

# 1 INTRODUCTION

*The Pacifica 2035 Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LCLUP) is a policy document for the long-range development of the portion of the City of Pacifica within the Coastal Zone. The Coastal Zone includes all land west of State Route 1, as well as Shelldance Nursery and some land south of City limits (see Figure 1-1, City of Pacifica and Coastal Zone). The LCLUP is an essential component of the City's Local Coastal Program as required by the California Coastal Act. The LCLUP has been developed in tandem with the General Plan, which provides the direction for the future growth of the City, and articulates a vision of what Pacifica aspires to be.*

## **1.1 PURPOSE OF 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 establishes certain land use priorities within the Coastal Zone: recreation and visitor-serving uses, fishing, boating, and other coastal-dependent uses, and public works and industrial facilities needed to support priority uses. Other resource-based uses are also prioritized by the Coastal Act.

The Coastal Act is implemented through a partnership between the California Coastal Commission and local counties and cities, including Pacifica. By certifying an LCP, the Coastal Commission grants authority to the local jurisdiction to issue coastal development permits that are required for nearly all types of development in the Coastal Zone. The LCLUP is the first and primary element of the City's LCP. It will serve as the basis for the City to update its zoning code and any other implementing tools needed in the Coastal Zone, and apply to the Coastal Commission for recertification of the LCP.

