



Chollas Creek Enhancement Program

Adopted May 14, 2002

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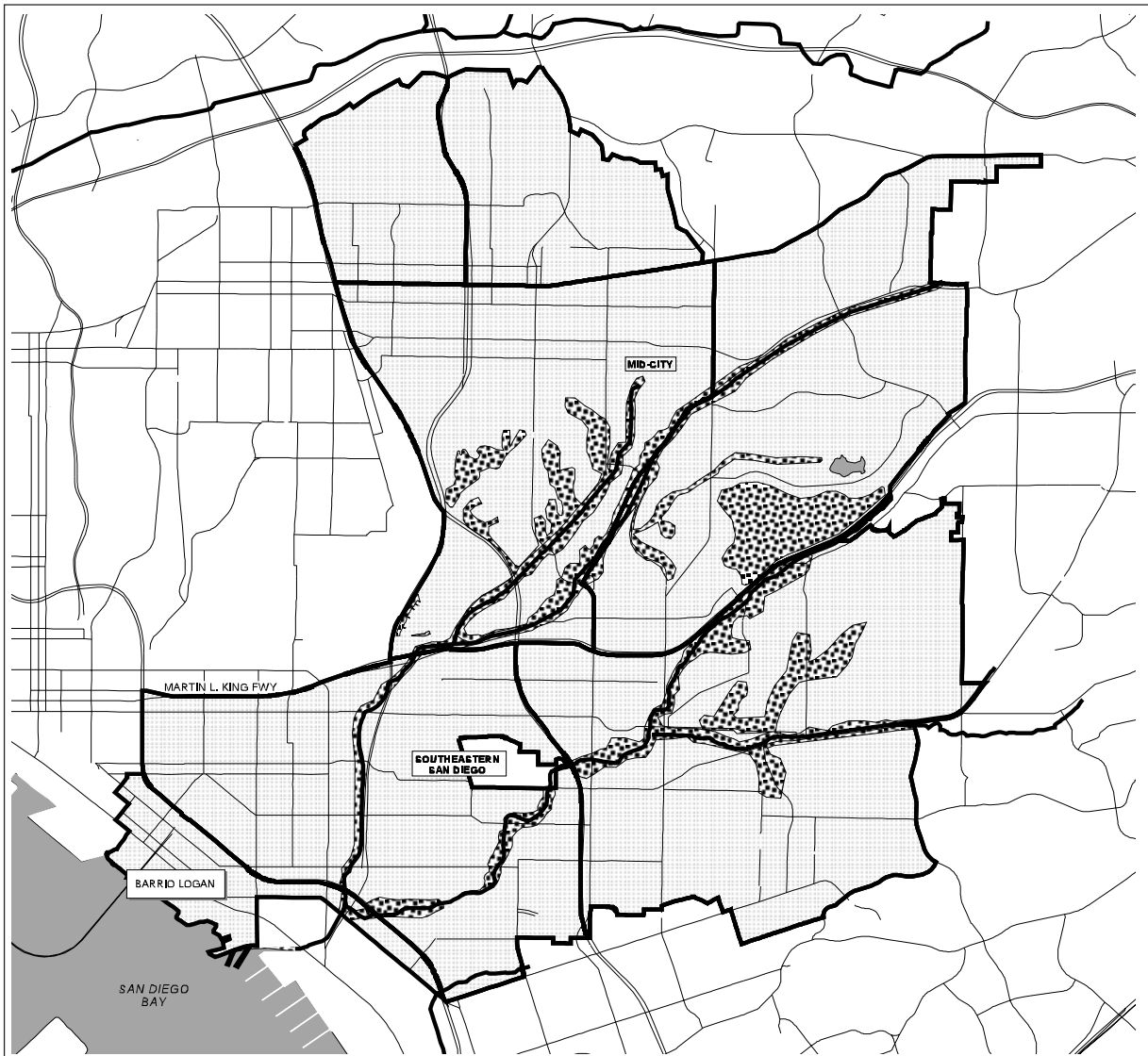
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Chollas Creek Enhancement Program

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Chollas Creek Community Planning Areas Mid-City, Southeastern San Diego, Barrio Logan



