

DRAFT
FAIRVIEW PARK
FLY FIELD COMPATABILITY EVALUATION



CITY OF COSTA MESA
PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

FAIRVIEW PARK ADMINISTRATOR



March 6, 2020

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Drone view of HSS fly field looking south toward Waldorf School and surrounding vernal pool complex.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Model aircraft flying has been an ongoing passive use at Fairview Park since the early 1960's. From the beginning, the Harbor Soaring Society (HSS) has been the nationally recognized, locally sponsored, Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) endorsed club at the fly field since that time. Although HSS has had this long history of model aircraft flying at Fairview Park, many aspects of the use, and of the park, have changed over this time period. Both technological advancements in the hobby as well as environmental conditions at the park have evolved resulting in the need to evaluate the compatibility of the use with current conditions and future plans for the park.

This document is the result of the June 2019 City Council direction to the Fairview Park Administrator to complete a "Comprehensive evaluation of the value of the partnership between HSS and the City, and the compatibility of all flying activity at Fairview Park". The timing of this evaluation coincides with the approval process for the current HSS / City agreement, due to expire on June 30, 2020, and the Fairview Park Steering Committee Master Plan Update, due for completion in 2021.

Within this document, staff presents the process and results of an approximately seven-month multi-modal investigation, public engagement process, and evaluation including:

- ✓ Historical and current conditions of Fairview Park
- ✓ Governance structure for management and operations of Fairview Park
- ✓ Summary of Council direction to complete the evaluation
- ✓ Evaluation processes and methods used
- ✓ Valuation of the partnership and compatibility of use
- ✓ Opportunities and Constraints
- ✓ Scenarios for moving forward

Major aspects of compatibility brought out in the public engagement process were:

- ✓ Conflicts between park uses (other users and wildlife)
- ✓ Fly field size and location
- ✓ Parameters of the fly field airspace and types of planes used
- ✓ Field use times; seasonal trail closures/bird migration patterns
- ✓ Enforcement of fly field rules and park ordinances
- ✓ City permitting processes
- ✓ Opportunities for aeronautic and engineering education

The public engagement and evaluation process concluded with a focus on four major concerns voiced by participants (not listed in any particular order of priority):

- ✓ Concerns about safety/nuisance issues
- ✓ Concerns about park flora/fauna
- ✓ Concerns about flight parameters
- ✓ Concerns about enforcement

After much study and review, staff is recommending the following four options for consideration by the Fairview Park Steering Committee:

- ✓ Continue use of Fly Field Activity without Modifications
- ✓ Continue use of Fly Field Activity with Modifications
- ✓ Close the Fly Field/Relocate to Alternate Location at Fairview Park
- ✓ Close the Fly Field without Alternate Location

With this information, the Fairview Park Steering Committee next, will make a recommendation to the Parks, Arts, and Community Services Commission (PACS) for their consideration and recommendation to the City Council for approval. (See Public Meeting Summary, page 25).

The information provided in this document is focused on the fly field evaluation only and is not intended to be an evaluation of all existing conditions, public use, or management of Fairview Park.

This report should be considered a “working document” until decisions are made and next steps outlined regarding any changes to the use of model aircraft flying at Fairview Park. Every effort was made to make this first draft include all information up until and including the February 12, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting.

As stated throughout the document, the processes used by staff for the evaluation cannot be considered a scientifically nor statistically based evaluation. Staff has learned in this process that current research and science surrounding the issue of model aircraft flying and disturbances to avian behavior, includes numerous and wide-ranging variables which are highly location and species specific, that make it inconclusive at this time and the data non-transferable to Fairview Park. (Please see pages 27 and 31 for more discussion on the subject).

Instead, the information used for the evaluation was provided by participating residents, regional flyers, park users, Committee members and Commissioners, and by organizations associated with the subject matter, and is directly related to their Fairview Park experiences.

The public comment process was instrumental in gaining a keen understanding of perspectives and was utilized to develop a strategy for evaluating both the compatibility of the fly field and the value of the HSS / City partnership.

CHAPTER 2 - FAIRVIEW PARK OVERVIEW

SECTION 2A. General Fairview Park History Related to this Evaluation

- i. Model Aircraft Flying
- ii. Natural Resources
- iii. Current Park Uses

SECTION 2A. GENERAL FAIRVIEW PARK HISTORY RELATED TO THIS EVALUATION

Fairview Park is the City's largest park, hosting 195 acres of natural open space, and 13 acres of manicured landscape for a total of 208 acres. The property was first owned by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, who sold Fairview Park along with what is now Orange County Talbert Regional Park (Talbert Park) to the County of Orange in the 1970's. In the mid to late 1980's, the County declared bankruptcy and to help with their financial crisis, sold the Fairview Park section of this open space (208 acres) to the City of Costa Mesa, keeping Talbert Park as a County Regional facility.

Fairview Park acts as a regional gateway to the Santa Ana River Trail, the Orange Coast River Park, and the adjacent 90-acre Talbert Park. The trails within Talbert Park and the regional Santa Ana River Trail connect through Fairview Park; the North Talbert County Preserve is part of Talbert Park, and is within the city boundaries of Costa Mesa. The adjacency of Talbert Park to Fairview Park continues to be a strong influence on the operation of Fairview Park in relation to recreational user groups, environmental restoration, park uses, and public access. Many users do not know where one park ends and the other begins, moving most to conclude the lands are all one regional County Park.

Fairview Park is unusual not only for its beautiful landscapes, but for the story that it can tell: Native American civilizations, wildlife and its habitat, unusual and subtle natural features and the promise of restoration. (Cite FVPMP). Within the 195 acres of natural open space, there are two Nationally Registered Cultural Resource Historic Sites and five distinct habitat ecosystems which are home to many rare and endangered plant and animal species.

In addition to this unique collection of natural resources, the park serves as a hub of passive recreation for the community. There is a network of walking trails, bicycle paths, and the infrastructure for other passive park uses, including running, model aircraft flying and model trains. There are also two schools adjacent to the park; Estancia High School and Waldorf School. The population of both schools is approximately 1300 youth, and some of these students, ages 4 to 18, use the trails at Fairview Park daily as routes to and from schools as well as for outdoor education and team sports.

The Costa Mesa Community highly values this rare open space located in the midst of the city's developed neighborhoods and roadways, and has advocated for open space preservation over the years. In spite of the community desire, each Master Plan generated since has included both passive uses as well as development concepts for active recreation.

An outline of Master Plan and Planning history follows:

FAIRVIEW PARK AND HARBOR SOARING SOCIETY FLY FIELD COMPATABILITY EVALUATION

WHEN?	WHAT?
1970-1980	Early County/City planning for Fairview Park indicates a desire for passive, open space
1996	Fairview Park Master planning process begins
1998	Fairview Park Master Plan is developed with community input, and adopted by City Council
2001/2002	Fairview Park Master Plan is revised
2005	Construction of Fairview Park Wetlands begins
2007	US Department of Fish and Wildlife listed Fairview Park as critical habitat for fairy shrimp
2008	Fairview Park Master Plan is revised/critical habitat designation lifted
2013	Construction of Fairview Park Wetlands is completed
2014	US Department of Fish and Wildlife noted infractions to Fairview Park critical habitats
2016	Citizens of Costa Mesa created and passed Measure AA
2017	Fairview Park Administrator hired and Fairview Park Steering Committee appointed
2018-2021	Fairview Park Steering Committee conducts Master Plan Update with Measure AA
2019- 2020	Fly Field Evaluation time period

In the 1970's and 1980's, California State Parks, the County of Orange and the City of Costa Mesa developed the earliest plans for the park. These plans indicate that there was a desire to see the park remain as passive open space, and not be developed as an active recreational park. Although they were never formally adopted by their agencies, the City of Costa Mesa has them in their archives, and has referenced them when developing subsequent plans over the years.

In July of 1996, the City undertook master planning for the park and produced the Fairview Park Master Plan, adopted in March of 1998. The City engaged groups of community members through this planning process to gather input and help determine direction for FVP. The 1998 document was subsequently revised in February of 2001 and November of 2002. In 2005 habitat restoration in the park began and in 2007, the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed Fairview Park as critical habitat for the endangered San Diego and Riverside fairy shrimp.

Because the Master Plan included a recommendation for the City to join the local Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), the 2007 critical habitat designation was lifted. However, ultimately the City did not participate in the NCCP, leaving the resources without a preservation plan. By 2014 the USFWS, because of noted infractions to these critical habitats at the park, notified the City that remediation needed to take place. The City then began working with the US Department of Fish and Wildlife to assure that sensitive habitats and endangered species were protected.

The Master Plan was updated again in November of 2008; however, this revision does not reflect two important land use changes. Construction of the wetlands, and relocation and grading of the fly field. Between the years of 2005 and 2013, the Fairview Park wetlands were created. These forty acres in the lower northwest corner of the park were constructed under mitigation agreements and are managed by the City of Costa Mesa under binding conservation easements with several agencies (US Army Corps of

FAIRVIEW PARK AND HARBOR SOARING SOCIETY FLY FIELD COMPATABILITY EVALUATION

Engineers, California Fish and Wildlife service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Orange County Transportation Authority, and County of Orange Flood Control District).

In 2005, the City of Costa Mesa graded a 150' wide by 470' area of land away from the bluffs in the southwestern portion of the park, which became the new takeoff and landing area for gliders and power planes.

In 2016, through a grass roots effort, the citizens of Costa Mesa created Measure AA, known as “An Initiative requiring Changes in Use at Fairview Park be subjected to Voter Approval”. The measure was passed by just over 70% of the voters, and amends the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to require certain changes to Fairview Park, as defined, be subject to voter approval. In response to Measure AA, the City has taken several steps to work with residents and park users to recognize and preserve natural resources provided within Fairview Park. (Attach – Measure AA)

In 2017 the City created and hired the Fairview Park Administrator staff position. In addition, the citizen working group that provided input to the planning process for Fairview Park became the current Fairview Park Steering Committee, and members were appointed to provide advice to the City Council regarding the implementation of the Fairview Park Masterplan and Measure AA. The Committee is staffed by the Fairview Park Administrator, complies with the Brown Act, and meets every other month at City Hall. The Fairview Park Steering Committee makes recommendations to the City Council for amendments/revisions to the Fairview Park Master Plan so that the intent of Measure AA will be realized. Since 2017 this team has reviewed, analyzed, and made recommendations on the following:

- Five proposed Capital Improvement Projects; three were eliminated (see chart on following page)
- Orange County Model Engineers Agreement was extended for a 25-year period
- The Annual Fish Fry Special Event was moved to another park location
- Restoration programs for the Park are continuously reviewed with no new ones allowed
- Community events are reviewed on a continual basis

Some smaller community events have been permitted to remain (Scarecrow Festival, Educational walks/talks, volunteer restoration events). Public uses continue to be evaluated in the context of the upcoming Master Plan Update planned for 2020/2021, which will include both restoration and passive public use programs.

