



*The purpose of this chapter is to describe existing and planned land use in the Planning Area and present the policy framework that will guide the City on development decisions. The chapter forms the core of the General Plan and its policies articulate the community's land use and growth priorities through 2035. It includes the Land Use Diagram, land use classifications, standards for density and intensity, and limitations on development expressed by the policies. The land use framework for each sub-area is then provided in greater detail.*

*Guiding and implementing policies aim to define the Planning Area's physical development and reinforce its commitment to balancing needs for open space and habitat conservation; housing opportunities; economic development; neighborhood character; and other issues.*

## 4.1 EXISTING LAND USE

### Background

Originally visited by the Portola expedition in 1769, Pacifica remained primarily agricultural until after the San Francisco Earthquake in 1906. Land speculators, stimulated by the construction of the Ocean Shore Railroad in 1905, subdivided and developed a series of small, coastside communities, including Edgemar, Vallemar, and the areas now known as Sharp Park, Pedro Point, and Rockaway Beach. These communities, together with Pacific Manor, Westview, Fairway Park, and Linda Mar, incorporated in 1957 as the City of Pacifica. The city grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s, and most of its current housing—54 percent as of 2010—was built during those decades.<sup>1</sup> Growth slowed in the 1970s, and then slowed further in the following decades, owing to the scarcity of developable land and infrastructure constraints. About 850 units currently standing were built in the 1990s, dropping to 360 units built between 2000 to 2010, with the total amounting to 1,210 units over the 20 years between 1990 and 2010.

### Current Land Use Pattern

#### *Parks and Open Space*

The Planning Area covers 7,660 acres, not including road rights-of-way. Over 3,600 acres (47 percent) of this land is preserved as open space. Most of Pacifica's rugged ridges are part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) or Sharp Park. Sharp Park Golf Course, San Pedro Valley County Park, and Pacifica State Beach represent other important public open space holdings. Parks and open space are discussed in further detail in the Open Space and Community Facilities chapter.

#### *Residential*

Residential use makes up 26 percent of the Planning Area and 70 percent of developed land<sup>2</sup> in the Planning Area, covering 1,957 acres. As shown in Figure

4-1, residential land is the predominant land use in the neighborhoods that occupy Pacifica's five valleys, along the coast, and in the highlands bordering Daly City and South San Francisco. Most residential land in Pacifica (90 percent) contains single-family housing, which is typical in nearly all neighborhoods. Multi-family housing is mainly located around Hickey and Skyline Boulevards; along Terra Nova and Oddstad Boulevards in the Park Pacifica neighborhood; interspersed among single-family houses and commercial uses in the West Sharp Park neighborhood; and along the coast in the West Edgemar-Pacific Manor neighborhood.

#### *Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed Use*

The Planning Area includes 108 acres of commercial uses, including a small amount of mixed use development. Commercial land is located at the City's shopping centers (Linda Mar, Pacific Manor, Fairmont, Eureka Square, Park Mall, Pedro Point) and at smaller shopping centers and districts at Rockaway Beach, Crespi Drive, Palmetto Avenue, and along the Highway 1 corridor. Pacifica has a small amount of mixed-use development along Palmetto Avenue in West Sharp Park, in Rockaway Beach and in Pedro Point. Overall, West Sharp Park has the greatest mix of uses throughout the neighborhood. Hotels, along with most visitor-serving commercial uses, are primarily in the Coastal Zone in the Rockaway Beach neighborhood. There are only 4.3 acres of office use in Pacifica. Finally, the City has a small amount of industrial land (18 acres), mainly located along Palmetto, north of the West Sharp Park commercial area.

