



NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Program Environmental Impact Report

General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan
City of Pacifica

Date August 5, 2020

To Reviewing Agencies, Interested Parties and Organizations

Subject Notice of Preparation (“NOP”) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Pacifica General Plan Update, and New Sharp Park Specific Plan, and Scheduling of a Scoping Meeting on Thursday, August 13, 2020

The City of Pacifica (City) is preparing an update to its General Plan, and a new Sharp Park Specific Plan (collectively, the “Project”), and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be necessary to evaluate environmental impacts of the Project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In compliance with CEQA, the City will be the Lead Agency and will prepare the EIR. Attached are the Project description, location maps, and preliminary identification of the potential environmental issues to be explored.

The City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, interested public agencies, organizations, and the general public (CEQA Guidelines §15082). If your agency is a responsible agency as defined by Section 15381 of the CEQA Guidelines, your agency may use the environmental documents prepared by the City when considering subsequent permits or approvals for action.

NOP Comment Period: August 5, 2020 to September 14, 2020

Responses and Comments: The City requests your careful review and consideration of this notice, and invites any and all input and comments from interested agencies, persons, and organizations regarding the preparation of the EIR. Comments and responses to this notice must be in writing and submitted to the Lead Agency Contact through the close of business on Monday, September 14, 2020. Please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization.

To Responsible and Trustee Agencies: Responses must be limited to environmental information about the agency's area of statutory responsibility and must be specific and relate directly to the Project.

Lead Agency Contact: Christian Murdock, Senior Planner
City of Pacifica
1800 Francisco Boulevard
Pacifica, CA 94044
murdockc@ci.pacifica.ca.us

SCOPING MEETING:

A scoping meeting will be conducted to collect oral comments from agencies and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the EIR in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.9. Comments may also be emailed to Senior Planner Christian Murdock (email address below).

<p>EIR Scoping Meeting on the Pacifica General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan</p> <p>Thursday August 13, 2020 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Teleconference Meeting (Online only – No physical location)</p> <p>Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/99451151254</p> <p>Phone: (669) 900-6833 Webinar ID 994 5115 1254</p> <p>For more information, please visit https://www.planpacifica.org.</p>

Please contact Christian Murdock at (650) 738-7341 or murdockc@ci.pacifica.ca.us with any questions regarding this notice or the scoping meeting.

Project Location

REGIONAL CONTEXT

As shown in Figure 1, the City of Pacifica is located in San Mateo County along the Pacific coast of the San Francisco Peninsula. It is bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean, on the north by Daly City, and on the south and east by the ridges of the Coast Range, the cities of South San Francisco and San Bruno, and unincorporated San Mateo County. Pacifica lies approximately eight miles south of downtown San Francisco, 40 miles northwest of San José and six miles west of San Francisco International Airport. Pacifica is primarily accessible via State Route 1 (Coast Highway) and State Route 35 (Skyline Boulevard.)

Project Boundaries

The proposed General Plan Planning Area and Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area boundaries are shown in Figure 2. The figure also shows portions of the City that are also within the State-defined Coastal Zone, planning for which occurs under the Local Coastal Program (LCP); the Draft LCP Update prepared by the City is currently being reviewed by the California Coastal Commission.

General Plan Update

The General Plan Update Planning Area encompasses 8,625 acres, or about 13.5 square miles, including the entirety of the City of Pacifica as well as 606 acres of unincorporated land south of city limits on the slope of Montara Mountain. This unincorporated area is included in the City of Pacifica's General Plan because it forms part of the City's Sphere of Influence, which is an area designated by the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) that represents "probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency."

Nearly half (42 percent) of the existing use of land in the Planning Area is permanently preserved open space. Another 14 percent of the Planning Area is presently vacant or undeveloped, and four percent is agricultural. Urban uses make up 40 percent of the Planning Area, 57 percent of which is residential. The City of Pacifica had an estimated population of 37,234 in January 2020.

