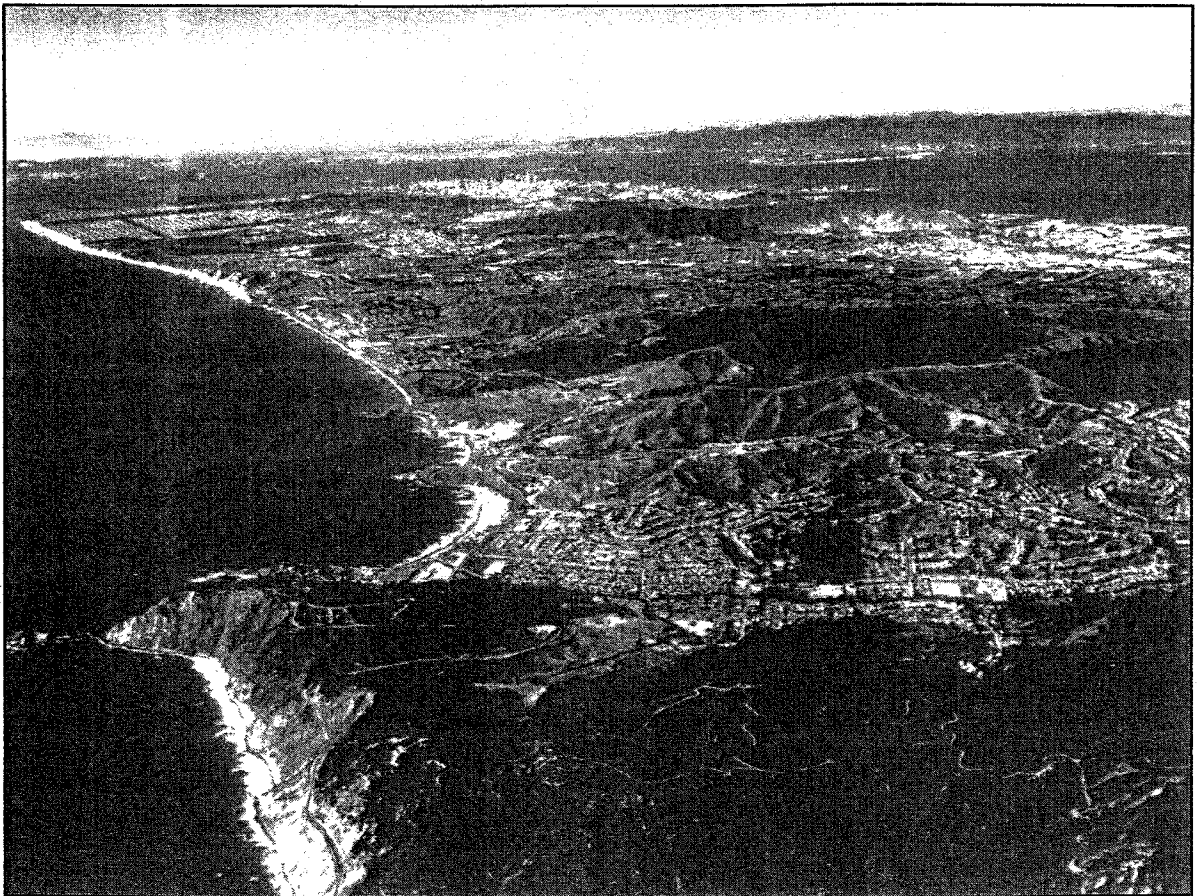


VOLUME I
**PACIFICA
OPEN
SPACE
TASK FORCE
REPORT**



the city of pacifica
and its environs



OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE REPORT: VOLUMES I AND II

Preface to the Second Edition

In 1988 the City of Pacifica published the first edition of the Open Space Task Force Report: Volumes I and II. This publication was the result of a desire to inventory and describe significant parcels of land for the purpose of long-range planning. By the mid 1990's, the City Council requested a review of the process by which the 51 parcels were identified and included in the original report. Its use came into question by private landowners, members of the public and later city councils. A joint meeting of the Open Space Committee (OSC) and the City Council in 1995 resulted in the directive to "...review...and advise it as needed with input from property owners...to correct any factual errors in the parcel narratives."¹

The goal of both editions remains the same: "This report is not intended to declare the City's intent or interest to acquire any of these parcels or to override the current land use regulations... Every property owner has the right to economically viable use of his or her property..."² Although the report is referenced in Pacifica's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, its value is to be used for informational purposes only. Both volumes are intended to be informative, useful and helpful as an informational digest to any reader whether property owner, developer, city official or member of the general public.

The primary revisions in Volume I occur in the Parcel Abstracts (pp. 27-33). Similarly the Parcel Narratives and descriptions in Volume II have been changed, modified or eliminated in order to update to current zoning and usage according to the General Plan, as well as to include factual changes determined by OSC review, citizen and property owners' input. In most cases, references suggesting the appropriateness of development or non-development were removed. The narrative revisions within the new document should take precedence and supersede the original OSTFR, Volumes I and II.

The process the OSC went through executing the directive of the Pacifica City Council took two and a half-years. The methods employed were as follows:

1. A letter from the OSC to all 102 registered owners of property included in the OSTFR was sent certified mail, return receipt requested. This letter stated the OSC's intention to revise the report and welcomed input from the property owners.
2. OSC members attempted to place a telephone call to every property owner.

¹ Minutes of the May 17, 1991 Joint Council/Open Space Committee Meeting

² OSTFR Vol., 1, p. 8

3. Some property owners responded either by letter or telephone. Per their request, a face to face meeting was arranged for nine property owners with an OSC subcommittee. Others expressed no dissatisfaction with the current report; some had no interest or wished further contact the OSC. The majority of property owners did not respond.
4. Property narrative revisions were prioritized based on property owner response and scheduling requests. These narrative revisions were completed first.
5. The president of a local landowners' organization, the Pacifica Land Alliance (PLA), who was also a member of the OSC, sent a letter to all property owners explaining the PLA's perspective on what the OSC was doing and urging their input.
6. A second certified mailing from the OSC to all property owners was sent in response to this letter.
7. The remaining narratives were revised by OSC subcommittees and later voted on by the OSC. Every property owner was informed in advance when OSC subcommittee revisions were to be discussed by the OSC.
8. Concerned owners and citizens made late requests for input into the OSTFR. The OSC placed these individuals on an OSC agenda for their meeting.
9. Four properties were removed from the report by a vote of OSC as no longer significant.
10. All narrative revisions were prepared for presentation by staff and agendized to an OSC meeting for final review and vote.
11. The final OSC submittal was sent to City Council for their review and vote, completing the process.

The new OSTFR includes this new preface, virtually all of the original Volumes I and II text and 49 revised Parcel Abstracts and Parcel Narrative.

The Open Space Committee's eleven members between 1995 and 1998 completed this directive. The Pacifica City Council of 2000 approved the revised report.

VOLUME I
**PACIFICA
OPEN
SPACE
TASK FORCE
REPORT**

PREPARED FOR THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PACIFICA
BY THE OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE
ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 14, 1988

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2ND EDITION REVISIONS PREPARED BY THE
PACIFICA OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 14, 2000

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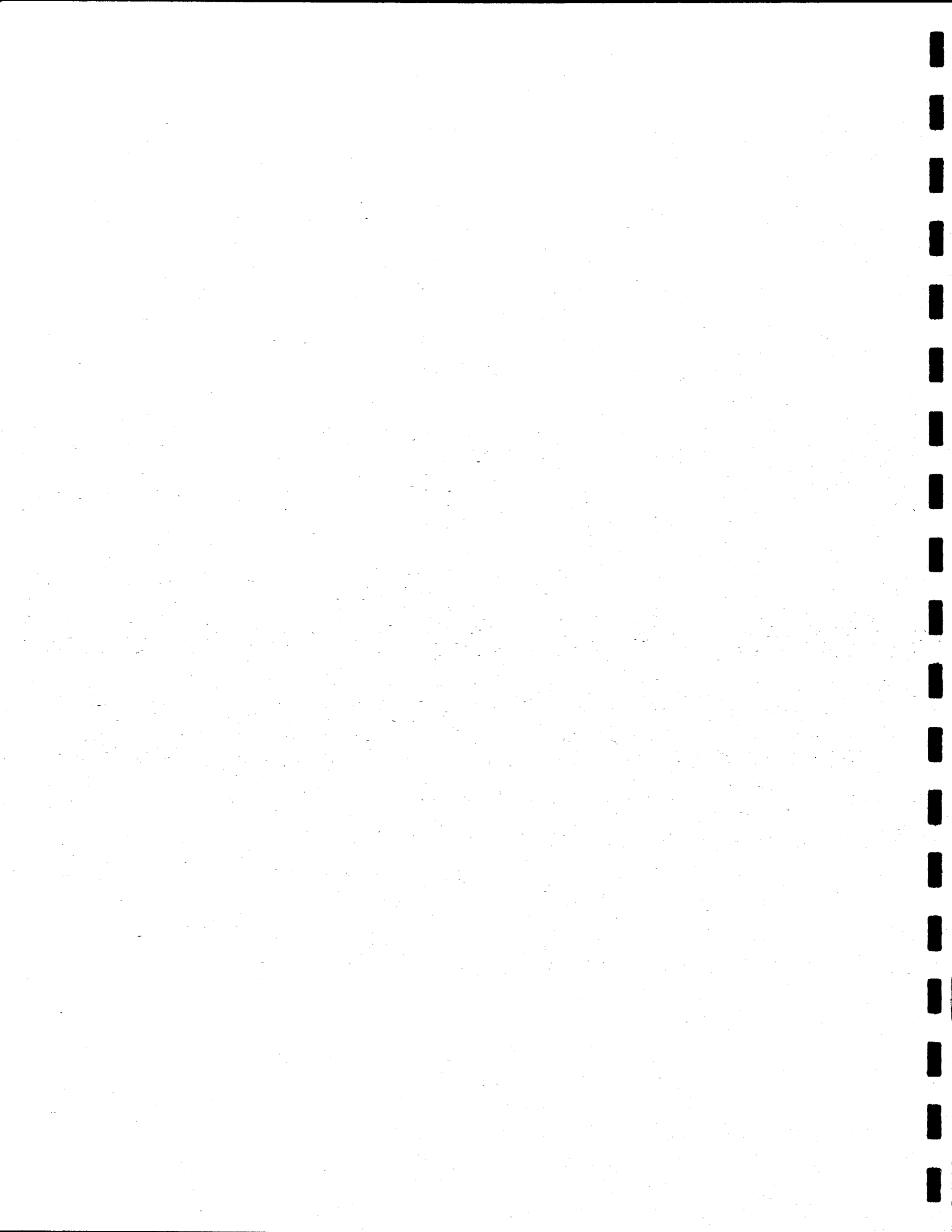
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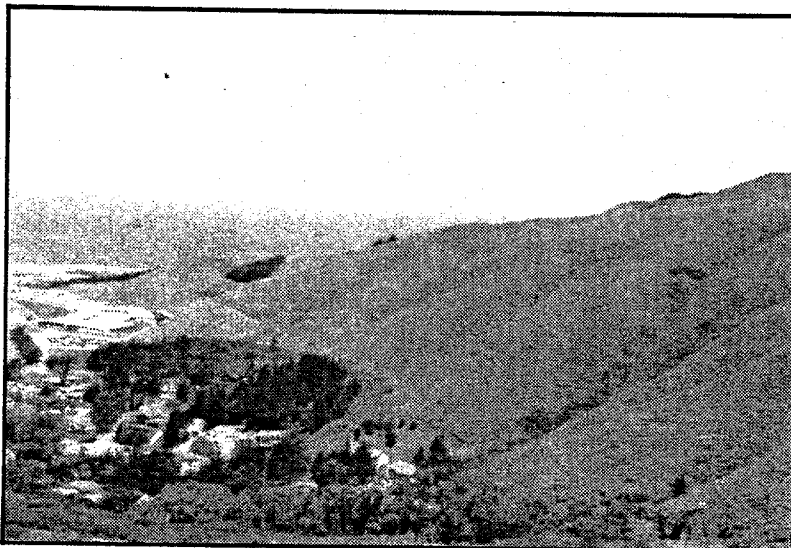
INTRODUCTION

Open space is an essential part of Pacifica's character. The community is defined by its open space as much as by its developed areas. Pacifica's distinctive personality is formed by a configuration of natural elements that is instantly recognizable. The dominant landforms of coastline, hills and ridgelines provide such strong elements that they clearly define Pacifica.

