



The 2035 General Plan is a policy document for the long-range development of the City of Pacifica. It provides the direction for the future growth of the City and articulates a vision of what Pacifica aspires to be. The Plan draws its ideas from residents, business owners, elected officials, and City staff and translates these ideas into a set of policies and actions for present and future generations.

This introduction to the General Plan provides an overview of the document. It highlights key themes, gives the reader a background to the planning process and the requirements for the Plan, describes how the Plan is organized, and explains how it will be administered after it is adopted.

1.1 PURPOSE AND PLANNING PROCESS

Purpose

Purpose of the General Plan

The Pacifica General Plan is a policy document mandated by State law to address issues related to physical development and conservation of resources. The Plan embodies the expressed goals of residents, business owners, and elected officials and establishes concrete and achievable actions within the planning period. Broad objectives such as “create economic development,” “preserve open space,” and “support sustainable practices” are translated into policies, maps, and specific actions that are tangible and can be implemented. The Plan is designed for a range of users, from City staff to residents. Where greater specificity is needed, the City will rely on specific plans, an updated Zoning Ordinance, and subdivision and other regulations to implement its policies.

This General Plan aims to achieve the following purposes:

- Outline a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community;
- Establish goals and policies to guide development and conservation decisions by the Planning Commission, City Council, and City staff;
- Provide a basis for determining whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with the City’s long-range vision;
- Reflect Pacifica’s current planning and economic development efforts;
- Allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that enhance the character of the community, promote public health, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, sub-

division regulations, specific and area plans, and the Capital Improvement Program;

- Ensure that the statewide goals of the California Coastal Act are served within the Coastal Zone.

Why Update the General Plan?

The City of Pacifica last comprehensively updated its General Plan in 1980. In the more than 30 years since then, many of its goals have been carried out, including a zoning code with regulations to protect slopes and preserve open space, and the revitalization of the Rockaway Beach area. Many issues facing Pacifica are enduring but the legal environment governing land use, environmental preservation, housing, and other planning issues have changed. New priorities have emerged with a new generation of Pacifica residents and stakeholders. The General Plan update has provided for a comprehensive assessment of current conditions; it allows today’s residents to express a vision for the future. This update plan can provide an opportunity to eliminate obsolete text and policies, ensure legal conformity, and address today’s challenges.

Plan Preparation Process

Community Building: Visioning and Key Issues

In order for the General Plan update to address accurately community needs and values, a comprehensive public of obtaining the input of residents, business and property owners, City staff, and elected officials was central to the update process. The visioning phase of the General Plan update process was initiated by the City of Pacifica in the spring of 2009. At different stages of the plan-making process, residents, property and business owners, organizations, and public agencies were invited to interviews, workshops and open houses to provide input. The initial stage of community involvement included the following elements:

- General Plan Outreach Committee (GPOC).** The City convened a committee with the responsibility of stimulating broader community involvement in the process.
- Community Interviews.** Consultants met with 35 members of the community selected to represent a broad range of interests and provide local knowledge. The interviews took place in April 2009, and were conducted one-on-one or in small groups of up to four people. A summary report on the interviews is available under separate cover.
- Community Forums.** Two community forums were held at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School, to help define a common vision and key issues for the General Plan to address. The first workshop took place April 25, 2009, with the theme “Community Vision.” At this workshop, the approximately 125 attendees were asked what they liked most about Pacifica today and what they would like to see change. Community members were asked to describe a positive vision of Pacifica in 20 years and identify things that would be accomplished. A second community forum was held on May 30, 2009 and drew about 120 community members. At this meeting, a list of broad key issues and draft guiding policies for the General Plan and LCLUP were presented. Working in small groups, participants considered the proposed statements and voted on their level of agreement with them. The results of these workshops are summarized in separate reports available through the City of Pacifica. They were critical in establishing the key themes and initiatives of the 2035 General Plan.
- Joint City Council/Planning Commission Workshops.** The results of the community-building phase, along with the results of the existing conditions analysis were presented at a workshop for City Council and the Planning Commission on September 1, 2010. Council and Commission members and members of the public were given the opportunity to provide feedback.



Community forums were held to get feedback from Pacifica residents about what they valued most, what they wanted to see change, and what their preferences were regarding key policies and alternative land use scenarios.

