



# Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan

*Prepared by*



City of San Diego



**FINAL – July 2005**



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*City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department*

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*Sunset Cliffs Citizen Advisory Task Force*

*Community of Point Loma*

*Dedicated Park Enthusiasts*

*Save Sunset Cliffs*

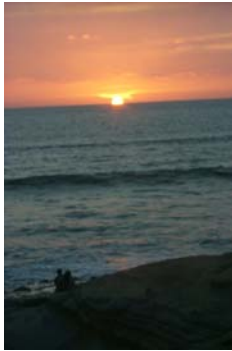
*Friends of Sunset Cliffs*

*Council Member Michael Zucchet, District 2*









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# Chapter 1 Executive Summary





# 1.

## Executive Summary



### Regional Resource Based Park

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park (SCNP) constitutes one of the unique coastal environments in San Diego County. By its name-sake, people have gathered at this special location over the years to seek temporary relief from urban living, engage in passive recreation activities and, often, reflect on evening sunsets.

Coastal resources at the Park feature dramatic cliff formations shaped by forces of erosion, terraces, promontories, rugged vertical cliff faces and sea caves. The terrace and promontories offer informal pedestrian paths, native vegetation and expansive ocean views. Below the cliffs are pocket beaches, tidepools, reefs, surf and the Pacific Ocean.

It is the beauty of nature that clearly draws people to this environment. On any given day, the Park attracts a wide cross-section of people engaged in enjoyable activities - walking, reflecting on sunsets, surfing, jogging, exploring, bird watching, plant study, photography, art, sight viewing, tidepooling, sunbathing, and fishing. Indeed, the Park's diverse resources and available activities



serve a broad range of neighborhood, community and regional recreational needs.

The location of the Park within the City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) area and adjacency to the Point Loma Ecological Reserve combine to create a unique setting and priority of restoration and preservation.

## Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Master Plan is, in essence, adeptly expressed by the SCNP Recreation Council’s adopted vision statement for the Park:

***“Create a Park where people can enjoy San Diego’s natural coastal environment as it once was, free from the effects of man and intended to inspire the user to reflect on the grandeur of the sea, and the beauty of the cliffs that are Point Loma.”***

To accomplish this goal, the following objectives and/or planning principles are forwarded as guidelines to direct Park planning decisions regarding development and preservation.

- ***Do no harm; protect, conserve and enhance.***
- ***Maintain focus on the unique coastal resources.***
- ***Allow public access with minimal environmental impacts.***
- ***Maintain planning integrity/strategy for resource preservation.***
- ***Restore areas of neglect and damage to their previous condition and visual quality.***

## Plan Recommendations Summary

As a natural, open space park, SCNP plays a key role in sustaining the quality of the regional environment in an urban setting. This regional based park’s role is supportive of coastal public access and viewing, the Local Coastal Program, the future Point Loma Trail, Multiple Species Conservation Plan, Multiple Habitat Pres-



*As a natural, passive, open space park, SCNP plays a key role essential to sustaining the quality of the regional environment in an urban setting.*



ervation Area, and the Point Loma Ecological Reserve. In this context, specific recommendations in this Master Plan focus on the accomplishment of three primary objectives:

### ***Protect the Park***

The Master Plan recommends implementation of a Park protection policy for use in guiding all future proposals that might affect the Park. SCNP represents a legacy - an irreplaceable coastal resource - that must be protected for future generations. The beauty of the cliffs, their unique features and our ability to observe nature's sculpting process must be protected from obtrusive, unnatural structures; native vegetation and wildlife within the Park must be protected from surrounding development; and near shore waters protected from pollution.

### ***Restore the Park's Natural Beauty***

The Master Plan recommends corrective measures for past and present Park abuse and neglect that may have degraded the Park's natural beauty. These measures include removal of man-made elements such as structures, construction debris, excess pavement and the athletic field; implementation of a comprehensive on-site drainage system, eradication of exotic invasive plants and a revegetation program for restoring native vegetation.

### ***Enhance the Park's Safe Use and Enjoyment***

Proposals recommended by the Master Plan to this end include: Access and circulation improvements such as redesigned parking lots to enhance safety and security as well as minimize runoff; new beach access at Garbage Beach and refurbishment of existing Ladera Street stairs; observation points with unobtrusive seating and/or resting forms of natural materials; and a comprehensive signage program to include unobtrusive entry identification, directional, and regulatory signage, as well as interpretive signage to communicate the Park's unique history and features to the public.

### ***Park Expansion***

The Park and Recreation Department shall seek opportunities to expand the park. This includes annexing land as it becomes available and the elimination of private easements across parkland.





## Chapter 2 Introduction





# 2

## Introduction



### Location

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is located approximately five miles west of downtown San Diego along the western shoreline of the Point Loma Peninsula, and is approximately two miles south of the I-8 Freeway (see Regional Map, Figure 1 and Vicinity Map, Figure 2 at end of this section).

Leading directly to the Park is Sunset Cliffs Boulevard, officially designated as a scenic drive. Access from the surrounding neighborhoods of the Point Loma community is provided via several City residential collector streets.

### Scenic Park Setting

The scenic and dramatic cliffs bordering the Point Loma peninsula's western shoreline have long served as a natural attraction for San Diego residents and visitors alike. Rising over 300 feet above sea level, the Park site offers expansive views overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Included as part of these remarkable geological formations is "Sunset Cliffs Park", owned by the City of San Diego and to be renamed "Sunset Cliffs Natural Park" by adoption of this Master Plan.



A dedicated regional resource based park, it encompasses 68 acres of land and spans approximately 1.5 miles of Pacific Ocean shoreline and is contiguous with the 650-acre Point Loma Ecological Reserve on the south.

People enjoy the Park environment for its prime location with ocean views and its many recreation activities. These include walking, hiking, surfing, sunset watching, jogging, reflecting, exploring, bird watching, plant study, photography, art, sight viewing, tidepooling, sunbathing, and fishing.

## Park Character

The Park is composed of two areas of differing character:

- 1) the Linear Park
- 2) the Hillside Park

***The Linear Park.*** Spanning about one mile from Adair to Ladera Streets, the 18-acre Linear Park is very narrow, bordered on either side by Sunset Cliffs Boulevard and the ocean shoreline. An identifiable park entry or point of arrival needs to be established at the intersection of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard and Adair Street, where the Boulevard opens up to unobstructed ocean views. The Linear Park meanders along the Boulevard and coastline, clearly defined by Point Loma residences on the east and eroding sandstone cliffs on the west. Precariously close to the Boulevard, the cliffs display near vertical drops of 50 feet or more to the beaches and surf at many locations. Promontories, commonly known as “points”, occur intermittently along the Linear Park. These sculptural landforms with more gradual slopes afford the opportunity for agile Park users to walk or climb down and view the water’s edge.

***Hillside Park.*** Sunset Cliffs Boulevard ends at Ladera Street which turns east and forms part of the north boundary of the Hillside Park. Here, the character abruptly changes from a narrow cliff side corridor to a Hillside Park of 50 acres. The shoreline cliffs continue southward, but the residential community gives way to natural open space along the west-facing slope of the Point Loma ridge. The Hillside Park is comprised of weathered and eroded land formations sporadically covered with native and non-native vegetation.



*The Linear Park of 18 acres at SCNP is generally narrow, but offers beautiful coastal bluff and Pacific Ocean views.*



*The connecting Hillside Park at SCNP encompasses 50 acres with expansive views of the hillside, coastal terrace, and bluffs above the Pacific Ocean.*

Over time, the Hillside Park has been greatly affected by adjacent land uses around its borders. These include the Point Loma community to the north, Point Loma Nazarene University to the east and the 650-acre Point Loma Ecological Reserve to the south. The reserve has various underlying ownerships including several U.S. Navy Commands, the City's sewage treatment plant, and the Cabrillo National monument. The Reserve contains high quality, regional, endangered plant communities and associated wildlife habitat. The west side of the Park consists of fragile coastal bluffs, caves and pocket beaches, the sensitive ecosystem of the intertidal zone, reefs and surf.



**FIGURE 1**  
**Regional Map**



1" = 8 Miles

Source: San Diego Association of Governments



FIGURE 2  
Vicinity Map





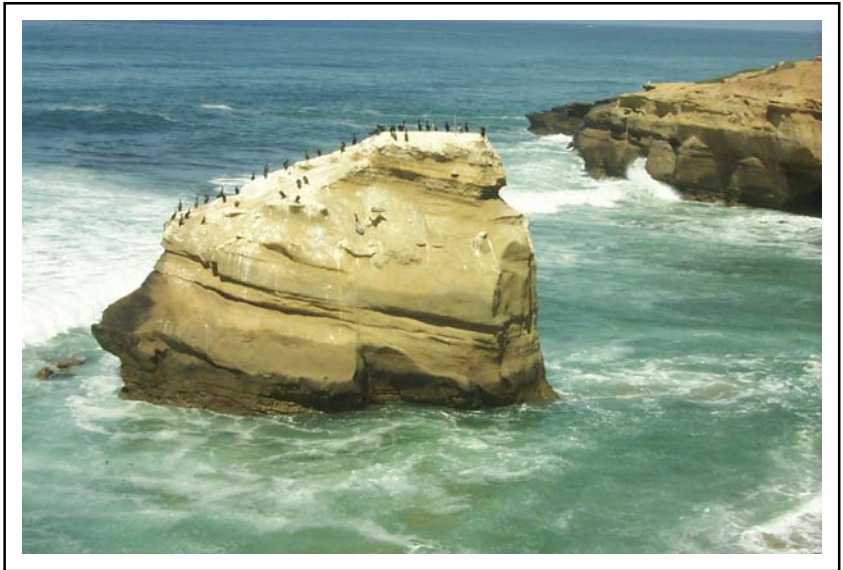
## Chapter 3 Planning Approach





# 3

## Planning Approach



### Need for Planning

Shaping and preserving the future of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is a worthy objective. This calls for sound planning to accommodate Park use while minimizing negative human impacts on valuable coastal resources. Lack of a strong planning framework and a comprehensive systems planning approach has resulted in the following impacts to the Park:

- *Non-Comprehensive drainage solutions.*
- *Increased unnatural erosion of bluff terraces and faces, potentially affecting public safety.*
- *Encroachment and man-made impacts on Park land by surrounding land uses.*
- *Soils compaction, loss of native vegetation and erosion from uncontrolled bicycle traffic, undefined pedestrian traffic and non-comprehensive drainage solutions.*
- *Uncontrolled access to sensitive Park resources.*

- *Degradation of the Park's natural beauty and coastal resource ecosystems.*
- *Placement of unnatural seawalls and riprap erosion control materials against the natural, scenic cliffs.*
- *Displacement of native plants by exotic invasive vegetation.*

Although positive and dedicated planning efforts have been undertaken by the community since the early 1980's, the Park has yet to benefit from an approved Master Plan. Such a plan will serve as a tool to assist in decision making and guide future development while preserving the Park's resources. An approved Master Plan will clearly benefit frequent Park users, neighbors, occasional visitors as well as the community and wider region.

## **Natural Park Stewardship**

The unique coastal resources at the Park - cliff terraces, promontories, vertical faces, sea caves, pocket beaches, tidepools, reefs, and surf have evolved from natural processes at work over the centuries. Such resources are fragile and finite.

A casual walk along the Park reveals evidence of man's intrusions on natural processes: accelerated bluff retreat and excess erosion due to inadequate drainage methods; compacted soils and lack of native vegetation from random foot traffic; eroded gullies from artificial drainage courses; unnatural seawall and riprap erosion control materials; and once pristine views marred by unnatural foreground elements.

Urban runoff is causing significant erosion to the Park from the top down as water moves from the hard surface of streets and sidewalks to the soft soils and sandstone of the park land. When water seeps through the land in subsurface channels, it emerges at the cliff face as cliff weeps.

In this light, the Master Plan advocates the concept of Stewardship. That is, responsibly looking after or taking care of the Park's coastal resources. Stewardship equates to one of the Plan's key objectives: "Do no harm; protect, conserve and enhance." The role of caretaker on a grand scale for Sunset Cliffs Natural

Park requires a collective team effort; neighborhood residents, adjacent land users, local and regional Park users, community park organizations and the City Park and Recreation Department.

Essential to the long term survival of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is accomplishing:

1. an adopted Master Plan to serve as a strong framework for guidance and standards for measuring future actions, and
2. a broad community education process to better inform and promote present, as well as future Park users and representatives as stewards and caretakers of the Park.

## Public Participation

The development of this Master Plan has included participation of dedicated citizens, interested groups, organizations and agencies. Organized planning efforts for the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park plan began in the early 1980's. Coordinated efforts by a subcommittee of the Coastal Area Committee of the San Diego Park and Recreation Board revealed community preference for a natural, open space park. The intent was to protect and preserve the fragile coastal bluffs.

The park planning effort received renewed support in August 1987, when the Coastal Area Committee appointed the SCNP Advisory Subcommittee to further evaluate Park needs and again gather community input. Continued interest in preserving the Park as natural open space resulted in the change from the SCNP Advisory Subcommittee to the more formally structured SCNP Recreation Council. The Recreation Council was chartered by the San Diego Park and Recreation Board in December 1988.

The master planning process has included a series of well-attended, broad-based community meetings facilitated by the project team. The Draft Master Plan has been further reviewed and issues explored in ongoing discussions among the City, SCNP Recreation Council, and ad hoc Sunset Cliffs Citizens Advisory Task Force and the community. The Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan, herein, represents the collective participation and input from organizations, agencies and members of the Point Loma community over many years. Owing much to these efforts, the Master Plan is intended to guide the planning and preservation of the Parks coastal resources for future generations.



Any proposed improvements for the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park will be required to go through the City of San Diego Park and Recreation public review process for input, review and recommendations from the various advisory boards. Currently that process includes the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Recreational Council, Coastal Area Committee, and The Park and Recreation Design Review Committee. Finally, proposed improvements for the Park will require a formal action by the Park and Recreation Board.

## **Plan Scope and Organization**

The emphasis of the Master Plan is the recovery and preservation of the natural resources of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park. To this end, the challenge is to achieve an acceptable balance between providing coastal access for the public and preserving irreplaceable natural resources.

As a natural Park with environmentally sensitive coastal resources, and as part of the Master Plan process, SCNP's natural site conditions were researched in great detail and involved extensive inventory and analysis of natural and man-made site conditions.

## **Implementation**

Implementation of the Master Plan will occur over many years. Initial improvements will establish the future vision for the project, therefore additional enforcement, maintenance and education will be necessary to realize the goals of the Master Plan.

## **Park Master Plan Program**

The intent of the Sunset Cliff Natural Park Master Plan is to reaffirm the purpose of the Park as a natural resource and to create guidelines for the future development of the park which represent this collective vision.

To that end, the following program for the Master Plan addresses various park elements and ways to achieve the goal of preserving and restoring the natural conditions of the fragile coastal environment.





