

## 5. Coastal Access and Recreation

Maximizing coastal access and recreational opportunities is a primary objective of the California Coastal Act. This chapter of the Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) documents existing coastal access conditions, and describes improvements needed to enhance access to the coast for people arriving by all modes of transportation. Recreational open space is a defining feature and an extraordinary resource for Half Moon Bay, and another high priority under the Coastal Act. This chapter also documents existing public recreational facilities, evaluates local and visitor demand for recreational facilities, identifies priority improvements, and evaluates the recreational needs of the community.

Coastal access and recreation are overlapping objectives. Providing coastal access is essential to promoting coastal recreation. Coastal access points offering support facilities such as transit and parking enable visitors to participate in coastal recreation activities. However, conflicts, such as recreation events that block beach access, must be identified and addressed in policies. Furthermore, the very nature of coastal access and recreational facilities is that they are often in direct contact with sensitive coastal habitat areas such as beaches and coastal bluffs. In that coastal resource protection is another primary objective of the California Coastal Act, the potential impacts of coastal access and recreation on habitat and other resources must be understood and policies should guide environmentally sustainable coastal access and recreational facilities and programs.

### Land Use Plan Framework

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Upon its admission into the United States in 1850, the State of California became the owner of all tidelands, submerged lands, and all lands lying beneath inland navigable waters. These lands are held and managed by the State for the benefit of all people of the state and are subject to the common law public trust doctrine<sup>1</sup>. The use of these lands is limited to public trust uses, which include navigation, fishing, maritime commerce, boating, public access, water-oriented recreation, visitor-serving facilities, open space, and environmental protection and restoration. Because the mean high tide line varies due to factors such as beach width and elevation, shoreline erosion, and sea level rise, the extent of lands in public trust also varies. Notably, as sea level rise accelerates, private lands that were previously landward of the mean high tide line may become subject to the state's ownership and protections of the public trust. Protection of these public lands lies at the heart of the Coastal Act, and development of public trust lands is under the permitting authority of the Coastal

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<sup>1</sup> California Coastal Commission, 2015. California Coastal Commission, Sea Level Rise Policy Guidance, unanimously adopted on August 12, 2015.

Commission. To that end, it is essential for Local Coastal Programs to ensure permanent protection of public trust resources for public trust purposes.

The Coastal Act requires that public access to and along the coast be maximized, while embodying considerations of public safety, property rights, and natural resource protection. New development projects must provide public access, with specified and limited exceptions. Public parking and other facilities should be distributed along the coast, and lower-cost visitor-serving facilities are to be protected, encouraged, and provided (Sections 30210 through 30214). Section 30252 requires that new development maintain and enhance public access to the coast by facilitating transit and minimizing the need for local travel on coastal access roads.

The Coastal Act also seeks to protect and expand recreational opportunities, by protecting oceanfront land and upland areas for recreational uses. Water-oriented recreation, recreational boating, and visitor-serving commercial recreational uses are to be prioritized (Sections 30220 through 30224). Additionally, the Coastal Act requires that adequate parks for local residents be provided so that coastal recreation areas are not overloaded (Section 30252).

## **COASTAL ACT POLICIES**

The following California Coastal Act policies are relevant to the provisions of coastal access and recreation and are incorporated into this LUP.

### **Article 2: Public Access**

The public's right to access all beach areas on public trust lands (as measured by the mean high tide line) is guaranteed by the California Constitution. The California Coastal Act provides a framework for achieving these basic public rights for use and enjoyment of the coast as addressed in the following policies.

#### **Section 30210 Access, recreational opportunities; posting**

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

#### **Section 30211 Development not to interfere with access**

Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

#### **Section 30212 New development projects**

(a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. Dedicated accessway shall not be required to be opened to public use until a public agency or private association agrees to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability of the accessway.

- (b) For purposes of this section, “new development” does not include:
- (1.) Replacement of any structure pursuant to the provisions of subdivision (g) of Section 30610.
  - (2.) The demolition and reconstruction of a single-family residence; provided, that the reconstructed residence shall not exceed either the floor area, height or bulk of the former structure by more than 10 percent, and that the reconstructed residence shall be sited in the same location on the affected property as the former structure.
  - (3.) Improvements to any structure which do not change the intensity of its use, which do not increase either the floor area, height, or bulk of the structure by more than 10 percent, which do not block or impede public access, and which do not result in a seaward encroachment by the structure.
  - (4.) The reconstruction or repair of any seawall; provided, however, that the reconstructed or repaired seawall is not seaward of the location of the former structure.
  - (5.) Any repair or maintenance activity for which the commission has determined, pursuant to Section 30610, that a coastal development permit will be not required unless the commission determines that the activity will have an adverse impact on lateral public access along the beach.

*As used in this subdivision, “bulk” means total interior cubic volume as measured from the exterior surface of the structure.*

- (c) Nothing in this division shall restrict public access nor shall it excuse the performance of duties and responsibilities of public agencies which are required by Sections 66478.1 to 66478.14, inclusive, of the Government Code and by Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution.

#### **Section 30212.5 Public facilities; distribution**

Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.

#### **Section 30213 Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities; encouragement and provision; overnight room rentals**

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

The commission shall not: (1) require that overnight room rentals be fixed at an amount certain for any privately owned and operated hotel, motel, or other similar visitor-serving facility located on either public or private lands; or (2) establish or approve any method for the identification of low or moderate income persons for the purpose of determining eligibility for overnight room rentals in any such facilities.

#### **Section 30214 Implementation of public access policies; legislative intent**

- (a) The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case including, but not limited to, the following:
- (1.) Topographic and geologic site characteristics.

- (2.) The capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity.
  - (3.) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses.
  - (4.) The need to provide for the management of access areas so as to protect the privacy of adjacent property owners and to protect the aesthetic values of the area by providing for the collection of litter.
- (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the public access policies of this article be carried out in a reasonable manner that considers the equities and that balances the rights of the individual property owner with the public's constitutional right of access pursuant to Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. Nothing in this section or any amendment thereto shall be construed as a limitation on the rights guaranteed to the public under Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution.
- (c) In carrying out the public access policies of this article, the commission and any other responsible public agency shall consider and encourage the utilization of innovative access management techniques, including, but not limited to, agreements with private organizations which would minimize management costs and encourage the use of volunteer programs.

### **Article 3: Recreation**

The following California Coastal Act sections provide the policy framework for assessing and prioritizing the visitor-serving and local recreation needs including commercial recreation and support facilities.

#### **Section 30220 Protection of certain water-oriented activities**

Coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities that cannot readily be provided at inland water areas shall be protected for such uses.

#### **Section 30221 Oceanfront land; protection for recreational use and development**

Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.

#### **Section 30222 Private lands; priority and development purposes**

The use of private lands suitable for visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation shall have priority over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependent industry.

#### **Section 30223 Upland areas**

Upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible.

#### **Section 30224 Recreational boating use; encouragement; facilities**

Increased recreational boating use of coastal waters shall be encouraged, in accordance with this division, by developing dry storage areas, increasing public launching facilities, providing

additional berthing space in existing harbors, limiting non-water-dependent land uses that congest access corridors and preclude boating support facilities, providing harbors of refuge, and by providing for new boating facilities in natural harbors, new protected water areas, and in areas dredged from dry land.

### **Article 6: Development**

The following California Coastal Act policies provide a framework for protecting public coastal access and recreation from potential negative effects of development and the growth inducing impacts of the expansion of public works facilities.

#### **Section 30252 Maintenance and enhancement of public access**

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

#### **Section 30254 Public works facilities**

New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division; provided, however, that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway Route 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road. Special districts shall not be formed or expanded except where assessment for, and provision of, the service would not induce new development inconsistent with this division. Where existing or planned public works facilities can accommodate only a limited amount of new development, services to coastal-dependent land use, essential public services and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state, or nation, public recreation, commercial recreation, and visitor-serving land uses shall not be precluded by other development.

## **Public Coastal Access**

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Half Moon Bay contains 6.2 miles of coastline, eight contiguous sections of beaches, and a nearly complete span of the California Coastal Trail along the City's oceanfront. The trail links open space and recreation areas, all highly utilized by locals and tourists alike. The City's primary road network consists of Highway 1, connecting north to San Francisco and south to Santa Cruz, and Highway 92, connecting east to San Mateo and the bay-side of the peninsula. The limited capacity of the City's circulation system, specifically the Highway 1 corridor, presents a coastal access paradox. Providing for and promoting coastal access and recreation results in severe traffic congestion during peak periods, thereby diminishing the quality of coastal access and recreation experiences. This section addresses existing coastal access

points, the roadway network for primary modes of transportation, alternative modes of transportation, and needed and planned access improvement areas.

## **COASTAL ACCESS ROUTES AND POINTS**

The Planning Area includes numerous coastal access provisions, including defined primary and secondary coastal access routes, coastal access points, signage, and identified coastal access improvement areas as discussed further below and shown on Figure 5-1.

### **Primary Coastal Access Routes**

Primary coastal access routes provide a direct connection between Highway 1 and/or Downtown Half Moon Bay and the coastline. Public parking areas and formal vertical access to the beach are available via each of the primary coastal access routes. ADA access is also included to varying degrees in the parking lots and for linkages to the California Coastal Trail and viewing areas. Primary coastal access routes include:

**Young Avenue and Venice Boulevard.** These primary coastal access routes lead to beaches that are part of Half Moon Bay State Beach (Dunes Beach and Venice Beach), a unit of the State Parks system. The Sweetwood Group Camp is near the southern end of Dunes Beach.

**Kelly Avenue and Poplar Street:** Kelly Avenue and Poplar Street link the Town Center to the coast. To reinforce the relationship between the visitor-serving amenities in Downtown and the beach, these streets are designated as primary coastal access routes between Main Street and the beach parking lots they connect to: Kelly Avenue to Francis Beach, and Poplar Street to Poplar Beach. Francis Beach is part of the Half Moon Bay State Beach and its visitor facilities include the Half Moon Bay State Beach Visitor Center and campsites. Poplar is a neighborhood street that provides access to Poplar Beach, owned by the City and San Mateo County, and managed by the City of Half Moon Bay. Visitor facilities are also owned and managed by the City, including the parking lot, vertical access, and various bicycle and pedestrian amenities.

**Wavecrest Road.** This access route terminates at the City's Smith Field park ballfields. The parking lot is used by coastal visitors to access the California Coastal Trail via informal trails.

**Miramontes Point Road.** At the south end of town, Miramontes Point Road connects to two public parking areas with vertical beach access nearby.

### **Secondary Coastal Access Routes**

Secondary coastal access routes are those that do not provide formalized public parking facilities; however, their connections between Highway 1 and the California Coastal Trail are direct and long-established, serving local and visiting bicyclists and pedestrians well. Some of these access routes link to beach access points, and some do not. The secondary coastal routes include Mirada Road, Roosevelt Boulevard, Wave Avenue, and Redondo Beach Road. Several of these routes have potential for parking improvements, at which point they could be designated primary access routes. Secondary coastal access routes are also discussed below as identified areas for coastal access improvements.

### **Additional Coastal Access Provisions**

**Coastal Access Points.** In addition to the primary and secondary coastal access routes, access to the coastline can also be found via many rights-of-way in the Miramar, Casa del Mar, Alsace Lorraine, Arleta Park, and Ocean Colony neighborhoods. Coastal access in these neighborhoods is typically in the form of informal trail connections to the California Coastal Trail, which provide views over the bluffs to the ocean. Surfers Beach in northernmost Half Moon Bay is also a significant coastal access point.

**Signage.** While signage is present along Highway 1 directing visitors to beach access points, it is incomplete and does not create a unified sense of Half Moon Bay's coastal access and recreation opportunities. The LUP calls for consistent and prominent wayfinding signage to be added along Highway 1, directing visitors to each of Half Moon Bay's coastal access points. Additional wayfinding signage can help direct vehicles to designated parking areas with available capacity and can also direct pedestrians and cyclists to designated access points, helping to prevent environmental damage and erosion due to the use and creation of informal pedestrian and bicycle paths. The LUP further includes policies to expand transportation options for the benefit of coastal visitors which can serve to reduce traffic congestion and pollutant emissions.