- **Newsletter.** An initial newsletter was mailed to Pacifica residents and businesses to introduce the process and its goals.
- **Media and Press Releases.** The City has provided press releases to generate local media coverage of the General Plan update in advance of each opportunity for community involvement.
- **City Website.** Frequent updates and interim documents were available on the City’s website throughout the planning process.

Analysis of Existing Conditions

The plan-making process involved City staff working closely with land use, traffic, market demand, and other consultants to analyze existing conditions and development opportunities. Interim reports were prepared to document findings of technical analysis. These findings were integrated in the *Existing Conditions and Key Issues* report, published in July 2010 and presented to a joint City Council/Planning Commission workshop in September 2010. In response to questions from Council and Commission members, the report on traffic conditions and the transportation chapter of the Existing Conditions report were revised and released in May 2011.

Evaluating Choices

The next phase of the update process involved development and discussion of alternative land use plans and key policy issues. The alternative land use concepts illustrate a range of choices—visions of the city in 2035—inspired by the priorities articulated during the community-building phase and informed by the existing conditions analysis. These were presented for discussion at a third community forum, held January 29, 2011, at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School. The meeting featured presentations on alternative concepts for future residential and commercial development, and key issues of sustainability and open parks and open space, followed by small-group discussion periods. The ideas and community feedback were published as the *Land Use Alternatives and Key Policy Issues* report, released in May 2011, and presented at public meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council in August and September of 2011.

Based on projected growth, the consulting team offered recommendations for each land use choice, and for how to proceed with key policy issues. Planning Commission and City Council heard testimony from members of the public, and registered their agreement or disagreement with each choice. This guidance from elected officials resulted in Preferred Plan concept maps, which were completed in January 2012. The Preferred Plan combines the most desirable aspects of the alternatives, with modifications based on community feedback. The adopted Preferred Plan Concept, provided the foundation for this General Plan.

Draft and Final Documents

The final phase of the update process includes the preparation of the Draft Pacifica 2035 General Plan, and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), for public review and adoption. The phase began with an opportunity for community members and resource agency representatives to comment on the proposed project at a scoping meeting for the EIR, held on March 7, 2012. Drafting the General Plan involved establishing detailed policies to help the City achieve its goals for development, conservation, public facilities and services, and other issues, over the next 20 years.

The Draft General Plan and Draft EIR will be circulated for public review prior to public hearings. A newsletter also will be proposed to summarize the draft Plan and to let residents know when and where community “open houses,” are to be held where additional comments will be taken. After Commission and Council action, the final version of the General Plan will be prepared.

1.2 GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

California’s tradition of allowing local authority over land use decisions means that cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans. However, though land use policies are not mandated, the issues to be addressed in the Plan are prescribed by State law. California Government Code Sections 65300 *et seq.* establish requirements for the content of General Plans, as well as for their adoption and subsequent amendments. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans:

- **The General Plan Must Be Comprehensive.** This requirement has two aspects. First, the general plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the full range of issues that affect the city’s physical development.
- **The General Plan Must Be Internally Consistent.** This requirement means that the general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. “Horizontal” consistency applies both to figures and diagrams as well as general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of

the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.

- **The General Plan Must Be Long-Range.** In order to avoid incremental planning decisions which may occur over many years, and may eventually conflict with each other, the General Plan must be long range. The General Plan is intended to take a long-term view of development and considers issues that may impact the community for the next ten or twenty years.

The City of Pacifica General Plan includes six of the seven elements required by State law: Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, and Noise. It also includes two other optional elements that address local concerns: Economic Sustainability and Community Design. Because the Housing Element is required by State law to be updated at specific times—more frequently than the rest of the General Plan—it is published as a separate document. However, the Housing Element is written to be consistent with the rest of the General Plan. Table 1-1 shows the relationship between required General Plan elements and their location in the Pacifica 2035

TABLE 1-1: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN REQUIRED ELEMENTS AND GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Required Elements	Element in 1980 General Plan	Current General Plan Element
Land Use	Land Use	Chapter 4: Land Use
Circulation	Circulation	Chapter 5: Circulation
Open Space	Open Space and Recreation	Chapter 6: Open Space and Community Facilities
Conservation	Conservation	Chapter 7: Conservation
Safety	Seismic Safety & Safety	Chapter 8: Safety
Noise	Noise	Chapter 9: Noise
Housing	Contained in a separate volume	Contained in a separate volume
Not required	Community Design	Chapter 3: Community Design
Not required	Scenic Highways	Covered in Chapter 3: Community Design
Not required	Community Facilities	Covered in Chapter 6: Open Space and Community Facilities
Not required	Historic Preservation	Covered in Chapter 7: Conservation
Not required	Not included	Chapter 2: Economic Sustainability
	Coastal Zone Land Use Policies	Covered in Local Coastal Land Use Plan

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.