Fairview Park Steering Committee CIP Review

CIP ITEM	FVP RECOMMENDATION	CITY COUNCIL ACTION
Storm Drain Improvements	The motion: As currently proposed, the project would require a public vote; the Fairview Park Steering Committee does not support this project being placed on a ballot as currently proposed.	City Council found the storm drain improvements to be a maintenance and public safety project and therefore exempt from Measure AA with revisions for the least environmental impact including careful consideration of the vernal pools.
North Bluff Trail and Restoration	The motion: As currently proposed, the project would require a public vote; and the Fairview Park Steering Committee does not support this project being placed on the ballot as currently proposed.	City Council did not approve the project.
Pacific Avenue Entry / Turn-Around	The motion: As currently proposed, the project would require a public vote; and the Fairview Park Steering Committee does not support this project being placed on a ballot as currently proposed.	City Council found the Pacific Avenue Entry / Turn-Around to be a maintenance and public safety project and therefore exempt from Measure AA with revisions for the most minimal amount of encroachment into Fairview Park and the least environmental impact.
Placentia Avenue Connector Trails	The motion: As currently proposed, the project would require a public vote; and the Fairview Park Steering Committee does not support this project being placed on a ballot as currently proposed.	City Council found the Placentia Avenue Connector Trails to be a maintenance and public safety project and therefore exempt from Measure AA and did not approve the Placentia Avenue Connector Trails project, (as proposed for the grant funding); approved the Fairview Park Committee recommended alternative diagram and proceeding with all maintenance and public safety repairs that would not trigger Measure AA, and with the least environmental impact.
ADA Sidewalk from Restroom to Picnic Shelter	The motion: As proposed, the project would require a public vote; and the Fairview Park Steering Committee asks City staff to review its current design and offer alternate design for path from restroom to the picnic area to avoid Measure AA vote.	City Council found the ADA Sidewalk from Restroom to Picnic Shelter to be a maintenance and public safety project and therefore exempt from Measure AA and did not approve the ADA Sidewalk from Restroom to Picnic Shelter, (as proposed); approved proceeding with an alternative path that would not trigger Measure AA, and with the least environmental impact.

i. **Model Aircraft Flying**

The Harbor Soaring Society (HSS) was founded in 1962 with just 10 members, and began flying at Fairview Park on the mesa in 1963. HSS was founded and chartered by the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA). This was the beginning of glider flying at Fairview Park, mostly from the bluffs. The westerly wind naturally created slope lift for thermal flying of the gliders, and was a great place to fly. Around 2000, O.C. Parks planted trees in Talbert Regional Park, at base of the slope soaring bluff. The planting of these trees resulted in the westerly winds being blocked, and eliminated the slope lift at the Fairview Park bluff top. These changes marked the end of thermal flying for slope soaring gliders as it was historically known, and prompted changes in location of the fly field away from the bluffs.

“From about 1963 on, we would also fly the bluff at the Fairview field, as a change of scenery and for variety of flying. There was no park there and the land belonged to the State of CA. The field was gigantic because Placentia Ave. did not cross it, so Fairview State Hospital was the east edge of the open field (hence we called it the Fairview site) and the two schools were not built yet...”

The

“We also started using the Fairview field for thermal flying when we discovered how good it could be at times. When Estancia High School was built we used the big grassy field there for thermal flying until more facilities made that unusable. By this time most competitive flying was thermal flying and not slope soaring and the club had become a mostly thermal soaring group so we dropped the word “slope” from the club name...”

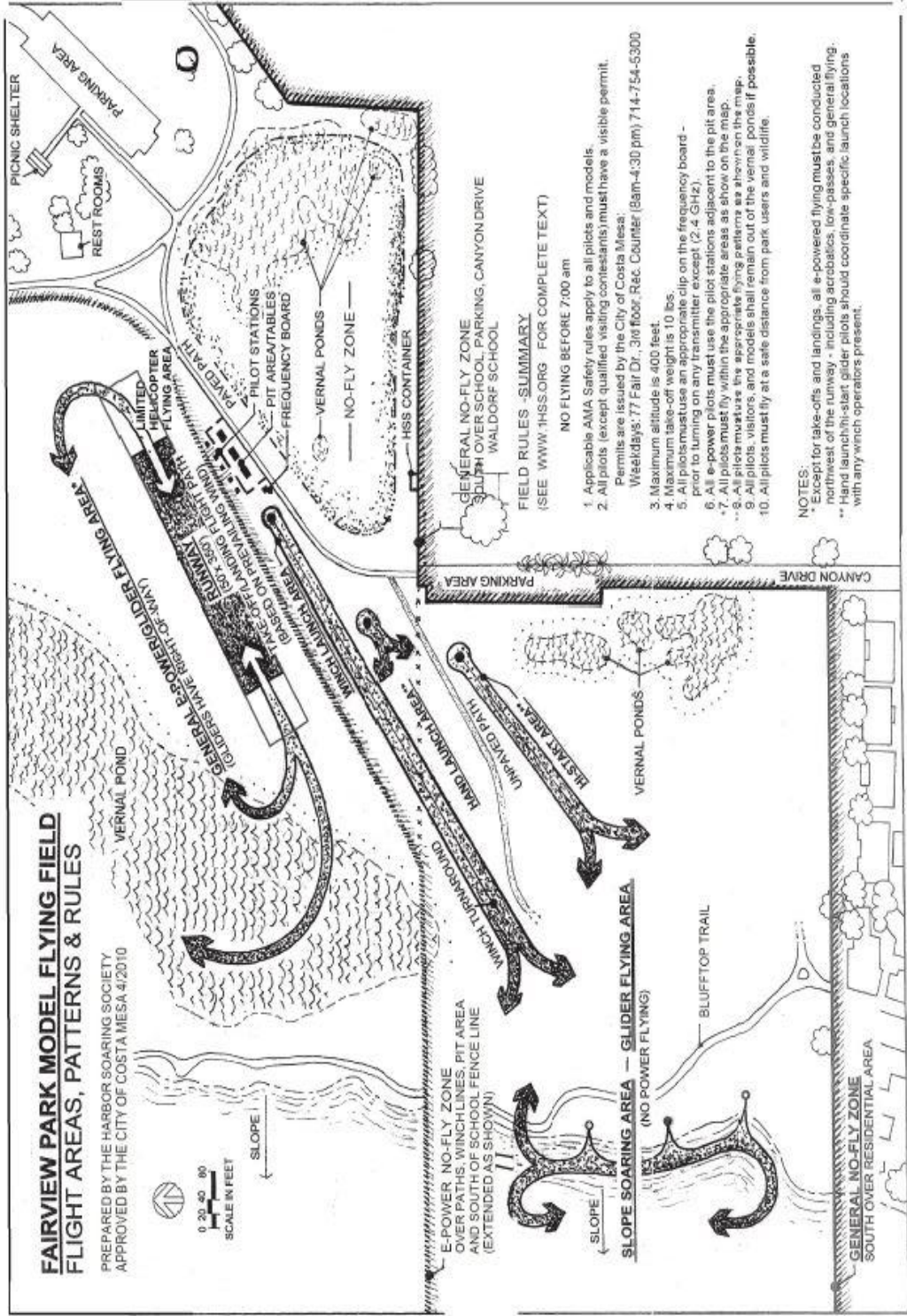
Frank Clover, HSS Founder

2000’s also marked the beginning of a New Era, the introduction of Electric Powered Aircraft. With Electric Powered Aircraft drastically improving the cost, weight, and performance of motors, batteries and electronics, the hobby grew and evolved significantly. In early 2002, Harbor Soaring Society planned and developed a runway to accommodate this change in Model Aircraft flying. (HSS WEBSITE)

“Early 2002, Harbor Soaring Society planned and developed a runway. This is the beginning of a New Era; Electric Powered Aircraft. In 2005, the City of Costa Mesa graded a large area north of the paved pedestrian path which became the new takeoff and landing area for gliders and power planes. The city graded the area 150' wide by 470' long, parallel to the pedestrian path which provided a North East to South West runway nicely aligned with the prevailing winds.” Frank Clover, HSS Founder

In 2005, the City of Costa Mesa graded a section of land north of the upper paved pedestrian path, which became the new takeoff and landing area for gliders and power planes. The area was then compacted, and HSS members were invited to help complete the task of removing small rocks and debris. The city graded the area 150' wide by 470' long, parallel to the pedestrian path, which provided HSS a North East to South West runway, aligned with the prevailing winds. The most popular trails utilized by (adjacent) local schools are within 10 feet of this runway used for Model Aircraft Flying, and Model Aircraft flyers use the airspace directly over this and other public trails. (Attach - Launch Site Improvements)

FLY FIELD AREAS, PATTERNS AND RULES

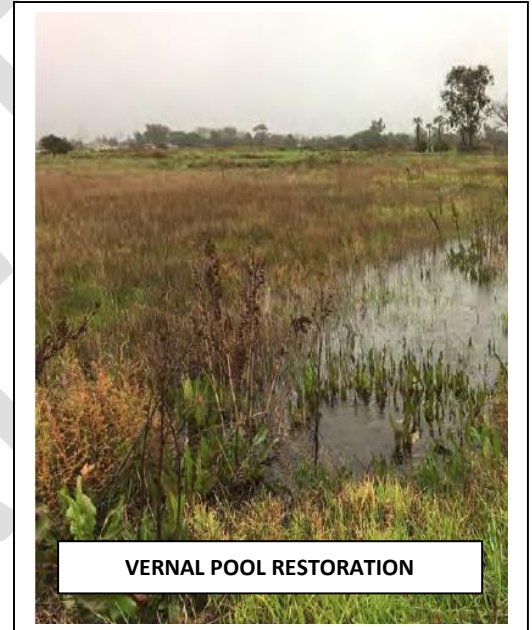


ii. Natural and Cultural Resources

The City’s restoration efforts have been successful in attracting a variety of different protected bird species, and numerous flora and fauna species of special interest. Some of these plants and animals are returning after decades of not being sited at Fairview Park, and some that have returned to the park are unique to the area or represent the only documented population within Orange County. The Fairview Park vernal pool complex, which act as feeding grounds for many rare and endangered species of birds, is the last *coastal* complex in the State, north of San Diego County and is protected at both the State and Federal level. The fly field is surrounded by the vernal pool complex.

