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RESIDENTIAL AND FUTURE RESIDENTIAL AREAS



Fassler Ridge. Pacifica has over 1,000 acres of undeveloped or under-utilized land that could be developed for residential use. Much of this land is on open bluffs or steep slopes.

Pacifica has an estimated 1,017 acres of vacant or under-utilized land within City limits that is currently zoned for residential use. Based on current zoning and typical development densities, this land could accommodate an estimated 1,457 new housing units. Vacant and under-utilized land could theoretically accommodate projected demand for new housing over the 20-year planning period. The city also needs to accommodate new housing for lower-income households not just in the current Housing Element period but over the longer term. The General Plan update will need to ensure adequate land for housing.

2.1 LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TYPES

The residential land use classifications used in the proposed General Plan approach are the same as those in the current General Plan: Open Space Residential; Very Low Density Residential; Low Density Residential; Medium Density Residential; and High Density Residential. As defined in the current General Plan, the expected uses and densities of each of these districts is summarized below.

Pacifica faces three important design challenges concerning future residential development. These are: good site planning on sensitive natural sites; compatible design in existing neighborhoods; and higher-density housing in suitable locations. The General Plan update should help to ensure that these issues are addressed successfully to the greatest extent possible. Design issues are illustrated in the photos below.

Residential Districts

Open Space Residential (OSR)

This designation is intended to provide for residential, agriculture, and recreation uses are allowed if consistent with objectives described in General Plan narrative. Average residential development densities are designated at more than five acres per unit.

Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)

The Very Low Density Residential designation allows single-family residential development averaging ½ to 5 acres per unit.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

This designation allows single-family residential development averaging 3 to 9 units per acre, translating to typical lot sizes of between about 4,500 and 14,000 square feet.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

This designation can accommodate a mix of housing types, including single-family houses on small lots, duplexes, townhouses, and clustered apartments, averaging 10 to 15 units per acre.

High Density Residential (HDR)

This designation is intended to accommodate attached homes, two- to four-plexes, and apartment buildings. Permitted densities range between 16 and 21 units per acre.

Mixed Use (MU)

Much of the higher-density housing the General Plan will accommodate will be in areas designated for mixed-use development. Typically this will mean “vertical” mixed use, with upper-floor housing above retail. In some cases it may mean a flexible “horizontal” arrangement of uses, including residential and hotel or retail. This designation is considered in Chapter 3, Commercial Areas and Economic Development.



Very Low Density Development in a Natural Context. *New development on hillsides and other open lands must be at a density that can be supported by the site and designed to minimize environmental hazards and negative impacts on critical habitat and views.*



Compact Neighborhood Design. *In recent years, small compact neighborhoods have been developed in Pacifica where site size and topography allows. Some sites may offer this potential during the coming decades.*



Compatible Design in Existing Neighborhoods. *New houses in existing neighborhoods should be in scale with nearby houses, and harmonize with the way neighboring houses relate to each other and to the street.*



Clustered Housing. *Clustered, medium-density housing can be designed on larger sites so that open space areas are preserved.*



Second Units. *Pacifica's zoning also allows small, second units to be added, making it easier for single-person households, relatives, or small renter households to live in single-family neighborhoods.*



Higher-Density Housing in Suitable Locations. *A greater amount and variety of multi-family housing would help Pacifica to satisfy the needs of low-income households and allow aging residents to "downsize" but remain in the community. Certain locations are especially suitable for higher-density housing; it is important that this housing be both attractive and well-designed for living. At 21 units per acre, the example on the right (from San Mateo) is in the density range of Pacifica's High Density Residential designation. At 29 units per acre, the senior housing on the right (Alameda County) would require use of the City's density bonus program.*

2.2 PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN APPROACH

Much of the land with residential development potential is on open bluffs or steep slopes. Development here has the potential to change the visual experience of the community, to come with environmental hazards, and to disrupt sensitive habitat. Development on infill sites has implications for the character of existing neighborhoods. The key objectives of the General Plan with regard to new residential development are outlined below. The proposed General Plan approach to residential areas is shown in Figure 2-1 Residential Areas.

Refine General Plan Land Use Designations and Harmonize with Zoning

For the most part, zoning in Pacifica conforms to the General Plan, but provides more detailed guidance. In some areas, zoning and General Plan designations do not match up. The General Plan update is an opportunity to evaluate which designation is better suited to the site, and to make the two designations consistent. As shown in Figure 2-1, clusters of potential development sites are distinguished according to whether the area is proposed to be matched to the lower-density of the current General Plan or zoning designations; matched to the higher-density of the two; or changed. The choice is based on one of the other key objectives, as follows.

