EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

UNIT SUMMARY

EXISTING LAND USES

OVERVIEW

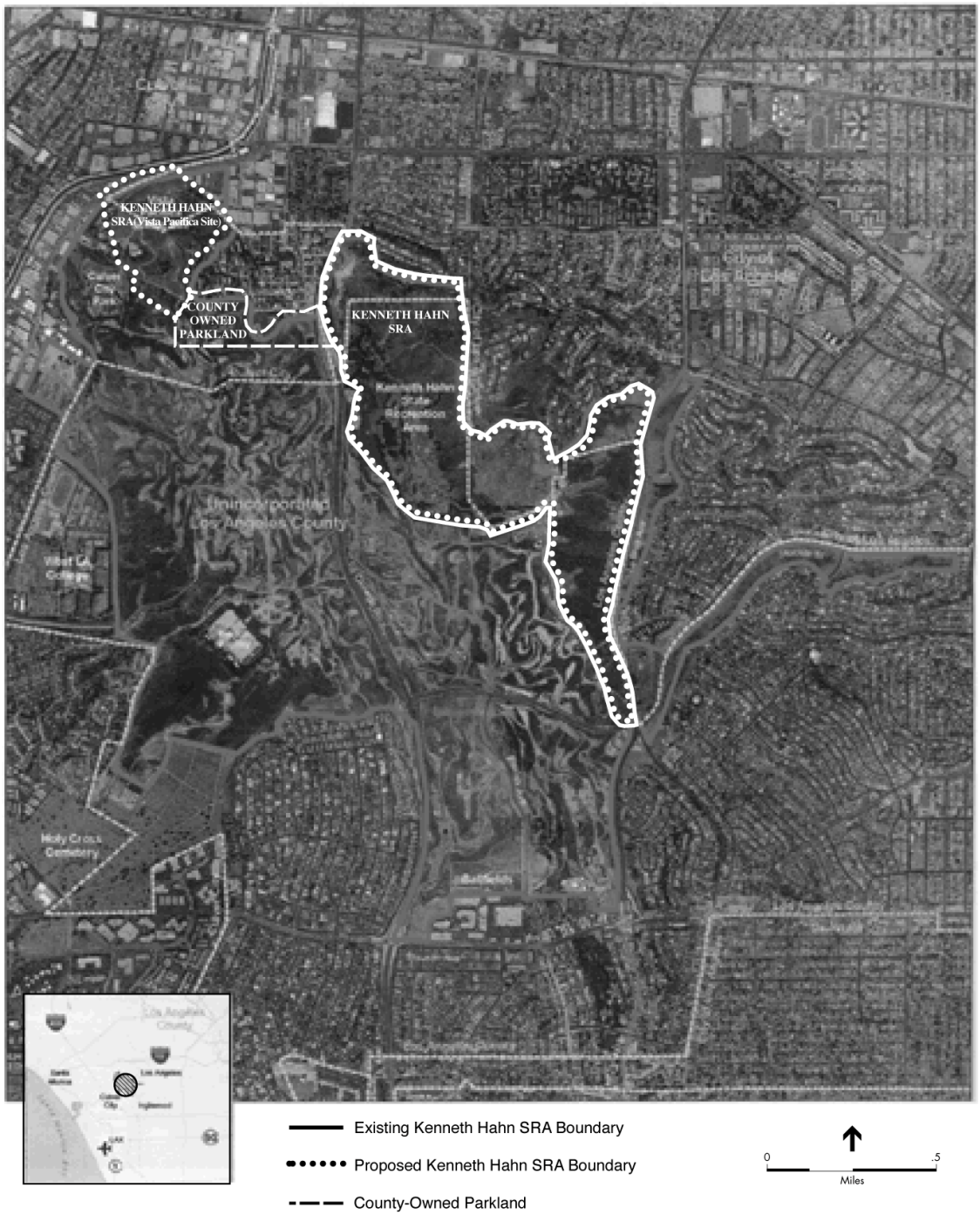
Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA or the park) comprises approximately 387 acres of parkland set in the midst of urban Los Angeles. The existing park is managed by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation and includes 319 acres native coastal sage scrub habitat, scenic overlooks, interpretive facilities, lawns and landscaped areas, picnic sites, tot lots, a fishing lake, lotus pond, community center, day-use parking, and five miles of trails. There are six restrooms within the park. The community center has four administrative offices and a small meeting room. A small maintenance yard and native plant nursery is maintained on-site. Activities within the park include but are not limited to hiking, biking, walking, running, fishing, picnicking, play, and nature interpretation and education. The Vista Pacifica Scenic Site consists of 50 acres of open space and a scenic view site at the northern tip of the western ridgeline. County-owned parkland that connect the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site to La Cieniga Blvd include a total of 18 acres of open space. Both the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site and adjacent County-owned parklands are currently closed to the public.

REGIONAL LAND USE

Residential, commercial, and recreation associated uses dominate the surrounding area. Refer to Figure 4 for jurisdictional boundaries.

ADJACENT RECREATION USES

Three established local parks currently occur in the vicinity of KHSRA. These include Norman O. Houston Park, Ladera Ball Fields, and Culver City Ball Fields. Norman O. Houston Park is four acres and is managed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, and includes a lawn area and tot lots located to the east of the park. Ladera Ball Fields (31 acres) includes three baseball diamonds, owned and managed by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, and is located southwest of the park. Culver City Park's 30-acre ball field and park is immediately adjacent to the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site, and includes three baseball diamonds, a small skate park and handicapped access trail.



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; GreenInfo Network

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Figure 4

City Jurisdictions and Unincorporated Areas

ADJACENT OIL PRODUCTION

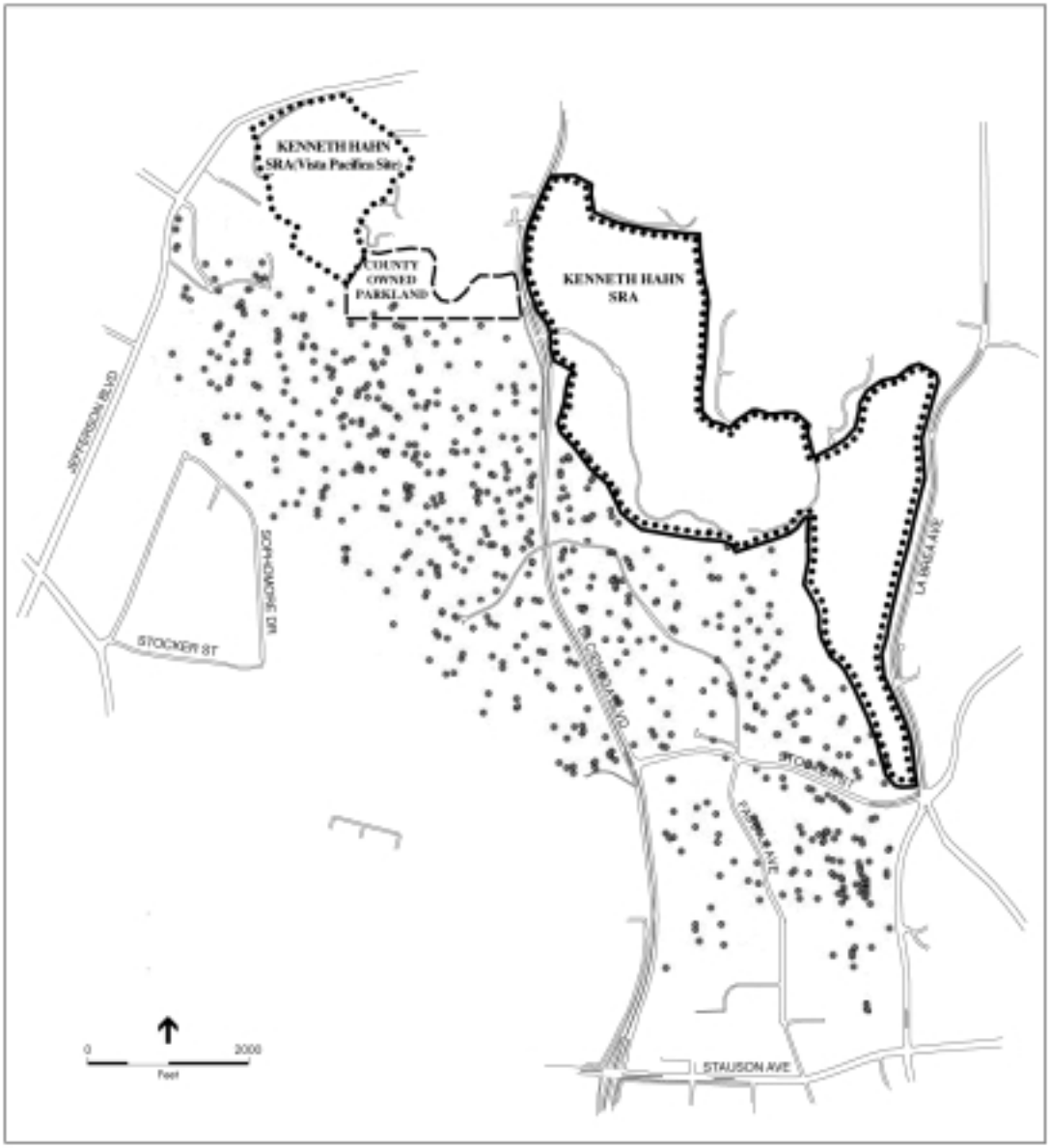
There are approximately 950 acres of active oil fields adjacent to KHSRA (Figure 5). Related surface structures generally include oil wells, pipes, water treatment and gas plants, storage tanks, buildings and service roads. Stocker Resources, Inc. has their administrative headquarters on site. Southern California Edison maintains a transmission facility at the southern end of the western ridgeline. A historic home built by the Chandler family exists on the western ridgeline and is currently in use as a private residence.

ADJACENT URBAN LAND USES

The areas immediately surrounding the park are primarily made up of single family homes (45%), multi-unit apartments (17%) and commercial office space (17%) (Figure 6). Several single-family residences are located along the ridgelines of the western and eastern portions of the Baldwin Hills. Directly north of the park in the adjacent lowlands along Rodeo Road, there is the multi-unit development known as the Village Green, a 70-acre self-contained middle class community of 540 homes. Other condominium and townhouse communities exist in all areas surrounding the park. These are typically gated communities ranging in size from 100 to 240 units. Traveling east along the foothills there is a marked increase in density of housing. Large neighborhoods of now dilapidated multi-unit apartment complexes are situated just below Jim Gilliam Park off of La Brea Avenue. This area connects to Santa Barbara Plaza, which is a vacant shopping center that suffers from severe deferred maintenance.

A half-mile stretch along Jefferson Boulevard in Culver City is dominated by business and industrial uses. This area lies just south of Ballona Creek and features businesses ranging from private storage to waste management facilities to commercial office buildings. Two mini-malls and several neighborhood businesses and restaurants exist in the area. There are several major retail outlets and food markets along the southwestern strip of Jefferson Blvd. Major franchises such as Target, Kinko’s and Shakey’s Pizza are all located at this commercial hub in Culver City.

Slauson Avenue has high concentrations of retail and commercial office buildings as you travel east from Culver City. The Fox Hills Mall and Corporate Point dominate the area to the south. Holy Cross Cemetery and Fox Hills Park are open space areas located north and south of Slauson Avenue respectively. Continuing east, the single-family residences of Ladera Heights span Slauson Avenue ending at La Cienega Blvd. On Slauson Avenue between La Cienega Blvd., and La Brea Avenue, there are three mini-malls, a shopping center, a commercial office building complex and a pre-school all on the north side of Slauson. The Los Angeles County Fire Department has a station at Fairfax and Slauson. The south side of Slauson Avenue is primarily residential with the exception of two churches and Ladera Park. East of La Brea Avenue, Slauson Avenue hosts a few established restaurants and miscellaneous businesses. This area lacks many amenities that are readily available in other parts of the city, including health spas, gourmet markets, hotels and other franchise businesses.



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; GreenInfo Network

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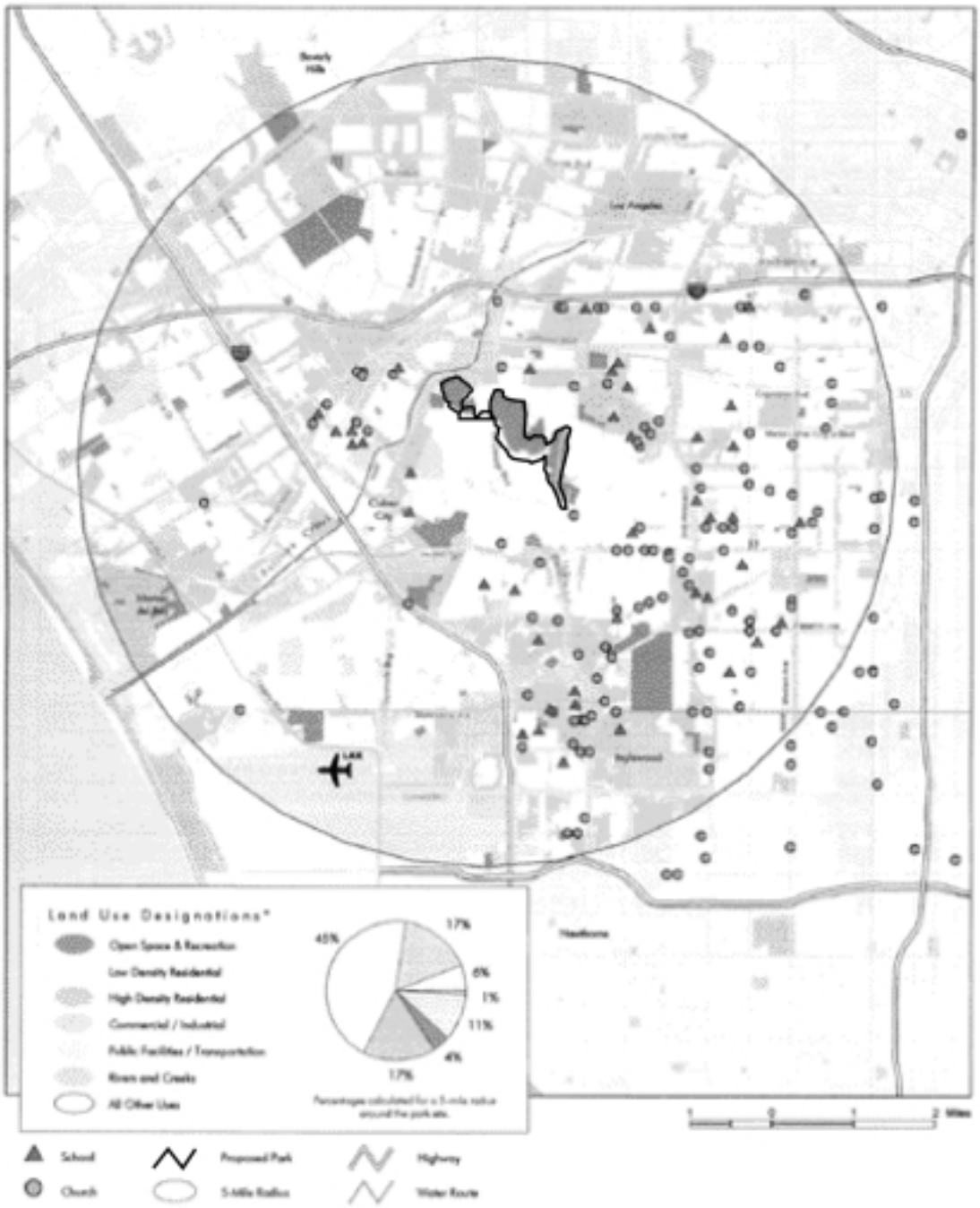
Figure 5
Oil Drilling Facilities Map



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Greenlinfo Network

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Figure 6

Land Use with Area Schools and Churches

West Los Angeles College is located southwest of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. This community college serves over 2000 students and covers nearly 70 acres. West Los Angeles College plays a significant role in the chain of education in the area, as many of the high school graduates from nearby Crenshaw and Dorsey High Schools attend the junior college while in transition to universities.

SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE VALUES

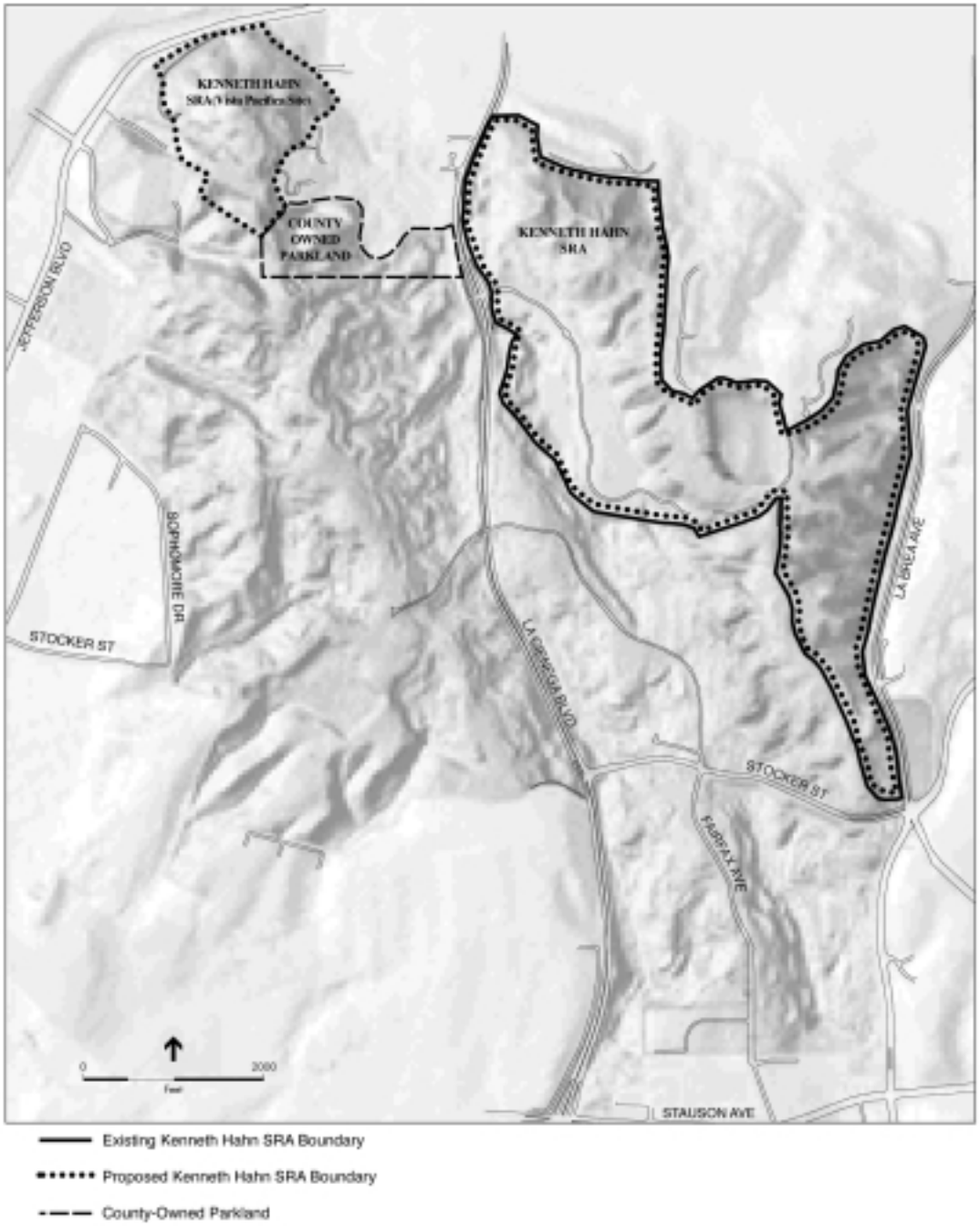
The park and the larger Baldwin Hills area are a unique part of the Los Angeles County landscape, rising from the middle of an otherwise flat and intensely developed plain. The long ridgelines are easily recognizable from throughout the Los Angeles Basin, and provide dramatic panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, cities and Santa Monica Bay. Despite years of urban and industrial development, the Baldwin Hills retain a number of intact areas of Southern California's unique coastal sage scrub vegetation, and they are still home to hundreds of native plants and animals, providing important habitat to many wildlife species that can't survive in the surrounding lowlands.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

TOPOGRAPHY

Viewed from above, the park appears as two long northwest-trending ridgelines protruding upward five hundred feet above the middle of the Los Angeles plain, midway between the coast and downtown, with an intervening central valley (Figure 7). These hills, along with an interrupted line of similar rises, mark the track of the Newport Inglewood fault, which has, over the past several million years, created a series of terrestrial wrinkles that extend from Newport Beach to Beverly Hills. Of these the portion of the Baldwin Hills within the park are the most prominent. Continuing faulting has ruptured the middle of the hills from south to north, creating a central rift valley flanked on both east and west by eroded ridges, composed throughout of geologically youthful and easily erodible bay sands and silts. The hills are one of a chain of northwesterly trending hills, which extend 40 miles from the Cheviot Hills in Los Angeles southeast to the Newport Mesa in Orange County.