OPEN SPACE DEFINES PACIFICA

The Pacifica General Plan states that, "Pacifica has a unique physical setting in the Bay Area. The scenic qualities of hillsides, beaches and ocean combine to give the City an open quality usually found only in rural areas far from urban encroachment. These scenic qualities have significant aesthetic and potential economic value to the City."

The General Plan goes on to say that, "[Pacifica's] coastal location and natural environment are superb assets. The City's goal includes conserving the natural environment, keeping noise to acceptable levels, protecting residents from natural hazards, protecting the visual quality of the City, and conserving the sense of openness which is an essential quality of the City."



southern slope
milagra ridge

PRESSURES TO DEVELOP OPEN SPACE





Pacifica is faced with growth pressures. It is very near San Francisco and is part of the fourth largest metropolitan region in the United States. People want to live close to the ocean, to enjoy the views and the other benefits of open space. Pacificans would like to control the destiny of their community in terms of the quality, variety and density of development. They want to protect the ocean environment, coastal strand (beaches and headlands), hillsides and ridgelines from inappropriate development.

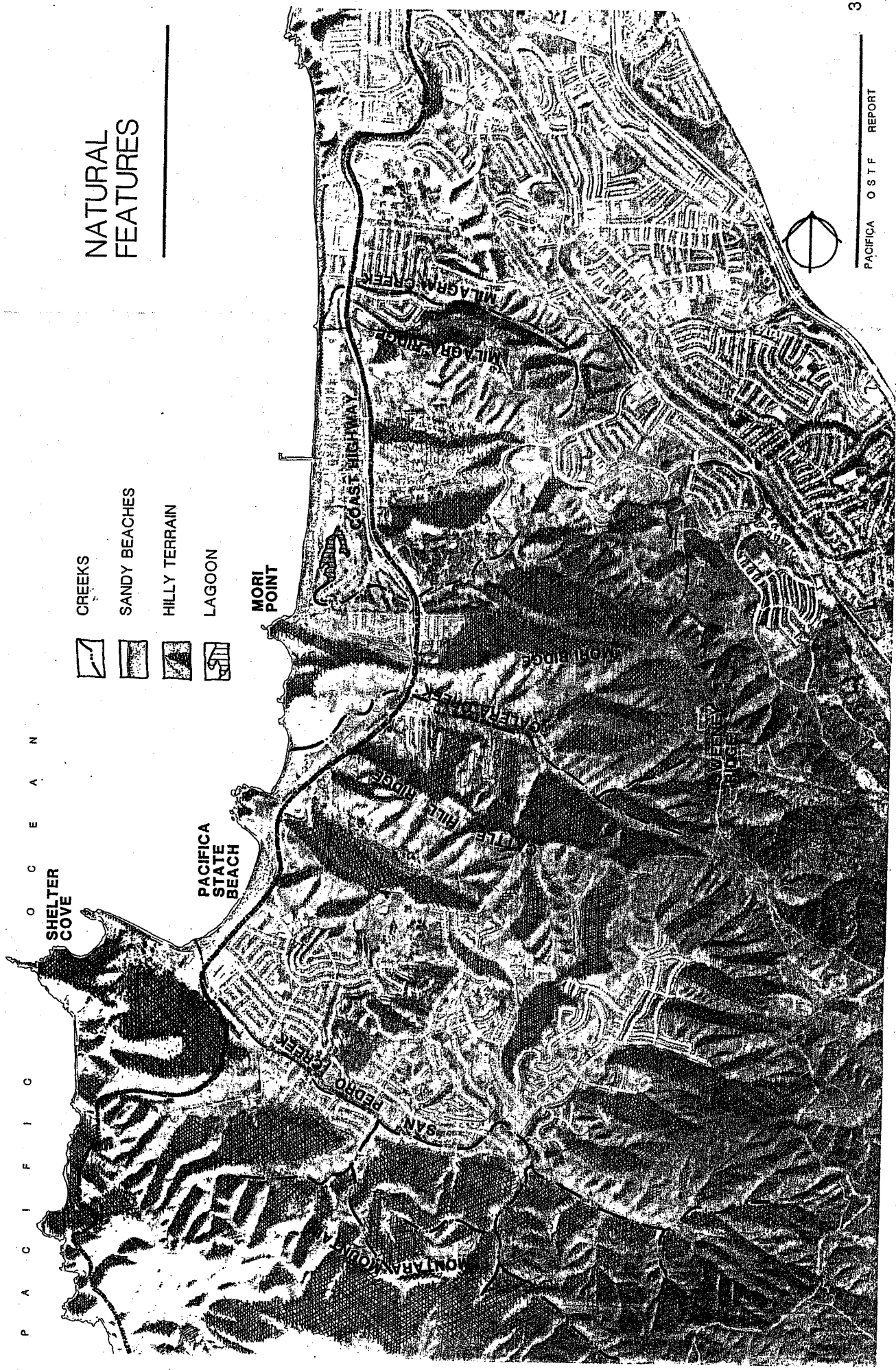
Pacifica has been very fortunate that a large percentage of its land is undeveloped open space. In the development patterns of the Bay Area, the bayside developed extensively while Pacifica, on the oceanside, did not. Development in Pacifica has been concentrated in communities primarily in the coastal valleys. As a result, the major hills, beaches, headlands and other landforms that define the community have been left open. Pacificans should not take this undeveloped land for granted and assume that the hills will always remain open.

The pressures are mounting to develop these remaining open space areas and to greatly change the character of the community. Because of congestion in other parts of the Bay Area, it is now becoming much more desirable to live near the coast. People are seeking the peace of mind to be found in a less densely developed atmosphere. Many people would like to live in a semi-rural community that has both urban amenities as well as open land.

Pacificans have a real advantage in that they have seen what happens when other communities overdevelop and lose their natural resources. The beauty and quality of life of these communities has diminished, and they are no longer highly desirable places to live. Once an open space is gone, it can never be regained.

NATURAL FEATURES

-  CREEKS
-  SANDY BEACHES
-  HILLY TERRAIN
-  LAGOON





Pacifica must control its destiny. It is a unique community that wants to preserve its small town coastal identity, its unique natural resources and to keep its physical profile intact. The character of Pacifica is derived from the integration of its open space network with its built environment. There is a need for the community and the City Council to initiate long-term programs for the preservation of these unique and irreplaceable open assets in order to ensure that the community's future growth is in harmony with its natural setting. Many other communities, facing pressures to develop, have acted to preserve their remaining open spaces.

NEED FOR LONG RANGE PLANNING

Pacifica needs to have a vision about what it wants to be twenty to thirty years from now. That vision must include a permanent open space system which creates the framework for urban developments in appropriate locations. Since the City's incorporation, Pacifica's City Councils have taken many significant steps to protect its natural resources and quality of life. These include the adoption of a Hillside Preservation District, an Open Space Element to the General Plan, Open Space zoning and a Trail System Plan, but other actions need to be taken. There are still unresolved questions about the type and intensity of development in major open space areas as well as the linkages among the open space resources and between the open space and developed areas. Pacifica needs to make a commitment to preserve these areas rather than lose them to inappropriate development.

VISION FOR PACIFICA

At their July 9, 1984 meeting, the Pacifica City Council, recognizing the importance of open space to Pacifica and the increasing pressures for growth, approved the formation of an Open Space Task Force. The Council Agenda Summary Report states that, "Pacifians have expressed their desire to preserve the scenic resources of Pacifica which are so vital to our economic development as well as our quality of life."

CITY COUNCIL CREATES OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE

The agenda report further states, "In Pacifica, we are fortunate to still have many of these limited and valuable open space resources. However, they could disappear through pressures for land development, as they have in so many other communities, if we don't have a long-range plan for their preservation. To do this, the City needs a definite plan for their preservation."

PURPOSE OF TASK FORCE

As adopted by the City Council, the purpose of the Open Space Task Force is, "To identify, prioritize, and seek means for long-range preservation of significant open space in Pacifica."

OBJECTIVES OF TASK FORCE

The objectives of the Open Space Task Force are to:

- A. Inventory privately and publicly owned open space;
- B. Prioritize open space for preservation;
- C. Identify means for acquiring or preserving open space;
- D. Explore acquisition/preservation techniques;
- E. Develop Open Space Preservation Plan, including action plan for implementation;
- F. Submit final report to the City Council for review;
- G. Implement preservation plan through funding and regulatory measures explored in the plan.

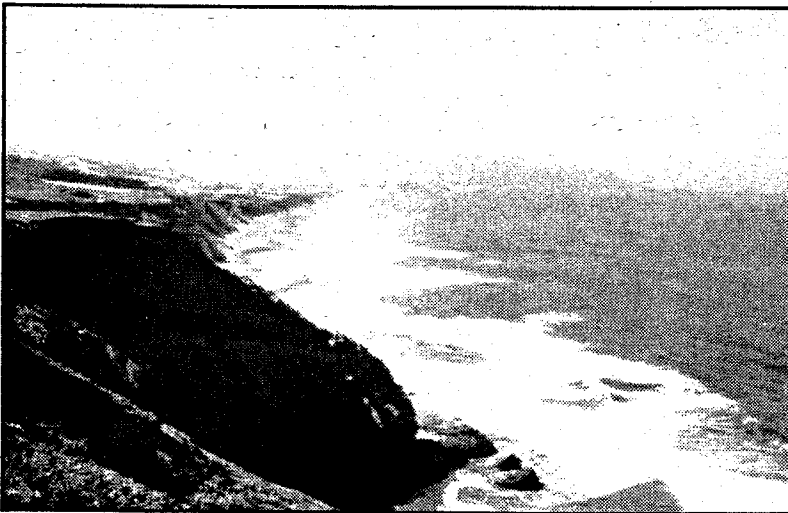
At their September 17, 1984 meeting, the City Council appointed the Open Space Task Force, composed of 13 members, as follows:

- 2 City Council Members
- 2 Planning Commissioners
- 1 Parks Beach & Recreation Commissioner
- 2 business community representatives
- 4 community group or homeowner representatives
- 1 Commercial Development Task Force member
- 1 city staff - PB&R Director

OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE DIRECTIVE

As identified in the Council Agenda Summary Report, open space to be reviewed by the Task Force, "[S]hould include areas of significant scenic value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to beaches; and areas which serve as links between recreation and open space areas. Open space for public health and safety shall include areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions, such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, fire risk and areas required for preservation of water quality. Open space should also include hills, ridgelines, bluffs, beaches, viewsheds and in-fill areas desirable for mini-parks or other public recreational uses."

The Task Force was charged with the task of "Identify[ing] priority open space based upon community desirability and value of resource for protection." and "Specify[ing] location, value of resource and purpose of preservation." This report is the result of the Task Force efforts.



pacifica beaches from northern bluffs

GRASSROOTS BASED PROCESS & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The movement to protect the open space of Pacifica was begun as a grassroots citizen-based effort prior to the creation of the Open Space Task Force. During the 1970's and 1980's, citizens organized themselves into groups to work to preserve valued open space lands. Broad community support for the preservation efforts of these groups developed, resulting in several conservation initiatives including the appointment of the Task Force and the creation of this report. This report is the direct result of the creative energy and innumerable hours of volunteer work by the dedicated citizens of Pacifica over a four year period. In preparing this report, Task Force members reviewed numerous documents relating to open space and on many occasions guest speakers, including Congressman Tom Lemtos, attended Task Force meetings to speak on a variety of open space issues. The Task Force also visited each of the parcels discussed in this report.

