



## Legislation Details (With Text)

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**Title:** Introduction of an Integrated Goose Management Plan for Central Park and Recommendation

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**Attachments:** 1. Integrated Goose Management Plan Presentation

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
11/17/2020	1	Parks & Recreation Commission	recommended for approval	Pass

## REPORT TO PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

### SUBJECT

Introduction of an Integrated Goose Management Plan for Central Park and Recommendation

### BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Clara Central Park includes the Central Park Lake, surrounded by planted areas and grass that attract waterfowl. Over the past few years, the Canada Geese and Mallards population has increased and produced excessive amounts of waste that exceeds the capacity of the daily grounds maintenance program to keep pathways, fields, meadows and recreational amenities clean and sanitary for public use. Each Canada Goose produces approximately a pound and half of feces per day, which deposits into the lake and its surroundings more than 600 pounds per day. The Central Park Canada Goose population is non-migratory. They forage and nest at the site, thereby creating several negative impacts year-round at the community park.

The management activities of the Canada Goose and Mallards are regulated by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and subsequent revisions, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). While the City has used various approved methods to deter geese, such as movable predator land decoys (coyote mannequins); floating water decoys (alligator mannequins), geese panic sounds, grass treatments, and physical barriers, additional steps are needed to address the community's complaints and concerns, as well as to educate and inform policy and management practices that include the community's understanding and support. To that end, the City has retained the services of avian biologist, Daniel Edelstein, who has specific Bay Area experience and who has developed a draft Integrated Goose Management Plan (IGMP) in order to provide community, staff and Council with research, information and proposed effective strategies to protect the wildlife while reducing the increasingly negative and unsustainable impacts the Canada Goose and Mallard have on the Central Park lake water quality, plants, pathways, recreational amenities, fields and visitor's park use.

## **DISCUSSION**

The IGMP proposes four management actions discussed below for City consideration and implementation.

- 1) Management Action 1:** Conduct community outreach and provide information to Santa Clara residents and media to educate the general public about the current issues at Central Park and proposed necessary geese and mallard management actions that may be taken to address them. Implementation of Management Action 1 will help the public understand the problems, issues and options available to the City to address the Canada Goose and Mallard problem. This includes:
  - a) Preparation of information about the current population and effects caused by the Canada Goose at Central Park, and outreach to the local Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) chapter and the Bay Area chapter of the Sierra Club to engage in discussion of the issues. This may include request of support from the Boards of Directors to communicate with their membership and public, and/or request a formal letter of support for the IGMP.
  - b) Enrollment of the groups' support of various effective management actions through public "scoping" and "public comment" meetings to ensure ongoing community understanding and support for the City's methodology, plans and actions discussed in the IGMP.
  - c) Work with the City Communications Office to develop and distribute media releases to the Santa Clara and local media, and informational articles and/or videos to help the general public understand the issues and proposed management actions.
- 2) Management Action 2:** Develop Interpretive Signs and materials to Educate Central Park Visitors. This includes:
  - a) Development of text content and graphic elements for installation along the Central park pathways. The purpose is provide information to visitors who may not be aware of the current issues caused by Canada Goose and Mallards, inform visitors about management strategies to address the problems, and help visitors understand the Canada Goose, Mallard, and other wildlife species that use Central Park and how and why management plans are implemented.
  - b) Develop other materials/programs including: an educational brochure handout, community meetings (as allowed with COVID19 Health & Safety Orders and protocols) such as a nature walk/bird outing, and virtual component.
- 3) Management Action 3:** In order to effectively address the negative effects of the current and growing population of Canada Goose and Mallard at Central Park, this action contemplates implementation of permitted management practices in conformance with Federal, State and local laws, as well as regulatory oversight and permits. These are in priority order.
  - a) Harassment Plan. The development and submission to City authorities for review and approval for a plan for ongoing, daily, humane harassment and disturbance of Canada Goose and Mallard foraging behavior and presence in Central Park. This may include supervised use of dogs by permit, or professional contract.
  - b) Depredation Plan & Permits. Applications and documentation will developed in support of obtaining from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) separate Depredation Order(s) and

Permit(s) for Canada Goose and Mallard. This includes a letter of proof, describing the damages each specie is causing at Central Park, receiving City authorization and communicating with USFWS authorities.

- c) Habitat Alteration(s) Plan. Design an effective goose and duck fence/barrier for City installation around the perimeter of the Central Park lake.
- d) Goose Repellant Plan. Write a plan for the effective use of goose repellant products on the market, and pros and cons, and public preferences.

**4) Management Action 4:** Adoption of the written Integrated Goose Management Plan (Plan) to ensure that careful, precise non-lethal management actions are implemented to manage the onsite Canada Goose and Mallard overpopulations. The Plan will identify successful management methods in use in the Bay Area and other locations where Canada Goose and Mallard are a problem, including qualification for a "Depredation Order" and permit from the USFWS to implement legal management activities to control overpopulations of Canada Goose and separately, a Mallard Depredation Order, while still protecting other migratory bird species such as rare, non-resident, non-breeding "winter" season look-alike "Canada goose" subspecies such as Small Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii minima*), and Aleutian Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii leucopaeria*). The Plan will contain a section devoted to "success criteria" and milestones anticipated at Central Park. The criteria will allow City personnel (including technicians/biologists) to monitor conditions at Central Park to ensure the ongoing implementation and success of the management actions.

The Parks & Recreation Commission will review the background and history of the Canada Goose and Mallards and their negative impact on Central Park and patrons. The Commission will also review the components of an IGM Plan and consider recommending approval to Council for the implementation of the Plan.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment. On the federal level, the action complies with federal regulator code under a valid U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) permit secured by avian biologist Daniel Edelstein and updated annually by the avian biologist. This USFWS code regulation is 50 CFR 21.52, pertaining to the allowance of non-lethal overpopulation management actions (including addling of Canada Goose eggs) for this year-round bird species present at the Central Park Lake.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Current park grounds maintenance activities are included in the Parks & Recreation Department's annual operating budget.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Parks & Recreation Commission's agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, e-mail [clerk@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov)

[<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>](mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov) or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommend Council approval of an Integrated Goose Management Plan for Central Park.

Reviewed by: Dale Seale, Deputy Parks & Recreation Director

Approved by: James Teixeira, Director of Parks & Recreation

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Integrated Goose Management Plan Presentation