Establish Appropriate Land Use and Design Controls in Hillside Areas

In recent years, Pacifica's zoning regulations have been effective in protecting the environmental and scenic quality of the city's hillsides and bluffs. Where it has occurred, new development has generally been clustered to preserve open space and designed to minimize impacts. The General Plan update should reinforce good site planning, while allowing appropriate new development.

Most of Pacifica's sensitive hillside areas are currently designated and zoned for Open Space Residential or Very Low Density Residential development. Careful review of proposed site plans is assured by the Hillside Preservation District. There are some hillside sites where zoning and General Plan indicate different levels of density. This proposal generally favors the lower-density of the two for sites with very challenging characteristics. These include sites on hillsides in the Linda Mar and Park Pacifica neighborhoods; and the lower slope of Gypsy Hill.

Where characteristics may allow more units to be accommodated with good site planning, the higher-density option is favored; this is the case for sites on upper Manor Drive and above Fairway Park.

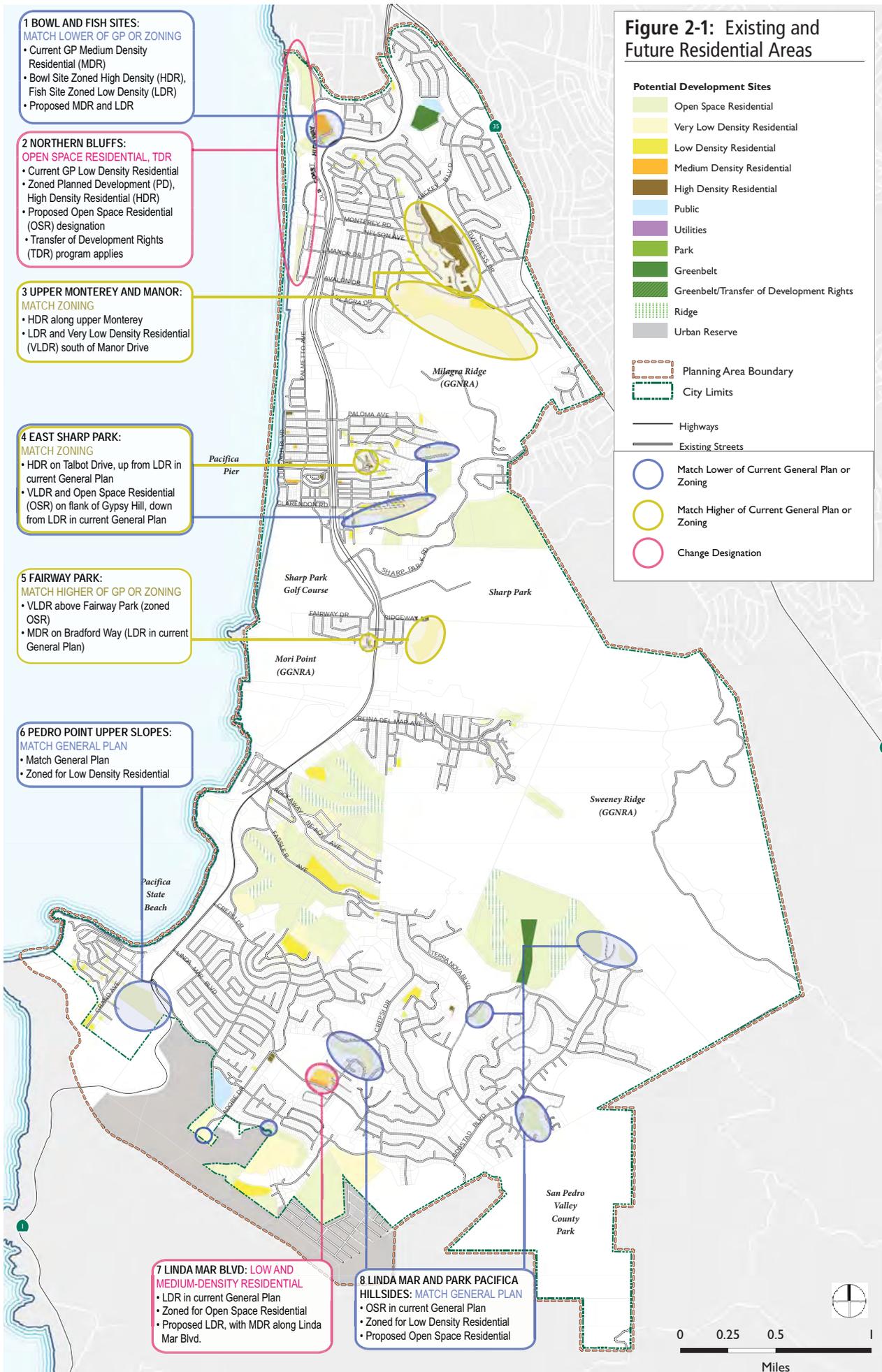
Identify Sites Where Habitat Protection and Open Space Preservation Should Take Priority

Open space is valued for many reasons: the way it defines Pacifica's character, trail access through natural areas, and its value as habitat. The most appropriate approach to conservation may vary site by site, with some sites identified as priorities for public acquisition and others seen as compatible with development.