To the west, north and east, the hills rise abruptly from the flat basin floor, forming steep faces along linear scarps; on the south side the hills descend more gently. Overall, the hills are quite steep, and are cut by many canyons which descend on either side of both the east and west ridgelines (Figure 8). Much of the site has slopes of over 20%. The highest point in the Baldwin Hills is the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. At 511 feet it is the highest elevation along the Newport-Inglewood Structural zone. Grading operations related to oil field activities and a previously approved subdivision have resulted in considerable modification of the natural topography of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site.



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Geoinfo Network

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Figure 7
Shaded Relief Map

SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; GroundInfo Network

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Figure 8
Slope Analysis

METEOROLOGY

The park shares with the rest of the California coast a mild Mediterranean-type climate, with dry warm summers and winter precipitation from storms originating thousands of miles away in the northern Pacific. Mean annual rainfall is about 15 inches, though both drought years and years with three times the average are not uncommon. The park contains a variety of slope exposures and elevations, from 150 to 500 feet. Wide variations of rainfall occur within short distances due to topography, with most of the precipitation falling between November and April. A coastal overcast commonly slides in from the sea at night and covers the hills on spring and summer mornings. Temperatures range generally from 50 to 80 degrees F, with cooler temperatures at the higher elevations. The typical wind pattern is a west or southwest breeze off the Pacific Ocean, which brings marine air into the area.

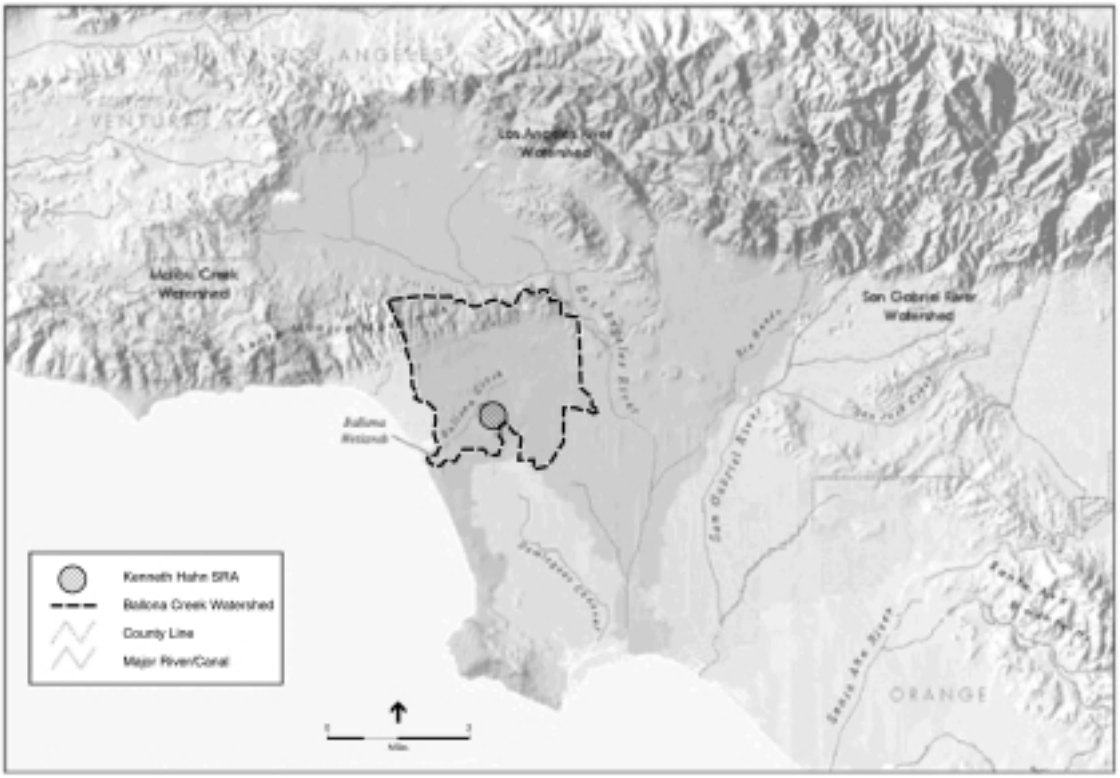
HYDROLOGY

The park is a component of the last large, undeveloped open space in the urban portion of the 127 square mile Ballona Creek Watershed (Figure 9). Park hillsides drain into both Ballona Creek and its tributary, Centinela Creek, through the Ballona Wetlands and then into Santa Monica Bay. Several small watersheds lead from the park to detention basins constructed by the oil producers to collect injection water. These detention basins overflow to Ballona Creek. Since the site covers the apex of the Baldwin Hills, numerous small watersheds direct storm water and irrigation runoff from the site. The eastern watershed flows down the steep hillsides to culverts and collection systems along La Brea Avenue. The major portion of the site collects storm water in the surface water features and ultimately drains north along La Cienega Avenue. The northwest disconnected site drains in all directions since the site is mostly a hilltop. Ballona Creek is located approximately 500 feet north of the northwestern portion of the park.

The hills are dissected by past erosion into several smaller sub-watersheds of a square mile or less in size, which sporadically discharge storm runoff through a half dozen or so brushy, steep-walled canyons. The maximum 24-hour rainfall intensity is 6 inches during the 100-year storm. The park is entirely outside of the 100-year flood plain designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The only storm water runoff occurring on the site is rain that falls on the site. As a result, there is little risk of flooding in the project area. The existing drainage system leading north to Ballona Creek from the hills is sized to accommodate the 50-year flood.

Several man-made surface water features exist on the site. On-site ponds are fed by irrigation water runoff and municipal water supply. The water features are generally landscaped with non-native vegetation. A portion of the site was once used as a reservoir. The reservoir dam failed in 1963 causing severe flooding in the highly urbanized Los Angeles Basin north of the site. Use of the reservoir was abandoned soon after the dam failure.

Toward the top of the hills the sediments are sandier and more likely to be of riverine rather than marine origin. With potential evaporation rates five times the annual rainfall, these sediments rarely accumulate more than a few inches of water during the winter and have the capacity to



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International

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Figure 9
Watersheds of Los Angeles County

store minor amounts of fresh water in local perched water tables which discharge as small springs on the slopes or in the local canyons that flank the hills. Nonetheless, this perched local system of groundwater flow may have significant impact on the ecology of the hills in their original natural state or in a future restoration, though it would probably not offer a significant source of water to wells.

Water quality from the park is important to the downstream water quality of Ballona Creek, the Ballona Wetlands and in Santa Monica Bay. The unpaved nature of most of the park site results currently in the majority of runoff and rain percolating into the soil, rather than flowing over streets and highways and collecting a pollutant load.

GROUNDWATER

The Baldwin Hills are located at the junction of three major groundwater basins: the Santa Monica Basin, the West Coast Basin, and the Central Basin. These basins underlie the coastal plains. The Baldwin Hills are a topographic highland that is elevated above the surrounding water table. Consequently, waterbearing strata in the adjacent lowlands are non-waterbearing in the hills. Rainfall that infiltrates these permeable sediments migrates through the dipping strata to the groundwater basins outside of the hills.

GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND SEISMICITY

Geology

The park is located partially in Culver City and the City of Los Angeles in the west central part of Los Angeles County. This portion of Los Angeles County is located on a northwest-trending alluviated lowland plain referred to as the Los Angeles Basin, and is bounded by mountains and hills along the north, northeast, east, and southeast. The basin slopes gently southward from the mountains toward the ocean where it is interrupted by the Newport-Inglewood belt of hills along the south and west from the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains to Newport Beach in Orange County, and by the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the extreme southwest.

The park includes most of the eastern portion of the Baldwin Hills, a part of the Newport Inglewood Hills. Geologic units underlying the Baldwin Hills consist of a thick layer of Tertiary and Quaternary sedimentary rocks that rest on a crystalline basement complex. The late Pleistocene Lakewood Formation and the early Pleistocene San Pedro Formation outcrop in the area. Holocene alluvial and/or colluvial deposits are present in drainage courses and at lower elevations of the Baldwin Hills. Deformation in the Baldwin Hills is believed to have started between 10 to 26 million years ago during middle Miocene time and is still occurring. This deformation has resulted in the formation of numerous oil traps such as the Wilmington, Signal Hill, and Inglewood Oil Fields.

Oil and Gas

The Inglewood oil field occupies an irregularly shaped area that extends diagonally across the trend of the hills along the axis of the faulted Inglewood anticline and covers approximately 700 acres. Oil was first discovered in the Inglewood field in 1924 as the result of a well drilled by Standard Oil. It was explored and developed rapidly such that its peak oil production occurred only a year later at a rate of over 50,000 barrels of oil per day. Production and development, mainly by "in-fill" drilling between wells, continued steadily to the present. Altogether some 368 million barrels of oil and 269 billion cubic feet of natural gas (principally methane) have been produced. As the hydrocarbons in the field are gradually depleted, an increasing amount of salty brine water is produced with the oil and gas. Starting in the 1950s, the brine water along with additional make-up water has been injected back into the field to sweep additional oil toward wells for recovery. As of 2000 there were approximately 1,200 wells in the oil field, consisting of 430 active wells, 215 inactive or shut-in wells, and about 530 abandoned wells. Field production as of October 2000 was 6,700 barrels of oil per day, 2,650,000 cubic feet of gas per day, and 180,000 barrels of brine water per day.

A significant subsidence area has developed over the years over the oil field. Oil field subsidence, when it occurs, is related to the volume of hydrocarbons and fluids removed from the geologic sediments underlying an oil field. For the Inglewood field, the most recent survey evidence from the 1970s shows that the center of the oil field has subsided more than 10 feet since the 1920s as a result of extraction of hydrocarbons and brine water. It is possible , considering the intensified oil field operations activity of the past few years, that a few inches of localized ground movements may continue to occur in the northwest part of the oil field, which is the most active area of extraction since the 1970s. Previous small ground movements and faulting have been associated with oil field activities and processes including withdrawal-induced subsidence and pressure injection. Future subsidence is minimized, however, by the significant quantities of water being injected into the field to replace the produced fluids.

There are hundreds of abandoned wells in the Baldwin Hills area adjacent to the park, many of which predate recent decades when abandoned wells have been required to be sealed under State supervision. Experience elsewhere, such as at the Los Angeles, Salt Lake, and Playa Vista oil field areas, indicate the possibility of hydrocarbon (gas) seeps for those early vintage wells.

Erosion and Soils

Soils in the park and surrounding Baldwin Hills generally consist of artificial fill, landslide debris, and the Pleistocene alluvial deposits of the Lakewood and San Pedro formations.[1] The Lakewood Formation is composed of marine and non-marine, poorly consolidated, crudely stratified to cross-bedded sand, silty sand, and gravel with lenses of silt and clay. The San Pedro Formation, which unconformably underlies the Lakewood Formation, consists of marine, well-

[1] LeRoy Crandall and Associates, *Report of Geotechnical Evaluation for Environmental Impact Report, Proposed Vista Pacifica Development, Los Angeles and Culver City*, California, January 3, 1991.

consolidated silts to very fine sands that are locally clay-rich. Stratification is poorly to moderately developed.

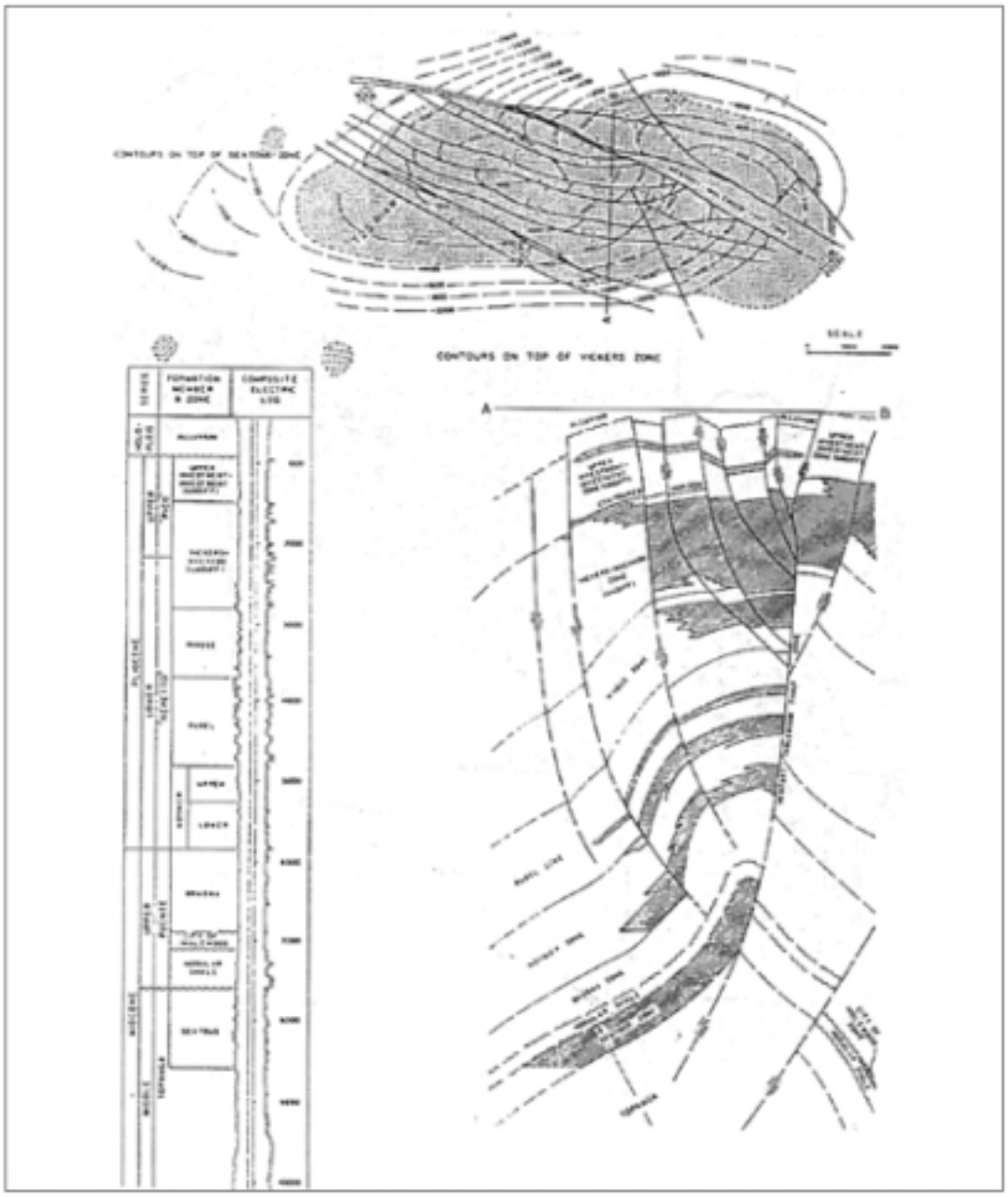
Fill soils consist of silty sand, sandy silt, and some debris, and range in thickness between two and nine feet. In addition, there is an abandoned landfill (the Hetzler Dump) near the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. The trash fill within the limits of the former landfill ranges from 33 to 43 feet thick and generally consists of asphalt, concrete, rock, brick, plasterboard, wood, metal debris, and other types of building materials. The landfill is a maximum of 75 feet deep with 70 to 80 percent of the material consisting of soil.

The park has a well-documented history of landslide and erosion problems that are associated with their unstable soil strata and the destabilizing effects of rainfall. Slope failures are manifested by shallow slides and wet season debris flows especially on slopes, which have been artificially oversteepened by grading. Combined with these properties, the geologically young relief of several hundred feet assures chronic slope instability on the exterior rim and in the many gullies that dissect the terrain of the park. This is exhibited in the form of landslides and debris flows which typically occur every three to five years, especially on the outer rim of the Baldwin Hills.

Seismicity

Southern California is a region that has historically experienced high seismicity. In the past 100 years, several earthquakes of magnitude 5.0 or larger have been reported on the active San Andreas, San Jacinto, Elsinore, Garlock, and Newport-Inglewood fault systems. The Baldwin Hills are located within one mile of the Newport-Inglewood fault zone, which consists of a series of discontinuous northwest-trending faults and a complex pattern of subsidiary faults extending from the southern edge of the Santa Monica Mountains south-eastward to offshore of Newport Beach. The Newport-Inglewood fault zone is represented on the surface as a series of geomorphically young anitclinal hills and mesas formed by the faulting and folding of sedimentary rocks. At depth, the fault zone is considered to be a complex fault system that serves as the boundary between the basement complex of igneous and metamorphic rocks and the overlying sedimentary bedrock. Figure 10 illustrates the fault network in southern California.

The Baldwin Hills share with the rest of the Los Angeles basin an exposure to frequent strong earthquakes in the range of M=6+, of which the 1997 Northridge, and 1971 San Fernando, and the 1933 Long Beach earthquakes (the latter specifically associated with the Newport-Inglewood Fault) might be taken as type examples. There are numerous Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones traversing the site. Other nearby potentially active faults include the Overland fault, located one mile west-southwest of the project site; the Charnock fault, located 2.2 miles west-southwest of the site; and the Santa Monica fault, located 3.4 miles to the northwest. This significant earthquake threat at the Baldwin Hills is about the same as elsewhere in the basin including downtown Los Angeles. Hence, there will exist for any future development, whether buildings, natural or fill slopes, water facilities, and lifelines such as fire protection facilities, pipes, roads, or a land bridge need to design for strong ground motions.



SOURCE: California Oil & Gas Fields, Volume 2; California Dision of Oil & Gas, 1991

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Figure 10
Baldwin Hills Fault Map

Geologic Hazards

Potential geologic hazards include:

- **Expansive soils.** Expansive soils possess a "shrink-swell" behavior that occurs in fine-grained clay sediments from the process of wetting and drying, which may result in structural damage over a long period of time.

- **Settlement.** Loose, soft soil material comprised of sand, silt, and clay, if not properly engineered, has the potential to settle after a building is placed on the surface. Settlement of the loose soils generally occurs slowly, but over time can amount to more than most structures can tolerate.

- **Subsidence.** The extraction of water, mineral, or oil resources can result in subsidence from the removal of supporting layers in the geologic formation. The impacts of subsidence could include lowering of the land surfaces, increased potential for flooding, potential disturbance to buried pipeline and associated structures, and damage to structures designed with minimal tolerance for settlement.

- **Landslides.** The material in a slope and external processes such as climate, topography slope geometry, and human activity can render a slope unstable and eventually initiate slope movements and failures. Shaking during an earthquake may lead to seismically-induced landslides, especially in areas that have previously experienced landslides or slumps, in areas of steep slopes, or in saturated hillsides.

- **Ground shaking.** Shaking intensity can vary depending on the overall magnitude, distance to the fault, focus of earthquake energy, and type of geologic material underlying the area. Areas that are underlain by bedrock tend to experience less ground shaking than those underlain by unconsolidated sediments such as artificial fill.

- **Surface fault rupture.** Rupture of the surface during an earthquake is generally limited to the narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to the fault on which the earthquake is occurring. Surface fault rupture may occur suddenly during an earthquake or slowly in the form of fault creep and almost always follows pre-existing faults, which are zones of weakness. Not all earthquakes will result in surface rupture.

- **Liquefaction ground failures.** Liquefaction is the process by which unconsolidated sandy soil materials lose strength and become susceptible to failure during strong ground shaking in an earthquake. Areas with shallow groundwater and saturated soils have an increased potential for liquefaction.

