

Phase 1 Public Workshops Summary

Salton Sea State Recreation Area

General Plan



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1 INTRODUCTION

California State Parks (State Parks) is preparing a General Plan (the plan) for Salton Sea State Recreation Area (SSSRA or the park). The General Plan will establish a long-term vision for the park and serve as its primary management document. It will include goals and guidelines for future recreation opportunities, resource protection, and facility development, as well as park improvements, services, and programs. Throughout the planning process, the public and all interested stakeholders will have multiple opportunities to learn about, provide input on, and influence the development of the plan. These include stakeholder meetings, public workshops, surveys, community engagement events, virtual engagement activities, and opportunities to review and comment on draft planning documents.

State Parks hosted an initial series of in-person and virtual public workshops in February 2026 to provide information about the General Plan and to obtain input to help guide the plan's development. These Phase 1 Public Workshops were held in person at the Bombay Beach Community Center on February 18, 2026, and at the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club on February 19, 2026, both from 6 to 7:30 p.m. State Parks also hosted a virtual public workshop using the online platform Zoom on February 24, 2026, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., to provide additional information and feedback opportunities. The in-person workshops included a welcome station, a presentation about the General Plan, a question and answer session, and an open house format for participants to interact with State Parks staff and provide input and comments at each of five stations highlighting different topics for feedback. A summary of the Phase 1 Public Workshops and public input and comments received is provided below.



2 PURPOSE

The purpose of Phase 1 Public Workshops was to:

- ▶ Provide an overview of Salton Sea State Recreation Area and the plan, including the planning timeline and opportunities for future public engagement throughout the planning process.
- ▶ Gather feedback on recreational opportunities, facilities, and programs most valued by workshop participants, as well as participants' desired level of recreational development at SSSRA and their vision for the park's future.

3 FORMAT

3.1 OPEN HOUSE

To encourage attendees to provide input in a relaxed and interactive environment, and at their own pace, the in-person workshop venues featured a series of stations that included interactive feedback exercises in an open house format. At each station, State Parks and consultant team staff were present to interact with and gather feedback from attendees on question prompts communicated in English and Spanish via display boards. Attendees' responses were documented using dot-voting and write-in options.



3.1.1 Welcome and Introductions

Workshop attendees were greeted by State Parks staff at the entrance. Attendees were encouraged to sign in and add their email addresses to the project email distribution list. Attendees were also provided with a comment card on which to write and submit comments concerning the General Plan.

3.1.2 Presentation/Question and Answer

The workshop began with a brief presentation from State Parks that provided an overview of the park and its history; an overview of the General Plan, including its purpose and the planning process; and an overview of the open house workshop format and stations. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session before the open house portion began.

3.1.3 Open House Stations

Five stations were located throughout the workshop venue. Participants had the opportunity to visit each station, provide feedback, ask questions, and discuss the station topic with State Parks and consultant staff. The five stations addressed the following topics:

- **Station 1 – What Park Resources Do You Most Value?** Participants identified which park resources they value most.

- ▶ **Station 2 – Which Recreational Facilities Do You Most Value?** Participants identified the recreational facilities they value most.
- ▶ **Station 3 – What Stories Matter Most to You?** Participants ranked interpretive themes and stories they feel should be highlighted in the park.
- ▶ **Station 4 – What's the Right Level of Development?** Participants indicated whether current development levels were more than enough, just right, not enough, or unknown for each park area.
- ▶ **Station 5 – What's Your Vision for the Park?** Participants provided open-ended written responses describing their vision for the park's future.

3.2 VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

To maximize opportunities for public involvement during the plan's initial workshop phase, a virtual workshop was held via Zoom in a format that best attempted to mimic the in-person workshops.

3.2.1 Welcome and Introductions

Staff from the consultant team and State Parks opened the virtual workshop by welcoming attendees and providing an overview of workshop logistics, including instructions for Spanish translation , which was provided via live interpretation channel.

3.2.2 Presentation/Question and Answer

State Parks provided an overview of the park and its history; an overview of the General Plan, including its purpose and the planning process; and an overview of the open house workshop format and stations. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session before virtual open house portion began.

3.2.3 Virtual Polling Exercise

The following five questions were asked of participants using the online feedback platform 'Slido,' and live responses were shown on the screen:

- ▶ **Question 1 – What Park Resources Do You Most Value?** Participants were able to select two options shown on the screen to identify which park resources they value most.
- ▶ **Question 2 – Which Recreational Facilities Do You Most Value?** Participants were able to select two options shown on the screen to identify the recreational facilities they value most.