Chollas Creek Enhancement Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chollas Creek is a natural drainage system that traverses inner-city neighborhoods within the Greater Mid-City (City Heights, Eastern), Encanto Neighborhoods, Southeastern San Diego, and Barrio Logan communities, from its headwaters in La Mesa and Lemon Grove to San Diego Bay. In its early history the creek was well known to Native Americans, who used it for settlement and as a major trail through the region. The creek also has a long geological history evidenced by a number of paleontological sites. In the past 50 years the creek has lost some of its natural geographic features due to freeways and other urban development that have segmented the creek so that in some areas it is barely recognizable as an open space system.

The historic channel and floodplain of Chollas Creek has been altered substantially as a result of decades of development and human activity. Today, the Chollas Creek-bed is an urban creek with little native vegetation and much of the channel is armored or is concrete channel and culverts. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified it as an “impaired” water body due to high levels of cadmium, copper, lead, zinc, and other toxicity found in the storm water collected. The creek’s primary environmental value is its contribution to improved downstream water quality as a result of the filtering action of water flow through the channel. Enhancement of the remaining natural or soft bottom sections of the creek-bed will contribute to this overall environmental benefit.

The potential of the creek’s development as an urban park asset was only identified in the late 1970’s when work was initiated to update the first community plan prepared for the Southeastern San Diego communities. Since that time, restoration and enhancement of the creek has been the subject of numerous City policies and plans including the Barrio Logan-Harbor 101 Community Plan of 1978, the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan of 1987, and the Mid-City Communities Plan of 1998. With the population of Mid-City and Southeastern San Diego communities expected to exceed 380,000 people by 2015, and the growing inadequacy of parks and open space in the



inner city, as well as an income level below City average, the development of Chollas Creek Park will become a major catalyst for community revitalization.

The boundaries of Chollas Creek Enhancement Program encompasses the Chollas Creek channel, floodway and floodplain fringe including the first legal parcel abutting the Creek's floodway (channel).



This Chollas Creek Enhancement Program has been partially funded by a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy which financed an environmental consultant contract to analyze and develop recommendations for wetland conservation, restoration and rehabilitation. This document also consolidates information contained in numerous documents adopted by City Council since the late 1970's into a single document specifically designed for the enhancement of Chollas Creek. The Enhancement Program provides a *Community Vision for Development, Existing City Policies, Design/Development Guidelines, and a Strategy for Implementation*, as follows:

The Community Vision:

The Community Vision for Development was enunciated during a widely advertised and attended Community Workshop held on March 21, 1998.

The Community Vision for Development envisions a Linear Park encompassing the multiple branches of Chollas Creek, with possible natural and urban treatments give existing conditions and design/development opportunities. The vision for the Chollas Creek area is multi-faceted including: maintaining the natural areas in an undisturbed fashion, promoting cohesive new development that integrates buildings, open space, and the creek into successful and useable areas for the community, and restoring channeled creeks in urbanized areas to more natural and safe conditions. Finally, the vision creates useable linkages throughout the Chollas Creek and the community to San Diego Bay.



Existing City Policies Context:

The existing City policies are organized by element/theme in order to easily follow the policy precedent basis for the Design/Development Guidelines. The policies are referenced in the City's Progress Guide and General Plan, the applicable community plans, and other citywide policies and regulations.

The Design/Development Guidelines:

The Design/Development Guidelines are based on long established City policies and are specifically designed to address: Wetland Restoration and Rehabilitation, Channel Reconstruction, Landscaping, Trail System, Public Art, and Education/Interpretive Program. Some of these Guidelines are existent in City Council adopted documents, while others are new, designed to implement the stated policies in their related setting.

Through this document, it is the intent of this Enhancement Program to foster the restoration and rehabilitation of the Creek's remaining wetlands, using existing wetland remnants as the source for wetland mitigation and enhancement for projects that disrupt wetland environments within the communities of Mid-City, Encanto Neighborhoods, Southeastern San Diego, and Barrio Logan, all within the Chollas Creek geographic area and hydrological basin. Beyond the wetland restoration and rehabilitation actions, it is the objective of this Enhancement Program to foster quality design and development throughout.