Sharp Park Specific Plan

The Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area encompasses approximately 104 acres (about 1.2 percent of the General Plan Update Planning Area) around Palmetto Avenue – Sharp Park's main commercial street. The main north-south corridors include Palmetto Avenue; Francisco Boulevard, a street characterized primarily by civic and commercial uses; and Beach Boulevard, a primarily residential street that provides access to the Promenade and Pacifica Pier. Between these corridors are residential neighborhoods with clusters of multi-family and single-family homes. The Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area is roughly bounded by Paloma Avenue and Bella Vista Avenue to the north, Beach Boulevard to the west, Clarendon Road and Lakeside Avenue to

the south, and Coast Highway to the east. The Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area also includes some areas east of Coast Highway including the Eureka Square shopping center. Figure 2 shows the location of the Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area within the boundaries of the General Plan Update Planning Area. Figure 3 shows the boundaries for the Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area.

Coastal Zone

Land west of State Route 1, as well as the Sheldance Nursery property east of State Route 1, is part of the Coastal Zone, subject to Pacifica's LCP and the policies of the California Coastal Act. Pacifica's Coastal Zone comprises approximately 1,000 acres of land, or about 13 percent of the proposed Planning Area.

Local Coastal Plans (LCPs), which include Local Coastal Land Use Plans (LCLUPs), are not subject to CEQA and therefore, the City's LCLUP update is not included as part of the EIR for the General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan. LCP amendments are exempt from CEQA because the Coastal Commission LCP certification process is "functionally equivalent" to the CEQA process (State Public Resources Code Sections 21080.5 and 21080.9, and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15250, 15251(f) and 15265).