### **Coastal Access Improvement Areas**

During the LUP update process, several "Coastal Access Improvement Areas" were identified as needing both smaller and larger-scale access infrastructure and improvements. Coastal Access Improvement Areas are indicated on Figure 5-1: Coastal Access, and summarized below:

**Surfers Beach.** For this location, the primary improvements needed are a safer Highway 1 pedestrian crossing and improved parking areas to accommodate surfers and beachgoers who park on the east side of the roadway. This location involves the Caltrans Highway 1 right-of-way and straddles the City and San Mateo County boundary; thus implementing improvements in this area would require multi-jurisdictional coordination.

**Mirada Road.** The western terminus of Mirada Road presents several opportunities for coastal access improvements such as parking, Coastal Trail repair or retreat, and potential vertical beach access. This location also straddles the City and San Mateo County jurisdictional boundary. As of 2020, San Mateo County was planning improvements to the pedestrian bridge connecting the cul-de-sac to the northern side of Mirada Road.

**Venice Beach.** Vertical access to Venice Beach is provided near the mouth of the Frenchmans Creek riparian corridor. Access to the beach in this area is actively eroding and in need of restorative improvements. Improvements could be multi-beneficial for coastal access and recreation, habitat value, and site stability.

**Wave Avenue.** This location is identified as a site where new restorative access improvements, such as a boardwalk, would clearly define the access pathway and allow for recovery of the eroding informal trails and surrounding habitat in that area.

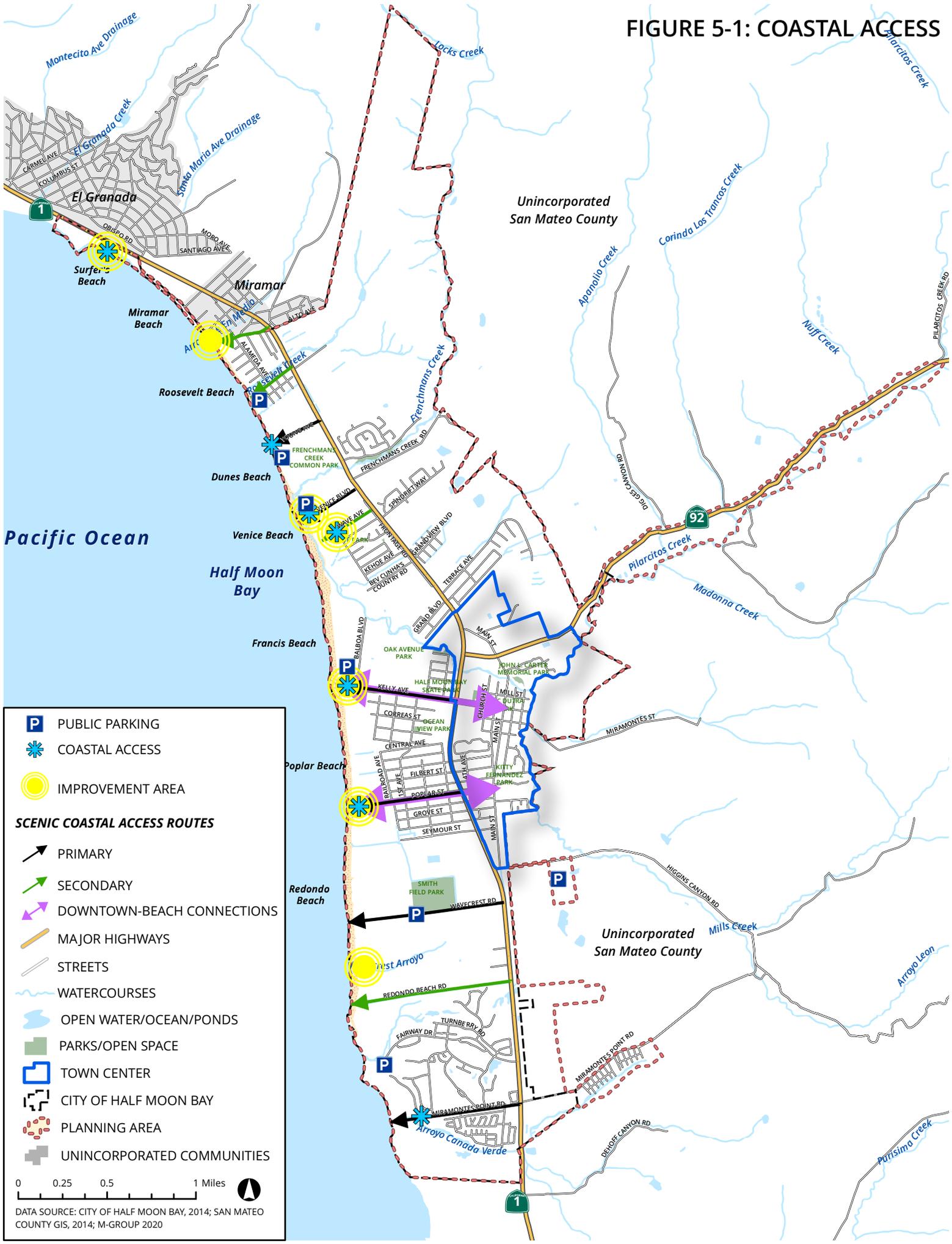
**Francis Beach.** At the time of the LUP update, the State Parks and Recreation Department had been planning coastal access improvements at Francis Beach with a new vertical access west of the terminus of Kelly Avenue.

**Poplar Beach.** The City periodically makes improvements to this heavily used blufftop park area. In 2020, new vertical access stairs and drainage improvements were completed. Future improvements were being planned for the parking lot; support facilities including trash, recycling, and restrooms; and ADA paths from the parking lot and California Coastal Trail to a viewing area.

**North Wavecrest.** In 2020, planning was underway for new lateral and vertical beach access in the North Wavecrest Restoration Area. The project includes extension of the California Coastal Trail, comprising the final segment to be implemented, with vertical access at the Wavecrest Arroyo. Parking and other support facilities are being considered for implementing this accessway, which will be located on land trust and/or public lands. This new vertical access will replace the informal, dangerous and environmentally unsustainable parking and access point at the terminus of Redondo Beach Road.

**Neighborhood Access Points.** Neighborhood coastal access is typically in the form of informal trail connections to the California Coastal Trail. Of these, several would benefit from on-going maintenance and restorative access improvements, such as the Casa del Mar informal trail connections. Restorative access can consist of boardwalks or split rail fencing to direct trail users including bicyclists and pedestrians, thereby reducing erosion and allowing revegetation.

FIGURE 5-1: COASTAL ACCESS



- PUBLIC PARKING
- COASTAL ACCESS
- IMPROVEMENT AREA

**SCENIC COASTAL ACCESS ROUTES**

- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- DOWNTOWN-BEACH CONNECTIONS
- MAJOR HIGHWAYS
- STREETS
- WATERCOURSES
- OPEN WATER/OCEAN/PONDS
- PARKS/OPEN SPACE
- TOWN CENTER
- CITY OF HALF MOON BAY
- PLANNING AREA
- UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

DATA SOURCE: CITY OF HALF MOON BAY, 2014; SAN MATEO COUNTY GIS, 2014; M-GROUP 2020

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## Policies – Public Coastal Access

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### *Policies – General*

- 5-1. **Maximum Coastal Access and Recreational Opportunities.** Provide maximum coastal access and recreational opportunities for all people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.
- 5-2. **Public Shoreline Access Rights.** Continue to ensure that the public retains right of access to the shoreline and sea as provided by the public trust doctrine, where acquired through historic use or legislative authorization, and where environmentally appropriate.
- 5-3. **Environmental Justice.** Minimize barriers to public coastal access to the maximum extent feasible, including ensuring that public access and recreational opportunities account for the social, physical, and economic needs of all people.
- 5-4. **Public Access and Sea Level Rise.** Require new development adjacent to public access and recreation areas vulnerable to coastal bluff erosion or sea level rise to be sited and designed to anticipate eventual loss and necessary replacement of such public access and recreation areas.
- 5-5. **Distribution of Public Facilities.** Continue to distribute public facilities, including parking areas, on both sides of Highway 1 so as to mitigate against the impacts of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.
- 5-6. **Public Access Required in New Development.** Require new development proposed between the first public roadway and the shoreline and along the coast to provide public access. Exceptions to this requirement shall be granted only where public access would pose a safety risk or threat to fragile resources, or where adequate access exists nearby.
- 5-7. **Public Access Maximized in New Development.** New development shall ensure that public access opportunities are maximized by including measures to offset any temporary and potentially permanent impacts to public access caused by the project. To the extent possible, development shall provide public access improvements, including within the private development project (e.g. visitor-serving development), where appropriate.
- 5-8. **New Development Public Coastal Access Management Plan.** Development with the potential to impact public coastal access, whether during construction or after, shall develop a public coastal access management plan designed to identify and limit impacts to public coastal access. Plans shall identify peak use times and measures to avoid disruption during those times; minimize beach, road, and trail closures; identify alternative access routes; and provide for public safety.
- 5-9. **Public Coastal Access Changes.** Any reductions or limitations in access to the beach, shoreline, trails, and parks for coastal recreation, such as signs limiting public parking or restricting use of existing lateral and/or vertical accessways, shall require a coastal development permit. Such projects shall ensure that existing overall levels of public access are maintained or enhanced, such as through the provision of bike lanes and

bicycle parking, pedestrian trails, and relocated vehicular parking spaces so as to fully mitigate any potential negative impacts and maximize access opportunities.

- 5-10. Mitigation for Impacts to Public Coastal Access.** Where adverse impacts to existing public coastal access cannot be avoided by new development and no feasible alternative exists, ensure that impacts are mitigated such as through the dedication of a new access or trail easement in perpetuity or the provision of improvements to other public coastal access points in Half Moon Bay.
- 5-11. Public Beach Parking Inventory.** Maintain and enhance the existing public beach parking inventory by providing on-street public parking spaces, providing opportunities for alternative modes of transportation and beach shuttles, and, where feasible, providing new beach parking areas where there are no conflicts with adjacent land uses or environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
- 5-12. Enhance Beaches and Open Spaces.** Work with California State Parks and other agencies and organizations to enhance the quality of the city's beaches, watercourses, and open spaces by reducing the amount of litter and pollution present in these areas and providing appropriate amenities as follows:
- a. Increase public awareness of the sources of pollution in the city's waterways;
  - b. Increase public awareness of litter and its impacts on the landscape;
  - c. Provide trash receptacles in strategic locations with associated signage along the city's open space network;
  - d. Encourage volunteer events and activities to pick up litter in public open spaces; and
  - e. Provide more amenities to support high quality coastal access where appropriate, including public restrooms, benches, and bicycle facilities.

***Coastal Access Points***

- 5-13. Coastal Access Improvements.** Improve safety, accessibility, environmental sustainability, and aesthetics of coastal access points, including those specified as Coastal Access Improvement Areas identified on Figure 5-1.
- 5-14. Siting and Design of Parking for Coastal Access Points.** Work with the State Department of Parks and Recreation and others to ensure that coastal visitor parking is created, modified, and/or managed with the following goals and characteristics:
- a. Provide distributed public parking along the coast on primary and secondary coastal access routes, east of the Coastal Trail to the extent feasible, and throughout the City to ensure access to all coastal access points, as permitted by environmental and safety constraints (e.g. avoiding public safety hazards, adverse impacts to ESHA, visitor-residential conflicts).
  - b. Ensure that any new beach parking areas located on the east side of Highway 1 are connected to coastal access points via alternative modes of transportation such as shuttles and bicycle/pedestrian trails.

