Parks and Recreation Commission
October 13, 2011 - Meeting Notes

Attending:

	Commissioner John Bailes
	Commissioner Heather Cunningham
	Commissioner John Kindle
	Commissioner Alene Pearson
	Commissioner Nick Pilch
	Commissioner Eddie So
Staff:	Penelope Leach
Consultant	Cheryl Miller

The first draft of the vegetation management section of the Albany Hill Creekside Master Plan Update was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review and comment. Cheryl Miller provided an overview of the six sections of the draft plan (see powerpoint show for further information):

1. *Introduction and Planning Process* describes the project and planning process.
2. *Existing Conditions* documents the changes since the 1991 master plan.
3. *Plan Goals and Objectives* adds seven new considerations to the 1991 goals and recommendations.
4. *Management Strategies and Actions* identifies the recommended management actions grouped by the nine vegetation types present on site. This section also describes seven techniques that could be used.
5. *Monitoring Program* reviews the California Natural Diversity Database for special status plants or animals that may require protection, and reviews information about the use of the site by Monarch butterflies.
6. *Detailed Implementation Plan, Schedule and Costs* identify a variety of management options to reach the plan goals and objectives.

The management options were divided by vegetation management unit and prioritized into high, moderate and low priority. To facilitate discussion a series of 7 questions were reviewed that focused on the vision for each vegetation management unit. Each Commissioner was provided with a "score card" and relative costs of the various options. After discussion of the options, Commissioners made the following comments:

Commissioner Pilch: In favor of the options with long term management that slowly removes eucalyptus as they trees age leaving existing understory vegetation type (grassland, toyon, oak, north coastal scrub) for both the hilltop and new parklands between Taft and Jackson Streets. Supports discouraging human use of the steep slopes on the new parkland between Taft and Jackson and maintaining this area as an open space preserve for wildlife. In favor of long-term management to enhance meadow and riparian area, with invasive plants removed. Would like to contain invasive species and reduce the species to below the 2011 levels. Overall, Albany Hill and Creekside Park are the biggest natural open space in the City and he would like to enhance the area and maintain healthy ecosystems.

Commissioner Kindle: Supports similar options as Commissioner Pilch and expressed concern over the existing Eucalyptus. Also wants to reduce the invasive non-native species and recommends no new trails on the steep parklands between Jackson and Taft Street.

Comments from Friends of Five Creeks: Written comments were submitted to the commission. The Commissioners asked Ms. Miller about the review comments. She responded that all of the additions or changes related to vegetation management could be incorporated into the draft plan. Trail and access related comments will be addressed in the update being prepared by Staff to be discussed at the November Commission meeting.

"Score Cards": Following the meeting the "score cards" used by the Commissioners were tallied with the following options being supported:

1. Vision for hilltop eucalyptus forest and understory (West of Taft St.)
   (Units EGHT, ESHT, ETHT)

   Majority - 5 of 6 supported
   Long-term management to slowly remove eucalyptus leaving existing understory vegetation type (grassland, toyon, oak, north coastal scrub).
   Result = Slow conversion from eucalyptus as trees age and are removed when needed, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protection of native species. Remove eucalyptus seedlings, resprouts and young trees – do not allow forest to expand.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Long-term management to retain Eucalyptus overstory + mixed understory.
   Result = Manage for existing eucalyptus forest and understory mix, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protect native species. Manage at current tree density for fire safety and mixed understory.

2. Vision for vegetation in new parklands between Taft and Jackson
   (Units: EGJT, EOJT, GOW)

   Majority - 5 of 6 supported
   Long-term management to maintain vegetation diversity. Eucalyptus Oak Woodland area (EOJT) and Grassland Oak Woodland area (GOW) mange to slowly remove eucalyptus allowing existing understory vegetation to dominate. Eucalyptus Grassland area (EGJT) manage to retain Eucalyptus overstory + grassland understory.
   Result = Maintain existing species mix in center area (EGJT). Protect oak woodland on north and grass oak woodland on south from being shaded out by eucalyptus; safer vegetation types from fire protection perspective; more diverse habitat for wildlife.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Long-term management to slowly remove eucalyptus leaving existing understory vegetation type (grassland, toyon, north coastal scrub).
   Result = Slow conversion from eucalyptus as scaled risk assessment indicates tree removal, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protection of native species.