The five (5) unique ecosystems of Fairview Park:

- Grasslands: support native grass scrubs including endangered species Southern Tar Plant and Burrowing Owl.
- Wetlands: consist of six ponds and forty acres of restored riparian habitat supporting numerous species including the endangered bird species Least Bell’s Vireo.
- Mesa Shelf: is home to the Native American Village registered historical site; contains fill dirt piles placed in the 1980’s from local construction; and holds approximately thirty acres of both native and invasive plant species
- Vernal Pool Complex: totals 3.93 acres supporting 6 rare and endangered plants and 2 endangered species of fairy shrimp. It is the last CA coastal vernal pool complex north of San Diego.
- Canyon & Coastal Sage Scrub Area: supports habitat for the endangered Coastal CA Gnatcatcher.



VERNAL POOL RESTORATION



Osprey at Wetlands (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Completed Restoration Sites:

- Eighteen acres of Coastal Sage Scrub
- 5-6 acres of Canyon Sage Scrub
- Forty acres of Riparian Scrub
- One acres of vernal pool

Active Restoration Sites:

- Five acres of canyon slopes
- Two acres of vernal pools and associated watersheds
- West bluff trail and watershed emergency restoration
- Mustard removal, replaced with native plantings



- Various volunteer restoration sites
- Future Restoration Plans:
- Complete West Bluff Restoration
 - Mesa hydrology corrections and fill removal
 - Archeological site cap and grassland restoration
 - East hills grasslands
 - Vernal Pool near Northeast side train station
 - Native plant nursery on site
 - South east park entrance and parking area

As indicated in the 2019 City Strategic plan (Goal #2), enhancing restoration at Fairview Park is a priority. As such, the 2019/2020 Capital Improvement Requests included several Fairview Park Projects:

- ✓ Vernal Pools 4,5,6 and 7 (matching grant funds)
- ✓ Protective fencing for various protected areas
- ✓ Emergency bluff repair and restoration
- ✓ Canyon Park Inventory

iii. Current Park Uses

Because of the location and diversity of Fairview park, the park is in high demand; especially as the community’s desire for outdoor recreation has evolved. Fairview Park offers users multiple passive recreational opportunities such as picnicking, kite flying, wildlife observation, environmental education, and 7 miles of trails for walking, running or cycling. There are neighborhood accesses and trail connections within the park, inviting participation from local residents, with ample parking for regional visitors.

Placentia Avenue runs through the center of the open space, dividing the park into two areas. The east area of the Park hosts a miniature railroad operated by the Orange County Model Engineers and the west area of the park hosts model airplane flying field which is operated by the Harbor Soaring Society (HSS). Bordering the northern and southern edges of the park are residential areas with gates into the park. The southwest corner shares its borders with two schools. The western border is comprised of the Santa Ana river and trails, and the eastern border is the Costa Mesa Golf Course.

The park is home to a number of City-wide special events throughout the year. Staff has recently documented over thirty (30) different types of park user groups including running clubs, bible schools, model trains and planes, special events, photography clubs, dog walking groups, bird watching, personal training, boot camps, meet-ups, soccer practices, dog trainings, filmmaking, professional and recreational photography, family gatherings, and more.

The trails at Fairview Park are used by a variety of park patrons, of all ages and with many interests. High schools and colleges are in need of cross-country training areas, as well as space for local and regional

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cross country events. There are dozens of trails throughout the park; some are wide and flat, with others being narrow, traversing the hills, and containing mounds created by the dumping of fill. These narrower trails attract the non-permitted use of remote control cars, small motor bikes and moto-cross bicycles into some of the ecological sensitive areas of the park. In addition to the non-permitted use, these trails and hills have altered the natural flow of water on the mesa, which is slowly eroding the bluffs just above Talbert Regional Park, and potentially disrupting the hydrology of the vernal pools.

The current uses at Fairview Park have also been impacted by an increased demand for open space throughout the Orange County community. This need has been amplified by the significant population growth in since the mid twentieth century. Specifically, the overall population of the Costa Mesa has more than tripled since the beginning of Model Aircraft flying in the 1960's, yet with the ongoing development of the city, its neighborhoods and thoroughfares, available open space in Costa Mesa and surrounding communities has diminished.

CITY OF COSTA MESA	
YEAR	POPULATION
2020	113,615
2010	109,960
2000	109,371
1990	96,849
1980	82,562
1970	72,660
1960	37,550

With the adoption of measure AA in 2016, the City's desire to balance park use with preservation has become a priority. Many Council decisions since 2016 have been to support this action, including the addition of the Fairview Park Administrator in 2017 to oversee the many necessary environmental and programming changes to the operation of the Fairview Park.

2019 CONCERTS IN THE PARK AT SUNSET



CHAPTER 3 – GOVERNANCE OF FAIRVIEW PARK

SECTION 3A. City Council Priorities

SECTION 3B. Fairview Park Master Plan

SECTION 3C. Measure AA

SECTION 3D. Local, County, State and Federal Environmental Regulations

SECTION 3E. Fly Field Rules, Regulations and Permitting

SECTION 3F. The City of Costa Mesa and the Harbor Soaring Society Agreement

Because of the uniqueness of the flora and fauna at Fairview Park and the community's interest in open space preservation, the operation and future development of Fairview Park has become a priority. There is oversight from federal to local levels, with laws that govern many of the park uses. These uses range from environmental considerations for the park to the use of the airspace over Fairview Park. A brief description of the various types of governance is provided in the sections that follow.

SECTION 3A. CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

January 25, 2019, the Costa Mesa City Council, community members, and staff met at an all-day session to develop goals for the city that would later be adopted by the City Council. These goals allow the Council, the community, and city staff to clearly understand specific ideas and direction to be pursued through policy changes, budget appropriations, staff time assignments, and more. To that end, the City Council wanted to assure that the importance of open space was included in their list of priorities. City Council Goal #2 focuses on neighborhoods and quality of life, and item 2b gives specific direction to enhance restoration activities at Fairview Park. (Attach – City Council Priorities)

✓ **Goal #2: Improve our Neighborhoods and Quality of Life.** *Improve, expand, and add to our open space via a Recreation Open Space Plan, along with enhancing restoration activities at our nature parks (including Fairview Park's restoration plan and Canyon Park)*

Resolution 2019-12 was adopted by the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, which directed and authorized City staff and others to pursue strategies – including staff time and funding – in the pursuit of the Goals and Priorities for 2019. (Attach Resolution 2019-12)

SECTION 3B. FAIRVIEW PARK MASTER PLAN

As previously mentioned, the Fairview Park Masterplan was adopted in March of 1998, revised in 2001 and 2002, and updated again in 2008. It was to be used as a roadmap for park development of Fairview Park. The plan presents a park for passive uses, including walking, jogging, biking and quiet contemplation, and includes a model railroad, glider and kite flying, and group picnicking, all offered without compromising the overall passive nature of the plan. (FVPMP, Page 28)

The plan defines that group activities are to be confined to designated areas, and also defines two types of model glider launch sites; electric motor launch operations and bluff top launches. (FVPMP, Page 33)

The flying of glider planes is included in its summary of passive uses. (FVPMP, Page 37) In addition to the passive uses discussed in the document, the plan included objectives for public use and park development, as well as objectives for restoration that supported conservation efforts.

Fairview Park Masterplan Public Use Objectives: (FPMP Pg. 26) Objectives include allowing park visitors to interact with the natural landscape and to experience a level of solitude. It also includes allowing public access which is compatible with natural habitat restoration and archeological preservation.

Fairview Park Masterplan Restoration Objectives: (FPMP Pg. 27) Objectives include preservation of archaeological resources and enhancing and re-establishing habitat for native plants and wildlife.

While much of the Fairview Park Masterplan focused on conservation, some of it did not. The Plan includes tot lots, improved access roads, and other more developed amenities for active recreation. This prompted the citizens of Costa Mesa to pursue legislation that would place further restrictions on the development of Fairview Park through the adoption of Measure AA.

SECTION 3C. MEASURE AA

On November 8, 2016, Costa Mesa residents had the opportunity to cast their votes in favor of or against Measure AA. The measure was known as *“An Initiative Requiring Changes in Use at Fairview Park Be Subject to Voter Approval”*. The authors of Measure AA stated that Parks, wildlife habitat, and open-space lands are vital to maintaining the quality of life in Costa Mesa. As the City’s population increases, it is of growing importance to provide parks and recreational opportunities to the residents of Costa Mesa. This measure amended the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to require that certain changes to Fairview Park go to a vote of the people. (Attach – Measure AA ballot language and ordinance here)

Ballot Measure AA Approval:

YES VOTES	27,098	70.85%
NO VOTES	11,149	29.15%

Ballot Measure AA States:

“Shall an ordinance requiring voter approval for 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 at Fairview Park be adopted? “

To that End, Chapter 5 of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code was written after Measure AA passed, outlining the adoption of the measure. This codifies that the people of Costa Mesa are entitled to a vote to determine what significant changes to Fairview Park may be made. Chapter 5 amended the Costa Mesa Municipal Code and superseded any provisions that may have been inconsistent with this chapter.