The northern coastal bluffs are identified as a primary site for permanent conservation due to the presence of a sensitive community of plants, and coastal erosion hazards. Development permitted on these sites could be shifted to other sites.

Much of the undeveloped land on the upper slopes of Pedro Point is being evaluated for designation as critical habitat for the California red-legged frog. Here, it is judged to still be appropriate to allow a very low level of development, located appropriately on the site.

Figure 2-1: Existing and Future Residential Areas



1 BOWL AND FISH SITES:
MATCH LOWER OF GP OR ZONING
 • Current GP Medium Density Residential (MDR)
 • Bowl Site Zoned High Density (HDR), Fish Site Zoned Low Density (LDR)
 • Proposed MDR and LDR

2 NORTHERN BLUFFS:
OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL, TDR
 • Current GP Low Density Residential
 • Zoned Planned Development (PD), High Density Residential (HDR)
 • Proposed Open Space Residential (OSR) designation
 • Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program applies

3 UPPER MONTEREY AND MANOR:
MATCH ZONING
 • HDR along upper Monterey
 • LDR and Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) south of Manor Drive

4 EAST SHARP PARK:
MATCH ZONING
 • HDR on Talbot Drive, up from LDR in current General Plan
 • VLDR and Open Space Residential (OSR) on flank of Gypsy Hill, down from LDR in current General Plan

5 FAIRWAY PARK:
MATCH HIGHER OF GP OR ZONING
 • VLDR above Fairway Park (zoned OSR)
 • MDR on Bradford Way (LDR in current General Plan)

6 PEDRO POINT UPPER SLOPES:
MATCH GENERAL PLAN
 • Match General Plan
 • Zoned for Low Density Residential

7 LINDA MAR BLVD: LOW AND MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 • LDR in current General Plan
 • Zoned for Open Space Residential
 • Proposed LDR, with MDR along Linda Mar Blvd.

8 LINDA MAR AND PARK PACIFICA HILLSIDES: MATCH GENERAL PLAN
 • OSR in current General Plan
 • Zoned for Low Density Residential
 • Proposed Open Space Residential

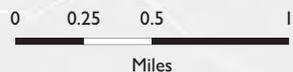
Potential Development Sites

- Open Space Residential
- Very Low Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Public
- Utilities
- Park
- Greenbelt
- Greenbelt/Transfer of Development Rights
- Ridge
- Urban Reserve

--- Planning Area Boundary
 --- City Limits

— Highways
 — Existing Streets

○ Match Lower of Current General Plan or Zoning
 ○ Match Higher of Current General Plan or Zoning
 ○ Change Designation



Ensure Unique Character of Neighborhoods

Vacant infill sites are scattered in several Pacifica neighborhoods. New houses on these sites will have the least impact on environmental resources, infrastructure or public services. Still, it is important that new development does not violate the existing character of neighborhoods. Infill sites have the same General Plan designation as their surrounding neighborhood, which are mainly considered appropriate.

Designate Sites for Higher-Density Development

There is a demand for housing units affordable to low-income households, and the City is required to demonstrate that this demand can be met. The General Plan must identify sites where townhouses and apartments would be well-suited. Some of these sites will be on land that is currently zoned for residential use, and others will be on commercially-zoned land where mixed-use development would benefit the City.

Residential sites that could accommodate higher density development not envisioned by the current General Plan include sites along upper Monterey Road and Hickey Boulevard, and a large vacant site on Linda Mar Boulevard.

2.3 FOCUS AREAS

Proposed changes to General Plan designations on specific sites are outlined in the photo captions that follow. The location of each focus area is shown on Figure 2-1.



Bowl and Fish Sites. The proposed approach is to designate the “Bowl” site Medium Density Residential (MDR) and the “Fish” site Low Density Residential (LDR.) In both cases these are the lower-density of the sites’ General Plan and zoning designations.



East Sharp Park. Parcels off of lower Talbot Avenue have a General Plan designation of Low Density Residential (LDR) but are zoned for multi-family housing. Property at the upper end of Talbot and on the south side of Clarendon Road have a General Plan designation of LDR, but are zoned for very low density. In both cases, it is suggested that General Plan designations be updated to match zoning.



