

MONTARA-MOSS BEACH-EL GRANADA COMMUNITY PLAN

I. BACKGROUND

A. PHYSICAL SETTING

The Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada community extends along the Pacific Coast from Martini Creek, at the base of Montara Mountain, to the northerly city limits of Half Moon Bay. Elevation ranges from sea level to 1,600 feet. A series of streams and arroyos, the Ocean, stands of eucalyptus and cypress trees and mountains join together to create a spectacular natural setting for the community.

B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area remained unsettled during the early part of this century until after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Speculators quickly subdivided lands along the route of the Ocean Shore Railroad in anticipation of an exodus of San Francisco residents affected by the disaster. San Francisco, however, quickly rebuilt itself and few of the subdivided lots were ever developed. In time, most of the curbs and sidewalks installed by the developers were buried under several feet of earth.

Growth occurred slowly in the community and by 1950 the population comprised only 1,700 residents. During the early 1960's, plans were proposed to develop extensively in and around Montara and Moss Beach by the Dolger Corporation, owners of approximately 8,000 acres of land in the area.

C. PLAN DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES

- 1976 - Work program for new community plan adopted by the Planning Commission; preliminary report setting forth goals, policies and alternative levels of growth published by Planning Department.
- 1977 - Staff directed by Planning Commission to develop a low growth plan with maximum preservation of natural resources.
- 1978 - Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada Community Plan adopted by Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

II. ISSUES

A. LAND USE

1. Residential

a. Preservation of Residential Character

Preservation of the community's existing character is important to the residents because it gives the locale a sense of identity and distinguishes it from other areas. However, since 1970, new residential development has changed the small town character of this coastal community. Many of the new houses are built to maximum building standards and exceed the size and scale of older houses. The site design of the newer houses is another concern. Often during construction the natural vegetation and unique terrain characteristics are ignored.

b. Housing Condition and Need

During development of the plan, the approximately 2,500 housing units within the Montara-Moss Beach-El Granada community represented about one percent of the County's total housing stock. It is estimated that less than 2% of the community's housing can be considered substandard.

A demand exists for farm labor housing where agricultural production occurs. Sufficient farm labor housing should be provided within the community to house local workers and to encourage agricultural production in areas with prime soils.

2. Commercial

Because the community must provide retail services for both the local population as well as recreational visitors, the location of commercial areas becomes important. In order to keep visitor and residential retail traffic separated, commercial recreation centers need to be developed at key points along the Ocean front and at the harbor to provide for visitor needs. Retail services for residents need to be strengthened by building strong commercial centers. Such centers will not only provide community services, but will serve as focal points as well.

Zoning is another issue. Before the adoption of the Plan, 98 scattered acres were zoned commercial; however, only about 7 acres were actually in commercial use. The remaining acres were either vacant or occupied with other land uses. Commercially zoned areas need to be reduced to an amount suitable to serve the population and consolidated into logical service centers to meet community needs.

3. Industrial

Prior to adoption of the Plan, too much land was designated for industrial use. At that time, 120 acres were zoned for industrial development, however, the amount was excessive in relation to past trends and future projections. Less than 15 acres were actually in industrial use, specifically, a candle factory and boat building facilities. Development of a stronger industrial base would help support public services in the community and provide a better job market.

B. TRANSPORTATION

1. Coast Highway Alignment

A new alignment for the Coast Highway was adopted by the State and County in 1958 to bypass Moss Beach, Montara and Devil's Slide. The community, however, is against construction of the bypass behind Montara and Moss Beach and in favor of a new alignment bypassing Devil's Slide in the vicinity of Martini Creek. Opposition to the adopted alignment centers on the increased recreation traffic that would pass through the community from the highway to the beach, creating additional safety problems for pedestrians and school children.

2. Road Standards

The narrow, unimproved streets of Montara, Moss Beach, and El Granada contribute to the small town character of the community, but they need to be paved in order to control drainage and provide an adequate all-weather travel surface. Current County road standards require the development of street widths that are too wide to blend with the established character of the community. Modified road standards seem more appropriate as they allow flexibility in road widths, which are more compatible with community image and residential development.

