

Project Title: MiraCosta College Facilities Master Plan

Project Location: North San Diego County, California

Sub-Category: Planning & Analysis

Image Summary



Image: 001_MiraCosta

Located in Oceanside, the Mira Costa Community College has been an important continuing education facility for the community of Northern San Diego County since 1934. The campus is well maintained and sits within a suburban residential context.

Mira Costa is currently trying to reposition itself as a leader in environmental vocational education, and prepare students for the “green economy” of the 21st century.



Image: 002_MiraCosta

The landscape master plan creates two main pedestrian promenades that intersect at the campus quad. A new bridge will connect students to the proposed gym and classroom buildings along the east side of campus. Several courtyards will provide passive space for students along with outdoor instruction opportunities. The north & west sides of campus are designated as a habitat corridor, outdoor laboratory, and community demonstration gardens



Image: 003_MiraCosta

Renderings illustrate the two proposed student promenades that will each have their own character. The Riparian Promenade connects the lower elevations along the North and South edges of campus and will feature native/adapted plants. The Student Promenade is relatively level in elevation and connects the parking fields along the east & west edges of campus to the central quad. This Promenade will feature more formal arrangements of native/adapted plant material. Both promenades provide shaded seating, art (by both student and community), and drastically reduce the amount of underutilized, resource intensive turf.



Image: 004_MiraCosta

By consolidating turf into the main event areas and sports fields, and replacing the remaining underutilized turf with native/adapted plant material, the master plan will save the district \$80,000 annually in water cost alone, which can be reappropriated for more vital educational uses.



Image: 005_MiraCosta

Mira Costa sits within one of the most productive and diverse habitat regions in California. SANDAG has designated a wildlife corridor to help fill a significant gap in the existing regional matrix due to heavy fragmentation of the natural habitat. Mira Costa is located on the eastern edge of this zone and can provide increased public awareness and serve as a catalyst to repairing this vital habitat area.

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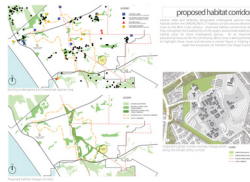


Image: 006_MiraCosta

Several state and federally designated endangered species have habitats within the SANDAG M.H.C.P. habitat corridor and are relatively close to the Mira Costa campus. Improved habitat connectivity will help strengthen the biodiversity of the region and provide additional habitat areas for these endangered species. As an important educational resource for the community, Mira Costa is well positioned to highlight these issues and become a central figure in helping to repair the ecosystem on northern San Diego County.

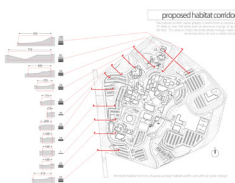


Image: 007_MiraCosta

The habitat corridor varies greatly in width from as narrow as 75' wide to over 700' wide, with an elevation change of up to 100 feet. This analysis helps illustrate where linkages need to be enhanced to ensure a viable habitat.

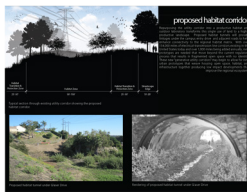


Image: 008_MiraCosta

Repurposing the utility corridor into a productive habitat and outdoor laboratory transforms this single use of land to a highly productive landscape. Proposed habitat tunnels will provide linkages under the campus entry drive and adjacent roads to help enhance connectivity to the regional habitat matrix. With over 154,000 miles of electrical-transmission line corridors existing in the United States today and over 1,000 miles being added annually, new prototypes are needed that move beyond the current regulatory process that results in fragmented open space with no identity. These new "generative utility corridors" may begin to allow for new urban prototypes that weave housing open space, habitat, and infrastructure together producing low impact developments that improve the regional ecosystem.

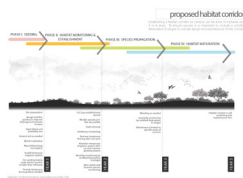


Image: 009_MiraCosta

Establishing a habitat corridor on campus can be done in 4 phases over 5 to 6 years. To ensure success it is important to include a certified Restoration Ecologist to oversee design and maintenance of the corridor.

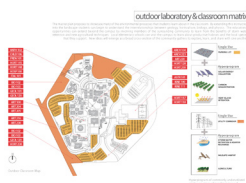


Image: 010_MiraCosta

The master plan proposes to showcase many of the environmental processes that students learn about in the classroom. By extending this instruction into the landscape students can begin to understand the interrelationships between geology, horticulture, biology, and physics. The educational opportunities can extend beyond the campus by involving members of the surrounding community to learn from the benefits of storm water retention and new agricultural techniques. Local elementary schools can visit the campus to learn about productive habitats and the local species that they support. New ideas will emerge as a broad cross-section of the community gathers to explore, learn, and share with one another.