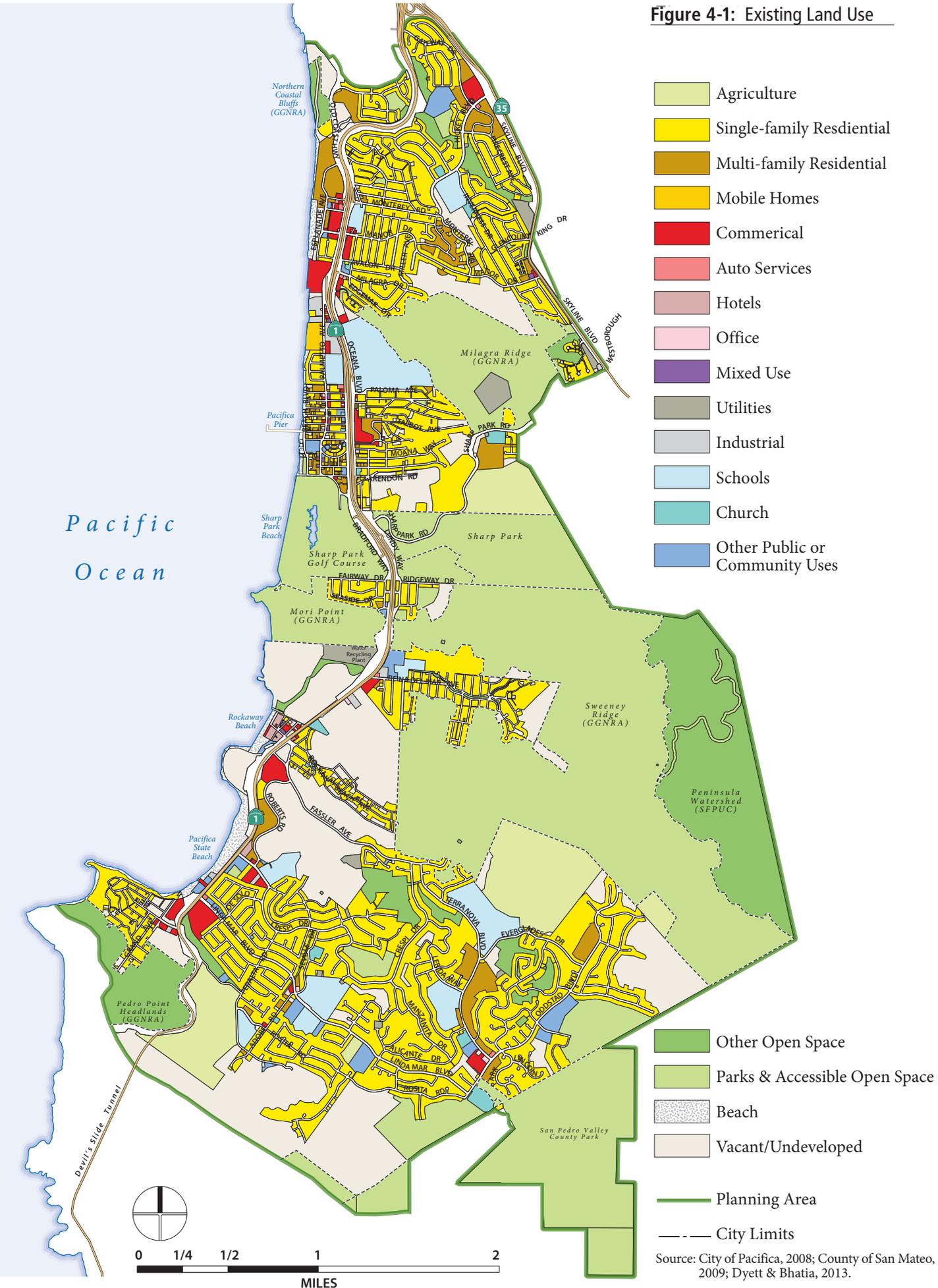
#### *Public and Institutional Uses*

Public, community, and institutional uses occupy 395 acres of land. Of this, about 70 percent is school land and buildings, including the campuses of Oceana and Terra Nova high schools. Other significant public land holdings—not including parks and open space—include the two library sites; the Calera

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2006-2010.

<sup>2</sup> Developed land includes all land uses except for Open Space, Agriculture, or Vacant/Undeveloped.

**Figure 4-1: Existing Land Use**





Sharp Park Golf Course and Mori Point. Over 3,600 acres are preserved as open space (top). Single-family houses comprise three-quarters of Pacifica’s housing (middle). Commercial land is concentrated at shopping centers and small neighborhood commercial areas (bottom).

Creek Water Recycling Plant; police and fire stations; and former school sites now used for other purposes.

### *Agriculture and Recreation*

There are about 360 acres of land used for agriculture or private recreation. About 260 acres of this are within City limits, at Millwood Ranch, Park Pacifica Stables, and properties directly north of Sharp Park and along Linda Mar Boulevard. About 104 acres are outside city limits, at Shamrock Ranch between San Pedro Creek and Highway 1. Most land in this category involves horse boarding and trail riding and has a rural character.