SECTION 3D. LOCAL, COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

The environmental stewardship and protection of natural resources and habitats at Fairview Park is not only a matter of local community desire and City Council direction, but is a matter of compliance with regional, state and federal regulations protecting the areas of native habitat. In addition to its' own unique environment, the park itself is part of a much larger ecosystem including Talbert Park, Canyon Park, coastal wetlands, Banning Ranch, the Santa Ana River corridor, and the Back Bay

Because of the connection of Fairview Park to this ecosystem, the diverse environment mandates that local park administration coordinates the management of this open space with, county, state and federal agencies. These agencies have regulations in place to govern the planned use and potential development of the Park, primarily concerning the welfare of protected or endangered flora and fauna. These agencies also understand that for these unique species to thrive, there is a need for broad based planning well into the future. (Attach - Flora and Fauna listings)

To that end, park administration is to act as a liaison to Fairview Park governing bodies, and is obligated to understand and follow County of Orange Codes of Ordinances, California State Laws and Codes, California Fish and Wildlife Codes; and even Federal Law, to provide for the effective protection of the environment at Fairview Park. (Attach - governing codes)

SECTION 3E. FLY FIELD RULES, REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING

Since 1996, HSS has been using a portion of Fairview Park for model aircraft flying activity. In early 2007, in an effort to create structure for and oversight of the fly field, Costa Mesa City Council approved Ordinance No. 07-01; an Ordinance Adopting Radio Controlled Model Aircraft Flying Regulations for Fairview Park. This ordinance states that a permit is required to fly model aircraft at Fairview Park. (Attach City Ordinance)

As outlined in ordinance No. 07-01, the Recreation Manager established model aircraft flying regulations, including a permit process, for flying model aircraft at Fairview Park. These regulations can be found in the City of Costa Mesa Municipal Code, Title 12, Chapter II, Articles 2 & 3 and specify that all pilots are required to have a permit to fly model aircraft. (Attach City Rules)

In addition to City regulations, HSS developed Field Rules with the stated intent of those rules to promote flying safety, financial responsibility, and environmental protection. These rules state the importance of maintaining order, controlling frequency usage of the fly field and educating fliers to act as good neighbors in the community. These rules are based upon the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Safety Code, AMA field recommendations, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular 91-57B, and local requirements as established by the City. (Attach HSS/AMA Rules)

In 2007, in compliance with ordinance No. 07-01, a permit system was developed by the City requiring all model aircraft operators (both HSS members and non-members) to register with the city Parks and

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Community Services Department to fly model aircraft and drones at Fairview Park. These permit requirements can be found in the Costa Mesa Municipal Code. (Attach - section CM 12-61 here)

Last year, the Parks and Community Services Department issued approximately 200 Model Aircraft Flying permits. That number has been declining over the past 5 years. Permits are effective January 1 through December 31, with no monthly pro-rating. Because of this evaluation, however, 2020 Model Aircraft Flying Permits were issued for 6 months only, effective from January 1 to June 30, 2020.

Permitted model aircraft flyers must comply with the following:

- ✓ The Fairview Park rules
- ✓ HSS flying rules
- ✓ Proof of AMA or personal insurance coverage at a minimum of \$500,000.00
- ✓ City Ordinance No. 07-01 (Ordinance Adopting Radio Controlled Model Aircraft Flying Regulations for Fairview Park)
- ✓ The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Safety Code
- ✓ Applicable FAA regulations and,
- ✓ The current HSS/City use agreement

City of Costa Mesa Permits Issued:						
YEAR	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020* (as of 02/30/20)
RESIDENTS	66	58	61	37	34	21
NON-RESIDENTS	288	275	237	190	155	88
TOTAL	354	333	298	227	189	109



MODEL AIRCRAFT REVENUE	
2020	\$3,480.00* As of March 3, 2020
2019*	\$10,920.00
2018	\$12,845.00
2017	\$7,440.00
2016	\$8,150.00
2015	\$8,675.00

SECTION 3F. THE CITY OF COSTA MESA AND THE HARBOR SOARING SOCIETY AGREEMENT

Between April and June of 2019, the Fairview Park Steering Committee, The Parks, Arts and Community Services Commission and City Council deliberated and approved a one-year agreement with HSS for Model Aircraft flying at Fairview Park.

The agreement went into effect on July 1, 2019 and is valid through June 30, 2020. As a caveat of the one-year approval, staff was directed to conduct this comprehensive evaluation of the value of the partnership between HSS and the City, including the compatibility of all flying activity with the Master Plan for FVP and Measure AA. [Attach Agreement](#)

Historically, the Harbor Soaring Society, by agreement with the City, has been responsible for the upkeep and oversight of the fly field. Oversight responsibilities currently do not include enforcement of regulations at the field, however, as the AMA Chartered Club at Fairview Park, HSS does have responsibilities for education and testing flyers.

Use of the fly field at Fairview Park is not exclusive to HSS members, therefore an effective partnership with a flying club to provide education and training can help to eliminate some of the ongoing challenges with management and enforcement. There are fly fields that can be further researched to learn more about their successful partnerships and efficient operations, as well as other model aircraft agencies, like the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA), that can assist the City and HSS with the development of a new, more workable agreement for the management of the Fly Field at Fairview Park. The AMA also helps clubs relocate when necessary field closures occur.



CHAPTER 4 – THE EVALUATION PROCESS

SECTION 4A. Committee, Commission and Council Direction

SECTION 4B. Staff Actions

SECTION 4C. Summary of Public Engagement

- i. On-line Survey
- ii. Public meeting participation
- iii. Public meeting summary
- iv. Field observations
- v. Public Comments

SECTION 4D. Evaluation of Local Fly Fields

SECTION 4E. Literature Review

SECTION 4A. COMMITTEE, COMMISSION AND COUNCIL DIRECTION

In the spring of 2019, as a component of the review of the 2008 Fairview Park Master Plan, the Fairview Park Steering Committee (FVPS) and the Parks, Arts and Community Services Commission (PACS) made recommendations to the Costa Mesa City Council (CMCC), which approved a one-year agreement between the City and Harbor Soaring Society (HSS). With the approval, City Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the value of the partnership between HSS and the City and an analysis of the compatibility of all flying activity with the Master Plan for Fairview Park, and Measure AA.

On April 10, 2019, the Fairview Park Steering Committee unanimously approved the following motion: “the Committee recommends a comprehensive evaluation of the value of partnership between HSS and the City, and the compatibility of all flying activity with the Master Plan for Fairview Park and Measure AA, be done by the City Staff, City Attorney, HSS, and the Steering Committee within the next year.”

Then, on May 23, 2019, the Parks, Arts and Community Services Commission followed suit, and approved the recommendation to extend the one-year agreement between the City and Harbor Soaring Society. Again, this approval directed staff to conduct an evaluation of the partnership of HSS and the City.

Finally, on June 25, 2019, City Council approved the one-year agreement and directed staff to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the value of the partnership between HSS and the City, and the compatibility of all flying activity with the Master Plan for Fairview Park and Measure AA, be done by the City Staff, City Attorney, HSS, and the Steering Committee within the next year.

SECTION 4B. STAFF ACTIONS

This comprehensive evaluation was conducted in combination with a public process, inviting community stakeholders to participate through a series of public meetings. From July 2019 through January 2020, staff designed, scheduled and implemented a seven (7) month collaborative process with HSS members, the general public, the AMA, Committee members and Commissioners, interested organizations, and other City Departments. Staff researched, compiled and reviewed City and HSS documents to better

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understand the history of the City/HSS relationship; researched other local fly field operations; scanned scholarly articles on the subject of fly fields and avian activity; scheduled public input meetings to gather information from interested community members; and invited community stakeholders to provide feedback on the compatibility of fly field use with other uses for Fairview Park. The following 5 months allowed for the approval process as required:

March 11, 2020	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE APPROVAL
April 23, 2020	PARKS, ARTS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION APPROVAL
May 19, 2020	CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL (DATE TENTATIVE)

The evaluation was broken down into three distinct phases:

- ✓ **Information Gathering:** First staff created an information gathering phase to determine the value of the partnership, and what, if any, compatibility issue existed. Information was gathered from stakeholders through on-line surveys, field observation surveys, written comments and a series of public meetings scheduled at various times and locations.
- ✓ **Presentation of Compatibility Concerns:** Next, community stakeholders were invited to participate in an exercise where staff presented the compatibility concerns that surfaced through the information gathering phase. The workshop format allowed stakeholders to document and discuss ideas for possible solutions to these potential compatibility issues.
- ✓ **Analysis and Recommendations:** Lastly, staff worked with the FVP Steering Committee and community stakeholders to discuss the value of the partnership, the compatibility concerns presented, ideas for solutions, and to present a recommendation to move forward.

Although staff believes that there was adequate time for seasonal evaluation of park uses and opportunities for community participation in the seven-month period, it should be noted that this time-frame permitted a planning level analysis; no scientific or statistical analysis level review of fly field activity or compatibility was conducted. However, a more detailed environmental analysis is planned for the review of the Fairview Park Masterplan, especially as it relates to park restoration, park use, and environmental documentation. If additional scientific or statistical analysis is required to satisfy the purpose of this evaluation, City Council direction would be needed to obtain the necessary resources to hire outside assistance with the review.

SECTION 4C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In order to allow ample opportunity for public participation in the evaluation process, staff used several modalities to engage community members. This included visits to the fly-field to observe interactions between flyers, park users and the natural environment; the compilation of information gathered from on-line surveys; the review of submitted written materials, scholarly articles, emails and reports; review of written and oral public comments, and participation in a series of public meetings. This process was designed to gather feedback from interested community members and park users, and allowed staff to gain a fuller sense of community sentiment and cooperative ideas for addressing concerns.

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i. Online Surveys

To compile some general information about the Fairview Park users who were interested in this compatibility evaluation, staff prepared an on-line survey available for interested parties. This survey was advertised on the City Website, posted at Fairview Park and announced at Fairview Park public meetings.

The Survey asked about respondent’s residency, the type and frequency of their park use, their experience with fly field activity at Fairview Park, and their visits to other fly fields.

