



# COUNCIL REPORT

**DATE:** March 14, 2023  
**CATEGORY:** New Business  
**DEPT.:** Community Services  
**TITLE:** **Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt the 2023 Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

## **BACKGROUND**

The City Council identified the development of a Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan (SWMP or Plan) as an item on the City Council Fiscal Years 2019-21 Work Plan. As part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget process, funding was approved to develop the SWMP, and, after conducting a Request for Proposals (RFP), H.T. Harvey & Associates was selected as the City's consultant in June 2021, largely due to their knowledge and expertise in a wide range of biological and design disciplines required to perform high-quality ecological projects and their experience working in the vicinity of Shoreline at Mountain View (Shoreline) and the surrounding region, which has given them intimate knowledge of the special-status species at Shoreline.

During the development of the City's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Strategic Roadmap, Council created seven strategic priorities, one of which is "Sustainability and Climate Resilience." Under this priority, Council included a project to: "Consolidate and update existing plans into a comprehensive Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan."

Following this direction, the SWMP consolidates existing plans and documents (regional, State, and Federal) that regulate wildlife and habitat at Shoreline into one comprehensive plan that complements the 2012 Shoreline Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan. In addition, the SWMP provides recommendations for future habitat enhancement projects and establishes best practices for landscape and habitat management within the Plan's area.

## **PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

As part of the process for developing the SWMP, the consultant, with City staff input, created an annotated outline of the Plan that was based on ecological and environmental data that had been historically collected at Shoreline. The outline provided the sections and subsections of the Plan

along with short descriptions of what information would be conveyed. The document facilitated a robust public input process and helped stakeholders, the public, and the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) better understand the purpose and parameters of the SWMP.

### **PRC Meeting—March 9, 2022**

The annotated outline was presented to the PRC on March 9, 2022 and kicked off the public input process for the SWMP. The meeting was held virtually, and key stakeholders were invited to attend and provide initial comments. It was an opportunity for the consultant and staff to further explain the purpose and direction of the Plan while allowing for initial comments and questions that would help develop the next steps of the public input process. Attachment 3 is the memo and annotated outline from that meeting. The PRC, public, and stakeholders were generally supportive of the direction of the SWMP based on the presentation and annotated outline.

### **Stakeholder Meetings**

Following the March 9, 2022 PRC meeting, the consultant and staff virtually met with members of key stakeholder organizations in June and July 2022, including the Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, GreenSpacesMV, and Urban Wildlife Research Project. Since many of the participants in these meetings had also attended the PRC meeting, the discussions focused on specific topics or feedback and enabled the consultant and staff to learn what additional elements the representatives wanted explored for the Plan as well as an opportunity for the consultant and staff to explain why the outline established specific parameters for the Plan. A number of common themes began to arise, which are summarized later in this report.

### **Webpage and Survey for the General Public**

As part of the public input process, a webpage was created for the general public to learn more about the SWMP and provide feedback through a survey that was posted in July and August 2022. The webpage included a short video summarizing the SWMP with a link to download the annotated outline. The survey had six questions with the final one asking if the individual would be interested in volunteering at Shoreline and to provide their contact information. The survey received 147 responses, and the five-minute video was viewed 460 times. An analysis of the results was provided by H.T. Harvey & Associates to identify the common themes and determine how those correlate to the feedback received from the PRC and stakeholders.

### **Public Input Trends from PRC, Stakeholders, and the Survey**

Through all parts of the public input process, the feedback was positive, and the direction of the SWMP was supported. A recurring theme was to add and expand certain elements of the Plan

due to the important topics that it addresses. In all three parts of the input process, the most common feedback included:

- Expand the boundaries of the Plan's area outside of Shoreline's boundaries by either including specific areas in the North Bayshore or the entire North Bayshore Area in the Plan;
- Expand the size and distance of the corridors in the Plan's area, especially regarding to the major creeks (Stevens Creek and Permanente Creek) that run through the Plan's area;
- Include an additional umbrella species that is not a bird species;
- Include nonprotected species that are special to Shoreline, such as the black-tailed jackrabbit or gray fox; and
- Expand upon the conflicting uses and activities between humans and wildlife, especially regarding infrastructure and maintenance needs, future projects by the City, contractors, or partner organizations, and recreational uses of Shoreline.

In addition, through the PRC and stakeholder meetings, the consultant and staff received substantial feedback to consider:

- Determine metrics, timelines, and priorities for the enhancement projects; and
- Explore ways to educate the public (signage or programs) and engage existing organizations to help with education efforts.

### **PRC Meeting—February 15, 2023**

After conducting the public input process, the draft SWMP was presented to the PRC on February 15, 2023. The PRC was provided the specific changes that were made from the annotated outline based on the feedback that staff and the consultant received. Every stakeholder group that was engaged during the public input process was represented at the meeting. The PRC and the stakeholders generally supported the draft SWMP. Stakeholders provided comments, including a request for more stringent guidelines be placed on human activities, such as maintenance, projects and recreation. Attachment 2 includes related PRC documents from the February 15, 2023 meeting.