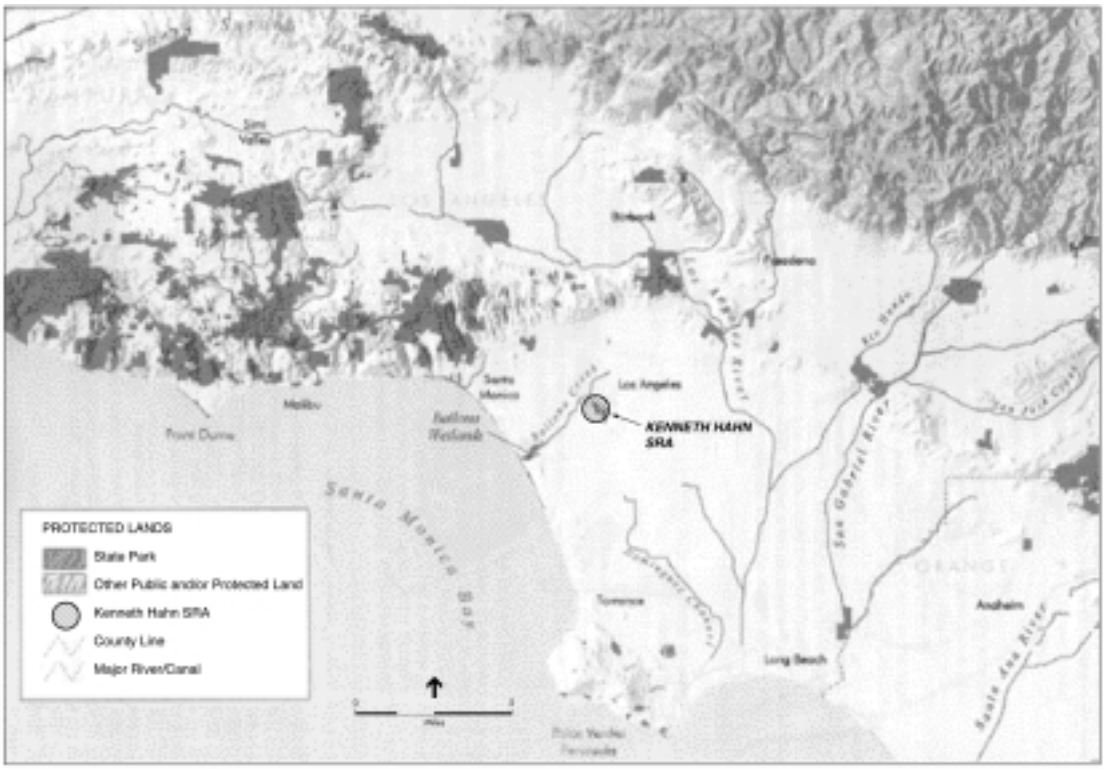
NATURAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

This information is based on an ecological assessment of the Baldwin Hills conducted by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County Foundation in 2000-2001. The park and the larger Baldwin Hills area represent the largest remaining expanse of the once dominant coastal sage scrub habitat in this area of the Los Angeles Basin, and contain remnants of the riparian (streamside) and grassland habitats that once made up much of the surrounding area. Coastal sage scrub is unique to Southern and Central California, and the park is home to hundreds of native plant and wildlife species. Historically, the coastal sage scrub habitats in the park and vicinity were largely separated from those of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Santa Monica Mountains, and hills of the eastern Los Angeles Basin by other natural habitats such as freshwater marshes and grasslands, creating a natural island effect (Figure 11). Over a century of agriculture and urbanization has fragmented the former habitat of the region, and the park is now surrounded by the intensively developed and densely populated cities of Los Angeles, Culver City and Inglewood.

The park is a series of hills running from north to south ascending to just over 500 feet above the coastal plain. Native park habitats are categorized as coastal scrub, grassland and riparian. All of the habitats have been degraded to varying degrees by urbanization, fragmentation and invasion of non-native plants and animals. Fragmentation occurs when roads, trails, buildings, non-native landscaping or other development break a habitat into many smaller pieces. Invasive, non-native species often thrive in disturbed and fragmented habitat and contribute to continuing and increasing fragmentation. The least disturbed areas of the park are coastal scrub communities located in canyons.

While natural habitats of the park are degraded and fragmented, they still provide important habitat for animals that depend on coastal scrub species as well as an important educational opportunity for the many human visitors to the area. Historic data on the park's flora and fauna is limited, but it is clear that the habitat in the hills today has lost those plant and animal species which are affected by human disturbance. The park is now dominated by plants and animals able to exist in close proximity to an urban environment. Some habitat specialists (species that are dependent upon one or a few habitat types), are still present and others have recently disappeared from the area and become locally extinct. The recent nature of many local extinctions, continued presence of some habitat specialists and the expanses of relatively intact habitat suggest that there is good potential for habitat restoration. Today, there are estimated to be over 72 species of native plants in the park, that in turn support hundreds of native animal species, including hundreds of insects, at least 12 species of reptiles and amphibians, over 166 species of birds and 21 species of mammals.



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Greenbelt Network

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Figure 11
Ecological Areas of Los Angeles County

NEED FOR CONNECTING HABITAT AREAS

Local extinctions are more frequent when habitat is isolated from other similar habitats that would serve as sources of species to re-populate an area under normal conditions. To prevent total habitat isolation, provide routes for re-population of an area with native animal species and ensure vital genetic exchange between populations, it is important to re-connect habitat areas in the Baldwin Hills and to maintain habitat corridors between similar habitats. This will allow animals to find new food sources, den sites and mates, and will help preserve the long-term health and viability of native wildlife populations.

Habitat specialists require the presence of specific habitat components in sufficient quantity in order to maintain a viable population. A viable population is one that is likely to persist through time. In urban settings, competition from non-native or invasive species is often a limiting factor in the success of native populations. Invasive species can out-compete native plants and animals, resulting in serious declines and sometimes extincitions of native plants and animals. The loss of a single or group of species can have a cascading effect of loss on dependent species. Mesopredators are omnivores and smaller carnivores, such as gray fox, feral cats and dogs (domestic species which have reverted to living in a wild state), that flourish in the absence of a top carnivore, such as coyote. Studies show that the loss of large predators allows mesopredators, particularly non-natives such as cats and dogs, to grow unchecked and decimate smaller prey species such as birds, reptiles and small mammals. Improved habitat connections in the park and larger Baldwin Hills area can help protect the remaining native species to survive and thrive.

VEGETATION COMMUNITY TYPES

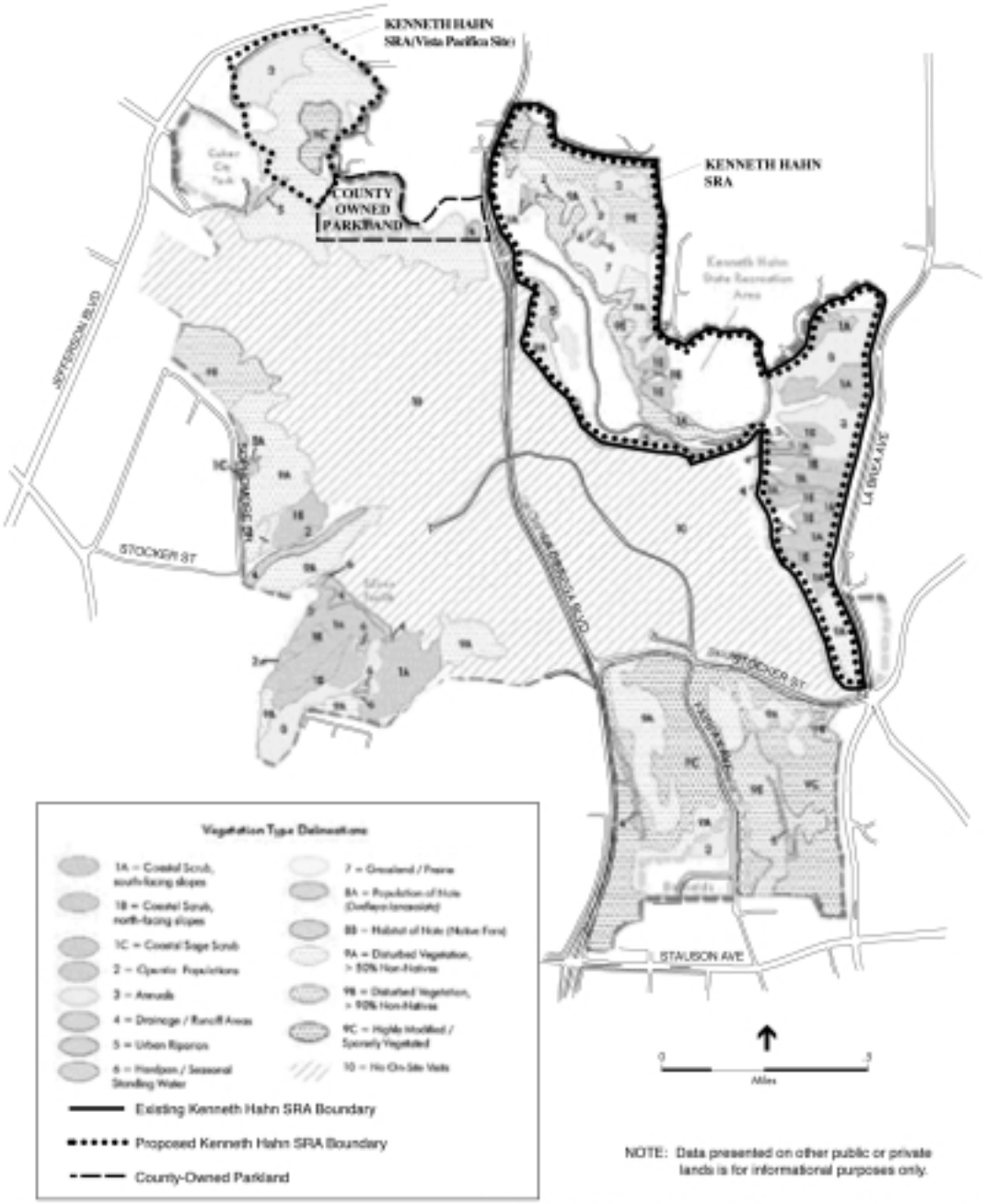
There are three main plant communities in the park (Figure 12).

Coastal Scrub

The dominant plant community is coastal scrub, a variant of coastal sage scrub lacking the sage (*Salvia* spp.) component. This habitat type is threatened by urban development throughout Southern California, and is the focus of many conservation efforts. Coastal scrub in the park is characterized by California sagebrush, coyote brush, bush sunflower and California buckwheat. It has been impacted by grazing, oil exploration, urban development, park landscaping, non-native species, improper irrigation practices and trail establishment. Growing on slopes of low elevation, this vegetation association is tolerant of drought and adapted to periodic fire.

Grasslands

Grasslands represent a smaller component of the park landscape and have been heavily impacted by the introduction of non-native annual plants. Modern day non-native annual plants – such as wild mustard, radish and various grasses – have replaced historic native bunch grasses that once grew in the area. A few native bunch grass species have recently been found to persist in the park and adjacent lands; these, and the presence of several species of native annually flowering plants, suggest that perhaps perennial grasslands or prairie did historically occur in the area. Today,



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; GreenInfo Network

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Figure 12
Detailed Vegetation Types Map

zones of grassland occur primarily on ridge tops and low saddle areas within the park. These areas are overwhelmingly dominated by exotic grasses and other plants that originated from the Mediterranean region.

Riparian Woodlands

The former natural riparian (streamside) community has been largely replaced by artificial aquatic and riparian habitats maintained via park maintenance and watering regimes. Arroyo willow and mule fat still thrive in wet canyon bottoms. Historical evidence suggests that vernal pools existed in the general vicinity of the Baldwin Hills. Plant species present in the areas identified in historic records are often found in vernal pool sites; however, no vernal pool indicator species have been identified in recent surveys of the park.

Native riparian or streamside communities in southern California typically consist of large alder, willow, sycamore and cottonwood trees intermixed with shorter stands of willow and mule fat. Historically, the larger drainages in the park and Baldwin Hills must have supported some riparian growth, and riparian woodland was extensive in the bottomlands of Ballona Creek and its tributaries. Because no significant natural watercourses presently flow through the park, the existing patches of riparian habitat are supported, in large part, by landscape maintenance or its runoff or other runoff on site. Compared to more natural riparian woodlands, these zones are reduced in extent and species composition, and exhibit a shrubby growth form. Some ponds and intermittent streams exist along and at the foot of natural drainages throughout the park, and these provide an important source of water for wildlife.

SENSITIVE AND SPECIAL INTEREST PLANT POPULATIONS

The only plant species identified within the park and cited as a species for conservation concern (Davis et al. 1994) is the California walnut. The individual shrubs of this species may or may not represent a formerly widespread woodland. Of interest may be the persistence of lance-leaf dudleya (*Dudleya lanceolata*) on a sandy bluff near the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site near West Los Angeles College. This species is not considered rare in general, but it is coastal scrub plant represented by only a small number of individuals.

EXOTIC FLORA AND POTENTIAL FOR RESTORATION OF NATIVE SPECIES

The intentional and accidental introduction of exotic plant species has permanently changed historic plant communities of Southern California. Some non-native plants out-compete native species in the absence of natural fires to which native species are adapted. Other non-natives also appear to be more tolerant of air pollution than native species. Members of the sage (*Salvia* sp.) family are particularly sensitive to air pollution, and this may explain why sage is absent from the area. Some non-native plants that threaten native species are weedy species blown or because they are less able to survive in neighboring habitat and are unlikely to adapt to the rapid addition of exotic predators and competitors. Others that are very aggressive and pose serious threats to native plants, such as pampas grass, have been planted in KHSRA and have now seeded into

natural habitat. Non-natives such as German ivy outgrow and crowd native species; the shallow root structure of the ivy also creates soil erosion problems. Non-native plants also tend to dominate where soil has been disturbed.

Two native plant species adapted for wet soils, an aquatic cattail and the nut sedge, are located at the tops of drainages in coastal scrub communities of the park. The persistence of these two species in these places indicates artificial water is entering the system. This negatively impacts coastal scrub species because other non-native insects move in to the altered drainage and out-compete native species; this causes a domino effect of loss in the food web, as many other animals are dependent on those native insects.

Removal of non-native plant species must be targeted considering the biology of each species. Some non-natives such as Pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata* and *C. selloana*) are notoriously invasive and laborious to remove. However, diligent removal efforts would promote healthier and more abundant coastal scrub plants. Native coastal scrub shrubs such as coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*) planted along the edges of park landscaping could help to contain non-native landscaping plants. The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation conducts regular removal of exotics from the park. Areas of highest priority for habitat restoration appear in Figure 13.

ANIMAL LIFE

The park is home to a number of native species, including hundreds of insects, at least 12 species of reptiles and amphibians, over 166 species of birds and 21 species of mammals.

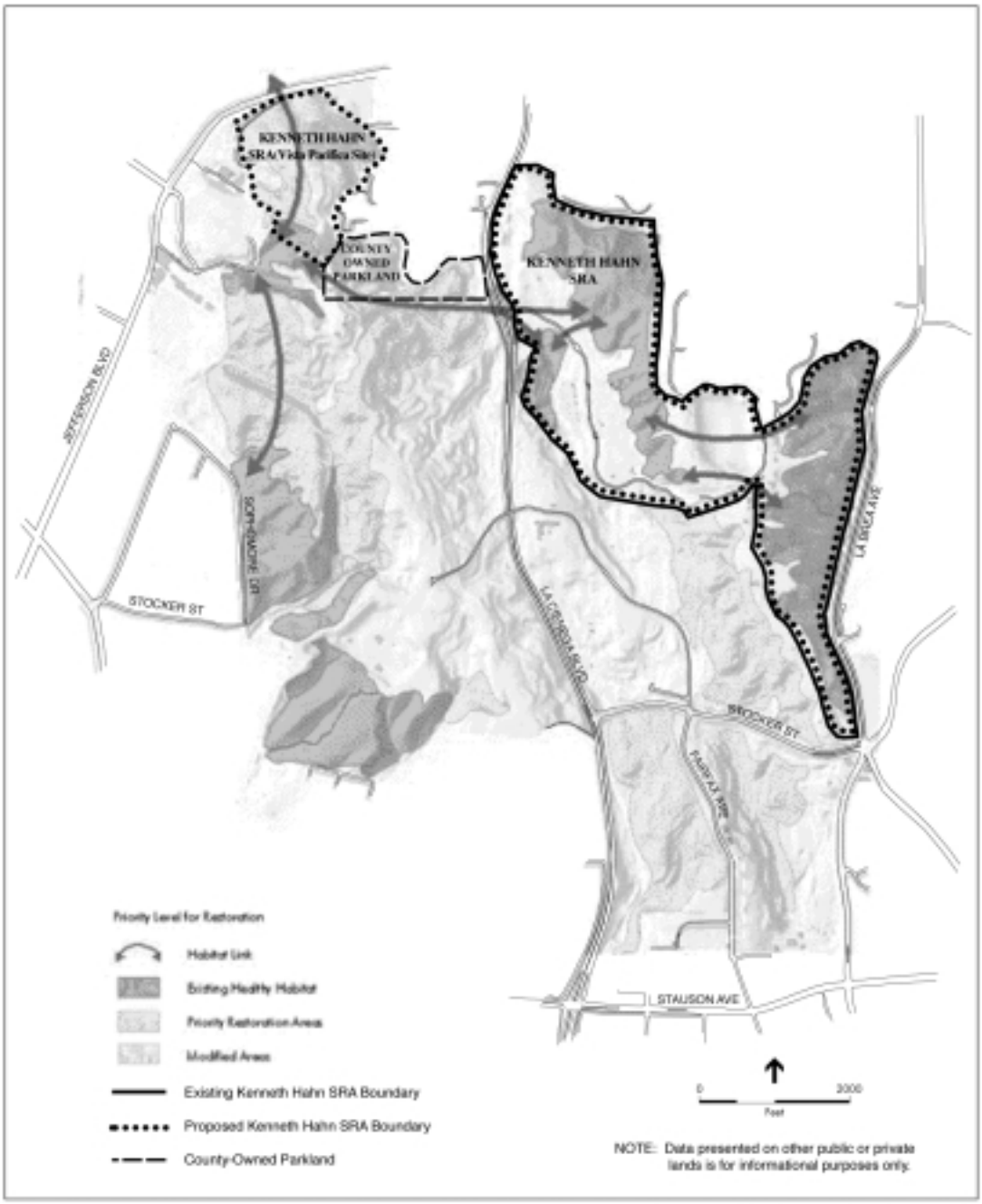
Native Arthropods

The diversity of arthropod populations is generally dependent upon plant diversity. Because many insects specialize on one or a few closely related species of plants, they are often limited by the densities and distributions of the host plant species upon which they feed. The most important habitat in the park for insects is coastal scrub.

There are many cosmopolitan and introduced species of arthropods within the park, probably numbering in the thousands. These include some 48 species of beetles, 15 species of bees and non-parasitic wasps, and 15 species of spiders. Additionally, 12 species of butterflies have been identified and up to 33 are expected to occur; all but one are native. Nearly 60% of these feed on a variety of common landscaping plants. The remainder feed upon a narrow range of hosts that are not well represented in the park. Insect species in the park are dominated by species common to much of southern California and often encountered in urban areas.

Exotic Arthropod Species

Exotic arthropods such as the Argentine ant (*Linepithema humile*), the pill bug (*Armadillidium vulgare*) and the European earwig (*Forficula auricularia*) tend to dominate in the park due to irrigated landscaping adjacent to native, drier coastal scrub vegetation. Irrigation has altered the



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International, Greenlnfo Network

Kenneth Hahn SRA Recirculated General Plan Amendment and EIR / 202310 ■

Figure 13
Habitat Restoration Priorites

ecosystem of the native vegetation, causing native insect species to be out-competed by the non-natives. The only other ant species identified was the thief ant (*Solenopsis molesta*). It is a small species that has a habit of co-occurring with other ant species from which it takes food resources (Hogue 1993), perhaps explaining its ability to persist in the presence of the Argentine ant.

The pill bug and European earwig are also considered an important threat to native species as they may prey upon their eggs and larvae, as well as directly compete for space. Native insect species dependent upon a narrow range of habitats are most vulnerable to non-native species.

Native Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles and amphibians found in the park are habitat generalists that have adapted to urbanization, including 12 observed species and several additional species likely to occur. All of these except the one turtle species encountered (Red-eared slider) are native to California. The species encountered most frequently were the side-blotched lizard and western fence lizard.

