

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Chapter 3 of the Arana Gulch Master Plan (herein also referred to as the "Master Plan")¹ addresses the main elements of the plan, overall goals, resource management actions, and park improvements to be undertaken. The objectives of the Master Plan are divided into "Resource Protection and Enhancement" and "Public Use" as follows:

Resource Protection and Enhancement

- Protect and enhance sensitive habitat areas, including coastal prairie, riparian woodland, and wetlands.
- Implement an adaptive management program to ensure the long-term viability of the Santa Cruz tarplant within Arana Gulch.
- Educate the public about natural resource protection and enhancement through interpretive displays and programs.
- Reduce sedimentation through: a) stabilization and restoration of eroded areas; b) trail improvements; and, c) other Best Management Practices.

Public Use

- Provide a trail system that allows public access within habitat areas in a manner that does not result in significant degradation of habitat values.
- Provide trail connections through Arana Gulch that provide access from adjacent communities to the coastline and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Trail. Provide multi-use trail connections that comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and provide pedestrian, wheelchair and bicycle access.
- Provide areas for nature viewing and interpretive displays. Ensure that interpretive displays are designed to complement and blend with the natural environment.
- To protect sensitive habitat areas, restrict dogs to on-leash use at all times on designated trails.
- Close unauthorized, non-designated pathways.

¹ The Arana Gulch Master Plan is in draft form and has not been adopted. The subject of this EIR is the Draft Master Plan.

- Provide no new vehicle parking within the Arana Gulch boundaries, as there is adequate existing parking near entrances.

B. PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The Master Plan addresses a 67.7-acre natural area located approximately 1.5 miles east of downtown Santa Cruz in the eastern part of the City. The project site is bounded by the Santa Cruz Harbor at the south and residential development to the west, east, and north. The City/County line is just within the eastern boundary of the site (see Figure 3-1).²

No public vehicular access is currently allowed with Arana Gulch. Existing pedestrian access is available from the following points: 1) Agnes Street at the north, and 2) the parking lot of the Upper Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor (Upper Harbor) at the south. These two entrance points provide access to all existing trails within the project site (see Figure 3-2). At the Agnes Street entrance, visitors can park along the street.

The Arana Gulch property features valuable habitats, including grassland (coastal prairie and annual grassland), riparian scrub and woodland, oak woodland, seasonal wetlands, emergent wetland, and open water (see Figure 3-3). The southernmost portion of Arana Gulch Creek flows along the eastern area of the site, and Hagemann Gulch (with an intermittent waterway) is located along the western edge of the site.

Santa Cruz tarplant (*Holcarpha macrodenia*), listed as "endangered" by the State of California and "threatened" under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, has been identified within the Master Plan boundaries. The management and protection of this species is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, under "Biotic Resources."

C. SITE HISTORY

The project site was purchased by the City of Santa Cruz in 1994 as part of a phased effort to acquire greenbelt properties. Since acquisition, the City Parks and Recreation Department has been responsible for management and maintenance of Arana Gulch.

Historically, the project site was part of the 110-acre Live Oak Ranch which was established by Frederick Hagemann in 1871. Wheat production and cattle grazing were the primary activities on the ranch. In 1919, a portion of the ranch was sold to the Kinzli family who created the Live Oak Dairy that was in operation until 1948. Cattle grazing continued on the property until the late 1980s. The part of the site sold to the Kinzli family did not include the ranch home and gardens, which are located just outside the project site at its western edge, between Hagemann Gulch and the site's western boundary. The Hagemann House

² The "project site" described in this EIR refers to the 67.7 acres that are within the boundaries of the Arana Gulch Master Plan. Part of the project site (8.4 acres) is within the County of Santa Cruz, and this acreage may be annexed.

Figure 3-1: Site Location

and gardens are located on 7.3 acres and are now privately owned. In 1975, this remainder of the Live Oak Ranch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

D. PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW HISTORY

After the City acquired the property in 1994, the *Arana Gulch Interim Management Plan* was prepared by the City Parks and Recreation Department and adopted in July 1997 (City of Santa Cruz, 1997). This Interim Management Plan was intended to outline actions necessary to manage and maintain the natural resources within Arana Gulch. Key management issues included: 1) management of existing grassland and riparian areas; 2) recovery of the Santa Cruz tarplant; 3) maintenance of designated trails; and 4) fuel management and fire hazard reduction. Land use decisions were not part of the Interim Management Plan and were intended to be addressed at a future date when preparing the Master Plan, the subject of this EIR. When approved and adopted, the Master Plan will supersede the Interim Management Plan.