### **Undeveloped and Vacant Land**

Vacant and undeveloped land totals 1,204 acres or 16 percent of land in the Planning Area. About 15 percent of this land (184 acres) is outside City limits. Large pieces of undeveloped land are present along the northern coastal bluffs, Milagra Canyon, Gypsy Hill, the Rockaway Quarry site, the face of Cattle Hill, Fassler Ridge, and the slope of Montara Mountain. Smaller vacant “infill” lots are scattered in neighborhoods. Given environmental factors such as slope and sensitive species, there are constraints on the development potential of many of these sites. Figure 4-1 maps the City’s land use pattern, while Figure 4-2 charts the relative distribution of land by land use in the Planning Area.

## 4.2 LAND USE FRAMEWORK

The Land Use Diagram, (Figure 4-3 and the foldout in the back of this plan) illustrates the community's vision for land use in 2035. This Diagram reflects planning themes presented in Chapter 1. The land use classifications depicted indicate the use and form of development. Planned land use will be guided by Plan policies and programs for hillside and open space preservation; housing and commercial development.

### Land Use

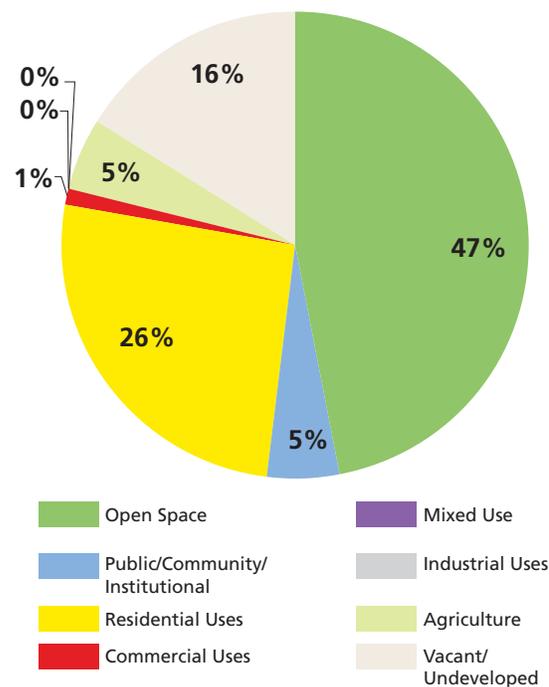
The Land Use Diagram is a graphic representation of planned land use classifications; it will be used in conjunction with policies established in the Plan to review and approve, modify or deny proposed development projects. The Land Use Diagram includes a legend that shows land use categories whose densities and allowable uses are specified in the Land Use Classification below.

### Land Use Classifications

Land use classifications establish allowed uses, maximum density and intensity, and the type and character of development that is expected. Details on development standards are established in the zoning ordinance, and more than one zoning district may be consistent with a General Plan land use classification.

According to State law, the General Plan must establish standards of population density and building intensity for each land use classification. The Plan stipulates residential densities in housing units per gross acre; population density can be obtained by applying average persons per housing unit<sup>3</sup> to the housing unit densities. For nonresidential uses, the Plan specifies a maximum permitted ratio of gross floor area to site area (Floor Area Ratio or FAR). Recommended density and intensity standards do not imply that development projects must be approved at the intensity specified for each use. Zoning regulations consistent with General Plan policies and/

