

SECTION 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE OCEANSIDE SUBAREA

2.1 REGIONAL LOCATION

The City of Oceanside is the northernmost city within San Diego County and the MHCP subregion (Figure 2-1). Oceanside is bounded on the north by Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (MCB Camp Pendleton), on the south by the Buena Vista Lagoon and the City of Carlsbad, on the west by the Pacific Ocean and on the east by the City of Vista and unincorporated areas of the County.

The City was incorporated in 1889 and encompasses an area of 41.2 square miles (26,964 acres). Oceanside has an estimated population of 161,029 people and 56,488 households (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). The expected population at full build-out is approximately 175,000 (SANDAG 1996; City of Oceanside General Plan 1986).

The City supports regionally important biological resources in its coastal lagoons and estuarine habitats, riparian habitats along the San Luis Rey River and Pilgrim Creek, and in remaining wetland and upland habitats scattered throughout the City. Biological studies (Section 3) suggest that a “stepping-stone” landscape linkage allows north-south dispersal across the City, between MCB Camp Pendleton and northern Carlsbad, for several coastal sage scrub bird species including gnatcatcher. These existing habitat linkages are considered essential for maintaining natural genetic exchange and population connectivity between core gnatcatcher populations on MCB Camp Pendleton and those in northern Carlsbad. These linkages and other biological resources are fully described in Section 3.

2.2 LAND OWNERSHIP AND LAND USES

The remainder of the analysis in Section 2 addresses the Oceanside Subarea, which does not include areas designated as Not A Part in Section 1. Land ownership in the Subarea is summarized in Table 2-1. The majority of land in the Subarea is privately owned and currently used or zoned for residential, commercial, industrial, public/semi-public, or agricultural land uses. The following sections detail patterns of land ownership and use relevant to conservation planning in the Subarea.

Table 2-1**GENERALIZED LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE OCEANSIDE SUBAREA**

Ownership Classification	Total Acreage ^{1,2}	Percent of Total
Road Right-of-Way	3,433.6	13.0
City	2,940.3	11.0
County	8.9	0
School Districts	715.0	3
Water Districts	5.2	0.0
Other Special Districts	275.7	1.0
State	72.0	0.3
State (Caltrans)	298.5	1
Federal	17.5	0.0
Private	18429.0	70.3
Total	26,186.3	100.0%

¹ Numbers in columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

² Total acreage values may vary slightly between tables due to the use of multiple data sources.

Source: SANDAG Land Layers, 2007.

Figure 2-1 8½ X 11 color page 1 of 2

Figure 2-1 8½ X 11 color page 2 of 2

2.2.1 Land Ownership

Of the 26,186 acres of land in the City Sub Area Plan, approximately 70 percent (18,429 acres) are privately owned (Table 2-1 and Figure 2-2). The remaining 30 percent (7,767 acres) of the City's land area is owned by various public agencies. Most County-owned lands within the City boundaries, including Guajome Park, are not part of the City's SAP.

Approximately 2,956 acres of land are classified as vacant and undeveloped based on 2007 existing land use data; approximately 66 percent (1,952 acres) is privately owned. These privately owned lands include the majority of remaining natural habitats in the City, including coastal sage scrub (449 acres), grassland (372 acres), and disturbed areas (166 acres). Much of the disturbed areas in private ownership are the result of fire management activities, prior agricultural uses, and the removal of vegetation by brushing and grading prior to development.

An additional 28 percent (838 acres) of the Subarea's vacant and undeveloped lands are in City ownership with approximately 55 percent (459 acres) currently classified as disturbed. Approximately 15 percent of the vacant land (450 acres) falls within the City's El Corazon parcel, which is centrally located in the City (Figure 2-2). Portions of the El Corazon parcel have been identified as important to Preserve design because of their potential for revegetation and contribution to habitat connectivity. The remaining 3 percent (90 acres) of land identified as vacant and undeveloped is owned by Federal, State, county, and other public agencies.

