land area and protect the CAL ORA-58 archaeological site.

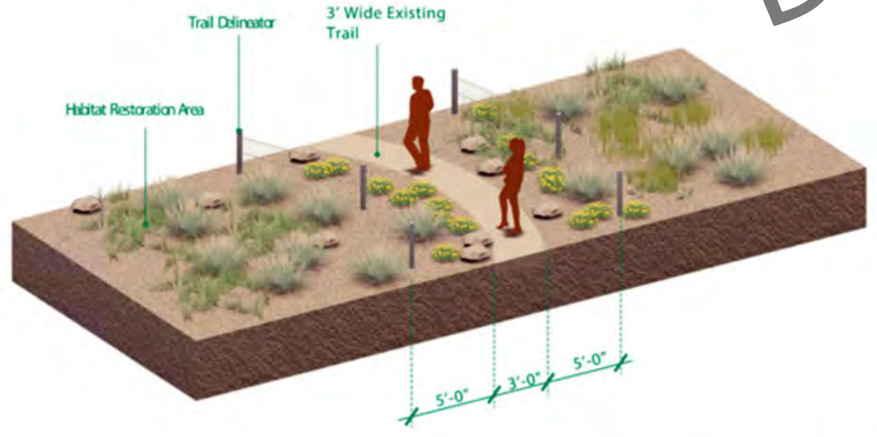
Construct the proposed drain in the area of Pacific Avenue. This improvement will relieve the flooding which occurs in the southern portion of the site, which is periodically affecting adjoining property.

Removal of Improper Fill Soils

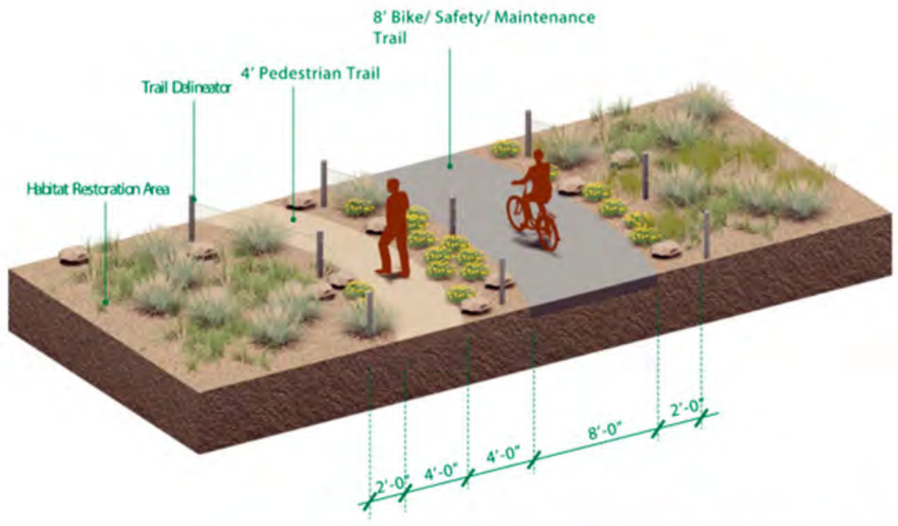
Remove the fill material that was deposited as a cap for the CAL ORA-58 archaeological site. This material contains asphalt, concrete, and other foreign material, which may further degrade the site. The removal of this material will be necessary before any restoration may begin in this area. Prior to the removal of the debris, a phasing plan is to be developed, which is to develop methods for preserving species of wildlife currently occupying the uneven terrain. Once the fill is removed, the area should be re-vegetated.