3. Trails

Because access routes are designed primarily for vehicles, there is a need for a trail system to accommodate the needs of both pedestrians and recreationists. Walkways, paths and hiking trails would provide access within the individual communities and to the schools, parks, beaches and open space areas.

C. CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

Because a vast amount of open space surrounds the community and distinguishes it from the dense urbanization of San Francisco and Bayside cities, preservation of the scenic physical setting is a key issue. A variety of planning concepts and governmental regulations could be used to conserve the open space character. These include cluster development, density transfer, agricultural preserves, purchase of development rights and public purchase.

D. PARKS AND RECREATION

While there are many park and beach facilities within the community only two are intended for use by residents. The other facilities are regional facilities serving San Mateo County and the entire Bay Area. In order to acquire and maintain additional community oriented facilities, residents must participate in local financing arrangements. Such methods include a recreation district or special service district with taxing powers, joint powers, agreements or cooperative agreements with public schools.

E. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Community Facilities

a. Airport Land Use Conflicts

Land use conflicts exist between the Half Moon Bay Airport and surrounding residential development. To mitigate these and protect the public from aviation hazards, the ALUC adopted an Airport Plan in 1977. This Plan established approach zones, prohibited structural development within the approach zones and prohibited new residential development in areas above a certain noise level. Subsequent Board of Supervisors actions, however, were inconsistent with Airport Plan Land Use policies. The Board of Supervisors voted to retain existing zoning and to not acquire additional land in the approach zones or in areas exposed to high noise levels.

b. Pillar Point Harbor

As the only port of refuge between San Francisco and Monterey, Pillar Point Harbor is a major resource of the community and has a strong influence on surrounding land use. Extensive development of the harbor was proposed at one time, but plans were later scaled down to a less intensive level with a focus on commercial fishing.

2. Public Services

a. Water

The two water suppliers serving the community have experienced difficulty in accommodating the needs of customers. Coastside County Water District, serving El Granada, experiences shortages during drought conditions. Citizens Utilities Water Company, serving Montara and Moss Beach, provides a level of service which residents rate as very poor. It appears that acquisition of this company by either another company or public district is the only way of improving service.

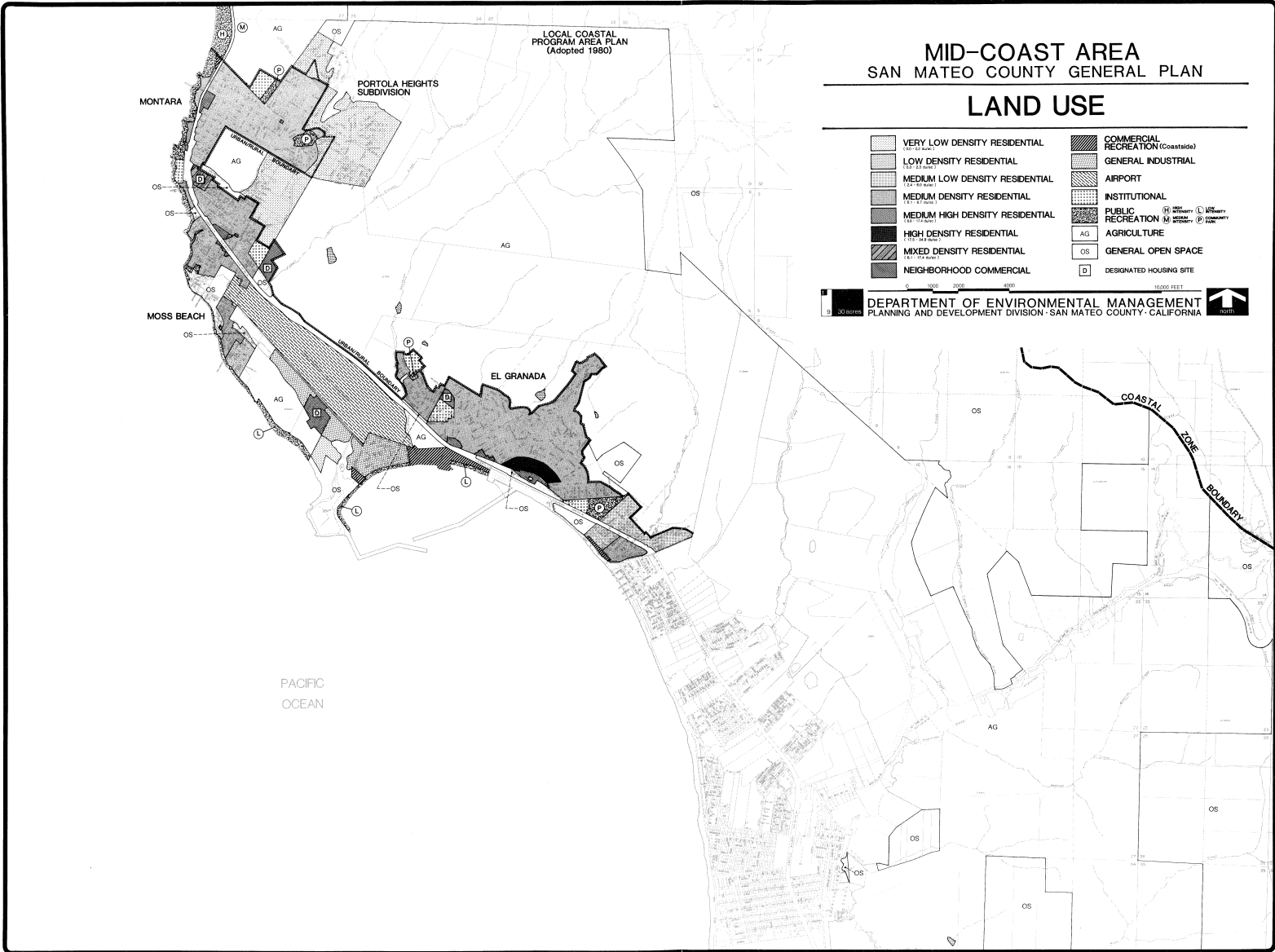
During plan development, district boundaries were also an issue. Like sanitary districts, water district boundaries extended well beyond the limits of urban development and needed to be brought into conformance with projected growth patterns.