The recommendations of this report reflect the judgement of the Task Force members as to the most critical parcels of land to be preserved in Pacifica as well as those steps that will need to be taken to ensure preservation. Approximately two-hundred separate parcels of land were assessed as candidates for preservation, but only 51 (25%) were deemed critically important for Pacifica's Open Space System. Those 50 parcels are abstracted in this volume and they are described more fully in Volume II: Appendix. With the recommended parcels, Pacifica's open space will be a more complete and integrated landscape system including the ridgelines, hillsides, ocean frontage, creeks and their interconnections.

This report does not prioritize parcels for preservation. The Task Force believes each of the parcels discussed in this report is an important and valuable part of Pacifica's Open Space System, and that giving priority to the preservation of one parcel over another will limit the City's flexibility in its preservation efforts. In addition, as circumstances change with time, priorities may also change rendering any priority list obsolete. Therefore, the Task Force has instead identified and prioritized critical open space values within each parcel.

The recommendations in this report are intended to be a resource for long-range open space planning in Pacifica. It is recognized that, where privately-owned parcels are discussed, current land use regulations establish the presently permitted intensity of development. This report is not intended to declare the City's intent or interest to acquire any of these parcels or to override current land use regulations. Rather, this report is intended to serve as a long-range planning tool to guide any future acquisition/preservation policy-making which may occur. Every property owner has the right to economically viable use of his or her property and the right to just compensation where that property is taken for public use. This report should be read and construed in harmony with those principles.

Open Space is essential to the high quality of life which Pacificans value. Action taken now to safeguard remaining open spaces, will help preserve the possibilities for a better future as well as leave something for future generations.

The intensity, pattern and pace of development that was seen in communities occurring 25 years ago is no longer acceptable. People who have witnessed the overdevelopment of other areas do not want to see this happen here.

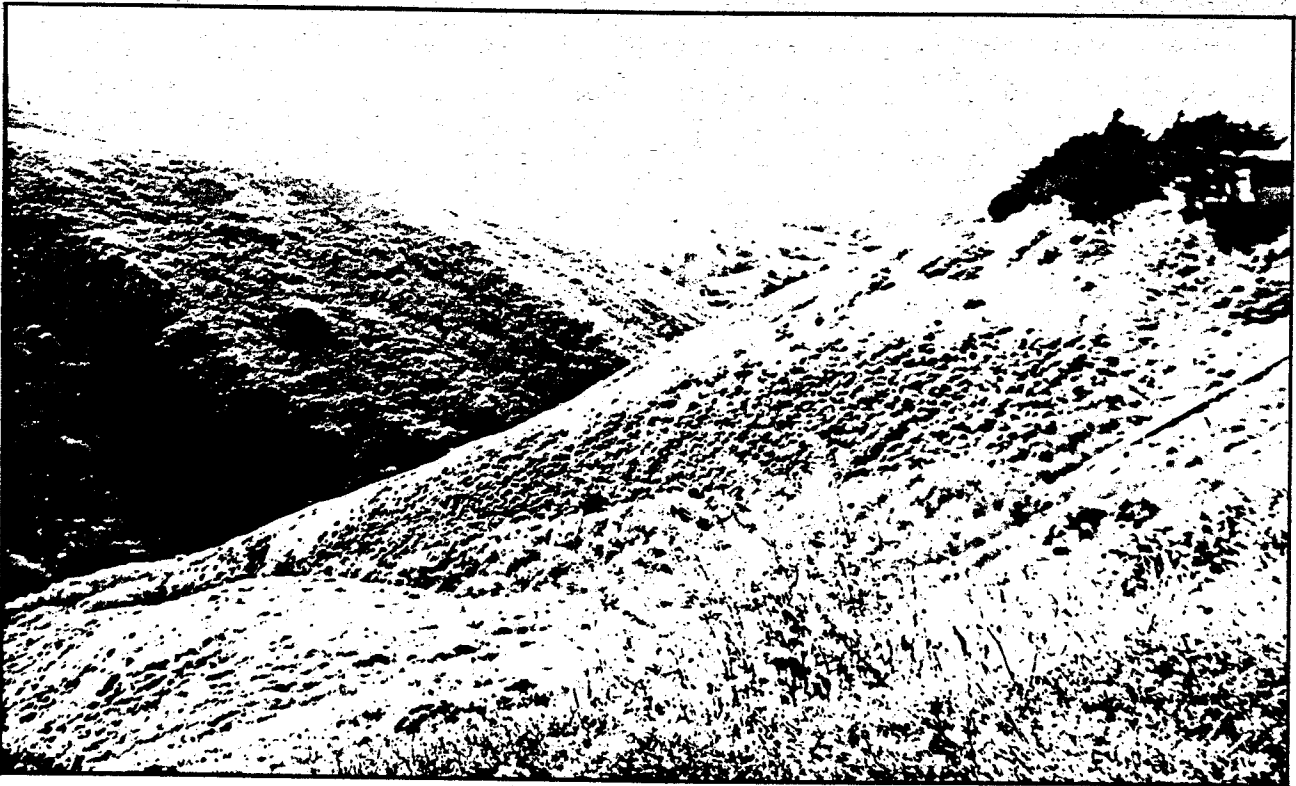
This report assumes that future urban development will be integrated with the open space system and that development will continue in neighborhood infill lots and in undeveloped areas according to current land use regulations. These regulations include careful controls on the intensity of development in sensitive areas such as highly visible ridgelines. But these assumptions can change, requiring firm actions now in order to ensure preservation for future generations.

**THE TIME TO ACT IS
NOW**

The critical issues are the intensity, type, scale and design of new buildings, the alteration of natural land forms and the relationship of the built environment to the natural setting of Pacifica. Hillsides and ridgelines must not be radically altered by dense development projects as have occurred elsewhere in the Bay Area. The ocean front must be open and publicly accessible, and creeks which link the uplands to the waterfront must be preserved.

Pacifica sees itself as a small coastal community and that character should be retained. It is not inevitable that the character must change for the worse as growth occurs. The patterns of development that have had negative effects on other places do not have to happen here.

Appropriate economic development that maintains the community in its present configuration, e.g., Rockaway Beach redevelopment and the Pacific Park RV Resort, can be encouraged. It is possible for investors and developers to make a profit while contributing to the maintenance of Pacifica's character.



milagra creek canyon from the top.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following fifteen recommendations are made to the City Council by the Open Space Task Force. These proposed actions represent the major findings of the Task Force, thus fulfilling the objectives of the City Council in 1984. Upon adoption of this report, the preservation plan can be implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT CITY OF PACIFICA OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE:

PERMANENT OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

- a. City Council should establish a permanent advisory committee to monitor the actions recommended in the Open Space Task Force Report and continue to initiate other appropriate actions which expand and extend the work begun by the original Open Space Task Force.
- b. Membership should include representatives from the City Council, Planning Commission, PB&R Commission, City staff and the general public.
- c. The committee should periodically tour selected open space parcels within the City for review and discussion.

2. CHANGES IN THE GENERAL PLAN:

GENERAL PLAN

- a. Open Space Committee to review the definition of the Hazardous/Protective Open Space designation and recommend modifications to the Planning Commission as necessary to effectively protect the community health, safety and welfare.
- b. The committee should recommend that the Planning Commission take steps necessary to identify which land should be protected by the Hazardous/Protective Open Space designation and map such land for inclusion in the General Plan.

- c. The committee should review the Open Space Element of the General Plan and recommend revisions to the Planning Commission where necessary to reflect the Open Space Task Force Report.
- d. Open Space Committees should recommend to the Planning Commission any General Plan and zoning changes necessary to protect open space resources.

ZONING ORDINANCE

3. OPEN SPACE ZONING DISTRICT:

- a. The City should apply the Open Space Zoning District to areas such as parks, beaches, creek setbacks, sensitive habitat areas, hazardous areas, areas with scenic value or unique natural features, and other areas with the aid of this report.

DENSITY TRANSFER ORDINANCE

4. ADOPTION OF A DENSITY TRANSFER ORDINANCE:

- a. City staff to develop an ordinance which will permit and facilitate the transfer of density from donor to receiver sites.
- b. Identify and map the donor and receiver sites with the aid of this report.
- c. Make this information available to landowners and, where appropriate, encourage density transfer to protect and preserve property according to the recommendations of this report.

OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT DISTRICT AND OTHER FUNDING METHODS

5. CREATION OF OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS AND OTHER FUNDING METHODS:

- a. Open Space Committee to investigate the possibility and process of creating a Citywide Open Space Assessment District to provide funds to help acquire, protect and preserve property according to the recommendations of this report.

- b. Open Space Committee to investigate the possibility and process of creating Neighborhood Open Space Assessment Districts to protect and preserve property of significant open space value to the neighborhood.
- c. Open Space Committee to investigate methods of funding open space acquisition, including bonds, grants, gifts and other.
- d. As required, City staff to hold public meetings to explain and discuss the purpose of an Open Space Assessment District.

6. **EXPANSION OF THE GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA:**

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

- a. Open Space Committee to act as a permanent liaison committee to represent Pacifica's interest in GGNRA programs and acquisitions.
- b. Open Space Committee to examine and evaluate those areas recommended by the Open Space Task Force for inclusion in the GGNRA.
- c. Open Space Committee, with direction from the City Council, to determine which areas are appropriate and actively pursue their inclusion in the GGNRA.

7. **DEVELOP PRESERVATION PLAN FOR AREA SOUTH OF PACIFICA STATE BEACH:**

PRESERVATION PLAN

- a. Open Space Committee to develop a comprehensive plan to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and historical amenities of the area south of Pacifica State Beach including the ocean frontage and adjacent fishing cottages, open space for a neighborhood park as identified in the Open Space Recreation Element of the General Plan, and the Ocean Shore Railroad "Tobin" Station.
- b. With City Council approval, the City to then proceed with the necessary steps to implement the action.

OPEN SPACE LAND TRUST

8. **CREATION OF PACIFICA OPEN SPACE LAND TRUST:**
 - a. The Open Space Committee should invite the Trust for Public Land, California Coastal Conservancy and other conservation groups to explore and make recommendations concerning the establishment of a private, non-profit Pacifica Open Space Land Trust.
 - b. City departments should cooperate with the Land Trust in sharing information.

TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE

9. **ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRAILS AND BICYCLE ROUTE SUBCOMMITTEE:**
 - a. The Open Space Committee should establish a subcommittee to oversee trails and bicycle routes. The subcommittee should include representatives from the City Council; Planning Commission; Parks, Beach & Recreation Commission; and others.
 - b. The work of this subcommittee should be closely coordinated with the Parks, Beach & Recreation Commission.

TRAILS SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

10. **DEVELOPMENT OF TRAILS SYSTEM MASTER PLAN:**
 - a. The Trails and Bicycle Route Subcommittee should develop a trails system master plan to accurately identify present trails that are managed by various public agencies and to designate future trails routes. Such a plan should address the issues identified in this report.
 - b. The pedestrian trail system should include a Citywide coastal bluff top trail, and ridgeline and other trails from the coast to publicly owned trails and park land at the City's easterly borders (east-west GGNRA connector).
 - c. The Trails and Bicycle Route Subcommittee should develop a bicycle route and equestrian trail plan that is compatible with the pedestrian trail system plan.

- d. The Trails System Master Plan should include priority listings for future trails, including specific techniques for securing public access and costs of trails construction and maintenance.

11. **ADOPTION OF CREEK PROTECTION PLAN AND ORDINANCE:**

CREEK PROTECTION PLAN AND ORDINANCE

- a. City staff to develop a plan and implementing ordinance which contains standards and regulations designed to protect creeks from the negative impacts of development and to preserve and restore riparian areas throughout the City.