Strategy for Implementation:

The Strategy for Implementation includes a 20-year phasing and funding timeline, as well as maintenance and oversight strategies. This document includes a Funding and Phasing Schedule with projected costs in year 2000 dollars. Cost projections are included to provide an early measure of funding levels required for each phase in order to give greater guidance to early funding requests. The phasing program includes the phased development of the following geographic sections of the Creek: South Branch, Encanto Branch, Emerald Hills Branch, Auburn Creek, Oak Canyon Branch, Main Branch, and Bayside. The Strategy for Implementation envisions each phase analyzed in detail through a separate and more specific enhancement plan, providing detailed implementation programs, phasing and funding.



Finally, considering the limited land availability and the need for quality design and engineering safety, it is recommended that the development of the Creek reconstruction areas should be approached as an arts project with artists to play a very active role or as lead designers supported by the required technical expertise of engineering, landscape architecture, hydrology and other required disciplines.



This document also includes two Appendices for reference: one is the Habitat Restoration Background for information details related to habitat restoration; the other, Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design which are particularly applicable to supplement landscaping and structural development proposals.

Chollas Creek Enhancement Program Funding and Phasing Schedule

Costs shown below are general projections based on Year 2000 dollar costs per unit and an approximated assessment of the area involved. The costs are provided for purposes of implementation planning and assessing grant funding requests. With the development of Enhancement Plans for each phase of development, these costs will be updated.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Phase I-South Branch 1. Enhancement – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Plan Habitat Restoration – \$2.0 million) Channel Reconstruction – (\$3.0 million) Trails – (\$1.3 million) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$619,000) Maintenance – (\$)	\$100,000 Grant																					
	\$1.2 Million Grant	\$800,000	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million																	
	\$372,000 Private	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million																		
		\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000																		
		\$150,000	\$70,000	\$400,000																		
Phase II-Encanto Branch 1. Enhancement – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Habitat Restoration – (\$100,000) Channel Reconstruction – (\$3.2 million) Trails – (\$320,000) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$500,000) Maintenance – (\$)			\$100,000																			
				\$100,000	\$100,000	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million														
				\$200,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000														
				\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000													
Phase III-Emerald Hills 1. Enhancement Plan – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Plan Habitat Restoration – (\$550,000) Channel Reconstruction – (\$1.6 million) Trails – (\$1.0 million) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$500,000) Maintenance – (\$)						\$100,000																
							\$200,000	\$350,000														
							\$200,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$600,000												
								\$300,000	\$500,000	\$200,000												
								\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000												
								\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000												
Phase IVA - Fox Canyon 1. Enhancement Plan – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Plan Habitat Restoration – (\$250,000) Channel Reconstruction – (\$4.0 million) Trails – (\$1.0 million) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$500,000) Maintenance – (\$)								\$100,000														
									\$250,000													
									\$500,000	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million											
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									\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000											
									\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000											