### *Erosion Control*

Erosion control is the first priority of the Master Plan. The plan will address on site erosion control by making recommendations regarding:

- The initiation and implementation of an environmentally responsible comprehensive drainage study and drainage plan for the Park.
- Restoration of areas damaged by past erosion and preservation of the unique geological formations within the park.
- Management of urban runoff onto and across the Park land.
- Management of sub-surface hydrology and its effects on erosion.
- Conduct an engineering study of the existing drainage patterns and develop formal recommendations regarding drainage solutions.
- Address erosion control by implementing a comprehensive native plant preservation and revegetation program.



## *Restoration*

- Restore the Park to its former natural state including the removal of unnatural materials and elements, e.g. construction rubble, exotic non-native invasive plants and unneeded pavement, barriers and signs and the Loma Land and Ladera Street properties.
- Implement drainage and erosion control measures as outlined in comprehensive drainage study plans and restore areas in accordance with the plans in areas of the Park where erosion has previously degraded the natural character of the Park.
- Define Park image and improve user orientation by creating enhanced Park entries with appropriate entry identification, landscaping and trail heads.
- Enhance Park image by providing for signage, traffic barriers, railings, seating/resting forms, trash receptacles and other site furnishings which will enhance the natural park character and setting in an unobtrusive way.
- Open Park views by demolition of the on-site Loma Land and Ladera Street properties.
- Eliminate existing athletic field. Remove fence and remove fill on western edge, recontour and revegetate with native plant material.
- Provide visual screening of the lower parking lot from the adjacent neighborhood in a manner not to interfere with favorable views

## *Preservation*

- Promote cliff terrace preservation by restricting vehicular access and defining pedestrian access points and trail system within the Park.

- Encourage biological preservation by defining a pedestrian trail system and considering interpretive education programs.
- Establish environmentally sensitive methods to protect and enhance plant habitat and wildlife preservation.

### *Trails, Parking and Circulation*

- Provide traffic calming devices, and safe pedestrian access along the Western Loop Road.
- Retain Sunset Cliffs Boulevard as a two-way street.
- Redesign linear parking lots along Sunset Cliffs Blvd. to allow for a pedestrian trail on the West side of the lots.
- Provide parking to maintain current number of parking spaces for Park use, including adequate accessible spaces.
- Reduce paved surfaces while accommodating parking.
- Provide a primary and secondary trail system with access to vista points and overlooks.
- Address the Navy boundary interface by investigating connection of a primary Park trail to a potential Point Loma Trail.
- Ensure ADA accessibility to Park Amenities, within the scope of natural resource protection.

### *Shoreline Access*

- Refurbish Ladera Street stairs as an interim measure. Investigate alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach and are sensitive to the area resources.
- Investigate possibility for future shower/comfort station at the lower parking lot.



- Maintain natural view corridors from the surrounding neighborhood.

## Chapter 4 Activity Use





# 4

## Activity Use



### Overview

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park consists of approximately 68 acres of scenic ocean shoreline, the property is owned by the City of San Diego for public use as dedicated park land. Recreational activities typical to the Park, include but are not limited to:

<i>walking</i>	<i>plant study</i>
<i>sunset watching</i>	<i>photography</i>
<i>surfing</i>	<i>art</i>
<i>hiking</i>	<i>sight viewing</i>
<i>jogging</i>	<i>tidepooling</i>
<i>reflecting</i>	<i>sunbathing</i>
<i>exploring</i>	<i>fishing</i>
<i>bird watching</i>	

Prohibited uses within the natural Park include off-trail bicycling, motor biking, camping and off-leash dog walking.

The diversity of available Park uses can be best understood as associated with the various natural features of the Park. These include the Ridge Slope; Coastal Terrace; Cliffs/Bluffs including



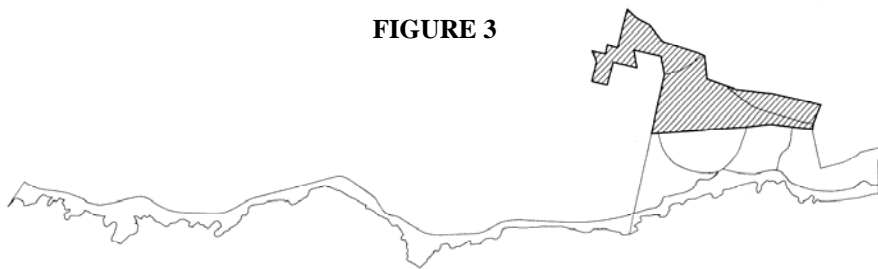
promontories, sea caves and beaches; and Intertidal Zone, Reefs and Surf.

As the primary goal of the Master Plan, site erosion control will effect all potential land-use decisions. Any proposed improvements must implement erosion control measures as a primary project component and be consistent with the specific Master Plan recommendations.

## Ridge Slope

The upper portion of the Hillside Park occupies the west-facing slope of the Point Loma ridge, characterized by moderate to steep slopes (see Figure 3). From its higher elevations, this area offers the most commanding views of the Park and Pacific Ocean. Vegetation is a mix of native and nonnative species. Man-made developments along the ridge slope include the Loma Land properties, Upper Parking Lot and Western Loop Road.

FIGURE 3



## Recommendations

### *Comprehensive Storm Drainage System*

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Design Park roads, parking and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes and cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever possible.

### *Activity Use*

Encourage activities suited to the ridge slope area of the Park: scenic vehicular access and parking (refer to Access and Circulation, Chapter 5, for complete recommendations), pedestrian use, reflecting, exploring, bird watching and plant study.





*Designate the Upper Canyon as a sensitive biological reserve with secondary trail access.*



*Provide primary observation point at the area near the Loma Land properties (planned to be demolished in long term).*

### **Upper Canyon**

Establish a biological reserve to recognize the unique resources and to preserve native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

### **Loma Land Properties**

Demolish the structures in the long term to restore views and passive Park uses. Demolition of the Corbin House shall be determined upon further historical analysis.

### **Observation Points**

Provide visually compatible, primary observation points (seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage) at the west end of the Upper Parking Lot, Loma Land properties area and Upper Canyon overlook area.

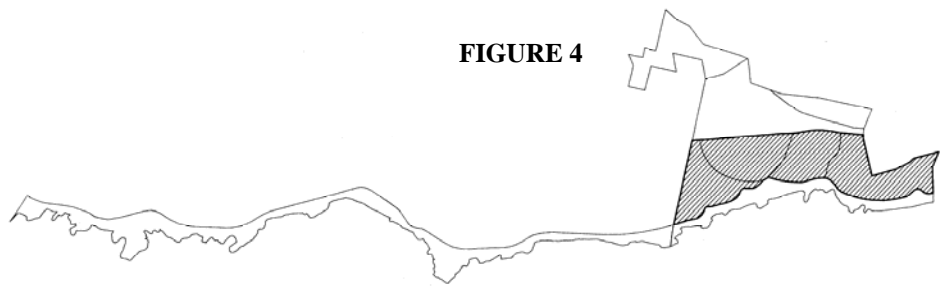
### **Visual Screening**

Provide screening with native plant material around the eastern perimeter of the Hillside section to limit the adjacent visual impacts.

## **Coastal Terrace**

Due to its more gentle topography, the coastal terrace functions as more negotiable terrain. Limited to the Hillside Park, the coastal terrace generally includes the gently sloped area west of the trail aligned with Cornish Drive down to the bluff tops (see Figure 4). Man-made development along the coastal terrace includes the Lower Parking Lot, Ladera Street properties and the existing turfed athletic field.

**FIGURE 4**



## **Recommendations**

### ***Comprehensive Drainage System***

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant, discharge using best management practices. Design park roads, parking and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes and cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever possible.

### ***Activity Use***

Encourage activities appropriate for the coastal terrace area of the Park: limited vehicular access and parking (refer to Access and Circulation, Chapter 5), pedestrian use, jogging, reflecting, exploring, bird watching, plant study, photography and sight viewing.

### ***Ladera Street Properties***

Demolish structures, and restore views and passive Park uses.

### ***Observation Points***

Provide visually compatible, primary observation points at the Hillside Park (seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage) along the western coastal terrace at a safe distance from the cliffs. Provide secondary observation points at the Hillside Park (seating/resting forms) meeting the same criteria.

### ***Athletic Field***

Eliminate the existing athletic field. Initial phase: discontinue irrigation and turf maintenance. Future phase: remove fence, remove fill on western edge, recontour and revegetate with native plant material.

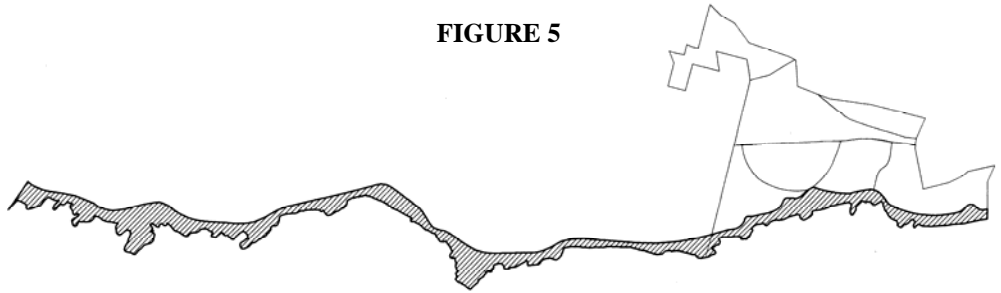


*Demolish the Ladera Street properties in the long term since they block coastal views and are inappropriate rental use of Park land*

## Cliffs / Bluffs

The naturally eroding cliffs allow the visitor a unique opportunity to view the geological process and encounter fracture lines, sea caves, promontories, arches and stacks (see Figure 5). This natural marine erosion creates the spectacular beauty of the cliffs, and their unique sculpted forms should be conserved.

**FIGURE 5**



The cliffs formations are generally unstable and sizeable areas can collapse unexpectedly. Over the years, the cliffs have retreated very close to the edge of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard primarily due to top down erosion. Eliminating space for a safe, off-street pedestrian walkway along the eastern edge of the linear portion of the park.

Efforts have been made to slow erosion by installing seawalls, gabions and/or large riprap at the base of the cliffs in the most vulnerable areas. Benefits and impacts of these erosion control measures need further study. Alternative, more sensitive erosion control measures, such as, beach sand replenishment, and other soft engineering solutions should be studied for viability. The intent of the Master Plan is to restore the Park to its natural condition and enhance the user's coastal urban alternative experience.

Along the Linear Park, short and long term access to the promontories will be determined by the natural bluff erosion processes. Continuous monitoring of bluff retreat by the City will be required to identify potential cliff areas no longer safe for public access, such as ledges/sea caves.



## Recommendations

### *Comprehensive Drainage System*

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant, discharge using best management practices. Design Park roads, parking and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes and cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever possible.

### *Alternative Bluff Erosion Control Measures*

Conduct further study as to viability of more sensitive erosion control measures, such as beach sand replenishment, and other soft engineering solutions with the objectives of reducing erosion and maintaining visual quality of the natural cliffs.

### *Activity Use*

Provide a continuous pedestrian Sunset Cliffs Coastal Trail along the bluffs of the Park (refer to Access and Circulation, Chapter 5, for complete recommendations). Establish safe viewing areas to reduce potential safety concerns.

### *Cliff/Beach Access*

Provide refurbishment of Ladera Street stairs and install new stairs at central cliffs of Garbage Beach to provide additional beach access (refer to Access and Circulation, Chapter 5, for complete recommendations).

## Promontories

Promontories, also known as “points”, are peninsula-like landforms that periodically project into the ocean along the Park shoreline. Resistant to erosion the promontories serve as extensions of the bluff tops and gradually step to the water’s edge. These draw people closer to the water since they are more negotiable than some other areas. Man-made development in these areas includes small parking pockets. From north to south, major promontories include Spalding Point, Osprey Point and Luscomb’s Point at the Linear Park, and various unnamed points along the Hillside Park.



*Provide a continuous pedestrian Sunset Cliffs Coastal Trail along the scenic bluffs of the Park.*



*Encourage activities to those suitable for promontories such as pedestrian use and fishing shown above.*

## **Recommendations**

### **Activity Use**

Encourage activities suitable for promontories at the Park: limited parking on structurally sound landforms (refer to Access and Circulation, Chapter 5, for complete recommendations), pedestrian use, reflecting, exploring, bird watching, plant study, photography and fishing.

### **Observation Points**

Provide visually compatible observation points at the Linear Park and Hillside Park at appropriate promontory locations (including seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage)

## **Sea Caves**

Sea caves are carved out beneath overlying formations due to piping and other natural forces, and are often hidden from view. Mature caves can result in the collapse of the overlying formations. In some locations, sea caves have penetrated beneath Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Use of the caves for recreational purposes is not recommended due to potential safety and ecological concerns. The caves provide an ecological function for the intertidal zone and should not be disturbed.



*Limit activities to viewing sea caves from distance due to potential safety and ecological concerns. Leave sea caves undisturbed.*

## **Recommendations**

### **Activity Use**

Limit activities to viewing the sea caves from a distance due to potential safety and ecological concerns. Leave sea caves undisturbed.

## **Pocket Beaches**

Attractive small pocket beaches occur along the Park's shoreline. The larger beaches include No Surf Beach, Garbage Beach and Ab Reef Beach. Partially viewable from above, these narrow beaches rest below steep cliffs that border three sides. Access to these "walled in" areas is generally precarious or infeasible without stairs. However, because these beach environments are fragile, access to them needs to be carefully considered in the context of a natural park setting.



Park users have created trails down steep and rugged terrain to access No Surf Beach, Garbage Beach and Ab's Reef Beach despite signs warning to stay back from dangerous cliffs.

The beaches are destination points and are used by surfers and anglers to access the ocean. Greatly affecting the amount of usable beach area at any given time of day are the changing tides that can totally submerge the beaches. With rising tides, it is not uncommon to find unwary beach visitors relying on the assistance of experienced surfers or trail climbers for rapid "escape" routes to the top of the bluffs. The existing riprap also negatively affects the ability to use the near shore waters.



*Pocket beaches are conducive to pedestrian use, surfing, reflecting, exploring, sunbathing, tidepooling and fishing.*

## **Recommendations**

### ***Alternative Bluff erosion Control Measures***

Conduct further study as to viability of more sensitive erosion control such as, beach sand replenishment, and other soft engineering solutions, with the objectives of reducing erosion and maintaining visual quality of the natural cliffs.

### ***Activity Use***

Retain activities such as pedestrian use, surfing, reflecting, exploring, sunbathing, tidepooling and fishing.

### ***Beach Access***

Refurbish Ladera Street stairs as an interim measure. Investigate alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach and are sensitive to the area resources.

## **Intertidal Zone, Reefs and Surf**

In a state of constant flux, the intertidal zone is the land and water area affected by the changing tides. Along the Pacific Coast, tides range from a low of about a -1.7 feet to a high of about + 7.3 feet (MLLW). The result is a rich, but fragile marine environment—beaches, tidepools, and reefs surge with plant and animal sea life.