12. **MAPPING OF AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN:**

AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN

- a. City should map areas which contain rare and/or endangered species, threatened species, possible archaeological sites, and significant natural systems with the aid of appropriate consultants and should publish such information in a brochure available to the public.

13. **ESTABLISHMENT OF EASEMENTS AND DEED RESTRICTIONS:**

EASEMENTS AND DEED RESTRICTIONS

- a. Open Space Committee to develop a plan to use easements and deed restrictions such as those indicated in this report to preserve and protect open space.

14. **USE OF TASK FORCE REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

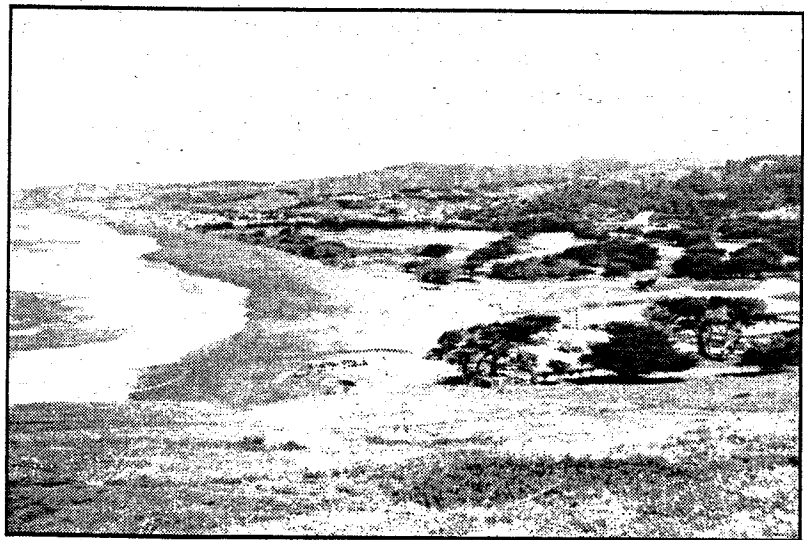
USE OF REPORT

- a. This report should be used as a reference by the City Council, the Planning Commission, the PB&R Commission and City staff to identify issues of concern when evaluating land use proposals and when considering issues relating to open space.
- b. The City should actively pursue the preservation and protection of open space according this report.

**SCHEDULE FOR
IMPLEMENTATION**

15. SCHEDULE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- a. The City Council should develop a specific schedule for implementing each of the Task Force recommendations.



looking north from mori point

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

The celebrated quality of life of the San Francisco Bay Area is closely related to the network of open spaces that have been preserved, including the Bay, the ocean frontage, the coastal hills and streams. Within this region, Pacifica is distinctive. The public and private areas that are presently undeveloped form a major oasis in the heavily urbanized San Francisco Peninsula and give a unique small town character to the City. Pacifica's protected open spaces, however, are limited. Much of the City's open character is defined by undeveloped privately owned lands. Regardless of ownership, the benefits of the present open space are considerable. One intent of this report is to ensure that those benefits are maintained in a manner consistent with the rights of private property owners.

BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE

Open space provides a number of important benefits to the community.

Open Space:

- provides recreational areas
- contains urban sprawl
- separates and defines neighborhoods and urban forms
- establishes buffers between incompatible uses
- preserves viewsheds and scenic vistas
- prevents problems often associated with intensive development such as pollution and traffic congestion
- controls development in hazardous areas
- protects fragile and irreplaceable natural areas, including beaches, headlands, creeks, and wetlands
- maintains important watershed lands
- protects rare and endangered or threatened plants and animals and their habitats.

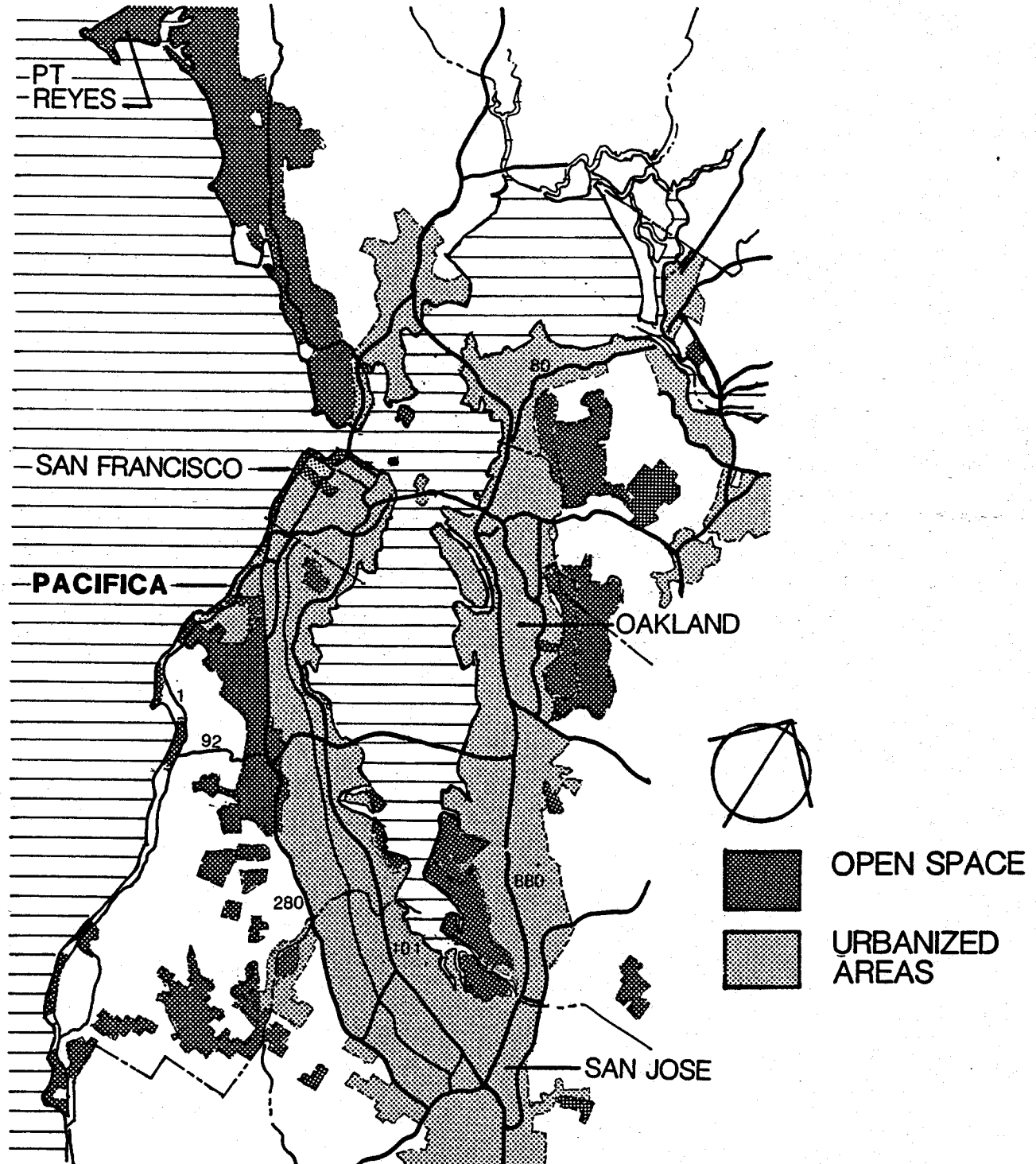
Besides these tangible benefits, there are important intangible benefits of open space, perhaps the most important of which are personal. Pacificans know that they live in a special place. Many describe their feelings as they come over the hill on Highway 1 and view the spectacular panorama of Pacifica's hills and coastline. Some are awed by the drama of powerful land forms plunging down to the sea. Others experience a calming sense of relief at leaving the hectic urban environment behind them. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Master Plan observes that, "In this commercialized, mechanized society, one of the most rewarding experiences can be the escape from the noise and pressures of an urban center to the peace and quiet of unspoiled open spaces."

For some Pacificans, the benefit of open space is simply the pleasant view of rolling hills or the ocean that they enjoy from their homes. For others, it is a vigorous hike in the open hills or a quiet walk on the beach. The enjoyment of Pacifica's open space includes all the ways in which a person experiences the beauties of nature--discovering spring wildflowers on a hillside, spotting a deer on a ridgeline or enjoying a sunset from a headland.

The immediate accessibility of open space areas is an important part of what makes Pacifica an ideal place to live. Open spaces provide a healthy environment for families. Unlike many communities, Pacificans have areas near to their homes in which to hike, bicycle and picnic, as well as areas which support year round outdoor activities such as surfing, fishing, beachcombing, horseback riding, golf and tennis.

The Santa Clara County Open Space Preservation Program points out that, "The fact that natural areas provide relief from crowding and congestion is widely accepted today. As crowding and congestion increases, people's need for constructive escapes from these urban ills also increases."

REGIONAL CONTEXT



COMMERCIAL BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE

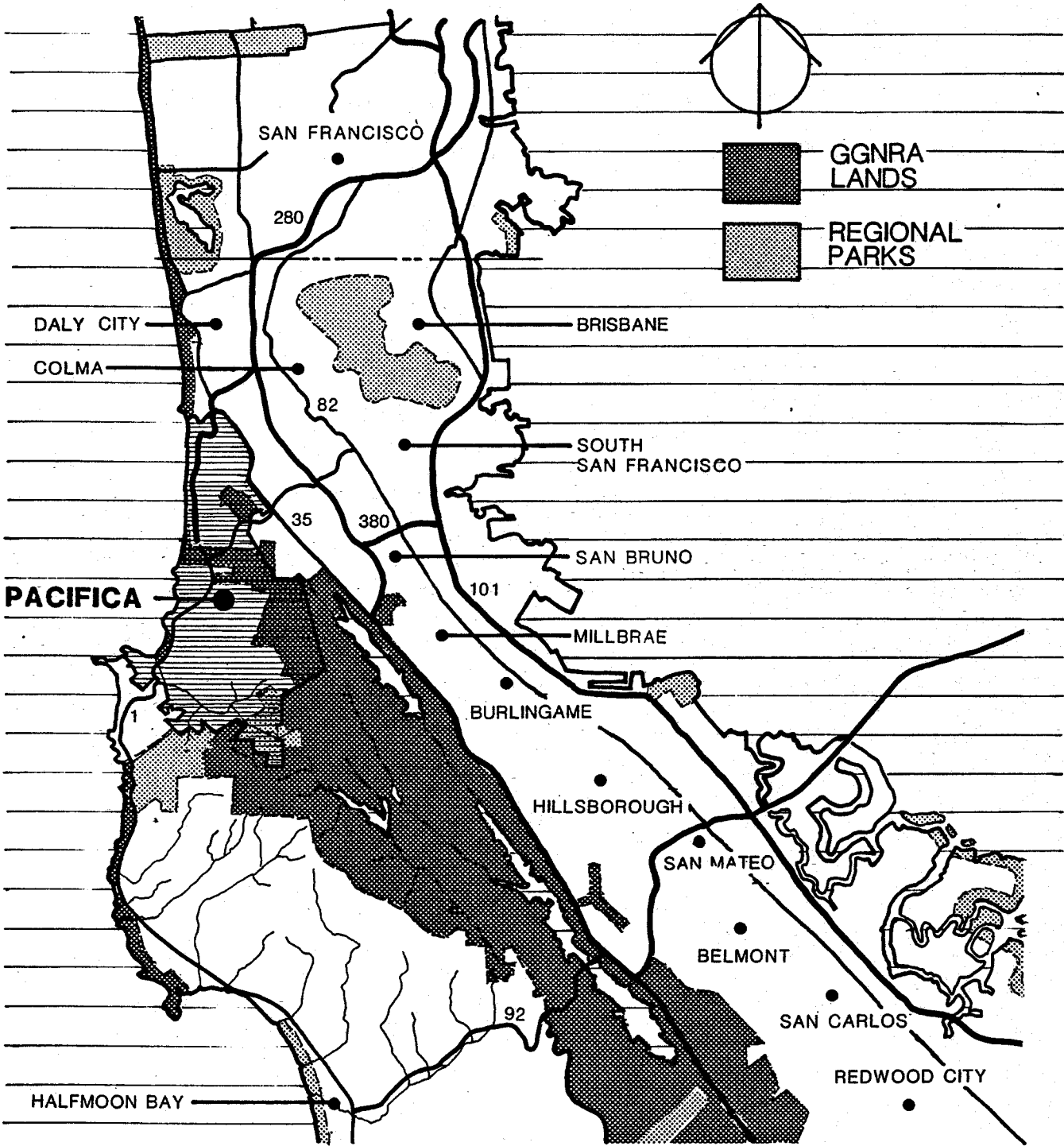
Open space is good for business. This is as true of the dynamic greater Bay Area as it is for Pacifica. Just as it is desirable to live and work in an area with open space, it is also desirable to spend leisure time in such places. For both residents and visitors, open space provides relief from crowding and congestion, and a breath of fresh air. The Pacific Ocean will continue to be a major tourist draw. More and more, people have come to recognize the important commercial benefits of preserving open space, particularly in terms of building tourism, guaranteeing the success of tourist-related businesses and generating increased tax revenues from these businesses.