The PRC forwarded the following recommendations to the City Council regarding the SWMP:

- Recommend the City Council adopt the SWMP;

- As part of the adoption of the Plan, include an annual update presentation to the PRC; and
- Recommend prioritizing the erosion control project at the Sailing Lake Island.

## **ANALYSIS**

The SWMP focuses on the distinctive aspects that make Shoreline a special place in the City and the South Bay, including the diversity of species, vegetation, and habitats that are currently found at this unique location in Mountain View. The Plan achieves this by reviewing and consolidating the various regulations and codes for wildlife and habitats at Shoreline. It also provides recommendations for best practices for maintenance operations and proposes future projects for habitat and landscape preservation, restoration, or enhancement.

### **Plan Area**

The SWMP examines the species and habitats found within Shoreline as well as two locations outside of Shoreline but within the North Bayshore Area. The two locations outside of Shoreline are the Egret Rookery off Shorebird Way and the Charleston Retention Basin. These two locations were added to the boundaries of the plan area based on the outcomes of the public input process.

The Plan focuses on these three areas because of their unique aspects that differ from the rest of the City regarding species and habitats found there. In addition, the City has the responsibility and control over the maintenance practices and types of projects at these locations as well as the ability to monitor, which will maximize the effectiveness of the SWMP. The Plan acknowledges adjacent restoration and development activities as well as regional implications of biodiversity within Shoreline, but it concentrates the regulations and maintenance and enhancements to within Shoreline and the two nearby areas.

### **Plan Outline and Purpose by Section**

Section 1 of the SWMP provides an overview of the Plan and details how the SWMP fits into a framework of plans, regulations, and goals at Shoreline, such as landfill maintenance requirements or sea level rise considerations.

Section 2 consolidates the existing regulations and codes that govern the management practices of the protected species of plants and animals found within the plan area. While it does not cover every legal precedent and code, the regulatory framework that is provided focuses on the most pertinent Federal, State, and regional regulations and references additional regulations and legal decisions that may also govern individual or smaller numbers of species.

After providing the regulatory framework, Sections 3 through 8 of the Plan provide descriptions and locations of the various species and habitats in the Plan area along with management and enhancement recommendations that will benefit those species. Information, such as the management and enhancement recommendations, is purposely repeated in multiple sections so that an individual does not have to read through the whole document in order to collect all of the information. Staff believes this layout will facilitate use of the document by the public, contractors, staff, and community partners when trying to obtain information from the SWMP.

Sections 3 through 5 provide overviews of the types of habitat and species found in the plan area. Section 3 provides a summary of each habitat's location, vegetation, wildlife, and management recommendations. This Section is intended for readers who are interested in specific habitat or specific location of the plan area. Section 4 summarizes the special-status species in the plan area that fall under the management dictated in Section 2's regulatory framework. Table 1 in Section 4 is intended to be used with Sections 2 and 3 so that a reader can correlate habitats to species and the regulatory framework. Then, since avian species are so prevalent and diverse within the plan area, Section 5 focuses on the specifics around nesting activity and how that interrelates with habitats, human activity, and developed areas (buildings) in the plan area.

Section 6 provides five umbrella species that represent the various types of habitat found at Shoreline. While Section 3 focuses on summarizing the habitats, Section 6 explains how species benefit from the various habitats and ties the benefits of habitat enhancement and management more directly to wildlife and details how the same recommendations can benefit these species. Each umbrella species is meant to serve as a representative for the other species that benefit from the habitat and enhancements. They are not the sole focus of projects and maintenance practices but demonstrate more clearly how the SWMP will benefit species in the plan area. Throughout the public input process, a recurring theme was the desire to add a fifth umbrella species that was not an avian (bird) species. Therefore, a fifth species, the monarch butterfly, was added to the SWMP, which is an invertebrate representing the grasslands habitat. This habitat was originally not represented in Section 6 because it is extensively covered in the 2012 Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan. However, the consultant and staff agreed with the feedback that a fifth species representing grasslands habitat is still important to address in the SWMP while referencing the 2012 Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan. Given recent concerns about western monarch butterfly populations and that conservation efforts for this species are already under way at Shoreline, the monarch butterfly was a good candidate for addition as a nonavian umbrella species. Section 7 discusses the management of invasive and nuisance species as well as pathogens that may adversely affect the species and habitats at Shoreline.

While Sections 3 through 7 provide information about the interrelation between species and habitats and the benefits of habitat management and enhancements, Section 8 focuses on the actual management, enhancement, and restoration opportunities by providing the prioritization and details of those opportunities. Through the public input process, it was recommended that timelines and measurable results be included with the enhancement and restoration projects.