- c. Locate parking lots on property accessible directly from primary access routes and appropriately separated from adjacent residential areas by distance, landscaping, or lowered elevation.
  - d. Include green infrastructure features such as vegetated swales, permeable pavement, or bioretention areas to ensure that water runoff does not exceed that which exists prior to installation of new parking areas, and to ensure that stormwater runoff impacts are minimized to the extent feasible for improvements to existing parking areas.
  - e. Incorporate site-appropriate setbacks and reserve suitable surrounding land for expansion or retreat for existing or redeveloped public parking areas near the beach, as permitted by environmental constraints.
  - f. Locate parking facilities so that beach access does not compromise sensitive habitat areas such as dunes, sea cliffs, bluffs, wetlands, and riparian areas. Where no other accessway is feasible, use site and design measures such as boardwalks, fencing, and signage to ensure habitat protection.
  - g. Incorporate educational and interpretive signage; and accommodate temporary uses including beach clean-ups, farm and sea-to-table events, and wildlife and habitat classes within beach parking areas as a compliment to the coastal setting and subordinate to visual resource qualities.
- 5-15. Beach Fees and Time Restrictions.** Maintain no-cost and lower-cost user fees and parking fees, and minimize parking lot and beach curfews to the extent feasible in order to maximize public access and recreation opportunities. Imposing new time restrictions or fees at public parking lots, particularly where none previously existed shall require a coastal development permit and shall evaluate potential for impacts to lower income users.
- 5-16. Siting and Design of Public Accessways.** Lateral and vertical public coastal accessways shall be sited and designed to account for likely uses of the facility; topographic and site constraints; the fragility of natural resources; potential future risks of erosion and sea level rise; the need for adaptable, non-permanent designs in erosive areas; and compatibility with adjacent land uses. Where trails are permitted uses within sensitive habitat areas and their buffers, new trail segments and improvements shall be sited and designed to minimize and mitigate impacts to the habitat and buffer areas.
- 5-17. Review of Accessway Plans.** Allow any public agency holding beach lands to review all accessway plans on adjacent property to ensure they are consistent with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan.
- 5-18. Setbacks from Accessways.** No new structure shall be built within 15 feet of an existing accessway or the boundary of shoreline areas under public ownership. A greater distance may be required to minimize adverse visual impacts, to protect residential privacy, or to protect public access. New accessways may be located within 15 feet of existing structures when it is not possible to locate them elsewhere.
- 5-19. Signage for Accessways.** All vertical and lateral public accessways shall have clearly posted and maintained signs specifying the public's right to use these areas. Signs

shall also identify any limitations on the public's right of access and specific uses. Signs shall be provided in both English and Spanish.

- 5-20. Maintenance of Accessways.** Require a public or private entity to be responsible for maintaining public accessways and protecting adjacent ESHA if present when public coastal access is a condition for new development. Such accessways shall be open to the public unless access poses a danger to public safety or ESHA.
- 5-21. Restrictions on Parking.** Prohibit restrictions on public parking that would adversely affect public access to beaches, trails, or other recreational lands along the coast except where necessary to protect public safety and preserve neighborhoods for primarily residential use. Mitigation may be required for implementation of parking restrictions where adverse impacts to public access cannot be avoided, such as through provision of off-site parking or an in-lieu fee to support a public access project in the City.
- 5-22. Private Roads and Gates.** Prohibit gates and other barriers designed to regulate or restrict access on private roads where such barriers have the potential to impede access to public trails and recreational areas.
- 5-23. Abandonment of Public Rights-of-Way.** Require a coastal development permit for any proposed abandonment of a public right-of-way that may affect public access. Allow abandonment only if it is demonstrated that adequate public access to the coast will be preserved.

## **Vehicular Coastal Access**

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Highway 1 and Highway 92 are the only access routes for visitors to the Planning Area. The natural beauty of San Mateo County Pacific Ocean beaches, Half Moon Bay's charming downtown, and nearby attractions such as Pillar Point Harbor attract large numbers of visitors during warm days of spring, summer, and fall. This is particularly true on weekends when the constrained roadway network in Half Moon Bay frequently reaches capacity. Special events such as the annual Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival in October and the Maverick's surf competition, held during the winter about 4 miles north of Half Moon Bay, also draw large crowds and high traffic volumes. Highway 1 provides the only direct access to such events and Highway 92 provides the most direct route to Highway 1 from the bay side of the San Francisco Peninsula and from much of the East Bay.

Vehicular coastal access is presented in Chapter 3. Public Works, where the focus is on Highway 1 and Highway 92 infrastructure capacity limitations. This LUP update introduces the Town Boulevard as an approach to improve access for visitors and residents in lieu of increasing roadway capacity, such as by adding lanes. The Town Boulevard complements the Town Center focus presented in Chapter 2. Development, and is presented in more detail in Chapter 3. In summary, the Town Boulevard includes lower speed limits; multi-modal improvements with safe crossings; and landscaping and other amenities intended to enhance the image and scenic quality of the Planning Area. Policies relevant to vehicular coastal access and the Town Boulevard are provided in Chapter 3.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Coastal Access**

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This section provides an overview of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in Half Moon Bay, including the California Coastal Trail. Existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities are shown on Figure 5-2. Equestrian facilities are also important to the Planning Area and are identified as applicable in this section.

### **Trails**

**California Coastal Trail.** Coastal Act Section 30609.5 protects any state-owned land that has been formally designated as part of the California Coastal Trail, and local jurisdictions are encouraged to identify an alignment for the California Coastal Trail in their LCPs. The California Coastal Trail is envisioned as a continuous interconnected public trail system along the California coastline. The trail can take many forms, including informal footpaths, paved sidewalks, and separated bicycle paths; it may be located on beaches, bluff edges, hillsides, and within the highway right-of-way. While primarily for pedestrians, the California Coastal Trail also accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, and others as opportunities allow. A parallel equestrian trail east of the Coastal Trail runs from Frenchmans Creek to Poplar Beach Blufftop Park, where vertical beach access is provided for riders at a location called “the slot” south of Kelly Avenue.

Existing segments of the California Coastal Trail run in a north-south direction west of Highway 1 in Half Moon Bay (reference Figure 5-2). In the 1996 LUP, the trail was referred to as the “Shoreline Trail,” and some residents call it the “Coastside Trail.” For this LUP update, the trail will be consistently referred to as the California Coastal Trail. The trail is a paved path along the coastal bluffs from Mirada Road in the north to past the south end of Poplar Beach at Seymour Bridge. The California Coastal Trail is also a paved path between Redondo Beach Road and the southern boundary of the city. The Wavecrest Trail Project, described below, will replace the many informal trails between Seymour Bridge and Redondo Beach Road throughout the Wavecrest area.

The Wavecrest Trail Project consists of two phases, and when complete it will provide a defined trail from the south end of Poplar Beach southward along the bluffs to Ocean Colony, adding nearly 1,700 feet of lateral public access. The first phase, between Seymour Bridge and the cypress row at the southern end of Coastside Land Trust’s 50-acre parcel was implemented in 2015. This trail span is known as the “Bird Trail” and is frequented by birders due to the extensive variety of species throughout the Wavecrest area. At the time of this LUP update, planning for the second phase was under way. Formalization of the California Coastal Trail through the North Wavecrest PD will provide a safe and highly scenic route for visitors that directs traffic away from sensitive habitat areas.<sup>2</sup> This second phase includes new vertical beach access at the Wavecrest Arroyo, a Coastal Access Improvement Area identified in the LUP. The second phase may also incorporate a spur trail to link the City’s Smith Field Park public parking lot to the Coastal Trail and thereby replace existing informal trails which are located in potential sensitive habitat areas.

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<sup>2</sup> Placeworks, 2014. Wavecrest Coastal Trail Project Public Review Draft Initial Study.

Half Moon Bay's city limits also include a narrow shoreline strip north of Arroyo de en Medio. Here, the California Coastal Trail uses Mirada Road as it parallels the shoreline, and then follows a paved path along the bluffs in unincorporated El Granada, returns to City limits as a narrow-paved trail along the shoulder of Highway 1; and then follows a paved path west of the highway to Pillar Point Harbor. The California Coastal Trail - San Mateo County Midcoast: Pillar Point to Mirada Surf report (San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, 2010) identifies short- and long-term recommended improvements for this segment of trail.

Due to the diversity and high number of trail users, including pedestrians and recreational family cycling, trail use conflicts occur. Speeding cyclists, trash, and off-leash dog walking have been problematic and are difficult to enforce along the extents of the trail. The California Coastal Trail alignment is also proximate to numerous sensitive habitat areas including Frenchmans and Pilarcitos Creeks. Access control and signage have not been wholly effective at keeping trail users out of some of these sensitive habitat areas. To address a range of concerns and support long-term sustainable trail use, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan specifies safety improvements along the trail, including signage and improved roadway crossings. And, at the time of the LUP update, the City was exploring options for improving trail maintenance and providing patrols during times of heavy use.

As of 2020, the San Mateo County Parks Department was in the early design phase for a new Ohlone-Portola Heritage Trail intended to commemorate the expedition route taken by Spanish explorer Gaspar de Portola to discover the coastside in 1769, and to honor the region's California native tribal history. The general trail alignment that will pass through the City of Half Moon Bay will utilize the existing California Coastal Trail alignment and will not result in new trail construction.

**Naomi Patridge Trail.** This trail runs along the east side of Highway 1 from Roosevelt Boulevard to Ruisseau Francais Avenue, and on the west side of Highway 1 from Ruisseau Francais Avenue to Highway 92. A second segment parallels the west side of Highway 1 between Kelly Avenue and Wavecrest Road. See "Planned Parallel Trail (Naomi Patridge Trail)" below.

**Highway 1 Underpass.** The underpass facilitates a connection between a short trail segment in Oak Avenue Park on the west side of Highway 1 to a short trail segment on the east side of Highway 1 connecting to Highway 92 near Main Street. From Main Street, bicyclists and pedestrians can access John L. Carter Memorial Park and the Town Center area. The Highway 1 underpass also connects the north and south segments of the Naomi Patridge Trail, via an on-street route along Pilarcitos and Kelly avenues.

### ***Planned Trails***

**Pilarcitos Creek Trail.** As early as the adoption of the 1995 Parks and Recreation Element, the Pilarcitos Creek Trail has been envisioned to eventually extend from the California Coastal Trail at its western terminus to the eastern city limits where it could provide linkages to other trails in unincorporated San Mateo County. The 2001 San Mateo County Trails Master Plan also acknowledges the "Pilarcitos Trail." West of Highway 1, the anticipated alignment is on the south side of Pilarcitos Creek. East of Highway 1, facilitated by the existing bridge at Oak Avenue Park and the highway undercrossing, the alignment is anticipated to be on the

north side of the creek. Implementation of additional trail segments adjacent to or bridging Pilarcitos Creek will require careful study to ensure that the alignment does not conflict with riparian corridor and other ESHA requirements, allows natural shifting of creek alignment, does not contribute to erosion risks, and avoids land use conflicts with agricultural operations.

**Eastside Parallel Trail.** The San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CBPP), adopted in 2011 by the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) of San Mateo County, identifies a “Parallel Trail” along Highway 1 as a key countywide corridor. The Parallel Trail would run adjacent to Highway 1, starting at Devils Slide and extend south to and through Half Moon Bay. The Naomi Patridge Trail has been functioning as Half Moon Bay’s segment of the Parallel Trail. Today, the Naomi Patridge Trail provides a direct travel route for pedestrians and cyclists along much of the west side of the Highway 1 corridor in Half Moon Bay. Half Moon Bay’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan brings the Eastside Parallel Trail planning forward for the Planning Area. Planned future segments of this trail will facilitate continuous non-motorized travel on a separate path along the east side of Highway 1, from Half Moon Bay’s northern to southern city limits. At the time of the 2020 LUP update, a portion of the trail had received grant funding and was undergoing environmental review. Because the Eastside Parallel Trail will provide a more direct route through town than the California Coastal Trail, commuters are likely to use it more often, which could free up some capacity on the Coastal Trail. The use of motorized bikes, scooters and similar modes may be more appropriate on this facility dependent upon the trail width and other design features and should be subject of future study to ensure use of this new amenity is optimized and complimentary to other facilities.

