



## OAK PARK BRANCH

### Chollas Creek Canyon Enhancement Planning

Workshop **1**

June 22, 2013

#### PARTICIPANTS

##### Residents (check spelling)

Dave Becerra  
Guy Mock  
Erica Dibello-Hitta  
John Rotsart  
William Babcock  
Danielle Laman  
Freddy Arthur  
Mike Gharet  
George Cole  
Melba Feller-Fabian  
Linda Pennington  
Pam Swain  
Lorraine Marshall  
Robert Black  
Dwight Cole

##### City

Jason Allen  
Sue Pelly

##### Canyonlands

Eric Bowlby  
Martha Baker  
Andy Spurlock  
Linda Pennington  
Dave George

#### 1. Introductory Comments:

- The purpose of the Enhancement Plan is to update and implement the 2002 Chollas Creek Improvement Plan.
- The intent is to plan for public lands including City park lands, City open space, street right of way and land owned or managed by other public entities such as utility departments, Caltrans, and so forth
- The plan can offer ideas that could be implemented by private property owners if they are interested and willing to participate with easements or management of property in exchange for maintenance or related benefits such as liability reduction or brush management.
- The plan can make recommendations for acquisition of land for certain uses
- Partners in the plan can include but is not limited to the following:
  - Parks and Rec
  - Development Services

Residents  
Planning  
Planning Groups  
Non-Profits  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
MSCP  
Regional Water Quality Control Bd.

## **2. Canyonlands Enhancement Plan Goals:**

- Balance conservation of resources with enjoyment of and education about nature
- Provide both public access and conservation of habitat
- Incorporate recreation in ways that are compatible with resources
- Provide education about nature and conservation

## **3. Enhancement Planning Process**

- Build Stewardship Groups, Map and Assemble Existing Conditions, Outreach with Workshops, Create Enhancement Action Plan, Seek Approvals, Funding, Permits, Execute Action Plan

## **4. Initial Questions and Comments with Introductions**

- a. Danielle: Is there a source for information about other branches and sections of Chollas Creek besides Oak Park? A list of the status of projects and what has been completed? Contact Laura Gates with City in DSD [lgates@sandiego.gov](mailto:lgates@sandiego.gov)
- b. Pam: Is there a synopsis of implementation projects for Chollas Creek with an inventory of priority, phasing and status of planned as well as completed projects? Laura Gates with City and Leslie Reynolds with Groundwork.
- c. Pam: suggests walk of Oak Park branch as part of workshop.
- d. Dwight Cole, resident on Chollas Parkway for 46 years Consider fire and brush management, Provide maintenance and cleaning along Chollas Parkway, Provide bike / walk trail the length of the canyon, incorporate fire access and connect recreation areas.
- e. Linda: Suggested involvement in the I Love A Clean San Diego Coastal Clean-up Sep. 4, 9:00am to Noon
- f. Guy: Supports trails and opportunity for kids and residents to interact with nature.
- g. Danielle: Suggest collaboration with San Diego Groundwork/Chollas and chair, Leslie Reynolds
- h. Bill Babcock has been organizing cleanups in the canyon since 2005 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday or each month. He can always use more volunteers.

## **5. Dave Presents Resource Maps:**

- a. Orientation to website and explanation of content of existing mapping  
<http://www.sdcanyonlands.org/cep> (see Chollas Creek, Oak Park Branch)
- b. Geotopographic and Viewshed: Slope steepness, Views, Channel location, Drainage structures, Drain Conveyance, Erosion
- c. Socio-infrastructure: Ownership, City/School/Right-of-way/Private Vacant, Trail Conditions, Sewer Access, GDP for Park at Federal Blvd/Home Avenue.

*Comment: Is Dog Park part of Home Avenue GDP?*

- d. Vegetation Condition: Quality of habitat/vegetation from High to Low.  
*Comment: Disturbance, toxic burn material fill on two parcels near 47<sup>th</sup> and Fairmount on privately owned parcels and partially under school site. Land should be purchased or negotiated and habitat preserved (corner of 47th St. and Fairmount), land for sale.*
- e. Vegetation Communities: Identifies primarily Coastal Sage Scrub, also wetland, riparian, upland and distinguishes disturbed areas
- f. Vegetation Polygon Links: Provides links to spreadsheets identifying species in each area.
- g. Future Trails: Preliminary location of trails and connections