## **Recommendations**



*Encourages passive activities at the intertidal zone such as pedestrian use, exploring and tidepooling.*

### **Activity Use**

Encourage passive activities conducive to the intertidal zone such as pedestrian use, reflecting, exploring, tidepooling, and fishing, as well as active sports such as surfing and swimming.

### **Marine Environment Protection**

Establish measures within the on-site comprehensive drainage plan to protect the rich, but fragile marine biology from the effects of pollution and erosional runoff.







Chapter 5  
Access and Circulation





# 5

## Access and Circulation



### Pedestrian Paths

With pedestrian use highly encouraged at the Park, accommodating pedestrian traffic while preserving sensitive coastal resources is a priority. Park users express that “walking in the Park” is one of the most enjoyable experiences, especially the 1.5-mile long shoreline affording numerous places to pause and reflect on the dramatic cliff and seaside views.

The primary walking paths in the park have taken advantage of the dramatic cliff and seaside views, while still providing a reasonably safe area to walk. A myriad of tertiary, small pedestrian paths have been “worn in” over time by various Park users, resulting in soils compaction, loss of vegetation and increased runoff and erosion. The primary paths shall be maintained and tertiary path shall be revegetated. Without such measures, pedestrians tend to cover every accessible area of the Park, including dangerous cliff edges and faces. Public safety and resource preservation are primary concerns.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Scenic Trail System***

Develop a comprehensive, scenic trail system connecting various Park use areas and linking the Park with the surrounding community. Trail layout should be sensitively designed as an integral part of the Park, and where environmentally appropriate, shall use the present trails as the basic guide to where trails should be located. Trails should be designed to respect the natural topography, maximize view opportunities and preserve coastal resources. Establish a hierarchy of trails including primary trails and secondary trails.

### ***Primary Trails***

The primary trails shall be 6' maximum width, variable width, ADA accessible, and developed to encourage users to remain on the trail. Surfacing to be a natural stabilized surface conducive to walking barefoot.

Establish a continuous 1.5-mile, "Sunset Cliffs Coastal Trail". The scenic cliff side pedestrian trail shall span from a new Park entry at the Linear Park (west of Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection) to the southernmost boundary of the Hillside Park. The trail should be located proximate to the cliffs to emphasize views of natural cliffs and surf, but safely aligned to minimize use of view obstructing railings.

At the Linear Park, where feasible, allowance shall be made for a pedestrian trail, the trail shall be located off-street and west of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Where insufficient Park width remains due to cliff erosion, trail shall transition to a sidewalk adjacent to the street.

Encourage the creation of a "Point Loma Trail" that would link the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park to the Cabrillo National Monument.

### ***Secondary Trails***

Secondary trails shall be, 4 feet maximum, variable width, ADA accessible where environmentally feasible, and developed to encourage users to remain on the trail. Surfacing to be a natural stabilized surface conducive to walking barefoot.

### ***Tertiary Trails***

Tertiary trails will be replanted with native vegetation. To facilitate native plant vegetation and to discourage continued use of tertiary trails, protection and temporary unobtrusive signage may be provided to educate the public on the importance of reestablishing native plant communities and limiting foot traffic and resultant erosion within the Park.

### ***Trail Enhancement and Amenities***

Construct trailheads at the Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard and the Lower parking lot of the Hillside Park to provide orientation for park users. (refer to Vehicular Circulation section for new park entry recommendations).

Develop trail overlooks, observation points and interpretive areas in a sensitive manner that minimizes visual and environmental impacts. Incorporate informational, safety and interpretive theme signage that appropriately complements the coastal setting (refer to Park Signage recommendation in Chapter 8).

## **Beach Access**

Beach access is needed and encouraged to allow public access to water-oriented activities such as tidepooling, swimming, surfing and fishing. The Ladera Street stairs provides beach access at the north end of Garbage Beach, yet it is in need of refurbishment. An alternate beach access point to Garbage Beach is desired. Access to Ab's Reef Beach has suffered from undefined trail use, resulting in soils compaction and erosion. Formal access to No Surf Beach, a small pocket severely constrained by tall vertical cliffs, would require further study to determine feasibility of public access.

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Ladera Street Stairway***

Maintain and upgrade the existing stairway to enhance user safety via surface improvements such as new handrails, and concrete patching. Preclude structural improvements that may disturb the cliff face or coastal terrace.



*Existing Ladera Street stairs.*



### ***Garbage Beach Access***

Investigate alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach. Access shall be designed in a sensitive manner (alignment, attachment, material and appearance) to compliment the coastal bluffs and promote responsible use of susceptible resources.

### ***Ab's Reef Beach***

Mitigate continuing erosion due to excess trail use and surface runoff via erosion control planting, redirection of storm drainage and other environmentally sensitive methods. Preclude trail access improvements due to sensitive bluff formations and user safety concerns.

### ***No Surf Beach***

Conduct a specific study, apart from the Master Plan, to determine access feasibility considering demand, geological constraints, specific access location(s) and potential cost impacts.

## **Bicycle Paths**

Bicycle use in the Park will be allowed on a designated bicycle path at the Hillside Park. The use of motorcycles or motorbikes within the Park is prohibited in the Park. Such activities accelerate the erosion process, compact soils and degrades the Park's visual character.

## ***Recommendations***

### ***Limit Bicycle Use***

- Limit use of bicycles in the Park to a designated bicycle path at the Hillside Park. The alignment shall generally follow the existing sludge line. Install aesthetically pleasing signage and trail head barriers as necessary on trails not designated for bicycle use. Initiate education program to inform Park users of potential degradation of Park due to such activities on undesigned trails.



*Investigate alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach.*



*Feasibility of access at No Surf Beach requires further study apart from the Master Plan.*



*Off-road use of racing and mountain bikes as well as motor bikes in the Park is prohibited.*

## Vehicular Circulation

Existing vehicular access and parking for Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is currently adequate to permit public enjoyment of the scenic bluffs and cliffs.

### Vehicular Access

Primary access to the Linear Park is available via Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Several routes are available through the City to arrive at the Park, which begins at the intersection of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard and Adair Street. The Boulevard is currently classified by the City as a collector street and scenic drive.

Access to the Hillside Park is provided via two routes: 1) Sunset Cliffs Boulevard to Ladera Street which provides access to the Lower Parking Lot at Cornish St., or 2) Catalina Boulevard to Lomaland Drive (through University property) to the Upper Parking Lot. The Upper Parking Lot can only be accessed through the Point Loma Nazarene University, where congestion can be a problem during peak hours.

The Western Loop Road provides access to the Park via a 25-year use agreement (ending in 2017) with the City. Traffic along the roadway impacts the Park, since speeding vehicles pose a safety concern and the road is not screened from Park users' view. Storm runoff along the steep roadway requires comprehensive drainage solutions. With the addition of a pedestrian trail near the roadside, the roadway and adjoining path will offer additional viewing opportunities of the Hillside Park. It would be appropriate to evaluate the usefulness of the roadway in a natural park context when the agreement expires in 2017.

### Recommendations

#### *Comprehensive Storm Drainage System*

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practice. Design street, parking lot and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes, land, cliffs, and use minimal impervious





surfaces wherever feasible. Convey storm water to avoid additional ocean outfalls.

### ***Park Entrances***

Create a Park entrance at the Linear Park west of the Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection to identify the Park. Entry shall include appropriate Park identification signage, accent native plants, restoration of native plant cover, and may include seating/resting forms and trail head furnishings. Create a second Park entrance near the Hillside Park's lower parking lot. Park entry shall include appropriate Park identification signage, accent native plants, restoration of native plant cover, Park orientation map, seating/resting forms and trail head furnishings. Create a third Park entrance at the Hillside Park's Catalina Boulevard entrance. Park entry shall include appropriate Park identification signage. Signs from both directions on Catalina Boulevard should clearly indicate the public access.

### ***Linear Park Access***

Vehicular circulation along Sunset Cliffs Boulevard shall remain as a two-way street. Lane widths and guardrail locating should be studied to accommodate the primary park trail.

### ***Hillside Park Access***

Maintain the current access in the current location to serve the lower parking lot. Design the access road to address minimum safety requirements as well as incorporation of comprehensive storm drainage system to eliminate erosion and runoff.

### ***Western Loop Road***

Install traffic calming devices (e.g. speed bumps, buttons, etc.) for controlling excessive traffic speeds to improve pedestrian safety. Construct a pedestrian walkway (alignment requiring further study) parallel with the roadway, southerly from Upper Parking Lot to base of hill. Connect the walkway to the proposed Park trail system. Provide visual screening of the road from view of Park users west of the Western Loop Road. Implement road improvements to address minimum safety requirements as well as incorporation of comprehensive storm drainage system to eliminate erosion and runoff. If the Western Loop Road vehicular access to the upper Hillside Park and Upper Parking Lot is eliminated after expiration of the



*Create a Park entrance and trail head at the Linear Park west of the Adair Street / Sunset Cliffs Blvd. intersection for Park identity.*



*At Western Loop Road, install traffic calming devices and construct parallel pedestrian walkway (alignment requires further study). Screen road from view of Park users.*



City/University use agreement in 2017, investigate removal of the entire Upper Parking Lot area and restoration of native vegetation.



*Redesign parking to decrease pavement area.*

## Parking

Parking along the Linear Park's ocean side is limited by developable land along the eroded cliffs. Off street parking is provided via turnouts. On-street parking is also provided along Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Future development should strive to maintain the current number of park use parking spaces to ensure adequate public access. Off-street parking spaces along the Sunset Cliffs Boulevard may need to be relocated to more stable terrain.

At the Hillside Park, primary parking is consolidated into the centrally located Lower Parking Lot. Storm water runoff from the existing parking lot is a concern with regards to bluff erosion and water quality. A second area, the Upper Parking Lot, is located near the hilltop. This lot is accessed via Lomaland Drive, it is used by the public and University on a first come/first served basis, and contains parking spaces for Park viewing.

## Recommendations

### ***Comprehensive Storm Drainage System***

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practice. Design street, parking lot and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes land cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever feasible. Convey storm water to avoid additional ocean outfalls.



*Relocate parking behind seawalls, redesign as head-in spaces on one-to-one basis as feasible.*

### ***Sunset Cliffs Boulevard Parking***

Maintain on-street parking and off-street turnout parking bays in the short term. All parking lots should be regraded to direct runoff away from the cliffs to prevent cliff erosion. As cliff retreat progresses, remove parking over mature sea caves and replace in areas behind seawalls or other stable areas. Convert off-street turnout bays to head-in street parking spaces to decrease pavement area, reduce potential erosion of the cliffs and facilitate implementation of the primary trail. If it is not

feasible to replace spaces lost due to turnout parking bay closures on a one-to-one basis, a decreased number of spaces will be acceptable to meet the overriding need of maintaining public safety. Provide accessible parking at each parking area.

***Lower Parking Lot***

Reconstruct Lower Parking Lot. Provide off-street parking to accommodate the current parking demand. Configure parking lot to maximize paving efficiency, and coordinate design with the comprehensive drainage system to minimize erosion impacts. Provide solar powered emergency phone in close proximity to lower parking lot. Provide accessible parking.

***Upper Parking Lot***

Reconfigure Upper Parking Lot to accommodate park needs only. Eliminate excess pavement and regrade area to match surrounding contours, restore area with native vegetation. Retain current number of spaces for daytime Park viewing and access. Provide accessible parking.



*Reconstruct existing Lower Parking Lot.*



*Reconfigure upper parking lot to accommodate Park needs only.*

Chapter 6  
Buildings, Utilities and Infrastructure





# 6

## Buildings, Utilities & Infrastructure



### Buildings

Buildings on the Park site are limited to eight City-owned structures that were constructed on the Hillside area some 30 to 90 years ago, prior to acquisition of the site as City Park land. Five buildings are located along the coastal terrace overlooking the ocean (Ladera Street properties), and the other three are located on the eastern Park Ridge (Loma Land properties). The City currently rents the Loma Land and Ladera Street properties for residential use.

Access to the Ladera Street properties is provided via Ladera Street serving the northern building, and Cornish Street and the Park's Lower Parking Lot serving the southern buildings. The Loma Land properties are accessed by a Park service road from Lomaland Drive.

Currently, Park users utilize two portable toilet facilities located in the Lower Parking Lot. The Park's beach users and surfers currently use an off-site shower by the Ladera Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection (northeast corner), so there is demonstrated

public demand for beach shower facilities. While Park user demand does not currently exist for a permanent comfort station and beach shower demands are currently being met elsewhere, the demand for both may develop during the life of this Master Plan.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Loma Land and Ladera Street Properties***

Demolish the structures (excluding the Corbin house) and restore the area to natural parkland. No action on the Corbin house shall be taken until the Historical Resources Board (HRB) considers the structure for historical designation.

### ***Corbin House (Theosophical Society Cabin)***

The Corbin house (Theosophical Society Cabin) shall be considered by the HRB for designation, prior to the implementation of any project that affects the building. If the HRB finds the structure to be significant, alternative uses, including reuse and relocation shall be investigated. Possible reuse as an interpretive center, or Park information center would be consistent with the Master Plan.

### ***Public Comfort Station***

For the foreseeable future, the existing portable restroom facilities are adequate for the site. A small, permanent public comfort station with a shower for beach user use, near the Lower Parking Lot may be considered in the future. The facility should be sited unobtrusively and screened such that it is visible to Park visitors desiring use but otherwise blends into the natural Park surroundings.

## **Utilities / Infrastructure**

At the Linear Park, all major utilities are located along or within one block of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. On-site existing storm drain outlets (five) occur at street ends and extend below grade through the cliff face. The design of the outlets, conveyance systems and headwalls are in need of upgrading to prevent erosion. Underground storm drain conveyance systems need to be accompanied by drainage galleries to curtail seepage as well as drainage impacts.



*Demolish the Loma Land and Ladera Street Properties (excluding the Corbin house) in the long term to open coastal views. Restore the areas to natural parkland.*



*Redesign existing parking lot, street and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes and cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever feasible.*



Point Loma Nazarene University has several previously constructed sewer and storm drain lines running through the Park site via City easements. Over the years, off-site storm drainage from permitted development on the campus may have contributed to erosion in the Park. The most severe case is the drainage running east-west through the central area of the Hillside Park. This area, approximately 30 feet deep and 40 feet wide, divides the Hillside Park and breaks the continuity of the Park and the proposed Coastal Trail.

## **Recommendations**



*The Master Plan calls for pipe outfalls of unobtrusive design, without damaging cliffs, intertidal / subtidal zones, reefs and surf; and maintaining ocean water quality using best management and treatment practices.*

### ***Park-Wide Comprehensive Drainage System***

Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize runoff, minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Design roads, parking and sidewalk surfaces to direct runoff away from Park slopes and cliffs, and use minimal impervious surfaces wherever feasible. Capture surface water in curb/gutters/swales and collect in storm drain inlets to underground conveyance systems. Provide sufficient drainage capacity and direction measures where curb cuts occur to ensure containment and prevent overflow onto the cliffs. Convey storm water to avoid additional ocean outfalls. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, including control techniques and system design and engineering methods, such as treating, filtering, infiltrating and regular monitoring to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality.