Figure 1- Regional Setting

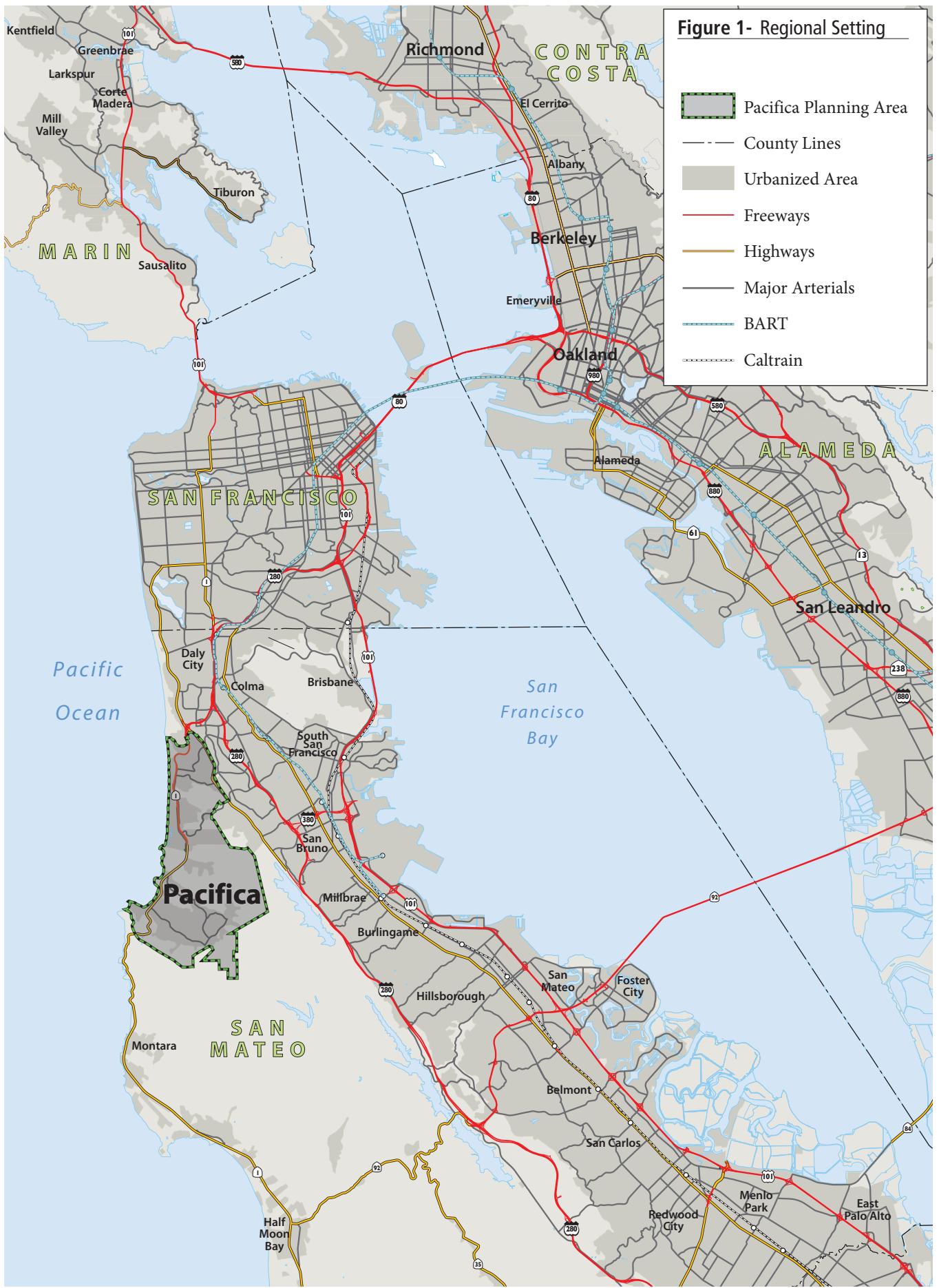
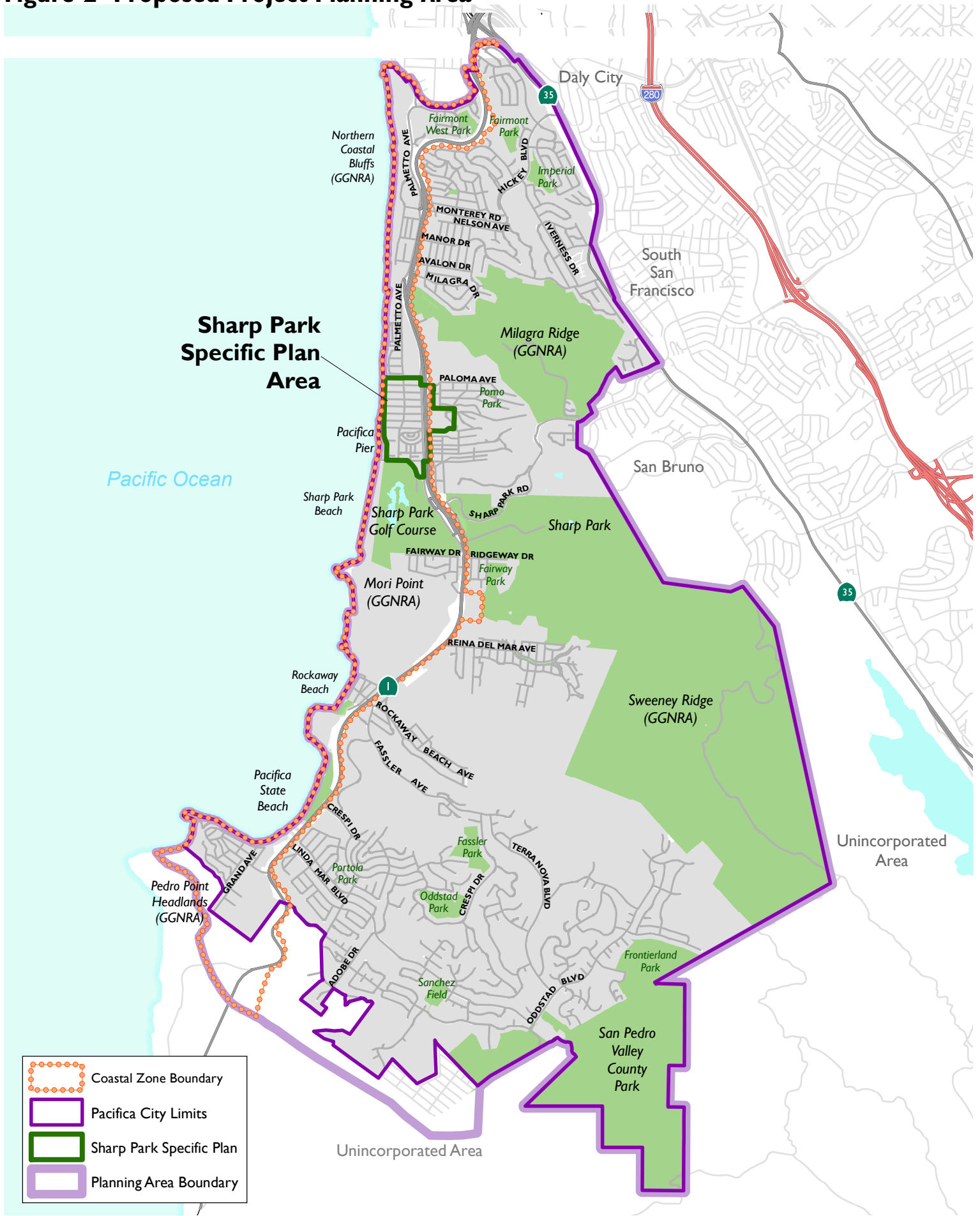






