

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

DATE: March 03, 2021
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Rafael Payan, General Manager
SUBJECT: Consideration and Approval of Resolution #2021-02 to Adopt an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Approve the Palo Corona Regional Park General Development Plan

SUMMARY:

In 2015, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) commissioned **DESIGNWORKSHOP** to develop a General Development Plan (GDP) for Palo Corona Regional Park (PCRP). Numerous one-on-one, stakeholder, and open-house meetings were held at various venues to enhance public participation. Because of MPRPD's and **DESIGNWORKSHOP**'s broad outreach, the plan was subsequently well received by the public, private property owners, and MPRPD's partnering organizations. The PCRP GDP was completed in the latter half of 2018.

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) was subsequently commissioned to perform an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the PCRP GDP. The IS/MND's purpose is to analyze all individual proposed projects identified in the PCRP GDP that are expected to have a physical effect on the environment.

In January 2021, Rincon produced the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Ms. Kari Zajak – Rincon's MESM and Project Manager for this project will summarize the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration. Upon completion of Project Manager Zajak's presentation, the Board will:

1. Open the process for public comment
2. Hear all public comments
3. Once the Board has heard all public comments, the Board will review and consider and vote to approve or reject Resolution 2021-02 (**ATTACHMENT 4**), which does the following:
 - a. Adopts the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (**ATTACHMENT 2**)
 - b. Approves the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (**ATTACHMENT 3**)
 - c. Approves the PCRP General Development Plan (**ATTACHMENT 1**)

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not applicable

FUNDING SOURCE:

Not applicable

FUNDING BALANCE:

Not applicable

DISCUSSION:

The PCRPD GDP was commissioned by MPRPD to investigate the range of recreational opportunities appropriate for PCRPD through site assessment, master planning, and public outreach. It provides a planning blueprint for conservation, stewardship, and public access to manage the 4,585-acre Park and addresses improvements that occur or will occur at the Rancho Cañada, Front Ranch, and Back County units. The primary focus of the GDP is on hiking and passive recreation on the existing trail network, but also includes plans for expanded day-use amenities and facilities. Proposed improvements are described below. A full detailed list of improvements is included in the Final IS/MND.

Multi-Use Trails and Trail Connectivity

As part of the GDP, MPRPD examined different trail types and typologies proposed for different locations and potential trail users to determine the most appropriate updates for the Park. For example, a trail hierarchy was developed to identify proposed trail widths and designate which trails would be appropriate for different uses. Through implementation of the GDP, the District will accommodate different trail users on the Park's trail network, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians. The Park's trails will be enhanced, as necessary.

Recreational, Educational, and Interpretive Uses

The GDP also includes recreational, educational, and interpretive uses. Improvements include adding educational signage and interpretive plaques to be located at key wildlife and conservation points and vistas. Primitive camping sites in the Back Country Unit will be marked with a post and provide minimal amenities, without facilities that require additional utilities or infrastructure. Potential camping areas include areas near the Whisler-Wilson Ranch and the Corona Homestead. No improvements to the existing structures in these locations are proposed. Camping will be by permit-only and Ranger-managed, with a strict no-fire policy and Leave No Trace practices. An on-site Ranger station and operations complex will be constructed near the proposed campground. The existing picnic table areas along trails, including Rumsen Loop and Laguna Vista, will be used for large group reservations, school groups, and informal outdoor classroom space for educational programs. New picnic tables will be added to gathering place areas on the Laguna Vista Loop or the Oak Knoll Loop along the Palo Corona Trail to create more formalized picnic areas in the Front Ranch Unit. Three to six pavilions will be added in the Rancho Cañada Unit.

Other Improvements

Improvements in the GDP also include development of an off-leash dog park with on-leash dog access; extant facilities' adaptive re-use, retrofits, and historic building preservation; and an emergency incident command center and staging area at the proposed dog park location. A helipad may be constructed near the dog park or other suitable site to provide a landing space for CALFIRE helicopters during emergency events.

Program-Level Analysis

Adoption of the proposed GDP will not directly involve the construction of park and recreation facilities, rather it will facilitate the future development of such improvements. Thus, the Final IS-MND evaluated the environmental impacts associated with the GDP at a programmatic level and provides programmatic-level mitigation measures. Individual components of the GDP may be subject to additional project-specific environmental review, where not exempt from CEQA. Project-specific mitigation measures may be identified, where appropriate. At the time each improvement undergoes project-level engineering and design review, it will be compared to programmatic mitigation measures identified herein. By that time, individual projects will include specific project-level detail such as construction drawings and scheduling information such that individual project-level impacts can be analyzed.

CEQA Process

Public notifications for the GDP and IS/MND were published, and county and state filings were submitted as required by CEQA. The formal public comment period of 30-days commenced on April 29, 2019 and was extended for another 30-days until June 28, 2019. The comment deadline was then extended a second time for an additional 30-days and completed on July 29, 2019 to provide the public additional time to comment on the document. A total of 59 comments were received during the public comment period. Five comments were from public agencies, six comments from organizations and legal teams, and the remaining 48 comments were from the public. Responses to comments can be viewed as Appendix H to the Final IS/MND.

Final IS/MND

The Final IS/MND is attached for Board review to facilitate adoption of this project's Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project in accordance with Section 15074 of CEQA Guidelines.

Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) is also included and attached in the Final IS/MND. The MMRP summarizes the mitigation measures that must be adopted by the Board in accordance with Section 15074 of CEQA Guidelines.

Specifically, CEQA requires that a reporting or monitoring program be adopted for the conditions of project approval that are necessary to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment (Public Resources Code 21081.6). This MMRP is intended to track and ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during the project implementation phase. For each mitigation measure recommended in the Final IS/MND, specifications are made herein that identify the action required, the monitoring that must occur, and the agency or department responsible for oversight.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is respectfully recommended that MPRPD's Board of Directors review and consider approval of Resolution #2021-02 (ATTACHMENT 4), which does the following:

- a. Adopts the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (**ATTACHMENT 2**)
- b. Approves the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (**ATTACHMENT 3**)
- c. Approves the PCRPD General Development Plan (**ATTACHMENT 1**)

ATTACHMENTS:

- [1. General Development Plan for Palo Corona Regional Park](#)
- [2. Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)
- [3. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program](#)
- [4. Resolution #2021-02](#)