### ***Existing Drainage System Clean-Up***

Clean-up measures should be performed with the objective of restoring the Park, as much as possible, to its natural condition. Visible portions of unused or abandoned drainage pipes should be removed, capped and concealed. Where feasible, leave buried portions of unused or abandoned drainage pipes in place to preclude removal operations, such as trenching, along the cliffs. Remove excess drainage appurtenances (headwalls, structures, etc.) and construction debris, and dis-



pose of off-site. Restore disturbed areas to match surrounding natural contours and vegetation.

***Park-Wide Grading***

Adopt sound corrective grading practices to restore the Park to its natural terrain, minimize excess runoff and groundwater seepage, direct runoff away from the cliffs, and prevent continued soil surface and subsurface erosion. Minimize site erosion through a broad range of environmentally responsible measures.





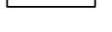


***Park-Wide Pipe Outfall Use and Design***

Construct new ocean outfalls only if no other options are available. Pipe outfall construction methods and techniques shall be unobtrusive in design; conduct runoff safely to the ocean without damage to the cliffs, intertidal/subtidal zones, reefs and surf; and minimize pollutant discharge to maintain ocean water quality using best management and treatment practices in tandem with the proposed comprehensive drainage system.



# Existing Man-Made Constraints - Linear Park

## Legend

- Structure 
- Retaining Wall 
- Water Line 
- Storm Drain 
- Sewer Line 
- Street Lighting 
- SDG&E Easement (Overhead power lines) 

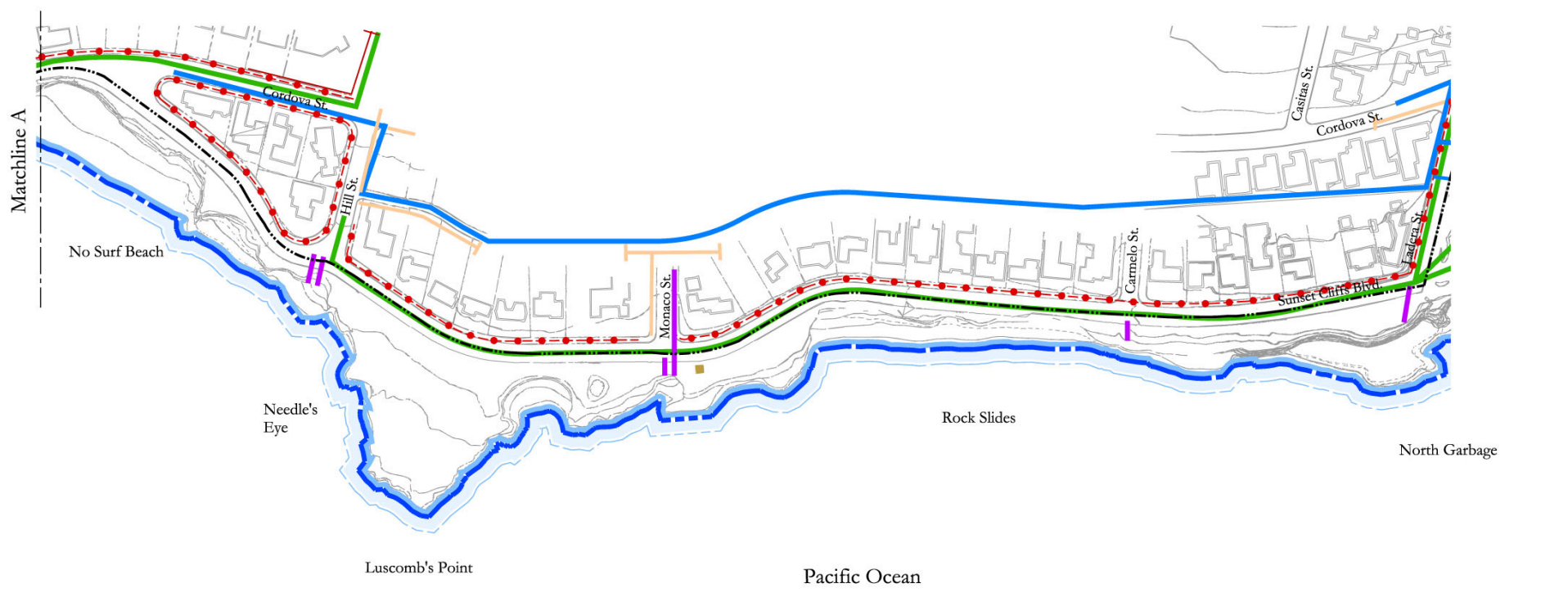
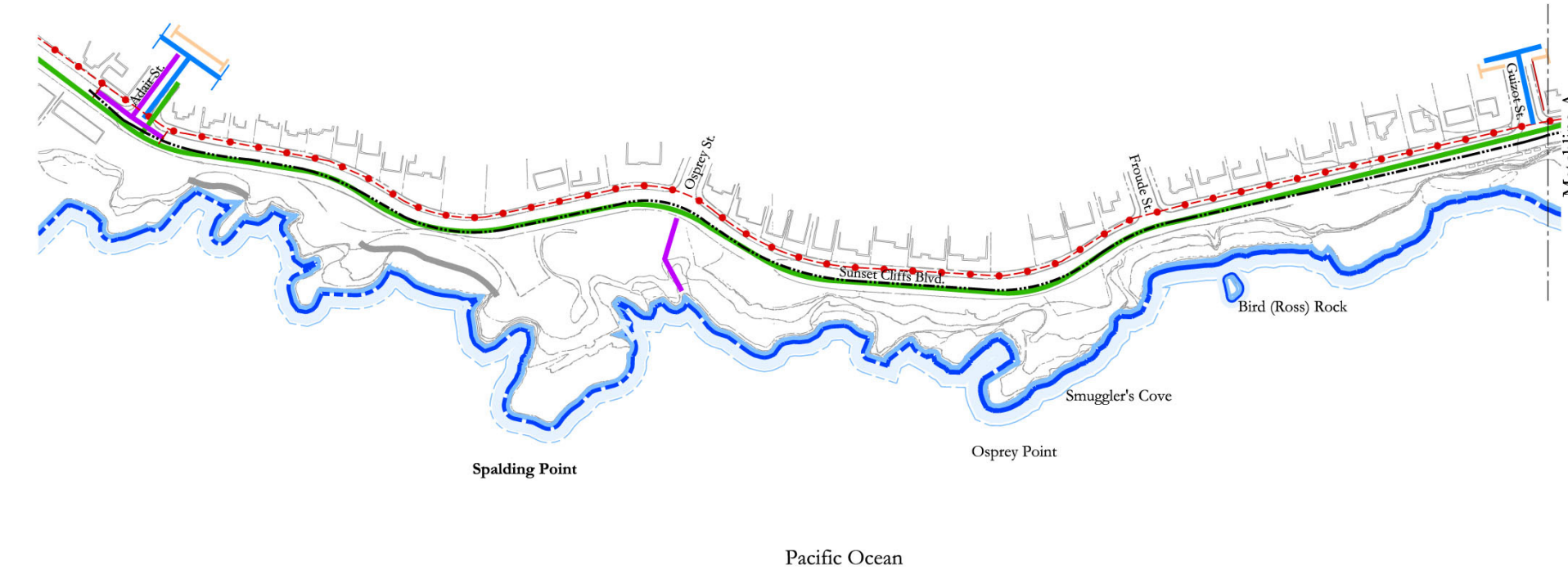
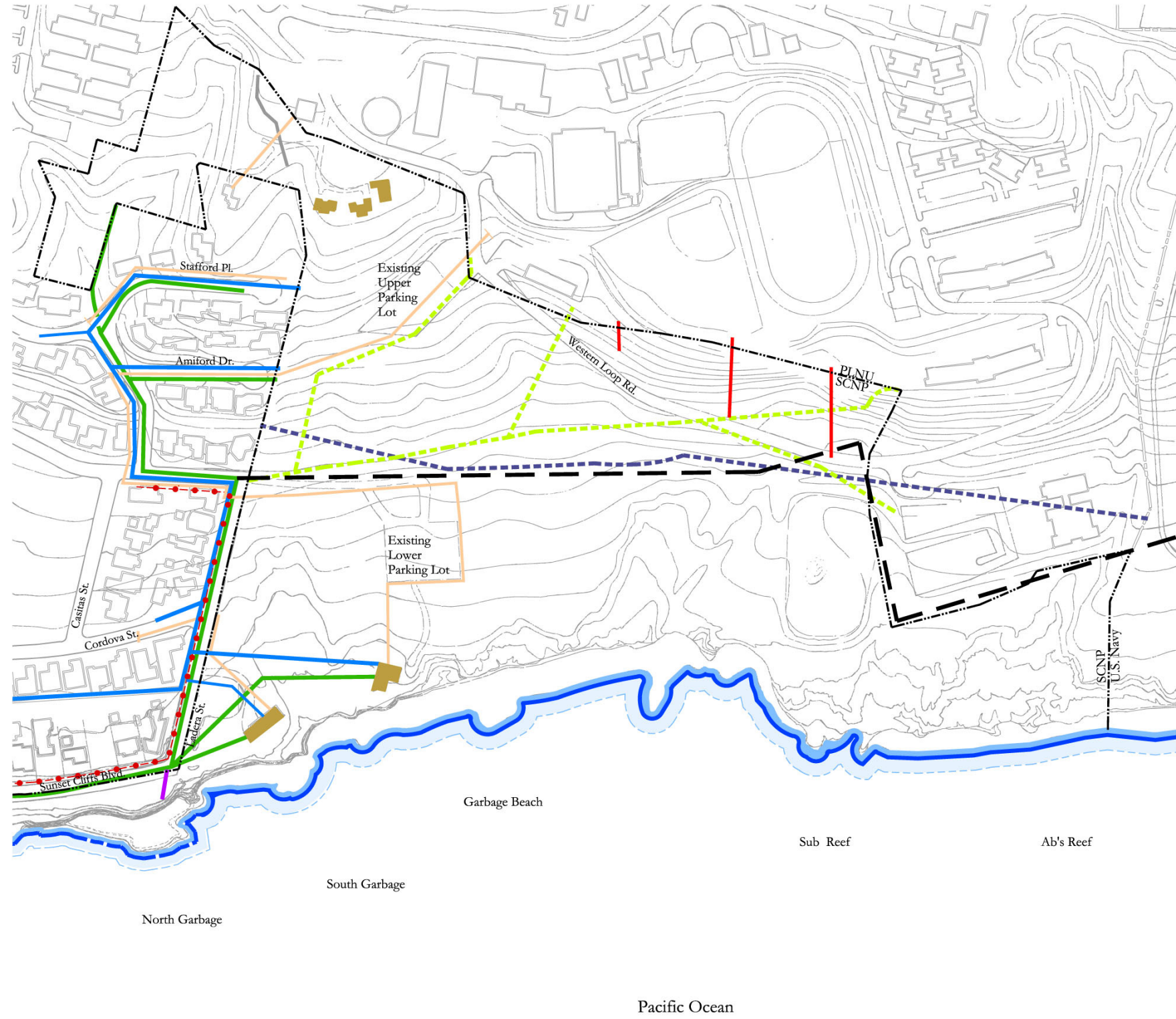


Figure 6







## Existing Man-Made Constraints - Hillside Park

### Legend












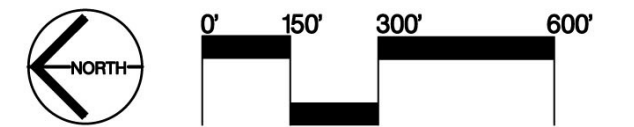
Structure	
Water Line	
Water Easement (10')	
PLNU Water Line Easement	
Storm Drain	
PLNU Storm Drain Easement	
Sewer Line	
PLNU Sewer Line Easement	
Sludge Force Main	
Street Lighting (12")	
SDG&E Easement (Overhead power lines)	

Figure 7





Chapter 7  
Native Plant Preservation







# 7

## Native Plant Preservation



### Native Plant Preservation and Revegetation

Both the Linear and Hillside sections of the Park contain native habitat including sensitive species which need to be protected. Designated part of the City's Multiple Habitat Preservation Area (MHPA), the Hillside section contains native coastal scrub, including remnant stands of Maritime Succulent Scrub, Southern Maritime Chaparral and Coastal Grasslands. These habitats should be preserved, as well as expanded and reestablished in the more disturbed areas. Exotic non-native invasive species have displaced native vegetation and should be eradicated and replaced with native vegetation.

Extensive revegetation efforts are necessary to restore the Park site in character with its original condition. Additional plant cover will reduce soil erosion, retain surface groundwater, provide cover for wildlife, increase survivability of remaining plant habitats, enhance scenic quality and create improved connectivity with the adjoining Point Loma Ecological Reserve.



Native plant species are highly recommended as they will readily adapt to the coastal environment of salt laden sea breezes, wind, humidity and sandy soils. Many native plants can survive direct seacoast exposure, demonstrating qualities of drought, wind and salt tolerance with minimal maintenance and remarkable hardiness. Adapted plants are also useful in limited numbers for special situations (Park entry accent plants, parking lot shade, etc.) if they possess similar qualities of native plants and blend with the context of the natural landscape. Native and adapted plants that support restoration and viability of the MHPA are encouraged.

Existing remaining plant communities at the Hillside Park that should be preserved and encouraged to grow include Southern Maritime Chaparral and Coastal Sage Scrub in the northern canyon and Maritime Succulent Scrub and Coastal Sage Scrub located in both the northwest and southeast corners of the Park site. These plant communities contain many native and some sensitive species.

In areas where native plants do not currently exist, revegetate with native plants. This is consistent with the MSCP goal to maintain and enhance biological diversity and conserve viable populations of endangered, threatened and key sensitive species and their habitats.

## ***Recommendations***

### ***Revegetation of Native/Sensitive Plant Communities***

Implement a phased revegetation program for the Park with emphasis on use of native plants species. Remove exotic non-native invasive species which have displaced native vegetation and replace with native vegetation. Preserve and encourage sustainability of existing native and sensitive plant communities at the Hillside Park to include Southern Maritime Chaparral and Coastal Sage Scrub in the northern canyon and Maritime Succulent Scrub and Coastal Sage Scrub in both the northwest and southwest corners of the Park site. Carefully and gradually remove exotic plants competing with the native plants.



### ***Expansion of the Native/Sensitive Plant Communities***

Revegetate large central portion of the Hillside Park and portions of the Linear Park with predominantly native plants in areas shown in this Master Plan.

### ***Revegetation Process***

Perform proper site preparation for seeding and planting. To maintain habitat viability, revegetation should consist of the gradual removal and phasing out of invasive exotics and replanting with natives. Use of added irrigation water should be avoided if possible. Provide short term fencing of restored areas during Park construction, and long term protective measures for restricting pedestrian traffic to designated trails. Use interpretive signage to raise public awareness of the restoration program.