These commercial benefits of open space were also recognized by the City Council approved 1984 Task Force Action Plan to Promote Commercial Development in Pacifica. This plan recommended "...that an ideal theme [for identifying Pacifica] would reflect our scenic views and coastal environment and could perhaps be built around Sweeney Ridge, the GGNRA and the (San Francisco Bay) Discovery Site".

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Pacifica is a coastal community lying approximately midway between San Francisco and San Jose. The network of beaches, coastal bluffs, undeveloped hills embracing the town and creeks combine to create an open space fabric for the town that is rare in the Bay Area. The open space system is particularly unique in the densely urbanized San Francisco Peninsula. The regional and national significance of these landscape resources have been recognized for many years, not only by the County and State parks departments, but also by the Federal government, with the establishment of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The built environment has developed in the past in a generally symbiotic relationship with the natural environment, with small, mixed communities clustered along the valleys, in the canyons and in the meadows near the coastal bluffs and beaches. The intense development pressure that has affected other Bay Area communities generally bypassed Pacifica until the last 20 years. Recent proposals to encroach on the ridges, hillsides, coastal areas and creeks have met with stiff local opposition. The City today remains a place whose landscape setting is intact but endangered.

THE PACIFICA VICINITY



EXISTING OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM

The Open Space and Recreation Element of the City's General Plan, adopted in 1984, addresses open space that is both publicly and privately owned. Open space is considered "...any area which provides recreation, significant visual assets for the City or is vital for the preservation of irreplaceable natural resources. Open space areas and facilities include City, County, State and National parks, schools, greenbelts, trails and bluff areas. Other open space opportunities include ridgelines and coastal access points. Privately owned lands that possess open space qualities are designated Special Area. Other areas shown as Open Space Residential or Prominent Ridgeline are regulated as to the density of development achievable to preserve open space values..."

trail up milagra creek canyon



pedestrian bridge over
highway 1 at milagra ridge









There are gaps in the existing Open Space system. Lacking are sufficient local neighborhood facilities, linkages among facilities (pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian) and public coastal areas. There are prominent hillsides and other important visual resources which are endangered. The boundaries of some existing parks divide important natural features which should logically be embraced to complete the preserved features within the parks.

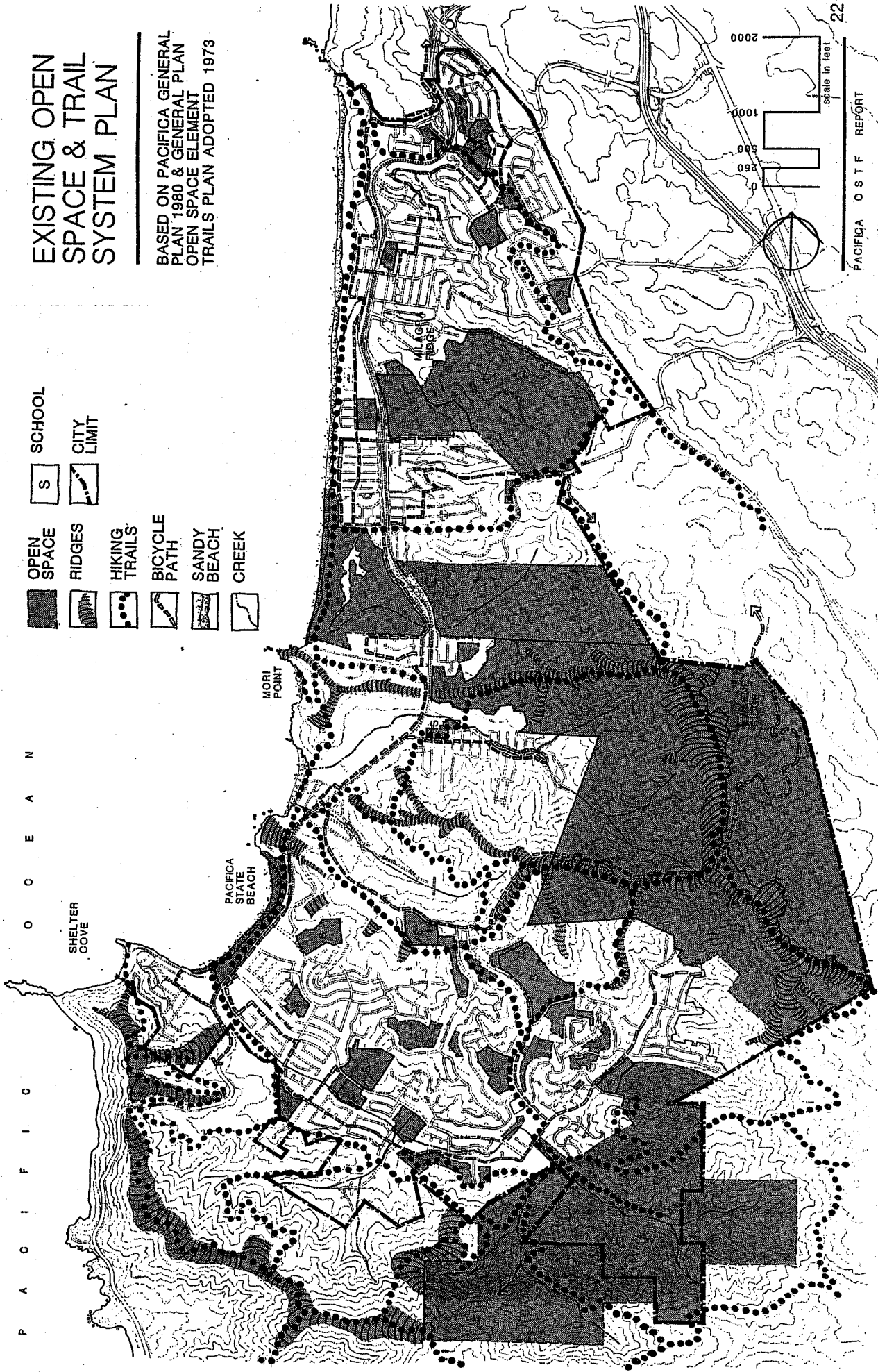
A Trail System Plan proposed in 1973 and adopted as an amendment to the 1969 General Plan shows an extensive network of proposed trails throughout Pacifica. To date, very little of the Plan has been implemented. An important goal of the Task Force is to implement the Trail System Plan. Both walkers and bicyclists are to be accommodated on the plan, but there are no officially designated equestrian facilities on it.

The Existing Open Space and Trail System Plan map shows the present public open space system, including parks and greenbelts, schools, ridges, streams, beaches, and trails. The trails shown are those included in the adopted 1973 Trail System Plan and may not reflect changes in the General Plan Open Space Element Trail System designation since their adoption.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN

BASED ON PACIFICA GENERAL PLAN 1980 & GENERAL PLAN OPEN SPACE ELEMENT TRAILS PLAN ADOPTED 1973

-  OPEN SPACE
-  RIDGES
-  HIKING TRAILS
-  BICYCLE PATH
-  SANDY BEACH
-  CREEK
-  SCHOOL
-  CITY LIMIT





PROPOSED OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM

The Task Force has addressed preservation of three major landscape types found in Pacifica: a) beaches, coastal terraces and headlands; b) hillsides and ridgelines; c) creeks and wetlands. The consensus of the Task Force is that these three landscape types are critical in defining the character of Pacifica and should be the focus of preservation efforts. The existing public open space does not include certain key parcels in each of these areas, resulting in an incomplete system.

OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The Task Force considered approximately 200 separate parcels as possible candidates for preservation. Fifty of those parcels are recommended in this report for one or several preservation actions. These 51 parcels are deemed to have critical scenic, biotic, recreation, access or educational values. Each of the parcels is described in detail in Volume 2. Abstracts of the individual parcels and a map of their locations are included in this volume under the heading PARCEL ABSTRACTS.

Each of the recommended parcels is significant to Pacifica. Several parcels are also deemed to be of regional and national significance, and should qualify for inclusion in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). A discussion about GGNRA expansion follows in the next section of this report.

The Task Force believes that the creation of an integrated trail system throughout Pacifica is essential for the enjoyment of the open space and for circulation throughout the City. The adopted 1973 Trail System Plan has not yet been implemented. Its implementation is a high priority including two additional lateral connections shown on the Proposed Open Space and Trail System map. The completed trail system will integrate Pacifica with the regional coastal and ridgeline trails, and will make important lateral connections through the City.

TRAIL SYSTEM

Pacifica presently has major elements of paralleling coastline and ridgeline trails, each approximately six miles in length, extending from Daly City in the north through the southern boundaries of the community. These two major linear trails are interconnected by three substantially existing east-west lateral trails. The northern most lateral trail extends along Milagra Ridge, the central along Mori Ridge and the southern following the historical path of the Portola Expedition from the ocean to ridgeline overlooking San Francisco Bay. The lateral trails provide loop trail opportunities for recreational hikers to experience both a coastal and ridgeline experience with easy return to trailhead origins without the necessity of back-tracking. Each of these loops approximates a three-hour recreational hike. By combining one or more of the loops, extended hiking may be planned with a return to the original trailhead.



south from sweeney ridge

A significant portion of Pacifica's existing trails system is already under the jurisdiction of various public agencies. The City should enter into agreements with such agencies to insure continuity of trail routes, and to provide for uniform design and operational standards. A Trails Master Plan should be developed, taking into consideration the diversity of those public agencies owning park lands in Pacifica (GGNRA, State of California, San Mateo County, and City and County of San Francisco). The City should play a key role in protecting the scenic resources which have generated the initial attractiveness of the coastal zone as a trail corridor.

Additional trail rights-of-way and land acquisition should include the extension of the north, central and southern lateral trails from the Ridgeline Trail to the coastline trail, and the development of a fourth lateral trail across Cattle Hill and located between the central and southern trails that will connect GGNRA to the Rockaway/Vallemar coastal areas. Much of the current coastline trail is on the bluff tops. Future long range trail rights-of-way and land acquisition should develop this coastline trail into a bluff top trail that extends the entire length of Pacifica and links with the GGNRA trails to the north, east and south. Long range planning for the bluff top trail is to render it suitable for all-weather use, and gain right-of-way and land to provide appropriate bypasses to render it a nearly level trail system. This would provide a uniquely scenic, coastal, all-weather trail that can be used by all citizens including senior citizens, handicapped, hikers, joggers, picnickers and strollers.



south from mori point

The existing and planned trails are based on information currently available from diverse public agencies including the City of Pacifica, San Mateo County and Federal government. The proposed trails plan enlarges and complements the existing trails, and is designed to provide a high usage, integrated trail system within Pacifica and beyond. Key features of the integrated trail plan are the extension of the George R. Stewart coastal bluff top trail throughout the length of Pacifica, an east/west interconnection between GGNRA trails and the coastal bluff top trail, and the all weather/all people design of a Pacifica bluff top trail with walk-around bypasses.