The composition and abundance of amphibian and reptile populations are directly related to the amount of suitable habitat present. Portions of the park that support native vegetation are often fragmented and have been degraded by the invasion of introduced plant species. These invasions reduce the quality of such habitats for native amphibians and reptiles by altering protective cover, often increasing the vulnerability of such organisms to native and introduced predators, such as feral dogs and cats (domestic species which have reverted to living in a wild state).

Historic accounts indicate that the fauna was once more diverse. Amphibians are especially dependent upon water resources for breeding success and have likely been affected detrimentally by the draining and channelization of historic riparian areas. The artificial drainages currently present in the park provide limited habitat for amphibians or reptiles in the area. The presence of the western toad and the pacific treefrog are a positive sign, as both have skins sensitive to pollutants in water and air and are therefore important indicators of the area's overall environmental health.

Reptiles and Amphibians of Concern

Reptile and amphibian diversity has probably been lost because of cascading effects of changes to the park ecosystem. The invasive Argentine ant prospers in areas of southern California with artificial water supply, including the park. The Argentine ant has displaced native ant communities and the demise of native ant colonies has deprived the coast horned lizard of its preferred food species. Thus it is of little surprise that the coast horned lizard, a California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Species of Concern found only in coastal scrub habitat, was not found in the park

The garden slender salamander is also a CDFG Species of Concern that historically occurred in the Baldwin Hills. This salamander was not detected in recent surveys, but the dry conditions during the survey period would have made it difficult to detect, and thus it may persist in the area.

Exotic Reptile and Amphibian Species

The exotic bullfrog is a predacious species threatening native amphibians throughout its expanded range. While the bullfrog was not observed during the recent survey period, its presence in the park is likely. The bullfrog thrives in habitats with persistent water where its voracious tadpoles eat native tadpoles, thereby eliminating native species. Because bullfrog tadpoles require two years to develop, they cannot survive in seasonal freshwater habitat. However, the park's artificial waterways provide ample habitat for bullfrogs. Control of this and other exotic predators such as the feral dog and cat could help to sustain herpetofauna diversity and health in the park.

Birds

There are 166 species of native birds in the park and surrounding Baldwin Hills, including 41 who regularly nest here and 18 who do so occasionally. There have been significant historical changes in the avifauna of the park. Comparison of recent surveys with sporadic historical accounts suggests that the diversity of the bird species present in the park has decreased with habitat fragmentation and destruction.

Birds of Concern

A number of bird species are found in the park that do not breed in the surrounding urbanized lowland areas. Documented breeders in the park and surrounding open space include the California quail, Cassin's kingbird, barn swallow, Bewick's wren, phainopepla, orange-crowned warbler, common yellowthroat, spotted towhee, California towhee, song sparrow and black-headed grosbeak. An additional six species that do not breed in urban habitats may breed in the Baldwin Hills but have not been verified.

The greater roadrunner and burrowing owl no longer occur in the Baldwin Hills, and the cactus wren and California thrasher have possibly also been lost from the suite of species that were resident there. Former breeding species of the park which now only occur as non-breeding visitors include the loggerhead shrike and blue grosbeak. The decline in populations of species which are dependent on native habitats is likely due to habitat loss and degradation and the impacts of native and non-native predators such as feral cats and dogs, raccoons, gray foxes, fox squirrels, and jays, crows and ravens.

Two sensitive habitats were identified within the park: California sagebrush and coast prickly-pear. Both of these habitat types are included in the Coastal Scrub association in the *List of California Terrestrial Natural Communities Recognized by the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB)* compiled by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in 1997. The coast prickly-pear habitat is considered in the NDDB to be "rare or worthy of consideration." The habitats are sometimes used by the coast cactus wren (coast prickly-pear) and the California gnatcatcher (California sagebrush). Coastal scrub habitats have been reduced and their floristic composition has probably changed considerably, and several bird species such as the greater

roadrunner, cactus wren and California thrasher that require this habitat seem to have disappeared in recent years.

Two nesting pairs of coastal cactus wren were observed in the canyon area to the southwest of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site in 1991. The coastal cactus wren is a Federal and a California Species of Concern, but it is not listed as Threatened or Endangered under the federal or state endangered species acts. The cactus wren was not recorded during surveys in 2000, although it was recorded as recently as 1996. The rufous-crowned sparrow is known only from a recent sighting of 1-2 individuals that may represent the last of a remnant population or recent colonizers or seasonal wanderers.

The peregrine falcon is the only state or federally listed species documented to occur currently in the Baldwin Hills area. Until recently the peregrine falcon was listed as federally endangered, but was removed from the list because of species recovery. It remains as a California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) listed endangered species. CDFG Species of Concern observed in or near the park within the last decade includes burrowing owl, belted kingfisher, olive-sided flycatcher, Swainson's thrush, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, blue grosbeak and tri-colored blackbird.

Exotic Bird Species

While native to the greater Los Angeles area, several species have expanded their range into urban and suburban habitats to the detriment of other bird species. The western scrub-jay, American crow and common raven have all exploded in population in recent decades in urban areas, as all three are very adaptable to urban environments. These species are considered extremely detrimental to smaller birds as they prey extensively on eggs and nestlings.

Restoration of natural riparian areas and native grasslands could enhance populations of several native bird species. Feral cats and free-ranging feral dogs are very detrimental to ground-nesting birds as well as to native small mammals and reptiles. The natural re-colonization of coyotes would contribute to the goal of eliminating exotic predators and superabundant native mesopredators in the park.

Mammals

Results of mammalian surveys indicate that the current mammal community of the park is species-poor compared to the area's historical fauna. It is characterized by species that are generalists and able to survive amid intense human activity. This includes 18 species of mammals, although up to 10 additional species (mostly bats) could occur. The current mammal fauna includes the native pocket gopher, woodrats, mice, a native rabbit and hare, the gray fox, raccoons, skunks, opossums, and the introduced house mouse and feral cats, dogs, and the fox squirrel. Most habitat specialists have been lost from the mammalian fauna of the park.

Mammals of Concern

Two bat species of concern possibly still occurring in the park are the pallid bat and the western mastiff bat. Populations of these species are suspected to be in decline or are highly localized and require active management to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened species. Another California state species of special concern that could potentially occur in the park is the Los Angeles pocket mouse.

Exotic Mammal Species

The present composition of the mammal community in the par appears to largely reflect the surrounding urban area; only the gray fox, native rodents, and the jackrabbit have close associations with native scrub habitats. The apparent loss of a top predator, the coyote, has important ramifications for the health of the entire coastal scrub community as the presence of such predators keeps populations of smaller predators, such as foxes and feral cats, in check. Feral dogs and cats not only threaten native species by directly preying upon them, but also by competing with native species for resources. Feral cat-feeding stations were observed in the vicinity of the park, further exacerbating the problems associated with feral cats.

PALEONTOLOGY[2]

Paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the general area show it to possess an environment fairly similar to today, but with more moisture and lower humidity. The area was a plain or open rolling country with an interior, semi-arid type of vegetation where grass-covered surfaces were interspersed with copses of trees and brush, favoring the existence of a diverse population of hoofed animals. In this environment, bison, horse, mylodont ground sloth, elephant, camel, and antelope would have been plentiful. Associated with these herbivores were the typical carnivores like the lion-like cat, coyote, sabertooth cat, and dire wolf. The park and surrounding area were similar to other parts of North America where big game hunting existed. It is reasonable to assume that even without an artifactual complex present (as we have in other areas) man was exploiting the Pleistocene megafauna in this area. In this period, Southern California populations shifted from a big game hunting subsistence to a small game and plant gathering. Because of the drier climate, water became less available in the desert which in turn lowered the grass resource production. This factor, as well as the changing resource base, resulted in a population movement from inland deserts to the more suitable environments of coastal areas. Environmental adaptation in terms of settlement patterns and subsistence resources permitted a general population increase.

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2 Paleontology is a branch of geology that studies prehistoric life forms other than humans, through the study of plant and animal fossils. Fossils are the remains of organisms that lived in the region in the geologic past and therefore preserve an aspect of Southern California prehistory that is of scientific importance, since many species are now extinct. Fossils are found embedded in geologic formations that range in thickness from a few feet to hundreds of feet. These formations form a complex relationship below the surface. Sedimentary formations are layered atop one another, and over time the layers have been squeezed, tilted, folded, and shaped by fault activity. Sensitive fossil bearing formations found at the surface also may extend from just below the surface to many miles below the surface. Consequently, the task of predicting paleontologically sensitive areas is difficult.

There are two main sedimentary formations that exist within the park, Pleistocene marine and marine terrace deposits, and Upper Pliocene Marine formations, that are likely to contain fossil[3] material of now extinct marine species. Invertebrate paleontological specimens have been identified within the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. Types of fossils included several species of Cephalopods. Due to the geologic makeup of the project's locality, there is a potential for project excavation to uncover fossil resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

In its natural state, the park is associated with chaparral environment. Characteristics of chaparral environment include hills, broad valleys, and alluvial soils. Native plant and animal resources in this area were of dietary importance to the Southern California Native Americans that occupied the area. Archaeological sites are known to exist within a one-quarter mile radius of the park. The Vista Pacifica Scenic Site was previously surveyed and monitored for archaeological resources as part of the mitigation process for previously approved development. Archaeological sites were identified during mitigation monitoring. While modern disturbance has most likely removed some surface deposits, there is a probability of uncovering subsurface finds during any future construction or excavation activities.

The Native Americans inhabiting the park just prior to Spanish contact were a Shoshonean linguistic group called the Gabrielino or Tongva. It is assumed that certain aspects of that heritage were retained and diffused into Southern California. European colonization occurred from A.D. 1540 to 1771 followed by three distinct periods to the present: the Mission Period (A.D. 1771 to 1834), the Mexican Period (A.D. 1822 to 1846), and the Anglo Period (A.D.1848 to present). The first documented instance of European contact in the general area was the 1542 voyage of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who was sailing up the California coast searching for a Northwest Passage to China. On October 8, 1542, Cabrillo, upon entering what is now San Pedro Harbor, sighted the smoke from many fires in the Palos Verdes Hills; thus, he named San Pedro Bay the "Bahía de los Fumos" or the Bay of Smokes. More than two hundred years later, in 1769, an expedition under the direction of Captain Gaspár de Portola left San Diego to reach and supply Monterey. An important member of this expedition was Father Junipero Serra who intended to establish a mission chain through Alto California to convert the Native Americans to Christianity.

On September 8, 1771, Father Angel Somera and Father Pedro Cambón founded Mission San Gabriel where the majority of the Native Americans of the Los Angeles Basin (including those from the Baldwin Hills area) were taken; hence, the Spanish name for the Native Americans of historic times, Gabrielino (the native name being Tongva), is derived from this Mission. Native Americans in the immediate area and from more distant areas were gathered into the Mission to provide a labor force for building, herding, farming, weaving, and cooking. The culture shock and

[3] Paleontologists consider all vertebrate fossils to be of importance. Fossils of other types also are considered significant if they are representative of a new record, a new species, a most complete specimen of its kind, a rare species, or a species useful in the dating of stratigraphic formations.

subsequent exposure to European diseases decimated the aboriginal population and resulted in the reduction of vast numbers of Native Americans. By the end of the 1700s, the Native Americans and their culture had been virtually destroyed in Southern California by Spanish missionization (which forced new cultural adaptations, i.e., agriculture). This led to extremely high death rates from disease and warfare and reduced the native population to half of what it was at the beginning of the period.

In the beginning of the 1780s, the concept of the rancho was developed. In the Baldwin Hills area, there were three main ranchos: 1) Rancho La Ballona, 2) Rancho Rincón de los Bueyes, 3) Rancho Cienega O'Paso de la Tijera. The social and economic systems revolved around the ranchos as exhibited by the stratified nature of the Spanish, Mexican, and Native American cultures. The Spanish owners, or “Gente de Razón” were the elite of the area, controlling vast amounts of land which enabled them to exert a vast amount of political and economic influence. Family influence and relatives in the Mexican civilian government permitted some families and/or small landholders to dramatically increase or gain vast amounts of land.

In 1800, the Alcalde (mayor) of the Pueblo de los Angeles was Joaquin Higuera. His son, Bernardo, was to settle the land that joined the Rancho La Ballona on the northeast and called it Rancho de los Bueyes. The Rincón Rancho was settled in December 1821 under Governor Noriega. The origin of Rincón de los Bueyes, "corner for cattle”, was a natural corral created by a ravine in the Baldwin Hills (which lies just southwest of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site in Culver City). Shortly after Bernardo Higuera and Se•or Lopez, his partner, settled the Rancho Rincón, Spanish control of California ended; henceforth, California was now under Mexican jurisdiction.

The Rancho Cienega, which comprised the majority of the Baldwin Hills, was called Rancho Cienega O Paso de la Tijera (“ranch of the swamp or passage of the scissors”). In 1843, Governor Manuel Micheltorena granted this Rancho to Vicente Sanchez. In 1875, his son sold a half interest of this Rancho for $60,000 dollars. Unable to pay off his loan, the remaining acreage was sold at auction to E.J. Baldwin, who used the Rancho for sheep ranching even though it was unprofitable (something unusual for this Comstock Mining millionaire). Baldwin, who was sometimes known as Lucky Baldwin, held his luck even after death when oil was discovered on the property in 1924. The Baldwin Hills (Inglewood Field) attracted major oil companies including Standard, Getty, Texaco and Shell, establishing the area as a very productive oil and natural gas field.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The region of the park was home to Native American population groups for at least 6,000 to 8,000 years. The native ecological environment consisted of river and stream drainages, which were prime locations for Native American food processing and village sites. These locations were often valued for their water sources, and therefore quickly urbanized once Europeans entered the region. Past construction often did not disturb the subsurface soils more than a foot or two. Prehistoric archaeological sites are often covered by three-feet or more of topsoil thereby

protecting the sites after the area has become highly urbanized. However, some prehistoric sites do occur on the surface in desert locations.

Prehistoric Period (Prior to 1542)

The Prehistoric cultural history of the park and environs is illustrated by the following chronology[4]:

- **Early Man Horizon.** From the end of the Pleistocene (approximately 11,000 years ago) to approximately 6,000 B.C. archaeological assemblages attributed to this horizon area were characterized by large projectile points and scrapers. The limited data available suggests that prehistoric populations focused on hunting and gathering, moving from region to region in small nomadic groups.

- **Milling Stone Horizon.** This horizon is characterized by the appearance of hand-stones and milling-stones, and dates between approximately 6,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C. Artifact assemblages during the early Milling Stone period reflect an emphasis on plant foods and foraging subsistence systems. Inland populations generally exploited grass seeds, which became the primary subsistence activity. Artifact assemblages are characterized by choppers and scraper planes, but generally lack projectile points. The appearance of large projectile points in the latter portion of the Milling Stone Horizon suggests a more diverse subsistence economy.

- **Intermediate Horizon.** Dated between 1,000 B.C. to A.D. 750, the Intermediate Horizon represents a period of transition for Prehistoric Native American groups. Little is known about the people of this period, especially those occupying inland Southern California. Archaeological site assemblages possess many attributes of the Milling Stone Horizon. In addition, however, these sites generally contain large stemmed (or notched) projectile points and portable mortars and pestles. It is believed that the mortars and pestles were used to harvest, process, and consume acorns. Due to the general lack of data on the subsistence system and the cultural evolution of this period, the substrates of the behavior are not well understood.

- **Late Prehistoric Horizon.** From A.D. 750 to Spanish contact in A.D. 1769, the Late Prehistoric Horizon reflects an increased technological sophistication and diversity. This period is characterized by the presence of small projectile points, which imply the use of bow and arrow, as opposed to spear. In addition, site assemblages also include steatite bowls, asphaltum, grave goods, and elaborate shell ornaments. Utilization of bedrock milling slicks is prevalent throughout this horizon. Also, an increase in hunting efficiency and widespread exploitation of acorns provided reliable and storable food resources. These innovations seem to have promoted greater sedentism.

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[4] Wallace, William J., 1955. *A Suggested Chronology for southern California Coastal Archaeology*. Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 11(3); 214-230.

NATIVE AMERICAN GROUPS: THE GABRIELINO

The Gabrielino occupied nearly the entire Los Angeles basin in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Their traditional lands included the watersheds of the San Gabriel, the Santa Ana, and Los Angeles rivers, several of the smaller streams of the Santa Monica Mountains and Santa Ana Mountains, to Aliso Creek in Orange County. They also inhabited the offshore islands of San Clemente, Santa Catalina, and San Nicholas. Precise data on village locations can no longer be obtained.

The Gabrielino populated a large territory, but in many ways are considered the least known of all Southern California Native American groups. This can be attributed to their location in the Los Angeles basin where they were quickly assimilated into the missions and European culture during the late 18th Century. Early ethnographers believed that the last Gabrielino died about a century ago, and because of this, the Gabrielino have never been granted Federal recognition. Historic population estimates of the Gabrielino are difficult, but likely ranged into the thousands. As many as 50 to 100 villages existed at any one time during the late 18th Century. Spanish reports estimate village populations to be between 50 and 200 individuals.

Gabrielino material culture is reflected in an elaborately developed artisanship that can be exhibited in utilitarian items that are elaborately decorated with shell, rare materials, carvings and paintings. The most well known Gabrielino items are those made of steatite (soapstone), which was quarried on Santa Catalina Island and carried to the mainland by plank canoes, which are similar to those constructed by the Chumash Indians. The Gabrielino also produced high quality basketry constructed from grasses and rush stems. The Gabrielino constructed their houses similar to those of the Chumash.

Labor was divided between gender. Men carried out most of the heavy, but short-term labor, such as hunting and fishing, conducted most trading ventures, and had as their central concerns the well being of the village and family. Women collected and processed most of the plant materials, and practiced basket production. The elderly members of the group taught children and cared for the young.[5]

The information presented above reflects a generalized overview of the cultural background of the Gabrielino people. Archaeologists, anthropologists, ethno-historians, and historians are constantly refining and redefining the variations between various groups of California Indians. However, this information is still a long way from depicting the true nature of prehistoric California occupation.

PROJECT AREA HISTORY

Spanish explorations of California began in 1542 with the expedition led by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. In 1579, Sir Francis Drake claimed California for England, calling it “Nova Albion”.

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[5] Information excerpted from Bean, Lowell John and Charles R. Smith, 1978, *Gabrielino, Handbook of North American Indians,* op.cit.,pp. 538-549.

In 1602, the expedition of Sebastian Vizcaino followed the route of Cabrillo along the California coast, and as in the case of the Cabrillo expedition, did not venture inland. On September 4, 1781, Gaspar de Portola and a Franciscan monk named Junipero Serra, dedicated a new town located one days ride north of San Pedro. Padre Junipero Serra named the town after Saint Francis of Assisi's first church, called Saint Mary of the Angels -- El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles. There were forty-four original settlers which included twenty-six of African descent and seven Native Americans, who were settlers from the Mission San Gabriel.

The present day Culver City area was off the main highway of travel during the early period of the European occupation of California that began in 1769. Culver City was made up of a valley formed by the La Ballona Creek that flowed toward Playa del Rey. Old maps of the cliffs of Ballona's easterly boundary are labeled as "Guacho", sometimes, "Huacho", a Gabrielino word meaning high place. The Gabrilieno people built brush and mud huts against these cliffs.

In 1784, the Spanish Viceroy granted a parcel land to Augustin and Ygnacio Machado and to Felipe and Tomas Talamantes for the acreage of land named Rancho La Ballona. The area of Rancho La Ballona included the proposed project area. The area encompassed by Rancho La Ballona, was previously also known as "Pass of the Carretas". It is this name that appears on the oldest maps of the area.

The park is also situated in the former Rancho Rincon de los Bueyes that operated during the Mexican Period[6]. In 1821, military commander Jose de la Guerra y Noriega granted Rancho Rincon de los Bueyes to Bernardo Higuera. Bernardo Higuera was the son of Joaquin Higuera, who operated the Rancho la Ballona. The origin of the name, "Rincon de los Buyes" translates to "corner for cattle". The "rincon" refers to the natural corral created by a ravine in the Baldwin Hills. From that "corner", with its rising knolls that are attractive to grazing cattle, the name was applied to the new rancho. Like many ranchos of its time, Rancho Rincon de los Buyes' main business was cattle and the hide trade.