General Plan. The table also shows the relationship between elements of this General Plan and elements in the 1980 General Plan which this Plan replaces.

Environmental Justice

State law requires General Plans to include consideration of environmental justice in preparing policies and implementation programs, and in creating the physical framework for development. The problems of environmental justice that the General Plan can address include procedural inequities and geographic inequities.

- Procedural inequities might include “stacking” commissions or committees with individuals who ignore the interests of minority and low-income residents, holding meetings at times and places that minimize the ability of low-income residents to participate, using English-only communications when non-English speaking populations may be affected by land use decisions, and requiring lower levels of mitigation for projects affecting low-income and minority populations.
- Geographic inequities might include providing fewer public services, transit services, and parks for minority and low-income residents than for middle- and upper-income residents.

The General Plan addresses environmental justice in the context of parks and public services in Chapter 6 (Open Space and Community Facilities). Chapter 8 (Safety) includes policies to ensure that public facilities and service levels are not related to race, ethnicity, or income status.

Complete Streets

The California Complete Streets Act (AB 1358) requires all cities and counties to plan for the development of multimodal transportation networks in their general plans, beginning in January 2011. “Complete Streets” meet the travel needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways, and of all modes of travel (walking, cycling, driving, etc.). Pacifica’s General Plan responds directly to the Complete Streets Act in Chapter 5, Circulation.

California’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Legislation

Pacifica’s new General Plan is being updated at a time when issues of sustainability, global climate change, and smart growth are being actively addressed at the State and regional levels. New legislation and regional planning efforts have informed this Plan update, and showed how local communities can play a part in confronting these larger challenges.

California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32)

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 directed the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop a strategy to meet specific targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions. The resulting CARB Scoping Plan outlined the combination of policies, programs, and measures necessary to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, the equivalent of reducing emissions by 15 percent below current levels and 30 percent below projected business-as-usual levels. Many of the measures identified in the scoping plan would, when implemented, contribute to emission reductions statewide as well as in local communities.

Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375)

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 promotes better integration of transportation and land use planning throughout California. The statute complements AB 32 by requiring CARB to develop regional GHG emission reduction targets for passenger vehicles. Following SB 375, CARB established targets for the years 2020 and 2035 for each region covered by the state’s 18 federally-designated metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including the San Francisco Bay Area.

Pursuant to this Act, each of California’s MPOs must prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) outlining how the region will meet its GHG reduction target by integrating land use planning, transportation planning and funding, and housing needs. The SCS is being incorporated into the regional transportation plan, now known as Plan Bay Area. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is leading the effort in the Bay Area, in partnership with other regional agencies and local governments.

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

Regional Location

Pacifica is within the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose metropolitan area, and at its northern end is just 10 miles from downtown San Francisco. The cities of Daly City, South San Francisco, and San Bruno border the City on the north and east, and include urban development up to the City's borders. Much of the land to the southeast and south is preserved as units of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, State and County parks, and the San Francisco watershed, and rural and agricultural land is prevalent to the south. The Pacific Ocean borders Pacifica to the west. Access to Pacifica is primarily via State Route 1 (SR 1, or Coast Highway) and State Route 35 (SR 35, or Skyline Boulevard.) Land west of SR 1 in Pacifica is part of the State-designated Coastal Zone, which also includes a small amount of land to the east. Figure 1-1 shows Pacifica in its regional context.