The City plans to finalize the Master Plan concurrently with the EIR, allowing the incorporation of relevant mitigation measures into the Master Plan before it is adopted. The concurrent effort is being undertaken to ensure that environmental impacts are minimized to the greatest extent possible.

As part of the Master Plan process, the City retained consultants to undertake specific studies related to known and potential resources on the site such as the Santa Cruz tarplant, tidewater goby, bats, and historic resources. These studies are addressed herein under specific topics (e.g., biotic resources and cultural resources). A consultant was also retained to prepare a detailed concept plan for the proposed new east-west, multi-use trail through Arana Gulch.

In addition to resource-specific studies (e.g., biological assessments, geological reports, etc.) earlier environmental studies for the project site have included the following:

1. Broadway-Brommer Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection IS/EA/AA (City of Santa Cruz, 1997);
2. Broadway-Brommer Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) (City of Santa Cruz, 1999); and
3. Broadway-Brommer Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection Response to Comments Addendum (Final EIR) (City of Santa Cruz, 2002).

The above documents were prepared to address a multi-use trail connecting Broadway (City of Santa Cruz) with Brommer Street/7th Avenue (County of Santa Cruz) through the Arana Gulch area and Upper Harbor. A public hearing was held to discuss the Draft EIR/EA on December 9, 1999. Although the Final EIR was certified, a Notice of Determination was not filed for the project and the project was never formally approved by the City. A Finding

Figure 3-2: Existing Setting

Figure 3-3: Habitat Areas

of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (a document specified by the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]), also was not issued for the project.

Compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and NEPA was required at that time because federal funding by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was associated with the development of the multi-use trail. The only components of the project that may be eligible for FHWA funding are the Canyon Trail, Creek View Trail, and Arana Meadow Trail pathway connections. FHWA would not approve the entire Arana Gulch Master Plan. For this reason, this EIR is being prepared to evaluate the Master Plan as a whole.

After the City finalizes the preferred project, a Final EA and FONSI would be prepared as a separate action, if a federally-funded multi-use trail is to be a part of the project. The Final EA would likely include primarily an Addendum to the original Biological Assessment and revised text of the original Draft EIR/EA to respond to public comments. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) would serve as the responsible agency overseeing the EA at a future date.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for the Arana Gulch Master Plan on June 22, 2005. A revised NOP was circulated for the project on October 5, 2005, after the City Council decided to include a 5.7-acre area at the north end of the project site that was originally to be excluded. A public scoping meeting was held on July 21, 2005 and public comments were solicited regarding topics to address in this EIR. A copy of the NOP and scoping meeting notice can be found in Appendix A. The main concerns identified at the public scoping meeting were the following:

- Proposed uses of the original 5.7-acre “excluded” area.
- Potential future lighting and visual impacts.
- Emergency access.
- Issue of dogs and leash regulations.
- Increased public use impacting natural resources.
- Increased erosion and siltation.
- Increased runoff and water quality degradation.
- Impacts on historic resources.
- Potential air emissions from construction.
- Visual impacts of the new Hagemann Gulch bridge.
- Paved trail impacts on sensitive species (e.g., tarplant).
- Wildlife impacts from bridge.

A summary of oral and written comments during and following the public scoping meeting can also be found in Appendix A.

E. PROPOSED PROJECT

A copy of the Arana Gulch Master Plan Table of Contents is included in Appendix B. Chapter 3 of the Master Plan addresses overall goals, specific management areas and associated actions, the interpretive trail system, and phasing/implementation. These elements are described below.

1. Resource Management Areas

Management Areas are proposed to be designated within Arana Gulch based on natural resources (see Figure 3-4). The intent of designating these areas is to more effectively focus resource management and enhancement efforts. The three Management Areas include: 1) Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area; 2) Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area; and 3) Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland Management Area. Specific management guidelines have been developed for each area. These Management Areas are briefly highlighted below and in Table 3-1.

Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area. The open prairie of the Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area is the primary visitor area of Arana Gulch due to its gentle terrain. A key goal within this approximately 30-acre area is to enhance the populations of tarplant and other native prairie species, while reducing the abundance of invasive non-native grasses. This area offers opportunities for visitors to enjoy meadow views and learn about prairie habitat. The following are the Resource Management Guidelines and Public Use Guidelines for the Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area.

Resource Management Guidelines for Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area

- Implement the Santa Cruz Tarplant Adaptive Management Program to ensure the long-term viability of the Santa Cruz tarplant subpopulations. This program (Appendix A of Master Plan) sets forth potential management actions, monitoring protocols, and an organizational framework involving botanists to ensure the program is carried out in the long-term. Management actions may include grazing, mowing, scraping and prescribed burns.
- Preserve designated seasonal wetlands located within the grassland.
- Monitor impacts of trail users near sensitive species. As needed, install fencing and/or signs or implement other strategies to deter off-trail use.
- Close unauthorized pathways transecting the coastal prairie habitat.
- Remove blackberry, poison oak, and non-native invasive shrubs to prevent further loss of coastal prairie acreage.
- Conduct annual fuel break mowing along the property boundaries to reduce the fuel load within the grassland areas.

Figure 3-4: Management Areas

Table 3-1: Arana Gulch Master Plan Management Areas

Management Area	Acreage (Approximate)	Natural Resources	Proposed Public Use
Coastal Prairie/Tarplant	30.2	Santa Cruz tarplant populations, annual grassland with scattered wildflowers and native grasses, and seasonal wetlands	Nature viewing; multi-use and pedestrian interpretive trails; dogs on leash
Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland	34.5	Arana Gulch Creek, salt and brackish marsh, willow riparian forest, emergent wetlands, steelhead trout, and great blue heron habitat	Nature viewing; pedestrian interpretive trail; no dogs
Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland	3.0	Oak woodland, riparian forest, and San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat habitat	Nature viewing; multi-use interpretive trail; dogs on leash
TOTAL	67.7		

- Coordinate with the City of Santa Cruz Fire Department to conduct prescribed burns. Consult with a qualified botanist under the Santa Cruz Tarplant Adaptive Management Program to determine the appropriate timing and location of the prescribed burns.

Public Use Guidelines for Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area

- Provide multi-use interpretive trails connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the Upper Harbor area. In addition to use by pedestrians and bicyclists, multi-use trails shall be wheelchair accessible. Ensure the pathways minimize disturbance to the coastal prairie habitat and Santa Cruz tarplant. Minimize grading and alteration of natural drainage patterns. Align trails to avoid smaller, isolated seasonal wetlands where feasible.
- Provide a pedestrian-only interpretive loop trail encircling the coastal prairie to allow visitors to enjoy the scenic vistas of the meadows and the harbor overlook.
- Allow dogs on-leash on designated trails within the Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area. Strictly prohibit off-leash dog use and off-trail use to avoid impacts to tarplant populations and other plant and animal species.
- Provide interpretive displays along trails at designated locations. Displays shall be compatible with the open space setting.

Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area. Arana Gulch Creek and the broad floodplain along the eastern portion of the project site comprise this Management Area. Totalling approximately 34.5 acres, the Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area features valuable habitat for aquatic species and birds. A pedestrian trail along the western edge offers overlooks of the creek and coastal marsh. Public access within the wetland habitat areas would be prohibited to protect wildlife habitat. The following are the Resource Management Guidelines and Public Use Guidelines for the Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area.

Resource Management Guidelines for the Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area

- Conduct further hydrologic analysis regarding accelerated head cutting and bank erosion along the tidal reach of Arana Gulch Creek. Design and implement a bank restoration project that reduces sedimentation and enhances fisheries and wildlife habitat along Arana Gulch Creek.
- Restore the eroded gully in the northern portion of Arana Gulch. Design and implement a restoration project that reduces sedimentation and blends with the natural setting.
- Remove non-native invasive vegetation.
- Close unauthorized pathways within the wetland and riparian habitat areas.
- Monitor impacts of trail users near sensitive wetland and riparian habitats. As needed, install fencing and/or signs or implement other strategies to deter off-trail use.