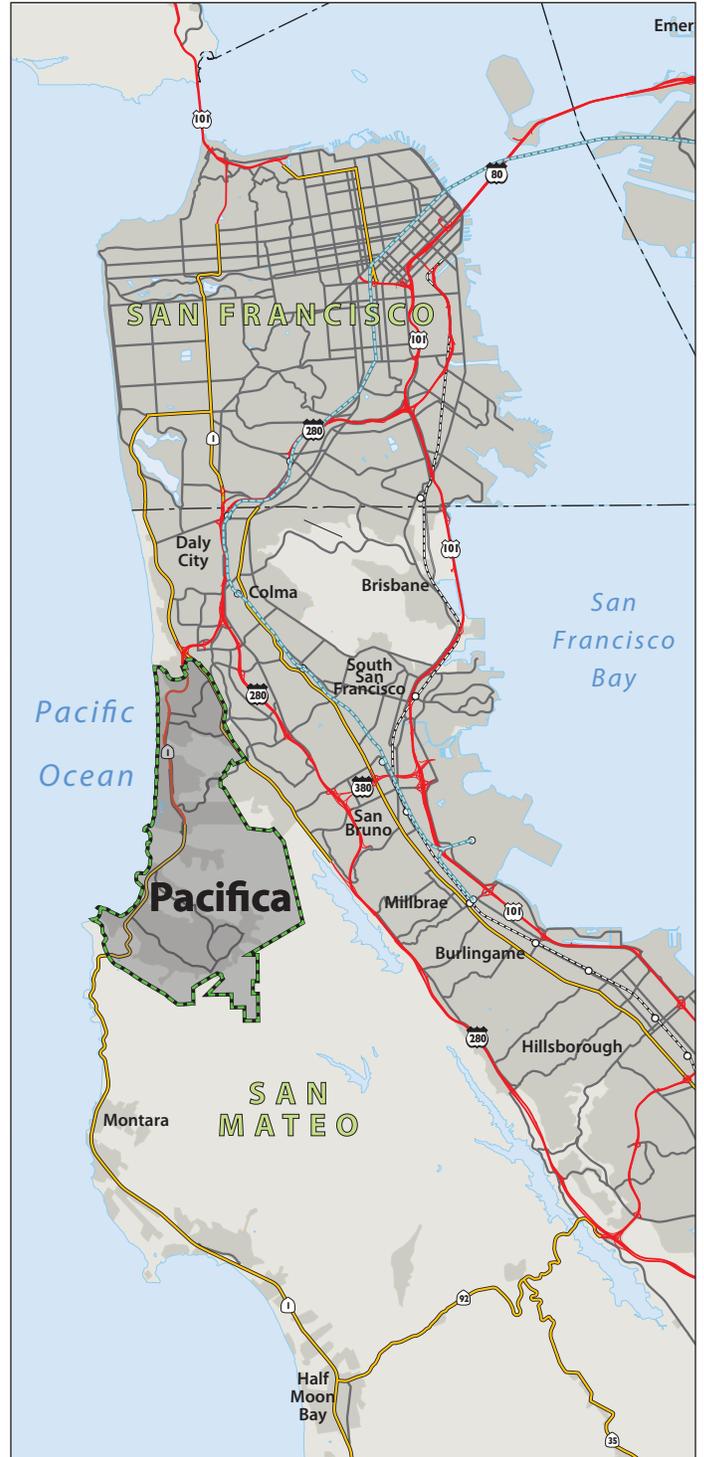
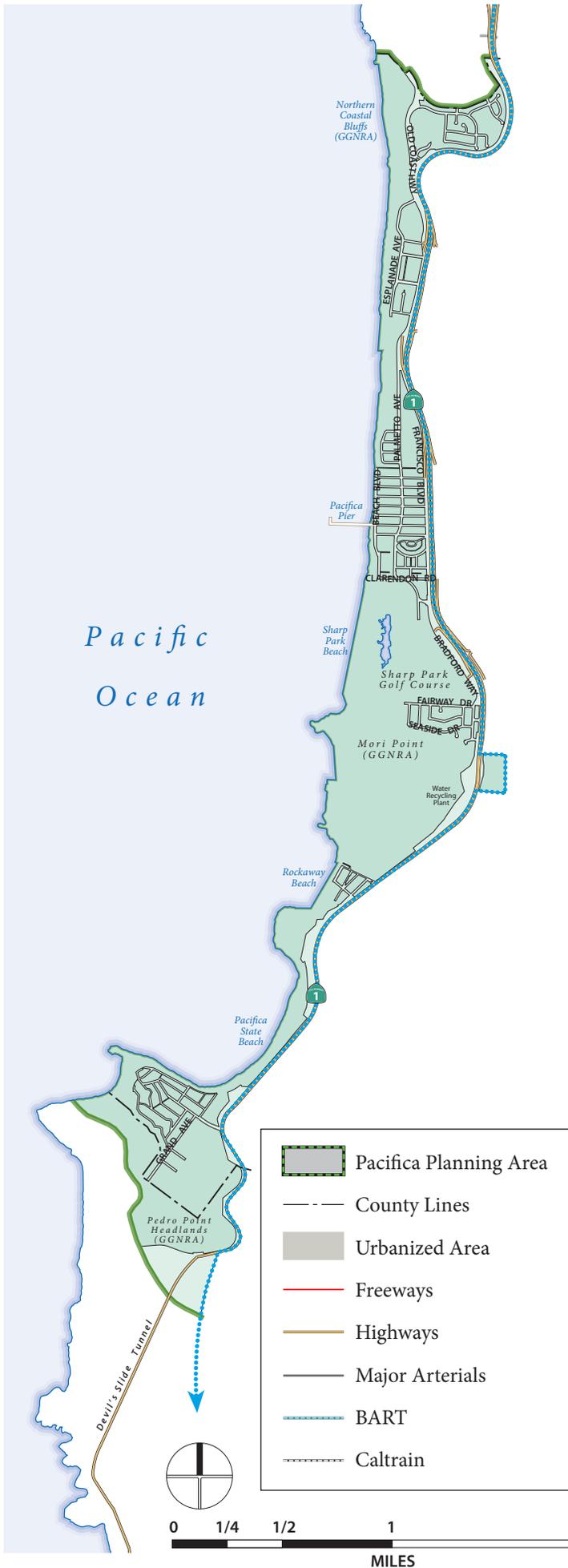
As of August 2013, the City of Pacifica had a certified LCP dating to 1980, with two areas of deferred certification: Shelldance Nursery and the Quarry Site. In these areas, the Coastal Commission maintains permit-issuing authority.

### **Why Update Now?**

The City of Pacifica last comprehensively updated its General Plan and LCLUP 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 has changed. New priorities have emerged with a new generation of Pacifica residents and stakeholders. The General Plan and LCLUP update will provide for a comprehensive assessment of current conditions, and allow today's residents to express a vision for the future. A major revision of the Plans is therefore necessary to eliminate obsolete text and policies, ensure legal conformity, and address today's challenges. The Plans respond to the desires of the present community and the need to accommodate projected growth.

Figure 1-1  
**Pacifica and the Pacifica Coastal Zone**

-  Coastal Zone
-  Planning Area
-  City Limits



Source: City of Pacifica, 2008; County of San Mateo, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

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## 1.2 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, in addition to Shelldance Nursery, is part of the State-designated Coastal Zone, and subject to the Local Coastal Land Use Plan.

### Historic Development

Pacifica remained a mainly agricultural and undeveloped area until the construction of the Ocean Shore Railroad in 1905 stimulated development of small coastside communities including Edgemar, Vallemar, 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. Growth slowed in the 1970s, and then slowed further in the following decades, owing to the scarcity of developable land and infrastructure constraints. About 1,210 housing units have been built over the last 20 years, along with a limited amount of commercial development.