When asked about their residency, 112 respondents indicated that they were Costa Mesa Residents, with 113 respondents being non-residents. The second highest number of respondents living in neighboring Huntington Beach. (Question #2)

When asked about preferred activity, eighty-five respondents indicated that walking and hiking was their preferred activity at Fairview Park, with the second highest number of respondents stating that flying was their preferred activity. Other activities included bird watching, dog walking and biking, and nature appreciation. (Question #3) When asked about any dissatisfaction with remote control flying at Fairview Park, 53% of respondents indicated that they either had a positive experience or no negative experiences and the other 47% of respondents indicating concerns (Attach 4C.1 Summary of Question 11). The concerns fell into the following categories:

1. Concerns about safety/nuisance issues
2. Concerns about park flora/fauna
3. Concerns about flight parameters
4. Concerns about enforcement

QUESTION #2	
RESIDENCY:	
COSTA MESA	112
Huntington Beach	36
Rancho Santa Margarita	18
Fountain Valley	12
Irvine	6
Westminster	5
Mission Viejo	4
Tustin	4
Santa Ana	4
Long Beach	2
Garden Grove	2
Cypress	2
Anaheim	2
Rossmore	1
Laguna Woods	1
Lake Forest	1
Villa Park	1
Buena Park	1
San Gabriel	1
Cerritos	1
Laguna Hills	1
Corona	1

QUESTION #3	
PREFERRED ACTIVITY:	
Walking/Hiking	85
Flying	81
Birding/Photography	33
Walking Dogs	14
Biking	13
Nature Appreciation	9
Running	5
RC Cars	4
Work Adjacent	2
Dog Mushing	1
Relaxing	1

ii. Public Meeting Participation

In addition to regularly scheduled Fairview Park Steering Committee meetings, a series of special public meetings were scheduled to give interested community members the opportunity to provide their comments to city staff regarding the fly field and the evaluation process itself. Meetings were held on differing days of the week and at various times to encourage participation from a variety of interest groups. Stakeholders attending these meetings included members of the Harbor Soaring Society, Academy of Model Aeronautics, Audubon Society, Orange County Model Engineers and the Fairview Park Alliance as well as general park users and fly-field users.

The differing public meeting formats allowed for varied participation and discussion. Some attendees expressed concern for the wellbeing of park flora and fauna, others were concerned about park uses overall, and still others expressed concerns and had comments about the future of the fly field. In addition to identifying concerns, solutions were explored.



Public Meeting #1 was a special meeting geared for permitted flyers and the general public, and held at the fly field on December 14, 2019, with approximately 60 attendees. The meeting format was quite informal, beginning with attendees circulating a display of exhibits with historic photos and general park information. At this meeting, staff presented a brief history of the park, a summary of the Fairview Park Masterplan and Measure AA, and discussed the city's obligation to preserve sensitive habitats. At the conclusion of the meeting, staff opened up the floor to attendees, encouraging dialogue and carefully recording comments for future reference. (Attach – Meeting #1)

Public Meeting #2 was geared for the general public, and held at City Hall in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Fairview Park Steering Committee meeting on January 8, 2020 with approximately 45 attendees. The majority of this meeting was spent reviewing the evaluation process thus far, and hearing public comments from individuals and stakeholder groups. Attendees, including representatives from Harbor Soaring Society, Sea and Sage Audubon, Academy of Model Aeronautics and members of the general public discussed their ideas for compatible park use, the health of the park ecosystem, and the potential loss of the fly field. (Attach – Meeting #2 notes)



GREEN

COMPATIBLE USE,
AS IS

YELLOW

COULD BE COMPATIBLE USE,
WITH MODIFICATIONS

RED

NOT COMPATIBLE USE,
EVEN WITH MODIFICATIONS

Public Meeting #3 was a special workshop geared for the general public, immediate park neighbors and the school community, and was held at City Hall on January 16, 2020 with approximately 50 attendees. The meeting was designed to address issues and concerns voiced at previous meetings, gathered through the on-line surveys and expressed in written comments.

Compatibility concerns were as follows: safety concerns related to flying equipment interference with park patrons; flying equipment noise level interference with enjoyment of the park by users; flying equipment interference with avian activity (intentional or non-intentional; retrieval of flying equipment from sensitive habitat areas; flights outside of designated flying area, over trails, sensitive habitats; regulation of flying equipment size, color and engine types; takeoff and landing area location, runway size; number of flying equipment in the air at any given time; hours the fly field is open/closed and enforcement of regulations governing flying activity. These concerns were posted around the perimeter of the room, and attendees were asked to provide details about their concerns, suggestions for possible modifications, and thoughts about possible solutions, using color-coded post-it notes. GREEN notes indicated that flying is compatible with concerns, just as it is; YELLOW notes indicated that flying may be compatible with certain modifications, and RED notes indicated that flying is not compatible with concerns, even with modifications. Staff focused their analysis on comments that fell into the YELLOW category, with many creative compatibility modifications. **(Attach – Meeting #3 notes and corresponding table on PAGE 26)**

Analysis of the information provided at these public meetings indicated that concerns fell into 4 distinct categories. Analysis provided in **CHAPTER 5** of this evaluation will focus in these areas:

1. Concerns about safety/nuisance issues
2. Concerns about park flora/fauna
3. Concerns about flight parameters
4. Concerns about enforcement.

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The table below is a summary of comments that were gathered at the January 16th meeting. Staff gathered comments from the community which indicated that fly field activity was not compatible, or compatible as is, but focused the detail of this matrix on the comments provided in yellow, summarizing suggestions for modifications to current fly field operations to increase compatibility.

CONCERN	RED NOT COMPATIBLE	YELLOW COMPATIBLE WITH MODIFICATIONS	GREEN COMPATIBLE AS IS	CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS
SAFETY/NUSIANCE:				
Safety concerns related to flying equipment interference with park patrons.	3	10	13	Suggested Modifications include enforcement of boundaries, additional controls, HSS members only, additional enforcement, separation of activities, relocation of flight area, additional signage.
Flying equipment noise level interference with enjoyment of park users.	2	14	16	Suggested Modifications include approving plane styles, requiring quieter planes, restricting types of planes or motors, scheduling times for different kinds of planes explore current noise ordinance for other activities, conduct a noise study, HSS regulate plane types, use decibel meter.
ENVIRONMENTAL:				
Flying equipment interference with avian activity (intentional/non intentional)	6	3	20	Suggested Modifications include monitoring of park activity that interferes with avian activity, including dogs, children and other park patrons.
Retrieval of flying equipment from sensitive habitat area.	3	22	5	Suggested Modifications include training and instruction on flight parameters and out-of-bounds areas, train HSS member to retrieve out of sensitive areas, fine for entering sensitive areas, rules posted at fly field, on line and on permit application, fence and sign sensitive areas, permits to HSS members only.
Flights outside of the designated flying area, over trails, sensitive habitats.	5	8	11	Suggested Modifications include revoking permits for non-compliant flyers, reduce speed, regulate types of planes, move runway closer to bluff, education and safety briefing, post rules, limit distance to 200 yards from runway.
FLIGHT PARAMETERS:				
Regulation of flying equipment size, color and engine types.	0	8	20	Suggested Modifications include no powered aircraft, limit aircraft size and decibels, HSS to regulate, no jets or drones, only gliders, restrict to certain models.
Takeoff and landing area location, runway size.	0	9	18	Suggested Modifications include better delineation of runway, fenced runway, clearly marked runway, better pedestrian signage, reduction in runway size.
Number of flying equipment in the air at any given time.	2	8	17	Suggested Modifications include additional policing, self-regulate, limit to 5 planes, limit to 3 or 4 planes, no exhibit flying,
Hours the fly field is open/closed	1	10	15	Suggested Modifications include modifying hours, changing hours, reducing hours, restricting hours, limiting hours to 8am – 4pm, limit hours to less active times.
ENFORCEMENT:				
Enforcement of existing regulations governing flying activity.	1	16	5	Suggested Modifications include: HSS provide enforcement, more education, HSS membership only, HSS membership for permits, posted rules, revoke permits of non-compliant flyers, additional rules enforced by park rangers, all flyers HSS members, permit checks by park rangers, HSS should not be required to enforce.

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iii. Public Meeting Summary:

The following public meetings were held to determine the fly field agreement and future operation:

WHEN:	WHO:	WHAT:
April 10, 2019	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	Directed evaluation of HSS & City, compatibility of flying activity with Masterplan & Measure AA
May 23, 2019	PARKS, ARTS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION	Approve one year agreement between HSS and City; directed evaluation of HSS and City relationship, compatibility of flying activity with Masterplan & Measure AA
June 25, 2019	CITY COUNCIL	Approve one year agreement between HSS and City; directed evaluation of HSS and City relationship, compatibility of flying activity with Masterplan & Measure AA
July 2019	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF HSS MEMBERS	Fly field use/observation surveys begin
July 2, 2019	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	Post public notice with updated fly field rules, regulations, and information
Oct. 9, 2019	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	Discuss fly field evaluation during old business
Nov. 12, 2019	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	Opened on-line fly field survey
Nov. 18, 2019	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	Opened fly field permit renewal for January – June 2020
Dec. 11, 2019	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	Discuss fly field evaluation during old business
Dec. 14, 2019	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	First HSS fly field public meeting at Fairview Park - 60 attendees
Jan. 1, 2020	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	Activated 2020 model aircraft/drone flying permit
Jan. 8, 2020	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	Second HSS fly field public meeting at the regularly scheduled meeting – 45 Attendees
Jan. 16, 2020	PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF	Third HSS fly field public meeting at Fairview Park – 50 Attendees
Feb. 12, 2020	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	
Mar. 11, 2020	FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE	*Special Meeting
April 9, 2020	PARKS, ARTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDY SESSION (DATE TENTATIVE)	
April 23, 2020	PARKS, ARTS & COMMUNITY SERVICES	
May 19, 2020	CITY COUNCIL (DATE TENTATIVE)	

iv. Fly Field Observations

During the months of June 2019 through January 2020, public use surveys at the fly field were documented to indicate the number of flyers, times the fly field was being utilized, and patterns in flying activities. These surveys were conducted primarily by City staff with some assistance from HSS in the beginning stages of the process.

Within the survey, the categories were broken up as follows: date and time, number of flyers, permit status, flight/flyer pattern, and educational/group activities. Each survey that was conducted was marked with the date and time of day that it was being done. Under the number of flyers section, it was broken down into total number of people at the field, number of flyers, and number of observers. Throughout the surveys, this helped show the fluctuation of people and what activity they participated in at the field.

In the permit status section, surveyors observed flyers to see if they were wearing their permits provided when submitting fly field permit applications at City Hall. If a permit was being worn by a flyer, they were marked as a permitted flyer. But if a flyer was not wearing a permit, they were marked as a non-permitted flyer.