- ▶ **Question 3 – What Stories Matter Most to You?** Participants were able to select two options shown on the screen to identify the themes and stories they feel should be highlighted in the park.
- ▶ **Question 4 – What's the Right Level of Development?** Participants indicated whether current development levels were more than enough, just right, not enough, or unknown for each park area.
- ▶ **Question 5 – What's Your Vision for the Park?** Participants provided open-ended written responses describing their vision for the park's future.

4 ATTENDANCE

A total of 93 individuals attended the three Phase I Public Workshops, including 55 at Bombay Beach, 19 at North Shore, and 19 virtually.

5 PUBLIC OUTREACH

The following strategies were used to advertise the Phase I Public Workshops.

5.1 PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website (saltonseasragp.com) provided information on workshop dates, times, locations, and registration. The website also provides information on the planning process, additional opportunities for public engagement, and an interactive park map featuring existing recreational facilities. Website visitors can join the project contact list to receive email notifications on planning updates and public engagement opportunities.

5.2 PRESS RELEASE

A press release providing detailed information concerning the workshops was distributed by State Parks to media outlets across the state.

5.3 E-BLAST

An e-blast announcing the public workshops was sent to email addresses included on the project contact list.

5.4 POSTCARDS AND YARD SIGNS

The project team prepared and distributed flyers, door hangers, and postcards throughout the park and in neighboring communities. These materials included information concerning the plan and workshops. Related signage was placed at park entry locations and facilities including the visitor center and restrooms.

5.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media posts were shared across State Parks social media accounts, encouraging the public to attend the public workshops.

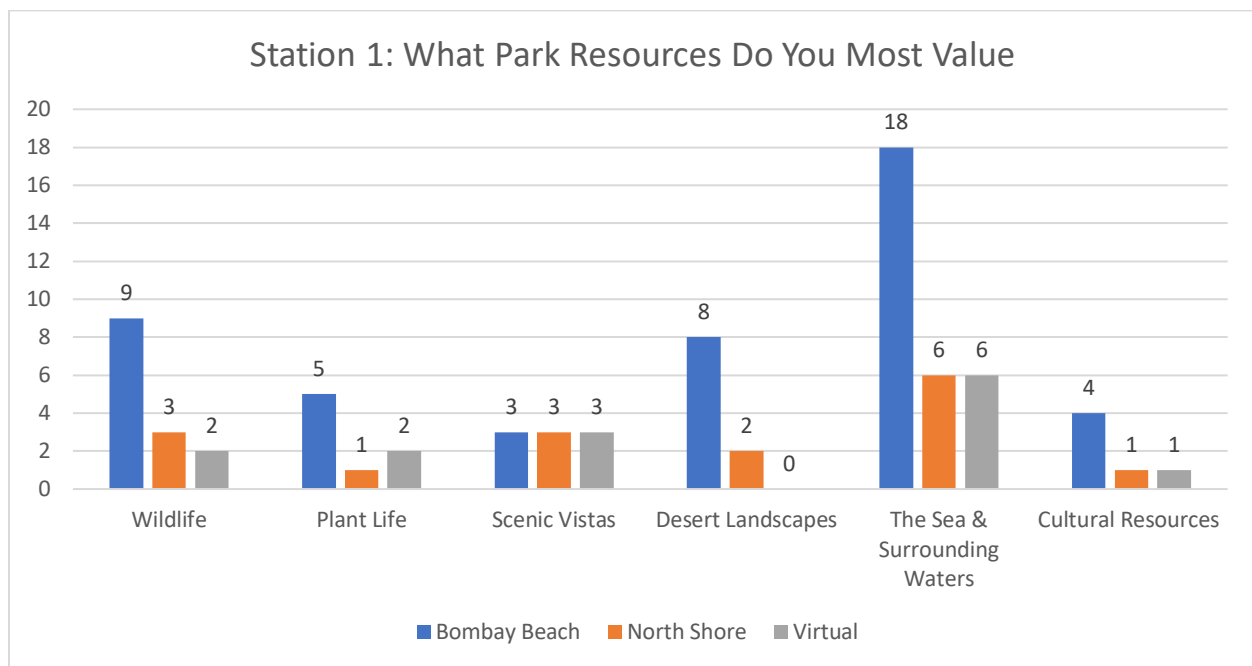


6 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC MEETING #1 AND ASSOCIATED PUBLIC COMMENTS

The summary below provides combined highlights from feedback received at both in-person public workshops and the virtual workshop. Dot-voting results show the number of votes each option received at each workshop location and in total.

6.1 STATION 1: WHAT PARK RESOURCES DO YOU MOST VALUE?

Participants used dot-voting (in-person) and Slido (virtual) to identify which park resources they valued most. The Sea & Surrounding Waters received the highest total votes, followed by Wildlife and Scenic Vistas. The table below shows votes by workshop location. A summary of verbal and written feedback is also noted below.



6.1.1 Station 1 Key Themes

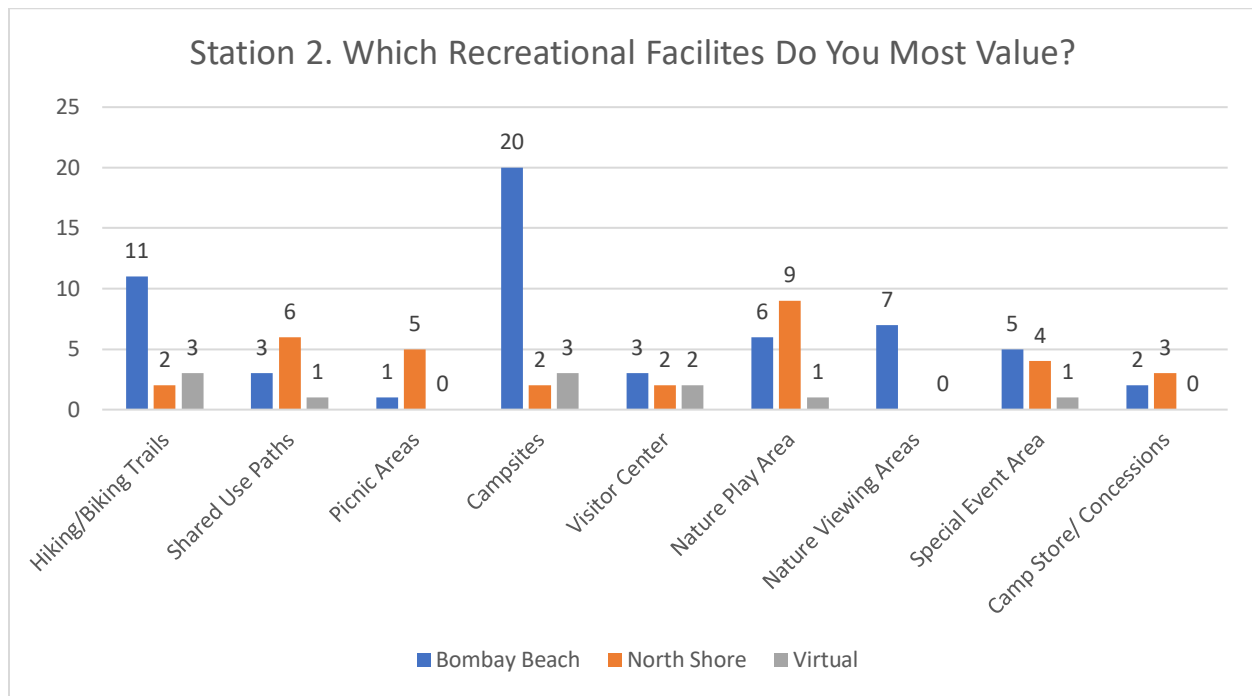
- ▶ Strong interest in wildlife and birding opportunities, including the sea as a critical migratory corridor
- ▶ Scenic vistas and the unique desert-water landscape are highly valued
- ▶ Cultural and community resources, including art and indigenous heritage, were highlighted by participants

6.1.2 Station 1 Summary of Verbal and Written Feedback

- ▶ Infrastructure for art fairs, farmers markets, and swap meets requested at Bombay Beach
- ▶ Dark sky designation and night photography opportunities noted as assets

6.2 STATION 2: WHICH RECREATIONAL FACILITIES DO YOU MOST VALUE?

Participants identified the recreational facilities most important to them. Campsites received the highest total votes, followed by Hiking/Biking Trails and Nature Play Area.



6.2.1 Station 2 Key Themes

- ▶ Strong interest in passive recreation — nature viewing, hiking, and trails
- ▶ Campsites and biking trails highly valued by Bombay Beach attendees, while nature play areas and shared use paths are most valued by North Shore attendees

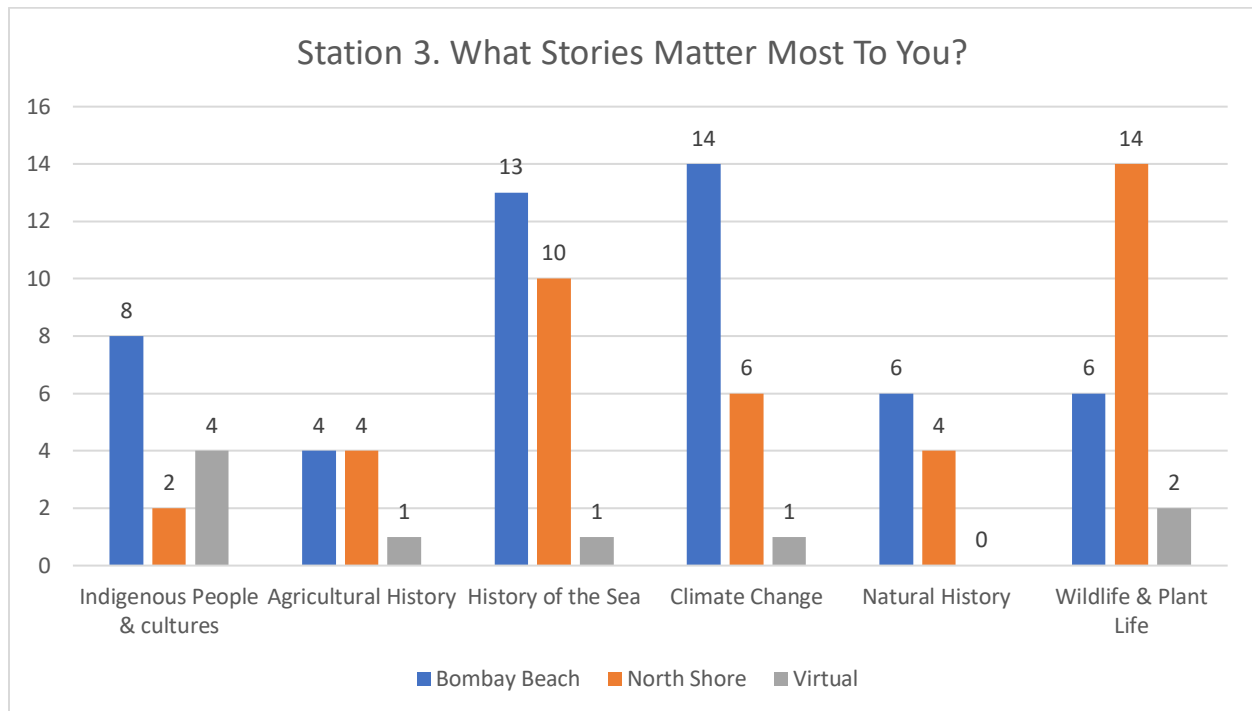
6.2.2 Station 2 Summary of Verbal and Written Feedback

- ▶ Requests for a water access point(s), amphitheater, and outdoor gym
- ▶ Desire to extend the Ironwood Nature Trail and create a loop trail around Varner Harbor Bridge
- ▶ Art corridor linking SSSRA to Slab City mentioned at North Shore

- ▶ Paraglider accommodations should be considered given frequent landings in the area

6.3 STATION 3: WHAT STORIES MATTER MOST TO YOU?

Participants ranked the themes and stories most important for the park to highlight. History of the Sea received the most votes, followed closely by Climate Change and Wildlife & Plants.



6.3.1 Station 3 Key Themes

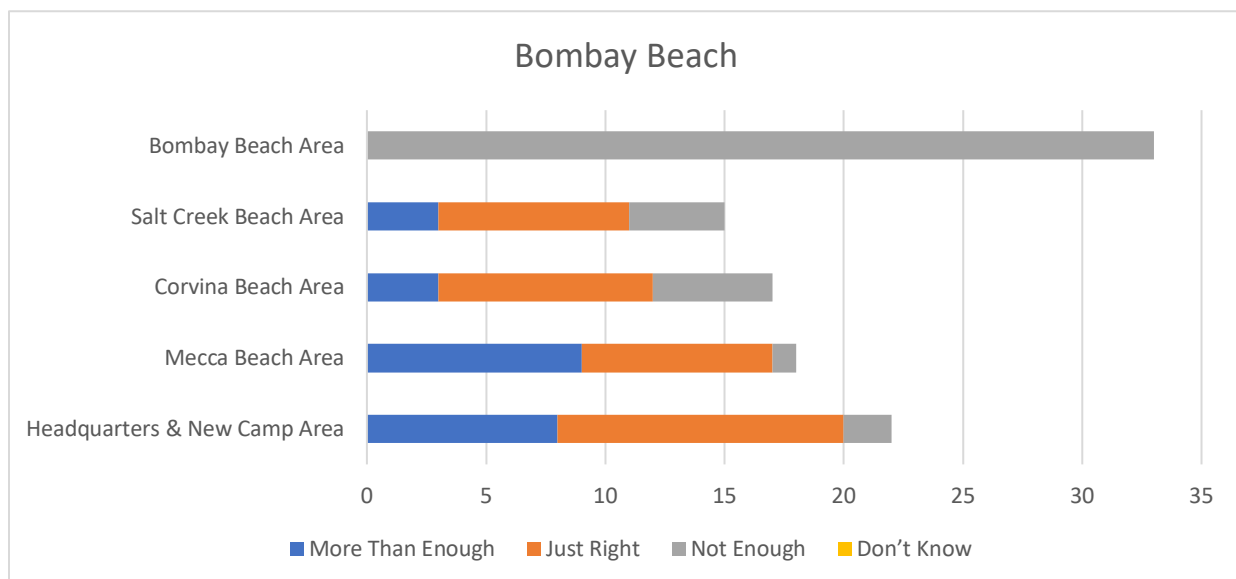
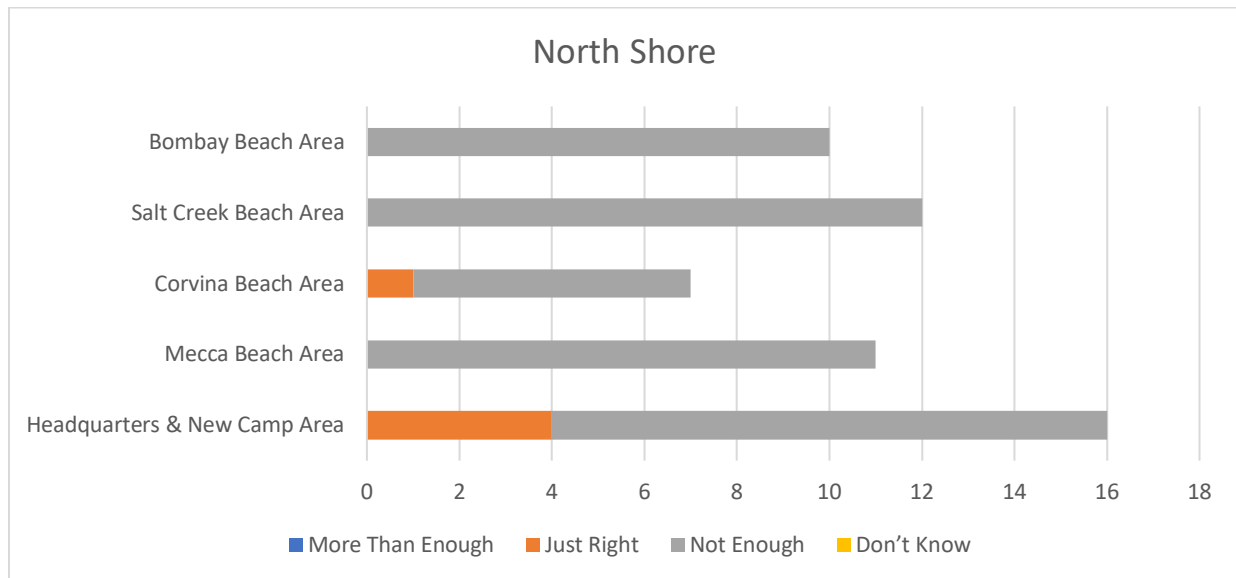
- ▶ History of the Salton Sea — its formation, rise, and decline — deeply resonates with participants
- ▶ Indigenous heritage and connections to the land were frequently mentioned
- ▶ Climate change and natural history themes were prominent across all locations

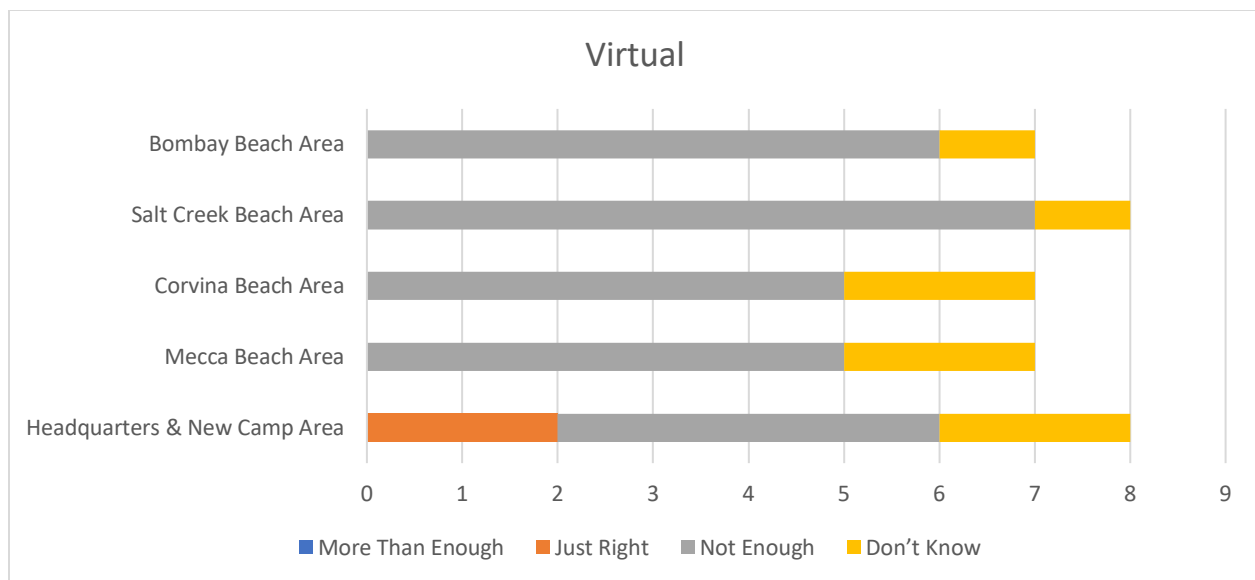
6.3.2 Station 3 Summary of Verbal and Written Feedback

- ▶ The sea's ecological role as a bird refuge and wildlife habitat was the top storytelling priority based on verbal and written feedback received
- ▶ Interest in Spanish-language interpretation and programming at North Shore

6.4 STATION 4: WHAT'S THE RIGHT LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT?

Participants indicated whether current development at each park area was more than enough, just right, not enough, or unknown. Results are shown by meeting location.





6.4.1 Station 4 Key Themes

- ▶ Across all locations, Bombay Beach Area received the most 'Not Enough' development responses; overwhelmingly at the Bombay Beach in-person meeting (33 votes)
- ▶ North Shore participants consistently rated all areas as needing more development
- ▶ Bombay Beach in-person participants rated Headquarters & New Camp Area as 'Just Right' (12) or 'More Than Enough' (8), reflecting satisfaction with development there
- ▶ Virtual respondents were largely in the 'Not Enough' category across all park areas

6.5 STATION 5: WHAT'S YOUR VISION FOR THE PARK?

Participants shared open-ended written responses describing their vision for the park's future. Key themes are organized below, along with summaries of verbal and written responses.

6.5.1 Water Access and Restoration

- ▶ Restore water levels in the Sea to enable boating, kayaking, canoeing, and swimming
- ▶ Adjustable dock or boat slip with drive-up access
- ▶ Water activity areas including kayaking, paddle boarding, and aquatic habitat zones
- ▶ Mobi mats on the beach to improve shoreline accessibility

6.5.2 Camping and Related Facilities

- ▶ Reopen and expand Bombay Beach Campground — the highest priority for many respondents
- ▶ More camping options including RV sites, tent sites, and reservable camping
- ▶ Shaded structures, water fountains, restrooms with A/C
- ▶ Camp host program and camp store/concessions
- ▶ Broadband Wi-Fi internet access at campgrounds

6.5.3 Connectivity and Community

- ▶ Link communities along the shoreline with walking paths, bike paths, and an art corridor from SSSRA to Slab City
- ▶ Family-friendly spaces with day-use areas, BBQs, and play areas for children
- ▶ Community event space for festivals, art fairs, and events at each campground
- ▶ Bombay Beach steward committee working in partnership with park officials

6.5.4 Interpretation and Education

- ▶ More interpretation in Spanish; signage and programs accessible to Spanish-speaking communities
- ▶ Educational stations on water ecology, natural history, and the significance of the Salton Sea
- ▶ Highlight the Sea's connection to the Colorado River Delta and Indigenous stewardship
- ▶ Keep old interpretive signs alongside new signs to tell the story of the park's evolution
- ▶ Solar power and sustainability features

6.5.5 Wildlife and Ecology

- ▶ Designated aquatic habitat for birds and a separate refugia for desert pupfish
- ▶ Bird trails, nature viewing areas, and wetland restoration
- ▶ Climate change education and environmental advocacy as a park priority

6.6 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS/ COMMENTS

Participants at each meeting location asked questions and raised topics for State Parks staff. Key questions and comments are summarized below.

6.6.1 Bombay Beach

- ▶ Does the GP include Bombay Beach? What is the soonest it can open?
- ▶ What are the bottlenecks to opening the Bombay Beach Campground?
- ▶ How many miles of SSSRA are currently closed?
- ▶ Can the community help with design and planning?
- ▶ What phase are we in now? (Phase II expected October 2026)
- ▶ Can a concessionaire be brought in (the Bombay Beach community is not-for-profit)?
- ▶ Can community beach clean-up efforts be formalized into dispersed camping or amenities?
- ▶ How can media and marketing direct day users to established SSSRA campgrounds in the interim?
- ▶ Request for a community liaison and addressing urgency to open the campground

6.6.2 North Shore

- ▶ Will the General Plan change over time as the Sea changes?
- ▶ Is there anything that is off the table in planning?
- ▶ Is the planning area the entire park? How are projects scaled? Is planning funding-constrained?
- ▶ At what point does the Bureau of Reclamation get involved?
- ▶ What other places in California can serve as a model for this park?
- ▶ How do we know what the park looks like today, and how are priorities set while the General Plan is being prepared?
- ▶ We don't have as many programs as we used to — consider using social media influencers for outreach

6.6.3 Virtual

- ▶ Stargazing areas — the stars are beautiful at the Salton Sea Recreation Area
- ▶ Garden area and more amenities

- ▶ Kayak access — mentioned by multiple respondents
- ▶ Needs more electric and RV sites
- ▶ Boat launching access and more broadband services
- ▶ Request for improved road conditions
- ▶ How can anything be done without adding more water to the Sea?
- ▶ Will improvements come with a day-use fee?
- ▶ Designate the Salton Sea as a California State Historical Site
- ▶ Will lake levels continue to drop, or stabilize seasonally?

6.7 GENERAL COMMENTS

The following summarizes general comments received via comment cards:

- ▶ Reopen the Bombay Beach Campground — it will create local jobs, resolve informal camping issues, and serve the community
- ▶ The sunsets at Bombay Beach are world class; tourism is vital; the beach needs better facilities and should reopen with collaboration from local artists
- ▶ Add restroom facilities on the north area of Salt Creek
- ▶ Develop an interpretive trail near Varner Harbor; protect cryptobiotic soil and wildlife; build a bridge over the inlet
- ▶ Increase park staff and provide staff housing

7 APPENDIX

The comments below are reproduced verbatim from sign-in sheets, station comment cards, dot-voting 'other' write-in responses, and the online platform received in conjunction with Public Meeting #1. Comments are organized by station and meeting location.

STATION 1: PARK RESOURCES – OTHER/WRITE-IN RESPONSES

Station 1 – Bombay Beach
Adding infrastructure to host art fairs, farmers markets and swap meets
More trees to include fruit/citrus trees!
Night photography friendly places, dark sky community
SSRA near Bombay Beach as Beach Sculpture garden
Station 1 – North Shore
People here don't want to leave their homes right now because of ICE/DHS
More walking trails in good condition, information about the native plants, more resources for the youth to create art in the plants, workshops on native plants for the home that benefit air and control dust and are drought tolerant

STATION 2: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES – OTHER/WRITE-IN RESPONSES

Station 2 – Bombay Beach
Add water to the sea
Ampitheater
Water access
Outdoor gym equipment like NS
Paragliders frequently land here - consider accommodations

Station 2 – North Shore

Extend Ironwood Nature Trail, bike path & winding curves

Bike connection btw campgrounds

Loop trail around Varnov Harbour Bridge

Close off OHV access on upland side of park, restore resources

Connecting to communities with walking path

Art corridor from SSSRA to Slab City

STATION 3: STORIES – OTHER/WRITE-IN RESPONSES

Station 3 – North Shore

Price of camping, information in Spanish, programming

STATION 5: PARK VISION – ALL RESPONSES

Bombay Beach

Our end of state park should provide job sources for locals and help keep our beach clear or campers. It looks like a campsite should be the beach I moved here for.

I envision the future of the sea being accessible and free from harmful runoff & false scientific facts keeping people away. In addition honoring the seas connection to the greater basin and the history of the grandy cayon formation forming into the Colorado River Delta & the original people that chose to steward the land.

I would love to see people back into the water. The decline of the water levels makes it nearly impossible to get a boat in through the mud. An adjustable dock or boat slip with drive up access would be great.

Family friendly spaces w/access to the water for boating & Canoeing. Shaded areas w/play areas for kids. Day use areas with BBQs. Camping, Camping, Camping. Wildlife & Bird viewing areas and more programs for adults & kids

Bombay Beach

People to be informed about the significance of the sea in world & cultural history as displayed in the Smithsonian.

A place for picnics, camping, seeing views, exploring beachside communities, access to the water for sunset walks and small boat use

Places for night photographers can make use of this area's bottle scale to make night imagery

I envision the park being in the front line of the debate of climate change and the environmental issues that severely is affecting the natural environment and population here

The park being a real option for recreational activities like hiking, boating etc.

The park hosting art. Art could be all around the sea, not only in Bombay

Sea to Sea - we need the water back. For the recreation wildlife, the best rec area in California.

Do not kill the goose with the golden egg

Bombay beach steward committee working in ally partnership with the park officials

The health of the environment in balance & accessible to public. Functional use of land and water. Protection of species & thriving trails & plant/wildlife. I envision the campgrounds interconnected & with art projects of Bombay expanded into the other campgrounds

Also, having regenerative restorative festivals at each campground that has public participation for restorative efforts of the sea and wetland. Broadband wifi internet access of campgrounds. Water fountains

Would be cool to have a series of cow boats for the water & bikes on land for people to use per campground. Also to have educational stations where people can learn of water, ecology, etc.

North Shore

Linking communities; Art Corridor (N Shore, Bombay Beach, East Jesus/Slab City); History (art story); Tourism burgeoning industry; Entrance fee barrier day use/consider only fees for camping; Tell story of evolution of park; Keep old interp signs (put new signs next to them to help tell story); Art festival to support local communities like Bombay Beach Art community (nature based); Promote hiking in Chucicualla NM

More information in Spanish; Costs of the services they offer; More connection for cell phones

North Shore

Camping reservations; Shaded structures; Water fountains; Restrooms with A/C; Programs; Dry weeds

Virtual

Representation, more accessible areas, more walkable

Water activity

Sustainability

Camping

Kayaking

Aquatic habitat

Wetlands

Habitat for pelicans

Pupfish

I hope that it becomes a place that makes it more comfortable for people to affordably camp and learn about/explore the area.

A safe place for people to connect with nature and a call to action for environmental issues and climate change

Designated aquatic habitat for piscivorous birds stocked with fish and a separate refugia for desert pupfish

Fairly primitive with water access, trails, peace and quiet.

A representation of our region and people

Welcome Center

We should put bird trails! I love birds.

Adding solar power would be awesome here!

More camping options! (Including the Bombay Beach Campground)

More Spanish interp signs

That it will ALWAYS be here! Keep up the Good Work Parks!

Car Ferry Across

Community Event Space

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – ALL RESPONSES

Bombay Beach

Does the GP include Bombay Beach? What's the soonest it can open?

Access to water, paddle boats, olympic athletes

County input or approval for docks in water

Biennale Festival - a few years ago opened campground for visitor

Option for concessionaire -- BB not profit

Camp Host?

Passes for park

Extend campground

Cleaning the sea in smaller portions via wildlife

Restore shade structures, put toilets

People camping illegally on IID land with no facilities

Bombay Beach

How many miles of the SSSRA are closed? (only BB)

24-47 campgrounds at BB (visitor stated)

Community does beach clean ups, porta-porties - can they turn it into dispersed

What is the size of BB?

Can community help with design

What phase are we in now? Phase II October 2026

In 15 years BB is top 5 place to visit by LA weekly lots of day use

Media/Marketing urge folks to use established SSSRA campgrounds. Day use in mean time?

Why isn't there a park now?

What are the bottlenecks of opening BB?

Road washed out, dump station

Liaison to community

Addressing urgency to open, willing to engage long term planning

Access to water?

Art installations

H2O camera live stream

North Shore

Will the GP change over time as the sea changes?

Is there anything that is off the table?

Is the planning area the entire park? How do you scale your projects? Is it funding constrained?

North Shore

Is this about identifying gaps in how people use the park?

What other places in CA can be a model?

At what point does BOR get involved?

How do we know what the park looks like today?

We don't have as many programs as we used to. Use social media influencers for outreach.

How are priorities made while the GP is being prepared?

Virtual

Not mentioned here but places for stargazing would be great. The stars are beautiful at the salton sea rec area

Garden area

More amenities

Kayak access

Just right.

Needs more electric sites

Boat launching access & more access to broadband services

Kayak access

Not enough. Need RV sites.

Road fixed

Not enough. Would like RV sites.

Not enough

More lighting and pathways maybe

Virtual

Again Kayak access, An accessible shower

Not enough.

Camping access

History of the sea and wildlife.

Natural history

Agricultural and natural history

How can anything be done without adding more water?

I would love a desert oasis with great views, but how can this be possible if the sea keeps evaporating. Can anything be done?

I would want the Salton Sea to be distinguished as a historical site in California and have that signage at the recreational area

Will these improvements come with a day-use fee?

Do you anticipate that the lake levels will fluctuate as each season approaches, or will levels continue to drop?

Mobi mats on the beach

Even just to walk out to the water. So many people try to get there and can't

I would love to be able to camp in the old Bombay Beach campground. I usually tent camp and don't need anything fancy, but a quiet-oriented camp would be a hit with a lot of folks and the community

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Comments – All Locations

We need the water back in the sea! The only solution. Bombay Beach camp grounds is so needed. It has been closed for far too long.

The sunsets at Bombay Beach over the mountains and the sea is world class. Tourism is a big part of the great environment and community. These include nomads and travelers who come and camp on the beach. These are some of my favorite members of the community. However, the beach lacks facilities for campers; trash, bathrooms, increased infrastructure for big weekends or events in the local area. Please reopen the Bombay Beach Campground - this will solve my problems at once as well as privately and some local jobs and training. I also think more paths and access throughout the area may lead to a heightened appreciation for the environment local history, indigenous history and of course, potential collaboration with local artists to help beautify infrastructure such as buildings on camp spaces or help with park design or architect work

Adding restroom facilities on North area of Salt Creek

Interpretive trail near Varner Harbour, Protect cryptobiotic soil and wildlife, bridge over inlet

Increase staff and staff housing