Planning Boundaries

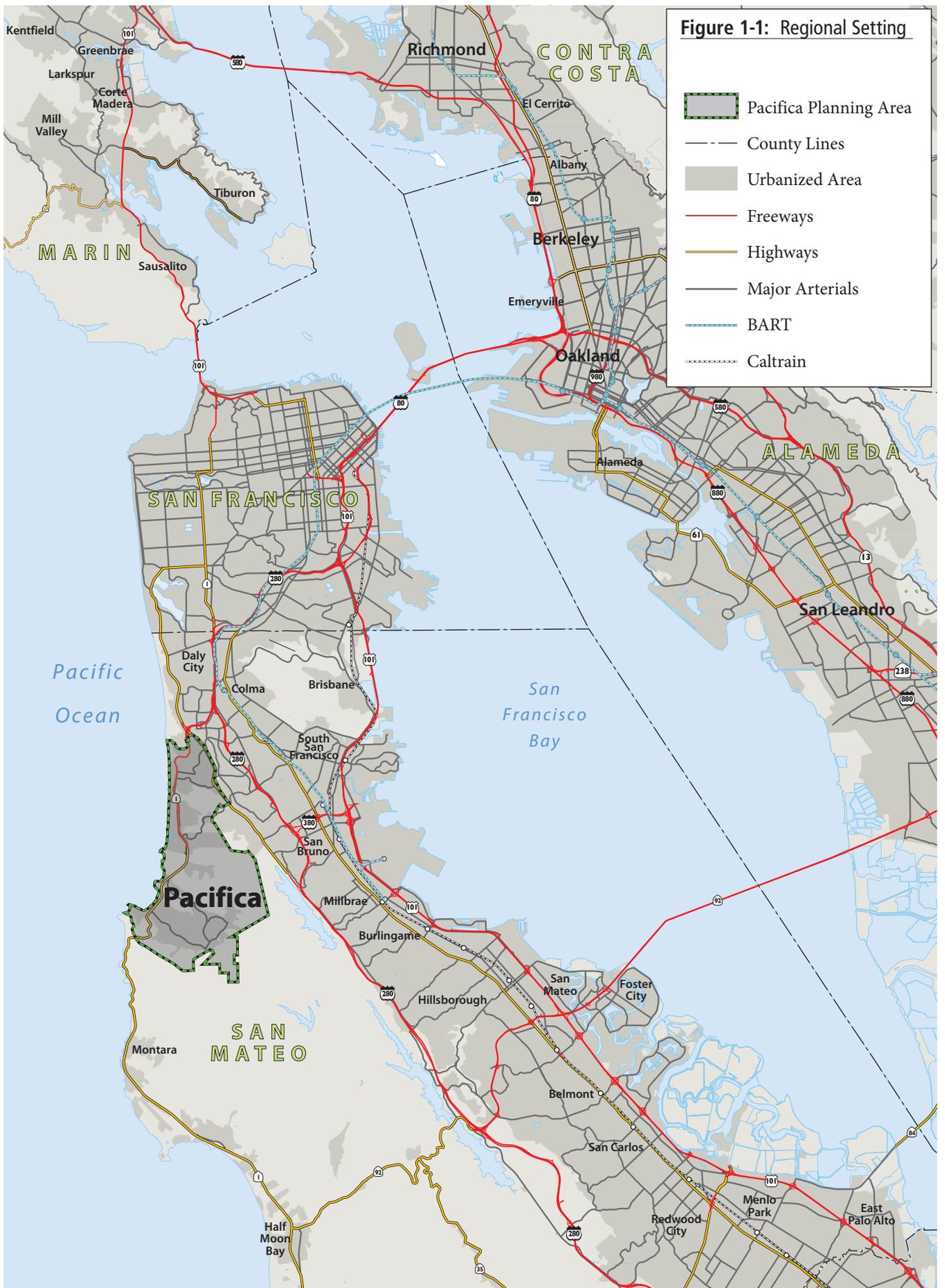
The Planning Area

The Planning Area is the geographic area for which the General Plan establishes policies about future urban growth and natural resource conservation in Pacifica. The boundary was determined in response to State law requiring each city to include in its General Plan all territory within the boundaries of the incorporated area as well as “any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (California Government Code Section 65300).

The Planning Area comprises 8,625 acres, or about 13.5 square miles, including all of the City of Pacifica (8,019 acres) as well as 606 acres of unincorporated land south of City limits on the slope of San Pedro Mountain. Nearly half (47 percent) of the Planning Area is preserved as open space. Another 16 percent of the Planning Area is vacant or undeveloped, and five percent is agricultural. Urban uses make up 32 percent of the Planning Area, 70 percent of which is residential.