Figure 2- Proposed Project Planning Area



**Sharp Park
Specific Plan
Area**

Pacific Ocean

-  Coastal Zone Boundary
-  Pacifica City Limits
-  Sharp Park Specific Plan
-  Planning Area Boundary

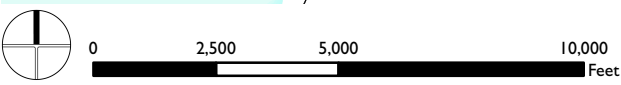
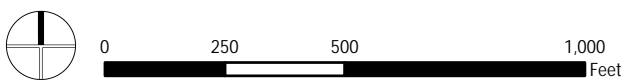


Figure 3- Sharp Park Specific Plan Planning Area



Source: City of Pacifica, 2019; San Mateo County, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2019.



Project Description

The Proposed Project for the EIR is the Pacifica General Plan Update and the new Sharp Park Specific Plan. The following section provides background information on both of these components of the Proposed Project.

PACIFICA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Background

The Pacifica General Plan is a long-term document with text and diagrams that express the goals, objectives, and policies necessary to guide the community toward achieving its vision over a 20-year period. City decision makers rely on the General Plan as the basis for making decisions on matters such as land use, transportation, open space and conservation, provision of public services, and environmental quality and safety. It is also a policy document that guides decisions related to protecting and enhancing what the community values most, such as open space, coastal resources, and protecting and enhancing the character of the community. Finally, the General Plan, together with the Local Coastal Program, serves to ensure that the statewide goals of the California Coastal Act are served.

