

# Pillar Point Harbor & San Mateo County Harbor District



MCC presentation by Lisa Ketcham 2014

Updated 2022

Aerial images courtesy of California Coastal Records Project

# Pillar Point Harbor Construction – 1960's

Outer breakwater construction by Army Corps - 1959-1961.

Wave surge within outer breakwater wouldn't allow floating boat berths.



Bulkhead – fill – parking lot  
Admin/harbor master building  
Concession building  
Maintenance building

Johnson Pier  
Boat launch ramp  
East restroom

1972



# Harbor Construction 1970's

Reworked vehicle entrance, additional parking near highway



1979



## Inner Harbor Construction 1980's

- Extend bulkhead/fill/parking lot westward; west harbor restroom
- Inner breakwaters
- Added parking lot at corner Hwy 1 & Capistrano
- Dredging for floating boat docks/berths; dredge placed on Perched Beach





by 1993

- Boat launch ramp relocated to east inner breakwater, expanded to 6 lanes.
- Boat trailer parking lot added uphill from new road to launch ramp.
- Public fishing pier added on top of west inner breakwater.
- Coastal trail paved from Perched Beach to Surfers' Beach.



1993



# Inner Harbor East Shoreline

Prior to inner harbor dredging & construction, the entire east harbor shoreline was a natural sandy beach backed by bluffs.





# Inner Harbor East Shoreline

Perched Beach and adjoining wetlands --  
safe & popular place for kayaking, paddle-boarding, wildlife viewing.



2012



Coastal Trail





# Inner Harbor East Shoreline -- Wetlands

Wetland habitat created to mitigate for boat launch ramp development in 1990.

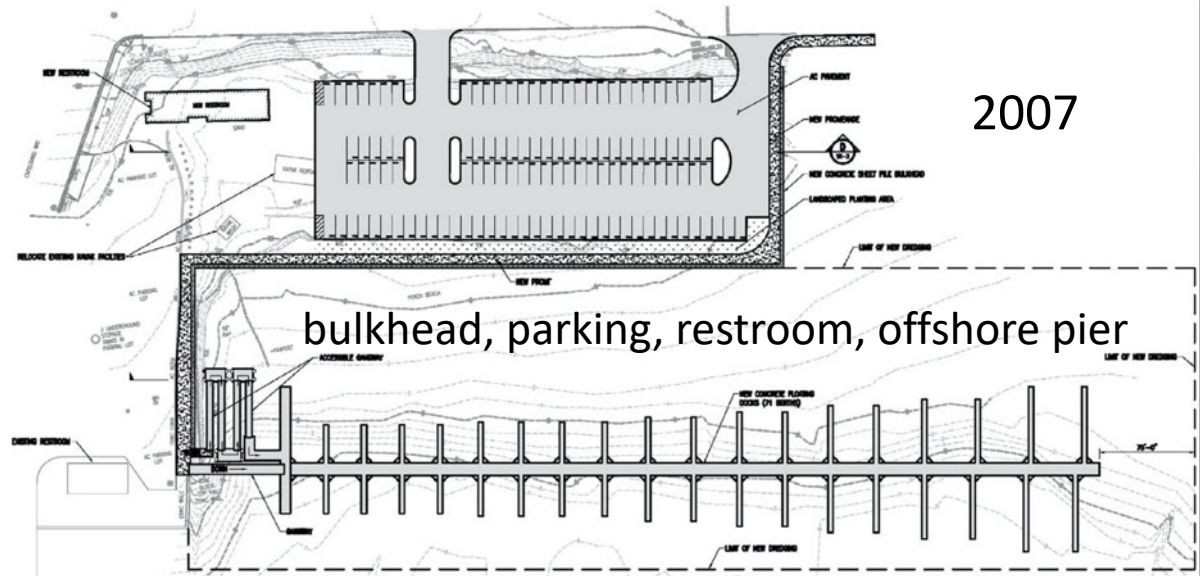




## Perched Beach Development Projects – ebb & flow

- 1991 Master Plan recommended developing Perched Beach, claiming its steep drop off was unsuitable for swimming. (kayak? paddleboard? picnic?)
- 2000: 2-story, 5200 sq ft building, restroom/laundry first floor, rental space on second floor. CDP approved 2001, permit expired, never built.
- 2004: 1-story, 2300 sq ft building, restroom/showers/laundry. CDP approved 2005. Building permit issued. Never built – “too expensive”.
- 2005: 40-berth and haul-out project -- consulting services obtained.
- 2008: Haul-out facility not feasible – thus bulkhead could be extended further. Discussion of 2-story development – same location as 2000 & 2004 plan.
- 2010: Perched Beach Committee (Tucker/Parravano) agreed to reactivate consultant contract to plan bulkhead, possibility for admin office, other development. Vision to complete bulkhead in next 12-18 months.
- 2011: Authorize detail bulkhead & fill design – consultants paid \$309K. Public meetings: public prefers recreational area.
- 2013: Third dredge disposal event from “emergency” launch ramp dredging – serves pre-development purpose to convert beach to upland area (previous events in 1998, 2006 without CCC permit).