2.2.2 Major Land Uses

Existing (2007) land uses in the Subarea are dominated by residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural areas (Table 2-2 and Figure 2-3). A significant portion of the Subarea is categorized as vacant, undeveloped land.

Planned (2007) land uses in the Subarea include residential, transportation, agricultural, park, light industrial, and commercial (Table 2-3 and Figure 2-4).

2.2.3 Transportation and Utility Corridors

Several major transportation corridors, roads, utility corridors, and utility facilities are relevant to conservation planning in the City (Figure 2-5). Several major arterial roadways within the City are key landscape features relevant to Preserve planning including the Interstate 5 (I-5)-State Route 78 (SR-78) interchange, which is adjacent to Buena Vista Lagoon, a CDFG owned and managed Ecological Reserve, and SR-78 and SR-76, which both cross east to west across the entire width of the City. Their presence, along with associated commercial, industrial, and residential development, contributes to the fragmentation of potential north-south habitat linkages across the City. The recent construction of the alignment of SR-76 at El Camino Real further constrained the linkage opportunities at this major intersection. Oceanside Boulevard is another major east-west thoroughfare that constrains linkage opportunities. A railroad/trolley easement also parallels the south side of Oceanside Boulevard adjacent to Loma Alta Creek.

A major SDG&E electrical transmission corridor (comprised of fee-owned rights-of-way and easements) runs generally north-south through the central portion of the City. This electrical transmission corridor is associated with many of the remaining habitat patches in this portion of the City and is anticipated to continue acting as a north-south habitat corridor through the City. SDG&E has a separate 10(a)1(B) permit from the USFWS covering activities within these transmission corridors. In addition, SDG&E's San Luis Rey substation is located along El Camino Real between Mesa Drive and Mission Avenue.

2.3 GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND LOCAL LAND USE REGULATION

Existing City documents, codes, and policies contain numerous references to conservation and preservation of open space in the City. Most notable are the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Local Coastal Program, and the Specific Plan for the San Luis Rey River. Policies and regulations are also found in various ordinances including the subdivision, floodplain management ordinances, and in the grading regulations manual. Implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies contained in these documents may occur through discretionary or ministerial permit review, or through realization of City public works projects.

Figure 2-2 11 x 17 GIS Land Ownership page 1 of 2

Figure 2-2 11 x 17 GIS Land Ownership page 2 of 2

Table 2-2

OCEANSIDE SUBAREA: EXISTING LAND USES

General Land Use Description	Total Acres ^{1,2}	Percent of Total
Agriculture	3,429.7	13.0
Airports	51.7	0.2
Commercial	801.0	3.1
Commercial Recreation	596.3	2.3
Extractive Industry	11.0	0.0
Group Quarters	25.3	0.1
Hospitals	53.0	0.2
Hotel/Motel	35.0	0.1
Junkyard/Dump/Landfill	45.8	0.2
Light Industry	658.2	2.5
Mobile Home Parks	369.2	1.4
Multi-Family Residential	1637.0	6.3
Office	49.7	0.2
Parks	334.5	1.3
Preserves and Open Space	2,864.1	11.0
Public Services	437.7	1.7
Schools	584.0	2.2
Single Family Residential	6370.9	24.9
Spaced Rural Residential	823.6	3.1
Transportation	3,939.3	15.0
Vacant and Undeveloped Land	2956.1	11.3
Water	113.2	0.4
Total	26,186.3	100.0%

¹ Numbers in columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

² Total acreage values may vary slightly between tables due to the use of multiple data sources.

Source: SANDAG Land Layers, 2007.

The following sections describe the documents or procedures listed above and the City's ability to apply them in implementing the SAP. The City will use and, in some instances, amend or supplement the basic public laws and regulations described below in order to implement the SAP. The City will enact an urgency ordinance upon entering into an Implementing Agreement to guarantee immediate action on SAP implementation and interim resource protection. The City will then undertake a General Plan amendment and will amend other appropriate municipal plans, codes, and ordinances to incorporate the SAP by reference. These actions are described in Section 6.3.