## **6. Review of Conditions by Area—West to East along Creek:**

- a. Park General Development Plan near Home Avenue and Federal Boulevard Park:  
Map shows the approved GDP plan on the three dimensional topography. GDP includes ball fields, parking, picnic area(s) and Children’s Play Area.  
*Comment: Eric observed that Play Area is in high quality Sage Scrub. Danielle feels Play Area could be Nature Play and Education rather than a traditional play area. GDP approved 5 years ago but improvements are unfunded.*
- b. Fairmount Avenue Area :  
Many renegade trails in this area. Privately owned land had an illegal grading which has been stopped and a fine levied. Consider acquiring the north triangle of private land. South triangle is high quality Sage Scrub, should be acquired for conservation/restoration.  
*Comment: Encampments should be closed, Keep one trail to connect to Federal Boulevard, Close dead end trails. Create Trailhead from Federal Boulevard. Consider bridge crossing (check GDP for park to west). Could be an educational trail loop connected to the proposed park. North side of Fairmount has fairly high quality sage scrub and few homeless or trail use.*
- c. Perkon Place, Isabel Street Area: This is a potential trailhead with good habitat and interesting archaeological features and fossils:  
*Comment: How to protect features. Educate kids to preserve features in place.*
- d. Euclid Avenue Area: This area is primarily street right-of-way not open space and includes many renegade trails. It has had homeless encampments (some of which have been cleaned up)  
*Comment: Establish a main trail, especially north of Euclid*
- e. Salta Place Area: This area is a good place for a walk to ground-truth the plan.
- f. 54<sup>th</sup> Street Triangle Area: Described as site for future IRC Garden?? It has mixed “blown-out” habitat, a concrete channel and difficult conditions for trail crossing. There are opportunities related to potential uses of triangle area east of 54<sup>th</sup> street. The section of Chollas Parkway between 54<sup>th</sup> and University Ave. can be removed to add open space as part of triangle development  
*Comment: What is the status of the Triangle Development. There was a grant for restoration but it fell through. Take advantage of Teen Challenge north of Leah Street and 54<sup>th</sup>. Create a loop trail connecting Triangle site. Environmental Services has a grant specifically to remove invasives and non-natives to improve visibility for safety. Coordinate with Lisa Wood at Environmental Services to hold a Clean-up. There is a fire issue with brush management for*

*Redwood Village. Clean-ups and clearing are coordinated through Environmental Services. Handling of safety/homeless should be through the Police Community Relations Officer*

*Resources: Laura Reabau, Chair Eastern Area Planning Committee*

*Michael Prinz Development Services: status of Triangle*

*Keith Selby: Area Manager for Planning*

*Lisa Selwood: Environmental Services – she is contact for the invasives grant which is for water quality enhancement*

*I Love a Clean San Diego: (Natalie Roberts) scheduled clean-up Sep. 21?*

*Police Community Relations Officer Luis Roman*

## **7. Community Comments:**

- a. Guy : Don't forget the tough, controversial issues—that many people will have problems with providing more access and trails: Increasing homeless use. Bicycle trails may increase off-road bike and BMX use and increase erosion. Address fear of crime from creating use and access. Look at purchasing or leveraging private parcel near Federal that has had illegal grading. Owner can't pay the fines and may be negotiable. Coordinate through Stacey Lomedico and Dave Monroe at Parks.
- b. Bill: Address Euclid Avenue park property west of the crossing: illegal dumping and grading. Area needs fence in City ROW, but back of private property. Eric responded that he will provide a City contact list next time for participants.
- c. Danielle: Address Sunshine ball fields that need a lot work. Illegal fill, park is poorly maintained and needs extensive work.
- d. Bill: Purchase the property at 47<sup>th</sup> and Fairmount and consider it for mitigation with restoration. Remove invasives and non-natives throughout and especially near Perkon Place. Create a trail system for the Creek throughout. Connect all parks. Close illegal "renegade" trails. Create two crossings or footbridges 1) 47<sup>th</sup> Street at former street crossing location connecting to Ridgeview 2) 54<sup>th</sup> and Euclid but just north at the sewer pipe location which is currently an informal crossing near spillway. Create a kiosk at the 47<sup>th</sup> street entrance (trailhead). Establish a dog park in east area west of 54<sup>th</sup>, accessible from Salta Place. Provide warning signs throughout for rattlesnakes. Consider a logo for Chollas Creek (provided a design). Close some trails throughout.
- e. Erica: Can we connect Chollas Creek with Chollas Lake—would like a pedestrian trail connection from the west side of the lake to the Oak Park Branch. Discussion of connecting as well to Encanto Branch and to Navy housing under Parkway. Bill commented: Chollas Lake connection could connect at the footbridge at Chollas Parkway north of Leisure Land and west of Oak Park Radio Tower at Oak Park.