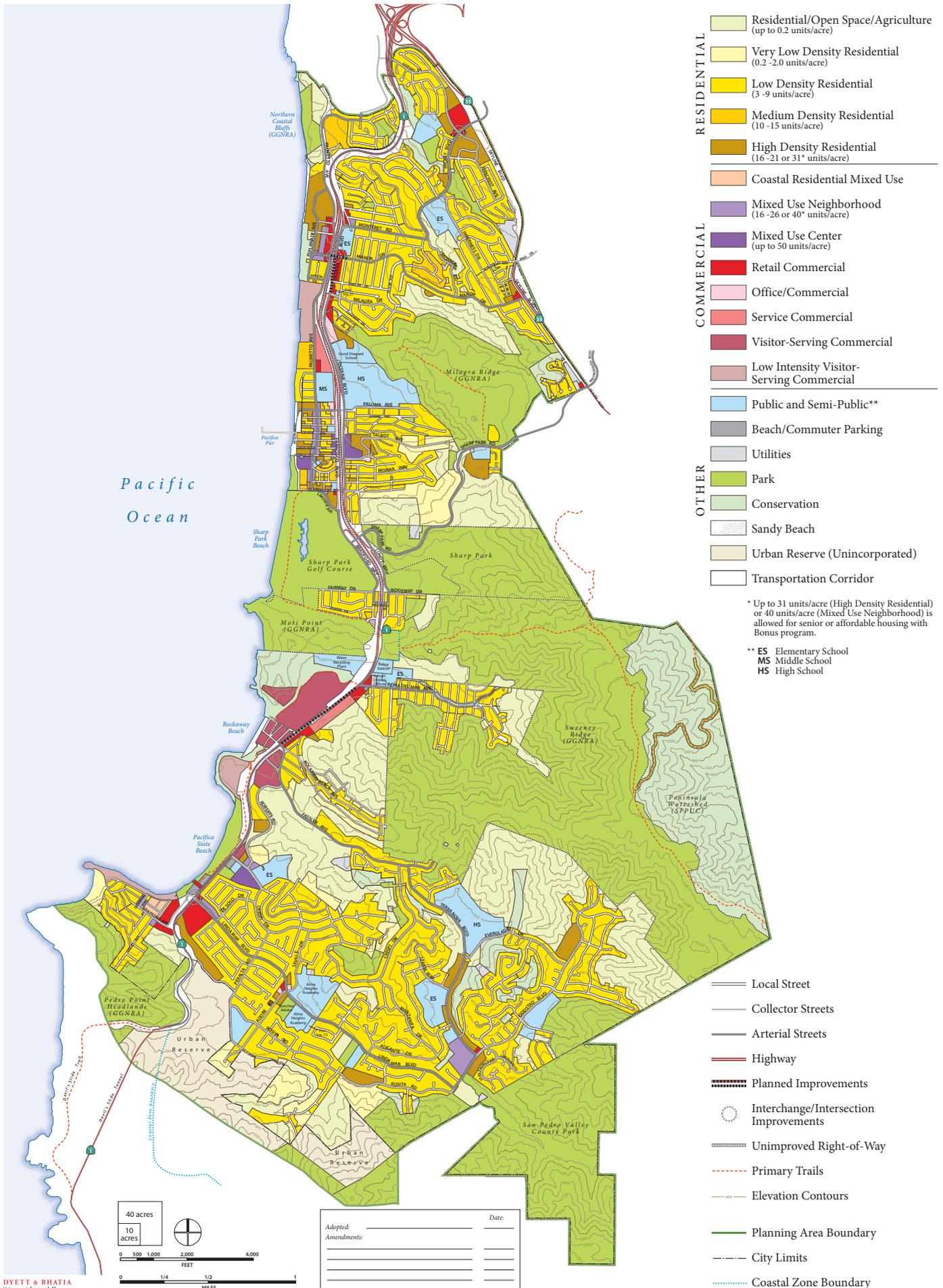
Figure 4-2: Current Land Use Distribution



Large pieces of undeveloped land are present on Gypsy Hill (pictured) and many other hillsides (middle). Smaller vacant "infill" lots are scattered in neighborhoods (bottom).

<sup>3</sup> Based on 2010 U.S. Census data, the number of persons per total housing units is 2.56.

**Figure 4-3: Land Use Diagram**



or site conditions may reduce development potential within the stated ranges. Table 4-1 shows gross density standards for residential categories and FAR standards for the other uses.

### *Residential*

The five residential classifications provide for a range of densities, consistent with neighborhood character and planned land use.

#### **RESIDENTIAL/OPEN SPACE/AGRICULTURE**

In the Residential/Open Space/Agriculture (ROSA) classification, residential, agriculture, and recreation uses are allowed at a gross density of up to one unit per five acres (or 0.2 acres per unit). The allowable density on a site will be determined by slope, geology, soils, access, availability of utilities, public safety, and open space values. The density assumed for buildout calculations is 0.15 units per gross acre.

#### **VERY LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

The Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) classification provides for clustered development of up to two units per gross acre. Residential care facilities, schools, and community uses are permitted. The density assumed for buildout calculations is 1.5 units per gross acre.

#### **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

The Low Density Residential (LDR) designation is intended for single-family housing development ranging from three to nine dwelling units per gross acre. Residential care facilities, schools, and community uses are permitted. Clusters of small-lot development as well as standard subdivisions will be allowed. Buildout is calculated at 6.5 units per gross acre.

#### **MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

Medium Density Residential (MDR) is intended for a mix of housing types, including small-lot single family, attached single family, apartments, duplexes, townhomes and mobile home parks at densities of up to 15 units per gross acre. Residential care facilities, schools, and community uses are permitted. Buildout is calculated at 12.5 units per gross acre.

#### **HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL**

High Density Residential (HDR) is intended for multifamily apartments, condominiums and townhomes, in two to three story buildings located near shopping areas and transit. The density will be up to 21 dwelling units per gross acre. Residential care facilities, schools, and community uses are permitted. Buildout is calculated at 25 units per gross acre.