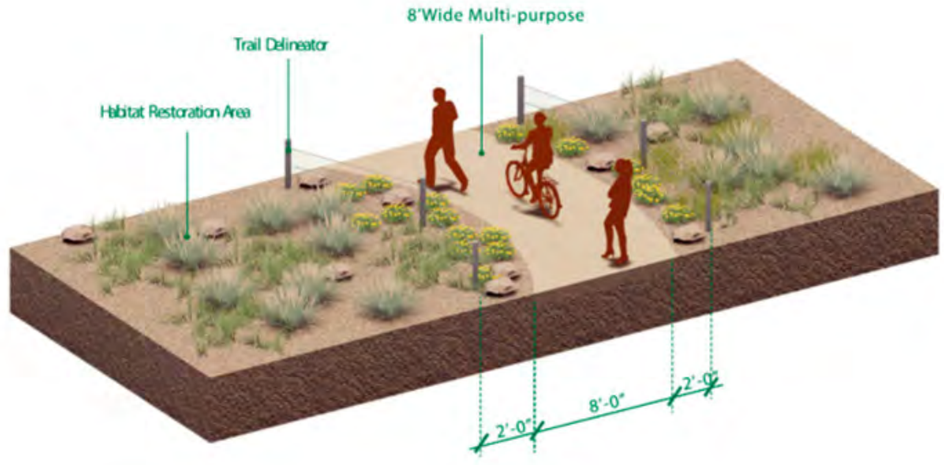
8' Wide Bike/ Safety/ Maintenance Trail



3' Wide Pedestrian Trail



Separated Bike/ Safety/ Maintenance Trail



8' Wide Multi-Purpose Trail

Mesa and Bluffs

This area includes the vernal pools, coastal bluff scrub, and large areas of native grassland restoration. These are among the most sensitive areas in terms of important and unique habitat. This area would establish a firm direction for the total project, create interpretive opportunities, and offer important bluff top trails for public use. At the time of the fill soil removal from the area of the archaeological site, restoration of the native grasslands must be started. Due to the presence of vernal pools, this area may also offer the greatest opportunity for attracting outside financial participation.

Northwestern Lowlands

This area also offers large areas of sensitive habitat restoration, as it will contain alluvial scrub, and coastal strand. The area also will serve as the link to Talbert Nature Preserve to the west and south. With the completion of this segment, the major portion of the western park area will be completed as a contiguous habitat.

Group Picnic Area – Lawn Area

Improvements to gathering and picnic areas, as well as centralized education, interpretation and nature play features, will be located within the developed lawn area. Additionally, revegetation of bare and denuded areas along with new trail delineation and signage linking trail connections can be completed along with trial overlooks allowing views to the Pacific Ocean, Catalina and the restored northwestern lowlands.

East Side and Model Railroad Area

In addition to landscape enhancements and improvements to the picnicking sites, it is recommended that an on-site maintenance and storage facility, or designated area is incorporated for efficient storage and use of Fairview Park restoration tools and equipment. Additionally, proposed enhancements for the east side include a native plant growing space on the east side of Fairview Park in a location that avoids impacts to sensitive habitat. The growing space shall be planned and designed in consultation with a qualified restoration ecologist. The on-site maintenance and storage facility will also complement the operation of the native plant growing space.

Appendices

Appendices completed as part of the Fairview Park Master Plan Update are summarized below.

Please visit costamesaca.gov/fvpmp to review full appendices.

Photo by MIG Inc.

Appendix A: Outreach Documents

This document includes a summary of community feedback gathered during the outreach process, as well as individual written responses collected from community meeting participants. This document also includes a description of outreach activities for each meeting conducted as part of the Master Plan Update project.

Appendix B: Biological Resources Technical Report

This report contains an inventory of documented biological resources present in Fairview Park based on site investigations conducted during the Master Plan Update project, and documented species observations from other recently completed projects and biological studies. This report also includes an assessment of special-status plant and wildlife species present in Fairview Park, and a description of sensitive vegetation communities and habitat features.

Appendix C: 2023 Vegetation Map and Habitat Restoration Opportunities Report

This report supports the Fairview Park Master Plan Update by providing an updated assessment of the park's vegetation communities, soils, and other site conditions to identify ecologically appropriate habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities. This report also outlines changes observed since the original Master Plan, completed restoration projects, and longterm vegetation targets to support the conservation of biological resources. In addition, this report contains a guide to support best practices for restoration projects, as well as a long-term invasive plant management plan, which are crucial to support the ecological health of the park and its sensitive habitats.