b. Wastewater

When the plan was developed, the existing boundaries of the three sanitary districts were obsolete and needed to be redrawn. The Montara, Half Moon Bay and El Granada districts were originally established when extensive community growth was anticipated. Revised growth patterns and population projections now require new district boundaries more in line with anticipated development patterns.

F. COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Because of the design of many new houses in the community appearance has become an issue. The size of many new houses is changing the small town character. Some houses form rows of massive structures out of harmony with the surroundings, because they are built to the maximum height and lot coverage. Views, open space and natural features have been destroyed. Concern about this issue led to the creation of a design review procedure allowing more detailed evaluation of new buildings and their effect upon adjacent natural features and development.



III. MONTARA-MOSS BEACH-EL GRANADA COMMUNITY PLAN POLICIES

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Natural Resource Protection

Preserve and protect the qualities, both natural and man-made, which give this coastal community its special character and distinguish it from other places. (GEN. GOAL)

1.2 Design Characteristics

Encourage good design in new construction which reflects the character, and is compatible with the scale, of the neighborhood in which it is located. (GEN. GOAL)

1.3 Development Patterns

Establish development patterns which preserve and protect the environmental features which form the unique natural setting of the community, i.e., the ocean, beaches, trees, and mountains. (GEN. GOAL)

1.4 Economic Development

Provide economic opportunities for the community by allowing for the development of appropriate and desirable industrial and commercial uses. (GEN. GOAL)

1.5 Retail Development

Encourage the orderly development of core commercial centers in each community to meet the needs of residents, and separate commercial recreation centers to serve tourists visiting the Mid-Coastside. (GEN. GOAL)

1.6 Road System

Establish a road system which is compatible with the small-town character of the community. (GEN. GOAL)

1.7 Infrastructure Phasing

Encourage the phasing of community services and utilities in relationship to the growth set forth in the Community Plan. (GEN. GOAL)

1.8 Housing

Accommodate a variety of dwelling styles within an economic range which serves the housing needs of the community. (GEN. GOAL)

LAND USE CHAPTER

GOALS

2.1 Location of Commercial Uses

Concentrate commercial activity in established centers to strengthen and enhance the centers as community focal points, and provide separate areas for commercial recreation to serve visitors. (COM GOAL)

2.2 Industrial Development

Increase industrial development to provide a better tax base to help support community services, and to create a source employment. (IND GOAL)