Public Use Guidelines for the Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area

- Enhance the existing trail along the western boundary of the Arana Gulch Creek Riparian and Wetland Management Area. The trail shall be pedestrian-only.
- To avoid disturbance to wildlife, primarily waterfowl, prohibit dogs within the riparian and wetland habitat of Arana Gulch Creek and on the pedestrian trail.
- Conduct non-toxic mosquito abatement as needed in a manner that minimizes impacts to the wildlife species.

Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland Management Area. Along the southwestern boundary of Arana Gulch is the smallest of the Management Areas, Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland. This 3-acre wooded canyon features a mix of riparian trees and scrub, though the habitat value is lessened by the number of invasive species in the canyon. Due to the steep terrain, public use would be limited to a new bridge providing a key non-vehicular connection between Arana Gulch and the adjoining neighborhoods. This bridge would also provide an interpretive overlook into the canyon and tree canopy. The following are the Resource Management Guidelines and Public Use Guidelines for the Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland Management Area.

Resource Management Guidelines for the Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland Management Area

- Remove non-native understory species, such as broom and ivy, to the extent feasible.
- Contain expansion of the eucalyptus trees and reduce the fire hazard within Hagemann Gulch through various treatments. These may include pruning lower branches of eucalyptus and removal of smaller trees and saplings.
- Close unauthorized pathways within Hagemann Gulch.

- Preserve the “Rose of Castile” heritage roses located on the upper slope of Hagemann Gulch. Relocate the roses within Arana Gulch in the vicinity of existing roses, only if no other alternative is feasible if needed for development of Hagemann Gulch bridge. Any relocation shall be done in consultation with the Central Coast Heritage Rose Group. Removal and replanting of oak saplings in immediate vicinity of heritage roses may be needed.

Public Use Guidelines for the Hagemann Gulch Riparian Woodland Management Area

- Establish a new west entrance at Hagemann Gulch to provide a multi-use trail connection between Arana Gulch and the residential Seabright neighborhood of Santa Cruz.
- Provide a new multi-use trail and bridge crossing over Hagemann Gulch, featuring an interpretive overlook. The bridge shall be designed to minimize impacts to heritage trees and habitat values and to blend with the natural setting as much as possible. The new multi-use trail would be open to pedestrians, wheelchair users, and bicyclists.

Further discussion of the trail system is presented below.

2. Trails

An interpretive trail system is the focus of public use within Arana Gulch. The proposed trail system, totaling approximately 2.0 miles, would provide public access for pedestrians, wheelchair users, and bicyclists. A key goal of the trail system is to allow opportunities for nature viewing and learning about sensitive habitats for visitors of all abilities. This trail system would be developed and maintained in a manner that does not result in significant degradation of habitat values. Another important goal is to close and restore informal or unauthorized pathways within Arana Gulch.

The existing trail system provides opportunities for pedestrians and bicycles; however, there are no trails accessible to wheelchair users. The proposed trail system would include trails that are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Within the City’s other greenbelt properties, the steep terrain and site constraints have precluded developing ADA-compliant trails.

In addition to providing opportunities to view nature and wildlife, the Master Plan trail system would also provide multi-use trail connections from adjacent communities through Arana Gulch to the coast and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail is a recreational and interpretive trail that links existing and proposed trail segments into a continuous coastal trail around Monterey Bay. The Sanctuary Scenic Trail provides an interpretive and recreational trail for walkers, joggers, bicyclists, local residents, and visitors. The Sanctuary Scenic Trail follows along the Lower Harbor Trail. Users could continue along the trail encircling the Upper Harbor to the southern Arana Gulch entrance.

Within Arana Gulch, an existing north-south unpaved trail provides access for pedestrians and bicyclists from the Agnes Street entrance to the Upper Harbor. The proposed trail system would improve this north-south trail route to provide for wheelchair users. The new trail system would also feature a new west-east trail connection between the Seabright residential neighborhood to the west of Arana Gulch and the Upper Harbor at the southeast.

Existing Trails. Prior to the City's ownership of Arana Gulch, the meadow area featured numerous cattle paths. These paths are visible on aerial photographs taken over the past several decades. When the City acquired the property in 1994, several informal pedestrian pathways existed. Some of these appear to have originally been cattle paths.