### ***Use of Nonnative Plants***

Limit use of nonnative plants to special situations (Park entry accent plants, parking lot shade, etc.) Selected plants for each use must possess similar qualities of native plants, blend with the context of the natural landscape and support native habitat.



*The Master Plan proposes native plant preservation through a comprehensive revegetation program and gradual removal of nonnative plants, such as Eucalyptus.*

### ***Tree Retention and Removal***

Gradually replace high maintenance, aged and/or diseased trees. Where shade, taller screening or view definition is desired in the upland portion of the Hillside Park, introduce Torrey Pines (*Pinus torreyana*) or Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) on a limited basis.

### ***Native Plant Preservation Program***

Implement a comprehensive revegetation program to address functional needs (accent, shade, massing, screening, definition, etc.) of the Park. Install accent landscaping to complement Park entry identification and interpretive signage. Plant native trees in upland portion of Hillside Park to provide shade, screen undesirable taller elements or frame, but not block views (exclude trees at Linear Park). Provide limited native tree plantings, such as Torrey Pine or Coast Live Oak. Plant native shrub and groundcover massings to define pedestrian trails.



***Brush Management***

The comprehensive revegetation program should comply with the most current Brush Management Guidelines of the City of San Diego Fire Department. Implementation plans for projects involving revegetation and/or landscaping will be reviewed by the City Fire Department and the City Biologist.

## Chapter 8 Site Amenities





# 8

## Site Amenities



### Site Furnishings

Site furnishings may conflict with the character and quality of the natural environment while satisfying human needs, and they should not play a key role at sunset Cliffs Natural Park. Because this is a natural open space park, the use of any site furnishing should be minimized. These elements may include barriers, steps, ramps, seating/resting forms, signs, trail markers, pathway borders, trash containers, lighting, drinking fountains, etc. To complement the desired natural setting and preserve pristine views, careful thought should be given to providing well designed and placed site furnishings.

Since selection of site furnishings will take place on a more detailed construction document level beyond the adopted Master Plan, the following guideline recommendations offer suggestions on how site furnishings may be creatively used at Sunset Cliffs Natural Park to benefit Park users and the natural environment.



## Signage

Existing signs at the Park are numerous, inconsistent in design, and redundant. As such the majority are regulatory in nature, rather than directional and informational. Lacking a common theme, the signage displays inconsistent design, construction, style and materials. Park entry signs at arrival points are also lacking.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Comprehensive Signage Program***

Develop a comprehensive Park signage program compatible with the scenic coastal setting. Use of signage shall be minimized to achieve consistency in preserving a natural open space park. Existing and proposed signage (identification, directional, regulatory and interpretive) shall be developed of similar design, material, construction, style and appearance. Signage should be simple, pictorial and easily understandable, All signage shall be visually unobtrusive and not degrade view corridors. Signs posted near cliffs shall be low-profile to maximize views.

#### ***Identification signage***

Provide Park entry identification signage at the intersections of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard/Adair Street, Cornish Drive and Catalina Boulevard. Park identification signs at Park entry shall inform the public that SCNP is a City of San Diego, Park and Recreation Department park.

#### ***Regulatory Signage***

Where necessary, place unobtrusive regulatory signage carefully, meet regulatory requirements and preserve coastal views. Install regulatory signage for posting traffic, parking, Park use, safety and maintenance regulations only as necessary to control undesirable activities and promote public safety.

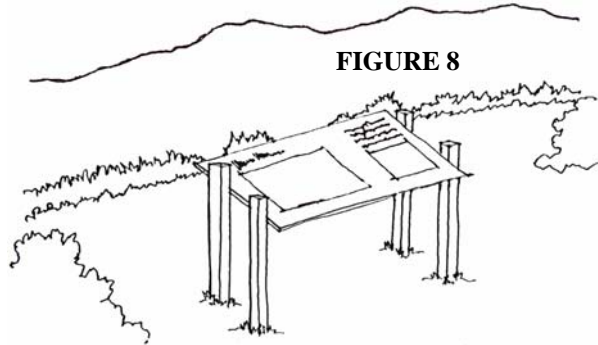


*The Master Plan calls for redesign of dissimilar site furnishings, including theme signage to enhance the natural Park image.*

### ***Interpretive Signage***

Develop appropriate interpretive signage to promote education of the public for preserving the Park’s natural resources. Place interpretive signage at points of interest, such as adjacent to parking lots or at designated observation points. Construct of natural appearing material with weather-protected descriptive data displayed on a post or pedestal (see Figure 8). (The California Coastal Conservancy provides excellent examples of interpretive signage displays.)

*Example of unobtrusive, low-profile interpretive signage display.*



**FIGURE 8**

## **Directional Features**

### ***Recommendations***

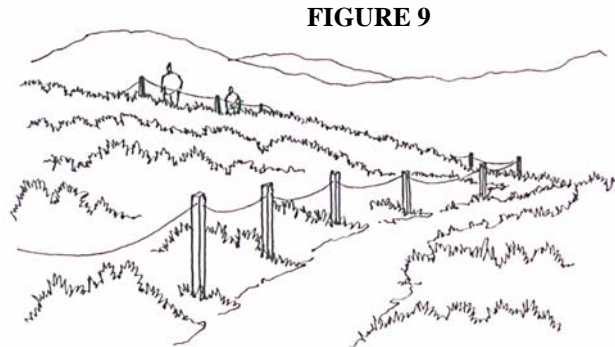


*Example from Torrey Pines State Reserve.*

### ***Directional Features***

Use primarily plant materials and/or limited railings to define circulation, provide foreground for distant views and visually reinforce other site furnishings (see Figure 9). Locate directional features to enhance, rather than block views. Material, form and color shall be consistent with the overall Park character.

*Limited use of post and chain railings in conjunction with plant materials aid in defining pedestrian paths.*



**FIGURE 9**



## *Safety*

Use delineations only if absolutely necessary. Park paths and observation points should be designed away from cliff edges and drop-offs to preclude the need for safety railings.

## **Markers**

### *Recommendations*

#### *Directional Markers*

Install markers sparingly along the trail system to imply direction and reinforce continuity of similar materials and site elements.

#### *Implied Barrier Markers*

Place markers at trail heads to imply barriers that restrict prohibited uses. Adjust spacing to physically prevent or visually discourage undesired access.

#### *Park Boundary Markers*

Place boundary markers at appropriately selected sections of the Park.

## **Barriers**

### *Recommendations*

#### *Vehicular Barriers*

Use traffic barriers only where necessary to address safety concerns. Solid barriers may be required adjacent to narrow roadway/cliff edges. Where appropriate (such as at trails heads), bollards or railings lend a more open appearance than solid barriers and may accomplish the same objective. Remove existing barriers of many differing forms and materials. Specifically, remove vehicular barriers where determined by City Traffic Engineer to be unnecessary along Sunset Cliffs Boulevard.



### ***Pedestrian Deterrents***

Provide railings, low plant massings or other construction materials along trail edges to sufficiently guide Park users in a preferred direction.

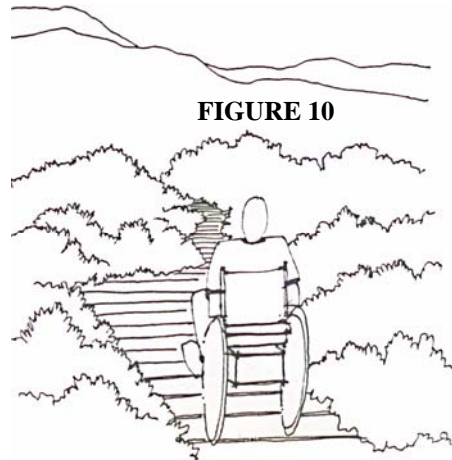
## **Surface Treatments**

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Boardwalks***

Use ADA accessible boardwalks for traversing sensitive topography (“The Badlands” and natural canyons) as well as cultural and biological resources. Boardwalks provide a raised path that people tend to follow without straying, since the differing material conveys a route to be followed (see Figure 10).

*Boardwalks are useful for traversing sensitive resources and the raised path conveys a route to follow.*

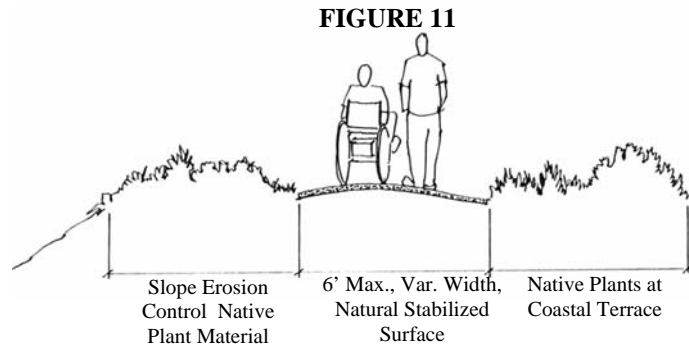


**FIGURE 10**

#### ***Natural Materials***

Keep trails in natural state, if possible, consistent with the Park objectives (see Figure 11).

*Accessible proposed primary trail designed with natural materials.*



**FIGURE 11**



## Accessibility

### Recommendations

#### ADA Access

The Park will provide accessibility to the site as much as feasible through creative design solutions and construction techniques (see Figure 12).

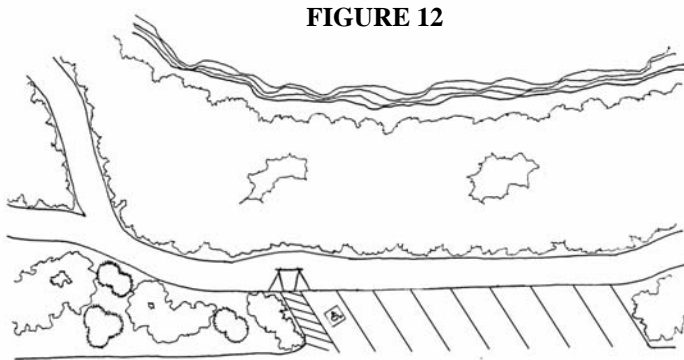


FIGURE 12

*Typical vehicular pull-out where appropriate for ADA access to trail system and view points.*

## Seating / Resting Forms

### Recommendations

#### Seating/Resting Forms

Provide seating/resting forms of natural materials at selected sites. Seating areas should be located to take advantage of scenic quality and not impact existing on and off site views (see Figure 13). Seating/resting forms shall be constructed of vandal and graffiti resistant material and complement other site furnishings. ADA accessible seating shall be made available along primary trails where compatible with the natural setting. In coastal terrace areas, seating/resting forms should be unobtrusive and set back from the cliff edge so as not to detract from the natural landforms or interfere with the natural silhouette.

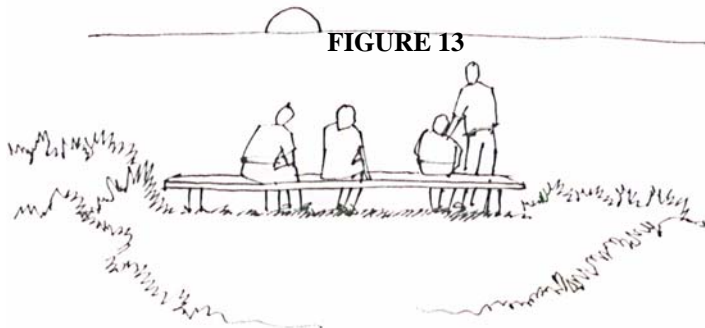


FIGURE 13

*Locate seating / resting forms of low-profile design and unobtrusive materials to enhance, rather than block views.*

## **Lighting**

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Security Lighting***

Ensure that lighting meets the minimum standards set forth by the City for proposed improvements by using directed, non-glare type fixtures to minimize light pollution of the view shed. The site is sensitive biologically and ecologically, therefore the general goal within the Park, is to prohibit lighting except where required.

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Trash Receptacles, Etc.***

Select site furnishings of design, materials and colors consistent with park character. Group smaller scale site furnishings in combination with larger ones, such as seating features, railings, etc. to maintain continuity.

#### ***Emergency Phones***

Provide a solar powered emergency phone at the lower Hillside Park parking lot and another solar powered emergency phone at one of the Linear Park parking lots.





Chapter 9  
Preservation / Restoration







### Need for Preservation

Fundamental to the successful recovery of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is the commitment to existing and the creation of new Park interpretive and preservation programs. Rich in natural resources, this unique environment offers scenic coastal bluffs, sensitive plant habitats, a diverse range of wildlife, numerous cultural resources, sandy beaches, marine tidepools, reefs and the ever changing surf of the Pacific Ocean. The healthy survival of this living laboratory depends upon agencies and Park users collectively practicing wise stewardship of the land while planning and engaging in its abundant recreational activities.

The Master Plan recommends taking advantage of the following preservation and interpretive opportunities. These ideas are not intended to be all inclusive, as many new strategies and suggestions will hopefully arise as progress is made in the Park's recovery. At the end of this chapter, a list of group and agency resources for potential involvement in shaping the Park's future is presented for convenient reference.

## Coastal Bluff Preservation

The Point Loma Community and Park users have expressed interest in transmitting to the public the messages of the coastal bluff erosion process, coastal terrace and bluff sensitivity impacts of human activities and safety precautions.

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Coastal Bluff Interpretive Signage***

Install interpretative, vandal-resistant signage display at primary observation point(s) that explains the coastal bluff formation and erosion processes. Illustrate graphic profile of the ridge slope, coastal terrace, cliffs/bluffs, beaches and tidepools with user-friendly text and graphics to communicate sensitivity of the bluff environment to the public, to solicit cooperation in protection measures and to list public safety precautions.

## Cultural and Paleontological Resources

The Park is rich in historic, archaeological and paleontological resources and the proposed Park trail system is designed to either avoid known sites or use raised boardwalks where site crossings are unavoidable. San Diego University is currently studying one of the identified archaeological sites, and other schools and universities should be encouraged to participate in similar activities.

As the coastal bluffs continue to erode, new discoveries are likely in store for archaeological finds, as well as paleontological resources that may be progressively exposed in the wearing cliff faces. Fossils of an ancient mosasaur have been previously recovered from Sunset Cliffs and preserved for study at the San Diego Natural History Museum.

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Resource Study and Evaluation***

Continue studying the Park's known historic, archaeological and paleontological resources to determine their significance and establish programs for continued research, preservation and public education. Organizations potentially involved in the Park's cultural resources include the San Diego County



Archaeological Society, San Diego Historical Society, Native American Heritage Commission, San Diego Museum of Man, and San Diego Natural History Museum.

### ***Park History Interpretive Signage***

Research historical account of the Park's development since the early Spalding Park days and summarize on an interpretive sign and/or in photographic display.

## **Plant Habitats**



*Sensitive Upper Canyon is recommended for designation as a biological reserve.*

Sensitive plant habitats should be preserved and restored in keeping with the primary goal of the Master Plan to preserve and restore the sites natural character.