In 1822, Mexico declared its independence from Spain. On January 9, 1847 Commodore Stockton recaptured Los Angeles for the third and final time. Shortly after, on January 13, 1847, Captain John C. Fremont accepted the surrender of Governor Pio Pico and Commander Jose Maria Flores. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo formally annexed California to the United States in early 1848, ending the Mexican War and beginning the American Period.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS REVIEW

A review of archaeological records was conducted for the park at the South Central Coastal Information Center on May 22, 2002. This search included a review of all recorded historic and prehistoric archaeological sites within a one-quarter mile radius of the park, as well as a review of all known relevant cultural resource survey and excavation reports. In addition, the California State Historic Resources Inventory (2001), the National Register of Historic Places (2001), the

[6] The Mexican Period in California lasted from 1822 to 1847.

listing of California Historical Landmarks (1996), and the California Points of Historical Interest (1992) were checked. Due to the sensitive nature of cultural resources, archaeological site locations are not released.

PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

Two prehistoric archaeological sites were identified within the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site during mitigation monitoring in October and November of 2001. The site was identified by ESA monitoring archaeologist, Laurie Solis. These sites included:

- **19-002968.** This site is comprised of stone tools, burned bone fragments, fire affected rock, and shell fragments. These items were found in association with modern refuse.

- **19-002966.** This site is comprised of five ground-stone fragments, mano, two shell fragments and fire affected rock.

In addition, the record search indicated that fifteen prehistoric archaeological sites were previously identified within a ¼-mile radius of the park. These sites were identified as the following:

- **CA-LAN-1399.** Obsidian, broken abalone shells, various clam & mussel shells, ochre chunks;
- **CA-LAN-122.** "human bones; poss. of considerable antiquity;
- **CA-LAN-74.** Seasonal village or campsite;
- **CA-LAN-73.** Seasonal camping or village site;
- **CA-LAN-72.** Seasonal camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-71.** Seasonal camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-70.** Seasonal camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-69.** Seasonal camp or village site;
- **19-100249.** Large chalcedony projectile point;
- **CA-LAN-68.** Seasonal camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-53.** A camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-58.** A camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-57.** A camp or village site;
- **CA-LAN-56.** A camp or village site; and,
- **CA-LAN-55.** Camp site.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

One historic archaeological site was identified within the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site during mitigation monitoring in September 2001.

- **19-002967.** The site was identified by ESA monitoring archaeologist, Laurie Solis as an Historic Period Refuse Deposit (HPRD) consisting primarily of historic period pop bottle, sanitary seam cans, liqueur bottles, household utility items, and cosmetic bottles and jars.

- Three historic structures were identified within ¼-mile of the project area. These were identified as the following,

- **19-150440.** The Knaster Furniture Factory Building is located at 5901 Rodeo Road and was constructed in 1945. The structure is now known as the Sterling Furniture Mfg. Co.

- **19-150444.** The Bert G. Knaster Factory Building is located at 5915 Rodeo Road and was constructed in 1948.

- **19-150323.** The Culver Hotel is located at 9400 Culver Boulevard and was constructed in 1924. The structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

The following surveys were previously conducted on various portions of the park

- **Clewlow 1975.** Dr. Carl William Clewlow Jr. of the Institute of Archaeology at the University of California Los Angeles conducted L-98 - The survey in 1975.

- **L-2632.** The survey was performed by Carol Demcak of Archaeological Resource Management Corporation of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site in 1992.

- **L-2312.** The survey was performed by Gwendolyn R. Romani for David E. Moss & Associates in 1991.

- **L-2158.** The survey was conducted by Roberta S. Greenwood for David E. Moss & Associates in 1990.

In addition, a site visit was conducted by ESA staff archaeologist, Laurie Solis for the proposed project in May 2002. Undisturbed vegetation was observed within the park.

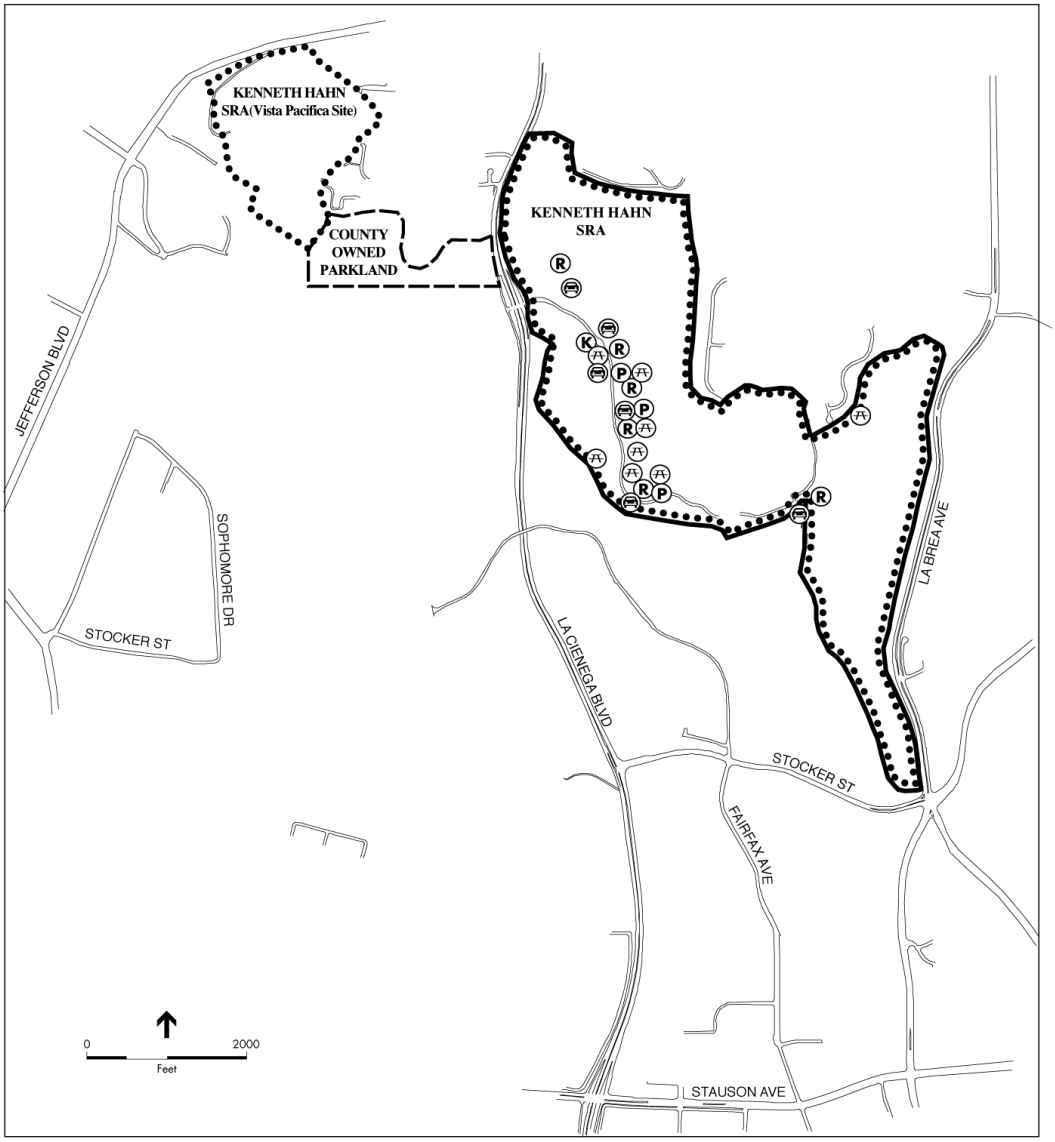
INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

VISITOR CENTERS AND INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

The park currently includes one community center with interpretive panels, four administrative offices, a small meeting room, and restroom facilities (Figure 14).

MUSEUMS AND HOUSE MUSEUMS

The Park does not contain Museums and or House Museums.



SOURCE: Los Angeles Department of parks and Recreation

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Figure 14
Existing Facilities

INTERPRETIVE KIOSKS

A kiosk is located at the entrance to park. The kiosk is primarily used as a ranger station, and fee drop, but often is also used as a form of communication between users of the park (through pamphlet displays, etc.).

INTERPRETIVE TRAILS, ROADS, AND WAYSIDE EXHIBITS, GARDENS, AND OTHER FEATURES

Several historic sites within the park are currently designated by explanatory signage, such as the Olympic Forest.

EXHIBITS

The Park does not contain exhibits at this time other than the historic signage mentioned above and interpretive materials located in the community center.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS (SUCH AS LIVING HISTORY, DEMONSTRATION, RE-ENACTMENT)

No events or programs occur on-site at this time.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (NATURE WALKS, GUIDED NATURE WALKS)

Educational programs (including nature walks and guided walks) that are currently conducted, are done so by groups not affiliated with the State of California. School programs and guided walks are currently offered at KHSRA. These programs are coordinated by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

AESTHETICS RESOURCES

VISUAL RESOURCES AND SCENIC CHARACTERISTICS

The existing visual character of the park is determined by the attributes (color, form, texture) of specific site features and by the patterns that the features have assumed as a result of natural processes and human uses. The assessment of the visual attributes and patterns of the park's features in this document is organized according to the following general descriptive categories: site location and spatial orientation, landform, land uses, and vegetation. The existing visual character of the park is also influenced by atmospheric effects and by seasonal changes in the foliage of the natural vegetation on the site. The site does not contain specific built objects, such as buildings, that have aesthetic significance.

Land Uses

Human development in the park is characterized by a fishing lake, restroom buildings, a small community center, ornamental gardens, and passive recreation facilities including picnic tables, shelters, seating and trails. The fishing lake is a man-made water body with handicapped-accessible ramps and paved seating areas. Ornamental gardens include a man-made stream, a water lily pond and the Olympic Forest, an assortment of non-native trees, including eucalyptus.

Vegetation

Most of the well-preserved natural habitat areas are located in canyons and slopes on the eastern face of the east ridge and the western face of the west ridge. The predominant coastal sage scrub vegetation covers steep slopes and canyons from the ridgelines to the boundaries of the site. These general vegetation patterns are visible from long distances and from adjacent neighborhoods and streets. Views of natural habitat areas from existing trails are very rewarding, including wildflowers, native shrubs, many species of birds and small reptiles and mammals.

NEGATIVE VISUAL FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Areas surrounding the park include developed areas such as oil and gas extraction and processing facilities, utility structures, an electrical transmission facility, recreational facilities, residential and urban uses, and a municipal garbage truck transfer facility. Scarred denuded hillsides, paved and unpaved roads, intermittent oil wells, pipelines, pipe storage and related buildings and facilities characterize the areas of oil and gas production. Larger processing facilities are located in close proximity to La Cienega Boulevard and include buildings with an industrial character, large pipe structures, tanks and other associated equipment. Other structures related to oil production and processing include a series of small wooden buildings and a large historic residence built in the craftsman style in the northwest portion of the site. Stocker Resources Inc.'s headquarter buildings are located in the southeast corner of the site. They are commercial in nature.

Developed recreation facilities include the Ladera Little League fields, consisting of baseball diamonds with associated fencing, parking facilities and nighttime lighting. Existing facilities in Culver City Park include baseball diamonds with associated fencing and parking facilities. A handicapped-accessible trail linking the park entrance with the recreation facilities above is a dominant visual feature on the edge of the park. A small skateboard area located adjacent to Jefferson Boulevard is furnished with basic equipment and is highly visible from the park edge.

Due to the high elevations of the site, numerous microwave towers are located on the eastern ridge in the vicinity of the former reservoir site. Electrical transmission towers run from the Five Points intersection at La Brea Avenue and Stocker Street to the north. Additional utility towers in the southwest part of the site carry electricity from the Southern California Edison facility through the site to the north. Other types of communication towers are located on the ridge tops and are visible from inside the park as well as from a distance.

Multi-lane high-speed streets in the center and on the edge of the site produce high levels of traffic noise. La Cienega Boulevard, a six lane limited access roadway, is the main source of noise in the site area, especially during peak traffic flows. La Brea Avenue, a four-lane roadway on the eastern edge of the site, also generates significant traffic noise. Despite the presence of these noise sources there are many areas of the site that are protected by landforms where traffic noise is imperceptible. The steep hillsides and canyons on the edges of the site create highly efficient noise barriers. The industrial activities of oil extraction, drilling and processing create point sources with varying levels of noise impact. Noise from the active recreational activities at the Ladera Little League fields does not appear to cause problems as the fields are located far enough from adjacent residential areas. Urban and residential development form the remainder of the landscape – overpowering the natural elements of the park.

VIEWSHEDS

The east and west ridges of the park provide unique and unparalleled panoramic vistas of the Los Angeles basin, Santa Monica Bay and the San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountains (Figure 15). These views provide a striking sense of the urban fabric of the city framed by natural elements of ocean and mountains. Although views of the basin from the north are commonly available from the Santa Monica Mountains, no other public open spaces afford nearly 360-degree views from the south looking at the ocean and mountain ranges that surround the basin. From the 500 foot elevations of the park, views of the Pacific Coast and all of Santa Monica Bay are visible, and visitors can see as far as Catalina Island on clear days. Views of mountain ranges to the north and east include the Santa Monica Mountains, the Hollywood Hills, the Verdugo Hills, the San Gabriel Mountains and the Santa Ana Mountains. The urban skylines of Santa Monica, Century City, Los Angeles, Hollywood, and the Century Boulevard corridor are present as well. These views are accessible from the existing ridge trail in the park and from the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. Additional access to the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site and the western ridge will provide increased opportunities for views of the northern and western portions of the basin. The ridgelines also provide views into the interior of the park site, which when redeveloped will include views of restored natural areas, gardens and park landscapes. Existing views from within the site are varied, consisting of natural habitat areas, recreation uses and industrial facilities. The ridge and valley topography of the park provides opportunities for focused views of natural areas.

DESIGNATED SCENIC AREAS OR ROUTES

No officially designated scenic areas or route occur within close proximity to the park.

EXTERNAL VIEWS

The park is visible from many short-range, medium-range, and long-range vantage points. The park appears as a natural landscape in views from all vantage points.

Top: View of Palos Verdes Peninsula Center: View of Santa Monica Bay and Pt. Dume Bottom: View of Santa Monica Mountains

SOURCE: Community Conservancy International

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Figure 15
Panoramic Views

RECREATION RESOURCES

RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The activities that are most common in the park include walking and jogging, picnicking, and play. The limited walking trails provided in the area are not comprehensive enough to accommodate the majority of users in the area. Park adjacent streets such as La Brea Avenue, Stocker Street and Overhill Drive are regularly in use by pedestrians as exercise routes to and from the park and its five miles of trails. Most of this exercise-related activity takes place in the mornings and evenings. Throughout the year visitors take advantage of the park and its passive recreation amenities. Several local schools regularly schedule bus trips to visit the park, providing area students with the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities. Fishing is a very popular year round activity. The lake is stocked with approximately 370 pounds of fish each month and is patronized at all times of the day.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area is the most significant park space in the region and accounts for over 40% of the existing park acreage in the planning area inventory. This regional facility is owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Department) and is operated to the County of Los Angeles for management of the park. One of the most actively used features is the park's variety of footpaths and trails. The Burke Roche Trail and the Rim Trial are the most recent trails created. More than 7 miles of trails exist at KHSRA and include the Burke Roche trail which is 2.2 miles, the Bowl Loop at 0.8 miles, the Ridge trail at 2.6 miles, the Waterfall Trial at one mile and the Ballfield Walking Path at one half-mile.

Active recreation and facilities in KHSRA include the following:

- Four playgrounds;
- One half basketball court;
- One fishing lake;
- One lit multi-purpose field;
- One sand volleyball court; and,
- One administrative building with a meeting room.

Passive recreation includes:

- Eight picnic rental shelters;
- 100 picnic tables (throughout the park);
- eight large barbecue pits; and,
- 60 small barbecue pits (dispersed throughout the park).

PATTERNS AND LEVEL OF USE

During weekends in the summer months, nearly 20,000 visitors fill the park enjoying the open space and natural surroundings of the passive areas in the park. A variety of groups use KHSRA on a fee reservation basis. Groups of approximately 100 people or less reserve picnic and recreation areas for the following general activities:

- Church events and weddings;
- Small corporate gatherings;
- Family reunions;
- Graduations; and,
- Birthday celebrations.

Special activities include an annual overnight campout for 300 youth sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America. Interpretive and nature walks for school groups and small public groups are conducted on a semi-weekly basis.

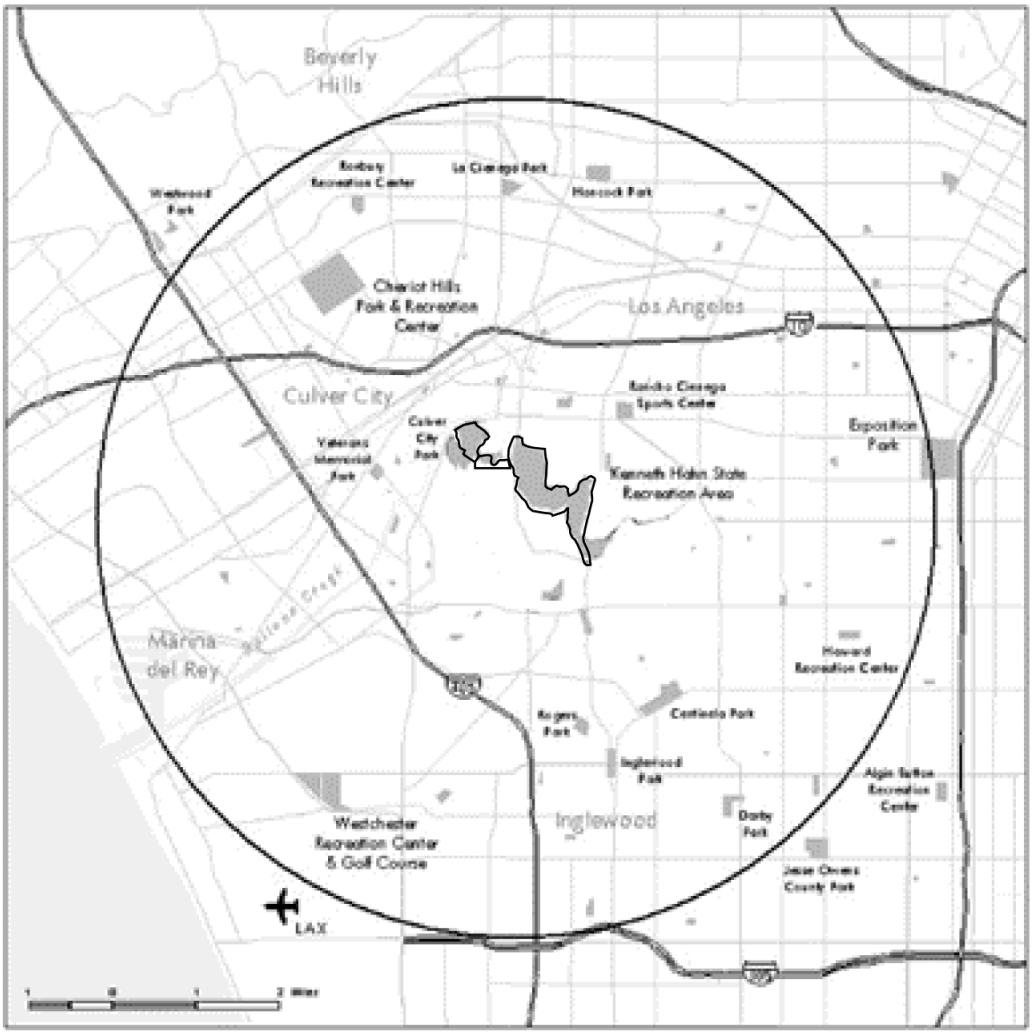
RECREATION POTENTIAL

An inventory of open space, parks and recreation facilities within a five-mile radius of the park was conducted by CCI. The County of Los Angeles, and the cities of Culver City, Inglewood and Los Angeles were each surveyed on the types and quantity of facilities in their park systems. The results of the inventory underscored the need for a significant increase in the quantity and quality of open space and recreation opportunities for the nearly three million park poor residents who use the park system.