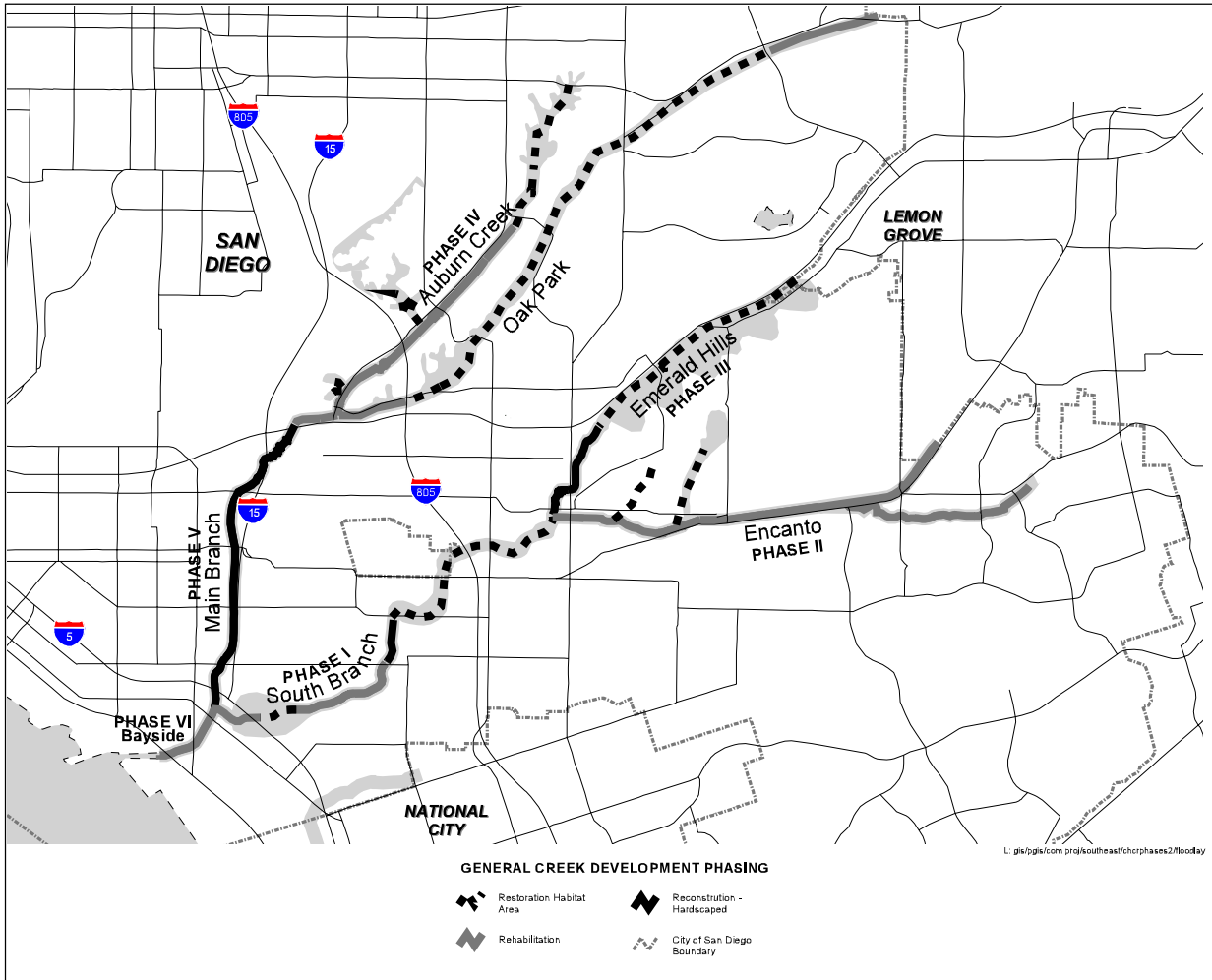
Chollas Creek Enhancement Program Funding and Phasing Schedule

Costs shown below are general projectons based on Year 2000 dollar costs per unit and an approximated assessment of the area involved. The costs are provided for purposes of implementation planning and assessing grant funding requests. With the development of Enhancement Plans for each phase of development, these costs will be updated.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Phase IVB - Oak Park 1. Enhancement – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Plan Habitat Restoration – \$2.4 million Channel Reconstruction – (\$1.0 million) Trails – (\$2.0 million) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$500,000) Maintenance – (\$)						\$100,000	\$500,000	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million												
Phase V - Main Branch 1. Enhancement – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Channel Reconstruction – (\$5.5 million) Trails – (\$1.5 million) Landscaping – (\$1.0 million) Interpretive Program – (\$1.0 million) Maintenance – (\$)										\$100,000		\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million	\$1.0 Million						
Phase VI - Bayside 1. Enhancement Plan – (\$100,000) 2. Implementation Plan Habitat Restoration – (\$100,000) Channel Reconstruction – (\$2.0 million) Trails – (\$600,000) Landscaping – (\$500,000) Interpretive Program – (\$1.0 million) Maintenance – (\$)														\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000		

NOTE: \$ costs are approximate projections based on 2000 unit costs and an approximation of the area involved. These costs are outlined for purposes of understanding the scope of the funding commitment necessary over the long term. With the development of the Enhancement Plan for each section, actual updated costs will be developed for implementation.





COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ISSUES AND VISION

Through the 1970's to the end of the 20th century, the inner-city communities developed an interest in Chollas Creek as a result of the City's Community Planning Program and the environmental consciousness that evolved through the later part of the century. Starting with the 1978 Barrio Logan/Harbor 101 Community Plan, the 1987 Southeastern San Diego Community Plan and the 1998 Mid-City Communities Plan, issues and visions for Chollas Creek have been discussed and developed. These include the Creek restoration and redevelopment at San Diego Bay, much of it within the Navy's 32nd Street Naval Station; the preservation and enhancement of the natural areas; and, the redevelopment of those disturbed concreted-in channel areas with urban parks and plazas to create a setting for new private redevelopment. The stated objectives of these plans have been modestly realized. Now, with a new interest in inner-city urban restoration and development, as well as the realization that creek systems can become very desirable urban parks, a new interest in realizing the objectives and vision of the 1979-1998 community plans has come to the forefront.

On March 21, 1998 a widely publicized community workshop was held, attended by a wide cross-section of community and agency representatives. At that workshop three major objectives were realized: one, the identification of key issues; two, development of design concepts; and three, the development of a common vision. The information that follows provides a synopsis of those key issues and common vision. A more detailed record of the proceedings is available in a report published after the workshop.

The sections that follow provide a short synopsis of the issues and the vision developed by the community representatives at the workshop. This information provides an important context to the Design/Development Guidelines and Implementation Program contained in this Chollas Creek Enhancement Program document.





Community Issues:

- The lack of creek identification throughout, and lack of knowledge about its important role in the ancient history of San Diego.
- The development of win-win solutions to integrate both open space conservation and urban development opportunities.
- The need to realistically address creek improvement funding and maintenance costs.

The Major Design Concepts:

Recreation

- Need for a multi-use trail system which connect neighborhoods north and south of SR-94, Chollas Lake, Southeastern San Diego, the San Diego Bay, and Mission Valley
- Hiking trails along natural portions of creek and bike pedestrian paths in more developed areas
- Focus on youth and education through use of creek



*Riverwalk, San Antonio Texas**

Development

- Identify funding sources
- Incorporate creek in setting for all development, with Riverwalk type commercial use
- Maintain continuity and connection back to community
- More bridges to connect communities
- Community gardens

*1. Many workshop participants used the term “Riverwalk”, which refers to design concepts embodied in San Antonio’s “Riverwalk” a highly successful urban revitalization project in downtown San Antonio, Texas, that incorporates public pedestrian amenities such as pathways, seating, plazas, amphitheaters, and landscaping with private development including shops, hotels, restaurants and outdoor cafes along the riverfront.

Safety

- Adequate flood protection
- Enhanced personal safety
- Solar panel emergency phones
- Lighting for pedestrian night use, with motion sensors