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***Plant Habitat Interpretive Signage***

Install plant awareness interpretive signage at primary observation points and plant identification signage along Park trails to educate Park users.

#### ***Community Participation***

Solicit public and private school involvement in preserving and studying Park plant habitats and assisting in revegetation efforts. Organizations for potential participation include the Point Loma Garden Club, Audubon Society, Sierra Club and California Native Plant Society.

## **Wildlife Habitats**

Sensitive wildlife species and habitats are recommended for protection and preservation. Revegetation of plant cover will play a key role in supporting and increasing wildlife habitat at the Park, including birds, mammals, reptiles and marine life. School programs currently utilize tidepool resources for study, and the Park is frequently used for bird watching by groups and individuals.



## **Recommendations**

### ***Wildlife Habitat Interpretive Signage***

Install minimal wildlife awareness interpretive and/or identification signage at key locations along Park trails to educate Park users.

### ***Community Participation***

Solicit public and private school involvement in preserving and studying Park wildlife habitats.

## **Resource Groups, Organizations and Agencies**

The following list of agencies, groups and organizations represents many, but not all, resources available to call upon for enlisting support for potential Park preservation and education programs. Public awareness and involvement are essential to completing the goals and objectives of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Natural Resource Groups***

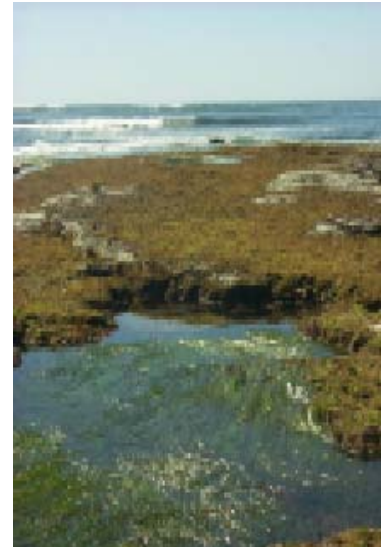
- Audubon Society
- California Native Plant Society
- Field Ornithology Group
- Point Loma Garden Club
- San Diego Natural History Museum
- Sierra Club
- Surfrider Foundation

### ***Cultural Resource Groups***

- Native American Heritage Commission
- San Diego County Archaeological Society
- San Diego Historical Society
- San Diego Museum of Man

### ***Community Groups***

- Citizens Coordinate for Century Three
- Save Sunset Cliffs
- Friends of Sunset Cliffs
- League of Women Voters



*Sensitive intertidal zone is recommended for preservation and study.*

Ocean Beach Merchants Association  
Ocean Beach Planning Board  
Ocean Beach Town Council  
Peninsula Chamber of Commerce  
Peninsula Community Planning Board, Inc.  
Point Loma Association  
Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Recreation Council  
Sunset Cliffs Surfing Association

***Recreation Groups***

Bird Watchers and Bird Watching clubs  
Hikers and Hiking Clubs  
Surfers and Surfer Groups



***Public Agencies***

California Coastal Commission  
California Coastal Conservancy  
California Fish and Game Department  
City Park & Recreation Board  
and its Coastal Area Committee  
City Park & Recreation Department  
City Planning Department  
Local Coastal Area Committee  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Regional Water Quality Control Board



***Public Services***

City Lifeguard Services  
City Police Department  
City Fire Department  
City Public Schools  
City Arborist  
City Biologist  
Community colleges  
State Universities  
U.S. Coast Guard



***Land Use Neighbors***

California Coastal National Monument  
Navy Fleet Combat Training Center, Pacific  
Point Loma Community Residents  
Point Loma Ecological Reserve  
Point Loma Nazarene University

***Park Resource Models***

Cabrillo National Monument  
Torrey Pines State Reserve

## Chapter 10 Public Interface







### Regional Park Role

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is a resource based park, serving users from the entire city and elsewhere and is centered around scenic and natural features that serve not only the surrounding neighborhood community but the entire city and visitors as well. It is noted that thousands of tourists annually visit the Park.

### Local Coastal Program/Peninsula Community Plan

The Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, provide guidelines for development of the peninsula. The goal of establishing Sunset Cliffs Natural Park as a natural, open space park is consistent with Peninsula Community Plan recreation recommendations. Public access to the coastal environment is highly encouraged in the document's accompanying Local Coastal Program. All recommendations within the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan should comply to the greatest degree practicable with those outlined in the Peninsula Community Plan.



## **Local Coastal Program**

The California Coastal Act of 1976 established a coastal zone boundary and mandated that all jurisdictions within that boundary prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP). The Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, approved July 14, 1987 provides guidelines for development of the peninsula and brings the jurisdictions' planning process into conformance with the 1976 Coastal Act.

The entire Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is located within the Coastal Zone. Consequently this Master Plan has the responsibility of developing standards to protect and preserve the state's coastal resources as identified in the Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

This Master Plan has incorporated the recommendations identified in the Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. These recommendations, as relevant to Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, are summarized below:

### **Public Access**

The Master Plan recommends the refurbishment of the Ladera Street stairs to ensure safe shoreline access and an investigation of alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach and are sensitive to the area resources.

The Master Plan incorporates recommendations for improving vehicular, and pedestrian access to the Park. Provisions for maintaining and creating parking areas, walking paths and viewing areas along Sunset Cliffs Boulevard which are also accessible for persons with disabilities is also recommended in the plan including dedicated parking in close proximity to the shore and paths offering opportunities to view the shoreline bluffs, sea caves and overlooks.

### **Recreation and Visitor Serving Facilities**

Sunset Cliffs offers a variety of recreational opportunities to the public at no cost including, sunset watching, surfing, hiking, bird watching, picnicking, swimming, and nature study and is adjacent to the Point Loma Ecological Reserve.



The Park trail system is a key component to the Master Plan. It will include a continuous primary trail along the linear portion of the Park, a primary trial system in the Hillside area of the Park, and secondary trails to provide access to vista points and overlooks. Existing small repetitive trails will be revegetated to eliminate erosion. Trails will be designed so surfacing will reduce negative impacts of surface water runoff and erosion.

### ***Beach and Coastal Bluff Preservation***

The Master Plan recommends the preservation of all of the Park's natural bluff areas, sea caves and promontories. Erosion control contributing to the deteriorating actions on the bluff areas will be addressed by making recommendations regarding elimination of urban runoff onto and across the site, alignment of the new drain pipe across the Hillside section of the Park, an engineering study and development of a comprehensive storm drainage plan for the Park, revegetation of exposed site areas and guidelines that any proposed cliff reinforcement consider soft engineering solutions which will retain the natural character of the park.

### ***Preservation of Water, Biological and Ecological Resources***

A primary goal of the Sunset Cliffs Master Plan is to preserve, maintain and restore the native vegetation throughout the Park. Recommendations for restoring the native habitat include implementation of a phased revegetation program for the park with emphasis on use of plants indigenous to the area such as those found in the Southern Maritime Chaparral Habitat, Maritime Succulent Scrub Habitat and Coastal Sage Scrub Habitat. Preservation and restoration of these plant communities will ensure habitat for the wildlife that inhabit the park, such as the California Gnatcatcher, Sage Sparrow, Western Snowy Plover, many other species of birds as well as rodents, squirrels and reptiles.

The Master Plan recommends implementation of a comprehensive drainage system to minimize runoff, surface and subsurface erosion, groundwater pollution and pollutant discharges with use of best management practices which will further protect the water, biological and ecological resources.



## **Visual Resources**

A top priority of the SCNP Master Plan is preservation and restoration of the natural character of the Park. Recognition of the great visual resource the park offers with its unique coastal vistas is the impetus of all recommendations within the Master Plan. The Master Plan calls for specific landscape and architectural guidelines to ensure the compatible integration of any new development for various improvements to the Park thus insuring the natural character of the Park and preserving its visual resources for generations to come.

## **Point Loma Community**

### **Residential Community**

The residential community of Point Loma adjoins two boundaries of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park: the east boundary of the Linear Park and the north boundary of the Hillside Park. Comprised of primarily single-family homes, much of the peninsula community has been developed. Increased natural resource based parkland is needed to serve the population. In this regard, Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is a valuable asset in a well established community. Improvements to Sunset Cliffs Natural Park will provide additional natural resource based recreational opportunities to the community.



*Restore and preserve the natural Park to its original condition to benefit the surrounding community and regional Park visitors as a coastal recreation resource.*

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Natural Park Restoration and Preservation***

Restore and preserve the natural Park to its original condition to benefit the surrounding community and regional Park visitors as a natural coastal resource.

#### ***Cooperative Planning Effort***

Participate in City/Community cooperative planning efforts for appropriate interface with the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Recreational Council and the community. Encourage comprehensive and creative approaches toward the creation of development standards to best conserve and enjoy Point Loma's unique geographic resources.

## Point Loma Nazarene University

Bordering the Hillside Park's eastern boundary is the privately owned Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU). The liberal arts University occupies approximately 87 acres and most of the campus has been developed just above the Park site. Young Hall, however, is located southwest of the Park on the lower coastal terrace.

## Recommendations

### *Cooperative Planning Effort*

Participate in City/University cooperative planning efforts for appropriate interface with the Park's neighbor. Encourage comprehensive and creative approaches toward land use planning to best conserve and enjoy Point Loma's unique geographic resources.

## U.S. Navy Property

As a major land use neighbor along the Park's southern boundary, the United States Navy has interest in reviewing development plans on it adjacent boundaries. Several military activities have been located on Point Loma since the early 1900's. Current development plans for the Naval activities on the peninsula are outlined in the Point Loma Naval Complex Master Plan.

The specific Naval activity bordering the Park site is the Fleet Combat Training Center Pacific (FCTCPAC), specializing in training of Navy personnel in electronic warfare systems. The majority of the activity's facilities are located along the Point Loma ridge, well above the Park site. FCTCPAC requires an unobstructed open range over the Pacific Ocean for electronic transmissions, and any proposed Park buildings or structures must not exceed 30 feet in height to prevent potential interference. In addition, a 20-foot clear zone for trees is required from the common boundary fence.



*Beach access along the lower U.S. Navy Property is restricted.*

Beach access along the lower FCTCPAC property is restricted in the interest of maintaining national security. A 7-foot high chain link fence, which is occasionally climbed or cut through from the Park side, currently runs along the entire Navy/City Park boundary. Surfers and bathers engaged in recreational activities on



Navy property do so at their own risk, and regulatory signs should be posted that advise potential trespassers of the federal government property's restricted area.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Cooperative Planning Effort***

Participate in City/Navy cooperative planning efforts for appropriate interface with the Park's neighbor. Encourage comprehensive and creative approaches toward land use planning to best conserve and enjoy Point Loma's unique geographic resources.

### ***Access***

Pursue discussions with the U.S. Navy for possible relocating federal property fencing to allow public access in conjunction with the potential Point Loma Trail.

## **Point Loma Ecological Reserve**

In 1993, the federal land adjacent to the southern boundary of Sunset Cliffs Natural Park became part of the newly formed Point Loma Ecological Reserve. The Reserve was formed by the Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game and the Audubon Society in recognition of the uniqueness and ecological significance of the existing native coastal habitat.

While the portion of the Point Loma Ecological Reserve contiguous to SCNP is the Navy FCTCPAC, the Ecological Reserve contains portions of several Navy commands, the City's Sewage Treatment Plant and the Cabrillo National Monument. Spanning from SCNP's Upper Canyon to the Point Loma Ecological Reserve to the tip of Point Loma are 3.5 miles of continuous habitat.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Point Loma Trail***

Participate in local, community and regional planning efforts that would link a proposed Park primary trail to the proposed Point Loma Trail and Cabrillo National Monument.



*Participate in local, community and regional planning efforts to create a Point Loma Trail that would link the proposed Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Coast Trail to Cabrillo National Monument.*

***Connectivity with Point Loma Ecological Reserve***

Revegetate SCNP to provide connectivity for wildlife and meet eligibility requirements for consideration as part of the Point Loma Ecological Reserve. Use native plants in the Ecological Reserve as a guide for native habitat restoration at SCNP.





Chapter 11  
Natural Park Master Plan





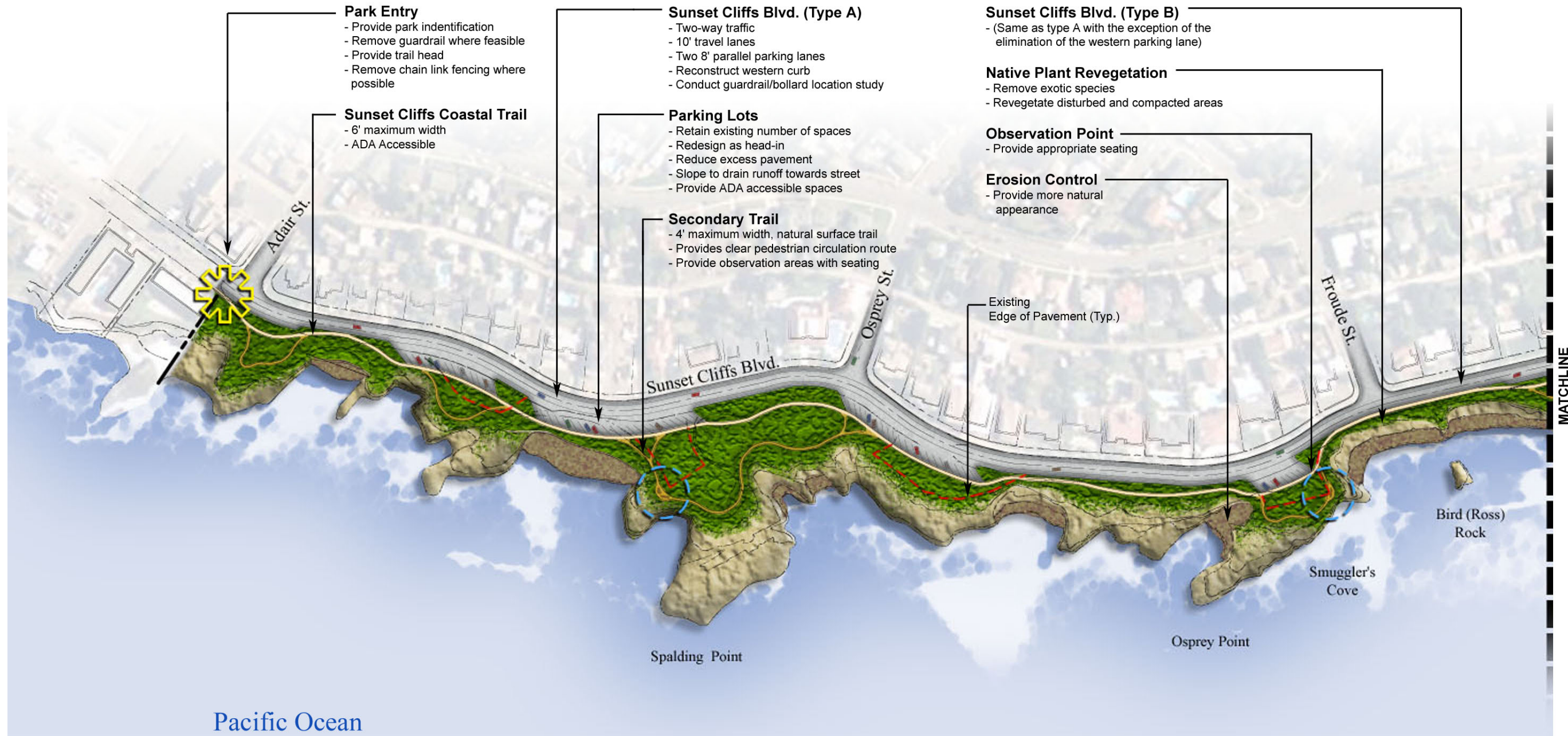




Recommendations of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan are illustrated in this chapter. The following pages contain illustrative site plans, written recommendations and supporting computer simulations of potential improvements.