Regional Open Space Deficit

The Baldwin Hills area is one of the most park-poor in California, with barely one acre of park space per 1,000 people, it falls far below the nationally recommended standard of six to ten acres per 1000 people (Figure 16). KHSRA serves as a recreation nucleus for residents who live in this highly under-served area. With a Population of 1 million The ratio of Park Acres Per 1,000 People is 0.91. The park acreage breakdown within a five-mile radius of the Baldwin Hills is as follows:

Location	Acreage
City of Inglewood Parks	90 acres
City of Culver City Parks	88 acres
L A. County Parks	371 acres
City of L.A. Parks	362 acres
Total	**911 acres**



Number & Facility Type	Facility per Potential Park User
22 Lit Ball Diamonds	1 per 45,000 people
17 Unlit Ball Diamonds	1 per 58,000 people
29 Multi-Use Fields (soccer & football)	1 per 34,000 people
33 Basketball Courts	1 per 30,000 people
61 Tennis Courts	1 per 16,000 people
10 Gym/Auditoriums	1 per 100,000 people
13 Community Buildings	1 per 77,000 people
43 Playgrounds	1 per 23,000 people
107 Picnic Areas	1 per 10,000 people

Existing Parks and Open Space

5-Mile radius around Site

Proposed Park

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SOURCE: Community Conservancy International, GreenInfo Network

Figure 16

Open Space Deficit in the Baldwin Hills

Simple amenities such as a science education center or a senior center have not been provided for the growing number of youth and seniors in the area. The park currently lacks a comprehensive trail system to connect existing park areas and regional trails. The only regional trail in the vicinity is the bicycle trail along Ballona Creek, which has very poor public access, no landscaping and no trailheads. An effective network of regional activities and amenities radiating from the park could revitalize the areas park system maximizing the open space and recreational opportunities for millions of park users.

There are a total of 36 parks in the Baldwin Hills area ranging from less than one acre to the 300+ acre Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. Small pocket parks were not included in this inventory. There are 11 recreation centers in the Baldwin Hills that have community and game rooms, which offer senior and youth programs or activities. The following table represents the quantity of facilities discovered in our inventory. The numbers illustrate the severe lack of amenities available to service the people within a five-mile radius of the park site.

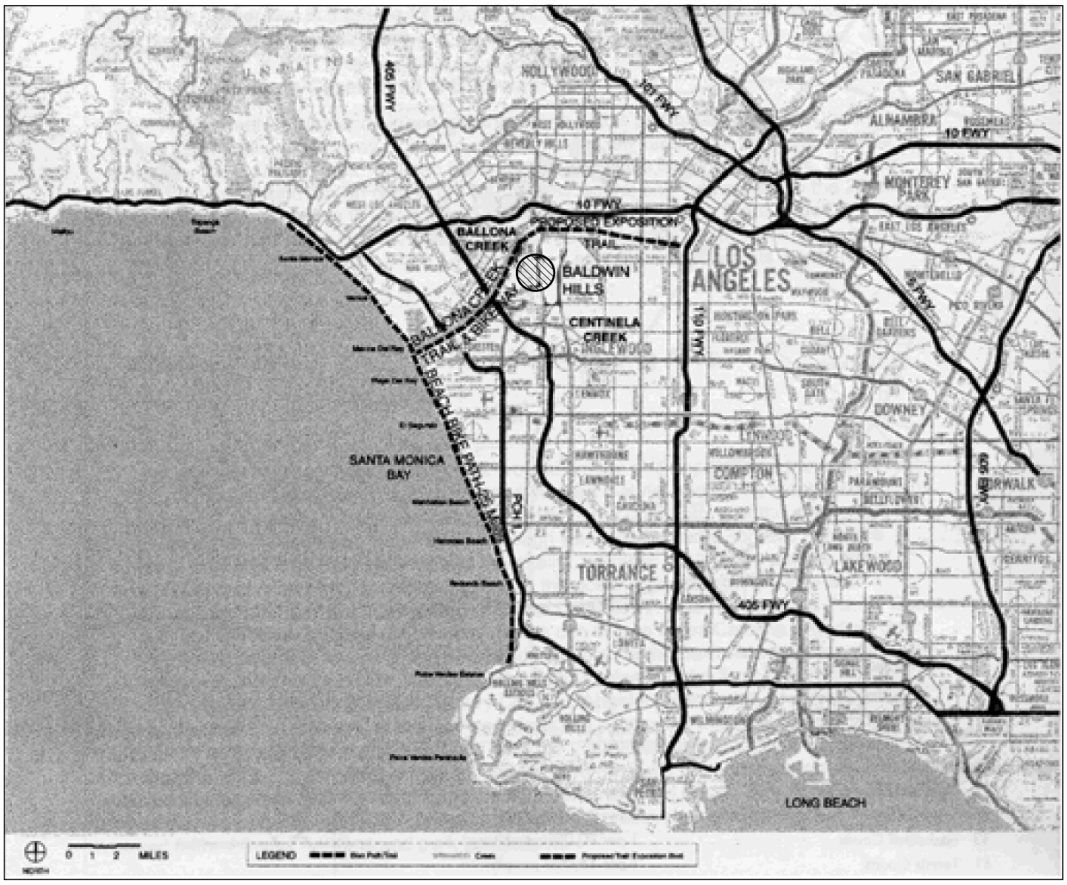
Quantity and Facility Type	Facility Per Potential Park User
22-Lit Ball Diamonds	1 lit ballfield for 45,000 people
17-Unlit Ball Diamonds	1 unlit ballfield for 58,000 people
29-Mulit-use Fields (soccer & football)	1 multi-use field for 34,000 people
33-Basketball Courts	1 basketball court for 30,000 people
61-Tennis Courts	1 tennis court for 16,000 people
10-Gym/Auditorium	1 gym and auditorium for 100,000 people
13-Community Buildings	1 community building for 77,000 people
43-Playgrounds	1 playground for 23,000 children
107-Picnic Areas	1 picnic table for 10,000 people

Nearby Parks

Nearby neighborhood parks found along the main thoroughfares surrounding the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation area include Jim Gilliam Park, Norman O. Houston Park, Culver City Park and Ladera Park. Amenities in these parks include tennis and basketball courts, multi-use playing fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas.

Ballona Creek Trail and Bikeway

The only non-street walking and bicycle trail that exists in this part of Los Angeles County is the Ballona Creek Trail and Bikeway. Located approximately 200 yards from the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site, the Ballona Creek Trail and Bikeway extends to the Ballona Wetlands, southern beaches and the Pacific Ocean (Figure 17). It provides the only trail access to the 25-mile Beach Bike Trail, connecting to Dockweiler State Beach, to Will Rogers State Beach to the north in Santa Monica, and to the Palos Verdes Peninsula past Torrance to the south. This critical



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International

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Figure 17

Ballona Creek Trail and Bikeway Connections

connection can provide a unique recreational resource to millions of residents in urban Los Angeles County.

EXISTING FACILITIES

BUILDINGS

The built environment of the park includes the following:

Recreation Facilities

- Four playgrounds;
- One half basketball court;
- One fishing lake;
- One lit multi-purpose field;
- One sand volleyball court;
- Eight picnic rental shelters;
- Benches;
- 100 picnic tables (throughout the park)
- eight large barbecue pits;
- 60 small barbecue pits (dispersed throughout the park); and,
- Three artificial ponds.

Community and Administrative Facilities

- One community center with four administrative offices and a meeting room;
- One maintenance yard and native plant storage area; and,
- Entrance kiosk.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Overview

The park consists of two distinct areas including the existing KHSRA, which is located in the cities of Culver City and Los Angeles, as well as unincorporated Los Angeles County, and the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. This existing KHSRA is generally bounded by Rodeo Drive to the north, Stocker Street to the south, La Brea Avenue to the east, and La Cienega Boulevard to the west.

The second area, the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site, is located on the west side of La Cienega Boulevard with Jefferson Boulevard forming the northern and eastern boundaries, privately owned land (i.e., existing oil production / extraction areas) to the south, and Jefferson Road to the west. These two areas would not be physically connected in this General Plan Amendment, and would therefore require separate access locations for each area.

Regional access is provided one mile north by Santa Monica Freeway (I-10), an east-west regional facility, and by the north-south San Diego Freeway (I-405) approximately two and three-quarter miles to the west. The major roadways in this area are described below within their respective management area.

Existing KHSRA – La Cienega Boulevard Park Entrance, Community Center, and North Central Valley Management Area

Santa Monica Freeway. The Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) is located approximately one mile north of the park. This east-west regional facility connects the City of Santa Monica with central Los Angeles and east to San Bernadino County (the closest alternative east-west freeway is the Century Freeway, I-105, approximately five miles south of Culver City). Within the study area, the Santa Monica Freeway provides four to five travel lanes in each direction, depending on location. As with all State freeways and highways in Los Angeles County, the 2002 Draft Congestion Management Program (CMP) identifies I-10 as a component of the CMP roadway system.

Freeway ramps are metered during peak periods to manage recurring congestion caused by travel demands associated with employment travel to central Los Angeles, Century City and Santa Monica. Despite ramp metering, travel speeds on the freeway are often lower than 35 miles per hour in each direction during peak commute periods. Access to the Santa Monica Freeway is provided at Washington Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard, Robertson Boulevard and National/Overland Boulevards.

San Diego Freeway. The San Diego Freeway (I-405) is the closest north-south freeway to the park, located approximately two and three-quarter miles to the west. Four to five travel lanes in each direction, with auxiliary lanes at some freeway interchanges, are provided along the San Diego Freeway, depending on location. Freeway access from surface streets is provided at Sepulveda Boulevard, Jefferson Boulevard, Sawtelle Boulevard/Braddock Drive, Culver Boulevard, Washington Boulevard/Venice Boulevard, National Boulevard, and La Cienega Boulevard (south of the project site). Access to this freeway is also metered during both peak commute periods. I-405 is a Los Angeles County CMP facility.

The closest alternative north-south freeway is the Harbor Freeway (I-110) six miles east of Culver City. The San Diego Freeway supports the north-south travel demands along the Westside between the San Fernando Valley, West Los Angeles, Los Angeles International Airport and the City of Long Beach.

La Cienega Boulevard. La Cienega Boulevard is classified as a major north-south highway in Los Angeles and an arterial in Culver City. North of Venice Boulevard, La Cienega is a six-lane, 80-foot wide roadway with three through lanes in each direction. South of Venice Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard varies in width from 66 feet wide immediately north of Washington Boulevard to 92 feet in width at Rodeo Road. Throughout most segments of La Cienega Boulevard, three through lanes are provided in each direction with left-turn channelization. The 2002 Draft Congestion Management Program (CMP) identifies La Cienega Boulevard as a component of the CMP roadway system.

La Brea Avenue. La Brea Avenue is classified as a major north-south highway in Los Angeles, with a width of approximately 72 feet near Rodeo Road. In the vicinity of the park, La Brea

Avenue is three through lanes in each direction. Left-turn channelization is also provided at all major cross-streets.

Stocker Street. Stocker Street is a four lane arterial roadway that provides east-west travel in the southern portion of the La Cienega Boulevard Management Area. Stocker Street provides local access to Crenshaw Boulevard to the east. Crenshaw Boulevard provided regional access to I-10 and I-405.

Slauson Avenue. Slauson Avenue is classified as a major arterial route that also provides east-west travel for vehicles destined south of KHSRA. Slauson Avenue provides regional access to I-405 and the Marina Del Rey Freeway (SR-90).

Venice Boulevard. Venice Boulevard is classified as a divided east-west major highway in Los Angeles, and an arterial in Culver City. West of Interstate 10, this roadway is State Route 187, under the jurisdiction of Caltrans; this portion of Venice Boulevard is a part of the Congestion Management Plan Roadway System. The entire segment of Venice Boulevard in the project vicinity has been developed to standards exceeding the City of Los Angeles standards for a typical divided major highway facility and is approximately 104 feet wide, curb-to-curb. Venice Boulevard is striped to provide a six-lane facility with bike lanes in both directions, media islands and intersectional left-turn channelization at major cross streets. Along most sections of Venice Boulevard on-street parking is permitted with some time restrictions during the period from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Robertson Boulevard. Robertson Boulevard is classified as a north-south secondary highway in Los Angeles (a primary collector/secondary arterial within Culver City). South of Venice Boulevard, Robertson Boulevard becomes Higuera Street and is 74 feet wide, providing two lanes in each direction. North of Venice Boulevard, a short segment of Robertson is divided and provides access to and from the Santa Monica Freeway.

Existing Public Trails

One of the most actively used features in KHSRA is the park's variety of footpaths and trails. The Burke Roche Trail and the Rim Trial are the most recent trails created. More than seven miles of trails exist at KHSRA and include the 2.2 mile Burke Roche trail, the Bowl Loop at 0.8 miles, the Ridge trail at 2.6 miles, the Waterfall Trial at one mile, and the Ballfield Walking Path at one half-mile.

Vista Pacifica Scenic Site Management Area

Jefferson Boulevard. Jefferson Boulevard is classified as a major highway in the City of Los Angeles and an arterial in the City of Culver City, running east-west in Los Angeles and the project area, and curving north-south to the south of the project site within Culver City. Adjacent to the project site, Jefferson Boulevard is an 80-82 foot wide roadway and provides two lanes in each direction with two-way left-turn channelization. Intersectional left-turn channelization is also provided along Jefferson Boulevard at all major cross streets. The "Y" intersection of

Jefferson and Sepulveda Boulevards is currently being improved with the inclusion of the Sepulveda/Jefferson connector road, which will enhance the capacity of the intersection.

Higuera Street. Culver City designates Higuera Street as a secondary arterial east of Hayden Avenue and a collector street west of Hayden Avenue. For most of its length, a single through lane is provided in each direction. Higuera Street currently provides two northbound traffic lanes and one southbound lane immediately south of Washington Boulevard, and curves to become an east-west street. The eastbound approach of Higuera Street to Jefferson Boulevard provides two eastbound through lanes, one southbound right-turn lane and one northbound lane. East of Jefferson Boulevard, Higuera Street becomes Rodeo Road.

Rodeo Road. Rodeo Road is designated a major highway within the City of Los Angeles. Rodeo Road caries in width from 70 feet east of La Cienega Boulevard to 82 feet east of Lenawee Avenue. Rodeo Road provides three lanes in each direction throughout the study area.

Washington Boulevard. Washington Boulevard, a designated major highway within Los Angeles and an arterial within Culver City, is 72 feet wide east of Overland Avenue and 78 feet wide west of Overland Avenue. In the study area, Washington Boulevard is a four-lane facility with left-turn channelization.

Sepulveda Boulevard. Sepulveda Boulevard is designated a major highway within Los Angeles and an arterial within Culver City. North of Jefferson Boulevard (at Playa Street), this 95-foot wide, north-south oriented roadway provides three lanes in each direction, with full left-turn channelization. North of the northern Jefferson Boulevard intersection, Sepulveda Boulevard provides two travel lanes in each direction plus left-turn channelization.

Overland Avenue. Overland Avenue, designated a major highway within Los Angeles and an arterial within Culver City, varies in width from 56 feet wide north of Washington Boulevard to 80 feet wide on the north leg of the Jefferson Boulevard intersection. Overland Avenue provides two lanes in each direction at Jefferson Boulevard and at Culver Boulevard.

National Boulevard. National Boulevard is designated as a secondary highway within Los Angeles and a primary collector/secondary arterial within Culver City. National Boulevard is 64 feet wide at Washington Boulevard and provides two through lanes in each direction. Left-turn channelization is also provided at all cross streets.

Duquesne Avenue. Duquesne Avenue is designated a primary collector/secondary arterial in the City of Culver City. East of Jefferson Boulevard, Duquesne Avenue terminates and becomes a 64-foot wide roadway that serves Culver City Park. West of Jefferson Boulevard, Duquesne Avenue is 46 feet wide and provides one lane in each direction with on-street parking along both sides within the residential area. Left-turn channelization is provides at all major cross streets.

Holdrege Avenue. Holdrege Avenue is a local street and is located approximately 1,085 feet north of the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. This 40 foot wide street provides one lane in each direction.

Existing Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service

Year 2001 a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic volumes were available for the CMP arterials (La Cienega Boulevard, I-10 and I-405) in the study area as reported in the Draft 2002 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County (CMP). Traffic volumes for other arterials in the project vicinity are either not available, or are outdated for more than one year. CMP requirements indicate that peak hour traffic volumes used for traffic impact analyses shall not be more than one year old at the date of analysis.

The methodology used in the CMP for the analysis and evaluation of traffic operations at each CMP facility is based on the roadway segment volume-to-capacity (v/c) analysis methodology. Briefly, a roadway segment is given a capacity based on its number of travel lanes. Morning and evening peak hour traffic volumes for each segment are divided by the capacity to derive a v/c ratio. Procedures have been developed for determining operating characteristics of an arterial segment and intersection in terms of "Level of Service" (LOS) for different levels of traffic v/c ratios. The term LOS describes the quality of traffic flow. LOS ranges from A to F, A being free-flow and F being congested, force-flow. Descriptions of levels of service and their respective v/c ratios are shown in the following table (Table 2-1). The existing (2001) peak hour traffic volumes and levels of service for the CMP facilities in the project vicinity are presented in Table 2-2. As seen in the table, all CMP facilities in the project vicinity currently operate at poor levels of service (LOS F) in both peak hours.

Public Transit Service

Two bus routes operated by the Culver City Municipal Bus Lines (CCMBL) serve the project area. Currently, the CCMBL routes that provide the closest service to the proposed project site are described below.

CCMBL Line 4. Line 4 operates exclusively within Culver City, with the exception of service provided at West Los Angeles College in Los Angeles. This route operates primarily along Washington Boulevard, Duquesne Avenue, Jefferson Boulevard, Overland Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard. Service along this line is provided by one bus per hour in both directions throughout daylight hours of operation. The closest bus stop to the project site along this route is located on Duquesne Avenue at Jefferson Boulevard, approximately 0.5 miles from the proposed office component.**CCMBL Line 5.** Line 5 operates between Mar Vista on the west and Blair Hills on the east. Primary route segments include Inglewood Boulevard, Braddock Drive, Washington Boulevard, Higuera Street and Rodeo Road. Similar to Line 4, this line provides service with one bus per hour in both directions during daylight operations. The closest bus stop to the project site along this route is located on Holdrege Avenue at Jefferson Boulevard, approximately 0.2 miles from the commercial office complex.

As indicated by the above information, the proposed development is not directly served by the CCMBL because the existing transit stops are located too far from the proposed project.

TABLE 2-1
LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS

Level of Service	Arterial/Intersection Operations	Volume-to-Capacity Ratio (v/c)
Arterial/Intersection Levels of Service		
A	At LOS A, there are no cycles that are fully loaded, and few are even close to loaded. No approach phase is fully utilized by traffic and no vehicle waits longer than one red indication. Typically, the approach appears quite open, turning movements are easily made, and nearly all drivers find freedom of operation.	0.00 v/c to 0.60 v/c
B	LOS B represents stable operation. An occasional approach phase is fully utilized and a substantial number are approaching full use. Many drivers begin to feel somewhat restricted with platoons of vehicles.	>0.60 v/c to 0.70 v/c
C	In LOS C stable operation continues. Full signal cycle loading is still intermittent, but more frequent. Occasionally drivers may have to wait through more than one red signal indication, and back-ups may develop behind turning vehicles.	>0.70 v/c to 0.80 v/c
D	LOS D encompasses a zone of increasing restriction, approaching instability. Delays to approaching vehicles may be substantial during short peaks within the peak period, but enough cycles with lower demand occur to permit periodic clearance of developing queues, thus preventing excessive back-ups.	>0.80 v/c to 0.90 v/c
E	LOS E represents the most vehicles that any particular intersection approach can accommodate. At capacity (v/c=1.00) there may be long queues of vehicles waiting upstream of the intersection and delays may be great (up to several signal cycles).	>0.90 v/c to 1.00 v/c
F	LOS F represents jammed conditions. Back-ups from locations downstream or on the cross street may restrict or prevent movement of vehicles out of the approach under consideration; hence, volumes carried are not predictable. V/C values are highly variable, because full utilization of the approach may be prevented by outside conditions.	>1.00 v/c

SOURCE: Draft 2002 Congestion Management Plan for Los Angeles County, LACMTA, April 2002.