The Coastal Zone

Land west of SR 1, as well as the Shelldance Nursery property and some land east of SR 1 south of City limits, is part of the Coastal Zone, subject to Pacifica’s Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP) and the policies of the California Coastal Act. Pacifica’s Coastal Zone comprises approximately 1,286 acres of land, or about 15 percent of the Planning Area. It includes a high proportion of the City’s commercial land and visitor destinations. The Planning Area boundary, Coastal Zone boundary, and City limits are shown in Figure 1-2.



1.4 PLAN THEMES AND KEY INITIATIVES

Several themes for the General Plan were identified based on input by the public and from key stakeholders and City staff. The importance of these themes was underscored by analysis of existing conditions, and key initiatives were developed collaboratively through the planning process. These themes guide many of the policies in each Plan chapter.

- **Open Space Preservation and Trail System Expansion.** Pacifica’s hillsides, beaches, and other protected open space are prized by community members for their scenic, recreational, and habitat values. Continued preservation is seen as a key accomplishment over the next 20 years. The Plan identifies priorities for open space preservation and strategies to protect open space while allowing limited development, to be clustered and designed to fit into its natural setting. It also proposes an enhanced trail system connecting the coastline and ridges throughout Pacifica.
- **Sustainable Development and Practices.** Pacifica residents want to allow a responsible amount of development while ensuring that habitat and the community’s unique, small-town character are protected. Residents also want to see green building and other sustainable practices promoted by the City. The Plan aims to set a good land use balance and to promote sustainable site planning

and design, water conservation, waste reduction, and use of alternative transportation modes.

- **Creating a Destination for Tourism.** Throughout the update process, community members and stakeholders emphasized the need for more economic activity. There is a widely shared sense that Pacifica has the potential to attract more tourists, and that this should be a key component of the City’s economic development strategy. The Plan includes strategies to enhance tourism by leveraging Pacifica’s natural assets, creating more attractive places in visitor-oriented districts, marketing, and pursuing destination hotels and inns at key sites, including Rockaway Beach and Quarry.
- **Shopping Area Revitalization and Walkable, Mixed Use Areas.** Pacifica residents desire more attractive and successful commercial areas, and also envision the development of walkable, mixed-use areas with good transit access. The Plan seeks to support commercial revitalization and redevelopment at key locations, advancing the City’s fiscal health, its quality of life, and its sustainability all at once.
- **A Unique, Vital Center for Pacifica.** Many community members expressed interest in creating a center for Pacifica, to provide a community gathering place and strengthen the City’s iden-



The Plan identifies strategies to preserve open space, and proposes an enhanced trail system connecting the coastline and ridges throughout Pacifica (left). Habitat protection and restoration will be a top priority for open space (right).



Compact, mixed-use development at key locations should stimulate tourism and revitalize shopping areas (left). New development is required to provide park land to serve local residents, or pay fees that help the City provide needed recreational amenities (right).

tity. Palmetto Avenue was most often pointed to as having great potential to grow into such a vital, unique district. The Plan aims to facilitate the enhancement of Palmetto as a pedestrian-oriented retail area, anchored by new development at the Old Wastewater Treatment Plant site, linking the retail district to the Promenade and the Ocean. New civic facilities, such as a City Hall and a new Library/Learning Center, could be valuable assets to this area as well.

- **Diversity of Housing and Population.** Only a small amount of new housing—about 1,000 units—is expected to be developed during the planning period. Residents are proud of the diversity of housing in the community, and want to ensure that this is carried on. In addition, many observed that new housing types should help provide additional options for residents as they age. The Plan aims to make Pacifica more accessible and ensure adequate housing options for people of all ages and incomes by providing enough sites at a higher density, and creating opportunities for mixed use development in transit-accessible locations.
- **Recreation Facilities and Activities for Youth.** Pacifica has limited recreation facilities, and community members expressed concern about the lack of things to do, especially for youth. The Plan identifies top priorities for recreation improvements, with an emphasis on improving park land that exists and providing some small

new parks. Creating more accessible and vibrant commercial areas with a sense of place that appeals to visitors will also help make Pacifica a better place for young people.