2.3.1 City of Oceanside General Plan

The City's General Plan is the long-range, public policy document guiding the private and public development of lands within the City. The document is internally consistent and contains vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies for various issues affecting the natural and built environment. The following elements are particularly applicable to conservation and open space.

- **Land Use Element.** This element, most recently amended in January 1989, contains general policies regarding development of sensitive lands and slopes. Article 2.6 includes the objective to "identify and preserve a variety of lands that, due to their topography, use, natural resources, values and/or limitations, are best left in an open or natural state." Chapter 3 of the element discusses natural resource management in greater detail including specific policies or treatment and conservation of vegetation and wildlife habitats (Section 3.11), grading (Section 3.14), soils (Sections 3.15 and 3.16), and agricultural resources (Section 3.19). Policies guiding development adjacent to or within the San Luis Rey River Flood Control District and development adjacent to Guajome Regional Park are also addressed.
- **Environmental Resource Management Element.** This element, adopted September 24, 1975, combines the Conservation and the Open Space Elements of the General Plan. The document provides an evaluation of the environment and a program for planned management, wise utilization, and preservation of natural resources. Various implementation strategies for preservation of sensitive lands

Table 2-3

OCEANSIDE SUBAREA: PLANNED LAND USES

General Land Use Description	Total Acres ^{1,2}	Percent of Total
Agriculture	3238.1	12.3
Airports	51.7	0.2
Commercial	1086.1	4.1
Commercial Recreation	619.7	2.4
Group Quarters	28.2	0.1
Hospitals	54.3	0.2
Hotel/Motel	31	0.1
Light Industry	1358.7	5.2
Mixed Use	21.1	0.1
Mobile Home Parks	359.4	1.4
Multi-family Residential	1386.3	5.3
Office	203.6	0.8
Parks	678.5	2.6
Preserves and Open Space	3019.2	11.5
Public Services	283.7	1.1
Religious Facilities	326.9	1.2
Schools	570.3	2.2
Single Family Residential	8568.4	32.7
Spaced Rural Residential	317.3	1.2
Transportation	3873.8	14.8
Water	110	0.4
Total	26,186.3	100.0%

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² Total acreage values may vary slightly between tables due to the utilization of multiple data sources.

Source: SANDAG Land Layers, 2007.

are offered, including fee acquisition, “less than fee acquisition” (e.g., open space easements, access or scenic easements), zoning for open space or for tight development controls, other development restrictions (e.g., phased development, restriction of public facilities), and property tax concessions for maintaining land in open space. The element does not apply strong regulatory control to problems associated with erosion and siltation but refers to the grading ordinance and the hillside ordinance. Due to the date of the document, no reference is made to the MHCP.

- **Recreational Trails Element.** This element was adopted in January 1996 as a subelement of the General Plan Circulation Element. The document calls for future river improvement plans to accommodate equestrian and pedestrian trails but acknowledges that crossing of environmentally sensitive areas may be a constraint. The document states that trail planning in the river area will be required to meet guidelines established by the MHCP.
- **Community Facilities Element.** This element, adopted June 1990, states that all social, economic, and environmental factors must be reviewed before major extensions of facilities or services are made by the City. Appropriate and sufficient screening, fencing, landscaping, open space setbacks, or other permanent mitigation or buffering measures are required between drainage corridors or other open space areas and adjacent surrounding land uses. Due to the date of the document, no reference is made to the MHCP.
- **Master Plan for Parks and Recreation.** This document, adopted January 1996, is an implementation tool of the City General Plan and provides comprehensive long-range plans for development of parks in the City. Specific reference is made to the MHCP when discussing potential parks in the Whelan Lake Area, the San Luis Rey River Project, Tule Canyon Park, and the Pilgrim Creek Open Space and River Park. Implementation guidelines contained in the document refer to implementing any guidelines established by the MHCP.