TABLE 2-2
2001 CMP ARTERIAL AND FREEWAY MAINLINE
PEAK HOUR LEVELS OF SERVICE

			AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
CMP Route	**Cross Street**	**Agency**	**V/C**	**LOS**	**V/C**	**LOS**
La Cienega Boulevard	Jefferson Boulevard	Los Angeles City	1.12	F	1.13	F
	Centinela Boulevard	Los Angeles City	1.14	F	1.10	F
	Stocker Street	LA County	1.18	F	1.06	F
Interstate 10	e/o Overland St	Caltrans	1.26	F(1)	1.36	F(2)
	e/o La Brea Ave	Caltrans	1.36	F(2)	1.46	F(3)
Interstate 405	n/o Inglewood Blvd	Caltrans	1.36	F(2)	1.01	F(0)
	n/o La Tijera Blvd	Caltrans	1.36	F(2)	1.26	F(2)

SOURCE: Draft 2002 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County, MTA.

Notes: Volume-to-capacity ratios for the mainline segments are based on the worst performing direction of traffic.

UTILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Wastewter Treatment Services

The park is in the area served by the Hyperion Treatment plant (HTP), located directly southwest of the Los Angeles International Airport. The HTP treats wastewater from almost all of the City of Los Angeles, as well as other cities, including Culver City. The City of Culver City is under contract to the City of Los Angeles to participate in the cost of having its wastewater treated at the Los Angeles facilities. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board governs wastewater produced in the Park.

Stormwater Facilities

Few storm drains currently exist in the park. Storm water currently is absorbed into the ground. Ballona Creek, a channelized waterway, runs along Jefferson Boulevard on the west side of the park.

Water Supply

Water service to the park is presently supplied by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Approximately 75 percent of Los Angeles' water is from the Los Angeles-Owens River

Aqueduct, 15 percent from local groundwater sources and 10 percent purchased from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). These proportions are not typical during drought periods, when MWD water makes up the majority of water supplies. MWD's ability to deliver water to Southern California has the potential to be severely affected by an extended drought, and more stringent water conservation measures during drought periods are anticipated. A small amount of well water is also used on site.

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste from the park is currently collected by the County. Landfills likely serving the park include Calabasas, Bradley West, Lopez Canyon, Chiquita Canyon, and North Valley-Sunshine Canyon. These landfills are classified as major landfills, which are defined as those facilities that receive more than 50,000 tons of solid waste per year.

Police Protection Services

Police and protection services in the park are presently provided by three different departments, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Culver City Police Department, and the Los Angeles County Police Department. The Culver City Police Department is the primary service provider for the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site and the County of Los Angeles Police Department is the primary service provider for the eastern portion of the park. The station that serves KHSRA is at 360 W. El Segundo Ave, about 13 miles from the park. Although no formal mutual aid agreement exists between the two departments, they cooperate as part of a regional approach in response to a large-scale event or natural catastrophe.

Fire Protection Services

Fire protection of the park is provided under two different jurisdictions. The Culver City Fire Department is the primary service provider for the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site and the City of Los Angeles Fire Department is the primary service provider for the eastern portion of the park. In addition, under the Statewide Master Mutual Aid Agreement, each Fire Department is available to assist the other upon request. In the event these departments cannot respond, assistance could be made available from the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Existing Community Infrastructure

There are over 75 religious institutions in and around the Baldwin Hills planning area with a total estimated membership of 80,000. The churches range in membership from 100 to 20,000 per institution. In the African American and Latino communities, religious institutions represent a large cross section of the people who live in neighborhoods surrounding the Baldwin Hills. Several of these churches have started their own community development centers (CDCs) that are focused on creating economic and education enhancing infrastructures within the neighborhoods they serve.

There are 55 schools within the planning area representing elementary, middle, and high schools. Over 30,000 area students will be impacted by the development of the park site which has the potential for recreation and education based programs to supplement their current curriculum. West L.A. Community College serves area youth and adults. The campus is situated on the western edge of the Baldwin Hills and is positioned to be an important nexus for development of environmental based park management curriculum. With parking for approximately 8,000 commuter students, the school will also serve as a prime public access point on weekends.

There are six public libraries serving the communities surrounding the Baldwin Hills. Active youth organizations include the Crenshaw YMCA, Culver City-Palms YMCA and the Angles Mesa YWCA. At least four local Boy and Girl Scout districts are represented in Inglewood, Culver City and Los Angeles. American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) has one of the largest organized youth sports programs in Los Angeles. AYSO has a major role in family-based activities and has an extensive network of local members throughout the planning area.

Business and city service organizations in the planning area include three large chamber of commerce groups representing Inglewood, Culver City, and Greater Los Angeles and three specific chambers representing African American, Latino and Crenshaw area business interests. There are two city hall buildings, one in Culver City and one in Inglewood, each hosting a variety of city service departments and their respective city council representatives. The Los Angeles Urban League, the South Los Angeles Economic Alliance, and Leimert Park Merchants Association along with three local Economic Development Corporations, are all integral components of the Crenshaw community infrastructure.

PARK SUPPORT

The park is currently managed by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. The County currently employees 16 full-time staff on-site and between 12-20 part-time staff, depending on season.

PLANNING INFLUENCES

SYSTEM-WIDE PLANNING

The Department performs some planning that addresses issues that cross park and regional boundaries. Any system-wide plans developed in the future that contain specific recommendations pertaining to the use, operation, or management of the State Park System may also effect future planning decisions at KHSRA. The following are existing statewide or system-wide planning influences that may affect planning decisions at KHSRA.

- Public Resources Code (PRC);
- California Code of Regulations;
- California Environmental Quality Act;
- Policies, Rules, Regulations, and Orders of the California State Park and Recreation;

- Commission and California Department of Parks and Recreation;
- California Department of Parks and Recreation Operation Manual (DOM);
- California Department of Parks and Recreation Administration Manual (DAM);
- California State Park System Plan;
- California State Park Mission Statement;
- California State Parks Access to Parks Guidelines; and,
- Resource Management Directives for the California Department of Parks and Recreation. These directives amplify the legal codes contained in the PRC, the California Code of Regulations, and the California State Park and Recreation Commission's Statements of Policy and Rules of Order. The text of the following directives which are particularly pertinent to existing or potential issues at KHSRA are listed below:
  - Directive Number 5 State Park Development;
  - Directive Number 9 Natural Preserve Integrity;
  - Directive Number 26 Consideration of Ecological Factors;
  - Directive Number 27 Natural Preserve Establishment;
  - Directive Number 28 Visitor Use Impacts;
  - Directive Number 29 Vegetation Management;
  - Directive Number 34 Exotic Plant Elimination;
  - Directive Number 35 Wildlife Habitat;
  - Directive Number 36 Wildlife Population Balance;
  - Directive Number 37 Erosion Control;
  - Directive Number 43 Water Quality Control;
  - Directive Number 46 Environmental Quality;
  - Directive Number 63 Cultural Resource Management Plan; and,
  - Directive Number 74 Recreation Development/Use.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Consideration of regional context is important in any discussion about the land use and facilities at KHSRA. When planning for KHSRA, it is important to understand the intrinsic values within the park as well as the relationship with the surrounding areas. The following summarizes the current public lands management agencies and land uses surrounding the park.

REGIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

Baldwin Hills Master Plan

Community Conservancy International (CCI) is prepared a Master Plan for the larger "Baldwin Hills Park" which includes KHSRA, existing local parks, and other private lands within its boundaries. This General Plan Amendment is consistent with the concepts and goals of the larger Baldwin Hills Park Master Planning effort. This effort represents an extraordinary challenge and unprecedented opportunity to develop a state-of-the-art, community responsive, large-scale urban park where sensitive natural habitat co-exists in a balanced environment with substantial active recreation, cultural and educational facilities. Baldwin Hills Park is envisioned as an evolution over time from a privately owned industrial area into a rich regional public resource. In addition to preserving and restoring the regionally unique landforms and sensitive natural habitat areas of

the Baldwin Hills, the Baldwin Hills Park would provide active and passive recreation facilities, educational and cultural facilities, job training and employment opportunities.

Baldwin Hills Park employs the "One Big Park" concept to create an over two square mile zone within Los Angeles' urban core which allows natural habitat areas to coexist with recreational, educational, and cultural resources. The creation of one large land area would be achieved through the construction of a 1/2-mile long land bridge spanning La Cienega Boulevard to connect the east and west ridges over the existing six-lane roadway, creating one unified land area, restoring the historic landscape and establishing effective mitigation of visual and noise impacts from La Cienega Boulevard. An internal park road, footpaths and bicycle trails would provide access between the two currently bisected portions of the site. Wildlife will also be able to use the land bridge as an important connection between habitat areas, which will help the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations and natural habitat in the Baldwin Hills.

The expanded park would extend into adjacent park-poor communities with greenways, pedestrian and bicycle trails, and will connect to important existing and planned regional trail systems, including the Ballona Creek Trail, the Stocker Street Trail and the La Brea Avenue Trail. Park visitor facilities might include interpretive resources concerning the natural, cultural and industrial history of the site. Science and educational facilities planned for the park will create a living laboratory that, with the support of institutions like the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the California Science Center and West Los Angeles College could become a model urban learning resource. Facilities and activities for all ages have been included in the preliminary park design from playgrounds to playing fields, skate park to golf course and senior center to botanical gardens.

The park design concept preserves the existing east and west ridgelines as natural habitat lands and passive, landscaped open space areas. No active recreation, intensive uses, facilities or roadways would be planned on the ridgelines or on the steep slopes below them in order to protect spectacular view sites and sensitive habitat areas and to avoid expensive and impractical earth moving on steep unstable slopes. The lower central valley portion of the site, which is relatively flat and which has been significantly disturbed over time, has been designed to accommodate most of the proposed active recreational uses, structures and other facilities in the park. Visitor serving facilities are planned for the northwestern portion of the site to provide important public access and educational opportunities and to take advantage of one of the most spectacular views in all Los Angeles of the Pacific Ocean, Santa Monica Bay, Los Angeles Basin and the surrounding mountains.

General Plan Designation

The existing portion of KHSRA is designated Open Space by the County of Los Angeles. The Vista Pacifica Scenic Site and adjacent County owned lands, located in the City of Culver City,

are designated Low Density Multiple Family Residential[7] and Open Space and are zoned HR – Hillside Residential and R1a – One Family Dwelling.

Air Quality Management Plan

The park is located in the South Coast Air Basin. The purpose of the Air Quality Management Plan is to establish a comprehensive program that will result in the achievement of Federal and state air quality standards. Individual Air Quality Management Plan's from all California air quality districts are incorporated into a State Implementation Plan, which outlines the state's effort to comply with the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments. Project consistency with the Air Quality Management Plan is determined by the local air quality control district.

Regional Water Quality Plan

The Water Quality Control Plan for the South Coast Basin (Basin Plan) was developed by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Southern Coast Region. The Basin Plan is intended to show how the quality of the surface and ground waters in the Southern Coast Region should be managed to provide the highest water quality reasonably possible. Specifically, the Basin Plan lists the various water uses in the Region; describes the water quality that must be maintained to allow those uses; and describes the programs, projects, and other actions that are necessary to achieve the standards established in the plan. The Basin Plan implements a number of state and federal laws, the most important of which are the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the Federal Clean Water Act. The U.S. EPA has delegated responsibility for implementation of portions of the Clean Water Act to the State and Regional Boards, including water quality planning and control board programs, such as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The proposed General Plan Amendment would comply with all state and federal regulations governing water quality. Given the expected compliance with applicable standards and regulations, together with the setbacks the project would provide from creeks, the proposed General Plan Amendment would be consistent with the Basin Plan.

Air Quality Management Plan

The project site is located within the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The SCAQMD adopted its first Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) in 1979, which intended to meet federal air quality standards by December 31, 1987. Using better data and modeling tools, the 1982 revision of the AQMP concluded that the basin could not demonstrate attainment by the 1987 deadline required by the Federal Clean Air Act. Therefore, the 1982 Revision of the AQMP proposed a long-range strategy that could result in attainment in 20 years. In 1987, a federal court ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to

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7 **Low Density Multiple Family** (up to 15 dwelling units per nte acre). Low Density Multiple Family allows multiple family dwellings, as well as single family, two family and three family dwellings. This designation is intended to preserve existing and encourage future developments of quality large-scale reasonably affordable low density housing on individual development parcels of 15,000 square feet or more. Typically, these parcels are suitable for large-scale development in terms of compatible adjacent uses, environmental constraints and location on or near major streets.

disapprove the 1982 AQMP revision because it did not demonstrate attainment of the federal standards by the 1987 deadline (South Coast Air Quality Management District and Southern California Association of Governments, 1989).

The 1989 AQMP was adopted locally by the SCAQMD in March 1989, and was approved by the ARB in August 1989. This plan was forwarded to the EPA for review. However, prior to its planned review, the California legislature passed the California Clean Air Act, which caused the district and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to immediately begin updating the 1989 plan and the EPA to delay the review process. Since March 1989, the 1989 AQMP has become the framework for all future air pollution control efforts in the South Coast Air Basin (South Coast Air Quality Management District and Southern California Association of Governments, 1989). The AQMP is updated every three years.

Noise Regulations, Plans, and Policies

Noise is regulated in the project area through implementation of local general plan policies and noise ordinance standards. Local general plans identify general principles intended to guide and influence development plans, and noise ordinances set forth specific standards and procedures for addressing particular noise sources and activities. Portions of the park are situated within the City of Culver City, the City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County; each of these jurisdictions has its own general plan and noise ordinance standards that contain guidelines for determining the compatibility of various land uses within different noise environments. The noise/land use compatibility standards in the *Noise Element of the Los Angeles City General* are consistent with the standards included in the *Noise Element of the City of Culver City Revised General Plan*. The *Noise Element of the Los Angeles City General Plan* also includes noise contours for nearby airports (City of Los Angeles, 1999). The park does not fall in the 65 dBA Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) of any of the region's major airports, though aircraft from Los Angeles International Airport may fly over the park.

Construction activities within the City of Culver City are required to comply with the Culver City Municipal Code Section 9.07.035, which regulates hours of operation and noise levels from mechanical equipment used. In addition, Municipal Code Section 9.04.020.(D).(2) prohibits all construction activity that causes any loud or unusual noise or sound disturbing the peace of residents of a residentially zoned neighborhood, except between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m Sundays.

The City of Los Angeles Noise Regulation (Section Municipal Code 112.01) controls any disturbing, excessive or offensive noise which causes discomfort or annoyance to any receptor of normal sensitivity in the area and applies to all noise sources including construction noise and project-induced noise affecting the surrounding area. Section 112.04, in particular, prohibits the use of lawn mowers, backpack blowers, lawn edgers, tractors, and other machinery within 500 feet of a residence between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Section 41.40 prohibits the use of construction equipment between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

While the southern portion of the park is located on unincorporated land in the County of Los Angeles, the nearest residences and other sensitive receptors are separated by Norman O. Houston Park, Ruben Ingold Park, and the intersection of Stocker Street and La Brea Street (the Five Points area). A school is situated at the Southeast corner of the intersection on County land.

ZONE OF PRIMARY INTEREST

The Department's concern for any environmental changes or ongoing impacts outside the unit that could jeopardize or degrade State Park System values are thought of as zone(s) of primary interest. At KHSRA, the Department is generally concerned with the following: traffic and circulation; vegetation management; bio-corridors; lands that may ultimately connect the park to other open space[8] or that may help provide for additional public parking and access.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Baldwin Hills area is extremely diverse, encompassing a wide range of ethnic groups and income levels (Figures 18 and 19). Within a five mile radius of the park site, ethnic representation is approximately 29% African American, 33% Latino, and 38% White; within a three-mile radius, the African American population rises to over 50%. Within the five-mile planning area, annual household income levels range from $13,000 to over $100,000, with 19% below the national poverty line and 66% below Los Angeles County's median household income of $37,940. Nearly one in every four households in this area has children under 18. Higher

income single-family households with larger concentrations of white residents are in Culver City and the western edge of the Baldwin Hills. The eastside of the Baldwin Hills is predominantly African American with the majority of hillside, park-adjacent single-family households representing the oldest and most affluent segments of the population. In surrounding flatter areas, there is a marked increase in high-density apartment complexes and lower income families. Although many of these areas are still primarily African American, the Latino population is growing, with highest concentrations in Inglewood to the south and Jefferson Park to the northeast.

PUBLIC CONCERN

One of the most important issues raised by the public that has influenced the design of the park site is the protection of natural areas with the greatest potential for sustaining native wildlife and plant habitat. This coincides with the overall public goal of preserving the natural character of the area for education opportunities and community enjoyment. It is also important to note these protected zones would need to be accessible by a carefully designed system of trails.

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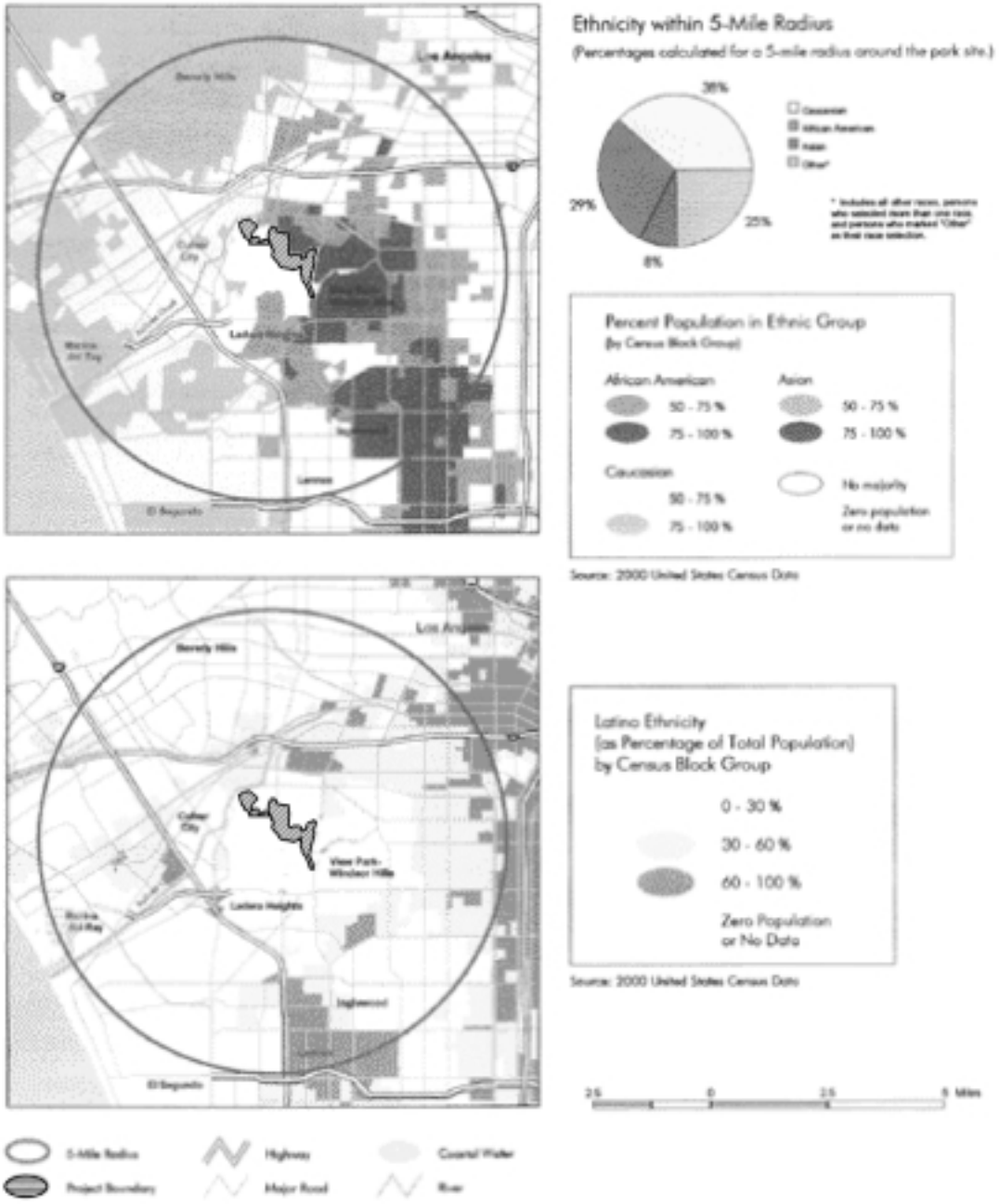
8 Discussion and all other comments regarding land acquisition are intended for long-range planning purposes only, and do not represent any intent or commitment for acquisition. Acquisition of any land depends on many factors, including the availability of funds and the willingness of the owner to sell. In most areas, through proper enforcement of existing county planning and zoning regulations,private lands can be privately managed in harmony with the neighboring state park lands.