Remove eucalyptus seedlings, resprouts and young trees – do not allow forest to expand boundaries.

3. Vision for uses in new parklands between Taft and Jackson
   (Units: EGJT, EOJT, GOW)

   Majority - 5 of 6 supported
   Discourage human use. Maintain as open space preserve for wildlife.
   Result = Reduce vegetation management needed for ignition prevention – continue to monitor for health and invasive non-native species.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Accommodate human use (e.g. provide trail and steps to connect Jackson Street to Taft Street).
   Result = Need to manage for ignition potential along trail or other access points in addition to monitoring for health and invasive non-native species.

4. Vision for oak woodlands
   (Unit: OW)

   Majority - 4 of 6 supported
   Long-term vegetation management for protection and enhancement.
   Result = Healthy oak woodland with diverse understory providing rich habitat for wildlife. See also management of non-native invasive species for understory health.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
   Result = Address fire hazards and storm damage. Young oak thicket may result in poorly shaped trees. Non-native invasive groundcover or shrubs may continue to take over large areas of understory reducing habitat value.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Either of the two options listed above

5. Vision for "big meadow" grasslands in Creekside Park
   (Unit: G)

   Majority - 5 of 6 supported
   Long term management to enhance meadow.
   Result = Grasses will be retained; shrubs and trees maintained at 2011 boundaries.

   Minority – 1 of 6 supported
   Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
   Result = Over long term shrubs and trees may encroach and make meadow smaller.

6. Vision for management of riparian areas
   (Unit: R)

   Majority - 5 of 6 supported
   Long-term vegetation management for protection and enhancement.

Result = Healthy riparian area with diverse understory providing rich habitat for wildlife. See also management of non-native invasive species.

Minority – 1 of 6 supported
Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
Result = Address fire hazards, flooding, safety and security concerns. Non-native invasive shrubs will continue to take over large areas reducing habitat value.

7. Vision for management of invasive non-native species
(All Units)

No Majority - 3 of 6 supported
Long-term management for fire hazards, to prevent pioneering species and contain invasive species at 2011 levels.
Result = Hold invasive non-native species at current population and geographic spread. Requires annual, or more frequent, monitoring for early detection and commitment of rapid response for removal of invasive species with establishment of IPM thresholds.

No Majority - 3 of 6 supported
Long-term management for fire hazards, to prevent pioneering species, and to contain invasive species and reduce species to below 2011 levels.
Result = Reduce invasive non-native species to below current levels. Requires annual, or more frequent, monitoring for early detection and commitment of rapid response for removal of invasive species with establishment of IPM thresholds. Reduce invasive, non-native high value habitat areas first with goal of eradication of individual species or in small areas as feasible.

Vegetation Management Options

What are we managing for where?

1. Vision for hilltop eucalyptus forest and understory (West of Taft St.) (Units EGHT, ESHT, ETHT)

❑ 1a. No vegetation management.
Result = Eucalyptus trees with mix of understory. Note: Risk of fire not addressed; additional dead material will build up at faster rate as trees drop dead wood. Annual grasses will take over native grasses and forbs. Understory shrubs/trees likely to remain.

❑ 1b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
Result = Eucalyptus trees will continue to age and be removed as determined by a scaled-risk assessment. Fire management for ignition prevention and reduce dead material on ground. Note: Eucalyptus may or may not re-generate on the hillside. Native grasses and forbs will likely be outcompeted by annual grasses.

❑ 1c. Long-term management to retain Eucalyptus overstory + mixed understory.
Result = Manage for existing eucalyptus forest and understory mix, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protect native species. Manage at current tree density for fire safety and mixed understory.

❑ 1d. Long-term management to slowly remove eucalyptus leaving existing understory vegetation type (grassland, toyon, oak, north coastal scrub).
Result = Slow conversion from eucalyptus as trees age and are removed when needed, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protection of native species. Remove eucalyptus seedlings, resprouts and young trees – do not allow forest to expand.