Linda Mar Boulevard. A large vacant site on the north side of Linda Mar Boulevard has a current General Plan designation of Low Density Residential (LDR) and zoned for agriculture. This site is well-suited to a mix of low- and medium-density residential development in the future.



Northern Bluffs. Current zoning on the bluffs is for multi-family and single-family residential and planned development. The area is proposed for Open Space Residential (OSR) designation.



Fairway Park. Sites on east side Bradford Way are zoned for medium density, and this proposal calls for updating the General Plan to match zoning. The undeveloped parcel on the slope above Fairway Park is designated for Very Low Density Residential (VLDR), but zoned for development at even lower density. The current General Plan designation is proposed here.



Linda Mar and Park Pacifica Hillsides. Several steep undeveloped hillsides in Linda Mar and Park Pacifica are designated for Open Space Residential (OSR) in the current General Plan, but have single-family residential zoning. The current General Plan designation is appropriate.



Upper Monterey and Manor. Undeveloped sites on upper Monterey Road are zoned for multi-family development, while the steeply sloping are south of Manor is zoned for very-low density. This proposal suggests that General Plan designation be revised to match this zoning.



Pedro Point Upper Slopes. An undeveloped site on the slope of Pedro Point is designated for Open Space Residential (OSR) in the General Plan, but zoned for single-family residential. Given the steep slope here, OSR is appropriate.

2.4 COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

At the community workshop, participants were asked to mark on individual worksheets whether they agreed, disagreed, or did not have an opinion on the proposed approach to each residential focus area. There were approximately 75 responses. The results are shown in Table 2-1.

The proposed approach all but one focus area received majority agreement from workshop participants. Still, there was less than 60 percent agreement to the proposals for the Bowl and Fish, Fairway Park, and Linda Mar Boulevard focus areas. The sources of this disagreement are reflected in the comments that many participants added to the worksheets and maps. These are provided in full in Appendices B, C, and D, and summarized here.

Bowl and Fish

Medium and Low Density Residential designations are proposed here, matching the lower of current General Plan or zoning designations. About one third of respondents disagreed with this approach. Of the 16 critical comments we received on this focus area, 13 indicated that it is not or may not be suitable for development due to erosion, drainage, or habitat, and should be preserved as open space. Two tables echoed these ideas in their discussion notes.

Fairway Park

In this focus area, Medium Density Residential was proposed for Bradford Way, while Very Low Density Residential was proposed for the hillside parcel above Fairway Park itself. In both cases current General Plan and zoning do not match, and the higher-density designation was proposed. This approach received the most opposition of any focus area (46 percent.) Only a few participants commented on the Bradford Way proposal and most supported the higher density. There was significant disagreement with the Very Low Density designation for the hillside parcel. Many comments indicated that Open Space Residential was more appropriate, noting that 18 or 19 parcels could be developed according to the definition of Very Low Density Residential, and this would be too many.

Linda Mar Boulevard

The flat parcel along Linda Mar Boulevard is proposed for both Low and Medium Density Residential, up from the current Low Density General Plan designation. The parcel is zoned for agriculture. One-third of respondents disagreed with the proposed approach. Based on the comments, some felt that a mix of medium and high density would be appropriate, given the site's accessibility; others wanted to see the site designated only for low density, or for open space and agriculture. One table's discussion notes indicate a preference for all Low Density Residential here. General Comments

TABLE 2-1: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED APPROACH TO RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Focus Area	Approach	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
1 Bowl and Fish	Match Lower of GP/Zoning	53%	32%	15%
2 Northern Bluffs	OSR, TDR	68%	30%	3%
3 Upper Monterey and Manor	Match Zoning	64%	27%	9%
4 East Sharp Park	Match Zoning	70%	18%	12%
5 Fairway Park	Match Higher of GP/Zoning	49%	46%	5%
6 Pedro Point Upper Slopes	Match GP	62%	34%	4%
7 Linda Mar Blvd	LDR, MDR	59%	32%	9%
8 Linda Mar and Park Pacifica Hillside	Match GP	73%	20%	7%

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.

Some worksheets strongly noted a concern that property owners weren't specifically contacted. There were also comments stating the following general views:

- Pacifica does not need housing for low-income households, but does need housing for seniors as the population ages;
- The General Plan should address housing for all stages of aging and for persons with disabilities;
- The General Plan should not generate any large increase in development;
- High-density housing should be facilitated in areas with public transportation access;
- "Hillside Residential" may be a clearer designation than "Open Space Residential" for parcels where very low-density residential development is allowed where site conditions permit;
- The Hillside Preservation District in Pacifica's zoning code should have been reflected on the maps and the proposed approaches;
- Pacifica's Hillside Preservation District is a model regulation, and must not be changed.

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