**Railroad Right-of-Way Trail.** The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identified the abandoned railroad right-of-way between Kelly and Central Avenue for a new trail. Although only 0.4 miles long, this trail would provide a direct link between Francis State Beach and the Alsace Lorraine and Arleta Park neighborhoods, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to avoid the heavily trafficked Kelly Avenue. The master plan also includes potential for a Railroad Avenue Trail extension from Grove Street in the Arleta Park neighborhood to Wavecrest Road. This 0.5-mile segment would provide access to Smith Field. Potential impacts to ESHA would need to be evaluated and avoided as consistent with Chapter 6 of the LUP.

**Pacific Ridge Trail.** This trail will be implemented east and uphill from the Pacific Ridge residential development. It will provide a pedestrian walking loop offering broad landscape and ocean views. Because of nearby sensitive habitat, use of this trail will be limited to pedestrians and dogs will be required to be leashed.

**Vista Trail.** As envisioned, the Vista Trail will be elevated to provide exceptional ocean views and connections between neighborhoods. Similar trail opportunities were identified in the 1995 Recreation Element as the “Foothills Trail” and the 2001 San Mateo County Trails Master Plan as the “Midcoast Foothill Trail.” The conceptual alignment is along the eastern extents of the city’s northeast neighborhoods (e.g. Grandview, Sea Haven, and Frenchmans Creek). The Pacific Ridge Trail could link to the Vista Trail, and also potentially provide a trailhead. The presence of ESHA and agricultural operations within at least some portions of this hillside area will require careful alignment such that certain segments may need to be located at lower elevations between neighborhoods, or farther east and upland within the

County's jurisdiction, to avoid impacts. It is possible that a future study will conclude that the Vista Trail is infeasible or undesirable because of potential impacts to ESHA, limitations associated with the deed restricted conservation area in Pacific Ridge, land use conflicts with agriculture operations, and/or hazards such as erosion.

**Frenchmans Creek Trail.** Similar to the Vista Trail, the Frenchmans Creek trail has been envisioned for many years. If feasible, it could provide a linkage between the Vista Trail and the Eastside Parallel Trail. However, the Frenchmans Creek riparian corridor includes ESHA and an alignment in this area will require sensitive planning. Lack of publicly owned property further restricts options for alignment. The LUP brings the concept forward for future study.

**Beachwood-Glen Cree Trail.** The City-owned Beachwood and Glen Cree properties are located between the Grandview and Highland Park neighborhoods. As part of this LUP update, the Beachwood property will be considered for a future mitigation bank and green infrastructure for stormwater management. This area is predominately wetlands and may be appropriate for resource dependent educational and interpretive uses including a trail with boardwalks to minimize impacts to wetlands. If feasible, it could serve as an alternate alignment for the Vista Trail, or an additional branch of the Vista Trail.

**Restorative Access Trails.** As previously presented, a number of coastal access points, including both lateral and vertical accessways, have been identified as appropriate locations for habitat restoration. In some cases, lateral accessways could be enhanced with boardwalks or other elements to define pathways and discourage off-trail use which causes erosion and diminishes habitat. Vertical access points also need to be addressed. Examples include eroding access locations at Venice and Poplar Beaches, and the terminus of Redondo Beach Road where unimproved access has led to significant bluff degradation.

**Bay to Sea Trail.** The planned Bay to Sea Trail is a multi-jurisdictional effort to provide regional connectivity between urban and open space areas from the bayside to the coastside. For Half Moon Bay, the trail is planned to connect to the California Coastal Trail via the City's existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian network. At the time of the 2020 LUP update, exact alignments and timeline for implementation were unknown.

### **Planning for Erosion and Sea Level Rise Impacts on Trails**

Waves acting upon the steep bluff features are a source of erosion along the Half Moon Bay coastline. Over time, sea level rise is anticipated to increase the Planning Area's exposure to coastal flooding, the rate of erosion along the shoreline and bluffs, and other potential hazards. Loss of shoreline due to rising waters may also threaten the stability of coastal habitats, recreation areas, and public access. LUP policies in this chapter require access and recreational facilities—in particular the California Coastal Trail—to be sited, designed and maintained to avoid or mitigate erosion and the impacts of sea level rise. The long-term viability of and access to the California Coastal Trail is a community priority, as it widely serves residents and visitors alike as a significant recreational, scenic, and low-cost visitor-serving experience. See Chapter 7 of this plan for more detailed discussion of these hazards. The City has studied and will continue to study and implement improvements to reduce erosion, such as those identified along the California Coastal Trail between Kelly Avenue and the Seymour Ditch.

Erosion of unstable creek banks and other watercourses will likely increase as climate change brings more extreme weather patterns. Sea level rise will also cause the estuaries and mouths of watercourses along the coast to retreat inland. Both of these likelihoods have the potential to adversely affect riparian habitat or wetlands. Riparian and wetland buffers must be established and firmly enforced in order to accommodate habitat retreat and dispersal, foraging, refugia, and nesting areas for special status species. Where trails are permitted uses within such sensitive habitat areas and/or their buffer zones, new trails contemplated for development should be carefully sited and designed to allow space for meander belts and for future retreat of the ESHA and its associated buffer.

#### **Bicycle Facilities: Trails and Bike Lanes**

Half Moon Bay has been developing an interconnected bicycle network which will be implemented with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Highlighted here are facilities specifically supportive of coastal access and recreation. Within the Planning Area, the California Coastal Trail, Naomi Patridge Trail, and Pilarcitos Creek Trail are multi-use trails for cyclists and pedestrians. Bicycle lanes are present on Main Street from Highway 1 south to Highway 92, Kelly Avenue from Highway 1 to the intersection of the California Coastal Trail and Balboa Boulevard, and Miramontes Point Road from Highway 1 to Pelican Point RV Park.

Facilities outside the Planning Area will also support coastal access and link to City's network. Highway 92 is identified in the CBPP as a countywide key corridor. A multi-use path is proposed starting at the intersection of Highway 92 and Highway 1, and terminating between Apanolio Creek and Corinda Los Trancos Creek, two miles to the east. Bicycle improvements beyond this segment of Highway 92 have not yet been defined. The CBPP also proposes creating a bicycle connection between the California Coastal Trail and Higgins Canyon Road. The type of bicycle facility is not defined in the plan but would include a combination of Poplar, Seymour, and Main streets and 2nd and 3rd avenues.

Bicycle facilities along Highways 1 and 92 will further enhance recreational access to the coast for cyclists. In addition to continuous multi-use trails along both sides of the Highway 1 corridor, the LUP identifies a more comprehensive bicycle network for the Planning Area that provides connections between downtown, the Naomi Patridge Trail, the California Coastal Trail, the planned Eastside Parallel Trail, and the beaches. Signage, lane markings, and further visibility improvements will also be considered to ensure bicyclist safety. The future addition of bicycle parking at major destinations such as Dunes Beach, Venice Beach, and Poplar Beach further encourage cycling.

#### **Pedestrian Facilities: Highway Crossings, Sidewalks, and Pathways**

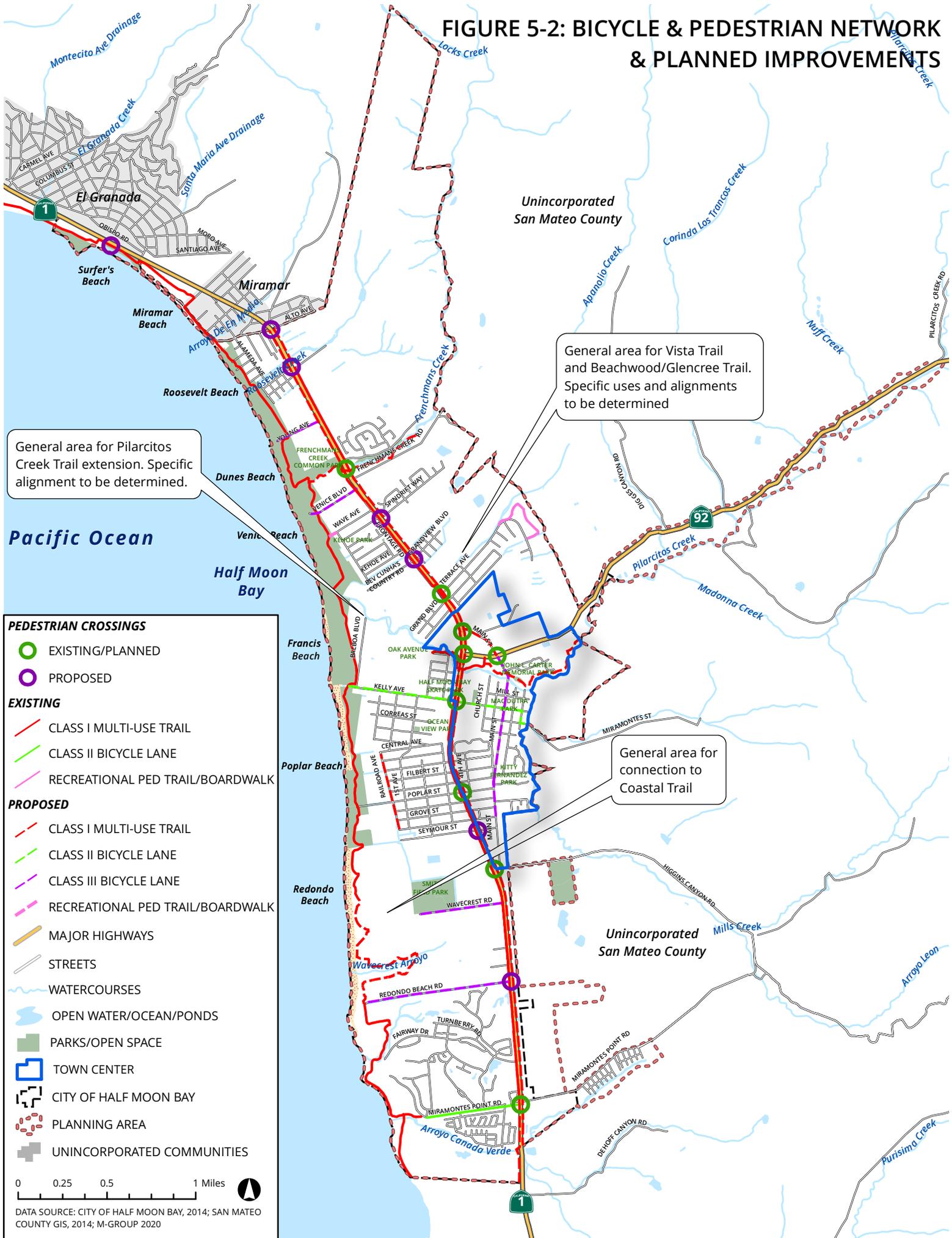
In the Planning Area, Highway 1 currently constrains pedestrian and bicycle mobility due to limited crossing opportunities, heavy traffic, and lack of consistent pedestrian pathways. Many intersections do not have stop controls or treatments to help pedestrians and bicyclists safely cross. Even where signalized intersections exist, green lights are calibrated for vehicles and do not allow sufficient crossing time for bicyclists or pedestrians. Pedestrians often walk along the roadway's paved shoulders due to the infrequency of safe crossings that would allow access to the Naomi Patridge Trail.

Pedestrian improvements along Highway 1 have the potential to provide greater access for low-income populations, agricultural workers, and transit riders who constitute a relatively large share of bicyclists and pedestrians in Half Moon Bay. Pedestrian improvements will also be of great benefit for coastal visitors by enhancing the connection between Downtown Half Moon Bay on the east side of Highway 1 and the beaches to the west. More frequent crossings of Highway 1 are a key element for this corridor and are supported by policies in this LUP.

Most streets in and around Downtown Half Moon Bay have sidewalks. Outside of this area, many streets do not have sidewalk or other pedestrian pathway facilities. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan further identified additional approaches to improving pedestrian circulation pertinent to coastal access. “Coastal Access Pedestrian Zones” are applied to Roosevelt Boulevard, Young Avenue, Venice Boulevard, Kelly Avenue, Poplar Street, and Miramontes Point Road. The master plan establishes that these areas should be prioritized for pedestrian comfort and safety with shared use pathways or sidewalks provided throughout.