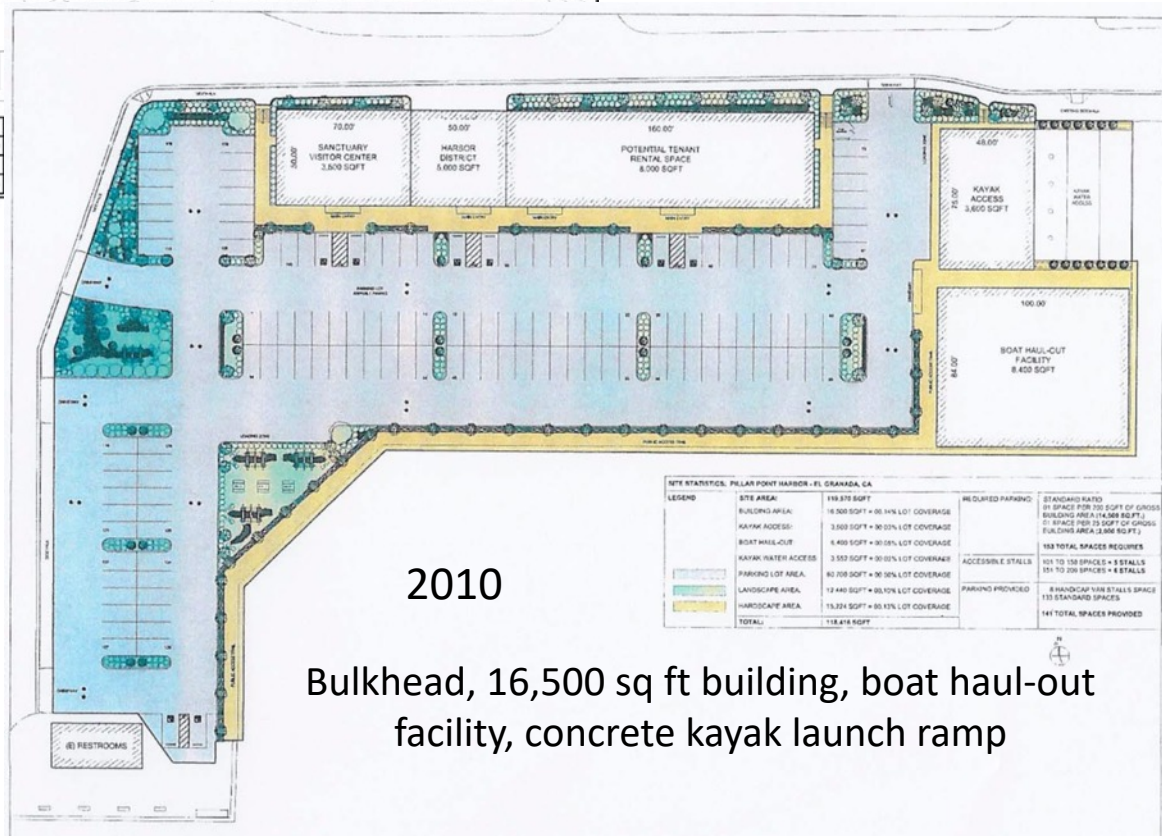




Perched Beach  
proposed site plans

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	APP'D

**PRELIMINARY**  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



**PERCHED BEACH  
PILLAR POINT HARBOR  
EL GRANADA, CA**

DATE: 06.25.10  
 06.25.10 Issued for Client Review  
 07.02.10 Issued for Client Review

DATE: 06.25.10

PROJECT DESIGNER:  
**abd | alex bautista design**  
 251 MONTEREY BOULEVARD  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133  
 direct: 415.324.6748  
 mobile: 415.612.6454

DATE: 06.25.10

**PROPOSED SITE PLAN  
AND PARKING LAYOUT**

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0" 1/4" x 1/4"

DRAWN BY: AEB  
 CHECKED BY: JEB

**A-1.00**

Sheet Number

Bulkhead, 16,500 sq ft building, boat haul-out facility, concrete kayak launch ramp



# Former Princeton Boatyard

200 block of Princeton Ave.