Appendix D: Cultural, Tribal Cultural, and Paleontological Resources Assessment Report

This report includes a description of the site's cultural, tribal cultural, and paleontological resources, and a description of the site's prehistoric cultural setting. This report also synthesizes previously completed cultural resources and historical resources investigations completed at the site, as well as ethnographic information based on previous study. The report underscores the site's high sensitivity due to the site's extensive history of human occupation dating back over 3500 years. This report also establishes mitigation measures to protect the site's various sensitive cultural resources.

Fairview Park Steering Committee Recommendations

1. Provide clearly defined trails and establish a designated trail system for the park.
2. Develop and adopt design standards for the designated trail system, including widths, materials, and designated modes of travel by trail type.
3. Finalize and adopt the habitat restoration and enhancement opportunities technical report for Fairview Park.
4. Establish functional and pedestrian pathways allowing for pedestrian access in both wet and dry seasons for approved trails (see Rec 1), including from the north end of Pacific Avenue to the north end of Canyon Drive. The pathway shall be planned and designed in a manner that protects the integrity of the vernal pools and the vernal pool watersheds.
5. Provide for long-term preservation of the vernal pools and their associated watersheds using suitable fencing, interpretive displays, and the removal of unauthorized user-defined trails that have formed through the vernal pool watersheds.
6. Relocate the fly field activity currently located within the vernal pool watershed to outside Fairview Park, due to detrimental impacts to sensitive biological resources associated with the activity and required maintenance of the fly field.
7. Revegetate and restore excessive areas of barren ground and exposed soil using ecologically appropriate native vegetation.
8. Provide for a potential native plant growing space on the east side of Fairview Park in a location that avoids impacts to native habitat. The growing space shall be planned and designed in consultation with a qualified restoration ecologist.
9. Provide for improved and updated signage and interpretive materials to highlight the exceptional conservation value of the site, and the importance of local and global biodiversity preservation.
10. Provide for improved and updated signage and interpretive materials to highlight the cultural history of the site, indigenous ecology, and to recognize the site's significance to tribal communities.
11. Utilize the site to enhance community education about the nexus between (1) human health and (2) ecological health and conservation of natural open spaces.
12. Provide for an on-site maintenance and storage facility, or designated area on the east side for efficient storage and use of Fairview Park restoration tools and equipment, and to Once support the operations of the native plant growing space.
13. Continue the current Master Plan recommendation that calls for the removal of unsuitable fill material (imported fill material placed on the Mesa in the late 1980s), protection of culturally sensitive resources, and habitat restoration of the Fairview Park mesa.
14. Continue the current Master Plan recommendation that calls for stabilization and habitat restoration of the Fairview Park west bluffs to protect natural resources and public safety.

15. Continue the operation of the model train railroad facilities, and integrate environmental interpretive content and ecological enhancements along the model train network to provide educational opportunities to all ages while onboard the model train circuit.
16. Develop and adopt the Maintenance, Operations, and Management Plan for Fairview Park, including the Invasive Plant Species Management Plan for Fairview Park.
17. Continue to build partnerships with organizations invested in environmental conservation, and expand opportunities to participate in community-based restoration, stewardship, and nature-based educational activities.
18. Provide continuing opportunities for tribal coordination and participation in the implementation of the Updated Fairview Park Master Plan.
19. Provide ADA-accessible pathway(s) from the main parking lot to the existing paved multipurpose path west of the main parking lot.
20. Provide an emergency and service vehicular access point into the park from Pacific Avenue. Develop protocol guidelines for vehicular use of this access point.
21. Provide for the incorporation of a central interpretive area.
22. Incorporate viewing platforms and scenic viewpoint features to enhance environmental interpretive opportunities while preserving sensitive features.
23. Incorporate nature play elements throughout the park and a nature play area within the existing lawn area.
24. Incorporate a native pollinator area to attract butterflies and other pollinators. The native pollinator area would replace the ornamental vegetation including invasive species currently located in the planter area.
25. Modify and refine the name of the Fairview Park site to a more nature-oriented name, such as “Fairview Nature Park” to reflect the site’s exceptional natural resources, significant conservation value, and lasting legacy as Costa Mesa’s premier natural open space asset.