Within the flight/flyer pattern section, there were the following subsections: flying over pedestrians/trails/natural resources, flying too close to park users/aircrafts/wildlife, disruption of bird flight patterns, entering vernal pool, and loud noises. Within the surveys, the top marked portions by surveyors were flying over pedestrians/trails/natural resources and loud noises. Lastly, the educational/group activities section included was not utilized in many of the surveys collected because there were no educational or group activities observed.

Overall, because of staff availability, not all days and time periods desired for the surveys were able to be completed. Surveys were done consistently in the mornings through afternoons from Monday through Thursday by City staff. It can be noted that peak times for flyer activity is in the mornings from 8-10 a.m. through all weekdays. In addition, there was a major decline in permitted flyers (being worn at the field) in the afternoons and evenings.

It should be noted that weekday parking congestion was observed on Canyon Drive. Staff concluded that this is due to the demand for Fly Field activity and Waldorf School drop-off/pick-up at the same times. Additionally, staff received reports of a plane landing on top of the school buildings, within five feet of children's play areas.

v. Public Comments

The Public Comments gathered as a part of this evaluation process were submitted orally at public meetings as well as in writing. Written comments were submitted either by email, post, or delivered in-person to City Hall. The public comment process provided interested community members with opportunities to share experience, offer suggestions and voice concerns.

Written comments were received, read, and analyzed staff, and were also used to gain a more thorough understanding of park use and compatibility concerns. Just as with oral comments, the information provided in these written comments were used as a roadmap to determine a course of action for the Steering Committee. Additionally, many of the written comments contained references to scholarly articles and similar studies that were included in the review of pertinent literary information.

The following two summaries of comments from organizations considered experts in the fields of avian habits and management. They are being provided as indication of the current knowledge and research available on the subject of model aircraft flying and bird flights. And they provide good suggestions for the City in terms of moving forward. (Please also see pg. 31 for an article summary).

Sea and Sage Audubon, Irvine Letter January 24, 2020

“...We continue to believe that the current model aircraft operations at the park do not comply with FVP Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), the FVP Master Plan and subsequent Amendments, nor with Measure AA. Impacts to rare and sensitive bird species, other fauna and sensitive habitats at the park from model aircraft are significant and unpermitted”.

“...We believe that model aircraft flying at FVP can only continue if the operation are dramatically scaled back, with new rules of operation implemented and enforced, and with a plan that goes through a new California Environmental Quality Act review”.

“...put forth a plan to fly aircraft within the original vision of the Master Plan and provide for a high degree of wildlife and natural habitat protection.”

“Our biggest concerns relate not so much to small model gliding aircraft operation, but engine driven planes, and jet aircraft ...We believe that the increase in these aircraft, combined with weak enforcement of flying rules and flight boundaries...are the primary causes of disturbances to wildlife...also to the general public...”

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Carlsbad Office email communication to FVP Administrator, May 2019:

“Consistent with other impacts to the park since 2007, it appears the use of electronic planes is a recent development that has become progressively more destructive as the number of planes has increased and the size of the area of disturbance associated with the runway has increased in recent years. We encourage the City to take responsibility for identifying the limits of disturbance that you are permitting to occur and to provide sufficient enforcement to prevent continued unauthorized access into the vernal pools.” The Service also offered several modifications that could be implemented to reduce the disturbance.

Public comments submitted orally at public meetings, gave staff and Fairview Park Steering committee members the opportunity to learn more about the operation of the fly field, understand the sentiments of the people using Fairview Park and appreciate the efforts of residents who are committed to its preservation. In addition, these comments helped staff create meaningful agenda topics and exercises for subsequent meetings which were then deliberated upon by the Fairview Park Steering Committee as a part of their ongoing discussions of park use. These public comments were also noted by staff as a function of recording meeting notes and minutes.

(Under construction – list of comments received)

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FAIRVIEW PARK AND HARBOR SOARING SOCIETY FLY FIELD COMPATABILITY EVALUATION

SECTION 4D. EVALUATION OF LOCAL FLY FIELDS (HSS IS COMPLETING THIS SECTION)

In an effort to better understand what is needed to own and operate a successful fly field, City Staff gathered information about some of the fly fields in the local area. The majority of the local fields are within Orange County and one field is in Los Angeles County.

FLY FIELD NAME:	Location: Field Hours:	Owner: Operator:	Permit Required:	Permitting Agency:	Permit Cost:	Enforcement/Special Conditions:
BOB SWENSON FIELD	Black Star Canyon	County of Orange OCMA		OCMA	\$100 Annual \$50 initiation	Safety Officers, OCMA Board, Co. Park Ranger Special Conditions: Poor/No ADA access. Gas engine permitted (Loud noise for hearing impaired). Limited electric aircraft usage. (No electrical charge stations). Fire extinguisher required.
EL DORADO PARK	Long Beach Hours: 7:00 am to dusk	City of Long Beach/ El Dorado Silent Flyers		El Dorado Silent Flyers	\$30 Annual/ Renewal \$10 Family	F+BYLAWS.pdf City Park Ranger Special Conditions: Electric only. (no electrical charge stations. Non-members fly here. Designated open area close to trees.
FAIRVIEW PARK	Costa Mesa Hours: 7:30 am to dusk	City of Costa Mesa/ HSS				HSS members, HSS Safety Ofcr, City Park Ranger, City Police, City Administrator Special Conditions: Electric only. City permit required for all AMA flyers. Mud/grass fld., ADA access, Electric charging station for HSS members, designated fly area in city park, non-club members fly here.
KITE HILL	Laguna Niguel Hours: 7 am to 6 pm	County of Orange				Enforcement: Co. Park Ranger Special Conditions: Extremely small landing area, 100 foot. Gliders, small light electric airplanes. Expert pilots only. Flying top of hill overlooking business and local streets
LILY SHAPPELL	Laguna Niguel Hours: When non-staff gate is open	City of Laguna Niguel		City permits AMA required		Enforcement: City Police Special Conditions: Extremely small landing area, less than 100 feet. Expert pilots only. TRABUCO
TRABUCO CANYON	Trabuco Canyon Hours: 7 am to dusk	Private Trabuco Flyers		Trabuco Flyers	\$300 Annual Prorated quarterly	http://www.trabucoflyers.com/membership.htm Safety Officers or Board Members Special Conditions: Gas engine permitted. Loud noise for hearing impaired. All types of airplanes, jets, drones. Fire extinguisher required.

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A quote from the most directly applicable article read, however, it is a National Refuge and recreation is not within the mission of Refuge management:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 2006. Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan - *Comprehensive Conservation Plan – Compatibility Determination, May 2006*

Description of use evaluated: the conduct of free flight and radio-controlled model airplane flying and competitive events at Sawangunk Grasslands, a Refuge for protection and management of migratory bird, grassland habitat.

Pg.34: “Impacts to migratory birds from model airplane flying and competitions are both direct and indirect. These impacts stem both from the act of model airplane flying and its associated activities, such as retrieval of planes. There are no specific studies that describe the impact of model airplane disturbance to grassland birds. However, there has been research showing that response to aircraft is influenced by many variables, including aircraft size, proximity, flight, profile, engine noise, and sonic booms (Smith et al. 1998, the Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State)

CHAPTER 5 – THE EVALUATION

SECTION 5A. Value of Harbor Soaring Society/City of Costa Mesa Partnership

SECTION 5B. The Compatibility of all Flying Activity with the FVP MP and Measure AA

SECTION 5C. Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

SECTION 5D. Fiscal Analysis

SECTION 5E. Legal Review

SECTION 5A. VALUE OF HARBOR SOARING SOCIETY/CITY OF COSTA MESA PARTNERSHIP

History of the Partnership: The Harbor Soaring Society has been part of the Costa Mesa Community at Fairview Park for more than 50 years. Up until 2016, the City had little interface or partnership activities with HSS other than the City’s participation in the movement and grading of the launch/landing fly field in 2005. Even though HSS had been using Fairview Park for decades, in 2007 a formal agreement between the City and HSS was generated for the first time.

Within the last three years the City has implemented changes to management of Fairview Park, including changes to fly field operation. These changes include working with the City to assure that required bird nesting surveys are performed three days prior to runway mowing. This has required HSS leadership to interact regularly with City staff to assure that special events, fly field closures and fly field maintenance is well coordinated with the Fairview Park Administrator. HSS’s ability to implement these changes has been difficult, but is slowly being accomplished.

HSS works independently from the city in many ways. They are committed to providing flight training for model aircraft flyers and educating future engineers and aviators in Costa Mesa and Orange County on and off the fly field, through participation the following:

- ✓ **An Investment in the STEM Curriculum** – For 50+ years, HSS members have been involved in instructing the next generation of engineers and pilots by pursuing the creation of STEM curricula for local High Schools.
- ✓ **Radio Control and Hobby Expo at the OC Fairgrounds** – HSS members participate in the OC Fair Radio Control and Hobby Expo to expose youth to model aviation and flying simulators, and teach youth how airplanes fly. Participants are invited to the HSS flying field to fly RC airplanes with other participants.
- ✓ **Educating Youth at Local Schools** - HSS visited local schools, including Everett A. Rea, Whittier, Wilson, and Killybrooke Elementary Schools, Davis Magnet School, Twinkle Middle School, Irvine School Foundation, and Newport Sea Base to develop interest in airplane design, leading students to careers in aviation or flying.

HSS also provided the Orange County River Park Committee aerial photography to determine degree of storm water intrusion into “Wetlands” adjacent to HB power plant and also provided needed drone imagery to the City of Costa Mesa. Much of the HSS community activity happens off of the fly field, therefore, the value of HSS contributions may be considered a benefit to the regional community.