The *Arana Gulch Interim Management Plan*, adopted by the City Council in 1997, identifies only one of these informal pathways as a "designated trail" to be maintained by the City Parks and Recreation Department. This unpaved trail, less than one-quarter mile in length, is the primary north-south connection between Agnes Street and the Santa Cruz Harbor. The Interim Management Plan also identifies this north-south trail as a maintenance/emergency vehicle access route. Pedestrian and bicycle use are allowed on this trail, with dogs limited to on-leash use only. The southernmost segment of this trail has experienced substantial erosion due to the steep gradient of the trail route and needs to be realigned.

Since the City approved the Interim Management Plan, an unpaved loop trail along the perimeter of the meadow area has become increasingly popular with pedestrians. Much of this loop trail, approximately 0.8 miles in length, appears to have existed previously when cattle were grazed on the property.

The existing trail system currently maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department totals approximately 1.2 miles (see Figure 3-2). This includes the north-south trail and loop trail encircling the meadow area. Neither of these existing trails is accessible to wheelchair users due to the unpaved, rough surface and steep gradients in some trail sections.

In addition to these designated trails, there are other undesignated pathways crossing the coastal prairie and tarplant habitat areas. These unauthorized pathways are either used as cut-through routes by pedestrians and bicycles, or for illegal off-leash dog use. The Parks and Recreation Department has made efforts to close these unauthorized pathways and enforce leash laws, but available resources and management actions have been limited under the Interim Management Plan. A key goal of the Master Plan is to close unauthorized pathways and discourage off-trail use to better protect sensitive habitat areas.

Along Arana Gulch Creek, there are also problems with undesignated pathways and illegal activities, including camping. The dense riparian vegetation helps to shield unauthorized users from public view. In addition to closing undesignated pathways within the riparian and wetland habitat areas, there is a need for a designated trail along the edge of the corridor that would increase visibility into the area and encourage appropriate public nature viewing and trail use.

Proposed Trail Alignments and Improvements. This section describes the proposed Master Plan trail system, totaling approximately 2.0 miles. The system would feature two types of trails: multi-use trails and pedestrian-only trails. Multi-use trails would be designed for pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair use, and for dogs on-leash. Less than one-third of the total trail system within Arana Gulch would be multi-use trails, with the remaining two-thirds limited to pedestrian use only, with dogs restricted to on-leash use at all times.

The multi-use trails would include the Arana Meadow, Creek View, and Canyon Trails (see Figure 3-5). These trails would enable visitors of all abilities to experience and learn about the different habitat areas: the coastal prairie, Arana Gulch Creek riparian and wetland area, and Hagemann Gulch riparian woodland. These trails would also provide key trail connections between adjoining neighborhoods and the coastline. Together, Canyon View and Creek View would provide a continuous west-east multi-use trail connection between Broadway Avenue and Brommer Street. Canyon Trail would include construction of a new bridge across Hagemann Gulch.

Multi-use trails would feature a hardened surface and gradient that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The paved trail width would be no greater than 8 feet. The proposed bridge over Hagemann Gulch and Arana Gulch Creek overlook may be wider in some locations to accommodate interpretive displays and nature viewing areas.

Retaining walls would be needed for the eastern portion of the Creek View Trail on Santa Cruz Port District property. The proposed retaining walls would vary in height up to a maximum height of 6 feet, 7 inches (see Figures 3-6, 3-7, and 3-8). As the multi-use trail continues along the Upper Harbor dry storage area, it enters Arana Gulch Creek's 100-year floodplain and 100-year floodway. As it approaches the culverts which convey the creek flow under the Upper Harbor storage area and parking lot, the trail must gain elevation to reach the grade of the Upper Harbor access road. Where the trail rises in the floodplain/floodway area, a small steel bridge span would be designed to achieve the change in grade. Using a bridge span to change the trail grade where it crosses the floodplain/floodway allows the 100-year event creek flow to pass the project unimpeded and without any change to upstream backwater conditions.

The portion of Creek View Trail within the Port District property will require an easement. The Santa Cruz harbor is governed by the Santa Cruz Port District which is comprised of an elected Board of Commissioners. In 1997, the Port District Commission endorsed what was then the D-2 alignment. The latest alignment is similar to the original D-2 concept; however, a bridge spanning Arana Gulch Creek is no longer included in the project. The Port District's 2002 dry storage project allows room for the revised alignment. However, a formal easement agreement between the Port District and the City is still to be negotiated. The City will formerly request the grant of an easement for the multi-use trail encroachment on the Port District property after approval of the Master Plan and EIR.