Kelly Avenue and Poplar Street are especially important coastal access routes in the Planning Area. Both streets directly link Downtown Half Moon Bay and the coast, and while both have a highway crossing, the lack of continuous pedestrian walkways may discourage coastal visitors from walking between these primary visitor-serving and coastal recreation areas. Kelly Avenue and Poplar Street are also distinct from one another, and street design improvements must be context-sensitive, accounting for neighborhood character, surrounding land use, and traffic volumes and speeds for each case. Care must be taken to protect natural features (such as the significant stands of Monterey cypress trees along portions of Poplar Street) as well as to relate to the agricultural uses creating a scenic streetscape along the north side of Kelly Avenue. ‘Green street’ practices can contribute to streetscape design while improving drainage patterns by incorporating landscaping and other natural, low-impact features into the stormwater management system. Incorporation of green infrastructure with the preferred pedestrian pathway approach – sidewalks, no-curb pathways, or other configurations – will need to conform to long-established and valued elements of the natural and built environment.

**FIGURE 5-2: BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN NETWORK & PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS**



General area for Pilarcitos Creek Trail extension. Specific alignment to be determined.

General area for Vista Trail and Beachwood/Glenree Trail. Specific uses and alignments to be determined

General area for connection to Coastal Trail

**PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS**

- EXISTING/PLANNED (Green circle)
- PROPOSED (Purple circle)

**EXISTING**

- CLASS I MULTI-USE TRAIL (Red line)
- CLASS II BICYCLE LANE (Green line)
- RECREATIONAL PED TRAIL/BOARDWALK (Pink line)

**PROPOSED**

- CLASS I MULTI-USE TRAIL (Red dashed line)
- CLASS II BICYCLE LANE (Green dashed line)
- CLASS III BICYCLE LANE (Purple dashed line)
- RECREATIONAL PED TRAIL/BOARDWALK (Pink dashed line)

**MAJOR HIGHWAYS** (Yellow line)

**STREETS** (Grey line)

**WATERCOURSES** (Blue line)

**OPEN WATER/OCEAN/PONDS** (Blue area)

**PARKS/OPEN SPACE** (Green area)

**TOWN CENTER** (Blue outline)

**CITY OF HALF MOON BAY** (Black outline)

**PLANNING AREA** (Red dashed outline)

**UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES** (Grey area)

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

DATA SOURCE: CITY OF HALF MOON BAY, 2014; SAN MATEO COUNTY GIS, 2014; M-GROUP 2020

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## **Policies – Bicycle and Pedestrian Coastal Access**

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- 5-24. Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.** Periodically update and implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to identify needs and prioritize improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs.
- 5-25. Highway Crossings.** Work with Caltrans to ensure that improvements to Highway 1 and Highway 92 incorporate safe access for bicycles and pedestrians from all neighborhoods to the beach, downtown, and schools.
- 5-26. Downtown-Beach Pedestrian Connections.** Require improvements of pedestrian east-west connections between downtown and the Francis State Park Beach and Poplar Beach where applicable to new public and private development projects. Kelly Avenue and Poplar Street should be high priorities for walkway enhancements suitable to the adjacent neighborhood environment, and pedestrian amenities as well as directional signage.
- 5-27. Complete Trail System.** Complete the trail system within the Planning Area to allow safe and environmentally compatible access to parks, beaches, and recreational open space areas, integrating with the regional trail system and minimizing hazard risks and adverse impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas or their buffers. The complete trail system should include:
- a. Continuous pedestrian and bicycle trails along the coastline;
  - b. Trails along Pilarcitos and Frenchmans Creeks in accordance with Policy 6-52. Standards in Riparian Corridor Buffer Zones, connecting neighborhoods to the beaches and coastline, parks, and foothills;
  - c. Completion of pedestrian and bicycle trails west of Highway 1, and the new Eastside Parallel Trail east of and adjacent to Highway 1 along its entire length; and
  - d. Connectivity between off-road trails and major on-road pedestrian and bicycle routes, including the Town Boulevard, such that future improvements in the trail system also contribute to linkages between important sites (such as beaches, schools, and commercial centers).
- 5-28. Trails Accessible for All User Groups.** Trails designed and designated as multi-use shall be accessible for all user groups, including walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians (as land use policy allows). Ensure that the network provides appropriate trail amenities for each trail type or user group such as lighting, benches, and signage, as appropriate with respect to sensitive habitat area and visual resource protection. Encourage improvements that will reduce conflicts between all types of users, such as speed-graded trails.
- 5-29. Resource-Dependent and Coastal-Dependent Uses.** Public trails and beach accessways are considered resource-dependent uses, unless there is a habitat-specific limitation that precludes development or aggravates hazards. The California Coastal Trail is considered a coastal-dependent use and its implementation, maintenance, and improvement along the coastline shall be a priority.

- 5-30. Minimize Potential Impacts of Trails.** Multi-use trails, associated amenities, and passive recreational features shall be located to minimize impacts to sensitive habitats and other sensitive surrounding land uses, such as residences and agriculture.
- 5-31. Improve Existing Trails.** Improve existing trails and trail amenities to address erosion, environmental concerns, and public safety. Consider options to retrofit or relocate existing trails and amenities to reduce impacts from sea level rise.
- 5-32. Trail Easements.** As part of the development approval process, obtain an irrevocable offer to dedicate or a permanent easement for multi-use trails on privately owned property where trails are proposed as part of the Half Moon Bay trail system. At a minimum, the dedicated easement shall have a width sufficient to allow an adequate multi-use trail, to protect the privacy of any residential structures built near the accessway, and to accommodate landward realignment needed for erosion and sea level rise impacts. For all new private development along the California Coastal Trail alignment, granting of lateral easements to allow for continuous public access along the shoreline shall be mandatory unless publicly owned blufftop land suitable for trail development and long-term maintenance intervenes between the development and the bluff edge.
- 5-33. Trail Setbacks.** New lateral trails along the bluff edge shall be set back a sufficient distance from the bluff edge to avoid impacts from erosion and sea level rise, generally 50 feet, and native vegetation shall be established and maintained between the trail and the edge to stabilize the blufftop. Outlooks and other trail amenities shall be incorporated to discourage damage from informal trails.
- 5-34. Trail Design and Maintenance.** Trails shall be designed and maintained for good drainage, using natural grades and surrounding vegetation; lasting ADA compliance; and sustainable implementation and maintenance with respect to ESHA and City resources (e.g. staffing, budget, capacity).
- 5-35. Restorative Access.** Identify public coastal access points, whether formal or informal, where public access is causing erosion or other impacts to sensitive habitat due to maintenance challenges or poor design. Provide alternate access, either in the same or a nearby location, designed to protect the surrounding habitat and allow for eventual restoration of the originally impacted access area. Options include raised boardwalks or seasonal bridges. Prioritize locations identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan including Wave Avenue and other streets in the Casa del Mar and Miramar neighborhoods that link directly to the California Coastal Trail.
- 5-36. Long-term California Coastal Trail Alignment.** Study, identify and implement future alignments of the California Coastal Trail that would be sufficiently protected from the highest projection of erosion and sea level rise scenarios and would preserve or establish native vegetation between the trail and the bluff edge.
- 5-37. California Coastal Trail Improvements.** Work with local land trusts and others to develop a formal segment of the California Coastal Trail between the Wavecrest open space and Redondo Beach Road. The trail should generally parallel the bluff edge, be designed to minimize erosion and potential adverse impacts to biological resources, and be aligned adequately inland to accommodate future sea level rise and bluff erosion projections. Connect the lateral trail with one or more vertical trails

connecting to the beach, located and designed to minimize negative impacts. Encourage restoration of any areas damaged by existing formal or informal trails that will not be part of this formalized alignment. Phased restoration may be appropriate where there is a significant amount of informal trails and/or where land ownership allows such access.

- 5-38. Equestrian Trails.** Separate trails shall be maintained for equestrian use along the California Coastal Trail corridor. Use landscaping and signs to separate horse and pedestrian trails and to reduce erosion or other adverse impacts along bluff tops and watercourses. Trail crossings of watercourses shall be sustainable and minimize impacts to ESHA.
- 5-39. Trail Improvements at Surfers Beach.** Work with Caltrans and other agencies on a long-term solution to reduce erosion, enhance coastal access and recreation, and protect Highway 1 from future instabilities at Surfers Beach. This solution shall include enhancements of the segment of the California Coastal Trail between Coronado Street and the Pillar Point RV Park.
- 5-40. Naomi Patridge Trail Extension.** Extend the multi-use trail along the west side of Highway 1, connecting to a continuous parallel trail planned for the unincorporated Midcoast.
- 5-41. Downtown Multi-Use Trail.** Study opportunities for a Town Center trail that can link to other downtown bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Site and design trails and trail connections to protect priority uses such as sensitive habitat areas and agriculture.
- 5-42. Creekside Trails.** Use Half Moon Bay's creek system as part of a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails linking the City's parks and open space recreation areas and providing coastal access. Ensure that all new development along creeks is set back to accommodate planned trails. Consider the need for adaptable, non-permanent designs in erosive areas and along meandering creeks with the intention to be re-aligned over time to accommodate natural processes. Site trails to avoid adverse environmental impacts to riparian corridors and other environmentally sensitive habitat areas; to prevent erosion, sedimentation, and flooding along the creek beds and banks upstream and downstream from trails; and to protect other priority uses including agriculture.
- 5-43. Vista Trail.** Prepare a feasibility study of potential trail alignments east of the city's northwest neighborhoods for pedestrian use. To facilitate inland and upland relocation of equestrian use over time, the feasibility assessment shall consider alignment and design requirements to potentially accommodate equestrian use. The presence of environmentally sensitive habitat and private agriculture operations will dictate trail alignment, design, and management. Until such feasibility study is prepared, trail easement requirements pursuant to Policy 5-32 will not apply. Future implementation shall include a funded plan for active oversight by a resource management agency to ensure protection of sensitive habitat areas, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and compliance with open space deed restricted areas.

## **Parking, Transit and Alternate Modes**

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### **Parking at Coastal Access Points**

Public parking is provided at most vehicular access points to the coast including at the end of Mirada Road for Miramar Beach, Young Avenue for Dunes Beach, Venice Boulevard for Venice Beach, Kelly Avenue for Francis Beach, Poplar Street for Poplar Beach, and Miramontes Point Road for the Ocean Colony beaches. To the north, there is an informal parking lot on the east side of Highway 1 providing access to Surfers Beach that is just outside the City limits. A small lot with a restroom was also planned as part of upgrades to the Pillar Point RV Park. The parking area would be free for those with valid accessibility placards. To the south, Redondo Beach Road terminates in an informal parking area that the City intends to relocate due to its hazardous setting, and a parking structure adjacent to the Ritz Carlton provides public parking for beach access in the Ocean Colony area. Public parking and informal connections to the California Coastal Trail are also available at Smith Field Park at the end of Wavecrest Road. Public coastal access parking locations are shown on Figure 5-1.

The lots at Dunes, Francis, and Venice beaches are part of Half Moon Bay State Beach and are managed by the State. The lot at Poplar Beach is owned and managed by the City of Half Moon Bay. The State Beach and Poplar Beach parking lots charge for parking. Parking is free at Smith Field Park and Miramontes Point Road.

Particularly on the weekends and during special events, these public lots fill up and often result in spillover parking on residential streets. Currently, the provision of special event parking is the responsibility of the event promoter. Parking management for events is addressed as part of the City's special events permitting process. Provisions intended to help address increases in parking demand include allowing drivers to park along the shoulder of Highway 1 and Highway 92 and in certain private parking facilities. To further address the high parking demand during peak times, the LUP calls for the City to explore the feasibility of additional parking options.