❑ 1e. Long-term management to retain Eucalyptus where they are thriving and slowly remove where they are not.
Result = Manage for existing forest where thriving on hilltop. Slow removal of eucalyptus on hilltop as they age allowing understory to dominate. Incorporate actions to reduce risk of fire and protect native species.

2. Vision for vegetation in new parklands between Taft and Jackson (Units: EGJT, EOJT, GOW)

❑ 2a. No vegetation management.
Result = Eucalyptus trees may continue to expand and shade out grasslands. Note: Risk of fire not addressed. Invasive plants such as broom and pampas grass may spread to dominate understory and take over grassland. Oak woodland may continue as is or compete with eucalyptus for dominance.

❑ 2b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
Result = Eucalyptus trees will continue to age and be removed as determined by a scaled-risk assessment. Fire management for ignition prevention, to reduce dead material on ground and to remove fire ladders. Note: Boundary, number, and density of Eucalyptus will expand. Invasive non-native species likely to dominate with loss of native grasses and forbs.

❑ 2c. Long-term management to retain Eucalyptus overstory + mixed understory.

Result = Manage for existing forest and understory mix, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protect native species. Manage at current tree density (reduce density as needed by removing small trees) for fire safety and mixed understory.

- ❑ 2d. Long-term management to maintain vegetation diversity. Eucalyptus Oak Woodland area (EOJT) and Grassland Oak Woodland area (GOW) mange to slowly remove eucalyptus allowing existing understory vegetation to dominate. Eucalyptus Grassland area (EGJT) manage to retain Eucalyptus overstory + grassland understory.
  Result = Maintain existing species mix in center area (EGJT). Protect oak woodland on north and grass oak woodland on south from being shaded out by eucalyptus; safer vegetation types from fire protection perspective; more diverse habitat for wildlife.
- ❑ 2e. Long-term management to slowly remove eucalyptus leaving existing understory vegetation type (grassland, toyon, north coastal scrub).
  Result = Slow conversion from eucalyptus as scaled risk assessment indicates tree removal, incorporating actions to reduce risk of fire and protection of native species. Remove eucalyptus seedlings, resprouts and young trees – do not allow forest to expand boundaries.

3. Vision for uses in new parklands between Taft and Jackson

(Units: EGJT, EOJT, GOW)

- ❑ 3a. Discourage human use. Maintain as open space preserve for wildlife.
  Result = Reduce vegetation management needed for ignition prevention – continue to monitor for health and invasive non-native species.
- ❑ 3b. Accommodate human use (e.g. provide trail and steps to connect Jackson Street to Taft Street).
  Result = Need to manage for ignition potential along trail or other access points in addition to monitoring for health and invasive non-native species.

4. Vision for oak woodlands

(Unit: OW)

- ❑ 4a. No vegetation management.
  Result = Trail access may become overgrown or blocked by storm-felled trees. Fire ladders at edges with shrub or grasslands may result in crown fire if adjacent areas ignite. Young oak thicket may result in poorly shaped trees. Non-native invasive groundcover or shrubs may continue to take over large areas of understory reducing habitat value.
- ❑ 4b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
  Result = Address fire hazards and storm damage. Young oak thicket may result in poorly shaped trees. Non-native invasive groundcover or shrubs may continue to take over large areas of understory reducing habitat value.
- ❑ 4c. Long-term vegetation management for protection and enhancement.
  Result = Healthy oak woodland with diverse understory providing rich habitat for wildlife. See also management of non-native invasive species for understory health.

5. Vision for "big meadow" grasslands in Creekside Park

(Unit: G)

- ❑ 5a. No vegetation management.

Result = Grasses will grow tall. Shrubs and invasive plants will succeed into meadow. Narrow trail with limited visibility. Fire, security and safety concerns not addressed.

- ❑ 5b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
  Result = Over long term shrubs and trees may encroach and make meadow smaller.
- ❑ 5c. Long term management to enhance meadow.
  Result = Grasses will be retained; shrubs and trees maintained at 2011 boundaries.