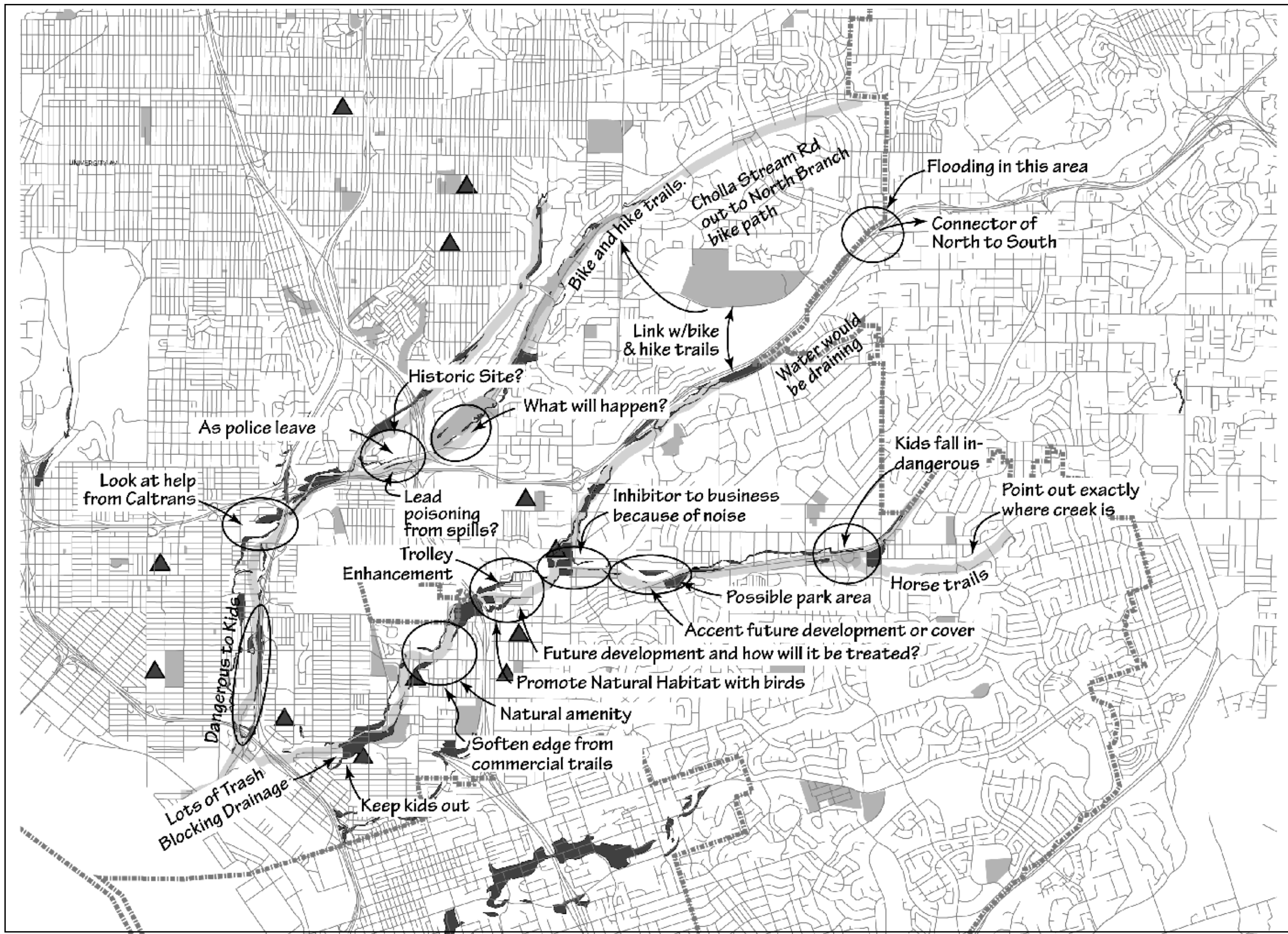
Maintenance

- Clean out debris and maintain using California Conservation Corps (CCC) and Job Corps

Beautification

- Emphasize natural setting and encourage wildlife
Don't fence it off
- Use public art
- Water wanted all along creek, explore high water table and dredging opportunities
- Restore to wetland
- Theme of trees to connect creek system visually
- No concrete channelization
- Cultural history awareness