### *Mixed Use*

The General Plan provides three mixed use classifications to create areas where housing and active commercial uses may be integrated. Visitor-oriented commercial uses are allowed as-of-right in all mixed use areas within the Coastal Zone.

#### **COASTAL RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE**

The Coastal Residential Mixed Use (CRMU) designation is intended for sites in the Coastal Zone with residential mixed use development potential, including housing at a range of densities, mixed use with housing over retail, and/or small-scale visitor-oriented commercial uses such as vacation rental or time-share units. Hotels are not permitted. Coastal access and public open space must also be provided, and environmental resources must be evaluated and protected. Sites may be developed up to an overall density of up to 15 units per gross acre, with clustering and sensitive site planning. Non-residential development may have an FAR up to 0.5 FAR. The total FAR (residential and non-residential) cannot exceed 1.0. Buildout is calculated at 15 units per gross acre and 0.10 FAR of non-residential use.

#### **MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOOD**

In the Mixed Use Neighborhood (MUN) classification, new development may include multi-family housing and building with ground-floor retail, restaurant or service uses and housing or offices above. Public or community uses and hotels may be permitted at appropriate locations. The MUN classification allows up to 26 units per acre and non-residential development with an FAR up to 1.0. The total FAR (residential and non-residential) cannot exceed 2.0. Buildout



*New development in Mixed Use Neighborhood areas should include multi-family housing or ground-floor commercial uses with housing above (top). The Mixed Use Center classification is intended for high-density mixed use development, hotels, or community uses (middle). The Visitor-Serving Commercial classification promotes concentrated development of commercial uses with visitor appeal (bottom).*

is calculated based on a 0.25 FAR for non-residential uses and 25 residential units per gross acre.

#### **MIXED USE CENTER**

The Mixed Use Center (MUC) classification is intended for high-density mixed use development, including public or community uses and hotels. Allowable uses include ground-floor retail, restaurant or service uses and housing or offices on upper levels. The MUC classification permits housing up to 50 units per acre and a 2.5 FAR of non-residential development provide the overall FAR not to exceed 2.5. Buildout is calculated at an FAR of 0.35 for non-residential uses and 25 units per gross acre for housing.

#### *Commercial Uses*

The General Plan establishes five commercial classifications to accommodate a variety of potential commercial activities. Visitor-oriented commercial uses are allowed as-of-right in all commercial areas within the Coastal Zone.

#### **RETAIL COMMERCIAL**

The Retail Commercial (RC) classification is intended for retail, restaurant, and service uses, typically in single- or two-story buildings within shopping centers or on sites in the Highway 1 corridor. New development will be pedestrian-oriented. Offices may be located above the ground floor. The maximum FAR is 1.0 FAR. Buildout is calculated with an FAR of 0.25.

#### **OFFICE/COMMERCIAL**

The Office/Commercial (OC) classification permits offices as well as retail and service uses in buildings of two to three stories. The maximum FAR is 1.5; buildout is calculated with an FAR of 0.35.

#### **SERVICE COMMERCIAL**

The Service Commercial (SC) classification is for industrial and heavy commercial uses, such as auto repair, equipment rental, storage, and materials salvage. The maximum FAR is 0.6; buildout is calculated with an FAR of 0.25.

**VISITOR-SERVING COMMERCIAL**

The Visitor-Serving Commercial (VC) designation is intended to foster and protect areas that attract and cater to visitors, including hotels or a visitor attraction, such as an interpretive center or conference center, restaurants, retail and services, commercial recreation, or other compatible uses. The maximum FAR is 3.0 FAR. Buildout is calculated with an FAR of 0.35.

**LOW-INTENSITY VISITOR-SERVING COMMERCIAL**

The Low-Intensity Visitor-Serving Commercial (LIVC) district allows uses that create public access to the coastal setting and are adaptable to changing environmental conditions: campgrounds, rustic lodging, concession stands, warming huts, outdoor event sites, and similar uses. Existing permitted businesses that do not conform to the description of LIVC may remain. In these areas, the designation indicates the long-term goal of transition to recreation-oriented land uses. Development may occur at up to 0.20 FAR, but must have an overall very low-intensity character on sites of more than one acre. Buildout is assumed at 0.05 FAR, recognizing the large land areas and minimal building expected to support recreational uses.

*Public and Community Uses*

Designations for public uses such as schools, civic buildings, utilities, and public parking areas are designated on the Land Use Diagram, and summarized below. Public park land is covered separately in the following section.

**PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC**

The Public and Semi-Public (PSP) designation indicates public or private schools, libraries, police and fire stations, and other civic and community uses. In the case that public facilities are converted or sold for new uses, Plan land use classifications shall be updated. If a public school is discontinued, any proposed new use should be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. The maximum FAR in this district is 1.0. Buildout is assumed at 0.35 FAR.

**BEACH AND COMMUTER PARKING**

The Beach and Commuter Parking (BCP) designation applies to areas where the priority use is public parking to serve beach visitors and/or transit users. Sites are located

adjacent to Pacifica State Beach and at Crespi Drive and Highway 1. Beach parking at the City's Beach Boulevard property serving Pacifica Pier and Sharp Park should be conserved as part of development of that site.

**UTILITIES**

The Utilities (U) designation indicates the location of water tanks communications facilities including cellular facilities, and other utilities serving the City. The maximum FAR in this district is 1.0.

*Parks and Open Space*

The Planning Area is defined by its extensive open space system, and additional land is designated for conservation or ridgeline protection. These categories are detailed below.

**PARK**

The Park (P) designation is applied to public land either now developed for active recreation use or intended for future recreation development. The designation applies to city parks as well as to park or open space whose primary character is undeveloped and natural, or that is managed for use by residents of the larger region and beyond. The City does not have permitting authority on lands owned by other public agencies.

**CONSERVATION**

The Conservation (C) district applies to publicly-owned or privately-owned open areas not intended for development. These areas may include:

- Watershed lands;
- Land which is physically unsuitable for development due to geotechnical hazards, excessive steepness, or other environmental constraints, or lies within stream channels;
- Areas to remain undeveloped as a result of density transfer or clustered development, or covered by open space, recreational or scenic easements;
- Open areas providing a physical and visual buffer between developed or open areas; and
- Open space required as mitigation for environmental impacts.

**SANDY BEACH**

The Sandy Beach (SB) designation applies to properties that are fully on beaches or coastal dunes or bluffs. No physical development is appropriate on these sites.

*Urban Reserve*

The Urban Reserve (UR) designation is created to apply to private lands outside of City limits but within the Planning Area. The City does not have

permitting authority in this area. The Pacifica General Plan intends for agriculture and residential development with a minimum site area of 5 acres per unit to be the predominant uses on land designated Urban Reserve. Actual density may be limited by the physical conditions of a site such as geological hazards, access, and potential habitat. The City should work with San Mateo County to ensure that substantial and development be considered in the context of a Plan Update.

**TABLE 4-1: LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND DENSITY AND INTENSITY STANDARDS**

Land Use <sup>1</sup>		Residential Density (gross units per acre): Range <sup>2</sup>	Non-Residential Intensity (FAR): Maximum <sup>3</sup>
<b>Residential</b>			
ROSA	Residential/Open Space/Agriculture	Up to 0.2	
VLDR	Very Low Density Residential	0.2 to 2	
LDR	Low Density Residential	3 to 9	
MDR	Medium Density Residential	10 to 15	
HDR	High Density Residential	16 to 21	
<b>Mixed Use</b>			
CRMU	Coastal Residential Mixed Use	10 to 15	0.5
MUN	Mixed Use Neighborhood	16 to 26	1.0
MUC	Mixed Use Center	Up to 50	2.5
<b>Commercial</b>			
RC	Retail Commercial		1.0
OC	Office/Commercial		1.5
SC	Service Commercial		0.6
VC	Visitor-Serving Commercial		3.0
LIVC	Low-Intensity Visitor-Serving Commercial		0.2
<b>Public and Community Uses</b>			
PSP	Public and Semi-Public		1.0
U	Utilities		1.0
BCP	Beach and Commuter Parking		–
<b>Parks and Open Space and Urban Reserve</b>			
P	Park		
C	Conservation		
UR	Urban Reserve		

1. All land use classifications are shown except those in the Parks and Open Space category. No development is projected in these areas.  
 2. Density ranges are rounded to the nearest whole number, except where less than 1 unit per acre. Senior or affordable housing may be developed at up to 1.5 times the maximum with the Density Bonus program.  
 3. For mixed use designations, the following maximum total FAR, including both residential and non-residential uses, is established: CRMU: 1.0 FAR maximum; MUN: 2.0 FAR maximum; MUC: 2.5 FAR maximum

Source: City of Pacifica, Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

## Coastal Development

The General Plan and LCLUP aim to ensure that the goals of the California Coastal Act are furthered by land use actions and policies that affect land within the Coastal Zone as defined by the California Coastal Commission.