- 1972 – 2003: Only ocean haul-out facility from Santa Cruz to Bodega Bay.
- 2003: District voted 3-2 not to buy property for \$200K and permanently closed boatyard.
- Board member Sally Campbell: “The Board did not act in the best interest of the public when they twice failed to acquire a facility that is so vital to the commercial fishermen and recreational boaters at Pillar Point Harbor.”





# Romeo Pier



1996 - Harbor District purchased old pier for \$185,000, while at the same time deciding not to buy Princeton Boatyard property for \$200,000.

1998 – Pier closed as unsafe.

2010 – District terminates License Agreement for land access to Romeo Pier.

2013 – Public warns deteriorating pier is imminent marine debris disaster.

2014 – Engineering services for pier demolition plan approved, \$61,200. Preliminary capital budget for pier removal: \$650,000.

2018 – Pier removed for \$2.3 million.



# Harbor District Administration Building

1960's - 2004 (40 yrs): Administration shared 2,400 sq ft with Harbormaster.

2004: Board approved 150% increase in office space via temporary move to 3,600 sq ft rented quarters in SSF for up to 5 yrs, to be followed by return to permanent office space on coast to be purchased or built.

2009: 5-yr non-cancelable office lease extension at \$90,000/yr.

2011: 13,500 sq ft multi-purpose building proposed for Perched Beach.

2012: District approves Parking Lot B site for multi-purpose building, and begins architectural planning although there are no confirmed tenants. Lost parking spaces would be moved to Perched Beach.

2014: District declines to purchase 504 Ave Alhambra building for \$1.8M, but in 2015 moves District Office to leased space on 2nd floor starting at \$7,000/mo.

2015: Portola/Obispo 2.71-acre parcel deemed surplus & sold to Fire District for \$845K.

2019: District re-purchased ¼-acre portion of Portola/Obispo parcel from Fire District for \$1.3M for District Office.

2021: District purchased 504 Ave Alhambra building for \$3M.







## Portola/Obispo parcel, originally 2.71 acres between Portola & Coronado

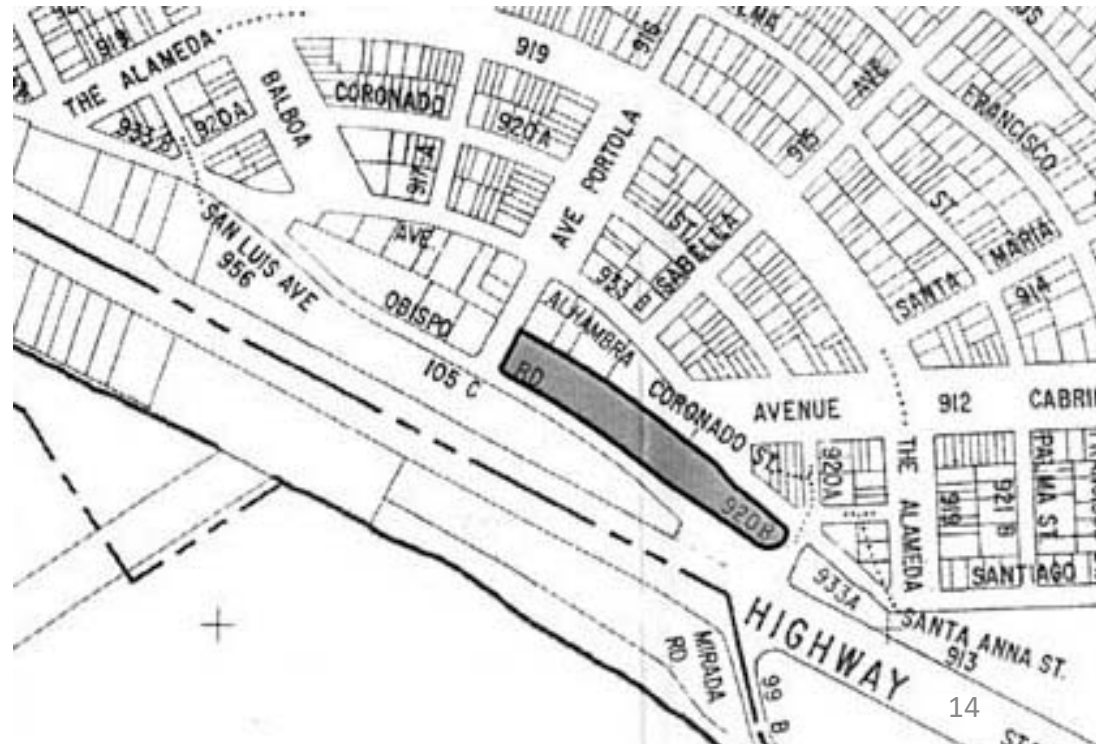
Acquired by Harbor District in 1953.