### The Coastal Zone

Land within Pacifica west of State Route 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 and the policies of the California Coastal Act. Pacifica's Coastal Zone comprises approximately 1,286 acres of land. It includes a high proportion of the City's commercial land and visitor destinations. The Pacifica Planning Area boundary, Coastal Zone boundary, and City limits are shown in **Figure 1-1**.

Pacifica's Coastal Zone contains a wide variety of land uses, including public recreation areas, distinct residential neighborhoods, visitor-serving and neighborhood commercial development, and highly sensitive wildlife habitats. The varied types of development of each coastal sub-area and the geographic relationships between them are an inherent and vital part of the character of the City. The General Plan and LCLUP strive to designate land uses and intensities suitable to the unique circumstances of each coastal area, adequately meet the needs of the City's residents and visitors, and be consistent with State Coastal Act policies. Chapter 2 provides detailed area maps and summary descriptions of seven identified sub-areas in Pacifica's Coastal Zone.

## 1.3 LOCAL COASTAL LAND USE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

### Local Coastal Programs

The California Coastal Act of 1976 gave the California Coastal Commission broad authority to ensure that development along the coastline would protect and enhance coastal resources. The Commission carries out this responsibility in partnership with local governments, through the development and certification of LCPs.

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 30000 *et seq.* establish the State’s coastal management policies and the procedures for preparation, approval, and certification of LCPs.

An LCP includes a local government's land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning maps, and other implementing actions for sensitive resource areas. These documents must be consistent and work together to implement the policies and provisions of the Coastal Act at the local level. The Coastal Act’s policies are provided in Appendix A of this Plan.

### *Local Coastal Land Use Plan*

To meet the requirements of State law, the LCLUP must be “sufficiently detailed to indicate the kinds, location, and intensity of land uses, the applicable resource protection and development policies, and, where necessary, a listing of implementing actions.” (Section 30108.5 of the PRC). An example of such would be the Pacifica LCLUP’s requirement for detailed geotechnical studies in certain locations to establish bluff edge setbacks and other appropriate siting or design mitigation measures to accomplish the policies of the plan. The LCLUP includes a public access component as part of Chapter 4: Public Access and Recreation, “to assure that maximum public access to the coast and public recreation areas is provided” (Section 30500). During all phases of the LCLUP’s development, the public as well as affected agencies must be provided with extensive opportunities to participate. In the case of the Pacifica General Plan and LCLUP update, the planning process, including public participation, is detailed in Section 1.2.

### *Implementation Plan*

The implementation component of the LCP comprises the zoning ordinance, zoning district maps, and other implementing actions within sensitive coastal resources areas. These are typically referred to together as the Implementation Plan (IP). The IP may be submitted to the Coastal Commission separately following submission of the LCLUP, and this is the intended approach in Pacifica. The relationship between the LCLUP and zoning is covered further in the following section.

## **1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND REGULATIONS**

### **The Local Coastal Land Use Plan and Zoning**

As described above, LCPs consist of local land use plans together with zoning codes, zoning maps, and any other implementation tools that are needed to assure that Coastal Act policies are properly carried out at the local level. LCPs are prepared in consultation with Coastal Commission staff. After Coastal Commission certification, all programs are implemented by local governments. This LCLUP represents the first part of the LCP for Pacifica, and the framework on which zoning, and, if needed, specific plans or other needed implementing actions, will be based.

### **The Local Coastal Land Use Plan and the General Plan**

The General Plan and 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.

Much of the background text is also the same in both documents. 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. 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. Each plan has a different organizational structure, to match its purpose. Plan organization is covered in Section 1.5. One EIR describes the expected environmental impacts of both plans.

## Plan Bay Area

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) have adopted the Plan Bay Area. This Plan will be the San Francisco Bay Area’s Regional Transportation Plan, and will satisfy the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) requirement established by SB 375 (see summary above). The effort is focused on bringing together transportation, land use, and housing policies at the regional scale to support greenhouse gas emissions reduction while ensuring mobility. Regional priorities for transportation investments will influence Pacifica’s future circulation system.

## 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. The Pacifica General Plan and Local Coastal Land Use Plan may provide a vehicle for enacting RSM recommendations.