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

2.3 Limit Residential Development

Employ the policies of the Seismic Safety Element of the County General Plan to prohibit or strictly control residential development in areas subject to danger from natural or man-made hazards, unless mitigation measures are incorporated into the building design to reduce risk to an acceptable level. (RES)

2.4 Multi-Family Uses in Commercial Districts

Ensure that multiple-family development in commercial districts is in conjunction with commercial uses, and does not occupy the ground floors of structures. (RES)

2.5 Location of Multi-Family Development

Locate multiple-family development adjacent to commercial centers as a transition to single-family development. (RES)

2.6 Restrictions on Urban Growth

- a. Encourage orderly and balanced development by limiting growth to the infill of already subdivided and partially developed areas. (COS)
- b. Establish limits for urban growth based on geological hazards, floodplains, tsunami hazard areas, and prime agricultural areas. (COS)

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

2.7 Commercial Development Buffers

Buffer commercial areas from surrounding residential development with landscaping, fencing, and/or buildings designed for compatibility between these land uses. (COM)

2.8 Location of Commercial Recreation

Locate commercial recreation activities in designated areas away from community commercial centers. (COM)

2.9 Appearance of Commercial Development

- a. Employ the design guidelines of the Community Design Manual in all new commercial development. (COM)
- b. Upgrade and enhance commercial centers, through landscaping within the public right-of-way and the installation of street furniture (i.e., benches, planter boxes, signs, trash receptacles, etc.). (COM)

2.10 Commercial Zoning

Eliminate spot commercial zoning and uses where they do not provide a functional service. (COM)

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

2.11 Desired Industrial Uses

Encourage industrial uses which are in accord with the stated objectives of the community: greenhouses, strawflower processing, fish processing, boat building, warehousing, and aviation related activities. (IND)

2.12 Location of Industrial Development

- a. Locate industrial development in areas where it will have the lowest impact on surrounding land uses and on the environment. (IND)
- b. Concentrate industrial development in areas adjacent to the Half Moon Bay Airport and Pillar Point Harbor. (IND)

2.13 Interim Use of Industrial Land

Encourage agricultural use of industrial-designated lands until they are developed. (IND)

INFRASTRUCTURE CHAPTER

GOALS

3.1 Circulation System

Develop a circulation system, and road standards for residential streets, which complement the small-town character of the community. (CIR-GOAL)

3.2 Trail System Development

Develop a trail system to provide intra-community circulation and access to recreation facilities, schools, and open space. (TR-GOAL)

3.3 Half Moon Bay Airport

Maintain service at the Half Moon Bay Airport at its present level of operation. (PF-GOAL)

3.4 Pillar Point Harbor Expansion

Permit limited expansion of harbor facilities, with a focus on commercial fishing activities, as approved by the State Coastal Commission. (PF-GOAL)

3.5 Montara-Moss Beach Water System

Provide Montara and Moss Beach with an adequate water system. (W-GOAL)

3.6 Wastewater Facility Development

Develop a coordinated program for the comprehensive development of sanitary facilities. (WW-GOAL)

CIRCULATION SYSTEM

3.7 System Design

Design circulation systems to discourage through traffic in residential areas. (CIR)

3.8 Devil's Slide Bypass

Construct the Devil's Slide Bypass in an alignment along Martini Creek. This would be a change from the alignment behind Montara and Moss Beach which was adopted by the State and County in 1958. (CIR)

3.9 Bicycle Lanes

Construct bicycle lanes as a portion of arterials and major and minor thoroughfares. (CIR)

3.10 Role of SamTrans

Encourage SamTrans, the San Mateo County Transit District, to increase the level of bus service from the community to Half Moon Bay and the Bayside cities. (CIR)

ROAD STANDARDS

3.11 New Road Construction

Employ the criteria of the Creative Road Design Manual relating to protection of natural features, conservation of resources, and neighborhood quality preservation in new road construction. (CIR)

3.12 Residential Street Standards

Construct residential streets in residential areas according to Modified Road Standards, which allow for reduced road widths and special design considerations. (CIR)

3.13 Arterial and Thoroughfare Standards

Construct arterials and major and minor thoroughfares, as defined in the Community Plan, to County road standards in urbanized areas of the community. (CIR)