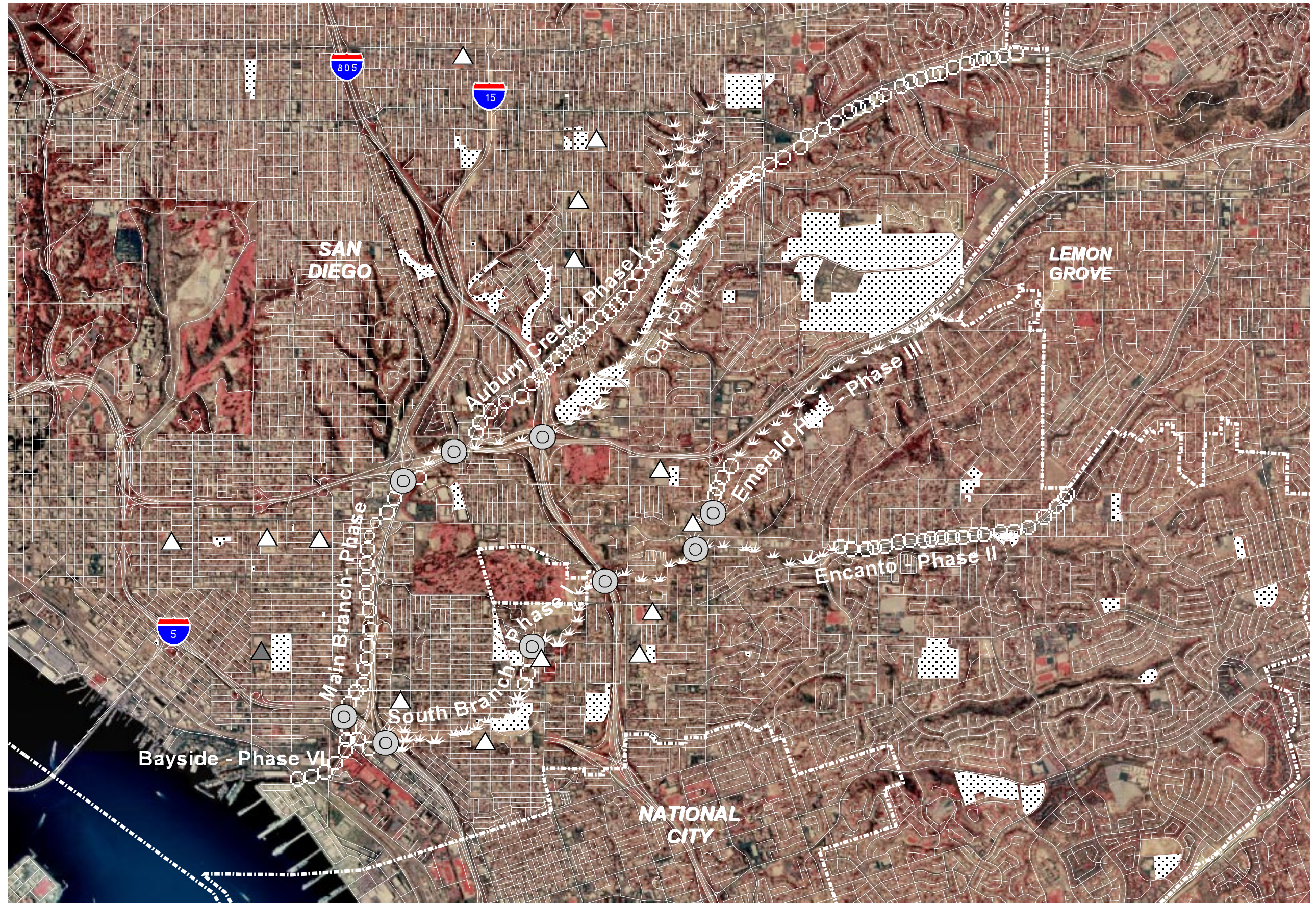


Community Vision

The Community Vision developed at the workshop for the enhancement of Chollas Creek Includes the following concepts:

- Recognize Chollas Creek as a regional resource with a good blending of natural and “built” environments.
- Identify the various creek tributaries and branches, creating identity for each, with a linkage system of trails * (a Riverwalk-type development all the way to the Bay.)
- Incorporate water areas into the creek by dredging, preservation of native habitats as an enhancement of disturbed areas through the development of Riverwalk concepts that integrate the river with urban development.
- Assure that private development and the City contribute to creek development and enhancement.
- Recognize the creek’s natural habitat, its historical role and its educational resource potential through an interactive educational exhibit program.
- Create a safe environment with motion sensitive lights, emergency solar panel telephones, and continuing maintenance to relieve impacts from flooding.
- Create a setting for economic development through creek enhancements and linear park development reminiscent of its historical role with linkages to College Grove, Chollas Reservoir, Radio Canyon, and terminating in San Diego Bay.
- Provide design excellence and continuity throughout, with connections back to the neighborhoods.
- Incorporate public art into all Riverwalk improvements and constructions.





CHOLLAS CREEK VISION

L: gis/pgis/com proj/southeast/chcrphases2/floodlay