Pedestrian-only trails would include the Coastal Prairie Loop Trail and Marsh Vista Trail. These pedestrian trails would be maintained as narrow, earthen footpaths. Most of the proposed pedestrian trails in the trail system currently exist, though some realignments and improvements would be necessary for erosion control and to enhance interpretive opportunities. The trail bed width would be approximately 1.5 to 2 feet.

Interpretive overlooks and displays would be located along the trail routes at locations that minimize impacts to sensitive habitats. Limited seating may be provided at scenic overlooks, but the number of benches would be limited. Fencing and signs would be installed as needed to discourage off-trail use. The amount of fencing would be limited to those locations where off-trail use cannot be controlled through other measures. No lighting would be installed along the trails within the meadow area of Arana Gulch. Low level lighting may be installed at the Hagemann Gulch bridge and Upper Harbor area if it is deemed necessary for public safety.

A summary of proposed trails is provided in Table 3-2.

Hagemann Gulch Bridge. A new multi-use pathway would cross Hagemann Gulch by means of a bridge. The bridge is proposed to be a 340-foot-long, single span, stress ribbon bridge. The stress ribbon bridge is supported by abutments located at either side of the gulch at the edge of the riparian forest. Cable ribbons are strung across the span and anchored to each abutment, and precast concrete deck panels are placed on top of the cable ribbons. Following the placement of the precast deck panels, a cast-in-place concrete overlay is placed on the top and then the cable ribbons are tensioned. This bridge system yields an extremely stiff yet slender span that is only 1-foot 3-inches thick. This type of bridge has a main span depth³ of 7½ feet but meets Americans with Disabilities Act standards for slope and landings.

3. Parking

No parking would be provided for the project. It is assumed that users would come from the immediate vicinity or would park in the surrounding neighborhoods as currently done.

4. Phasing and Implementation

A preliminary phasing plan is proposed for implementation of the Arana Gulch Master Plan. The phasing plan identifies specific projects, projected timelines, and staffing needs to maintain and manage the improvements. The phasing plan provides general recommendations and should be viewed only as a tool to guide implementation. The City Council may determine that specific projects should receive higher priority than presented in this section.

³ This means the bridge elevation in the middle is lower by this amount as compared to the elevation at the abutments.

Figure 3-5: Proposed Trail System

Figure 3-6: Preliminary Trail Alignment for Canyon Trail and Creek View Trail

Figure 3-7: Preliminary Cross Sections of Canyon Trail and Creek View Trail
(Sections A-D)

Figure 3-8: Preliminary Cross Sections of Canyon Trail and Creek View Trail
(Sections E-H)

Table 3-2: Summary of Existing and Proposed Trails for Arana Gulch Master Plan

Name of Trail	Distance of Trail (Miles)	Trail Description
Multi-Use Interpretive Trails (Bicyclists, Pedestrians, and ADA compliant)		
Arana Meadow Trail	0.3	Access to coastal prairie habitat; existing trail improved to meet ADA requirements; not to exceed 8 feet in width; interpretive display at northern entrance to trail.
Creek View Trail	0.2	New trail to connect to Arana Meadow Trail and to Upper Harbor and Brommer Street; to be located on City and Port District lands; to meet ADA requirements; to be approximately 8 feet in width; retaining wall needed at eastern edge of Port District storage area; to provide scenic overlook of coastal stream.
Canyon Trail	0.1	New trail to provide new entrance and trail connection to parkland from Seabright residential neighborhood; to meet ADA requirements; to include bridge over Hagemann Gulch; access from east end of Broadway Avenue via City-owned land; views provided into riparian and oak woodland habitat.
Total	0.06	
Pedestrian Interpretive Trails (Pedestrian only; does not comply with ADA)		
Coastal Prairie Loop Trail	1.0	Existing trail encircling Coastal Prairie/Tarplant Management Area; open to pedestrians only; erosion control improvements to be done; signs and fencing installed as needed to discourage unauthorized pathways; dogs on-leash allowed; some seating may be installed; a spur trail at center would allow a shorter loop.
Marsh Vista Trail	0.4	Some segments currently exist; trail to be realigned and improved to connect with Coastal Prairie Loop Trail; provides views into Arana Gulch Creek riparian area; open to pedestrians only and dogs prohibited.
Total	1.4	

Preliminary Phasing Plan. The preliminary phasing plan is organized into two phases, based on fiscal year cycles which begin in July of each calendar year. The first phase focuses on establishing the Tarplant Adaptive Management Program and developing the multi-use interpretive trail system. The second phase is largely focused on continued implementation of the Tarplant Adaptive Management Program, management of the trail system, and restoration of eroded areas. The phasing plan is outlined below.