3.14 Road and Path Appearance

Employ design measures which blend with the rural character of the community: walkways of asphalt, exposed aggregate pavement, and/or colored (earth colors or black) cement; walkways separated from roadways; and the preservation of existing trees by curved roadways, winding pathways and walkways, parking bays, etc. (CIR)

3.15 Location of Paths and Walkways

Locate paths and walkways on one side of streets only in residential areas, except in locations where there is heavy pedestrian traffic, i.e., near schools, parks, etc. (CIR)

3.16 Parking Bays

Provide parking bays instead of parking lanes wherever possible and desirable. (CIR)

TRAILS

3.17 Provision of Bicycle Lanes

Incorporate bicycle lanes with new road construction for major and minor thoroughfares. (TR)

3.18 Coastal Bicycle Path

Construct a bicycle path along the Coast Highway for intra-community as well as regional access. (TR)

3.19 Equestrian Paths

Develop equestrian paths alongside selected roads and in open space areas. (TR)

3.20 Potential Trail Locations

Utilize stream and drainage channels extending into urbanized areas as a basis for a trail system for hikers and equestrians which serves parks, schools, beaches and open space. (TR)

PUBLIC FACILITIES

3.21 Airport Development

Development surrounding Half Moon Bay Airport is to be consistent with the goals and policies of the adopted ALUC Plan. (PF)

3.22 New Harbor Facilities

Develop new berths and harbor facilities as approved by the State Coastal Commission. (PF)

3.23 Marine-Related Commercial/Industrial Uses

Encourage the development of marine-related commercial and industrial facilities adjacent to the harbor. (PF)

WATER

3.24 Consolidation of Water Districts

Encourage consolidation of water districts in the community. (PF)

3.25 Limit Water District Boundaries

Encourage the reduction of water service district boundaries to correspond to the limits of urban development. (PF)

WASTEWATER

3.26 Limit Sanitary District Boundaries

- a. Encourage the reduction of sanitary district boundaries to correspond to the limits of urban development. (PF)
- b. Limit expansion of sanitary district capacity to conform with planned growth within the community. (PF)

UTILITY SERVICES

3.27 Restriction of Service Districts

- a. Limit services provided by utility districts to urbanized areas. (COS)
- b. Set the capacity of public utility districts to conform to established limits of growth. (COS)

HOUSING CHAPTER

GOALS

4.1 Housing Design

Build housing which relates to its physical setting, does not destroy the natural features of the land, and is compatible with the neighborhood scale and coastal character of the community. (RES-GOAL)

4.2 Development Incentives

Provide incentives which will encourage the development of an adequate housing base designed to meet the needs of all residents in the community, especially those with low and moderate incomes. (RES-GOAL)

PROVISION OF HOUSING

4.3 Housing Rehabilitation

Substandard housing should be rehabilitated and not demolished unless health or safety is threatened. (HSG)

4.4 Provision of Affordable Housing

Provision of housing affordable by low and moderate income families should be a priority of new residential construction, particularly if government subsidies are available. (HSG)

4.5 Development Incentives

Incentives should be developed for builders of lower income housing, i.e., density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, etc. (HSG)

4.6 Innovative Housing Programs

Innovative housing programs, like that of the Palo Alto Housing Corporation, which require that a proportion of all new units be for low and moderate income families should be considered. (HSG)

4.7 Compatibility of New Housing with General Plan

New housing should be consistent with the policies of the County General Plan, its elements, and the Local Coastal Program. (HSG)

4.8 Condo Conversion Criteria

Prior to condominium conversion, apartments housing low and moderate income tenants should meet conditions set by the Local Coastal Program. These include: (1) comparable rentals are

available in the area as evidenced by a 5% vacancy factor for six months preceding the conversion; (2) tenants are given first option to purchase; and (3) the building meets all applicable codes and regulations. (HSG)

4.8 Funding Sources for Low and Moderate Income Housing

No less than 20% of all taxes allocated to a development agency should be used to improve or increase the supply of low and moderate income housing. Exceptions can be made when local government can substantiate an effort to meet such housing needs by obligation of funds available through various government sources. (HSG)