The proposed integrated plan is dependent upon lands currently under both public and private ownership. This report identifies all these lands and, for privately owned lands, discusses their unique open space and environmental features as well as potential techniques to insure the right of public passage.

gypsy hill and ridges beyond



The following are abstracts of the key characteristics of each of the parcels studied by the Open Space Task Force. The numbering system reflects north/south chronology and does not represent priorities. These numbers correspond to the numbered parcels on the map. "Proposed Open Space and Trails System."

Undeveloped acreage, high bluff-top dunes, steep cliffs and narrow stretch of beach north of Dollar Radio Station. Unobstructed coastal views and high visibility from Highway 1. One of the few remaining open rolling bluff-top dunes. Bluff top trail site.

The 5.5-acre parcel is in multiple ownership and is one of the last major remaining undeveloped areas east of Palmetto in north Pacifica.

A 3.5-acre site of open bluff top dunes with sheer cliffs. Geologic and erosion concerns and hazardous beach access. There are existing requirements for view corridors across site, overlooks, access parking and beach access.

A 46.87-acre part of a major ridgeline that separates two neighborhoods. Lowest part of one of the three major east-west finger ridges that physically and visually define Pacifica's network of hills, tying Sweeney Ridge to the coastal headlands. The site includes endangered species habitat and offers high scenic and recreation values and a possible link between the Bay Area Ridge Trail and the bluff top trail and beaches.

A 62-acre parcel of steep northern slopes of Milagra Creek Canyon. The creek flows through the long, narrow valley floor. There is flat land at the western entry to the canyon.

This parcel has been removed from the Open Space Task Force Report

The approximately 72 acre parcel currently has four homes on large sites and is one of the prominent and scenic east-west ridges. A panoramic view is available from the upper areas of the ridge.

PARCEL ABSTRACTS

NORTHERN COASTAL BLUFFS 1

THE BOWL AND THE FISH 2

BLUFF AT ESPLANADE 3

LOWER MILAGRA RIDGE 4

NORTH SLOPE MILAGRA CREEK CANYON 5

EAST SLOPE OF MILAGRA RIDGE 6

GYPSY HILL 7

- 8 FLOWER FARM Two parcels totaling 65.57 acres. One undeveloped site is steep and the other site is in agricultural use
- 9 BEACH BOULEVARD TERRACE The 3.82-acre coastal terrace is now in public ownership. Composed primarily of beach sand and added fill materials, there has been significant erosion and cliff retreat in recent years. Adjacent homes were damaged and destroyed in recent storms. Seawall and beach access recently completed. Terrace now used for promenade and ocean front park.
- 10 MORI POINT A spectacular 108-acre centrally located headland, which serves as a primary and secondary habitat of the endangered San Francisco garter snake. Sweeping views of Pacifica's coastline, coastal hills and areas north. Portions of the site, including slopes, ridgeline, marsh and headland, are desirable additions to the GGNRA. If development does not occur, all of the site should be considered for GGNRA inclusion.
- 11 THE QUARRY LANDS 108-acres of hills, steep coastal bluffs and flat quarry. The hills and high coastal bluffs are integral to Mori Point and Mori Ridge. They are a potential link between Pacifica's GGNRA and the ocean.
- 12 EAST FAIRWAY PARK HILLSIDE A 9.90-acre parcel which is part of the lower slopes of Sweeney Ridge and part of its watershed. Candidate for inclusion in GGNRA.
- 13 SHELLDANCE A prominent 12.5-acre portion of Mori Ridge with an orchid and Bromeliad nursery. Currently used for parking and trailhead for Sweeney Ridge. Present problems with access to Highway 1 must be corrected.
- 14 NORTH SLOPE OF VALLEMAR A 27.91-acre gentle open hillside is part of the Calera Creek watershed and abuts Mori Ridge. Visually prominent above Vallemar
- 15 NORTHEAST FORK CALERA CREEK A 3.8-acre undeveloped portion of Calera Creek Valley floor. One of two such remaining parcels. There is a variety of vegetation in the valley and meadow. Bounded on three sides by GGNRA. Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.
- 16 END OF DARDENELLE This parcel has been removed from the Open Space Task Force Report.

<p>These 6.61-acres are on the southeast fork of Calera Creek. A critical part of the watershed and creek's riparian habitat. Evidence of possible Ohlone Indian occupation. Views of this valley are possible from surrounding hillsides. Bounded on three sides by GGNRA. Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.</p>	<p>EASTERN CALERA CREEK VALLEY 17</p>
<p>A 261.68-acre lateral ridge visible from many areas of the City. Present GGNRA access trail allowed through property. Possible lateral trail site connecting Sweeney Ridge (GGNRA) to coast.</p>	<p>CATTLE HILL 18</p>
<p>A broad 61.45-acre valley at the end of East Rockaway Beach. Potential for neighborhood park at western end.</p>	<p>ROCKAWAY VALLEY 19</p>
<p>109.2-acres of the western most portion of Cattle Hill, which separates Vallemar from East Rockaway Beach. Good wildlife habitat along the ridge and lush valley. Important visual resource. Lateral trail site connection to Sweeney Ridge/(GGNRA). Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.</p>	<p>WESTERN EXTENSION FROM CATTLE HILL 20</p>
<p>The 12+ acre open hillside runs behind homes on the south side of Rockaway Beach and includes many separate ownerships. A trail easement between the beginning of San Pedro Way to the Fassler Avenue/Estella Drive intersection is recommended.</p>	<p>SOUTH SLOPE ROCKAWAY 21</p>
<p>This parcel has been removed from the Open Space Task Force Report.</p>	<p>FASSLER ROCK 22</p>
<p>A 5.22-acre ocean front parcel with a well-used advanced-level surfing beach. Highly visible in the foreground view of the ocean from Highway 1. The site is currently used as low-intensity beachfront park with beach access parking, small picnic areas and surfing facilities</p>	<p>SOUTH ROCKAWAY BEACH 23</p>
<p>A prominent 20-acre coastal headland which is a Pacifica landmark. Vistas, a rich variety of flora and rare Douglas Wallflower characterize the site. A potential link in a continuous coastal trail with overlook.</p>	<p>ROCKAWAY HEADLAND 24</p>
<p>A scenic 37-acre corridor which divides Rockaway Beach and Linda Mar.</p>	<p>FASSLER AVENUE CORRIDOR NORTH 25</p>

- 26 FASSLER AVENUE CORRIDOR SOUTH A 193-acre property that lies along the east route of the Portola Party. Part of a scenic corridor that divides Rockaway Beach and Linda Mar.
- 27 ROBERTS ROAD KNOLL The major open space value of this 17-acre parcel is its prominent, highly visible knoll which is an extension of the Fassler Avenue ridgeline.
- 28 PICARDO RANCH A picturesque 166.61-acre coastal ranch with small orchard, grassy uplands and ranch buildings in a fertile valley. Visible from various locations. Future uses should protect the adjacent Baquiano Trail (Portola Discovery Trails). Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.
- 29 PARK PACIFICA STABLES A modern, well-maintained horse stable complex on 18.8 acres of relatively flat land, surrounded on three sides by GGNRA's Sweeney Ridge. The property provides private equestrian access to the park. Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.
- 30 PACIFICA STATE BEACH (LINDA MAR BEACH/SAN PEDRO BEACH) A 37-acre gently sloping beach and dune area which includes the mouth of San Pedro Creek. The highly visible parcel has multiple public and private ownerships and uses. Pacifica State Beach is a treasure that must be conserved.
- 31 CRESPI DRIVE AND HIGHWAY1 Portion of this 2.4 acre property is covered by a marshy area which floods each winter. Site is a portion of an area that was covered by coastal lagoon.
- 32 CRESPI DRIVE EAST OF COMMUNITY CENTER This 1.69-acre parcel is significant as a remnant of a lagoon that originally covered the entrance to the San Pedro Valley. Site features a lush growth of vegetation and a variety of water fowl and other fauna. The front of the site includes a residential structure.
- 33 SHELTER COVE This 17-acre property consists of a beautiful beach sheltered at both the north and south ends by large rock formations. Due to severe storms, access has been limited to a pedestrian path.
- 34 FORMER ARCHDIOCESE PROPERTY This is a flat, 6.3 acre site in private ownership.

These 45 acres of undeveloped land are east of Grand Avenue, and highly visible from Highway 1, Pacifica State Beach and portions of Linda Mar neighborhood. Tree removal should be minimal.

PEDRO POINT EAST OF GRAND AVENUE 35

Two parcels totaling 9.39-acres. San Pedro Creek has cut a deep channel on the northeast border of this property. Eastern portion features dense vegetation. Creek provides access to the spawning grounds of steelhead trout.

EXCESS CALTRANS PROPERTY-SAN PEDRO CREEK FLOOD PLAIN 36

This .96-acre site contains part of the riparian habitat of the steelhead trout. The land is also part of the San Pedro Creek flood plain.

SAN PEDRO CREEK 37

Serves as a part of a de facto greenbelt in the Linda Mar housing tract. The 27.07-acre parcel, home of Alma Heights Academy, features stands of eucalyptus and some pine trees.

ALMA HEIGHTS 38

This 9.10-acre site contains a building. The southern perimeter provides a buffer for San Pedro Creek.

WHITE FIELD 39

This parcel has been removed from the Open Space Task Force Report.

MALAVEAR COURT NURSERY 40

A 5.6-acre commercial nursery with buildings, growing areas and open space gently sloping to the creek on the valley floor. Views along the tree-lined creek bed are of Montara Mountain and the Sanchez Art Center.

C & M NURSERY 41

This 9.1-acre parcel, publicly owned, features a turfing playing field and cultural arts center. It buffers San Pedro Creek to the south and the nursery to the west. General Plan designates playing field as a permanent recreational park for the Central Linda Mar neighborhood.

SANCHEZ SCHOOL 42

This 66-acre property includes a variety of flora fauna. Sanchez Fork of San Pedro Creek flows through the property. Part of the greenbelt that forms Pacifica's southern boundary. Property includes part of the Old Coast Highway, one of the most scenic trails in San Mateo County.