The City’s zoning code features a Coastal Zone (CZ) Combining District, with development regulations based on Coastal Act goals. These include the provision of public access to the shoreline and recreational opportunities, the protection and enhancement of the coastal environment, and the prioritization of coastal-dependent and visitor-serving uses. The Coastal Zone requirements supplement the underlying zoning regulations on all property subject to the LCLUP. Following adoption of the General Plan and LCLUP, the CZ District will be updated to be consistent with the new guidance provided here.

General Plan and LCLUP policies that promote visitor-oriented development are in Chapter 2. Policies to protect scenic resources are in Chapter 3. Provisions for public shoreline access and recreation are provided in Chapter 5. Policies to protect water quality, sensitive habitats, and natural resources are in Chapter 6. Policies to protect against seismic hazards, erosion and flooding, and other natural hazards are in Chapter 8. This chapter covers how this Plan supports Coastal Act priorities for development.

## Land Use Strategies to Protect Natural and Scenic Resources

### *Hillside Preservation District*

The Hillside Preservation District (HPD) covers most of the city’s ridges and open spaces, as an “overlay” district on top of base zoning. The HPD aims to ensure that development of highly sensitive slopes does not endanger the public or harm the environmental or scenic values of the site, and to encourage high-quality site planning and design that enhances the beauty of the landscape. Figure 4-4 shows Pacifica’s existing Hillside Preservation District, and identifies sites whose status should be reviewed based on slope stability. Other sites may also be reviewed.

Development regulations for hillsides are covered in Chapter 3 as they pertain to community design and in Chapter 8 as they pertain to safety.

### *Transfer of Residential Development Rights*

Transfer of development rights (TDR) is established to provide a mechanism to relocate potential residential development from areas where environmental or land use impacts could be severe to other areas more appropriate for development, and to preserve significant open space resources. Owners of environmentally sensitive sites may transfer residential development rights to other sites where higher-density development can be supported, or from one part of a site to another. As in the Hillside Preservation District, clustered housing is encouraged to preserve the most sensitive portions of a site. The zoning code identifies eligible “sending areas” and “receiving areas.” TDR may also be used to shift development within a site which has more than one zoning or General Plan designation, or between commonly owned parcels which have more than one zoning or General Plan designation and are planned as a unit.

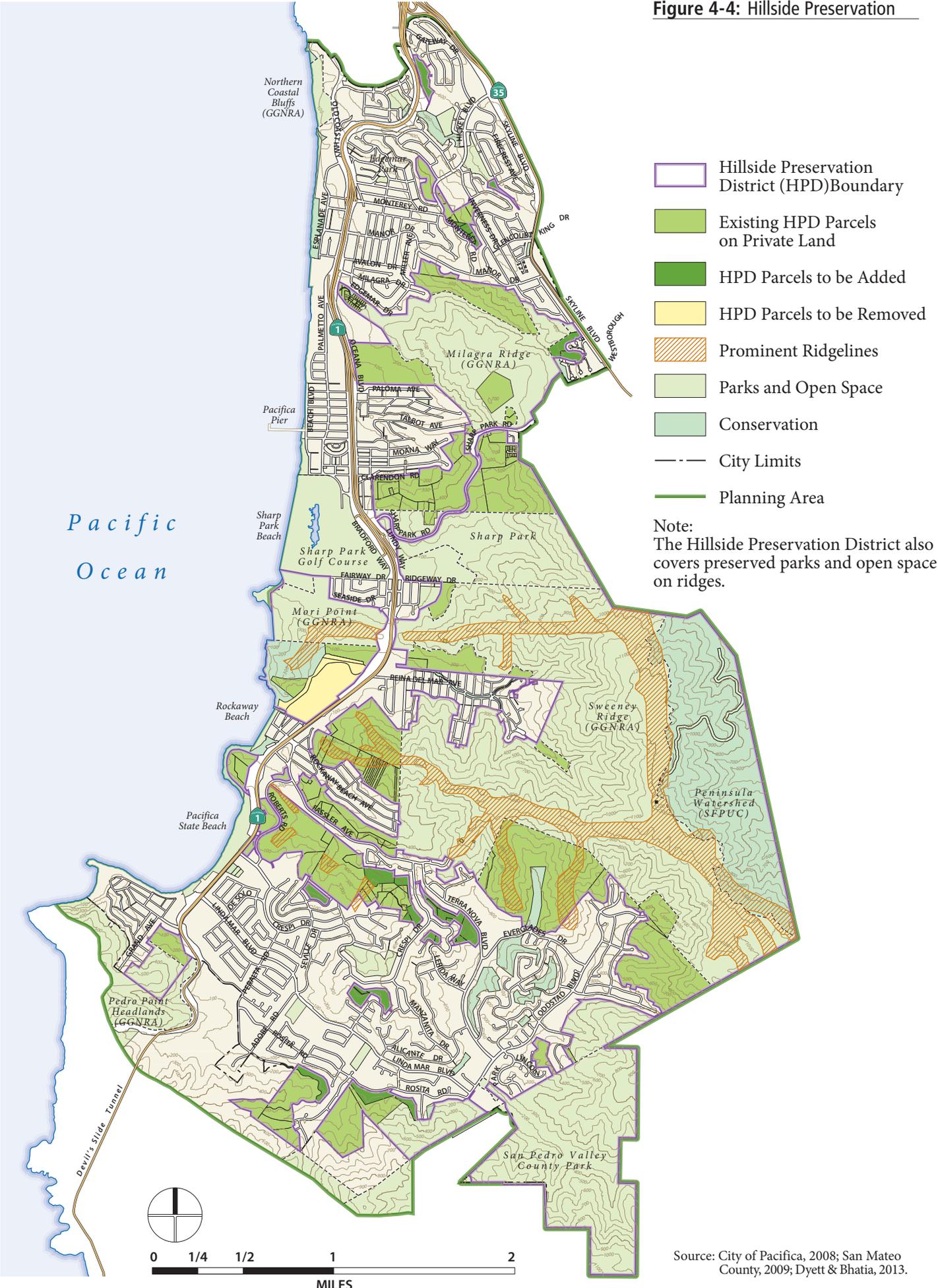
## Land Use Programs to Facilitate Housing