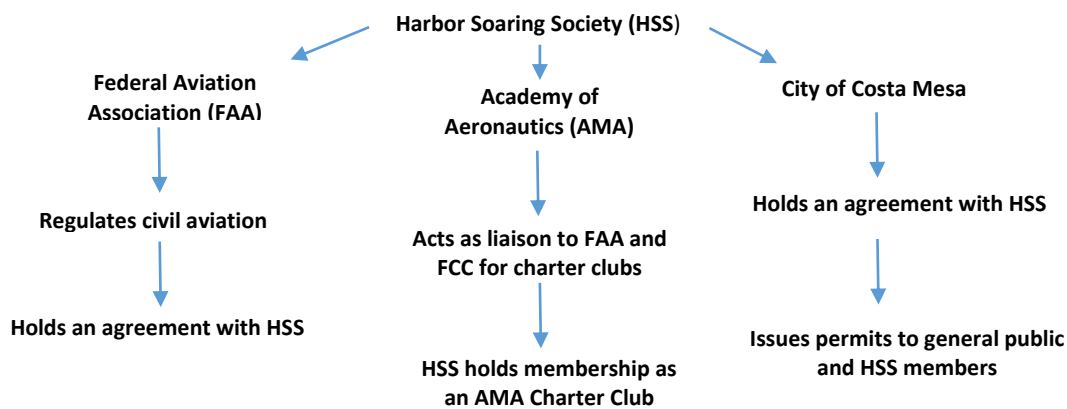
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Current Partnership: The current City/HSS agreement does not include parameters to define a community benefit or the value of a City/HSS partnership. For purposes of this evaluation, staff defined the value of the partnership from two perspectives; the HSS interface with the FAA and the HSS interaction with the Costa Mesa Community.

HSS is the liaison to the FAA, and through that relationship is authorized to fly model aircraft within 5 miles of the John Wayne Airport. The required multi-layered agreement structure that permits a fly field to exist at Fairview Park requires two parties: The City who owns the land and HSS who operates the fly field. The HSS, as an AMA Certified Club, has an agreement with the FAA to operate the runway and air space above the designated fly field. The Club’s agreement with the FAA is necessary for a fly field to operate at Fairview Park. (see diagram below and Attachment #)

HSS provides educational and social programs to the community, however the programs are limited and not conducted in partnership with the City. Throughout this evaluation process, there has been a keen interest expressed by the community for enhancing this relationship, thereby enhancing the value of the City/HSS relationship. The AMA has offered their assistance, and boasts a successful track record working with other organizations on successful community programming. By working with the AMA and other clubs, programs promoting park stewardship, youth education, and other events can be modeled. Discussions with HSS leadership have indicated a preference for a private club rather than a club for public benefit, however, the evaluation process has also created much needed awareness of the need for a healthy partnership.

The diagram below (see pg 31) illustrates the relationships between permitted flyers, the City, HSS, the AMA and the FAA.



Moving forward: This evaluation process has also highlighted several needs that should be addressed as the City considers the continuation of model aircraft flying at Fairview Park. These management needs are discussed in SECTION 6 RECOMMENDATIONS, and City staff can take the lead on developing solutions for these needs. It has become apparent, however, that for any of these solutions to be successfully

implemented it is vital to have a committed fly field partnership in place. This type of healthy relationship is required to appropriately manage a fly field and offer public educational programs at Fairview Park.

In addition to continuing to provide flight training and youth education, an enhanced partnership and additional programming will be required to help provide the oversight needed for more effective management of the fly field. This partnership may include programs like: Permit and Flight Testing for Fairview Park; Review of FAA Compliance at Fairview Park; Flight Certification Programs for Urban Flyers at Fairview Park; or even a Volunteer Fly Field Marshal Program to oversee model aircraft flyers, answer questions about rules and regulations and provide information regarding the park.

If at the end of this evaluation, City Council gives Staff direction to continue with operating a fly field at Fairview Park, a new, expanded agreement between the City and a Model Aircraft flyers club will need to be implemented to strengthen any club partnership that develops. The opportunities and value of this new, expanded partnership is covered in greater detail in SECTION 5C. (An example of what a new agreement might look like is presented in Attachment #). Staff also recommends that a budget allocation to provide for sufficient enforcement of any modifications to flying and fly field use be authorized.

SECTION 5B. THE COMPATIBILITY OF ALL FLYING ACTIVITY WITH THE FVP MP & MEASURE AA

During the evaluation process, much of the discussion was about the “compatibility” off all flying with avian activity, rather than focusing the compatibility with the Master Plan and Measure AA as directed by City Council. Staff worked diligently with the community to direct their ideas and energy to the task at hand, by keeping the focus of the discussion on the compatibility of flying with the existing governance through the Master Plan and Measure AA. The following summaries incorporate comments received and provides a basic understanding of the two governing documents.

The Master Plan: The Master Plan includes the fly field use in general discussion as a “passive use” – but in specific entries, describes the activity as “model glider planes” with both “electric motor launch operations” and “bluff top launches” (see boxes below). The two major quotes discuss the need for moving the launch sites from the vernal pools, to the east; and the need to provide access into the vernal pools in a compatible manner to preservation. These descriptions appear to be from the earliest drafts of the Master Plan; the 2008 Master plan update did not include changes that had already occurred to the permitting, type of flyers allowed, or changes to the runway/fly field. This has been expressed by some in the evaluation process, as the current use not being compliant with the MP. It is staff’s recommendation that if the use continues at FVP, all changes to the use be

Master Plan, Pg. 33: **Glider Launching Sites**

There are two types of model glider airplane launch sites in use at Fairview Park: electric motor launch operations which take place in the morning when winds tend to be calm, and bluff top launches which take place in the afternoon when the prevailing wind creates a strong updraft at the bluff.... The landing requires a separate small area, which must be clear of pedestrian traffic... The plan calls for moving the current site to the east in order to remove the launch string systems from the vernal pools.

documented in the MP Update of 2021, and that the environmental documentation for the Update include analysis of, and preventative measures form potential impacts to the adjacent sensitive habitats from the use.

Master Plan, Pg. 37: **Passive uses and circulation trails**

Passive uses for the park include walking, running, walking of leashed dogs, flying glider planes, flying kits, picnics, and other small group functions.

Measure AA: “An Ordinance to give the people of Costa Mesa a vote to determine what significant changes to FVP may be made.” (See SECTION for full description). It is important to note that Measure AA supersedes any other CMMC, and gives the public the right to determine if a project, beyond the “As Built” condition of FVP, shall be allowed or not. The “As Built” condition means the amenities and alterations that have been built as of the effective date of the ordinance (Nov 2016). The Measure then further describes conceptually, what projects are exempt from this condition based on definitions of “significant change”, “preservation, restoration, and maintenance”.

Measure AA includes the following phrases related to the fly field:

- allows for “all uses passive” including “glider flying”
- “protect against alteration that reduce the tangible and intangible benefits to the public”
- “protection of extremely rare vernal pools that need protection”
- “no expansion of uses”

Once staff is given direction on which recommendation to pursue, more detailed examination of what steps need to be taken with Measure AA will be taken. For instance, an option that includes modifications to the use, and/or movement of the field, will most likely have consequences from AA, if not requiring a full vote of public to be implemented.

Nesting white-tailed kites observed from bluffs of Fairview Park, over-looking Talbert Regional Park



SECTION 5C. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

The City of Costa Mesa has a responsibility to address public demand for recreational programming at Fairview Park, including the area of the fly field. This need must also be balanced with the need to protect the highly valued, strongly regulated, environmentally sensitive landscape. In the context of this evaluation, the balance becomes challenging. The existing use of the fly field has a decades-long history, yet the HSS is experiencing a decline in members. The fly field is situated amongst the sensitive habitat areas and restoration has become a community priority. These restoration efforts have proven successful at attracting more wildlife; and at the same time, other park uses have increased in demand bringing more people to the park.

It is with this challenge in mind that staff offers the following analysis of *general* opportunities and constraints for the fly field at Fairview Park. These opportunities and constraints will certainly influence the suggestions made regarding the future use of model aircraft flying at Fairview Park. (CHAPTER 6 offers more detailed opportunities and constraints for each specific future action recommended).

General opportunities and constraints occur in the areas of aeronautic education, building volunteer stewardship programs, implementation of restoration plans, and park oversight and enforcement.

Aeronautical education: There are numerous opportunities for developing a strong regional education program focused on aeronautics and engineering topics. If the fly field remains operational at Fairview Park and the City and HSS (or other Club) are successful in developing and adopting a new agreement for operation of the fly field, the AMA has provided examples of highly successful STEM programs being offered at other fly fields; some in conjunction with school districts.

An expanded agreement between the City and HSS could also include the option to work with Orange County Model Engineers (OCME) on educational programs in the area of engineering. Classes could be offered through the City of Costa Mesa Recreational Program Guide as well as through other educational partners. Constraints to be considered would be the limited number of trained aviators who would be willing to donate time for this cause.

Increased opportunities for volunteerism and stewardship: A park stewardship program can be developed in conjunction with fly field stakeholders to provide oversight of the fly field. This can be accomplished by assembling a trained volunteer team. This team would need to be present whenever the field is open, and would be responsible for informing the public on important topics. Stewards could teach about the uniqueness of this outstanding natural resource. They could also partner with City enforcement to document and reporting inappropriate behavior to the City for proper enforcement. The City would then be tasked with developing training for park stewards. Constraints would be the ability of the City to create and implement this program. This effort could be further constrained by the limited number of committed volunteers who are willing to serve in this capacity.

Future park restoration plans: The citizens and the City Council of Costa Mesa have made restoration of Fairview Park a priority for the community. As a part of the updated Master Plan, a park-wide restoration plan will be developed. This Master Plan update is in process by the Fairview Park Steering Committee and City staff. (Anticipated Plan completion in 2021). The larger environmental community views the 208 acres of Fairview Park as critical habitat. This habitat plays an important role within the regional open space network. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife are currently cooperating with city staff on several restoration projects and are anticipating the Master Plan Update will address environmental needs identified by these agencies.

Fairview Park contains diverse natural areas unlike any other park in this region; it is one of the best spots for bird observation in Orange County, is home to several rare plants, and host to a handful of endangered species. Conducting required restoration and resource maintenance provides an ideal opportunity to build strong community involvement at numerous levels. The restoration process also affords opportunities for community partnerships to assist with the significant funding needed to implement and maintain the natural environment in the future. There are many models of partnerships between City programs/Park Agencies/ and local non-profits to cooperate on land management and public engagement activities. HSS is one example of a small special interest group that could provide volunteers for larger effort of restoring/maintaining FVP in partnership with the City.