Due to the extensive permitting, coordination, and resources needed for some of these opportunities, the SWMP provides a prioritization of projects rather than specific timelines.

The implementation of these recommendations are viewed in three types of activities or projects. The first group is maintenance and management practices that staff are already following. The SWMP puts the practices into writing for the various habitats not covered by the 2012 Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan. The second group of activities and projects are achievable with current funding, resources, and volunteer groups, such as some of the landscaping or habitat restoration projects. An example of this Group 2 project is the pollinator habitat being installed in Shoreline through the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. The third group of activities and projects are the long-term projects that may require permitting, engineering, design, and construction considerations. Since all of the opportunities in Section 8 are important, the prioritization indicated in the SWMP details the workload and timing considerations rather than level of importance. In addition, as habitat enhancements and restoration projects are pursued, their success will be measured through current and additional monitoring. The information from this monitoring will be provided annually to the PRC.

Section 9 of the SWMP addresses wildlife connectivity and the important corridors within the Plan area. Because the majority of wildlife corridors within the Plan area are comprised of one of the types of habitat already addressed in the Plan, Section 9 details corridor locations in conjunction with Section 3 for projects and opportunities for enhancement. One recurring theme that arose during the public input process but was not included in the SWMP was the desire to include Stevens Creek and Permanente Creek in the North Bayshore Area or further. The consultant and staff reviewed inclusion of these important corridors but limited their inclusion to Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh and the section of Permanente Creek within Shoreline for two reasons. First, these waterways require extensive permitting and coordination with multiple stakeholders for any maintenance work or projects. Because they are ultimately the responsibility of another organization, the City did not want to dictate the activities for these waterways. Secondly, the habitat and wildlife within the creeks would greatly increase the scope of the SWMP to a level believed to be ineffective for the desired goals of the SWMP.

Lastly, Sections 10 through 12 focus on the management practices of staff, contractors, and other organizations that work and conduct projects within the Plan's area. These sections also highlight the maintenance and projects required for infrastructure, buildings, and recreation areas that are required within the Plan area and details the processes to follow to minimize impacts on wildlife and habitat. Sections 11 and 12 reflect information and practices that are already adopted through the 2012 Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan.

### **Reporting and Adaptive Management**

The SWMP summarizes and identifies the annual reporting requirements that are already being conducted as required by regulatory agencies. The SWMP will not create new reporting

requirements but, rather, clarifies the framework with which current reporting can measure the effectiveness of habitat management and monitoring at Shoreline. Through this annual reporting, the City will be able to determine if additional or modified practices or projects are needed in the Plan's area. In addition, as regulations are updated, new management practices are implemented, and grant opportunities and projects with community partners arise, it is anticipated that the SWMP will be updated. Therefore, the sections and layout of the Plan are designed to be adaptive.

Based on direction from the PRC, staff will provide a presentation annually reflecting the information from the monitoring and annual reporting.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Community Services Department was provided \$60,000 in funding to create the SWMP as part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Adopted Budget. This funding was encumbered in Fiscal Year 2020-21; therefore, no additional appropriation is needed. Based on the landscape, restoration, and management opportunities that are identified in the SWMP, staff is not recommending an additional budget at this time. If a future project requires extra resources, staff will request that one-time funding through the Capital Improvement Program to be paid by the Shoreline Fund. In addition, the City is exploring grant opportunities and partnerships with organizations that may provide volunteers and additional resources in order to achieve some of the proposed projects.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan is an item on the City Council Strategic Work Plan to consolidate existing regulations governing habitat and wildlife in Shoreline at Mountain View, the North Bayshore Egret Rookery, and the Charleston Retention Basin. The SWMP also provides recommendations for the management and enhancement activities and projects to benefit the species and habitats in the plan area. The SWMP was developed after an extensive public input process by staff and the consultant, and the final SWMP provides valuable information for the public, staff, contractors, and community partners. Upon adoption by City Council, the Plan will complement the 2012 Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan and will be used within a framework of plans and regulations that govern Shoreline to help maintain and enhance habitat while achieving other goals such as recreation uses, infrastructure needs, and landfill preservation.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Do not adopt the Plan.
2. Provide feedback to the consultant and staff and request the Plan be brought back with changes to either the PRC or City Council.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

## **PUBLIC NOTICING**

Agenda posting and shared on City's webpage dedicated to Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan. A copy of this report was provided to stakeholder groups engaged in the public input process.

Prepared by:

Brady Ruebusch  
Shoreline Manager

Brenda Sylvia  
Assistant Community Services Director

Approved by:

John R. Marchant  
Community Services Director

Kimbra McCarthy  
City Manager

BR-BS/AF/6/CAM  
240-03-14-23CR  
202503

- Attachments:
1. Draft 2023 Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan
  2. [February 15, 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Items](#)
  3. [March 9, 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Items](#)