- **Infrastructure Improvements.** The need for the City to maintain and improve streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure was a clear consensus point for the community. Most notable is the need to fix the bottleneck on Highway 1. The Plan supports completion of planned highway improvements and seeks to set priorities for sidewalk and street repairs based on location and safety.
- **Protection from Natural Hazards.** Pacifica faces a variety of natural hazards, including fires, earthquake-induced landslides, flooding, and coastal erosion. The Plan establishes a land use pattern that reflects hazardous conditions, such as steep slopes and coastal bluffs, and includes policies to improve public safety services and emergency management. The need to respond over the long term to coastal erosion will be an ongoing challenge for the City.

1.5 DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE PLAN

One purpose of the General Plan is to ensure that the City can accommodate projected population and job growth over the planning period (to 2035). To meet the requirements of State housing law, the City must also have adequate sites where housing affordable to moderate- and low-income households can reasonably be developed. The Plan seeks to meet these needs while also satisfying other community goals and ensuring safety and environmental protection. This section estimates projected demand for new housing and non-residential space, and the development potential provided under the General Plan land use framework.

Full development under the General Plan is referred to as “buildout.” Buildout is calculated based on assumptions about new residential and non-residential development that could be built under the Plan’s land use designations and their respective densities and intensities, adjusted to match expected demand, discussed above.

Residential Development and Population

Table 1-2 tracks the existing and additional housing units and population expected under General Plan buildout. As shown, approximately 14,520 units existed in the Plan-

ning Area as of 2010 according to the U.S. Census. The General Plan is intended to accommodate an additional 1,000 units. In total, General Plan buildout will result in approximately 15,520 housing units in the Planning Area.

Pacifica had a population of approximately 37,230 in 2010. Assuming that average household size remains stable, buildout of the General Plan would accommodate a population of approximately 39,800 in the Planning Area, or an increase of approximately 2,570.

Non-Residential Development and Employment

Table 1-3 summarizes the additional non-residential floor area and jobs expected under General Plan buildout. Pacifica currently has slightly over 2 million square feet of non-residential floor area, not including schools or public facilities. The General Plan is intended to accommodate an additional 644,000 square feet of non-residential floor area. At buildout, the Planning Area will accommodate approximately 7,830 jobs, in line with ABAG projections. Of the 1,470 new jobs, more than three quarters (1,170 jobs) would be service-related and less than one-quarter would be retail jobs, with a small number of jobs in the wholesale/trade sector.

TABLE 1-2: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION

	Existing (2010)	Net New at Buildout (2035)	Total at Buildout (2035)
Housing Units	14,520	1,000	15,520
Population	37,230	2,530	39,760

Source: US Census, 2010; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

TABLE 1-3: NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

	Existing (2010) ¹	Net New at Buildout (2035) ²	Total at Buildout (2035)
Non-Residential Sq. Ft.	2,054,000	645,400	2,699,400
Jobs	6,360	1,470	7,830
Retail	690	290	980
Service	5,240	1,170	6,410
Wholesale/Trade	430	10	440

Source: San Mateo County Assessor’s Office, 2008; ABAG, 2010; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

1 ABAG estimates are used for 2010 estimates of jobs by sector. Existing non-residential square feet is based on San Mateo County Assessor data, and does not include schools or other public facilities.

2 Net new development assumes the following job generation ratios by land use classification: 400 s.f./job in Mixed Use, Retail, Office/Commercial, and Visitor-Serving Commercial classifications; 600 s.f./job in Service Commercial classifications; 1,500 s.f./job in Low Intensity Visitor-Serving Commercial classifications; and 1,000 s.f./job in the Public and Semi-Public classification.

1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND REGULATIONS

The General Plan provides the basis for all of the City’s regulations, policies and programs that relate to issues addressed in the Plan. In addition to requiring that the Plan be internally consistent, the State also requires “vertical consistency”—i.e., consistency between the General Plan and other City actions. This requirement means that the City’s zoning and subdivision ordinances, specific plans and redevelopment plans, all development approvals, public works projects, and open space implementation programs have to be consistent with the General Plan.

The State’s *General Plan Guidelines* provide the following rule for defining consistency: “An action, program, or project is consistent with the general plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the general plan and not obstruct their attainment.” This rule gives the City flexibility in implementation. Because the Plan is both general and long-range,

there are many circumstances where future City actions will be addressed only generally in the Plan.