This Project will update the City's existing General Plan, which dates to 1980. The General Plan Update will outline a broad range of policies related to development and conservation in the Planning Area through 2040. The General Plan Update encompasses all elements except Housing, which is not proposed to be updated at this time (the City Council adopted the City's Housing Element of the General Plan on May 11, 2015). Chapters of the General Plan that are required by State law include Land Use, Conservation, Open Space, Circulation, Noise, and Safety (State law also requires Environmental Justice and Air Quality elements in the General Plans of certain communities, but these elements are not applicable for the City of Pacifica). Optional elements included in the General Plan Update include Economic Development, Community Facilities, Historic Preservation, and Community Design. The State-mandated Housing Element will be updated as part of a separate process as part of the next Housing Element cycle (2023-2031). Issues covered in each chapter include:

- **Land Use:** Distribution of land uses, standards for density and intensity
- **Economic Development:** Jobs and employment growth, economic strategies
- **Conservation:** Agriculture and soils, biological resources, mineral resources, water quality/hydrology, water management, waste management, air quality, energy and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)
- **Historic Preservation:** Cultural resources, historic resources
- **Community Design:** City form, residential neighborhoods, mixed-use districts, scenic highways, view corridors, sustainable site planning, green building
- **Open Space and Community Facilities:** Parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, schools, community facilities, environmental justice
- **Circulation:** Street classifications, transit service, pedestrian and bicycle needs, complete streets, truck routes
- **Noise:** Noise attenuation and reduction

- **Safety:** Seismic and geologic hazards, fire hazards, flooding, potential sea level rise, hazardous sites and materials, public safety services, emergency management, environmental justice

The General Plan Update offers the City Council and the Planning Commission an opportunity to revisit, reaffirm, and revise the City's priorities regarding development of infill sites, parks and open space conservation, economic development, and other issues. An ongoing public participation process is providing opportunities for community input. The General Plan Update will inform capital facilities planning, changes to zoning and other implementing ordinances, and operations and maintenance activities.

While Pacifica's growth in the coming decades is expected to be slow, the community will see continuing change and growth in response to economic, demographic, and other trends.

General Plan Update Themes and Key Initiatives

The General Plan Update includes the following themes, which emerged from community and decision maker input throughout the planning process and guide General Plan Policies:

- *Open Space Preservation and Trail System Expansion.* Pacifica's hillsides, beaches, and other protected open space are prized by community members for their scenic, recreational, and habitat values. Continued preservation is seen as a key accomplishment over the next 20 years. The General Plan Update identifies priorities for open space preservation and strategies to protect open space while allowing limited development to be clustered and designed to fit into its natural setting. It also proposes an enhanced trail system connecting the coastline and ridges throughout Pacifica. These trails could potentially include trail segments through Rockaway Quarry uplands and the head-lands; trails in the Pedro Point Headlands; lateral ridge trail extensions connecting the Coast and Sweeney Ridge; extension of the Harry Dean Trail; development of a Pier to Ridge Trail connecting the Sharp Park Beach Promenade and upper Sharp Park Road; and development of the San Pedro Valley Trail between Pacifica State Beach and San Pedro Valley County Park. Potential locations for enhanced trailheads include the Mori Ridge Trailhead; a trailhead near Pacifica State Beach connecting to the Fassler Ridge trail; and the trailhead at the S Ridge Trail near Highway 1 in Pedro Point.
- *Sustainable Development and Practices.* Pacifica residents want to allow a responsible amount of development while ensuring that habitat and the community's unique, small-town character are protected. The General Plan Update's land use pattern seeks to create compact and concentrated development in already-urbanized neighborhoods. Residents also want to see green building and other sustainable practices promoted by the City. The General Plan Update aims to set a good land use balance and to promote sustainable site planning and design, water conservation, waste reduction, and use of alternative transportation modes.
- *Creating a Destination for Tourism.* Throughout the General Plan Update process, community members and stakeholders emphasized the need for more economic activity. There is a widely shared sense that Pacifica has the potential to attract more tourists, and that this should be a key component of the City's economic development strategy. The General Plan Update includes strategies to enhance tourism by leveraging Pacifica's natural assets, creating more attractive places in visitor-oriented districts, marketing, and pur-

suining destination hotels and inns at key sites, including Rockaway Beach and Quarry. The General Plan Update would not identify new locations where hotels and inns would be permitted, but would place an emphasis on the development of hotels and inns at these key sites.