Figure 2-3 GIS Existing Land Use 11 x 17 page 1 of 2

Figure 2-3 GIS Existing Land Use 11 x 17 page 2 of 2

Figure 2-4 11 x 17 page 1 of 2

Figure 2-4 11 x 17 page 2 of 2

Figure 2-5 8½ x 11 color page 1 of 2

Figure 2-5 8½ x 11 color page 2 of 2

2.3.2 Local Coastal Program

The Local Coastal Program (LCP) Land Use Plan was originally adopted by the City Council in 1980 and subsequently amended in 1984 and 1985 to implement the requirements of the California Coastal Act within the City. The boundaries of the Land Use Plan include Buena Vista Lagoon and the San Luis Rey River upstream to approximately 0.4 mile west of Canyon Drive. The LCP calls for protection of these areas as natural resources and encourages the maintenance of a 100-foot-wide buffer from the lagoon and river. Only passive recreational uses, such as walking, nature study, and photography are permitted in the buffer zone. Other policies require new development to minimize grading, to require revegetation of exposed soils upon completion of grading, to design final grades as close to natural drainage patterns as possible, and to incorporate silt basins or other measures to restrict siltation.

A component of the LCP includes the San Luis Rey River Specific Plan. The Specific Plan, dated January 1980, is a comprehensive land use plan for the river area within the Coastal Zone, providing management policies and development criteria to guide future actions. The document describes specific development projects in the river area (known at the time the Specific Plan was prepared), their impacts, consistency with the LCP, and recommended mitigation measures. Specific land use policies include recommendations for posting signs regarding trespassing, encouraging the enforcement of CDFG codes, requiring removal of debris, and protecting habitat of particular plant species. The Specific Plan also calls for allowing natural tidal circulation in the river mouth, minimizing runoff of pollutants from development, using strict erosion and sedimentation controls, and protecting the aesthetic values of the area. Implementation measures include requiring development permits for all private development; amending the City General Plan and Zoning Ordinance where necessary to achieve consistency; developing a phasing and funding program; and developing a monitoring and maintenance program to review the Specific Plan, its implementation, and adequacy.

Because the existing approved LCP predates the MHCP and SAP, the LCP contains no reference to these planning documents. While the formal linkage and consistency between this SAP and the approved LCP are not explicit in the existing LCP, nothing in this SAP shall be construed as exempting projects in the coastal zone from Coastal Act or LCP compliance. The City will continue to implement all existing provisions of the LCP that protect sensitive resources. Further, the LCP does state that all projects are subject to the

requirements of CEQA and/or NEPA, where applicable. The City will adopt an LCP amendment to further support internal linkages and consistency with the SAP once the SAP has been finalized.

2.3.3 City Ordinances

Various City ordinances address protection of resources, including the Zoning Ordinance, Grading Regulations Manual, the Subdivision Ordinance, the JURMP, and the Flood Plain Management Ordinance. Figure 2-6 illustrates development constraints in the City based on these ordinances. Each ordinance is summarized below.

- **Zoning Ordinance.** Several of the stated purposes of the Zoning Ordinance are to ensure provisions of adequate open space, to prevent pollution and encourage wise use and management of resources, and to conserve and enhance key visual features. As a regulatory document, the Zoning Ordinance and CEQA require environmental review for all discretionary actions. Specific districts are established by the Ordinance, including the Open Space District. These districts permit limited use of land while protecting and conserving open space as a limited and valuable resource. Uses permitted in these districts include agriculture, minor utilities, and one single-family residence per site. Conditional uses include park and recreational facilities, major utilities, and limited commercial uses associated with a permitted public park or recreational facility. Overlay Districts are established that require further review and analysis prior to development in certain defined areas. The Historic Overlay District and the Scenic Park Overlay District, for example, address preservation of natural and historical resources. Where the Overlay Districts apply, projects must be reviewed for conformance with these special standards prior to building permit issuance.