Consistency Between the General Plan and Zoning

The City’s Zoning Ordinance is one of the most important tools for implementing the Plan. Following Plan adoption, zoning must be revised to be consistent with the General Plan, as needed. Requirements for consistency between the General Plan and zoning can be broken down into three aspects:

- **Uses and Standards.** The General Plan’s land use classifications are more general than the Zoning Ordinance classifications. For example, the Plan has five categories for residential use, while the zoning ordinance may have more. Multiple zoning districts may be consistent with a single General Plan residential classification, as long as all of the densities and unit types allowed in each zoning district are also permitted in the relevant General Plan category.



The General Plan update has been conducted in tandem with the update to Pacifica’s Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP), covering land use and related issues for the portion of Pacifica within the State’s Coastal Zone.

- **Spatial Correlation.** The Zoning Map should reflect the general pattern of land use depicted on the Plan Diagram. However the two need not be identical. Boundaries of land use classifications depicted on the General Plan Diagram are typically more precise in developed areas and more generalized in undeveloped properties. For new development areas, details will be established through adoption of master or specific plans, and establishment of zoning.
- **Timing.** State law allows a “reasonable time” for updating and reconciling the zoning ordinance with the General Plan. The General Plan has a 20-year horizon, while zoning focuses on the immediate appropriate uses for individual sites.

The General Plan and the Local Coastal Land Use Plan

The California Coastal Act requires every city and county lying partly or wholly within the Coastal Zone to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP). The LCP consists of a local coastal land use plan or plans; zoning ordinances; zoning district maps; and other actions which taken together implement the Coastal Act provisions. These provisions seek to ensure that public access to and along the shoreline is maintained; that water quality, marine life, and environmentally sensitive habitat areas are protected; and that coastal visual resources and special communities are preserved. The Coastal Act calls for certain land uses within the Coastal Zone to have priority over other uses: recreation and visitor-serving uses, fishing, boating, and other coastal-dependent uses, and public works and industrial facilities needed to support priority uses.

The General Plan and Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP) updates have been conducted in tandem. While they are two separate documents, much of the descriptive text and many of the policies are overlapping. Policies that are included in both the General Plan and the LCLUP are marked with a  in the General Plan. All policies in the LCLUP are also in the General Plan.

Detailed discussion of Coastal Act requirements and goals is included only in the LCLUP, while issues that are not relevant to Coastal Act requirements and goals are covered only in the General Plan. As part of this effort to keep the two plans as close as possible, the term “Planning Area” is used to refer to the General Plan’s Planning Area, while the term “Coastal Zone” is used to refer to the area subject to the LCLUP. The two plans each have different organizational structures, to match each Plan’s purpose.

Coastal Regional Sediment Management Plan

A consortium of State and federal agencies, including the California Department of Natural Resources and the US Army Corps of Engineers, is organizing a series of Regional Sediment Management (RSM) plans. The primary focus is on facilitating the movement of excess clean sand to areas experiencing high levels of erosion. Goals include restoring and preserving beaches; sustaining recreation; enhancing public safety; and restoring coastal habitats. The San Francisco Littoral Cell Coastal RSM Plan is currently being developed for the coastline between the Golden Gate and Pedro Point Headlands. The Plan’s purpose is to assist communities by providing information for decision-makers and offering recommendations specific to the coastlines of San Francisco, Daly City and Pacifica.

1.7 GUIDE TO USING THIS DOCUMENT

Plan Organization

The Plan is organized as follows:

1. **Introduction.** This chapter summarizes the key themes and initiatives of the Plan. It covers the Plan’s purpose, process, planning context, State requirements, relationships to other plans, plan organization, and requirements for administration of the Plan.
2. **Economic Sustainability.** This chapter, an optional General Plan Element, describes the economic context and sets out goals and policies to stimulate retail and tourism-related development, maintain fiscal health, and support other efforts to enhance the City’s economy.
3. **Community Design.** This chapter, an optional General Plan Element, includes urban design policies to improve the city’s visual quality and livability, including its neighborhoods, mixed-use areas, hillside and coastal areas, and scenic routes.
4. **Land Use.** This chapter describes the existing land use pattern and provides the physical framework for land use and development in the City. It enumerates development demand and capacity, and provides detailed descriptions of land use issues by sub-area. *This Element is required by State law.*
5. **Circulation.** This chapter includes policies, programs, and standards to maintain efficient circulation for all modes of travel. It identifies future street and traffic improvements, and addresses walking, biking, transit, and parking to enable a multi-modal circulation system. *This Element is required by State law.*
6. **Open Space and Community Facilities.** This chapter outlines policies relating to regional open spaces and beaches, the trail system, coastal access, City parks and recreation, schools, and community facilities. *Open Space is a required General Plan subject under State law; Community Facilities are included because they logically relate to Pacifica’s Open Space.*
7. **Conservation.** This chapter includes policies relating to hydrology and water quality, biological resources, agriculture and coastal sediment, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, and historic and archaeological resources and conservation. It also addresses water supply, sewerage, solid waste management, and recycling, as well as stormwater management and sustainable site planning. *This Element is required by State law.*
8. **Safety.** This chapter addresses the risks posed by seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, hazardous materials, and wildland fires. It also includes policies on public safety services and emergency management. *This Element is required by State law.*
9. **Noise.** This chapter includes policies to limit the impacts of noise sources through land use planning, site planning, building design requirements, and other measures. *This Element is required by State law.*
10. **Implementation.** This chapter describes the implementation process in general terms and the major actions to be undertaken by the City

Table 1-5 shows how the General Plan Elements correspond with chapters in the LCLUP.

TABLE 1-4: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS AND LOCAL COASTAL LAND USE PLAN CHAPTERS

General Plan Element	Related LCLUP Chapter
Chapter 1: Introduction	Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Economic Development	–
Chapter 3: Community Design	Chapter 4: Environmental and Scenic Resources
Chapter 4: Land Use	Chapter 5: Natural Hazards
Chapter 5: Circulation	Chapter 2: Land Use
Chapter 6: Open Space & Community Facilities	Chapter 3: Public Access and Recreation
Chapter 7: Conservation	Chapter 3: Public Access and Recreation
Chapter 8: Safety	Chapter 4: Environmental and Scenic Resources
Chapter 9: Noise	Chapter 5: Natural Hazards
Chapter 10: Implementation	–

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2012.

Policy Structure

Each chapter of the Plan includes background information to establish the context for policies in the chapter. This background information is followed by two sets of policies, which together articulate a vision for Pacifica that the Plan seeks to achieve:

- **Guiding Policies** are the City’s statements of its goals and philosophies.
- **Implementing Policies** represent commitments to specific actions. They may refer to existing programs or call for establishment of new ones.

Policies provide guidance for development review, infrastructure planning, community facilities and services, and protection for the city’s resources, by establishing planning requirements, programs, standards, and criteria for project review. Explanatory material or commentary accompanies some policies. The use of “should” or “would” indicates that a statement is advisory, not binding; details will be refined in General Plan implementation. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced. Many of the Coastal Act policies are translated into Plan policies, as indicated in policy commentary. As shown earlier, policies identified with a  in the General Plan are included in both the General Plan and the LCLUP.

Diagrams and Land Use Classifications

Diagrams in the General Plan illustrate policies relating to land use, circulation, conservation, and public facilities. The Land Use Diagram, other figures, and the Land Use Classifications (in Section 4.2 of the General Plan) are also adopted parts of the Plan.

Glossary and List of Acronyms

The Plan concludes with a glossary to define important terms and concepts, and a list of acronyms that may appear in the preceding chapters.

1.8 PLAN ADMINISTRATION

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. As such, it will be updated periodically to address site-specific or comprehensive needs, to respond to new State or federal law, or to modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic over time.

Amendments to the Plan

The Plan may be amended from time to time, but opportunities for such amendments are limited to four times per year. Each amendment may make an unlimited number of changes to the Plan. However, this restriction does not apply to optional elements (such as Community Design), to amendments needed to comply with a court decision, or to allow for the development of affordable housing.

Annual Report

The California Government Code requires that City staff submit an annual report to the City Council on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report is submitted to the Governor's Office on Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The report must include an analysis of the progress made in meeting the City's share of regional housing needs (identified in the Housing Element) and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of affordable housing. Also, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed in the General Plan EIR should be included in the annual report. Finally, the report should also include a summary of all general plan amendments adopted during the preceding year, a description of upcoming projects or General Plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, and a work program.

This page intentionally left blank.