### **On-Street Parking**

**Neighborhoods.** With the exception of Ocean Colony, on-street parking is available in all of the city's established neighborhoods. Street frontage improvements (i.e. sidewalks, curbs, and gutters) and on-street parking configurations vary within each neighborhood. Neighborhoods in close proximity to coastal access points often experience parking spillover, particularly during the weekends and summer months. Nighttime neighborhood parking permit programs have been implemented in the past to reduce impacts on residents.

**Downtown.** Within downtown, the majority of parking is provided on-street with both parallel and angled on-street spaces. Several downtown parking surveys have been conducted, most recently in 2019, to determine the location and times of the highest parking occupancy rate. May and June represent months of peak demand in Half Moon Bay, particularly during weekends. The survey showed that during this time, the average parking occupancy level downtown was 50 percent. The highest occupancy rate (close to 100 percent) was observed during the afternoon hours in certain blocks. The peak weekend occupancy rate lasted from late morning to early evening on Saturdays and Sundays. Streets

parallel to Main Street had much lower parking occupancy rates in comparison to Main Street. The LUP calls for expanding time-limited parking in the Town Center area to encourage employees and business owners to park farther away from their stores, opening up more convenient parking for customers and coastal visitors. As parking demand changes over time, the City could consider a range of options to manage parking supply such as time limits, differentiation in cost, and/or development in-lieu fees to support provision of additional parking areas.

### **Transit and Shuttles**

Existing transit service to Half Moon Bay is provided by the San Mateo County Transit District, which operates SamTrans, the regional bus service; and RediCoast, a paratransit service. Two fixed-route SamTrans bus lines currently serve Half Moon Bay:

- Route 17 provides weekday service connecting Pacifica, Moss Beach, El Granada, Half Moon Bay, and Pescadero. The route travels along Highway 1 and uses Main Street and Kelly Avenue in Downtown Half Moon Bay.
- Route 294 connects Half Moon Bay with San Mateo Medical Center, Hillsdale Caltrain Station, Hillsdale Shopping Center, and the College of San Mateo, via Highway 92, with a loop in Downtown Half Moon Bay.

These two bus routes run very infrequently, making it difficult for both residents and visitors to use public transportation as a primary mode of travel. In addition, routes are limited and not well-matched to the travel needs of coastal visitors. Recreational visitors seeking access to coastal attractions and Half Moon Bay festivals lack convenient transit information and options and would benefit from more frequent and connected transit routes. Limited transit service puts additional strain on Highway 1 and Highway 92 during weekends and festivals and impedes mobility of both local residents and coastal visitors. Increasing transit service on the weekend or providing additional types of service during major events such as the Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival would make public transit a more viable option. Transit stops lack amenities such as benches, shelters, and trash cans. Adding amenities will help create a more comfortable and pleasant waiting environment for transit riders. Shuttle services that could operate on weekends and during special events, allowing people to move between destinations such as Downtown Half Moon Bay, Pillar Point Harbor, the Ritz-Carlton and Half Moon Bay Golf Links, and the beaches, may also be a viable option.

Half Moon Bay's park-and-ride lot is located behind a grocery store in the Strawflower commercial center. The lot predominately serves residents who commute on SamTrans buses out of town for employment. It also serves some community college students. Visitors are not likely to use existing transit services and would not benefit from this commuter-oriented park-and-ride lot. Addition of a multi-modal transit hub would have the potential to support visitor transit use. Such a hub would include bicycle sharing and parking facilities and be within walking distance of downtown and beaches. In the ideal case, a Half Moon Bay transit hub could be linked with direct service to a transit hub on the bay side of the peninsula. Locations for a bay-side visitor-serving transit hub, which would be active on weekends, could include parking lots at community college campuses or office parks, or the Millbrae Transit Center.

## Emerging Alternate Modes and Technologies

Emerging alternative transportation modes and technologies could be implemented to improve coastal access. Visitors who need support with mobility may find it difficult to access the coastside. Jitneys and pedicabs, although not new concepts, could become an essential option for such visitors, as well as for Half Moon Bay's aging population. The expanded and interlinked multi-use trail network envisioned in the LUP presents an alternative transportation network that is not dependent upon the often severely congested Highway 1. Use of alternative transportation modes on the City's trail system should be context-sensitive, making appropriate use of smaller scale recreation-focused vehicles on recreation-focused trails such as the California Coastal Trail. Small and slow-moving motorized vehicles are used in a similar manner on multi-use trails in Europe. Modes that can utilize the multi-use trail system for assisted mobility should be evaluated and encouraged if they can improve coastal access overall, and especially so if they help the disabled.

Alternative fuel vehicles, particularly plug-in electric cars, have become common-place. Although use of these vehicles does not reduce traffic, they have lower environmental impacts than traditional gas-powered cars and trucks. They produce low or zero emissions and also tend to be very quiet. Standard motor vehicles idling in start and stop traffic along Highway 1 and Highway 92 during peak periods produce localized and concentrated emissions, thereby reducing air quality and increasing greenhouse gases emitted to the atmosphere. Broader availability of charging stations, especially where there is an existing electricity source, could encourage the use of electric vehicles for visitor trips to Half Moon Bay. The City has continued to install EV charging stations for public use through the downtown area. Other well-visited areas, such as the beach parking lots should be considered for EV charging stations if utilities are convenient and installation would not impact ESHA.

It is expected that autonomous vehicles will be a more widely introduced mode of transportation during the planning horizon of the LUP. The impacts of this emerging mode are being studied and the results have been mixed. In urban settings use of this mode increases both vehicle trips and miles traveled. Half Moon Bay's unique setting and circulation use patterns may have a different outcome depending on how autonomous vehicles are regulated.

Internet and smart-phone capabilities can also be used to the advantage of improving coastal access opportunities. Providing up-to-date, real time information about accessibility of coastal access points, capacity and pricing of public parking lots, public transit locations and options, and more could significantly improve visitor experiences and meet local needs. A Half Moon Bay-specific website and/or smart-phone application could be a viable option for providing such access and transit information to residents and visitors in real time.

## Policies – Parking, Transit and Alternate Modes

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### *Policies – Parking and Signage*

**5-44. Peak Period Parking Provisions.** In the downtown area and for beaches and other attractions, encourage improvements to parking systems such that they are sufficient

- to accommodate visitor surges during peak periods, including special events and weekends.
- 5-45. Parking Management.** Parking management strategies shall continue to be developed and implemented during peak periods and may include encouraging non-motorized transportation, expanding time-limited parking, and providing spillover parking lots, online parking capacity information, shuttle services, or establishing a demand-based parking program.
  - 5-46. On-Street Public Parking.** Protect and enhance the City's on-street public parking supply, including by requiring new development to provide sufficient off-street parking and frontage improvements or payment of in-lieu fees to support such improvements.
  - 5-47. Comprehensive Signage Program.** Implement a comprehensive program to provide wayfinding and informational signage to direct visitors to destinations such as the beaches and downtown, as well as public parking areas, and provide other necessary public information, ensuring that any signage is visually consistent and appropriate in the coastal setting.
  - 5-48. Directional Signage.** Design signage to be visible from Highway 1 and Highway 92 and maintain visual harmony with the coastal setting.

***Policies – Transit Access and Shuttle***

- 5-49. Effective Transit Services.** Support efforts to maintain and operate local and regional transit services that meet the needs of Half Moon Bay residents, workers, and visitors.
- 5-50. Local and Regional Transit.** Work with SamTrans to increase bus frequencies and ensure that routes connect to regional transit options for coastal access and expanded commute options. Encourage SamTrans to provide frequent, especially peak weekend transit service to Half Moon Bay State Beach.
- 5-51. Bus Shelters.** Work with SamTrans to provide safe, comfortable, and weather-protective bus shelters throughout Half Moon Bay, including amenities such as electronic time schedules and countdowns, benches, and pedestrian-scale lighting, set back a safe distance from the roadway. Ensure that shelters are easily accessible for all users of the pedestrian and bicycle network.
- 5-52. Community Shuttle Service.** Establish a shuttle service to meet a variety of local needs. Options include a local circulator for seniors and youth throughout the week, as well as weekend and event shuttles that can transport visitors between downtown, the beaches, and parking.
- 5-53. Visitor-Serving Transit Hub.** Collaborate with SamTrans to model potential ridership and identify potential locations for a Half Moon Bay and bay-side linked transit hubs.

***Policies – Alternate Modes and Emerging Technologies***

- 5-54. Promote Alternate Modes.** Explore the integration of alternative modes of transportation to enhance access to Half Moon Bay's destinations while reducing vehicle trips, greenhouse gas emissions, and parking impacts. Support efforts to

- manage travel demand during periods of congestion through the distribution of information (e.g. through signage, online) about in-advance and real-time travel options and parking capacities, pricing of City-owned parking facilities, subsidy of transit options and the provision of facilities for walking and bicycling.
- 5-55. EV Vehicle Facilities.** Support installation of EV charging stations in all public parking areas and require EV charging stations in new non-residential and multi-family development.
- 5-56. Emerging Modes.** Allow smaller, slower moving and context-appropriate motorized vehicles to utilize streets and trails that can be easily shared to enable nonautomotive transportation. Study the use of emerging technologies including autonomous vehicles to ensure future implementation improves coastal access and does not contribute to congestion or other unintended consequences.
- 5-57. Transportation Demand Management.** Explore and support TDM programs that reduce the reliance of Half Moon Bay residents and, especially, visitors on use of the private automobile.
- 5-58. Scenic and Unique Facilities.** Support special transportation and recreational facilities in Half Moon Bay and surrounding areas, including the airport, marina, and equestrian facilities.

## Coastal Recreation

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The California Coastal Act seeks to ensure that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas, by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to service new development. This section summarizes Half Moon Bay's existing coastal recreational land, as shown in Figure 5-3, and the City's approach to ensuring that local recreation needs are met. Parks and recreation are covered in more detail in the Conservation and Open Space Element of the City's General Plan.

### **PUBLIC COASTAL RECREATION AREAS**

Half Moon Bay extends over six miles along the Pacific Ocean. The coast is generally characterized by bluff-backed sandy beaches, with bluffs rising from about two to 80 feet in height, with the higher bluffs in the south. About three-quarters (4.5 miles) of the coastline is in public ownership, including nearly the entire coastline from El Granada (Surfer's Beach) to the south end of Poplar Beach. A total of approximately 283 acres along the Half Moon Bay coastline are in public ownership and available for public recreation.

California State Parks owns and manages most of this land at Half Moon Bay State Beach, with smaller amounts managed by the City and County at Poplar Beach and Surfer's Beach. Half Moon Bay's beaches and bluffs support a variety of recreational uses including swimming, surfing, walking, jogging, fishing, crabbing, and horseback riding, as well as passive enjoyment. The California Coastal Trail currently extends along most of the coastline, with a gap in the North Wavecrest Restoration area between Wavecrest Road and Redondo Beach Road.

The Coastal Act provides for protection of these coastal recreation areas and uses, as well as the upland areas necessary to support them. For example, the blufftop area above Poplar Beach is needed to access the California Coastal Trail and the beach accessway, and thus must be protected in order to provide continued access to the trail and beach.

## **BEACHES**

Surfer's Beach is estimated to draw some tens of thousands of visitors per year, mainly surfers. Because this beach is narrow and directly adjacent to Highway 1, with no easily accessible parking and no facilities, visitors who do not surf tend to visit other beaches. The beaches of Half Moon Bay State Beach (Roosevelt, Dunes, Venice, and Francis beaches) are all served by parking lots with restrooms and are accessible from the California Coastal Trail. Camping is available at Francis Beach. An estimated 684,000 visitors went to Half Moon Bay State Beach in 2013, according to the San Mateo County Department of Parks and Recreation.<sup>3</sup> Poplar Beach is also served by public parking and is accessible from the California Coastal Trail as well as Half Moon Bay's central neighborhoods. Visitor use estimates are not available for Poplar Beach, or for the coastal beaches and bluffs to the south outside of the public recreation area.

Recreational beach use is a hallmark of Half Moon Bay's visitor-serving recreational attractions. Temporary events are encouraged in the coastal recreational areas of Half Moon Bay where they are low impact, do not block public access, and do not privatize an otherwise public area. Such events could include charity and outreach, organized beach clean-ups and surf classes, and small weddings or other special events. The LUP policies allow temporary events with a coastal development permit if they meet certain criteria.