## 1.5 GUIDE TO USING THIS DOCUMENT

### Plan Organization

This section describes the organization of the Pacifica 2035 Local Coastal Land Use Plan and the structure of guiding and implementing policies. The LCLUP is organized to follow the topical sections of the Coastal Act policies, and 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 (here), and requirements for administration of the Plan.
2. **Land Use and Development.** This chapter describes the existing land use pattern and provides the physical framework for land use and development in the Coastal Zone. It enumerates development demand and capacity, and provides detailed descriptions of land use issues by sub-area. It describes how the land use plan and related policies support development prioritized under the Coastal Act.
3. **Public Access and Recreation.** This chapter includes policies, programs, and standards to ensure that public access to the coast is provided according to the policies of the Coastal Act, serving as the

public access component of the Plan. It identifies future street and traffic improvements, and addresses walking, biking, transit, and parking to enable a multi-modal circulation system in the Coastal Zone. This chapter also contains policies relating to regional open spaces and beaches, the trail system, City parks and recreation, as they pertain to Coastal Act policies to ensure the public has adequate access to coastal recreation opportunities.

4. **Environmental and Scenic Resources.** 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. It also 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. Policies are presented in terms of their satisfaction of Coastal Act provisions.
5. **Natural Hazards.** This chapter addresses the hazards posed by seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland fires, and provides detailed policies that respond to Coastal Act provisions for minimizing adverse impacts.

Table 1-1 shows how the chapters in the LCLUP related to General Plan Elements.

TABLE 1-1: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COASTAL ZONE CHAPTERS AND GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS	
LCLUP Chapter	Related General Plan Elements
Chapter 1: Introduction	Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Land Use and Development	Chapter 4: Land Use
Chapter 3: Public Access and Recreation	Chapter 5: Circulation
Chapter 4: Environmental and Scenic Resources	Chapter 6: Open Space & Community Facilities
Chapter 5: Natural Hazards	Chapter 7: Conservation
	Chapter 3: Community Design
	Chapter 8: Safety
	Chapter 3: Community Design

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2013.

## 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’s Coastal Zone that the Plan seeks to achieve:

- *Guiding Policies* are the City’s statements of its goals and philosophy.
- *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 need to be resolved in LCP implementation. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced.

## Diagrams and Land Use Classifications

Diagrams in the LCLUP illustrate a number of policies relating to land use, coastal access, circulation, environmental and scenic resources, and hazards. Diagrams, and in particular the Land Use Diagram in Chapter 2, are important parts of the plan that contain information not presented anywhere else. The Land Use Diagram, other figures, and the Land Use Classifications are also adopted parts of the Plan.

## Appendix, Glossary and List of Acronyms

Appendix A presents the coastal resources planning and management policies that comprise Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act, or Section 30200 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code. These policies are organized in seven topical articles, which guide the organization of the LCLUP chapters.

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

## 1.6 PLAN ADMINISTRATION

### Certification

The LCP may be submitted to the Coastal Commission all at one time, or in two phases, with the LCLUP first and the implementing actions second, and each may be separately certified. The LCP may also be split geographically. An LCP is not fully certified by the Coastal Commission until all parts have been certified. The Commission is also expected to review all certified LCPs from time to time to determine whether they are being implemented in conformity with State law.

The Coastal Commission reviews the LCLUP for conformance with the coastal resources planning and management policies of the Coastal Act. At least one public hearing is required prior to land use plan certification; additional meetings may be required if the Commission finds substantial conformity issues.

Review of the implementation plan (e.g., zoning) is focused on its adequacy to carry out the provisions of the certified LCLUP, including the public access component. At least one public hearing is required before certification (or rejection) of proposed zoning.

Following certification of the LCP, the City of Pacifica will be granted authority to issue most coastal development permits (CDPs) under the new Local Coastal Land Use Plan and updated zoning map and zoning code. Some decisions may be appealed to the Coastal Commission. The Commission retains jurisdiction over public trust lands and tidelands, and may retain jurisdiction over sensitive lands. The Coastal Commission retains jurisdiction over permitting at the Quarry site and Sheldance Nursery site in Pacifica's Coastal Zone as of July 2011.

### Amendments to the Plan and Periodic Review

The LCLUP is less flexible than a General Plan in that its amendment, even after certification, requires the approval of the Coastal Commission as well as the City. An exception exists for minor amendments if the

Coastal Commission’s executive director determines that they are “de minimis,” having no impact on coastal resources and remaining consistent with Coastal Act policies. Although Pacifica's LCLUP and General Plan are integrated, the coastal policies are clearly identified in order to facilitate the amendment process should that be desired in the future. The Coastal Commission periodically reviews certified LCPs to ensure that coastal resources are being effectively protected.