Section 3039 of the Zoning Ordinance contains the Hillside Development Provisions, applicable to lands with 20 percent slopes and a minimum difference in elevation of 25 feet. A Hillside Development Plan is required prior to development on these lands. Existing conditions including slopes, drainage, vegetation, soils, geologic factors, and hydrology are reviewed together with the development plan and a proposed landscape plan. Findings must be made that the development is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and can be adequately and reasonably served by public services and facilities. Subsequent

grading and building permits are then required to be consistent with the Hillside Development Plan. The Hillside Development Provisions state, however, that “lands designated Public/Semipublic, Commercial and Industrial may require significant landform alteration and grading to ensure their viability. While it is desirable to have such developments design to the spirit and intent of this section, it is recognized that the ability of such developments to meet the provisions and standards of this section will be limited.” Note that implementation of this SAP will strengthen hillside protection within limited portions of the City (see Section 5.3.1).

- **Grading Regulations Manual (Ordinance Nos. 81-20, 82-43, 92-15, and 81-20).** With minor exceptions, a grading permit is required for all grading, clearing, brushing, or grubbing of natural or existing grade in the City including sensitive habitats (e.g., coastal sage scrub). Permits are reviewed for compliance with established controls and can be mitigated or denied on environmental grounds. Erosion control guidelines require protection of environmentally sensitive areas (see Grading Ordinance for definition) and restrict grading activity within 100 feet of environmentally sensitive areas subject to erosion between October 15 and April 15. In addition, trained personnel are required at grading sites containing environmentally sensitive areas subject to erosion during any storm where precipitation is expected to exceed 0.25 inch in 24 hours.
- **Subdivision Ordinance.** The Subdivision Ordinance, adopted February 1991, complements the City’s General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. CEQA review is required for all subdivisions. A project can be denied if it is found to cause substantial damage or substantially and unavoidably injure fish or wildlife or their habitat. In addition, all subdivisions must be found consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- **Flood Plain Management Ordinance (Ordinance No. 87-25).** The Flood Plain Management Ordinance establishes regulations intended to alleviate flood damage by controlling the alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers that help accommodate or channel flood waters. A development permit is required for construction within areas identified as special flood hazards or potential mudslide areas. If a water course is to be altered or

relocated, adjacent communities require notification in addition to coordination with State and Federal agencies.

- **Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Plan (JURMP).** The City of Oceanside has implemented a comprehensive Jurisdictional Urban Runoff Management Plan that is designed to address the storm water mitigation requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Plan focuses on practices designed to promote water quality throughout the City and the watersheds it occupies. The JURMP addresses a variety of land uses; including commercial, construction, industrial, municipal, industrial, residential, new development, and redevelopment projects. The JURMP is updated annually by the City and audited by the RWQCB to ensure consistency with regulations and to verify implementation.
- **Fire Ordinance.** The City has adopted a Fire Ordinance consistent with the California Code, 1998 Edition, and with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), dated February 26, 1997, between the USFWS, CDFG, California Department of Forestry, the San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association, and the Fire Districts' Association of San Diego County. The Fire Ordinance designates maximum clearance from structures and roadways that are adjacent to habitat areas. Vegetation areas are categorized by the State of California Department of forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) into hazard classifications (very high, high, moderate, low, urban) for all land in the State, including the City of Oceanside. New development in an area designated as very high hazard is required to build to a more stringent structural building code, and is required to create a 100' minimum fuel management zone around the structure. This 100' horizontal distance is divided further into fuel management zones. Each zone has requirements regarding species, spacing and density, irrigation, height, etc. Modifications to the guidelines are possible through specialized construction or other features (sprinklers, non-combustible exteriors, etc) approved by the City if 100' can not be achieved. Any existing developed parcel adjacent to an area not designated as very high hazard is not required to maintain fuel management zones and 100' of horizontal distance, and uses the standard building code for construction, New development on a parcel adjacent to an area not designated as very high hazard must have a minimum setback of 30' from small areas of brush and grass.