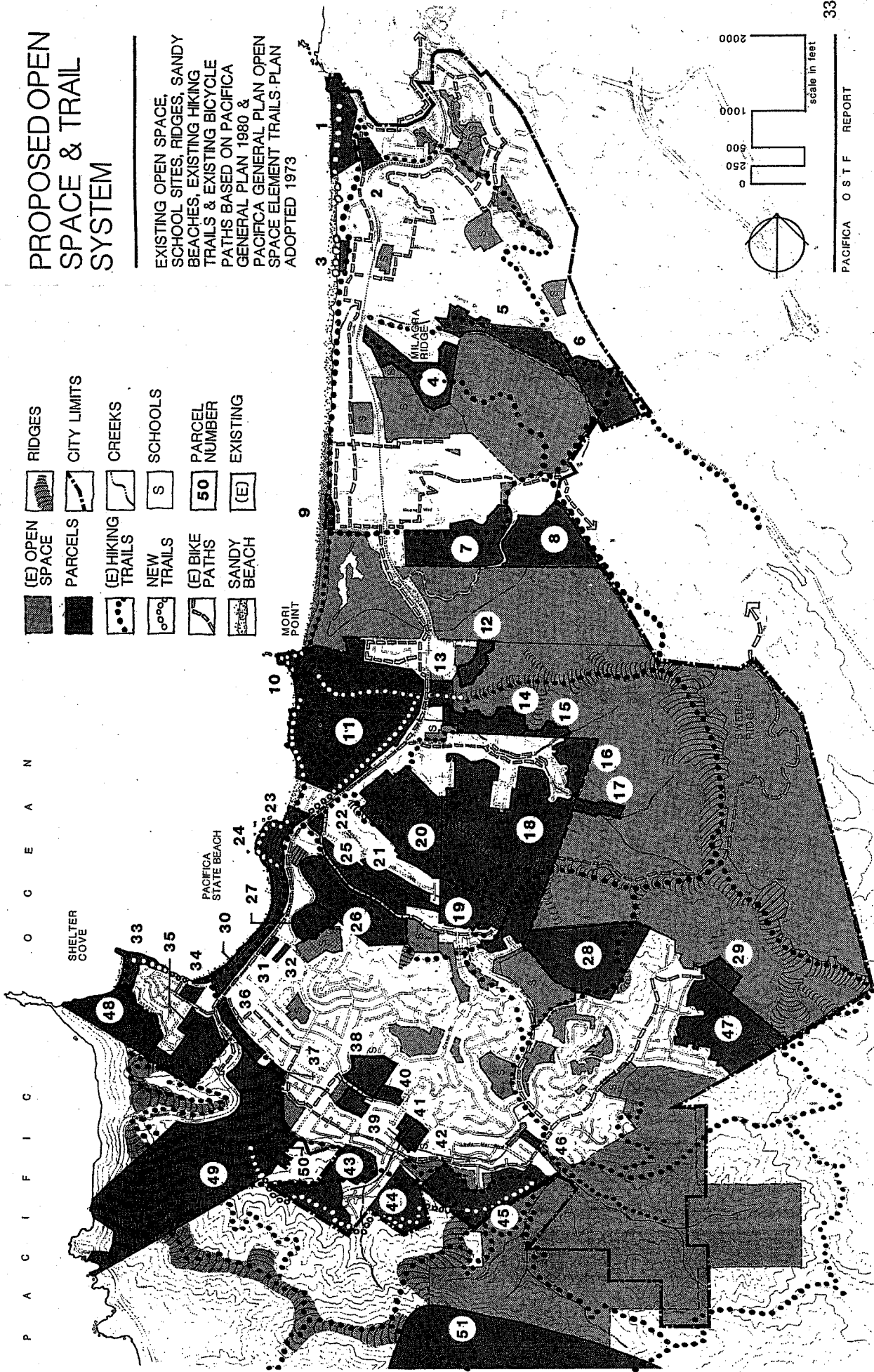
SANCHEZ FORK DRAINAGE 43

- 44 PITTO RANCH This 41.81-acre parcel is part of the San Pedro Creek watershed and buffer for streams. The property includes informal trail system links.
- 45 END OF VALDEZ WAY Visually significant 62.17-acre parcel. Provides a possible link between San Pedro Valley County Park and McNee Ranch State Park.
- 46 ODDSTAD NURSERY One of the last remaining agricultural areas in the City. The 2.46-acres are bordered by San Pedro Creek, shopping center, and residential neighborhood.
- 47 EAST OF ST. LAWRENCE COURT The 89-acre parcel includes an equestrian trail. Part of San Pedro Creek watershed. Candidate for GGNRA inclusion.
- 48 PEDRO POINT CITY LIMITS Visually significant 50-acre property within the City's sphere of influence. Heavily wooded. Owned by Pacifica Land Trust (PLT).
- 49 SHAMROCK RANCH & SAN PEDRO MOUNTAIN These parcels totaling 286-acres support a variety of native flora and fauna, and a working ranch and kennels. Important to watershed drainage. Provides a significant view of rural and open space for Linda Mar. Historically significant in potential trail system links.
- 50 END OF ADOBE DRIVE Several parcels comprised of multiple ownership totaling 12.2 acres with townhouses at the Adobe Drive cul-de-sac. The terrain varies from gently sloping to steep. There are grassy areas and stands of trees. Access is provided via Adobe Drive.
- 51 MONTARA MOUNTAIN - NORTH SLOPE Dominant feature of the Pacific landscape. Within the City's sphere of influence. Rich in native plant life, including rare, endangered Montara manzanita and rare Giant Golden Chinquapin. Includes a variety of native animal life. Important view shed for residents. Any use should include trail system links.

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE & TRAIL SYSTEM

EXISTING OPEN SPACE,
SCHOOL SITES, RIDGES, SANDY
BEACHES, EXISTING HIKING
TRAILS & EXISTING BICYCLE
PATHS BASED ON PACIFICA
GENERAL PLAN 1980 &
PACIFICA GENERAL PLAN OPEN
SPACE ELEMENT TRAILS PLAN
ADOPTED 1973

- (E) OPEN SPACE
- PARCELS
- (E) HIKING TRAILS
- NEW TRAILS
- (E) BIKE PATHS
- SANDY BEACH
- RIDGES
- CITY LIMITS
- CREEKS
- SCHOOLS
- PARCEL NUMBER 50
- EXISTING





PROPOSED GGNRA INCLUSION

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) was established in 1972 under Public Law 92-589 "in order to preserve for public use and enjoyment certain areas of Marin and San Francisco Counties possessing outstanding natural, historic, scenic and recreational values, and in order to provide for the maintenance of needed recreational open space necessary to urban environment and planning."

This most heavily visited of all the national parks stretches from Point Reyes along both sides of the entrance to the Golden Gate, then along Ocean Beach south to Fort Funston. The park was the result of the combined efforts of many people, notably "People for the GGNRA" and Congressman Phillip Burton, who sponsored and guided the legislation that made it all possible.

Congressman Leo Ryan first suggested extending the GGNRA into San Mateo County in the mid-1970's. When in 1978 Congressman Ryan made it known that he would initiate legislation to purchase Sweeney Ridge and also extend the GGNRA to the various public lands in northern San Mateo County if the people of Pacifica would support such an action, a massive show of support through petitions and testimony got the process started.

After Congressman Ryan's death, many in the U.S. Congress helped expedite passage of Public Law 96-607 in December 1980, spearheaded again by Congressman Burton. The law provided for the purchase and inclusion of Sweeney Ridge into the extension of the GGNRA boundaries according to a published map. The map included most of the public lands down to Pillar Point on the coast and beyond Route 92 in the San Francisco watershed lands. The die was cast and finally in 1984 Sweeney Ridge was dedicated as part of the GGNRA.

EXISTING GGNRA LANDS

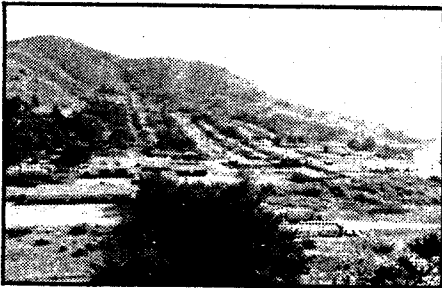


southeast from
sweeney ridge

The existing GGNRA boundaries in Pacifica, in addition to Sweeney Ridge (along with the easterly end of Cattle Hill/Discovery Ridge and most of easterly Mori Ridge), include Sharp Park State Beach, the pier, the Sharp Park Golf Course, Milagra Ridge Park, San Pedro Park, the San Francisco Discovery Site and Pacifica State Beach.

NEED FOR EXPANSION

As the Bay Area region continues to grow, the need for nearby, accessible open space becomes increasingly important. City dwellers, weary from the congestion of the San Francisco-San Jose metropolitan area, are encountering weekend traffic problems of rush-hour proportions as they search for outdoor recreation opportunities to the north in Marin County or to the south in southern San Mateo County. Fortunately, there is open space just minutes from the urban areas of San Francisco and Silicon Valley which, with improved access, could satisfy the recreation needs of thousands of Bay Area residents. This open space is located in the City of Pacifica in the GGNRA and its contiguous expansion areas.



cattle hill

The open hillsides which surround the developed coastal valleys of Pacifica offer a variety of recreational experiences. These ridgelines offer hiking trails, wild flower displays, wildlife observation and spectacular ocean views to as far north as Point Reyes National Seashore.

The City Council and citizens of Pacifica support careful controls for these relatively undiscovered areas so as to prevent an inappropriate level of development. However, long-term preservation of open space lands cannot rely solely upon present attitudes continuing indefinitely, especially since Pacifica has recently been discovered by real estate interests as desirable and as one of the last "affordable" cities in the metropolitan Bay Area. If these open space lands are to be preserved as parklands for a reasonable cost, it is urgent that this be done soon.

Several natural east-west ridgelines extend from Sweeney Ridge in the GGNRA to the ocean but the park's most westerly boundary currently stops at Highway 1. There is no coastal access along any part of it at this time. In fact, access in general to the GGNRA parcel is difficult. However, there are several large parcels of open space lands which would alleviate this difficulty and greatly enhance the recreation value of the parkland now in GGNRA ownership. There is a need for GGNRA involvement since the Federal Government has the ability to acquire, manage, maintain and operate open space resources often lacking at local, county and state levels. Therefore, it is proposed that the boundaries of the GGNRA be expanded to include these parcels.

AREAS FOR INCLUSION IN GGNRA

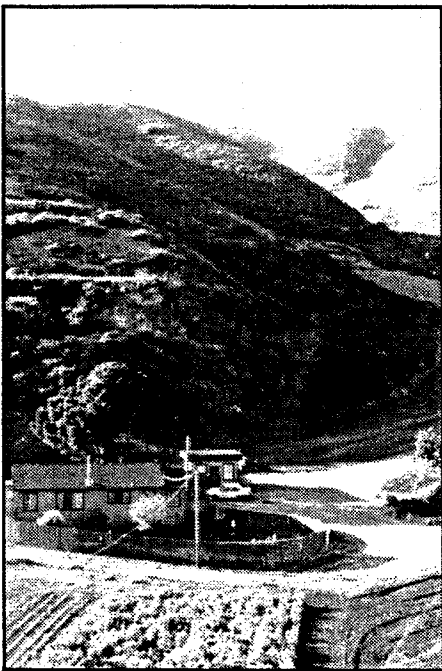
An examination of the areas included within the boundaries of the GGNRA in Pacifica and most of the parcels listed in this open space study indicates the contiguous nature of the land involved and clearly suggests that inclusion of many of these lands within the GGNRA would be an appropriate vehicle for preservation and maintenance of open space values. Without such preservation, the privately owned parcels are in danger of future development to the detriment of the entire region. Without such preservation, inappropriate development of the privately-owned parcels could adversely affect not just Pacifica, but the entire region, due to their proximity to the GGNRA.



flower farm

SUPPORT & ENDORSEMENT

The Task Force is recommending that fifteen parcels be considered for inclusion in the GGNRA. Abstracts of each parcel are included under PARCEL ABSTRACTS and detailed descriptions are included in Volume II. The following parcels are recommended in whole or in part for inclusion in the GGNRA boundaries and are keyed to the map entitled Proposed GGNRA inclusion:



picardo ranch







4. Milagra Ridge
5. North Slope Milagra Creek Canyon
6. East Slope Milagra Ridge
10. Mori Point
11. The Quarry Hillside & Coastal Bluffs
12. East Fairway Park Hillside Land
13. Sheldance
14. North Slope of Vallemar
15. Northeast Fork of Calera Creek
17. Eastern Calera Creek Valley
18. Cattle Hill
20. Western Extension from Cattle Hill
28. Picardo Ranch
29. Park Pacifica Stables
47. East of St. Lawrence Court