Especially due to climate change, there are significant threats to the city's coastline. All beaches in Half Moon Bay are subject to potential loss from erosion and rising sea levels. Additionally, access points including the parking lot and pathways at Half Moon Bay State Beach and Dunes Beach, and Venice Beach may be affected. Some segments of the California Coastal Trail, including bridges at Pilarcitos Creek and Wavecrest, as well as informal trails along the coast at Wavecrest, are also subject to erosion and potential loss. Following preparation of a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment in 2016, the City has been studying localized erosion conditions along the bluff top between Kelly Avenue and the Seymour Ditch. These evaluations are indicating that the City needs to begin addressing the effects of drainage from the uplands in the near-term because this condition is causing accelerated erosion in advance of future predicted higher sea levels, which will undermine the bluffs from below.

## **OPEN SPACE**

In addition to the public coastal recreation described above, there are approximately 631 acres of preserved open space in City limits. This open space includes land on beaches and

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<sup>3</sup> California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup. Coastal Regional Sediment Management Plan for the Santa Cruz Littoral Cell, Pillar Point to Moss Landing, 2015.

adjacent to public recreation areas and greatly contributes to Half Moon Bay's coastal recreational environment.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code 65560, open space land is defined as follows:

"Open space land" is any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in this section, and that is designated on a local, regional, or state open-space plan as any of the following:

- (1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources, including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays, and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.
- (2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including, but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of groundwater basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers, and streams that are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.
- (3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including, but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.
- (4) Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas that require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.
- (5) Open space in support of the mission of military installations that comprises areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace that can provide additional buffer zones to military activities and complement the resource values of the military lands.
- (6) Open space for the protection of places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code.

This definition acknowledges the many purposes and benefits of open space, including for recreation, resource production, and hazard avoidance. Of particular significance to Half Moon Bay, open space provides buffers and habitat for threatened, endangered, and unique species. Adequate and linked open space accommodates dispersal and corridor movements for these species. Coastal access and recreation activities, although accommodated by open space, can adversely affect open space. Off-trail use in open space areas can harm habitat and exacerbate erosion. Non-compatible uses include flying drones, model airplanes, and motor-paragliders which disturb raptors and other species. Trash left by visitors in open space areas on the bluffs and at beaches pollutes these habitats and the ocean, attracts unwanted scavengers, and can be hazardous to public safety. Development, pollution, erosion and sea level rise also pose threats to open space, and, as such, coastal access and recreation. Although

the Coastal Act calls for protection of such ocean-front land suitable for recreational uses, the means of protection should not include hard shoreline armoring that would adversely impact other open space areas and beach access and recreation opportunities.

Public recreation opportunities in open space areas must be compatible and protective of the open space resource. The Coastal Act allows for passive recreation uses in open spaces outside of ESHAs, as well as within ESHAs and buffer areas. Such uses, which are resource-dependent, include research, education, restoration and wildlife viewing as well as trails. Multi-use and restorative access trails were discussed above in the context of coastal access.

### **CITY PARKS**

As of 2020, there are eight existing and two planned city parks in Half Moon Bay, totaling approximately 19.5 acres of developed parkland, or 38 acres of total parkland.

In addition to these park facilities, the City owns and/or manages a number of other parks or facilities that provide recreational amenities to residents and visitors alike. These include portions of Poplar Beach, Surfers Beach, and Redondo Beach; the Johnston House property east of Highway 1 (outside City limits); and segments of the Coastal, Naomi Patridge, and Pilarcitos Creek trails. The developed portions of these properties are also counted toward the City's park acreage standard. As part of the LUP update, a land use designation specific to City parks is included in the Land Use Diagram for all existing and planned parks. The General Plan update associated with this LUP will include a Healthy Community Element. This optional element addresses City park and recreation facilities as well as recreation programs specifically from the community's perspective. It is also consistent with LUP Coastal Recreation policies. In addition to the General Plan, the City also has a Parks Master Plan that identifies local parks needs and determines priorities for implementation.

The 1995 General Plan Parks and Recreation Element and original LUP's parkland standard has been 8 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard was not met and was not supported by implementation requirements in the Subdivision Ordinance, which secured only 4 acres per 1,000 residents for parkland dedication with new development. Recognizing that the beaches and bluffs provide a valuable and plentiful recreational resource for both residents and visitors, a revised standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents is introduced in the draft Conservation and Open Space Element and Healthy Community Element of the General Plan. This is the maximum allowable parkland dedication requirement pursuant to the Quimby Act and is a standard that can be met and maintained. Maintaining this standard in the future would require the development of 9.8 acres of parkland to serve the community's anticipated population in 2040.

### **VISITOR-SERVING RECREATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

Half Moon Bay offers a wide range of visitor-serving uses. Those most specifically associated with recreation are discussed in this section and include marine-based recreation, eco- and agritourism, equestrian use, and golfing. Lodging, including camping, hotels, motels, and short-term rentals are also discussed in this section because these facilities support the

Coastal Act's policy for the provision of access, including low-cost accommodations. Other hospitality visitor-serving commercial uses are addressed in Chapter 2. Development.

### **Marine-Oriented Recreation**

Half Moon Bay is especially suited to marine-oriented visitor-serving recreation. Active water sports include surfing and kayaking. Motorized recreation sports such as jet skis, although less common in Half Moon Bay, may be disruptive to surrounding passive and active recreation. Fishing and marine-oriented ecotourism, as noted below are also readily available. Local maritime history, marine habitats, and current research could all be features of marine-oriented visitor-serving uses.

### **Ecotourism**

Half Moon Bay's environmental setting supports numerous ecotourism options. Birding tours are popular, and the range of avian species present is considered exceptional. Blufftops and nearby Princeton Harbor and Fitzgerald Marine Reserve offer whale watching and opportunities to explore local marine life. Many visitors simply come to enjoy a hike through the highly varied coastal habitat areas where trail access is provided.

### **Agritourism**

Half Moon Bay is part of a well-established Midcoast agricultural community. The Pumpkin Festival is the city's long-standing and iconic attraction which brings thousands of visitors to pumpkin patches in and around the city. Produce stands, flower markets, Christmas tree farms, and farm-to-table events have further promoted the local agricultural industry for agritourism. Tasting rooms, farm-stays, and education opportunities for adults and children (e.g. tours, classes, and day camps) appeal to both visitors and the local population. Policies supportive to agritourism are included in the Agriculture chapter of the LUP.

### **Equestrian Uses**

Horseback riding tours and lessons and horse stabling and boarding are offered at Sea Horse Ranch and Mahoney's Horses and Ponies, both located on Highway 1 just south of Frenchmans Creek. Historically, equestrian facilities have also existed on the north side of the creek. These equestrian operations make use of the Coastal Equestrian Trail, which runs generally parallel to the California Coastal Trail from Young Avenue south to Poplar Street. While in the State park, horses are restricted to the designated horse trail and are not permitted on the beach.

Equestrian access to and along the beaches and streams has been observed to accelerate bluff and stream-bank erosion. The use can also adversely affect water quality of creeks and beaches. Although some demand may exist for expansion of existing equestrian uses, expansion must be limited in accordance with protection of the beach, dune, and stream environment and any impacts must be mitigated. There are additional opportunities for equestrian recreational use in the hillsides east of Highway 1, where equestrian uses include a horse breeding operation.

### **Golf Courses**

The private Half Moon Bay Golf Links spreads across the southern end of the city west of Highway 1, with two 18-hole courses offering some of the most scenic and well-known golf facilities in the country. The Golf Links also includes a 4-acre practice facility, bocce ball court, rental and sales shops, and restaurant. Although they provide for a highly desired recreational experience for many visitors, golf courses often utilize significant amounts of water as well as fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals to stay consistently maintained to a very high standard for turf. They are also typically not a lower-cost recreation option. Thus, in considering potential new golf courses, these characteristics must be taken into account in order to fulfill obligations under the California Coastal Act for protecting, encouraging or providing lower-cost visitor and recreational facilities; as well as for protecting water quality.

### **Campgrounds**

Half Moon Bay is home to several campgrounds primarily accommodating campers and recreational vehicles (RVs), with a total of 232 campsites as of 2016. Half Moon Bay State Beach provides 46 sites that accommodate trailers or RVs and seven tent-only sites at Francis Beach. The Sweetwood Group Camp is located at the northern end of the State Beach near Frenchmans Creek and provides one large group tent site. Outside of the State Beach, Pillar Point RV Park has 48 RV sites at Pillar Point Harbor at the far north end of Half Moon Bay. The privately-owned Half Moon Bay RV Park and Campground, on Wavecrest Road, and Pelican Point RV Park, on Miramontes Point Road, provide 65 and 72 sites, respectively.

In practice, it is known that sometimes RV facilities become occupied by long-term tenants and are no longer available to visitors. This situation may serve to supplement the community's need for affordable housing; however, the actual inventory of lower-cost accommodations, which is supported by California Coastal Act policy, may be limited and not adequate to meet future needs. At the time of the LUP update, the City was in receipt of a preliminary application for a new RV park on Wavecrest Road. The site is immediately west of the Half Moon Bay RV Park and Campground and a 46-room hotel which opened in 2018.

### **Lodging**

There are over 900 rooms in hotel and motel establishments in the Coastsides region, including 587 in Half Moon Bay. A hotel data sample analyzed for the General Plan and Local Coastal Plan Update in 2014 reveals that Coastsides rooms are well distributed across the price scale. The Half Moon Bay hotel market skews more towards the upscale and luxury market, with only about 5 percent of rooms considered economy class while nearly 60 percent are luxury class. Table 5-1 presents a summary of the major lodging establishments in the city, from north to south. As shown in the table, there is a lack of lower-cost lodging options. Lower-cost options can encourage visitors to have longer stays, further supporting the City's tourist industry and economic development.

Half Moon Bay hospitality establishments include the Beach House Hotel, America's Best Value Inn & Suites, Comfort Inn, Coastsides Inn, Half Moon Bay Inn, Best Western Plus, Ritz-Carlton, and Half Moon Bay Lodge. Smaller establishments, including the Mill Rose and Old

Thyme Inns, along with other inns and bed and breakfasts, provide additional room inventory primarily within the downtown area.

There is also an actively expanding short-term rental market in Half Moon Bay, on the order of 100 short-term rentals operating within the city limits for at least a portion of each calendar year as of 2020. Short-term rentals also operate in the unincorporated Midcoast. Smaller short-term rentals, especially those that are “hosted” by the property owner, provide a lower-cost accommodation option for visitors to the coast. The City has been generally supportive of this use, and as of the 2020 Land Use Plan update, has begun to consider approaches for short-term rental regulations that will ensure neighborhood compatibility and protect against loss of housing stock. Policy in Chapter 2. Development addresses short-term rentals as a residential land use.

Based on historic hotel performance trends and generally consistent with forecasts for state and national travel spending, analysis done for the General Plan and Local Coastal Program Update estimated that the Coastside could add nearly 73,000 room nights by 2017, or roughly 200 rooms.<sup>4</sup> The study assumed a stabilized occupancy rate of just over 70 percent in 2012, which is considered strong by hospitality professionals. The Coastside Chamber of Commerce reported similar occupancy rates through 2018. The economic study considered the hotel market area to include Half Moon Bay and the unincorporated Midcoast and noted that projected hotel room growth could occur anywhere within the Coastside. Half Moon Bay was also considered to be particularly well positioned because of its established downtown shopping district, restaurants, access to the beach and other local, regional and state parks. The study was completed before the Best Western Plus’s 46 rooms became available in 2018, and prior to recent growth and better monitoring of the local short-term rental supply, both within the city and the unincorporated Midcoast.

