

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAREN ANDERSON DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: MAY 28, 2019

SUBJECT: BAYLANDS COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) discuss and provide feedback on the draft Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan (BCCP) (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the BCCP is to develop goals, policies, prioritized action steps, and best management practices to holistically manage the Baylands Nature Preserve over the next 15 years and beyond. The BCCP will provide staff, the PRC, and the City Council with clear direction on how to manage the Baylands using an ecosystem-based approach that will help guide the protection of the preserve’s habitat, wildlife, and natural resources; ensure that stewardship and access to nature-friendly recreational opportunities are available for park visitors to enjoy the Baylands now and in the future; and help the City manage the Baylands in a way that allows the preserve to thrive in the face of challenges such as sea level rise and climate change. It also incorporates opportunities to provide art in appropriate public spaces.

DISCUSSION

The draft BCCP includes the following sections:

- Existing Conditions;
- Planned Future Improvements and Activities;
- Vision, Goals, and Objectives;
- Opportunities and Challenges Analysis;
- Climate Change and Sea Level Rise at the Baylands;
- Action Plan and Best Management Practices;
- Design Plan for Byxbee Park; and
- Concepts for the Former ITT Property/Renzel Wetlands.

Public, stakeholder, and PRC involvement has been an integral part in the development of the BCCP and has contributed valuable insight and guidance throughout the planning process.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement included the following opportunities for participation and input into development of the BCCP:

- Stakeholder Meeting 1 on October 18, 2017
- Tour of former ITT Property/Renzel Wetlands on November 13, 2017
- Stakeholder Meeting 2 on December 5, 2017

- Stakeholder Meeting 3 on February 15, 2018
- Onsite Baylands User Survey in April and May 2018
- Stakeholder Meeting 4 on November 29, 2018
- Project website as an alternative opportunity for the community top review and provide feedback on BCCP chapters.
- The PRC discussed the BCCP on February 27, 2018; June 26, 2018; September 25, 2018; and December 18, 2018
- Review of draft sections of the BCCP via email

Five overarching themes emerged as important throughout the public and stakeholder process including:

- Natural Resources;
- Public Access and Facilities;
- Public Engagement;
- Public Art; and
- Operations and Management

These themes formed the basis of topic areas that are the focus of the BCCP. For example, Natural Resources were identified as an important asset of the Baylands, and Natural Resources Management is a prominently featured topic in the Goals and Objectives developed for the BCCP, and is included as a main topic in Opportunities and Challenges Analysis. Natural resources and habitats are specifically addressed in the Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Assessment chapter. The BCCP also includes specific natural resources management action plans, specifically the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan and the Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Plan. Natural resources conservation is also included as a main objective in the Byxbee Park Plan and the former ITT/Renzel concepts. Natural resources/ecology is also a major theme of Art Overlay section of the BCCP.

On December 18, 2018, the PRC discussed elements of the BCCP and focused their feedback on the Draft Design Plan for Byxbee Park. The PRC supported the Draft Design Plan for Byxbee Park, and recommended the parking lot improvement option (Concept 2), which allows vehicles to drive a loop through the parking lot. The PRC also requested adding bus parking to the design. The PRC feedback was incorporated into the Final Design Plan for Byxbee Park.

On May 7, 2019, staff met with the PRC Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the draft BCCP. The Ad Hoc Committee expressed support for the draft plan, and recommended a few minor changes:

- ITT conceptual plan—keep the one low to the ground antenna in the former ITT area.
- Include bio-blitzes as a method of monitoring and measuring wildlife and habitat.
- Do not clutter the Baylands with too many interpretive signs.
- The action plan it mentions “native plants” and “climate smart plants”. Consider using the term “habitat supportive plants”. The idea is that at some point it might not just be native plants that are best for supporting habitat given sea level rise.
- Include an appendix page with a list of volunteer partners.
- For Byxbee Trails, include the mileage of the loops.

NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

- CEQA Analysis—June to December 2019
- Parks and Recreation Commission to recommend and City to formally approve Final BCCP and certify CEQA document – December 2019

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan