

1

INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS



1.1 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT

This Existing Conditions and Key Issues Report represents an important step in the process of updating the General Plan for the City of Pacifica, a process which formally began in the summer of 2008. This report provides spatial and substantive information on conditions in the planning area, covering the City of Pacifica and a small amount of land to the south. The report will be used as a basis for:

- Preparing alternative land use and transportation plans that will be the next step in the planning process;
- Providing substantive background to help community members assess alternatives;
- Formulating policies and implementation actions for the General Plan; and
- Creating the environmental setting portion of the Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan.

Purpose of the General Plan Update

The state of California requires every city and county to have a comprehensive General Plan that serves as a constitution for long-term physical development. The General Plan identifies current and anticipated needs in areas such as land use, housing, transportation, public services, environmental quality, and economic development, and represents a community's collective vision for future growth and development. The General Plan is a policy document that provides the basis for making land use decisions over the long term. The time horizon for this General Plan will be from 2010 through 2030. In Pacifica, the General Plan also serves as a Local Coastal Land Use and Implementation Plan (LCP), as required by the California Coastal Act. The LCP portion of the General Plan covers the areas of Pacifica west of Highway 1, and provides more detailed analysis and recommendations consistent with Coastal Act policies.

Pacifica's current General Plan was adopted in 1980, with only the Housing Element updated significantly since then (in 1990, amended in 1992.) In the 30 years since, many of its goals have led to successful projects, including a zoning code with regulations to protect slopes and preserve open space, and the revitalization of the Rockaway Beach area west of Highway 1. While many issues facing Pacifica are enduring, there are new challenges, new ideas and new mandates to consider and apply. The General Plan update will provide for a comprehensive assessment of current conditions, and allow today's residents to express a vision for the future.

Public Outreach and Participation

In order for the General Plan to accurately address community needs and values, the input and feedback of residents, businesses, and property owners is necessary throughout the update process. Information and ideas will be exchanged among elected officials, City staff, and the public. The following methods are being used over the course of the General Plan update to ensure the public's full participation:

- **General Plan Outreach Committee (GPOC).** The City has convened a committee that has the chief responsibility of stimulating broader community involvement in the process. Committee members are expected to attend all community meetings and recruit others to join them, and to work to raise awareness about the General Plan update. GPOC will also provide insight and feedback to City staff and consultants on community involvement efforts.
- **Community Interviews.** Consultants met with 35 members of the community selected to represent a broad range of interests and local knowledge. The interviews took place in April 2009, and were conducted individually or in small groups of up to four people. A summary report on the interviews is available under separate cover.
- **Community Workshops.** Two "community forums" are being held as part of the initial phase of the General Plan process, and these will help to define a common vision and key issues. A third community workshop will be held to weigh alternative land use scenarios, and a fourth meeting will be held to present the public review draft of the General Plan.



In Pacifica, the General Plan also serves as a Local Coastal Land Use Plan, as required by the California Coastal Act. Pacifica's General Plan was last updated in 1980. Updating the plan provides for a comprehensive assessment of current conditions, and allows today's residents to express a vision for the future.

- **Community Survey.** A survey will be conducted to gather citizens' input on alternative land use scenarios and key policy choices.
- **Newsletter Updates.** An initial newsletter has been mailed to Pacifica residents and businesses to introduce the process and its goals. A second newsletter will report on preliminary work, and may include the community survey on key policy decisions (see above.)
- **Media and Press Releases.** The planning team will seek local media coverage of General Plan update progress.
- **City Website.** Frequent updates and documents will be available from the City's website throughout the update process.
- **City Council/Planning Commission Joint Sessions.** Joint City Council/Planning Commission workshops will be held to solicit comments from these governing bodies about General Plan issues. These workshops will be open to the public.
- **Public Hearings.** Adoption of the General Plan, its associated Environmental Impact Report, and the Housing Element will be discussed in public hearings.
- **Coastal Commission Meetings.** As the process nears completion, the Coastal Commission will meet to review and provide comments on the Local Coastal Plan, which will be part of the General Plan. These meetings will be open to the public.



The General Plan update process includes extensive community involvement. A community survey, multiple workshops, and Planning Commission, City Council, and Coastal Commission hearings provide opportunities for public participation.

1.2 KEY ISSUES

This report contains an extremely large amount of detailed information related to all the General Plan elements and topics required to be considered. Titles of each chapter are:

2. Land Use and Urban Form
3. Population and Economy
4. Future Development Potential
5. Environment
6. Transportation
7. Public Resources and Services

Following is a copy of the summary conclusions sections from each chapter, which are the last chapter sections, called “Planning Issues and Implications”.

2. Land Use and Urban Form

Pacifica’s existing General Plan is nearly 30 years old. The current update process must take full stock of the General Plan and produce a coherent new vision and set of policies to help Pacifica thrive in the coming decades. The above analysis reveals the follow issues which will be discussed with City staff, decisionmakers, and community members, and ultimately addressed through policies in the updated General Plan.

- i. **Land Use Policies to Encourage Quality Development on Vacant Land.** About 16 percent of land in the Planning Area is classified as vacant or undeveloped, and much of this is constrained. The scarcity of developable land and the location at the region’s edge create difficulties for economic development and stable sources of revenue. The General Plan will address appropriate land use and economic development to ensure fiscal sustainability and expand business opportunities. Future land use polices should seek to make new development



Pacifica, a city of 40,000, is powerfully imprinted by its physical setting of ocean and ridge. The city’s distinct neighborhoods are connected along this geography by Highway 1, but there is no town center.

compatible with neighborhood character. They should accommodate projected growth, meet community needs, and preserve open space and ecological resources. And they should help to make Pacifica more vibrant. These competing goals will be the challenge of the General Plan's land use strategy.

2. **Connecting Neighborhoods.** The General Plan can play an important role in better connecting neighborhoods along Highway 1, and reconnecting neighborhoods across Highway 1, through community design policies and decisions concerning the circulation network.
3. **Creating a Town Center.** The City as a whole does not have a center. Palmetto Avenue and the Rockaway Quarry site have both been discussed as potential sites for a town center. Another approach may be to revitalize or redevelop shopping centers, which could help to create stronger focal points for the West Edgemar-Pacifica Manor, East Sharp Park, and Linda Mar neighborhoods.
4. **Consolidating Commercial Activities.** Pacifica's commercial land is distributed throughout the City, with little concentration. More commercial development could be beneficial in terms of providing local services, creating a "critical mass" of activity, and increasing revenue to the City. Pacifica has the potential to attract tourists, and may be able to add more visitor-serving commercial uses. Office land use is especially under-represented in Pacifica, and there may be a desire to create more jobs for residents and to close the gap between jobs and housing.
5. **Determining the Appropriateness of Industrial Land.** Pacifica's few industrial or service commercial uses are concentrated along the coast. The General Plan should determine whether this condition should be changed, and if so, what alternatives are desirable.



Nearly half of the planning area, or 3,600 acres, is protected as open space. Another 1,200 acres is vacant or undeveloped. Mori Ridge, adjacent to the Vallemar neighborhood, is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

6. **Adding Open Space.** Over half of the Planning Area is preserved as open space, mainly under the auspices of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the County and State parks systems, and the City and County of San Francisco. Additions to preserved open space must be considered in terms of local and regional benefit and environmental protection.
7. **Ensuring Housing Choices.** The City will need to determine how much housing, and at what level of affordability and what density, it will accommodate during the planning horizon. Redevelopment at a higher intensity could allow Pacifica to grow without compromising open space resources. The General Plan process will consider how such housing can be incorporated into mixed-use redevelopment projects or integrated into existing neighborhoods.
8. **Responding to Coastal Commission Requirements.** About 13 percent of the Planning Area is within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission. For this area, the General Plan also serves as the LCP and must address all of the goals applied to the California coast, with its unique environmental concerns, expectation for public access, and opportunities for commercial and recreational development. Some Coastal Act policies have changed since the adoption of the current LCP in 1980 and must be addressed in this update.
9. **General Plan and Zoning Code Consistency.** Pacifica's current Zoning Code has been developed and updated to be consistent with the goals and policies of the existing General Plan. The General Plan map needs to be updated to be consistent with the Zoning Code, and with any new General Plan policies related to land use.



Pacifica's proximity to San Francisco and its top-notch scenic and natural resources could be leveraged with "place-making" and other strategies to develop a tourism-based shopping environment over time.

3. Population and Economy

An assessment of Pacifica's demographic and economic profile, and projected change in the coming years, points toward several areas which could be influenced by General Plan policies and decisions about how to allocate public resources.

1. **Accommodating Population Growth.** Pacifica's population has grown minimally since the 1970s, averaging about 800 new residents per decade from 1980 to 2000. According to the population estimate for 2009, this rate ticked up significantly during the last decade, showing a net increase of 1,600 residents. ABAG projections suggest that Pacifica's population will grow by 2,000 to 3,000 residents during the planning period, a relatively slow rate that reflects its environmental land constraints and historical growth patterns.. The City will need to accommodate new housing and commercial space to meet the needs of new residents.
2. **Meeting the Needs of an Aging Population.** In recent years, Pacifica's population has become older, with the 45-to-61 cohort increasing to become the largest in 2007. This trend is likely to continue, and to move into the oldest age cohort (62 and over) over the course of the planning period. There may be a need for more housing suitable for "aging in place," and greater access to medical services.
3. **Satisfying Retail Demand.** At the same time, median household income has grown, and ABAG projects significant income growth in coming years. This could play an important role in bolstering the City's retail sector.
4. **Providing Affordable Housing for Very Low-Income Households.** Only about one quarter of Pacifica's households are renters, but housing costs are a significant burden for these households. Rents have risen faster than incomes, and very little rental housing has been added in recent years. Pacifica met only 8 percent of its share of housing for very low-income households in the 1999-2006 period.



Most new development in Pacifica during the past decade has been single-family housing, but some new mixed-use buildings have been built in Rockaway Beach and on Palmetto Avenue, above.

5. **Facilitating Employment Growth.** Pacifica has a low jobs-to-housing ratio, and this is projected to stay stable through the planning period. However, the City may seek to counteract such trends and attract or develop jobs, as a way to ease traffic congestion, lower carbon emissions, and create a more “complete” community.
6. **Shaping Employment Areas.** The location and intensity of employment development will vary depending on its focus—the needs of biotechnology companies, for example, differ from those of tourist-oriented retail development. The City will have an important role in shaping this form through zoning and public investment decisions.
7. **Leveraging Key Locational Assets.** Pacifica’s location and setting have the potential to be leveraged to build and enhance a “place-making” and tourism-based shopping environment over time. The attraction of a luxury and/or resort hotel could significantly advance this goal by transforming Pacifica into a higher profile travel destination. Both the Rockaway Beach Quarry site and Palmetto Avenue represent two potentially complementary opportunities to advance the City’s retail and tourism sectors.
8. **Improving Shopping Areas, and Recruiting Tenants.** The upgrade and redevelopment of existing shopping centers could create an environment more conducive to attracting a broader base of customers and tenants. Local population, employment, and income growth will provide opportunities for gradual retail expansion over the long term. The City can play an active role in attracting specific businesses or tenants that reinforce or enhance the economic and social vitality of the City.
9. **Investing in Public Infrastructure and Facilities.** Streetscape improvements, a signage program, and other public infrastructure investments represent a valuable asset to property owners and developers, who stand to benefit from improved landscaping, signage, lighting, and infrastructure.

10. **Branding Pacifica.** A detailed marketing plan could help Pacifica shape its image as a desirable destination itself through a wide range of methods. Such an effort must be integrated with other strategies.

4. Future Development Potential

Analysis of recent development patterns in Pacifica, and the Planning Area’s supply of potentially developable land, suggests several key points, as follows.

1. **Keeping Pace With the Need for Multi-Family Housing.** Ninety percent of the 300 new units developed in Pacifica over the last decade have been single-family houses, accessible to residents with above-moderate incomes. If Pacifica is to reach its Housing Element goals of providing housing at a range of income levels, more multi-family housing will need to be developed.
2. **Facilitating New Commercial Development and Revitalization.** Commercial development accounted for only 13.5 percent of the value of new construction permitted in Pacifica between 1998 and 2008, and an average of just one new building each year. Commercial activity is vital from the standpoint of City revenues, and a vibrant community. There is significant redevelopment potential in Pacifica’s aging shopping centers and commercial areas.
3. **Accommodating Residential and Commercial Growth Over the Long Term, Given Land Constraints.** An estimated 1,600 acres in the Planning Area are undeveloped (not including protected open space) or are considered underutilized. This land is estimated to have the capacity to hold approximately 1,500 new housing units and 2.2 million square feet of commercial space, if it were all to be developed. However, approximately 1.72 million square feet of the commercial space is currently designed for the Rockaway Beach area, and only 441,000 square feet is in other locations in the city.

Most of the land lies on slopes, with difficult access and often competing demands for open space preservation or habitat protection, while

other potentially developable land is challenged by fractured ownership, weak demand for commercial space, or other factors. The estimated need for 1,300 new units and 640,000 square feet of commercial space in the next 20 years will be a challenge to achieve. The space for commercial growth may be the biggest challenge, given the location of space in the Rockaway Beach area.

4. **Creating New Development Acceptable to the Community.** Much of the land that could be developed in Pacifica is on highly-visible or sensitive sites. It will be critical to facilitate development that suits—or enhances—its context. *In the case of the Rockaway Quarry, a public vote is required to approve any development involving housing.*
5. **Resolving Development Issues at the Quarry Site.** The Specific Plan which currently governs development on the Quarry site envisions a mix of visitor-serving uses and employment uses. The Plan does not account for more recent changes to the site, including the development of the new Wastewater Treatment Plant, and

does not project any residential development on the Quarry site, in deference to the ordinance requiring a public vote on any development proposal at the site which includes residential use. However, the Implementation Plan for the Redevelopment Area does project that site development will include a residential component. Resolving Quarry site development rules will be a major challenge.

5. Environment

Pacifica's setting provides both a rich environmental context and considerable challenges. The City has made significant efforts to be a good steward of its land and water resources. These efforts include restoration of Pacifica State Beach and the San Pablo Creek estuary, and development of a state-of-the-art wastewater recycling facility and program. The City's residents participate actively in the conservation of local open space and habitat. The City has also sought to be prepared for natural hazards. In both resource conservation and hazard mitigation, the General Plan update will deal extensively with policies for both resource conservation and hazard mitigation. Some key issues follow.



The current Specific Plan governing the 94-acre former Rockaway Quarry site calls for a mix of visitor-serving and employment uses, and preserved open space. Any housing proposed for the site requires approval by public vote. Development on the site also is likely to be limited to protect environmentally sensitive habitat.

Hydrology and Flooding

1. ***Improving Water Quality in San Pedro Creek.*** San Pedro Creek provides habitat for steelhead trout, a federally listed threatened species, and also has a level of coliform bacteria which makes it an “impaired waterway” by Regional Water Quality Control Board standards. Maintaining the quality of water in this creek will continue to be a high priority for Pacifica.
2. ***Establishing Regulations Responsive to Specific Flooding Hazard Areas.*** Flooding has been an ongoing issue for low-lying areas of the City, and likely will continue to be a challenge in the future. FEMA’s flood insurance maps show a significant portion of the Rockaway Quarry site to be within the 100-year flood zone, but these maps do not reflect the restored stream channel, and so actual flood risk on the site is not known. Additionally, a recent report has shown that increased coastal flooding associated with sea level rise would occur in West Linda Mar, lower Pedro Point, Rockaway Beach, West Sharp neighborhoods, and the Sharp Park Golf Course.
3. Strategies will include limiting development in flood-prone areas, and managing the quantity and quality of runoff from existing and future impervious surfaces, to meet stringent requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). An additional priority will be to incorporate FEMA guidelines and suggested mitigation activities into local government plans and procedures for managing flood hazards.

Geology and Seismic Risk

4. ***Minimizing Earthquake-Related Hazards, Liquefactions, and Landslides.*** The San Andreas fault, which traverses the northeast corner of the Planning Area, is active and capable of causing a large earthquake. Areas located on or immediately adjacent to the mapped fault traces require very thorough investigation in accordance with the Alquist-Priolo Act prior to any development to ensure that fault rupture hazards can be avoided or minimized.

Areas located within the alluvial valleys could have a high potential for liquefaction. Site-specific geotechnical investigations can confirm the presence of liquefiable materials and can provide various foundation design criteria to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of liquefaction.

The Planning Area also includes slopes that are susceptible to landslides, especially areas with greater than 50 percent inclines. Geotechnical engineering can typically overcome the challenges of development on steep terrain through drainage improvements, anchoring foundations in deeper materials, and regrading slopes, as well as other methods.

5. ***Minimizing Hazards Related to Winter Storms and Coastal Erosion.*** Much of Pacifica’s coastline is subject to severe coastal erosion. Short term erosion hazards are generally mitigated through incorporation of best management practices and use of soft stabilization techniques. In areas that are experiencing active coastal erosion, the most effective mitigation is to relocate development. If sea level rise proceeds as projected, there is potential for more serious long-term coastal erosion, which could be a critical challenge for the Planning Area.

Biological Resources

6. ***Protecting the Widespread-Critical Habitat in Public and Private Development.*** Pacifica contains some of the northernmost natural habitat on the San Francisco Peninsula. The Planning Area’s location, richly varied topography, and its considerable undeveloped land provide habitat or potential habitat for a wide variety of species and natural communities. Some of these species and communities, both plant and animal, have special legal status, having been listed under the federal or state Endangered Species Acts or other statutes, or having been identified as sensitive in the California Natural Diversity Database.

Currently, the California red-legged frog (CRLF) and steelhead trout have critical habitat within the Planning Area, on Sweeney Ridge and along San Pedro Creek, respectively. Additionally, the San Francisco garter snake (SFGS) is known to breed in open spaces in Pacifica, most notably Mori Point. The legal protections given to these species to ensure their survival will need to be taken into consideration when planning development in Pacifica.

7. ***Protecting Sensitive Natural Communities Identified.*** Coastal bluff scrub has been identified on Pacifica's northernmost shoreline, northern maritime chaparral has been identified in San Pedro Valley County Park, and northern coastal prairie is potentially present on San Pedro Point. These identifications as natural communities carry implications for preservation and management.
8. ***Protecting Other Environmentally Sensitive Areas Both Open Space Lands and New Private Development.*** In a third category, significant portions of the Planning Area have been noted for their high habitat values (providing important resources to plants and wildlife), use as a migration corridor, or their potential to be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) under the provisions of the California Coastal Act. These areas include much of Sharp Park, Milagra Ridge, Sweeney Ridge, and Mori Point, which are already managed as protected open space. They also cover some of Pacifica's only privately-owned undeveloped land, on Gypsy Hill, the face of Cattle Hill, and the Rockaway Quarry site. A more complete evaluation of biological resources on these sites will be necessary to determine development potential and preservation requirements in these areas.

Fire Hazards

9. ***Actively Managing the Urban-Wildland Interface.*** Pacifica's 40,000 residents enjoy close contact with open ridges and woodlands. This brings with it the risk of proximity to wild-

land fires. Preparedness is essential, and the North County Fire Authority's fire prevention activities, especially its Vegetation Management Program, are important. Development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone must be sensitively designed and meet strict building code requirements. The General Plan should provide a clear framework for managing the urban-wildland interface, at the local level.

10. ***Maintaining and Enhancing Evacuation Routes.*** It is critical that road capacity exists for Pacificans to evacuate in case of an environmental disaster, including fire.

Hazardous Materials

11. ***Facilitating Cleanup of Contaminated Properties.*** Pacifica is home to thirteen sites currently undergoing remediation for contamination with hazardous materials. Some contaminated sites are on vacant parcels or properties with the potential to redevelop, including the old Wastewater Treatment Plant in West Sharp Park. Contamination does not render these sites unusable, but may require time and funding for cleanup. The former Rifle Range in Sharp Park has potential to be reused for recreational purposes, an outcome the current clean-up effort will facilitate.

Air Quality

12. ***Contributing to Regional Air Quality Attainment.*** Levels of several criteria pollutants in the Bay Area meet air quality standards, but the region is in nonattainment for state and Federal ozone standards and for California's standards for annual concentrations of PM 10 and PM 2.5 particulate matter, as well as the federal 24-hour standard for PM 2.5. Due to its position relative to wind flow patterns and topography, air quality in Pacifica is better than it is in the Bay Area overall. Still, pollutants emitted locally have regional consequences.



Coastal erosion is a significant problem in Pacifica, with ongoing processes exacerbated by storms and by projected sea level rise. Major winter storms in 1982-83 and 1997-98 caused serious damage. Responding to long-term coastal erosion will be a critical challenge.



On Milagra Ridge, a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, public enjoyment and habitat protection go together. Milagra Ridge has high habitat value for the endangered Mission blue butterfly and the threatened California red-legged frog. Wildlife corridors on adjacent lands may need to be preserved to prevent the ridge from becoming ecologically



Pacifica faces fire threats at the “urban-wildland interface.” Fire prevention, through building code enforcement, vegetation management, and public awareness, is critical.

13. According to CEQA guidelines, local plans, such as Pacifica’s General Plan, should be evaluated for their consistency with the most recent regional air quality plan, which will likely be the 2010 Bay Area Clean Air Plan, currently in draft form. The General Plan must be consistent with the population and vehicle use projections used in the Clean Air Plan, and must implement the Clean Air Plan’s transportation control measures.

Climate Change

14. **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions.** Reducing emissions of gases that contribute to climate change is increasingly important both globally and in order to meet state mandates. Pacifica will have to continue pursuing ways to reduce local emissions by setting goals, tracking emissions, and developing policies that reduce emissions. Policies that effectively address emissions reductions may require significant changes from the “business as usual” development pattern. Transit-oriented development, higher land use densities near employment and transit, and improved walkability are among strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
15. **Preparing for Potential Sea Level Rise.** The potential for sea level rise and increased coastal erosion has very serious implications for Pacifica. Areas of the Sharp Park Golf Course, the Rockaway Beach district, and the West Linda Mar and West Sharp Park neighborhoods could be inundated. Meanwhile, coastal erosion processes that have caused damage along the high bluffs of Pacifica’s northern neighborhoods would very likely increase in magnitude. Pacifica should make it a priority to state a clear approach to the threat of coastal erosion and sea level rise in the General Plan.

Noise

16. **Mitigating Noise Along State Route 1.** Highway 1 is a significant source of noise for portions of Pacifica, and may dampen the residential development potential of some sites that could be candidates for mixed-use development. Strategies for minimizing the negative effects of noise should be emphasized.

6. Transportation

The General Plan update has a role to play in defining Pacifica's approach its transportation issues, and the relationship between transportation and land use, urban form, and air quality. Key issues for the Circulation and Scenic Highways elements include:

1. **Optimizing Mobility Given Physical Constraints.** Pacifica lies in close proximity to San Francisco, the Airport, and Silicon Valley, but rugged topography means there are a limited number of links to the regional transportation system. In order to thrive, the City needs to make the most of its transportation infrastructure, but also limit growth where transportation access is seriously restricted and would be dangerous.
2. **Improving East-West Access via Hickey Boulevard.** Hickey Boulevard's intersections with State Route 35 and Gateway Drive operate at LOS E and F, respectively, during peak hours. These two intersections should be examined in conjunction to promote a more efficient entrance into the City off of SR 35. This analysis shows a traffic signal is warranted at Hickey Boulevard and Gateway Drive.
3. **Improving North-South Traffic Movement Along Highways 1 and 35.** Four of the five intersections along State Route 1 that were analyzed for this report operate at LOS E or F during at least one peak hour, and the segment of the highway between Crespi Drive and Linda Mar Boulevard operates at LOS F during the AM peak hour. With the construction of Calera Parkway, level of service may improve but will require further monitoring. Meanwhile, SR 35 operates at LOS E between Hickey Boulevard and Timberhill Court during the PM peak hour. With increases in population and vehicular traffic, roadways will experience an increase in traffic and consideration should be given to measures that would reduce travel delays in Pacifica.
4. **Complete the Three Major Roadway Improvement Projects.** Completion of three major transportation projects currently underway or in planning are expected to improve traffic flow, and they will also have broader implications. By shortening and easing travel along the coast south of Pacifica, the Devil's Slide Tunnel may increase through traffic along SR 1, as well as provide new economic development opportunities for Pacifica. The Calera Parkway project lies directly adjacent to the former Rockaway Quarry, and should be designed to accommodate connections into the quarry site. The Manor Drive overcrossing has the potential to help stimulate redevelopment of the Manor shopping area.
5. **Protecting Scenic Qualities.** The current Scenic Highways Element identifies four roadways in Pacifica for potential scenic roadway designation. The State and County have designated two of these, Highway 1 and Sharp Park Road, as scenic highways, but local adoption and corridor plans are needed. The current Plan should revisit the City's approach to designating scenic roadways, and to protecting scenic qualities of travel.
6. **Increasing Transit Use.** Less than two percent of Pacifica's trips are made using public transportation. Given its position at the edge of the region and its low population and employment density, it is unlikely that major transit investments will be made in Pacifica. However, the City is served by good peak-hour bus connections to the regional transit system, and a great majority of its workers commute to San

Francisco and the Peninsula. A much greater share of work commute trips could be shifted to transit with a combination of community effort, public initiative, and improvements to the transit experience. There is also potential for Pacifica to support higher-density, mixed-use development around transit.

7. **Improving Transit Services.** Support may be available through the C/CAG of San Mateo County for transit services designed to address the specific challenges of providing public transportation and the specific characteristics of traffic congestion along the coast. Such programs could include solutions to school-related congestion, or a small local shuttle service.
8. **Improving the Bicycle Network.** Many of the improvements identified in the 2000 Bicycle Master Plan have not been completed; implementing these measures would allow residents a better non-motorized travel experience in Pacifica, and help to raise the City's profile as a destination for outdoor activities.
9. **Improving the Pedestrian Realm.** Pacifica has the opportunity to create or enhance mixed-use districts in certain areas. To achieve the

desired quality-of-life and other benefits, it will be important to ensure pedestrian connections within these districts and between these districts and adjacent neighborhoods. Completion of the Citywide Trails Master Plan should also be considered—both to allow residents to walk between neighborhoods, and to make the City a great place for visitors.

7. Public Resources and Services

Pacifica has both historical and natural resources of high quality, and has the opportunity to connect these assets more firmly to the City's identity and its appeal to visitors. A new library, City Hall, and fire station are potentially needed, and decisions about the location, character, and implementation of these projects should be considered in the broader context of the General Plan. Water, waste water, and storm water infrastructure is critical to the City's viability. A growing awareness of the effects of urban form on public health adds to the importance of considering carefully how Pacifica develops. Key planning issues related to public resources and facilities follow.



Just 3 percent of trips from Pacifica to other parts of the region, 2 percent of incoming trips, and a tiny fraction of trips within the City are made using public transportation. Shifting more trips to transit would reduce traffic congestion and curb Pacifica's greenhouse gas emissions.

Water and Water Management

1. **Further Progress on Reducing Water Use.** The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has put a cap on the amount of water it will draw from water sources, and on the amount it will sell to purchasers like the North Coast County Water District. At the same time, the State has new requirements for water districts to reduce urban per capita water use, and for municipalities to implement water-conserving landscaping requirements. Pacifica must make further progress on reducing water use. The General Plan update may feature new targets, and may create the framework for coordination between the City and the Water District.
2. **Expanding the Water Recycling System.** The City and the Water District are currently collaborating on a project to use treated wastewater for landscaping. In its first phase, this project will serve Sharp Park, Highway 1, and certain other public landscaping areas. The General Plan should focus on long-term expansion of the recycled water system.

Historic Resources

3. **Protecting Archaeological Resources on Development Sites.** Pacifica's environmental setting and its long history of habitation by Native people make it likely that unrecorded cultural resources are present in the Planning Area. The General Plan should restate City policy concerning field study requirements for development projects.
4. **Continued Improvements to Historic Resources.** As the site of a Native American village, a Spanish mission outpost, and an early Mexican land grant where the oldest surviving structure in the County still stands, the Sanchez Adobe Park has a powerful story to tell. Together with the Portola Discovery Site and Portola

Expedition Campsite, Pacifica is home to a group of sites with resonance in California. These sites' relationship to their surroundings and to each other has the potential to be improved and emphasized, through community design, trails planning, and economic development strategies. Other historic resources, such as the Little Brown Church, may play a role in the revitalization of the West Sharp Park neighborhood.

Public Open Space and Recreation

5. **Marketing Pacifica's Open Space Resources.** Pacifica has a great wealth of regional public open space. With greater and broader marketing, the potential regional draw of this resource could bring more visitors and additional revenue into the City.
6. **Developing Local-Serving Public Spaces.** Pacifica has an abundance of regional public open space, in the GGNRA lands, San Pedro Valley County Park, and Sharp Park. But the City does not currently meet the acreage and distribution standards in the current General Plan for neighborhood, district, and large city parks. Active play areas in close proximity to homes is an important indicator of public health. The General Plan update must evaluate whether the standards are appropriate for Pacifica and if so, to identify new park locations and development strategies.
7. **Strengthening Joint-Use Agreements of Open Space at Schools.** One way to address the shortage of local-serving parks would be to have shared-use agreements with the school districts for public use of school playfields and facilities after school hours.
8. **Optimizing and/or Increasing the Local Use of Sharp Park.** Coordination with the City and County of San Francisco, which operates Sharp Park, could help Pacifica augment its usable public open space. The upland part of the park is largely undeveloped with recreational amenities, while the future of the Golf Course remains unresolved. The General Plan process

may help to clarify Pacifica's goals regarding Sharp Park, and strategies for achieving them.

9. **Defining Goals for New Cultural/Recreational Amenities.** An Ocean Discovery Center, a GGNRA Visitors' Center, kiosks and camping huts are among facilities that have been discussed which could build on Pacifica's open space resources and enhance the City's attractiveness for visitors. Direction on these or other amenities should be provided in the General Plan update.
10. **Developing and Improving the Trail System.** Enhancing Pacifica's trail system, and in particular, improving linkages between ridgeline and coastal open spaces, has long been a goal for the City. Pacifica has the opportunity to strengthen connections between neighborhoods and its enviable public open space resources, and facilitate the active enjoyment of these spaces by residents. At the same time, an enhanced trail system could play a key role in making the City more of a destination.
11. **Managing Public Use and Protection of Open Space Resources.** Public safety issues, impacts of public use on biological resources, and fragile resource concerns need to be addressed in Plan policies determining the City's management approach to key areas under its jurisdiction.

Schools and Community Facilities

12. **Enhancing the Relationship Between Neighborhoods and Schools.** Whether or not Pacifica School District moves toward a neighborhood-oriented enrollment policy, General Plan policies can seek to strengthen connections between neighborhoods and schools, through pedestrian improvements, consideration of adjacent land uses, and partnership opportunities.
13. **Making the Most of School Facilities.** School district facilities in Pacifica are considered capable of handling enrollment, which is projected to remain stable or increase slightly. PSD's two closed schools, Fairmont and Oddstad, and its central office building may present reuse or redevelopment opportunities. Oceana High School, with fewer than 600 students on a sprawling 55-acre campus, may present opportunities as well.
14. **Developing a New Library/Learning Center.** The potential for a new library to be created that more fully and more efficiently serves the community will have important implications for other plans in the City. A new library/learning center could be achieved in partnership with other goals, and may be a centerpiece for the City's evolution. Funding for a new library will be an important consideration. If a new library is developed, the two existing library sites will have reuse or redevelopment potential.
15. **Developing a Civic Center.** City Hall and other public offices are recognized to be in poor condition, and there is potential to dramatically improve the City's interface with residents and image to visitors by creating new facilities or a civic center.

Fire and Public Safety

16. **Improving Fire Service Needs, Possibly Including a Third Station.** Pacifica's long and narrow geography and its reliance on Highway 1 for north-south access create challenges for fire service response. Currently, North County Fire Authority does not meet its full assignment response time standard for the southern half of the City, and does not meet its first-responder standard for the Vallemar neighborhood. A third fire station in this central part of the City is warranted, and will be especially needed if significant development occurs.

Public Health

17. **Creating Walkable Neighborhoods and Mixed Use Development close to Transit Stations.** Pacifica's low-density form spread across rugged topography has not produced accessible neighborhoods or highly usable public transportation. As a result, walking is not facilitated as part of daily life. The new General Plan has an opportunity to try to achieve concentrated, mixed-use development served by transit at key locations in the City. Establishing better pedestrian connections between existing neighborhoods should also be considered.
18. **Improving Spaces and Activities for Youth.** There appears to be a relatively high rate of substance abuse among youth in Pacifica. From a General Plan perspective, this might be addressed by creating places in Pacifica that support more activities for youth.



Pacifica has great reserves of regional park land, but does not meet its current standards for access to city parks at the neighborhood and district scale. Some recent developments, such as Cypress Walk, above, have included vest-pocket parks, which help to provide locally accessible play areas.



Pacifica's current City Hall occupies an old schoolhouse in the West Sharp Park neighborhood. The building is a local landmark, but does not adequately meet the needs of city government and is in poor condition. A new civic center and a new "21st Century library and learning center" are both under discussion in Pacifica.



Pacifica's beaches and hillsides can be the foundation for quality of life, ranging from economic development to health and well-being.

This page intentionally left blank.