Another partnership opportunity between HSS and the City exists in forming a joint effort to document restoration efforts through drone photography for purposes of both management and public education. There is no such formal arrangement to date, but HSS members have demonstrated an eagerness to assist with this service.

A major constraint to the continued use of the fly field in its current location, would be the inability to restore the vernal pool complex to the optimum level of restoration possible. Because the field sits in the middle of a disturbed vernal pool watershed, and the area still contains fill soils dumped decades ago, the hydrology of the park remains impaired. The optimum restoration of the entire mesa hydrology is contingent upon the field being moved from the current location.

Enforcement Capabilities: Enforcement has come through the evaluation as one of the top concerns of the model aircraft flyers and park users. Many of the enforcement issues expressed are not unique to Fairview Park; but many are unique to the use of model aircraft flying at the park. In this, as in any similar situation, there is an inherent responsibility of the user group to “self-police” against non-compliant behavior. Perhaps even more-so because the HSS has a contractual responsibility for the field.

Several suggestions are being made regarding “modifying use” of the flyers that may help with some of enforcement issues, but again, the outcome is unknown and ultimately dependent on those that participate. Some contributors in the evaluation commented that the problems are only “a few bad apples” that need to be controlled; others advocated for Rangers to cite more misuse and be more present. Constraints to increasing enforcement of any type is tied to several considerations: the cost to the City to staff / change existing enforcement programs; the limited number of committed volunteers

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and ability to sustain a volunteer base; and the fact that this is a declining use internationally which is reflected in the diminishing revenue the City receives via flying permits.

The physical characteristics of the fly field in its current location presents constraints to fencing or gating the area as seen in other fields staff observed. Fencing allows for more control of who’s using the field, at what times the field is used, and provides a way for Rangers and other park users to know when it is OK for flyers to be at the park. Being able to fence and gate a field might create opportunities for better enforcement on the ground, but does not address the airspace use above the field. Currently at FVP, the field and airspace remain “wide-open” like they were in the 1960’s, making enforcement difficult at best.

SECTION 5E. FISCAL ANALYSIS (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

COSTS FOR PUTTING FORTH A VOTE FOR MEASURE AA

COSTS TO RELOCATE FLY FIELD

COST OF ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT BY THE CITY (INCREASING COVERAGE)

POSITION	ANNUAL COST ESTIMATE
PARK RANGER – FULL TIME	\$114,588.07
PARK RANGER – PART TIME	\$55,959.80
COMMUNITY SERVICE LEADER III (AMBASSADOR)	\$29,528.13

PERMIT REVENUE

Permit Category	Fees effective 9/1/17
Adult Permit	\$50.00
Non-Resident Adult Permit	\$55.00
Learner’s Permit (Ages 6-14)	\$30.00
Non-Resident Learner’s Permit (Ages 6-14)	\$35.00

*\$5.00 administrative fee **will be added** per transaction

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Permit Revenue 2015 – 2020	
2020	\$3,480.00 As of March 3, 2020 (6 month permit)
2019*	\$10,920.00
2018	\$12,845.00
2017	\$7,440.00
2016	\$8,150.00
2015	\$8,675.00

SECTION 5F. LEGAL REVIEW (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

- ✓ Impacts to Ordinances, Policies, practices,
- ✓ Measure AA interpretation
- ✓ Permits/permitting changes
- ✓ Existing and new agreements
- ✓ Future actions

DRAFT

CHAPTER 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 6A. Continue use of Fly Field without Modifications

SECTION 6B. Continue use of Fly Field with Modifications

SECTION 6C. Close the Current Fly Field/Relocate to Alternate Location at Fairview Park

SECTION 6D. Close the Fly Field without Alternate Location

SECTION 6A. CONTINUE USE OF FLY FIELD WITHOUT MODIFICATIONS

While some of the feedback gathered through the public process indicated that there may be support for this option, much of the feedback indicated that oversight of existing flight rules, regulations and parameters are in order (this included HSS and AMA representatives) – rendering this option non-viable. These results point to there being no real opportunities with this option, only constraints.

The participants that expressed complete non-compatibility of the current use of the fly field without modifications, were primarily referencing perceived impacts to avian activity based on plane types. Staff was able to complete a brief review of several articles and speak with professional “birders” on the subject enough to understand that this is a very grey area of scientific conclusions, and one that is constantly changing with modified aircrafts and ongoing research. If this scenario is chosen as the path forward, staff strongly recommends that at minimum, experts in the field be engaged to follow up and professionally research this issue at FVP.

Although the cost for this option is thought to be the least expensive for the City to implement, there are risks associated with this option. Continued use in the current location without modifications carries an increased risk to the city in being cited at the State and/or Federal level, for a management fault, which may incur a financial penalty to the City.

Also with this option there continues to be the potential for degradation of the habitat quality that supports wildlife throughout the park, which is counter to City and community desires and is also the responsibility of park management.

Lastly, yet perhaps most importantly, this option continues to allow an identified risk of potential for conflicts or accidents amongst park users. The many complaints heard during this evaluation were due to: a few “bad apples”, those that don’t follow the rules, and permitting and rules not being enforced; all of this type of reported activity will continue to take place with this option.

SECTION 6B. CONTINUE USE OF FLY FIELD WITH MODIFICATIONS

Information gathered from on-line surveys, suggestions from public meetings and feedback from public comments indicated that there is sizable support for continuing fly field activity at the current location, provided there are modifications to fly field activity to address these four primary concerns:

1. Public safety/nuisance issues
2. Park flora, fauna and natural resources
3. Flight parameters
4. Enforcement

Further into the process, modifications were identified that, if implemented, would address these concerns, making the use more compatible. The following list of modifications is representative of ideas put forward and is not meant to be all inclusive: (Please see page 26, Compatibility Exercise for more)

- ✓ Issue a new fly field permit for both HSS members and other flyers (current permits expire June 30, 2020)
- ✓ Develop a new agreement with flyers and require needed modifications to address identified concerns
- ✓ Develop new flight parameters for the fly field, and gather resources to enforce existing flight parameters
- ✓ Limit fly field hours of operation to coincide with environmental, keeping bird foraging times “flight free”
- ✓ Explore seasonal parameters, limiting flight during nesting season, when trails are flooded, etc.
- ✓ Post and observe unobtrusive *and temporary* field flags, signifying that the fly field is open/closed
- ✓ Install markings for sensitive habitat and out-of-bounds areas; visual cues that park users can easily see
- ✓ Create an education/enforcement plan with staff, partners, ambassadors, rangers, and non-profit groups

Many evaluation participants expressed that this scenario poses the best “compromise” as to keeping the field open, while attempting to resolve some of the primary concerns; and it offers the greatest **potential** opportunities for more public engagement. As presented in SECTION 5C, *general* opportunities lie in the areas of aeronautic education, building volunteer stewardship programs, with implementation of restoration plans, and with review of park use oversight or enforcement. Increased volunteerism from the fly field community would be critical for successful implementation of this scenario. Constraints would be the limited number of trained aviators who would be willing to donate time for this cause.

Implementation and coordination of these modifications would need to begin with the new agreement date (presumably July 1, 2020) and would require a newly focused undertaking of already limited staff resources. A phasing program to determine next steps, development of cost analysis, legal review, and a project schedule would need to be established immediately. Close coordination between City staff, HSS members, non-HSS flyers, and the AMA would be necessary. Requiring a commitment to increase HSS Club members as productive members of an ongoing implementation team should be initiated as part of the City committing to making this scenario work. Standards for success of implementation should be resolute, the outcomes measurable, and the process should become a regular item for review/report to City Council. In principle, any agreement to move forward with this scenario should be tested over a short period of time (one-year) before putting in place a long term agreement for use of the fly field.

SECTION 6C. CLOSE FLY FIELD/RELOCATE TO ALTERNATE LOCATION AT FAIRVIEW PARK

Feedback from the community indicates that the fly field is an important recreational, educational and social park amenity. This scenario, more than others, values this position and considers the environmental constraints with the current fly field location, and the potential for an improved education programming. However much like other scenarios, the same limitations of implementing these programs still applies.

Consideration of an alternate fly-field location at Fairview Park would need to meet the needs of the flying community without compromising the environmental stewardship of the park. It would be a lengthy and costly process; the steps for implementation will be similar to those explained in 6B, but with the additional task of finding and approving a new site.

Considerations for this option would require a thorough investigation of the following:

- ✓ Careful research of alternate field location and appropriate flight parameters
- ✓ Identification of funding for the relocation costs
- ✓ Site design and preparation, review of disruption to other existing uses, and evaluation of other potential uses of the chosen site
- ✓ Legal review of proposed modifications and development of new agreements
- ✓ Environmental documentation, Master Plan and Measure AA coordination
- ✓ Determination of when, how AND where the move should take place
- ✓ An approval process that includes all three governing bodies (identical to this process)

Currently, staff has identified one potential area of the park that could be considered for relocation of a reduced fly field footprint with modification to flying parameters and permits. The location is on the east side of the park, which triggers additional evaluation needs based on current uses, coordination of existing program operations and discussion of other potential future uses for the site.

A three to five - year process would likely be required to do the research, planning and design, environmental documentation, and relocation, if a suitable site within Fairview park can be identified.

SECTION 6D. CLOSE THE FLY FIELD PERMANENTLY

The loss of any long-standing public amenity is difficult, but with time comes change. The fly field at Fairview park represents a park use and a tight-knit community that began when the park was established, over sixty-years ago. Comments from fly-field users indicate that a loss of the fly field would represent the loss of their community and have reported that the location and accessibility of other local fields may present accessibility barriers for model aircraft flyers with transportation or mobility concerns. The loss of this amenity would currently impact twenty Costa Mesa residents and eighty regional users, and reflect a loss of approximately \$6,000.00 in annual revenue to the City.

Other considerations for this option should include the need for:

- ✓ Installation of informational signage and enforcement of no fly zone (one-year minimum)
- ✓ Removal of amenities and restoration of the site to its natural condition
- ✓ Developing a plan for compliant use of existing site

Discussion of closing the fly field at Fairview Park is not unique to Costa Mesa flyers; field closure is actually quite common and several nearby fields have closed in the past five to eight years. In addition to advocating for Model Aircraft flying, the AMA offers regular assistance to flying clubs with field relocation.