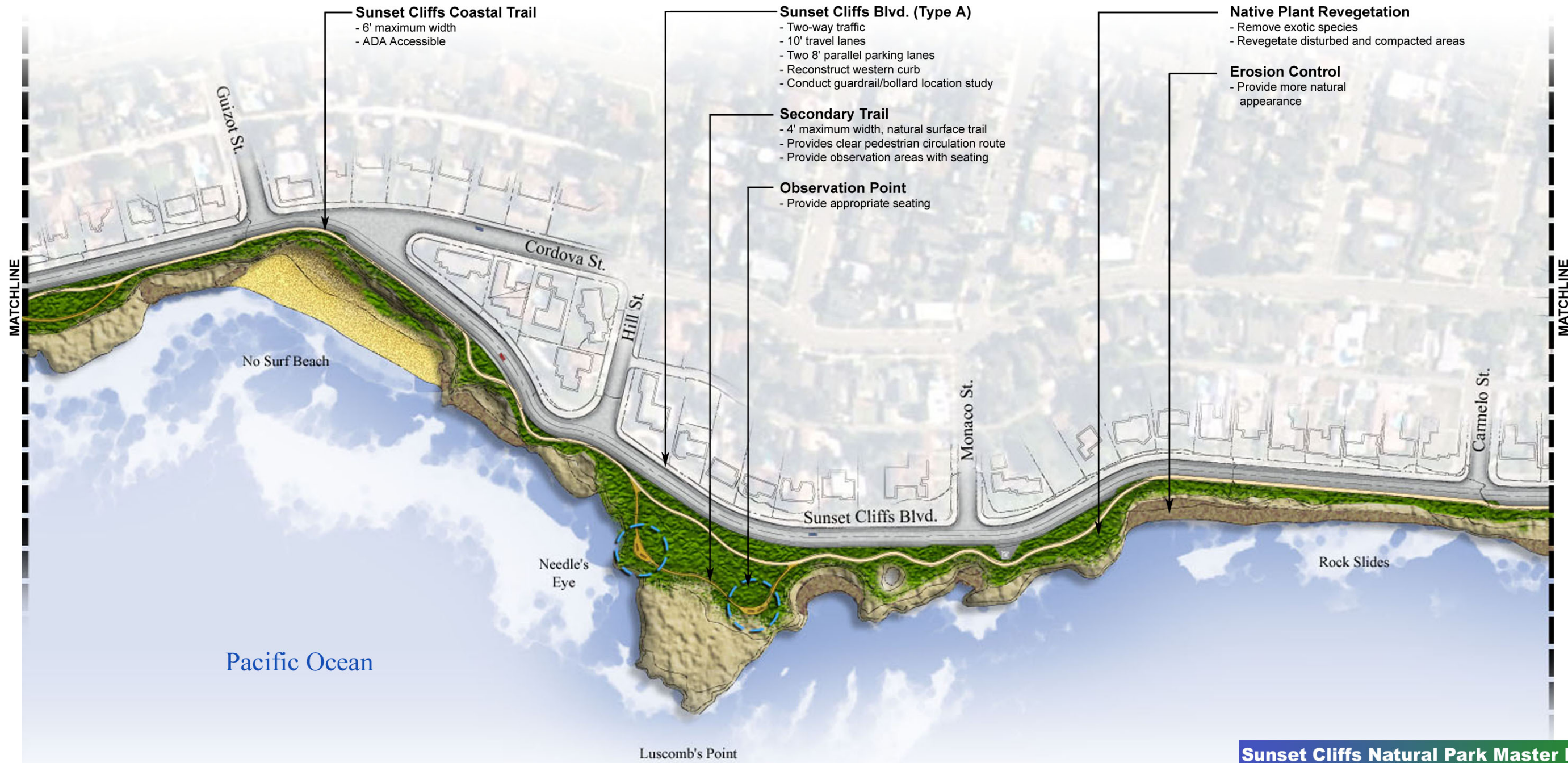
**Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan**

FIGURE 14 - Area A



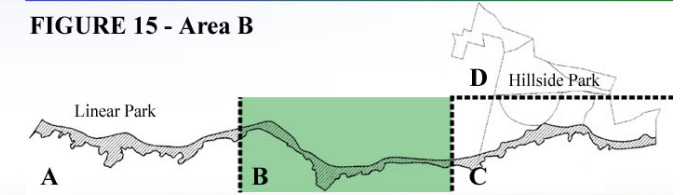






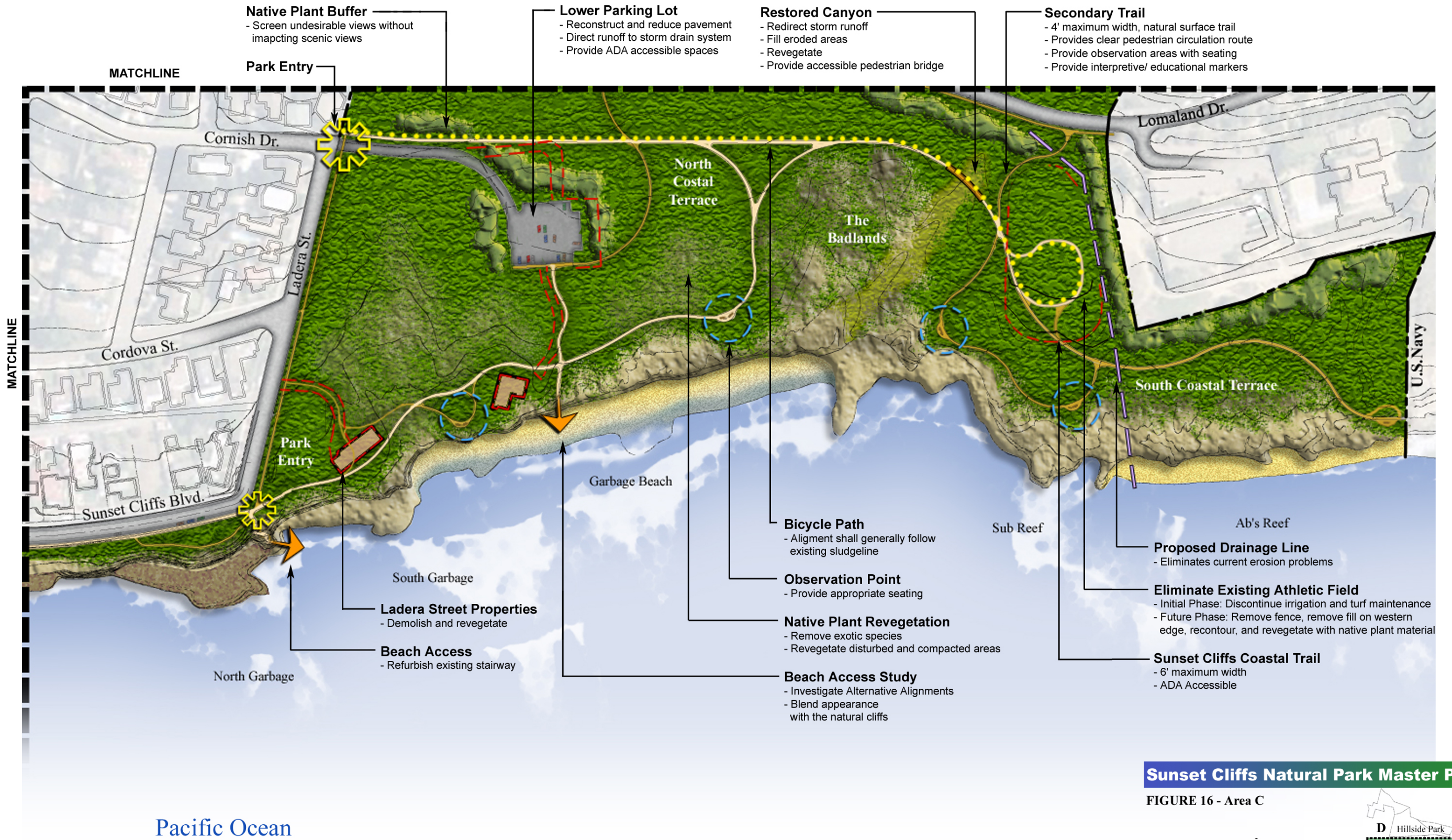
**Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan**

FIGURE 15 - Area B



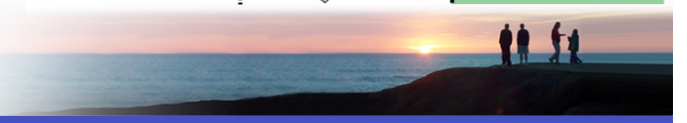






**Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan**

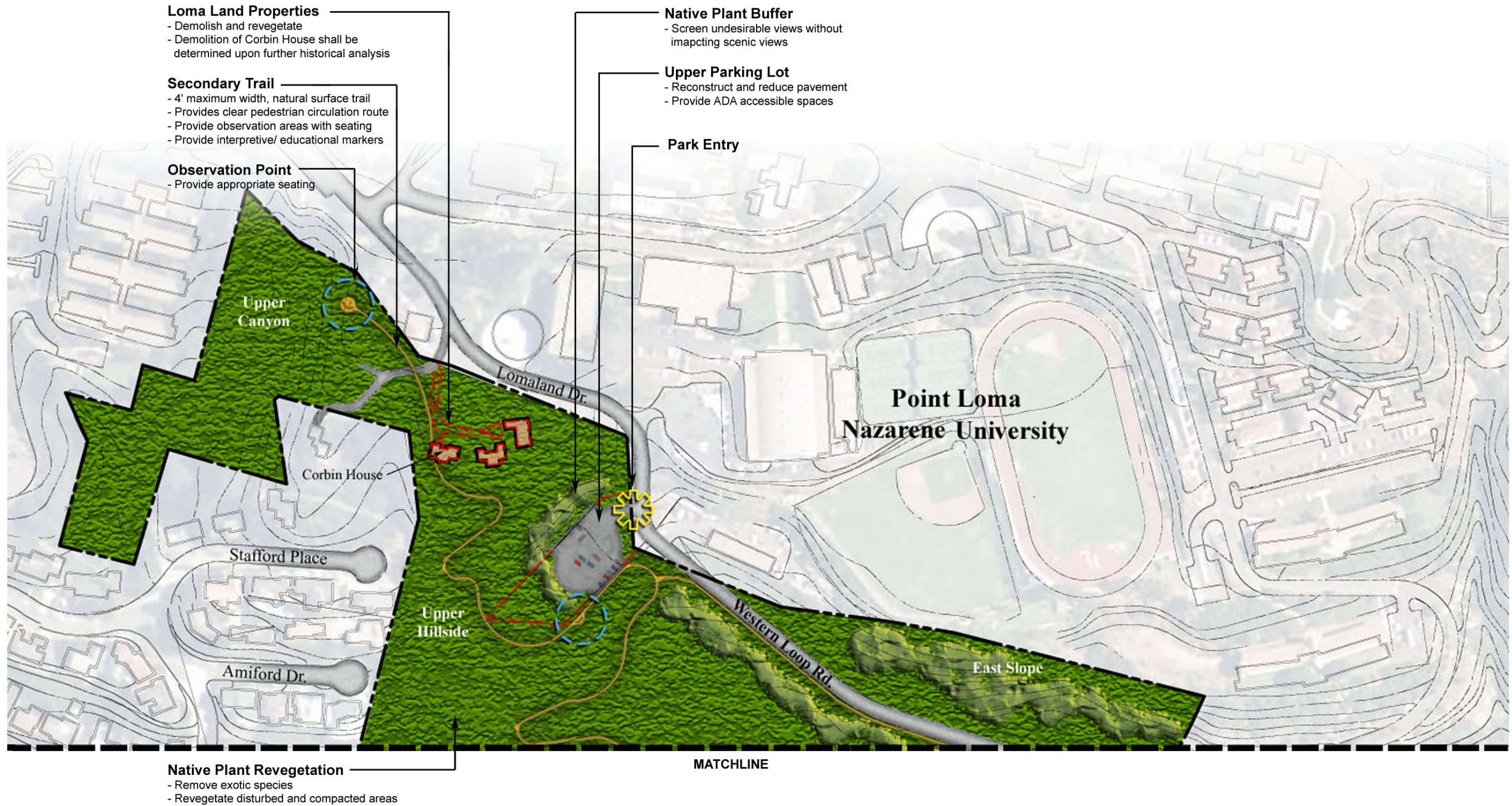
**FIGURE 16 - Area C**





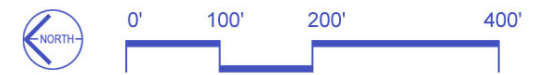
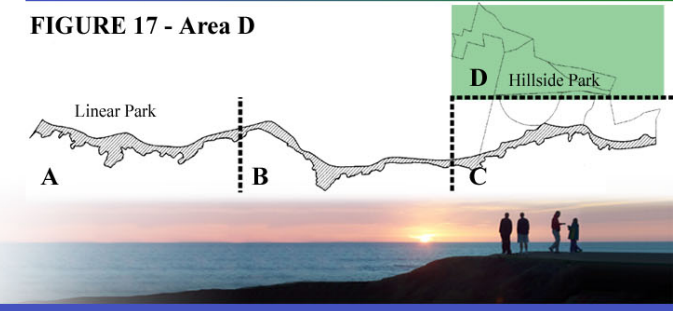






**Sunset Cliffs Natural Park Master Plan**

**FIGURE 17 - Area D**







## **Drainage and Erosion Control**

The first priority of the Master Plan is the recovery and preservation of the natural resources of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park.

### ***Recommendation***

Prior to implementing the following recommendations for the development of the Park, the initiation and implementation of an environmentally responsible comprehensive on-site drainage study and drainage plan for the Park, resulting in specific recommendations should be developed and approved (see Figure 18 & 19).