2.4 ANTICIPATED PUBLIC PROJECTS

At this time, numerous public projects in the City in various planning stages are anticipated to require permits for impacts to biological resources. This section lists those projects that the City believes will require take authorizations in advance of this SAP, as well as those that are likely to require take authorizations under this SAP in the future. Figure 2-7 shows the locations of the anticipated City infrastructure projects.

2.4.1 Water and Wastewater Projects

Integrated Water Utilities Master Plan – This plan is comprised of the combined Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects of the Integrated Water Utilities Master Plan (Master Plan). The comprehensive Master Plan addresses the phased and orderly development of water utilities for current and future needs of the City of Oceanside. The Master Plan contains volumes for water, recycled water, wastewater, sanitary sewer management, information technology, and the financial plan. The CIP for the water, recycled water, and wastewater plans consists of the individual improvement projects to construct new facilities and modify or expand existing facilities that would be needed to implement the Master Plan. The individual projects in the Master Plan are anticipated to be implemented in phases, depending on the plan component through 2026.

2.4.2 Transportation Projects

Circulation Element - The Circulation Element is that is currently in effect was approved in 1990 and anticipates construction of various roadway improvements to complete the Oceanside roadway network. Examples of facility improvements include an interchange at SR 78 and Rancho del Oro Drive, as well as the extension of Melrose Drive between SR 76 and North Santa Fe, amongst others. The City is in the process of updating the Circulation Element; it is anticipated that the current update to the Circulation Element and associated environmental impact report (EIR) will be completed in 2010.

Pedestrian Master Plan – The Draft Pedestrian Master Plan was completed in Summer 2009. The Master Plan is an overall guide for the City to identify, plan, construct, and maintain pedestrian facilities to enhance pedestrian circulation within the City. It is intended to make walking a safer and more convenient mode of travel. All projects will be associated with existing and planned roadway improvements. However, some improvements may involve minor encroachments into adjacent habitat areas.

2.4.3 Parks and Public Facilities Projects

Bicycle Master Plan – The Bicycle Master Plan was approved by the City Council in December, 2008 and is a part of the City's Circulation Element and Recreational Trails Element of the General Plan. The Master Plan includes establishment of a range of bike facilities in the City and points where the bikeway system could integrate with the existing San Diego County regional bikeway system (e.g. along the south side of the San Luis Rey River). The Plan includes phased improvements such as Class 1 bike/pedestrian trails which are separated from roadways, Class 2 and 3 improvements that are on existing or planned roadways, and off-road or mountain bike trails.

2.4.4 Stormwater Projects

Master Plan of Drainage Facilities – The Master Plan of Drainage Facilities (1980) remains in effect and is being implemented in phases as future development occurs in the City. The drainage facilities proposed for undeveloped areas are based on future development consistent with present City land use policies. Proposed future and upgraded existing Capital Improvement Projects are grouped under Drainage Districts in defined basins or watersheds in the plan. Two specific detention basin projects that are likely to require take authorization issued through this SAP are depicted in Figure 2-7.

2.4.5 Other Projects

Buena Vista Lagoon Restoration and Management Plan Project – The Buena Vista Lagoon is located within the cities of Oceanside and Carlsbad and is managed as a State ecological reserve by CDFG. A lagoon restoration feasibility study and updated Management Plan are currently being prepared under the guidance of CDFG, USFWS, and the State Coastal Conservancy. The Management Plan will identify a preferred lagoon restoration scenario and will contain policies and standards to ensure lagoon restoration success and the long term health and management of the lagoon ecosystem. CEQA and NEPA compliance will be required for this project as well as separate regulatory permits. Therefore, take authorizations issued through this SAP will not apply to this project.

Figure 2-6 11 x 17 page 1 of 2

Figure 2-6 11 x 17 page 2 of 2

Figure 2-7 11 x 17 page 1 of 2

Figure 2-7 11 x 17 page 2 of 2