



DATE: March 9, 2022

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Brady Ruebusch, Shoreline Manager
Brenda Sylvia, Assistant Community Services Director
John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

SUBJECT: Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan Introduction

RECOMMENDATION

Review the attached Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan annotated outline (Attachment 1 to the memorandum) and provide staff and the consultant with feedback prior to taking next steps to further develop the Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City Council identified the development of a Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan (SWMP or Plan) as an item on the City Council Goals Work Plan for Fiscal Years 2019-21. As part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget process, funding was approved to develop the SWMP. The purpose of the SWMP is to help consolidate existing plans and documents (regional, State, and Federal) that regulate wildlife and habitat at Shoreline at Mountain View (Shoreline) into one comprehensive plan and provide recommendations for Best Practices for habitat management based on the regulatory framework. After conducting a Request for Proposals, H.T. Harvey & Associates was selected as the consultant in June 2021. Staff has been working with the consultant for the past few months to draft the annotated outline (Attachment 1). Staff anticipates completing the SWMP by the end of Fiscal Year 2021-22.

During the development of the City's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Strategic Roadmap, Council created seven strategic priorities. One of the priorities is entitled "Sustainability and Climate Resilience." Council further prioritized this project by listing "Consolidate and update existing plans into a comprehensive Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan" as part of the Strategic Roadmap. The SWMP will focus on the unique aspects that make Shoreline a special place for the diversity of species, vegetation, and habitats that are currently found in this unique location of Mountain View.

Consultant

Since 1970, the highly Santa Clara County-based H.T. Harvey & Associates have delivered consulting services to municipalities, public agencies, private entities, and nonprofit organizations. Their expertise encompasses a wide range of biological and design disciplines required to perform high-quality ecological projects. In addition to their expertise, H.T. Harvey & Associates has experience working in the vicinity of Shoreline and the surrounding region, which has given them intimate knowledge of the special-status species at Shoreline. Their expertise and knowledge of the region will help provide management, restoration, and enhancement recommendations as the City goes through the process of creating the SWMP.

ANALYSIS

Due to the number and variety of protected species found in Shoreline, the SWMP will serve two primary purposes. First, it will review and consolidate the various regulations and codes for wildlife and habitats at Shoreline. Second, the SWMP will provide recommendations for Best Practices for habitat management to be applied through maintenance operations and potential future projects.

It is important to note that the annotated outline (Attachment 1) is the starting point for creating the SWMP and embarking on a public input process. The outline is being used to map out the direction of the SWMP and does not yet contain specific details about species, regulations, management practices, or potential future projects. Those details will be provided in the draft Plan that will be brought back to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) in the spring after going through the stakeholder and public input process.

Boundaries

The SWMP will examine the species and habitat that are found within the boundaries of Shoreline. As a regional park located along the Bay, Shoreline possesses many unique aspects that differ from the rest of the City. Therefore, this Plan will serve as a guiding document specifically for Shoreline in order to preserve and enhance the habitat for multiple species found within the boundaries of Shoreline. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the Plan, it does not focus on the greater North Bayshore Area or other areas of the City.

In addition, the areas around Shoreline are significant to the preservation and enhancement of wildlife. However, the Plan will focus specifically on Shoreline, where the City has the responsibility and control over the maintenance practices and type of projects that can take place. While the Plan will acknowledge adjacent restoration and development activities and the benefits of Shoreline to regional biodiversity, it will more specifically concentrate on the regulatory framework as it applies directly to Shoreline and on the management practices and enhancements best suited to the species and habitats at Shoreline.

Scope

In order to achieve the two goals of the Plan, the SWMP will provide regulatory and ecological information on all of the protected species found within Shoreline. The Plan will consolidate regional, State, and Federal regulations and codes into a single reference document for staff, contractors, stakeholders, and the public. In addition, the SWMP will review other habitat considerations, such as buffer zones, corridors, invasive/nuisance plant and animal species, and nesting seasons, in order to maximize benefits to wildlife in Shoreline.

The SWMP will focus on four of the protected species as “umbrella species” for habitat management and enhancement of ecosystems that they and other special-status species use at Shoreline. The four umbrella species are California Ridgway’s rail, black skimmer, white-tailed kite, and San Francisco common yellowthroat. This approach minimizes conflicting management practices and maximizes the benefit for all species in Shoreline. Due to the number and variety of protected species within Shoreline, certain protected species have conflicting ecological niches and needs that affect management decisions (e.g., whether to create more perches versus eliminate perches). In addition, the SWMP is not replacing the Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan or its management guidelines. Rather, it is building upon them and focusing on areas and habitat that enhance areas of Shoreline not necessarily managed by the guidelines listed in the Burrowing Owl Preservation Plan. For these reasons, the four umbrella species were chosen due to their significant presence, preferred areas for habitat, and commonalities for management practices with other protected species found in Shoreline. All species in Shoreline that benefit from the habitat management recommendations of each umbrella species will also be addressed in that respective section.

Lastly, the SWMP will look at current operations and existing conditions that impact the wildlife management guidelines being recommended. A regional park that is located on a landfill and provides a utilities system that serves the entire City presents unique situations and special considerations about types of vegetation and recommended locations and types of enhancement projects.

Reporting and Adaptive Management

The SWMP will also summarize and identify the annual reporting requirements that are already being conducted as required by regulatory agencies. The SWMP will not create new reporting requirements but clarify the framework with which current reporting can measure the effectiveness of certain species and habitat management and monitoring at Shoreline.

As updated regulations and new best management practices arise, it is anticipated that the SWMP will be updated. Therefore, the sections and layout of the Plan are designed to be

adaptive. The reporting will help indicate if projects and management practices need to be updated as well.

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

The March 9, 2022 PRC meeting is serving as the kickoff meeting for the stakeholder and public input process for the SWMP. The report and presentation are meant to provide an overview of the Plan and general approach to the content and layout. After the PRC meeting, staff and the consultant plan to hold meetings with stakeholders as well as one meeting with the general public. In addition, a community survey will be available online. Signage and information about the survey will be posted at key locations within Shoreline, provided at various City facilities, and advertised through the City and stakeholder's social media channels.

NEXT STEPS

Staff and the consultant will return to the PRC with a final draft of the report at the May PRC meeting. The final SWMP is currently scheduled for City Council adoption later this fiscal year.

BR-BS-JRM/6/CSD

240-03-09-22M

Attachment: 1. Shoreline Wildlife Management Plan Annotated Outline