**FIGURE 18 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Urban Runoff onto Park land and cliffs*



**FIGURE 19 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Comprehensive drainage program implemented and natural cliffs restored.*

## Linear Park Recommendations

### Cliffs/Bluffs

#### *Recommendations*

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality (see Figures 18 & 19).
- Encourage use of innovative soft solutions to prevent cliff retreat and preserve natural sea cliff form, e.g. beach sand replenishment and careful preventive erosion management.
- Remove or mitigate the existing riprap as feasible.
- Pipe outfall construction methods and techniques shall be unobtrusive in design; conduct runoff safely to the ocean without damage to the cliffs, intertidal/subtidal zones, reefs and surf; and minimize pollutant discharge.
- Create a Park entrance at the Linear Park west of the Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection to identify the Park and the beginning of the proposed Sunset Cliffs Coastal Trail. Bluff top entry shall include appropriate Park identification signage, accent native plants, restoration of native plant cover, seating forms and trail head furnishings of natural materials (see Figures 20 & 21).
- Construct Linear Park portion of the Primary Trail, segment spanning from a new primary Park entry at the Linear Park (west of Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection) to Ladera Street. Construct trail head at the Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard. Align trail west of the Boulevard where feasible. Block off-shoot trails with natural barriers and recover with native vegetation (see Figures 22 thru 27).







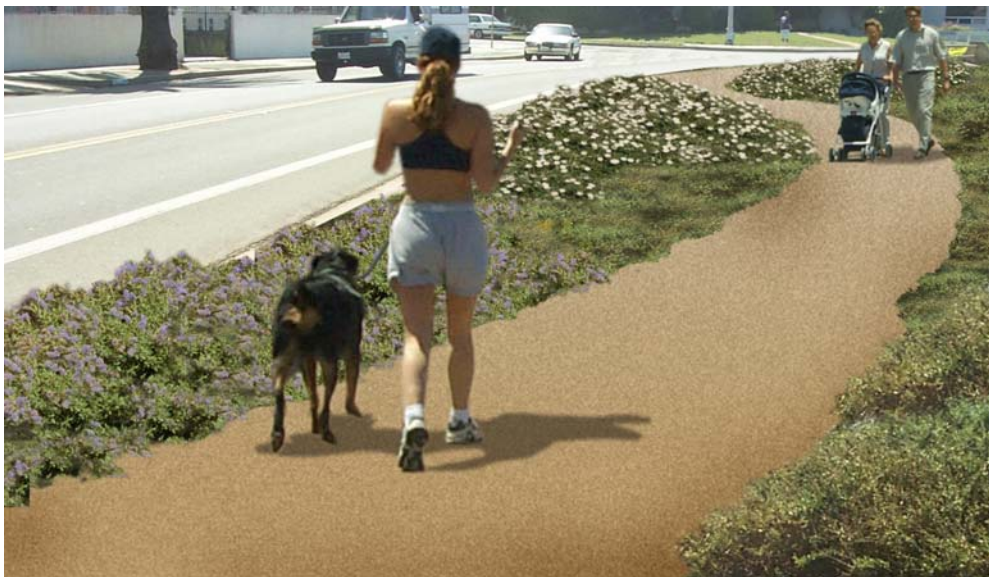
**FIGURE 20 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Park entrance at Adair Street / Sunset Cliffs Boulevard intersection.*



**FIGURE 21 –**  
***Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:***  
*Park entrance image enhanced, trail head and coastal trail created.*



**FIGURE 22 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Non-compatible barriers and lack of pedestrian access.*



**FIGURE 23 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Barriers removed and coastal trail created.*







**FIGURE 24 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Excess parking pavement, compacted soils and lack of accessible pedestrian access.*



**FIGURE 25 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Parking redesigned, coastal trail created and park revegetated.*





**FIGURE 26 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Un-Natural park image, obtrusive barriers and exotic invasive plants.*



**FIGURE 27 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Naturalized park image and coastal trail created.*



- Install primary observation points along the coastal bluffs with natural, unobtrusive elements such as seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage.
- Maintain Sunset Cliffs Boulevard as a two-way street.
- Reduce paving and maintain structural stability at off-street turnout parking by providing head-in parking. Provide ADA accessible parking, remove excess paving and restore to natural soil surface and/or native vegetation. Drain parking lot paving toward street to collect surface runoff into storm drain system (see Figure 24 & 25).
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation per proposed native plant preservation and revegetation program.
- Consider redesign of chain link fence barriers around surface sea cave openings at Luscomb's Point and other areas to achieve more unobtrusive design (see Figures 26 & 27).

## Hillside Park Recommendations

### Cliffs/Bluffs

#### *Recommendations*

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality.
- Construct Hillside portion of the Primary Trail, spanning from Ladera Street to the southernmost boundary of the Hillside Park (for future connection with the potential Point Loma Trail).

- Refurbish Ladera Street stairs as an interim measure. Investigate alternative alignments from the lower parking lot that would provide safe access to Garbage Beach and are sensitive to the area resources.
- Encourage use of innovative soft solutions to prevent cliff retreat and preserve natural sea cliff form, e.g. beach sand replenishment, and careful preventive erosion management.
- Pipe outfall construction methods and techniques shall be unobtrusive in design; conduct runoff safely to the ocean without damage to the cliffs, intertidal/subtidal zones, reefs and surf; and minimize pollutant discharge.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation per proposed native plant preservation and revegetation program.
- Install primary observation points at designated locations along coastal bluff tops with natural, unobtrusive elements such as seating/resting forms and interpretive signage. Install secondary observation points at designated locations with seating/resting forms.

## Coastal Terraces

### North Coastal Terrace

#### *Recommendations*

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality.



- Create a Park entrance at the Hillside Park's lower parking lot, close to Cornish Street. Park entry shall include appropriate Park identification signage, accent native plants, restoration of native plant cover, Park orientation map, seating/resting forms and trail head furnishings of natural materials (see Figure 28 & 29).
- Provide pedestrian trail from Cornish Drive and connect with other major use areas of the Park as part of the proposed comprehensive trail system. Block undesirable off-shoot trails with natural barriers and recover with native vegetation.
- Replace dead and diseased trees with groupings of *Pinus torreyana* (Torrey Pine) and *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak) to frame hillside views.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas by planting with native vegetation using proposed native plant preservation and revegetation program.
- Investigate construction of a small, permanent public comfort station and beach shower near the Lower Parking Lot.
- Demolish the Ladera Street Properties and restore the areas with native vegetation (see Figure 30 & 31).
- The Park and Recreation Department shall seek opportunities to expand the park. This includes annexing land as it becomes available and the elimination of private easements across parkland.





**FIGURE 28 - Existing Conditions:**  
 Existing Park entry and signage at Cornish Drive / Ladera Street intersection.



**FIGURE 29 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
 Park entry and signage simplified and enhanced.





**FIGURE 30 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Ladera Street Properties*



**FIGURE 31 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Ladera Street properties removed - ocean views restored.*

## South Coastal Terrace

### Recommendations

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality.
- Divert drainage away from the eroded canyon area (drainage gully) by implementing new comprehensive drainage solutions. Restore the eroded canyon by filling to more natural finish grade (following contours of the natural canyon) and revegetate with native shrub and groundcover plants.
- Provide pedestrian trail through South Coastal terrace and connect with other major use areas of the Park as part of the proposed comprehensive trail system. Block undesirable offshoot trails with natural barriers and recover with native vegetation. Pursue continuation southward as part of the future Point Loma Coast Trail.
- Provide primary observation points with natural, unobtrusive elements such as seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage where appropriate. Install secondary observation point with seating/resting form near promontory at south end of Garbage Beach.
- Eliminate the existing athletic field. Initial phase: discontinue irrigation and turf maintenance. Future phase: remove fence, remove fill on western edge, recontour and revegetate with native plant material.
- Eliminate erosion on steep slopes through planting of native plants. Remove non-native plants.



## Ridge/Slope

### *Recommendations*

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system (capture, collect, treat and convey) to minimize surface/subsurface erosion, groundwater seepage and pollutant discharge using best management practices. Provide controls to minimize discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable to maintain groundwater and ocean water quality.
- Eliminate erosion on steep slopes through use of native plants. Remove nonnative plants, replant with native vegetation.
- Provide pedestrian trail access : 1) from Upper Parking Lot observation point to Coastal Terrace, and 2) along west side of and parallel with Western Loop Road from Upper Parking Lot to Park boundary. Connect trails with other major use areas of the Park as part of the proposed comprehensive trail system. Block existing undesirable off-shoot trails with natural barriers and recover with native vegetation.
- Reduce size of Upper Parking Lot and restore area with native vegetation. Retain spaces for Park viewing and access, trail access, and interpretive and other Park use.
- Install a primary observation point at west end of the Upper Parking Lot with natural, unobtrusive elements such as seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation per proposed native plant preservation and revegetation program.
- Gradually replace dead and/or diseased trees and selectively replace with *Pinus torreyana* (Torrey Pine) and *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak) to frame hillside views.



- Implement Park brush management program in compliance with current City Fire Department brush management guidelines, improvement plans subject to review by the City Fire Department and City Biologist as applicable.
- Designate the Upper Canyon area as Biological Reserve dedicated to the preservation and study of native plant and wildlife habitats.
- Provide secondary pedestrian trail access from the Upper Parking Lot observation point to the Ridge and Upper Canyon overlooks as part of the proposed comprehensive trail system. Block existing undesirable offshoot trails with natural barriers and recover with native vegetation.
- Install primary observation points at the Ridge slope west of the former Loma Land properties and the Upper Canyon overlook with seating/resting forms and/or interpretive signage.
- Demolish the Loma Land properties and driveways and restore the areas with native vegetation (see Figure 32 & 33). Demolition of the Cobin House shall be determined upon further historical analysis.
- The Park and Recreation Department shall seek opportunities to expand the park. This includes annexing land as it becomes available and the elimination of private easements across parkland.





**FIGURE 32 - Existing Conditions:**  
*Loma Land properties*



**FIGURE 33 - Computer Simulation of Potential Improvements:**  
*Loma Land properties removed - ocean views restored. Demolition of the Cabin House shall be determined upon further historical analysis.*

## Chapter 12 Phasing and Implementation





# 12

## Phasing and Implementation



The Master Plan recommends implementation in the following phases. Implementation of both general guidelines and specific recommendations will depend upon availability of funding sources, project-specific environmental reviews, community review and permits, cost impacts and changing circumstances affecting overall Park phasing priorities. As a general framework phasing priorities will change in response to many external factors.

Recommendations listed in this chapter are summarized for ease of referencing overall priorities. For more detailed information, please refer to the previous chapters as appropriate to the specific recommendations.

The Master Plan is intended as a guiding document. Each specific project will require an environmental review, as well as analysis for compliance with current ADA and Title 24.

## Drainage and Erosion Control

The first priority of the Master Plan is the recovery and preservation of the natural resources of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park.

### *Recommendation*

Prior to implementing the following recommendations for the development of the Park, the initiation and implementation of an environmentally responsible comprehensive on-site comprehensive drainage study and drainage plan resulting in specific recommendations should be developed and approved.

## Linear Park Phasing

### Cliffs/Bluffs-Phase 1

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system.
- Study use of innovative soft solutions to prevent cliff retreat, e.g. beach sand replenishment, and careful preventive erosion management. Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation.
- Create a Park entrance at the Linear Park west of the Adair Street/Sunset Cliffs Boulevard
- Construct Linear Park portion of the continuous, 1.5-mile primary Trail.
- Study redesign of chain link fence barriers around surface sea cave openings at Luscomb's Point and south of the same to achieve more unobtrusive design.
- Reduce paving at off-street parking by providing head-in parking only. Restore open space with native vegetation. Drain parking lot toward street.

### Cliffs/Bluffs - Phase 2

- Install primary observation points along the coastal bluffs.

## Hillside Park Phasing

### Ridge Slope - Phase 1

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation per proposed native plant preservation and revegetation program.
- Reduce impacts of Western Loop Road by providing safe pedestrian access parallel with the road (alignment requires further study), installing traffic calming devices, implementing comprehensive drainage solutions and screening the road from view of Park users via native plant material.
- Implement Park brush management program in compliance with current City Fire Department brush management guidelines.
- Designate the Upper Canyon area as Biological Reserve dedicated to the preservation and study of native plant and wildlife habitats.

### Ridge Slope - Phase 2

- Facilitate erosion control on steep slopes through use of native plants. Remove nonnative plants using best management techniques.
- Demolish the Loma Land properties and driveways and restore the areas with native vegetation. Demolition of Corbin House shall be determined upon further historical analysis.
- Install a primary observation point per Master Plan Recommendations.
- Provide pedestrian trail access from Upper Parking Lot observation point to North Coastal Terrace.





- Provide secondary pedestrian trail access from the Upper Parking Lot observation point to the Ridge and Upper Canyon overlooks.

### **Ridge Slope - Phase 3**

- Strengthen screening buffer along Park boundary through use of native trees, shrubs and groundcover.
- Reduce size of Upper Parking Lot and restore area with native vegetation.
- Explore alternatives for usefulness of the Western Loop Road when use agreement expires in 2017.

### **Coastal Terrace - Phase 1**

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation.
- Facilitate erosion control on steep slopes by revegetating slopes with native plants. Remove nonnative plants using best management techniques
- Reconstruct Lower Parking Lot at existing location reducing pavement.
- Create a Park entrance at the Hillside Park's lower parking lot entrance near Cornish St.
- Eliminate existing athletic field. Discontinue irrigation and turf maintenance.

### **Coastal Terrace - Phase 2**

- Provide pedestrian trail access along Ladera Street to the proposed Garbage Beach stairway beach access, and connect with other major use areas of the Park as part of the proposed primary trail.



- Provide pedestrian trail from Cornish Drive and connect with other major use areas of the Park as part of the proposed primary trail.
- Install primary observation point per Master Plan recommendations.
- Pursue coordination with the federal government regarding design and construction of proposed Point Loma Trail.
- Demolish the Ladera Street properties and restore the areas with native vegetation.
- Eliminate existing athletic field. Remove fence, remove fill on western edge, recontour and revegetate with native plant material.

### **Coastal Terrace - Phase 3**

- Investigate construction of a small, permanent public comfort station and beach shower near the Lower Parking Lot.
- Replace dead and diseased trees with groupings of *Pinus torreyana* (Torrey Pine) and *Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak) to frame hillside views.

### **Cliffs/Bluffs - Phase 1**

- Implement a new on-site comprehensive drainage system.
- Refurbish and maintain Ladera Street stairs.
- Conduct engineering study of the existing drainage patterns and develop formal recommendations regarding drainage solution at canyon drainage.
- Construct new ocean outfall for proposed canyon drainage restoration project only if no other options are available.
- Recover eroded and exposed soil areas with native vegetation.
- Construct Hillside portion of continuous primary trail.



## Cliffs/Bluffs - Phase 2

- Study use of innovative soft solutions to prevent cliff retreat, e.g. beach sand replenishment, and careful preventive erosion management.
- Remove or mitigate existing riprap as feasible.
- Construct new stairs at Garbage Beach central cliffs near lower parking lot, of unobtrusive design and minimal impact to the cliff face and beach before, during and after construction.