The City provides special regulations and incentives to facilitate development of housing affordable to moderate- and low-income households while preserving neighborhood character. These programs help to bring about concentrated development in transit-supportive areas, in keeping with Sections 30250 and 30252 of the Coastal Act. They do not override provisions of the Coastal Act that protect sensitive environmental areas.

### *Density Bonus*

Developments providing rental units, affordable housing, or housing for elderly or disabled persons may exceed the maximum density allowed by zoning, with approval from the Planning Commission. Rental housing developments may be granted up to 15 percent more units, while affordable housing and housing for the elderly or disabled may receive up to a 50 percent bonus, proportionate to the number of set-aside units and the extent to which low- and very-low-income households are served.

Figure 4-4: Hillside Preservation



### *Below Market Rate Program*

In Pacifica, residential developments or subdivisions of eight or more units must set aside at least 15 percent of units as Below Market Rate housing, with affordability provisions in place for at least 45 or 55 years for for-sale units and rental units, respectively. With approval from the Planning Commission, developers may meet the program goals by building units off-site, dedicating land to the City, or paying into the city’s housing trust fund.

### *Second Residential Units*

Second units may be built in single-family residential zones, provided that the property continues to meet lot coverage, setback, and height requirements. One unit must be owner-occupied, and the second unit must have no more than one bedroom and be no larger than 750 square feet or 50 percent the floor area of the main unit (850 square feet is permitted as needed for accessibility).

### **Sub-Areas and Specific Sites**

Figure 4-5 shows 15 sub-areas. Sub-areas may be referred to as neighborhoods at times. The “sub-area” designation is not intended to correspond with any jurisdictional boundaries, but to help readers understand the way the General Plan affects Pacifica’s distinct geographic areas. Figure 4-5 also identifies specific sites that are the subject of General Plan policies. This chapter contains land use policies for specific sites. Policies on open space, parks and coastal access are in Chapter 6. Policies on environmental resources are in Chapter 7, with visual resources covered in Chapter 3. Policies on hazards are in Chapter 8.

Figure 4-5 also serves as a key map for the four maps that follow, showing sub-areas and specific sites at a larger scale. These maps show General Plan land use at the parcel level, as well as coastal access points; park opportunity sites; coastal view corridors; trails and proposed trail improvements. The area maps, and the sub-area descriptions below, are intended to demonstrate how various aspects of the General Plan—including land use, parks and recreation facilities, coastal access, and environmental resources and haz-



*New development along the coast is required to provide public access, unless the City determines public access would pose safety issues or there is adequate access nearby (top). Clustered development is encouraged to preserve open space areas and protect sensitive hillsides (middle). The development of second units, compatible with their neighborhood context, is facilitated (bottom).*

**Figure 4-5: Sub-Areas and Specific Sites**