NATURAL RESOURCES CHAPTER

GOAL

5.1 Protection of Agriculture

Protect and enhance prime agricultural and open space lands within the community and maintain the existing balance between urban and open lands. (COS)

AGRICULTURE

5.2 Preservation of Agriculture

Maintain agricultural production in all viable areas and encourage the placement of prime agricultural soils in agricultural preserves (Williamson Act). (COS)

5.3 Residential Development in Agricultural Areas

Restrict residential development in areas of prime agricultural soils to development related to agricultural production. (COS)

5.4 Zoning of Agricultural Land

Retain prime agricultural lands in A-1 (Agriculture) or RM (Resource Management) zoning for protection against urban development. (COS)

5.5 Leasing of Prime Soils

Sublease areas of prime soils within publicly owned parks and the Half Moon Bay Airport for agricultural production. (COS)

OPEN SPACE

5.6 Preservation of Resources

Protect and enhance the natural resources of the area. (COS)

5.7 Restrictions on Development

Prevent development of prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, and ridgetops. (COS)

PARK, RECREATION AND HISTORIC RESOURCES CHAPTER

GOAL

6.1 Local Parks

Provide park facilities for use by local residents in each community, and establish a system for financing them. (PR)

PARK AND RECREATION

6.2 Providing Additional Resources

- a. Develop miniparks and tot lots on suitable vacant parcels throughout the community which are available for acquisition. (PR)
- b. Utilize streams and drainage channels extending through urbanized areas as a basis for linear parks, recreation corridors, and trail systems. (PR)
- c. Utilize school playgrounds for such active recreation as baseball, tennis, swimming, etc. (PR)
- d. Establish a community center for the area. (PR)

6.3 Improvement of Regional Park and Recreation Facilities

- a. Acquire land connecting Montara State Beach with the Fitzgerald Marine Preserve. (PR)
- b. Encourage the State Department of Transportation to construct a pedestrian crossing over the Coast Highway for safe access to Montara Beach. (PR)

6.4 Financing Local Parks

Establish a recreation district or a special service district to create and maintain local parks. (PR)

HISTORIC RESOURCES

6.5 Historic Preservation of Montara Light Station

Obtain historic designation for the Montara Light Station. (COS)

VISUAL QUALITY CHAPTER

GOAL

7.1 Preserving Visual Quality

Preserve and enhance the visual qualities of the coastal community which give it a unique character and distinguish it from other places. (CA)

URBAN DESIGN

7.2 Preserving Community Character

- a. Maintain community character and ensure that new developments are compatible with existing homes in scale, size and design. (RES)
- b. Maintain the small-town character of the area by preventing construction of massive structures out of scale with the community. (CA)

7.3 Preserving Natural Amenities

Preserve the natural amenities of the community through the appropriate location of new structures designed to harmonize with their surroundings. (CA)

7.4 Undergrounding Utilities

Establish a program for undergrounding overhead utility lines in conjunction with new street improvements. (CA)

7.5 Area Restoration

Encourage the restoration of run-down areas through clean-up and fix-up campaigns sponsored by community associations and homeowners groups. (CA)

7.6 Protection of Scenic Vistas

Preserve and protect scenic vistas of ocean, beaches, and mountains for residents of the community. (CA)

7.7 Tree Planting

Encourage the planting of trees along streets and walkways. (CA)

7.8 Preservation of Landforms and Vegetation

Preserve existing landforms and vegetation. (CA)

7.9 Landscaping Coast Highway

Encourage CalTrans to landscape portions of the Coast Highway in urbanized areas of the community. (CA)

7.10 Green Belts

Maintain green belts between urbanized areas to preserve individual community identities. (CA)

REGULATION OF APPEARANCE

7.11 Design Review

Apply the DR (Design Review) Overlay Zoning District in the urbanized areas of the community to regulate siting of structures, to protect natural features, and to provide for design compatibility with surrounding development. (RES)

7.12 Community Design Manual

- a. Employ the design guidelines set forth in the Community Design Manual. (CA)
- b. Employ the guidelines of the Community Design Manual to ensure that specific site design is sensitive to the marine orientation of the community. (RES)

7.13 S-17 Overlay District

Apply the S-17 Overlay Zoning District to reduce building size and lot coverage for new structures, and to insure that new residential development is in scale with its surroundings. (RES)