- ¼ acre zoned neighborhood commercial next to post office.
- 2-½ acres zoned El Granada Gateway (open space).

Leased out in 2000 for 55 yrs for development too ambitious to be approved. Bought lease back in 2011.

In 2015 District deemed it unsuitable for their long-sought admin building and sold to Fire District for \$845K.

In 2019, ¼ acre at Portola/Obispo re-purchased for \$1.3M for Admin Building (not built).



# Beneficial Use of Harbor Dredge Material

## 2013 District Dredge Disposal Strategy

District priority : Fill or mitigate for development.

Public priority: Sand nourishment of eroding beaches.



Sites proposed by Harbor District in 2013:  
IH = Inner harbor beach at kayak stand,  
aka "Perched" Beach  
WL = Wetlands/Mudflat habitat -- not eroding.



# West Shoreline Trail

- Popular public coastal access trail
- Owned by Harbor District
- Critical emergency vehicle access

700-ft trail section threatened by wave-action erosion since 2011.

Repair delayed while 2013 launch ramp dredge material was placed on Perched Beach.





# West Trail Living Shoreline Project

In 2019 at Coastal Commission request, erosion protection project scope was redirected to living shoreline treatment rather than hard armoring. Construction occurred in spring 2022, with dune planting to be added in the fall.







## Surfers' Beach Pilot Restoration Project

- 2015: project planning initiated as reduced scale of Army Corps preferred alternative to mitigate increased erosion caused by breakwater construction.
- One-time placement of 100,000 cubic yards of east basin dredge material onto Surfers' Beach between the jetty and Coronado St, using suction dredge and pumping system to transport sand slurry via pipeline.
- 2023 construction anticipated, beginning with eelgrass mitigation in west basin.
- Follow-up 2-year monitoring program will determine whether larger beach nourishment project would be pursued in future.



## Surfers' Beach

Access, views, parking

For decades this District-owned lot with public restroom was available for day-use beach parking & self-contained overnight RVs.





# Surfers' Beach Public Access, Views, Parking

1998: Harbor District leased out property as RV Park for 25 years with option to renew. Development occurred without benefit of Coastal Development Permit.



- Restroom closed and locked.
- Tall landscaping blocks public ocean views.
- \$10 parking fee at day-use lot results in lot mostly empty while beach-goers park along the highway.
- Community considers major infrastructure expenditures to solve Surfers Beach parking problem and lack of public restroom.

2003 & 2009: Lessee requests exemption to Length of Stay Ordinance due to low occupancy and not wanting to lose permanent RV residents. Opposed by CCC.

## Pillar Point RV Park Public Restroom & Green Space Improvement Project

2019: after-the-fact CDP approved by HMB Planning Commission to include new public restroom, outdoor showers, reduced number of RV spaces to 40, day-use parking, Coastal Trail reconfiguration, and landscape improvements to restore public ocean views and provide more appropriately-sized screening for the RV's from the highway and the Coastal Trail. Construction expected 2022.

# San Mateo County Harbor District

More info and background links on MCC website  
Pillar Point Harbor Issues Page

[www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/harborshoreline/](http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/harborshoreline/)

1933: Harbor District established by Board of Supervisors Resolution

1933 – 1948: District inactive

1953 – 1960: Land acquisition at Pillar Point. Outer breakwater.

1960 Master Plan: Only Phase 1 built (pier, bulkhead, fill, office, concession building) due to unanticipated storm waves within harbor.

1966, 1970, 1977, 1991 attempts to dissolve Harbor District –

1966 dissolution by County Board of Supervisors, approved by voters, overturned on technicality by courts in 1969.

1976 – 1985 Coastal Permit 133-76 and amendments to build inner harbor

1991: Master Plan – Pillar Point Harbor Urban Waterfront Restoration Plan

2022: Master Plan -- <https://www.smharbor.com/master-plan-e5efbfe>