- *Shopping Area Revitalization and Walkable, Mixed Use Areas.* Pacifica residents desire more attractive and successful commercial areas, and also envision the development of walkable, mixed-use areas with good transit access. The General Plan Update seeks to support commercial revitalization and redevelopment at key locations, advancing the City's fiscal health, its quality of life, and its sustainability all at once. It is anticipated that new or more intense development could occur in these mixed-use areas, including Palmetto Avenue, Eureka Square, the Linda Mar Shopping Center, the Park Mall Shopping Center, and the Pacific Manor Shopping Center.
- *A Unique, Vital Center for Pacifica.* Many community members expressed interest in creating a center for Pacifica, to provide a community gathering place and strengthen the City's identity. Palmetto Avenue was most often pointed to as having great potential to grow into such a vital, unique district. The General Plan Update aims to facilitate the enhancement of Palmetto as a pedestrian-oriented retail area, anchored by new development at the Old Wastewater Treatment Plant site (2212 Beach Boulevard), linking the retail district to the Promenade and the Ocean. New civic facilities, such as a City Hall and a new Library/Learning Center, could be valuable assets to this area as well, and it is anticipated that new and more intense development could occur along Palmetto Avenue and Francisco Avenue in this area.
- *Diversity of Housing and Population.* Approximately 1,000 units are expected to be developed during the planning period. Residents are proud of the diversity of housing in the community, and want to ensure that this is carried on. In addition, many observed that new housing types should help provide additional options for residents as they age. The General Plan Update aims to make Pacifica more accessible and ensure adequate housing options for people of all ages and incomes by providing enough sites at a higher density, and creating opportunities for mixed use development in transit-accessible locations. The General Plan Update is anticipated to result in modest land use changes compared to the existing General Plan. Where there are changes in land use designations, including several new land use designations that replace older and more generic land use designations in the same or nearby areas; the new land use designations accommodate more diverse housing types, densities, and commercial developments, primarily in already-developed areas.
- *Recreation Facilities and Activities for Youth.* Pacifica has limited recreation facilities, and community members expressed concern about the lack of things to do, especially for youth. The General Plan Update prioritizes recreation improvements, with an emphasis on improving park land that exists and identifying opportunities for some small new parks and public spaces that could occur on underused public land or as part of redevelopment. Creating more accessible and vibrant commercial areas with a sense of place that appeals to visitors will also help make Pacifica a better place for young people.
- *Infrastructure Improvements.* The need for the City to maintain and improve streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure was a clear consensus point for the community. Most notable is the need to fix the bottleneck on Highway 1. The General Plan Update supports strategies other than widening of Highway 1 to relieve congestion, and sets priorities for sidewalk and street repairs based on location and safety.

- *Protection from Natural Hazards.* Pacifica faces a variety of natural hazards, including fires, earthquake-induced landslides, flooding, and coastal erosion. The General Plan Update establishes a land use pattern that reflects hazardous conditions, such as steep slopes and coastal bluffs, and includes policies to improve public safety services and emergency management. The need to respond over the long term to coastal erosion will be an ongoing challenge for the City.

LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM UPDATE

The California Coastal Act requires every city and county lying partly or wholly within the Coastal Zone to prepare a Local Coastal Program. The Local Coastal Program consists of a coastal land use plan or plans; zoning ordinances; zoning district maps; and other actions which taken together implement the Coastal Act provisions. Pacifica's Local Coastal Program was last updated in 1980.