6. Vision for management of riparian areas

(Unit: R)

- ❑ 6a. No vegetation management.
  Result = Fire, flooding, safety and security concerns not addressed. Non-native invasive shrubs will continue to take over large areas reducing habitat value.
- ❑ 6b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire and physical hazards).
  Result = Address fire hazards, flooding, safety and security concerns. Non-native invasive shrubs will continue to take over large areas reducing habitat value.
- ❑ 6c. Long-term vegetation management for protection and enhancement.
  Result = Healthy riparian area with diverse understory providing rich habitat for wildlife. See also management of non-native invasive species.

7. Vision for management of invasive non-native species

(All Units)

- ❑ 7a. No vegetation management.
  Result = Invasive non-native species may take over areas and damage existing vegetation. Many species have high fire hazards and low habitat values.
- ❑ 7b. Minimal high-risk vegetation management (fire hazards and prevent pioneering species).
  Result = May not be enough to keep invasive non-native species from taking over areas. Annual monitoring for early detection and rapid response of invasive species required with establishment of IPM thresholds.
- ❑ 7c. Long-term management for fire hazards, to prevent pioneering species and contain invasive species at 2011 levels.
  Result = Hold invasive non-native species at current population and geographic spread. Requires annual, or more frequent, monitoring for early detection and commitment of rapid response for removal of invasive species with establishment of IPM thresholds.
- ❑ 7d. Long-term management for fire hazards, to prevent pioneering species, and to contain invasive species and reduce species to below 2011 levels.
  Result = Reduce invasive non-native species to below current levels. Requires annual, or more frequent, monitoring for early detection and commitment of rapid response for removal of invasive species with establishment of IPM thresholds. Reduce invasive, non-native high value habitat areas first with goal of eradication of individual species or in small areas as feasible.

Albany Hill Vegetation Plan

Vegetation Management Options Costs

	1st year costs	
	low initial	*high initial*
1. Vision for hilltop eucalyptus forest and understory		
1a. No management	$0	$0
1b. Minimum management*	$ 37,100	$ 105,700
1c. Long term management to retain Euc+ mixed understory*	$ 79,450	$ 136,600
1d. Long term management to slowly remove eucalyptus *	$ 82,650	$ 165,000
1e. Long term management to retain & remove eucalyptus*	$ 122,650	$ 264,800
*Does not include cost determined by scaled risk assement of annual eucalyptus tree removal		
2. Vision for vegetation in new parklands between Taft and Jackson		
2a. No management	$0	$0
2b. Minimum management*	$ 18,450	$ 31,400
2c. Long term retain Eucs + mixed understory*	$ 29,650	$ 54,700
2d. Long term management slow remove eucalyptus*	$ 30,850	$ 57,100
2e. Long term management retain some/ remove some eucalyptus*	$ 37,250	$ 68,400
*Does not include cost determined by scaled risk assement of annual eucalyptus tree removal		
3. Vision for Use of new parklands between Taft and Jackson		
3a. Open space preserve (no human use)	$0	$0
3b. Accommodate Human Use	$ 8,100	$ 44,200
4. Vision for Oak Woodlands		
4a. No management	$0	$0
Subtotal 4b. Minimum management	$ 4,600	$ 9,200
Subtotal 4c. Long term management	$ 11,600	$ 24,200
5. Vision for Big Meadow (Grassland) in Creekside Park		
5a. No management	$0	$0
Subtotal 5b. Minimum management	$ 3,300	$ 5,400
Subtotal 5c. Long term management	$ 4,900	$ 7,800
6. Vision for Management of riparian areas		
6a. No management	$0	$0
Subtotal 6b. Minimum management	$ 5,000	$ 18,000
Subtotal 6c.Long term management	$ 24,900	$ 53,000
7. Vision for Management of Non Native Species		
7a. No management	$0	$0
Subtotal 7b. Minimum management	$ 10,000	$ 35,000
Subtotal 7c. Long term to contain at 2011 levels	$ 31,000	$ 53,600
Subtotal 7d. Long term to reduce below 2011 levels	$ 43,700	$ 73,500
Project Administration/ Contracting/ GIS	$ 8,000	$ 18,000
Education, signage and awareness program	$ 10,000	$ 15,000
Subtotal - All Minimum Management + admin	$ 86,450	$ 222,700
Subtotal - Long Term Mgmt. (1e, 2e,4c, 5c, 6c,7d) +admin + use + education	$ 271,100	$ 568,900