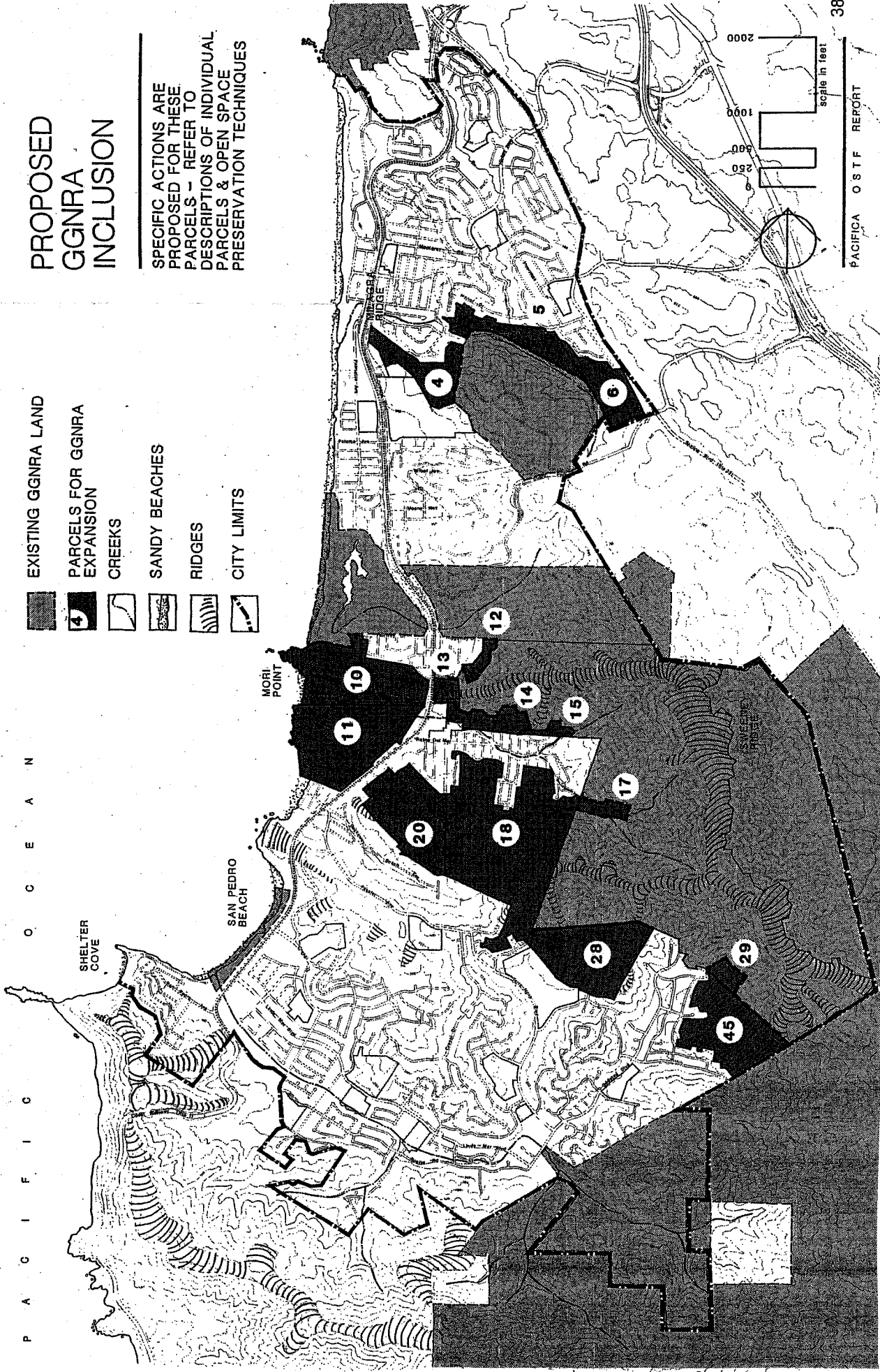
Active citizen participation was the key to success in initially demonstrating widespread support for the GGNRA proposal. From the beginning, the citizen support for the extension of the GGNRA to Pacifica included both the initial purchase of the privately owned 1,100-acre Sweeney Ridge parcel and the eventual acquisition of the connecting major undeveloped ridges that give Pacifica its dramatic seascape appearance and link the beaches to the coastal mountains.

There continues to be widespread citizen and city support for the expansion of the GGNRA to include the recommended parcels. This report should be used to further educate the public in Pacifica and the region about the possibilities, and is seen as an important first step. Endorsements of civic and environmental groups as well as governmental agencies should be solicited to support this grass roots effort.

PROPOSED GGNRA INCLUSION

SPECIFIC ACTIONS ARE
PROPOSED FOR THESE
PARCELS - REFER TO
DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL
PARCELS & OPEN SPACE
PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

-  EXISTING GGNRA LAND
-  PARCELS FOR GGNRA EXPANSION
-  CREEKS
-  SANDY BEACHES
-  RIDGES
-  CITY LIMITS





OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

There are a variety of techniques which may be employed to help preserve open space. Although the following discussion is by no means a comprehensive examination of the subject, it does provide an overview of some of the most common techniques and will serve as a starting point for those interested in exploring ways to preserve open space.

A General Plan is a long-range statement of goals, objectives and policies related to uses of land, and provides a guide to a city's future growth and development. California State Law mandates that a General Plan have a minimum of seven specific elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. Other elements may be added as deemed necessary and/or important by a city. Although the General Plan does not establish specific standards for land development, a city's land use actions must be consistent with the policies of the Plan.

GENERAL PLAN & ZONING

A General Plan is relevant to open space preservation in two ways. First, the Open Space Element must contain, as mandated by California Government Code Section 65560:

"A plan for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open space land within the City's jurisdiction . . . including, but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lake shores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors."

Second, the Land Use Element may contain language which refers to specific parcels of land. Included in such language may be references to the need to preserve open spaces or to restrict development to certain areas. General Plan language may also suggest acquisition of open space by local, state or federal agencies.

Zoning is one of the most common techniques available to regulate the uses of land. While the General Plan is intended to project the use of the land over time, zoning involves the immediate regulation of the physical limitations of the use of land and specific site planning. Building codes are distinct from zoning in that such codes deal with the structure and safety of buildings, while zoning regulates the use of land and the location, use, height, aesthetics, etc. of buildings. Zoning must be consistent with the General Plan.

Zoning can be used to maintain existing land uses (i.e., agricultural or open space zoning) or to preserve a portion of existing open space lands (i.e., large lot zoning) consistent with the rights of property owners to the economically viable use of their lands.

ZONING OVERLAYS

The use of overlay zones can be an effective open space preservation technique. An overlay zone is a zoning category which is applied in addition to the basic zoning designation. An overlay zone can be used for view protection, historical preservation or other special purposes. In Pacifica, the Hillside Preservation District (HPD) is an overlay zone which is relevant to open space preservation because it limits development in hillside areas. The steeper the slope of the property, the lower the amount of allowable building coverage (see Article 22.5 of Title 4 of the Pacifica Municipal Code).

SPECIFIC PLANS

A Specific Plan is a tool for implementing the General Plan in a designated area of a city. As the name suggests, it contains more definite criteria for development than the General Plan and may even supersede the zoning ordinance. Specific Plans are relevant to open space preservation because they often dictate where and how development will take place, and if and where open space will be preserved.

Development may often require the division of land into two or more parcels. Such a division is subject to government regulations. These regulations may require the provision of open space or limit the area where development may occur. In Pacifica, "Table 4" of the Subdivision Ordinance regulates the minimum lot size of subdivided parcels based upon the average cross slope of the property, thereby creating larger lots on steeper properties. (See Article 10 of Title 10 of the Pacifica Municipal Code).

SUBDIVISION CONTROL

Each local government whose jurisdiction includes a portion of the state designated coastal zone must prepare a local coastal program (LCP). Among other things, a LCP must address protection of agricultural lands and scenic areas within the coastal zone and may thereby provide extra protection for coastal open space lands.

LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAMS

Transfer of the Development Rights (TDR's) is a concept whereby potential development is transferred from a location where local government wishes to limit development to one where increased development is deemed appropriate. By encouraging use of TDR's, a city may be able to preserve desirable open space lands without using more restrictive land use controls.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

An easement constitutes a legal restriction on the use of all or a portion of a particular property. While the ownership of the land does not change, the owner's right to use that portion of the property subject to the easement is limited. Easements are normally deed restrictions that can be enforced by public and private agencies, or by individual citizens, depending on the nature of the easement.

EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are used for a wide range of public goals, such as land and scenic conservation, historic preservation, and public outdoor and recreational activities. Public acquisition of conservation easements is normally accomplished at a cost substantially less than the price of the land since the owner can still own and use the land in a manner compatible with the easement.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT

AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT

This is a form of conservation easement over property that will remain in agricultural use. This easement restricts those activities unnecessary for agriculture and that would adversely affect the open space values involved.

RECREATION EASEMENT

This is a form of conservation easement which restricts all activities harmful to the recreational uses of the land. These uses may include hiking, riding, fishing and camping, and the restrictions may protect flora, fauna and sensitive areas.

SCENIC OPEN SPACE EASEMENT

These are forms of conservation easement with restrictions which protect scenic ecological values and permit only uses which preserve the scenic view, both of and from the property. Limitations on density, height, bulk and design of structures can be expressly provided for in the deed or conveyance.

ACQUISITIONS

Perhaps the most effective way to preserve open space lands is to purchase or otherwise acquire such lands or their development rights. This technique often requires a funding source. For public agencies, such sources include the general fund, bonds, special taxes and a variety of others. Private nonprofit groups, however, often employ innovative and creative funding methods.

FEDERAL ACQUISITION

These are lands or easements acquired by the federal government by purchase or gift. In Pacifica, these will most likely involve new acquisitions for addition to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA).

STATE ACQUISITION

These are lands or easements acquired by the state government by purchase or gift. In Pacifica, these will most likely involve new acquisitions of ocean frontage and beach properties.

COUNTY ACQUISITION

These are lands or easements acquired by the county government by purchase or gift. In Pacifica, these will most likely involve the county park system that is within Pacifica's Sphere of Influence.

These are lands or easements acquired by the City of Pacifica by purchase or gift. Most likely these will involve new acquisitions to enhance our parks and outdoor recreation activities.

CITY ACQUISITION

The following Techniques may also be used to preserve open space.

OTHER PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

These are lands or easements acquired by a district formed by a community of landowners. In Pacifica, this may involve the acquisition of substandard lots or other lands considered necessary for the quiet enjoyment of the homes within the district.

OPENSPEACEMAINTEANCE DISTRICT

In some cases, restrictions are placed directly on the deed to the property and may control the location or type of development. Establishment of a deed restriction requires the cooperation of the property owner.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

These are lands or easements acquired by public land trust by purchase or gift. In Pacifica, the "Trust for Public Land" acquired Sweeney Ridge and the new Community Center site and then transferred them to the Federal Government (GGNRA) and the City of Pacifica. Other parcels of land could be acquired and preserved by a "Pacifica Land Trust" if it were to be formed by the citizens of Pacifica. The purpose of a "Pacifica Land Trust" would be to acquire various lands and easements of public benefit that would not otherwise be acquired by public or private agencies. Funds can often be obtained from public and private agencies and from voluntary contributions by individual citizens. Public Land Trust can often acquire lands at much reduced costs and have proved very successful in obtaining gifts from private foundations and individuals.

PUBLIC LAND TRUST

**DEDICATIONS AND FEES
FOR PARK AND
RECREATIONAL PURPOSES**

California State Code Section 66477 and Pacifica Municipal Code Article 16 provide general police power for the purpose of providing land and/or funds for such additional parks, recreational facilities and open space as may be deemed appropriate pursuant to the Open Space Recreation and Coastal Land Use Elements of the General Plan.

Dedications and/or fees are required as a condition of approval of a tentative or parcel map for residential projects based on a formula of 2 acres per 100 dwelling units (.02 acre per unit) or a fee in lieu of dedication based upon the average estimated fair market value of the land being subdivided or a combination of both.

CONCLUSIONS

It is proposed that the City Council develop a specific schedule for implementing each of the Task Force recommendations. There will be a need for strong leadership from the City Council for implementation of these recommendations.

This report by the Open Space Task Force represents extensive work, study and analysis of open space needs and potential for preservation. The Task Force feels that it has broad base community support and that it is imperative that this report be completely and thoroughly implemented and not simply become another governmental report that is filed on a shelf.

This report should become a living document through its implementation, refinement and modification to meet the goals of preserving open space, protecting the environment, attracting visitors to enjoy this environment and visitor-serving commercial resources, improving the recreational assets, and enhancing the overall quality of life in Pacifica.

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