Local Coastal Plans (LCPs), which include Local Coastal Land Use Plans (LCLUPs), are not subject to CEQA. LCP amendments are exempt from CEQA because the Coastal Commission LCP certification process is "functionally equivalent" to the CEQA process (State Public Resources Code Sections 21080.5 and 21080.9, and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15250, 15251(f) and 15265). The City of Pacifica started an LCLUP update in 2009 and continued its work through 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, the update work paused. Work on the LCLUP update resumed in 2019 with a series of five community meetings and study sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council. On February 24, 2020, the City Council considered the Post-Consultation Draft LCLUP and approved transmittal of the LCLUP to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification. The LCLUP was transmitted to the Coastal Commission on June 12, 2020. Although the LCLUP is a separate planning document, the LCLUP policies and relevant narratives will be included in the General Plan Update to ensure coordination between the two documents.

The City has prepared a draft of the LCP Update in 2019, approved by the City in 2020, and which is currently under review for certification by the California Coastal Commission. To the extent the General Plan Update proposes any policies beyond those which were sent to the California Coastal Commission for review and certification, a subsequent LCP amendment would be necessary to make the LCP consistent with the General Plan.

SHARP PARK SPECIFIC PLAN

Background

Along with the preparation of its General Plan Update, the City of Pacifica is undertaking a parallel but related planning process for the Sharp Park area. The Sharp Park Specific Plan builds on a first phase of pedestrian improvements made along Palmetto Avenue, the area's "main street." In February 2020, the planning area was designated a "Priority Development Area" by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments due to its potential to support new housing and employment near transit. This designation qualifies the City to receive potential future additional grants for specific projects and public improvements consistent with the Specific Plan.

Many community members have expressed interest in creating a vital center for Pacifica with more opportunities to shop, dine, and gather. Currently, Sharp Park is the City's civic core and is home to many unique businesses, as well as the iconic Pacifica Pier. There is significant opportunity for mixed-use buildings, new housing and higher-intensity development that will help the City address issues of housing affordability and create a center of gravity for the broader Pacifica community as well as visitors. The goal of the Sharp Park Specific Plan is to formalize this vision for Sharp Park and put in place an implementation program that will help realize change in the area through detailed development standards, public realm improvements, and design guidelines for new developments. The Specific Plan will strive to fulfill the community's vision, enhance Sharp Park's livability, and promote community development, economic activity, and investment that enhances the area.

The Specific Plan will likely include the following sections and content:

- **Land Use:** Land Use Diagram and classifications, density and intensity standards, potential new development at Plan buildout, and affordable housing strategies. The Specific Plan is considering land use policies which could increase the density or intensity of development — mostly mixed-use — up to 50 dwelling units per acre from 21.8 dwelling units per acre as identified in the 1980 General Plan along portions of Palmetto Avenue and Francisco Boulevard (the Draft General Plan identifies densities up to 26 dwelling units per acre in these same areas). Other strategies may be used in place of explicit density limitations, however, such as floor area ratio limitations and height standards. The City will consider a range of alternatives in the Specific Plan process. Almost all land use changes are expected to occur on Palmetto Avenue and Francisco Boulevard to preserve residential neighborhoods between these corridors.
- **Mobility:** Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along Francisco Boulevard, Palmetto Avenue, and focused east-west corridors such as Paloma Avenue, Clarendon Avenue, and San Jose Avenue; any existing or future automobile circulation deficiencies arising from new development or an increased visitor or resident population; strategies to improve transit and transportation demand management measures; and parking strategies.
- **Urban Design:** Streetscape improvements and wayfinding, development standards and building design guidelines, focus pedestrian-oriented buildings and open space design to enhance the public realm. The Specific Plan is considering building heights of up to 55 feet along portions of Palmetto Avenue, Francisco Boulevard, and Oceana Boulevard, an increase from a maximum of 35 feet in the City's current zoning regulations.
- **Infrastructure and Public Services:** Any needed improvements or upgrades to infrastructure and public services required to support an increased population or new development.
- **Environmental and Cultural Resources:** Biological, hydrological, and cultural resources; hydrology, flooding, and other coastal hazards; geology and seismicity; hazardous materials and air contaminants; biological resources; and noise.

Sharp Park Specific Plan Guiding Principles

The Specific Plan will help attain the following draft guiding principles, which emerged from community and decision maker input during the planning process:

- Promote a vibrant mix of uses—including unique stores, restaurants and cafés, places for the making and display of art, and cultural establishments—that enhance Palmetto Avenue’s attraction for those who live in Pacifica and those who visit.
- Support office space in locations that do not detract from an active streetscape along Palmetto Avenue in order to increase opportunities for local employment, improve weekday daytime activity, and decrease vehicle miles traveled to employment locations outside Pacifica.
- Ensure development honors the area’s character, history, and coastal locale.
- Promote development of housing in mixed-use settings, which accommodates residents of all incomes, family types, and life stages.
- Foster development of a “complete neighborhood”, with uses, activities, and services that support everyday living, promote social connectedness, and enhance community well-being.
- Prioritize placemaking in public and private spaces to create inviting places that enhance the experience in Sharp Park.
- Expand opportunities for outdoor recreation which maximize Sharp Park’s coastal location and proximity to trails and open spaces.
- Improve connections within Sharp Park and to other Pacifica neighborhoods through sidewalk completion, streetscape improvements, pedestrian-scale lighting, and signage.
- Build on existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to create an even more appealing public realm along Francisco Boulevard and Palmetto Avenue corridors and across key east-west routes.
- Establish a sustainable future for the Sharp Park area by planning for coastal resiliency using strategies identified in the Local Coastal Program.

(Continued on Next Page)

Environmental Impact Report

The EIR will analyze the potential environmental consequences of adopting the Proposed Project. It will discuss how proposed General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan policies may affect the environment, identify significant impacts, and recommend measures to mitigate those impacts. It will also evaluate the cumulative impacts and potential growth-inducing impacts of the General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan. The EIR will consider the environmental impacts of alternatives developed during the planning process, including the “No Project Alternative” (existing General Plan), and identify an environmentally superior alternative. Impact assessment will be conducted parallel to Plan preparation so that identified mitigation can be built into the General Plan and Sharp Park Specific Plan. Subsequent environmental review will be conducted for major development projects, public works and infrastructure improvements described in the General Plan to evaluate site-specific impacts. However, a more detailed analysis of certain activities described in the Sharp Park Specific Plan will be undertaken in this EIR in order to improve opportunities for future streamlining and approval of these activities without requiring additional environmental review.

The environmental assessment will utilize the most current CEQA Guidelines and for each issue area, including global warming and greenhouse gases/climate change. The EIR will be prepared to take full advantage of CEQA streamlining and tiering opportunities for future projects, whether in accordance with provisions of SB 375, or other tiering and exemption provisions in CEQA.

Community members can provide input in response to this Notice of Preparation, or to the Draft EIR itself when that document is released. A series of public hearings will allow for additional public input before City decision makers consider certifying the EIR and adopting the updated General Plan Update and Sharp Park Specific Plan.

Potential Environmental Impacts to Be Considered

Consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G), the following environmental resource categories will be analyzed in relation to the Project:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Geology/Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Population, and Housing
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

Effects Found Not to be Significant

CEQA allows environmental effects for which there is no likelihood of a significant impact to be “scoped out” of the EIR analysis. The following effects have been determined not to be significant, as outlined below. Full documentation of the factual basis for this determination will be included in the EIR. Unless specific comments are received during the NOP public comment period that indicate a potential for the project to result in signif-

icant impacts, these less than significant effects will be addressed briefly in the EIR and “scoped out.”

Based on characteristics of the Planning Area, the Mineral Resources topic area will be included in the *Effects Found Not to Be Significant* section of the EIR. No activities related to mineral resources occur within the Planning Area boundaries, and none of the properties are designated as relevant for mineral resources by the City of Pacifica General Plan or Zoning Ordinance, or by the State of California. These conditions preclude the possibility of impacts on mineral resources; therefore, this issue will not be analyzed further by the EIR.