PRELIMINARY PHASING PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARANA GULCH MASTER PLAN

PHASE I (JULY 2006 THROUGH JUNE 2009)

Resource Management

- Establish Adaptive Management Working Group and conduct management actions under the Tarplant Adaptive Management Program.

- Pursue funding to conduct gully repair and to further analyze Arana Gulch Creek tidal reach erosion.
- Remove non-native vegetation within riparian habitat areas.

Trails

- Develop interpretive displays and educational programs.
- Close undesignated pathways throughout Arana Gulch.
- Construct new Canyon Trail (multi-use), including Hagemann Gulch bridge. Install interpretive displays.
- Construct new Creek View Trail (multi-use) within Arana Gulch property. Creek View Trail segment through Port District property may be constructed in Phase II depending on available funding.
- Construct improvements to Arana Meadow Trail (multi-use trail).
- Construct improvements to Marsh Vista Trail (pedestrian only).

PHASE II (JULY 2009 – ONGOING)

Resource Management

- Conduct management actions under Tarplant Adaptive Management Program.
- Continue removal of non-native invasive vegetation within riparian habitat areas.
- Repair and restore eroded gully near Agnes Street.
- Conduct analysis of eroded tidal reach of Arana Gulch Creek and identify possible solutions. Implement stabilization of tidal reach.

Trails

- Monitor trail use and implement appropriate measures to ensure visitors do not degrade habitat areas through off-trail use or other unauthorized activities.

F. REQUIRED APPROVALS

A variety of actions and approvals are required prior to implementation of the Master Plan. Many of these are addressed in more detail in the "Land Use and Planning" section of Chapter 4. The following are the required approvals expected for the project:

City Actions

- Certification of the Final EIR by the Santa Cruz City Council.
- Approval of the Arana Gulch Master Plan by the City Council.
- Santa Cruz City Council approval of amendments to General Plan/Local Coastal Program to include Master Plan.

- Amendment to General Plan/Local Coastal Program Policy 2.2.7 of the Land Use Element to: eliminate the requirement for a specific plan for Arana Gulch and replace with the requirement for park master plan/resource management plan. Amendment to delete the sections of the policy that require: clustering development; a variety of housing including 35 percent affordable units; and a possible community facility including a school and neighborhood park of at least 10 developable acres.
- Amendment to the General Plan/Local Coastal Program land use map to change the land use designations on the site from Community Facilities and Very Low Density Residential to Natural Area, and to delete the symbol for the requirement of a specific plan on the property.
- Amendment to the Zoning Map/Local Coastal Program to rezone the property from R-1-5 (Single-Family Residential) to PK (Parks). (Floodplain designation will remain unchanged.)
- Permits as needed for future trail improvements and bridge construction (design, grading, coastal permits, etc.).

Port District, County, and Regional Actions

- Approval of trail easement by Port District.
- Annexation approval by the Local Agency Formation Commission and Santa Cruz County for annexation of about 8.4 acres into the City of Santa Cruz.

State Actions

- California Coastal Commission approval of Local Coastal Program Amendment and coastal permit for future development within areas of Commission jurisdiction, as needed.
- Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game for removal of riparian vegetation in Hagemann Gulch for bridge construction, if needed.

Federal Actions

- Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) if any trails receive federal government funding.⁴

References

City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department, 2006. Arana Gulch Master Plan (DRAFT).

⁴ The final compliance with the federally-funded components of the project, if any, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) would occur after the City certifies the Final EIR and adopts the Master Plan. Thus, this EIR does not address NEPA compliance.

City of Santa Cruz, 2002. Broadway-Brommer Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection Response to Comments Addendum (Final EIR), May.

City of Santa Cruz, 1999. Broadway-Brommer Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection Draft EIR/Environmental Assessment, November.

City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department, 1997. Arana Gulch Interim Management Plan, July.