## **8. Next Meeting:**

Eric wants to coordinate representation from State wildlife agencies as well as City Parks and Open Space.

Next meeting will include a walk of the eastern portion of Chollas Creek's Oak Park Branch from Euclid to the Triangle at 54<sup>th</sup>. It will include marking up maps with specific conditions and recommendations. Linda confirmed that Teen Challenge has given approval for parking at Teen Challenge

**Tentative Meeting Date**

July 19, 2013

9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Wear hiking clothes and shoes, bring water

Park at Teen Challenge, 5450 Lea St.

**9. Summary:**

The plan *does* need to address the controversial issues as well as the community's goals.

- Security: Restoring habitat and creating useable trails in the right locations can discourage negative use by putting eyes in the canyons and educating kids and the community. It's creating the right balance of access and conservation.
- Fire: Brush management is a critical part of habitat restoration as well as location of trails.
- Private Property: The idea is to encourage participation and buy-in so that private owners will see benefits over time with higher security, management of brush and community involvement. Owners may then be willing to allow access (trail) if liability can be addressed or willing to incorporate habitat on private property.

END

## Chollas Creek (Euclid to 54<sup>th</sup> St)

Recommendations from Vicki Church, Resident

### 1. Safety

- a. Eliminate Mexican Fan Palms or trim fronds annually. (Fire Hazard)
- b. Inspect area for encampments at least once a month (Fire and Personal Safety)
- c. Keep some sections/embankments clear so there is line of sight visibility on both sides of the creek. This may also serve as a fire break. (Fire and Personal Safety)
- d. Keep vegetation five (5) feet from the curb on the Oak Park side. City has allowed vegetation to grow into the street over the years and is slow or non-responsive to taking care of their property.
- e. The patch of poison oak in the 5000 block of Chollas Pkwy (South) needs to be removed before it spreads. If it were to burn, the inhalation hazard would be significant to the nearby residents. We also do not need a deterrent to people working in the area. (Safety – Fire inhalation hazard)

### 2. Paths

- a. Create a five (5) foot wide path along the curb of Chollas Pkwy (South) (Oak Park side). This provides space for two people to walk side by side. This also serves as a fire deterrent, as cigarette butts have been noted near the curb area. The path material should be suitable for dogs to walk on it. Path should not be subject to plant/weed growth.
- b. Create a meandering path in the area on the north side of the creek.
- c. Connect the paths as if it were a loop from Euclid to 54<sup>th</sup> St.
- d. Identify some paths that are adjacent to the creek (lower level) and walkable in the non-rainy season.
- e. Post markers for the path and distances. (e.g. Euclid Ave 0.6 miles/ 0.96 km)
- f. Place chain or barrier across the lower road into the creek near Salta.
- g. Place warning signs in the areas where the embankment drops off.
- h. Continue the planning and strategy work for the connection of paths all the way to the San Diego Bay.

### 3. Nature

- a. Put proactive controls in place for invasive plant species. (e.g. Russian Thistle, Castor Bean, Crown Daisy, Puncturevine to include well timed series of spring weed whacking before they blossom, go to seed, or get too woody to cut)
- b. Establish key “viewing/resting” stations along the upper portion of the creek. If they are staggered on the opposite sides of the creek, then people would be able to view nature.
- c. Place limited signage identifying common animals/birds/plants/geological formations in the area.

### 4. Other

- a. Rebuild the walking bridge between City Heights and Oak Park. The historical bridge was about three houses west of 54<sup>th</sup> St. A crossing at Mina or Boyce, would allow people to do a short or long loop walk in the area.

- b. Place trash containers at two locations along Chollas Pkwy that are convenient for pickup.
  - c. Need to stop dumping on both sides of creek, especially landscape material.
  - d. Need a program for the recovery of shopping carts. (e.g. Once a store is notified, the cart should be removed within 3 working days or else the company should pay the city for its recovery. The 800 Shopping cart phone number is not always helpful.)
  - e. Get the Community Garden to be a good neighbor (no dumping from the garden)
  - f. Provide multilingual educational materials about this area. (English, Spanish, Vietnamese)
  - g. A minor expansion of the New Roots Community Garden would work. A major expansion is not acceptable.
5. Water
- a. Continuous water source from east of 54<sup>th</sup> St should be identified. This was historically a seasonal or ephemeral creek.
  - b. Stagnant water should not be allowed. Mosquito prevention is essential.
  - c. Vegetative filtration of the water may be desirable.
  - d. Baseline water quality data would be helpful.
6. Jobs
- a. Continued funding of organizations such as Canyonlands could provide meaningful jobs and a better awareness of the creek resources.
  - b. Student internships would be good.