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Greenlnfo Network

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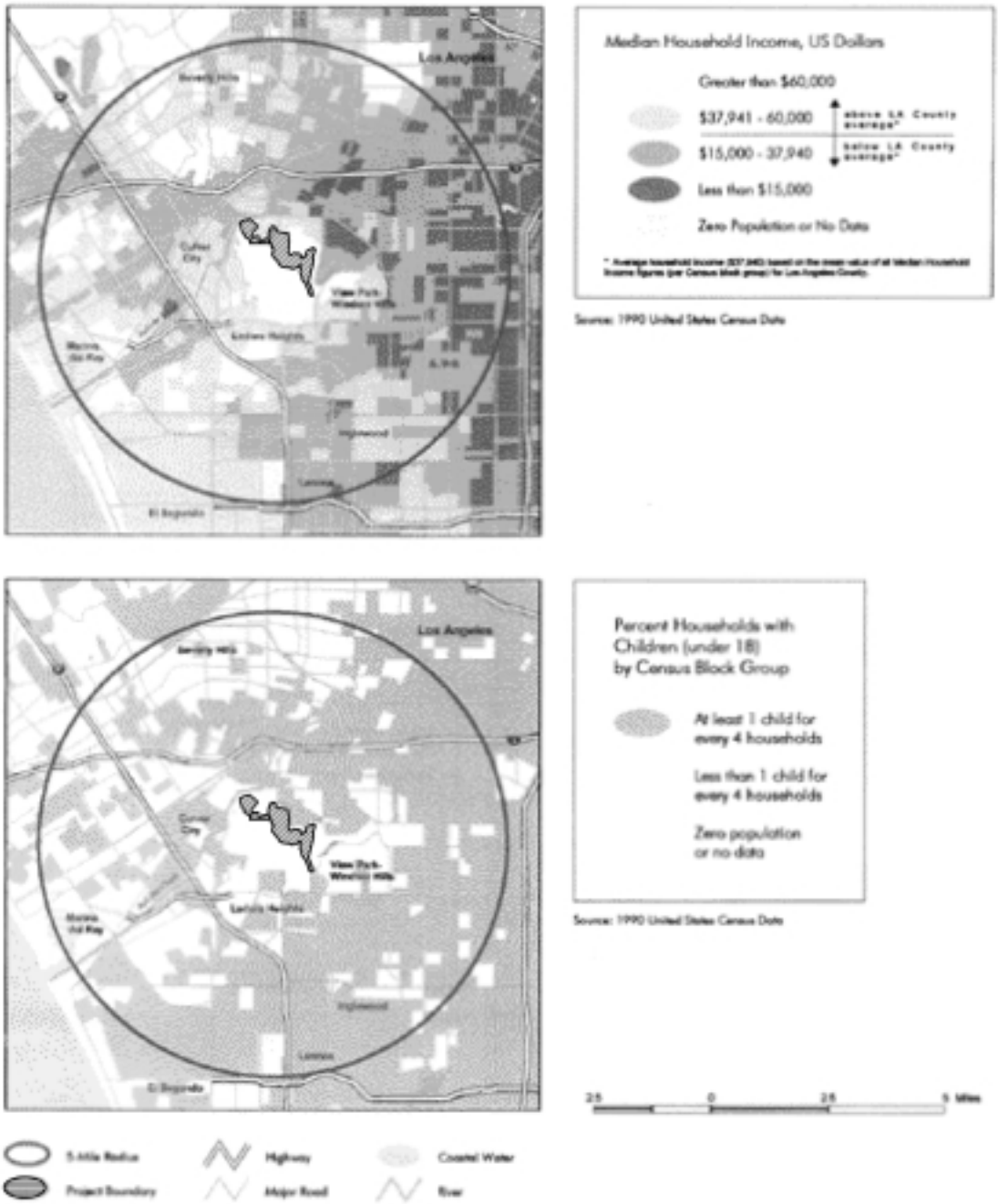
Figure 18
Demographics-Ethnicity



SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; GreenInfo Network

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Figure 19

Demographics-Income Level, Households with Children

Public safety and security were among the highest concerns raised by the public. Designing the park as a safe environment for recreational, educational and cultural activities included limiting construction of activities and facilities in areas of steep and unstable slopes, and conducting a thorough environmental health review of all public activity areas. Maintaining a secure environment should be considered a top priority for the park plan. In addition to existing county police in the park on site security provided by State Rangers, additional county park police or other local law enforcement personnel should be included in the park plan to address concerns about illegal activities taking place in the park site. In the event of an emergency, easy access for public safety and first aid vehicles was also deemed critical to making the park safe.

Adjacent residential areas expressed concerns regarding the proximity of entrances and recreation activities to their homes. Of particular concern was the impact of noise, lights and crime typically associated with urban parks. In an effort to create a park that a compatible to the surrounding neighborhoods, the design team addressed these issues by creating wide buffer zones of natural habitat around the park and strategically placing active recreation areas away from nearby homes.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

All aspects of the proposed park site were thoroughly researched, analyzed and mapped to determine site constraints and limitations as well as site opportunities and potential. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping based on a current aerial survey was used. Diagrams of key elements posing constraints or potentials were prepared to assess optimum placement of park, recreation, habitat and other related uses (Figures 20 and 21).

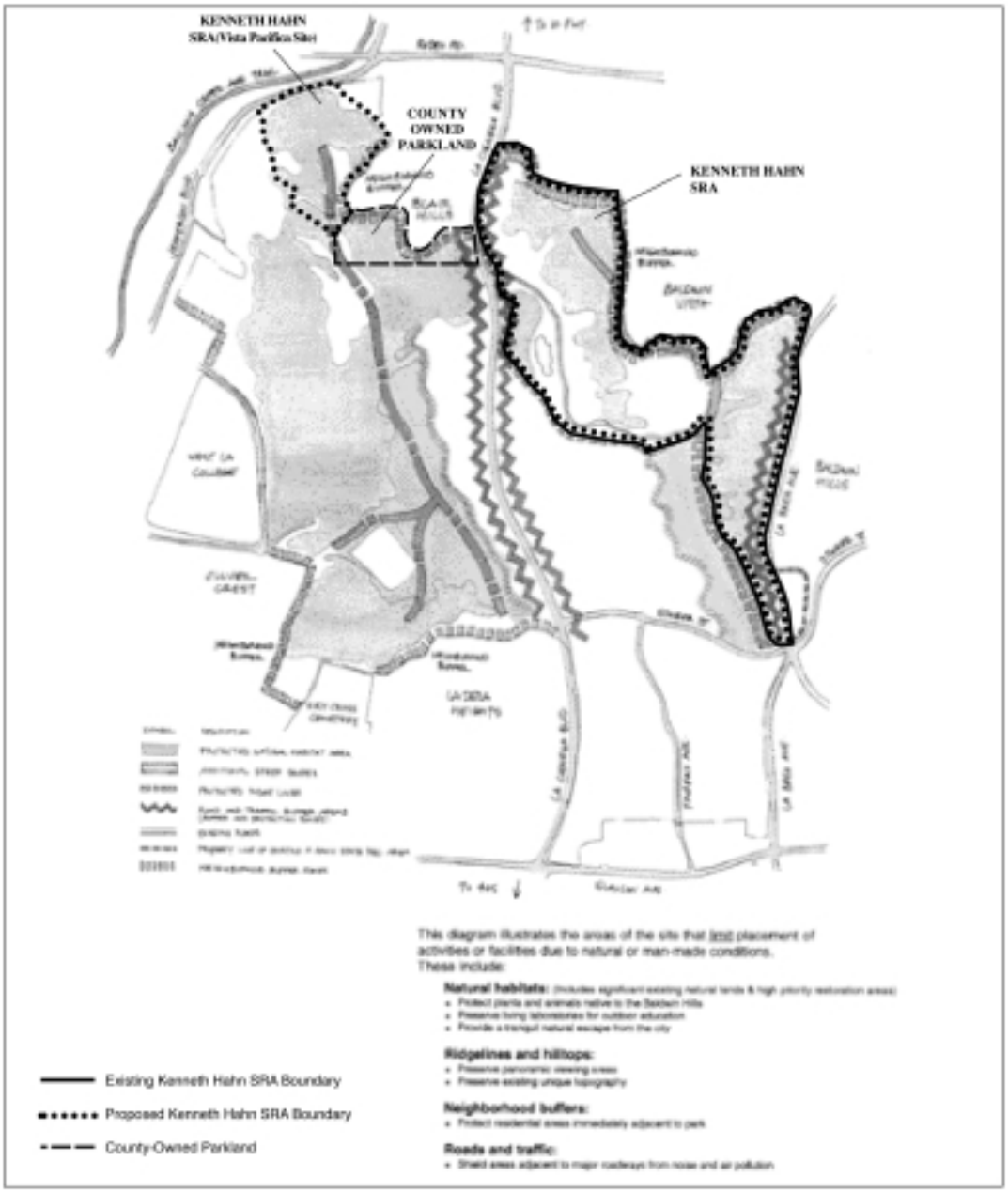
SITE CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

CONNECTING EAST AND WEST RIDGELINES

The site currently consists of two areas divided by La Cienega Boulevard: the existing KHSRA and the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. Well preserved natural habitat and areas with good potential for restoration are located on both sides of the park but are separated by oil and gas extraction activities and the roadway. The Department and the County of Los Angeles are working cooperatively to acquire properties that would connect these two distinct parcels.

TOPOGRAPHY

As part of the Newport Inglewood Structural Zone, a series of northwesterly trending hills extending from Cheviot Hills in the North to Newport Mesa in the south, the Baldwin Hills are characterized by two ridges rising up to 500 feet above sea level. Steep slopes and canyons dominate the site on the east and west sides of both ridges. The interior of the site is characterized by similar steep slopes in the northeastern portion of the site KHSRA. Industrial operations in the central part of the site have produced considerable alteration of the natural topography. Areas graded for roadways and oil and gas extraction operations are characterized by steep and often unvegetated earthen slopes. A slope analysis performed with GIS software



NOTE: Data presented on other public or private lands is for informational purposes only.

SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Mia Lehrer + Associates; Hood Design

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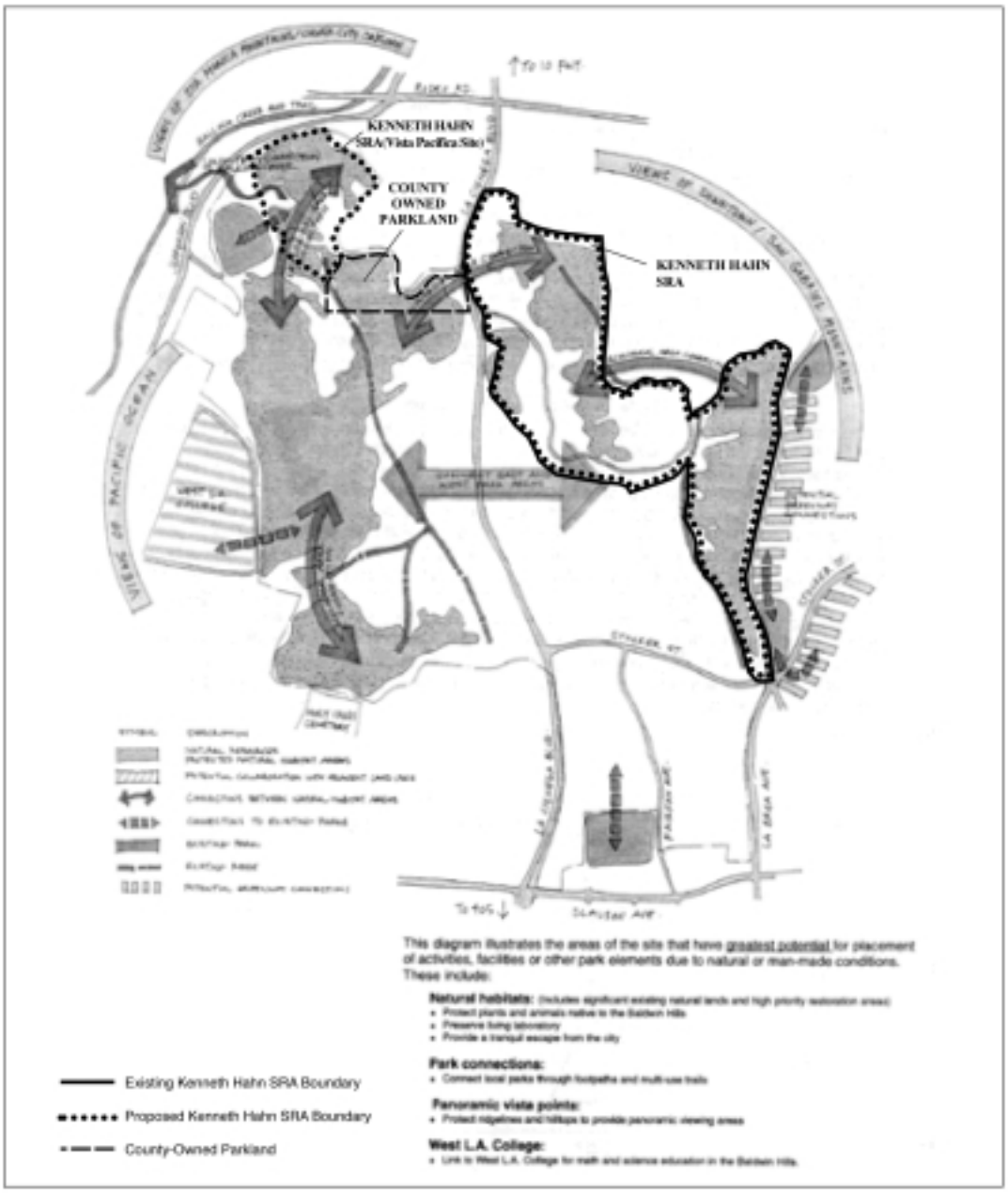
Figure 20
Site Limitations Diagram



NOTE: Data presented on other public or private lands is for informational purposes only.

SOURCE: Community Conservancy International; Mia Lehrer + Associates; Hood Design

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Figure 21
Site Potential Diagram

identified much of the site as having slopes of 20% or greater. These areas are considered largely unsuitable for structures or recreational facilities due to instability of slopes, numerous public safety hazards and the cost of grading and construction of retaining structures required to create viable construction sites.

ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS

The site is bounded on the north, west and southwest by single and multi-family residential neighborhoods. Visual impact and noise from park activities have the potential to create disturbances to adjacent residences. Residents in homes adjacent to KHSRA have experienced impacts from the park. Planning of future facilities should include effective mitigation measures including adequate setbacks from adjacent neighborhoods and the use of earthforms and existing topography to separate park activities from adjacent residents. Restored ecological areas without recreational access can also serve as buffers between the park and adjacent homes. Activities requiring night lighting should utilize efficient, shielded lighting equipment that eliminates light spillage or overflow. Activities generating high levels of sound should be located far enough from adjacent residential areas to avoid conflicts.

NATURAL HABITAT

Natural habitat areas will have limited recreational and trail use in order to protect sensitive wildlife and plant species. The location of existing habitat areas and those with restoration potential were identified by the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History's ecological assessment and then incorporated into the GIS database for mapping. These areas were evaluated based on the quality of existing habitat and their potential for successful restoration. In the proposed park plan, areas of existing natural habitat or areas with high potential for restoration have been excluded from consideration for structures or facilities that would have significant negative impacts on wildlife and vegetation. Where natural habitat areas are located in close proximity to active recreation or other facilities planned to have frequent use, landscape buffer areas with limited access will be used to prevent negative impacts from noise, lighting or irrigation and stormwater runoff.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Two streets and one intersection act as major constraints to development on the park site; La Cienega Boulevard, Stocker Street, and the Five Points intersection. La Cienega Boulevard is a six-lane limited access street that bisects the site, dividing it into east and west portions; this road is also a major north-south thoroughfare and a significant commuter route. The many vehicles that travel La Cienega Boulevard at high speeds generate significant levels of noise, and are a serious safety hazard for adjacent uses.

The only existing vehicular access to KHSRA is from exit lanes on La Cienega Boulevard from the north and southbound directions. This access includes deceleration and acceleration lanes in order to maintain vehicle travel speeds on the main part of the roadway. Even with this separation

of park visitors from commuters, traffic can be affected and visitors do encounter delays entering the park on heavy use days.

The Five Points intersection includes La Brea Avenue, Stocker Street and Overhill Drive. Its location at a high point where the three streets intersect severely limits visibility. A complex signal pattern accommodating through traffic and turning lanes makes pedestrian crossings very difficult and raises serious safety issues. This intersection was identified early in the design process as a particularly difficult intersection unsuitable for vehicular park access, posing serious safety issues, and in need of a bridge to provide safe pedestrian access.

Stocker Street provides a popular east/west route connecting La Cienega Boulevard to Fairfax Avenue, La Brea Avenue and to points further east. Stocker Street is the main access for the oil and gas extraction activities and currently does not have sidewalks. La Brea Avenue, on the east edge of the site, is a four-lane street with a posted speed limit of 40 mph. Vehicles on this street also generate high levels of noise that could be disruptive to adjacent activities. This street also lacks continuous sidewalks.

ADJACENT USES REQUIRING MASKING

Screening of ongoing oil production and related industrial uses will help to create the sense of a natural and recreational environment. While the most objectionable views may be the oil production facilities, there are some other adjacent uses that will also benefit from screening. Screening views of adjacent office buildings and retail properties will also assist in creating a more park-like atmosphere. Views of some residential areas on the northeastern edge of the park could benefit from screening as well.

SITE OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIAL

RIDGELINES AND VIEWS

The ridgelines of the park range in elevation from 370 feet to over 500 feet and provide extraordinary views of the Los Angeles Basin, all of Santa Monica Bay, the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains and the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains. These ridgelines present excellent opportunities for unparalleled scenic viewing areas, scenic trails connecting the north and south areas of the park and for a very high quality natural park experience in the heart of the city.

NATURAL HABITAT

One of the greatest assets of the park will be the opportunity to experience high quality natural habitat areas in close proximity to densely urbanized neighborhoods. Three plant communities native to Southern California are found in the park: coastal scrub, riparian woodlands and grasslands. Native wildlife species in the hills include over 166 birds, hundreds of insects, 12 reptiles and amphibians and 21 mammals. Existing natural habitat areas in good condition are

located on the steep slopes and canyons on the exterior faces of the east and west ridgelines. These existing areas are presently separated, creating habitat islands. Opportunities to create connections can produce much larger habitat areas, protect populations of native plants and animals unique to Southern California, establish large natural preserve areas, increase the diversity of plant and animal communities and preserve the overall environmental health of the region. To protect habitat areas, public access would need to be limited to footpaths and interpretive facilities. These limited-access habitat areas could provide excellent opportunities for buffer zones adjacent to residential developments.

GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

The creation of greenways along streets and roads leading to the park could connect KHSRA to adjacent urban areas, connecting the park itself to the surrounding areas and providing important pedestrian and bicycle access to the park apart from the high speed, high volume adjacent streets. Existing undeveloped corridors are located along La Brea Boulevard from Five Points to Jim Gilliam Park, along Stocker Street from Five Points to Presidio Boulevard and along Overhill Drive from Five Points to Slauson Avenue. Additional perimeter streets such as Slauson Avenue, Jefferson Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard and Rodeo Road could also be developed as urban greenways to extend the park into adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas, creating a larger park district. Greenway elements on these streets should include consistent street tree plantings, planted medians, landscaping, signage and other park district identification elements.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS

There are several excellent opportunities for creating new pedestrian walkways and bicycle trails and pedestrian bridges over busy streets to provide important public access and pedestrian connections between surrounding areas and the park. Building pedestrian bridges at key public access points would allow easy connections to major public trails and access into the park. Pedestrian bridges will be particularly important for trail connections and to provide safe pedestrian access at Five Points, where the Stocker Street and La Brea Avenue Trails intersect with the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, and at the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site across Jefferson Boulevard, connecting to the Ballona Creek Trail. Landscaped walking trails could be created along Stocker Street, La Brea Avenue and Overhill Drive, connecting to local parks and public transportation. The Ballona Creek Trail connects to the 25-mile Beach Bike Path, presenting an opportunity to link the entire Baldwin Hills Park and surrounding areas to this regional trail network, to provide a contiguous bicycle and pedestrian trail network and to re-connect natural habitat and native wildlife species in the Baldwin Hills with those of the Ballona Wetlands downstream.