At the time of this LUP update, the City was in the process of reviewing a prospective hotel project at the former L.C. Smith Estate PD for about 130 rooms; and had also received a preliminary application for a hotel and RV park at the Surf Beach/Dunes Beach PD which included a 200-room hotel with a spa and conference facilities and 170 RV spaces. Pending further economic and other studies, it is unclear if this much additional lodging will be needed over the course of the planning horizon or if the city’s infrastructure can support this level of intensification of new visitor-serving uses.

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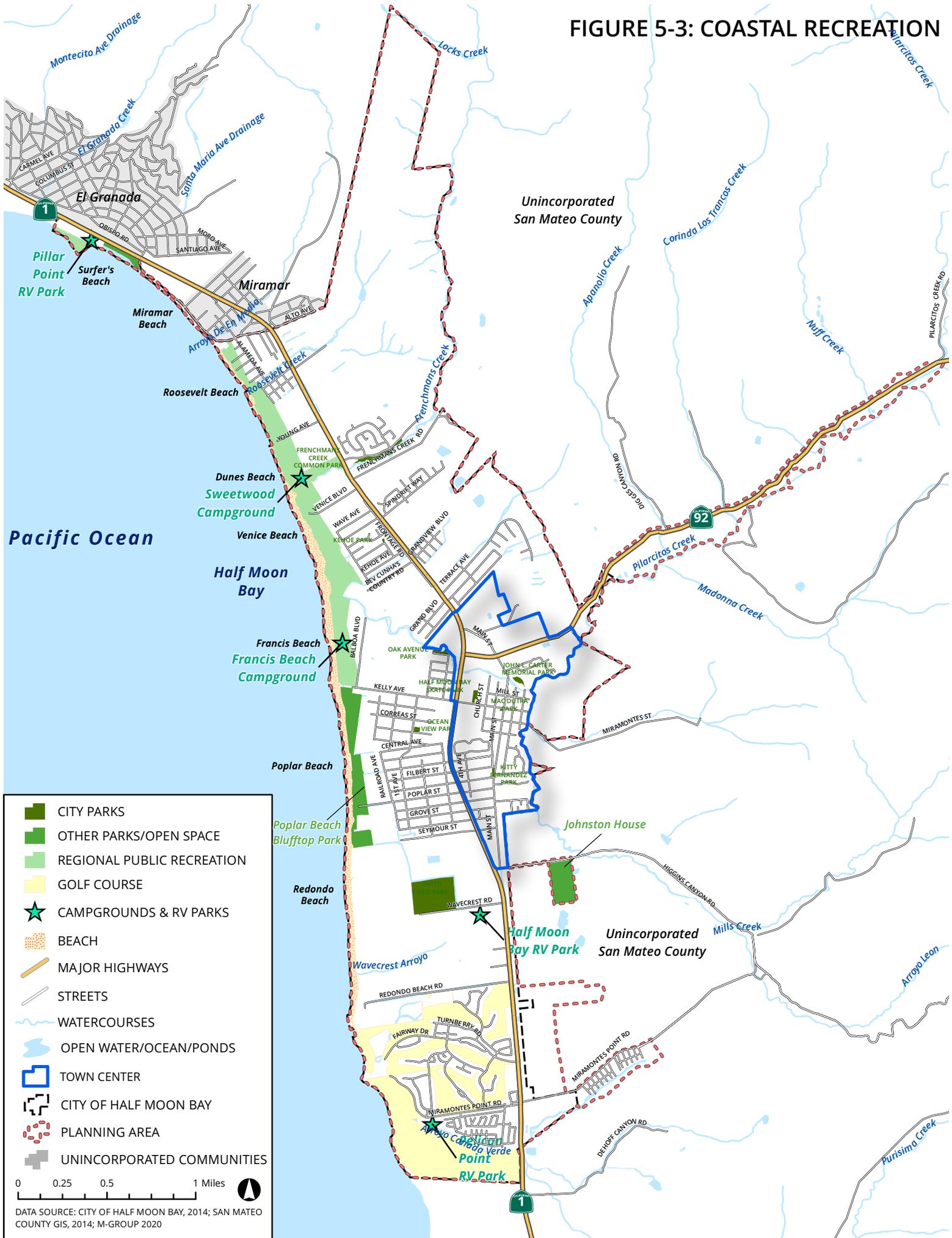
<sup>4</sup> Economics & Planning Systems, Inc. Plan Half Moon Bay Economic and Real Estate Conditions and Trends, 2014.

**Table 5-1: Half Moon Bay Major Lodging Establishments (2020)**

<i>Hotel Name</i>	<i>Year Built</i>	<i>No. of Rooms</i>	<i>Hotel Class</i>
Beach House Hotel	1996	54	Luxury Class
America's Best Value Inn	1991	27	Economy
Quality Inn	1999	54	Upper Midscale
Coastside Inn	1991	52	Midscale
Half Moon Bay Inn	1934	13	Upper Midscale
Best Western Plus	2018	46	Upper Midscale
Ritz-Carlton	2001	261	Luxury Class
Half Moon Bay Lodge	1976	80	Upper Midscale
<b>Total</b>		<b>587</b>	

*Sources: Smith Travel Research, 2014; EPS, 2014; City of Half Moon Bay, 2020.*

FIGURE 5-3: COASTAL RECREATION



	CITY PARKS
	OTHER PARKS/OPEN SPACE
	REGIONAL PUBLIC RECREATION
	GOLF COURSE
	CAMPGROUNDS & RV PARKS
	BEACH
	MAJOR HIGHWAYS
	STREETS
	WATERCOURSES
	OPEN WATER/OCEAN/PONDS
	TOWN CENTER
	CITY OF HALF MOON BAY
	PLANNING AREA
	UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

DATA SOURCE: CITY OF HALF MOON BAY, 2014; SAN MATEO COUNTY GIS, 2014; M-GROUP 2020

## Policies – Coastal Recreation

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### *Policies – General*

- 5-59. Development Adjacent to Parks and Recreation.** Require new development adjacent to parks and recreation areas to be sited and designed to prevent impacts to and be compatible with the continuance of those recreation areas.
- 5-60. Parks Master Plan.** Require implementation of the Parks Master Plan in association with public and private development projects as applicable. Implement and update a strategic parks master plan that identifies needs and prioritizes improvements to park facilities and programs.
- 5-61. Parkland Standard.** Provide a minimum of 5 acres of City parkland including neighborhood and community park area for each 1,000 city residents, with additional parkland for specialized and low use park acreage. The parkland standard shall ensure that new development accommodates the recreational needs of future residents in pace with population increase.
- 5-62. Acquisition for Coastal Access and Recreation.** Facilitate dedications of lands as required by this LUP in order to reduce land purchases, expand opportunities for coastal access and recreation, and ensure proper management of such lands by a public agency or local land trust.
- 5-63. Open Space Dedications.** Any offers of dedication or easement required by this Plan shall be reserved until accepted by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, other State agencies, San Mateo County, or a special district.

### *Policies – Coastal Recreation*

- 5-64. Coastal-dependent and Recreational Uses.** Define coastal-dependent development and uses to mean any development or use which requires a site on or adjacent to the sea to be able to function at all. Upland areas necessary to support coastal-dependent and recreational uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible. In a zone extending approximately 300 feet inland from the mean high tide line, priority shall be given to coastal-dependent and related recreational activities and support facilities. New or redeveloped camping facilities shall be set back from the beach, bluffs, and near-shore areas reserved for day use activities at least 100 feet or more as necessary to be safe from shoreline hazards.
- 5-65. Recreational Uses on Oceanfront Lands.** Recreational uses on ocean front lands that do not require extensive alteration of natural environment shall have priority over recreational uses requiring substantial alterations. This shall apply to both public and private development. Off-road vehicle use shall be prohibited in regional recreation areas, as designated on the Land Use Map.
- 5-66. Recreational Uses in Public Park Lands.** Development unrelated to on-site recreational activities shall not be permitted in publicly owned recreational areas, with the exception of habitat restoration, the State Park administrative and maintenance operations located at Half Moon Bay State Beach, and limited housing for State Parks staff.

- 5-67. Temporary Events.** Ensure that temporary events minimize impacts to public access, recreation, and coastal resources through the special events permitting process. Require a coastal development permit for temporary events that have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to public access or coastal resources during the peak summer months.

***Policies – Commercial Recreation and Visitor-Serving Commercial Uses***

- 5-68. No-Cost and Lower-Cost Visitor and Recreational Facilities.** Protect no-cost and lower-cost public access, visitor-serving, and recreational facilities including overnight accommodations from removal, redevelopment, and/or environmental hazards including erosion. These include major, free recreational attractions such as the California Coastal Trail and numerous beaches; and low-cost facilities such as Half Moon Bay State Park and other camping and RV facilities.
- 5-69. Development Priority for Visitor-Serving and Recreational Uses.** Prioritize visitor-oriented and recreational uses in all areas designated for Commercial Visitor-Serving on the Land Use Map. Encourage the addition of visitor-serving uses and overnight accommodations in these areas, particularly those that are lower-cost.
- 5-70. New Overnight Accommodations.** Consider the carrying capacity of the coast, visitor demand over a range of affordability levels for various accommodation types, and consistency with all applicable LCP and General Plan policies before approving any new overnight accommodation development proposals. Prioritize lower-cost visitor-serving accommodations over higher-cost lodging.
- 5-71. Inclusion of Lower-Cost Accommodations.** Require new development of higher-cost accommodations and/or new development that would fail to provide lower cost accommodations on land where that use is allowed and suitable to provide lower-cost accommodations (e.g. a lower-cost bank of rooms in a hotel, a hostel, campground, cabins, etc.). The lower-cost accommodations may be provided as listed in order of priority as follows: on-site, off-site, or through payment of an in-lieu fee fund to support establishment of new lower-cost accommodations in the coastal zone. The provision of lower-cost accommodations shall equate to 15 to 25 percent of the number of approved high-cost accommodations in consideration of the price range of the proposed lodging options and provision by the development of other low-cost public access and recreation benefits such as airport shuttles, bicycle rentals, or trail connections. Require full replacement of any existing low-cost rooms proposed for conversion to high-cost rooms.
- 5-72. Use Requirements for Overnight Accommodations.** All overnight accommodations, including campgrounds and RV spaces, shall be for transient use only (i.e., occupancy of such units shall be for a period not to exceed 30 days).
- 5-73. Location of Visitor-Serving Commercial Development.** Generally locate new visitor-serving commercial development including facilities that provide lodging, food and automobile services within the Town Center area, within and near Ocean Colony/Half Moon Bay Golf Links, near Pillar Point Harbor, within Planned Developments where such uses are deemed appropriate, and in locations along Highway 1 designated for Commercial Visitor-Serving on the Land Use Map.

- 5-74. Marine-oriented Visitor-Serving Uses.** Support any required permitting or licensing for marine-oriented visitor-serving land uses, such as education, surf schools, and low-cost water-oriented recreation. Continue to protect coastal areas suited for such uses and ensure equal opportunity for such uses to operate.
- 5-75. Ecotourism and Agritourism.** Encourage and permit sustainable and economically viable visitor-serving ecotourism and agritourism activities as consistent with the policies of the City's Local Coastal Program.
- 5-76. Location of Commercial Recreation.** Locate new or expanded commercial recreational facilities in areas already established for such uses, with priority to locations in the Town Center area of the City, except where use characteristics are incompatible with densely developed commercial areas (e.g. stables and golf courses). Commercial facilities which are strongly connected with and support recreational uses shall be encouraged to locate in close proximity to the recreational activity.
- 5-77. Equestrian Facilities.** Where equestrian facilities are a permitted use, ensure that new facilities will not conflict with other public recreation uses and require that existing equestrian facilities and activities improve practices to prevent and remediate adverse environmental impacts to creeks and other ESHAs as necessary. New facilities east of Highway 1 should be sited in consideration of potential linkages to future City or San Mateo County trail systems, and especially in locations where other equestrian-oriented events and programs can be accommodated.
- 5-78. Commercial Recreation Water Quality Impacts.** Evaluate the potential water quality impacts of commercial recreation uses, including equestrian facilities and golf courses, to inform future decisions regarding the types of commercial recreation uses that can be accommodated in the city.