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# 2.0 LAND USE ELEMENT\*

*Each City differs from every other City in its physical characteristics and in nature of its opportunities, so that the development of every City must be along individual lines. This very fact allows full scope for the development of that peculiar charm which, wherever discovered and developed irresistibly draws to that City people of discrimination and taste, and at the same time begets a spirit of loyalty and satisfaction on the part of the citizens.*

Daniel Burnham  
The American Plan

*\*This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements, such as maps, will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## Goals

- ❖ Retention of the quality of life and atmosphere of a small beach-oriented town characterized by:
  - An inclusive town with a human scale and a relaxed pace of life,
  - Vibrant mixed-use residential commercial districts, and
  - A built form suitable to the beach-scale and location of the community that avoids overcrowding
- ❖ Increased climate resiliency, sustainability, and economic prosperity.
- ❖ A city with equitable and healthy communities that treats people of all races, cultures, and incomes with fairness and respect in the activities, development, and regulation of the City
- ❖ A Local Coastal Program integrated with the City's overall framework for growth and development

## Background

The Land Use Element establishes the framework for development of the City, providing for the general distribution, location, and extent of the use of public and private land. This Element focuses on residential, commercial, and mixed use land uses. The Parks,

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Recreation, and Coastal Access Element addresses land uses related to open space and recreation.

The Element includes both land use maps and text. The policies and maps have been harmonized with all other elements and policies of the General Plan. All elements of the General Plan carry equal weight and the Land Use Element does not supersede other elements.

The City of Imperial Beach (City) is distinguished by its spectacular natural setting with open space as the largest single land use by acreage. Within the urbanized land areas the City is committed to maintaining and enhancing a “classic Southern California” beach-oriented community with a safe, small town, family atmosphere, rich in natural and cultural resources. While meeting this long standing goal, Imperial Beach is also working to differentiate itself in the region and state by becoming a landmark destination for ecotourism. The goals and policies of the Land Use Element are closely related to goals and policies in other elements that create a full picture of the long-term vision for Imperial Beach.

According to population and housing data from SANDAG, the City of Imperial Beach has approximately 9,860 residential dwelling units, and an estimated population of 26,324 (2010). The SANDAG projected regional growth forecast estimates a population of about 36,125 persons in 2050. New housing and services will be needed to support this growth.

Table L-1 summarizes land use designations by acreage.

<b>Table L-1</b>		
<b>Imperial Beach Land Use Designations by Acreage</b>		
	<b>Designated Acreage</b>	
Residential	1,010 Ac.	36%
Commercial	167 Ac.	6%
Open Space	1,085 Ac.	38%
Urban Reserve	407 Ac.	14%
Public Facility	170 Ac.	6%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>2,840 Ac.</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Acreage is rounded to whole acres and total acres do not sum.

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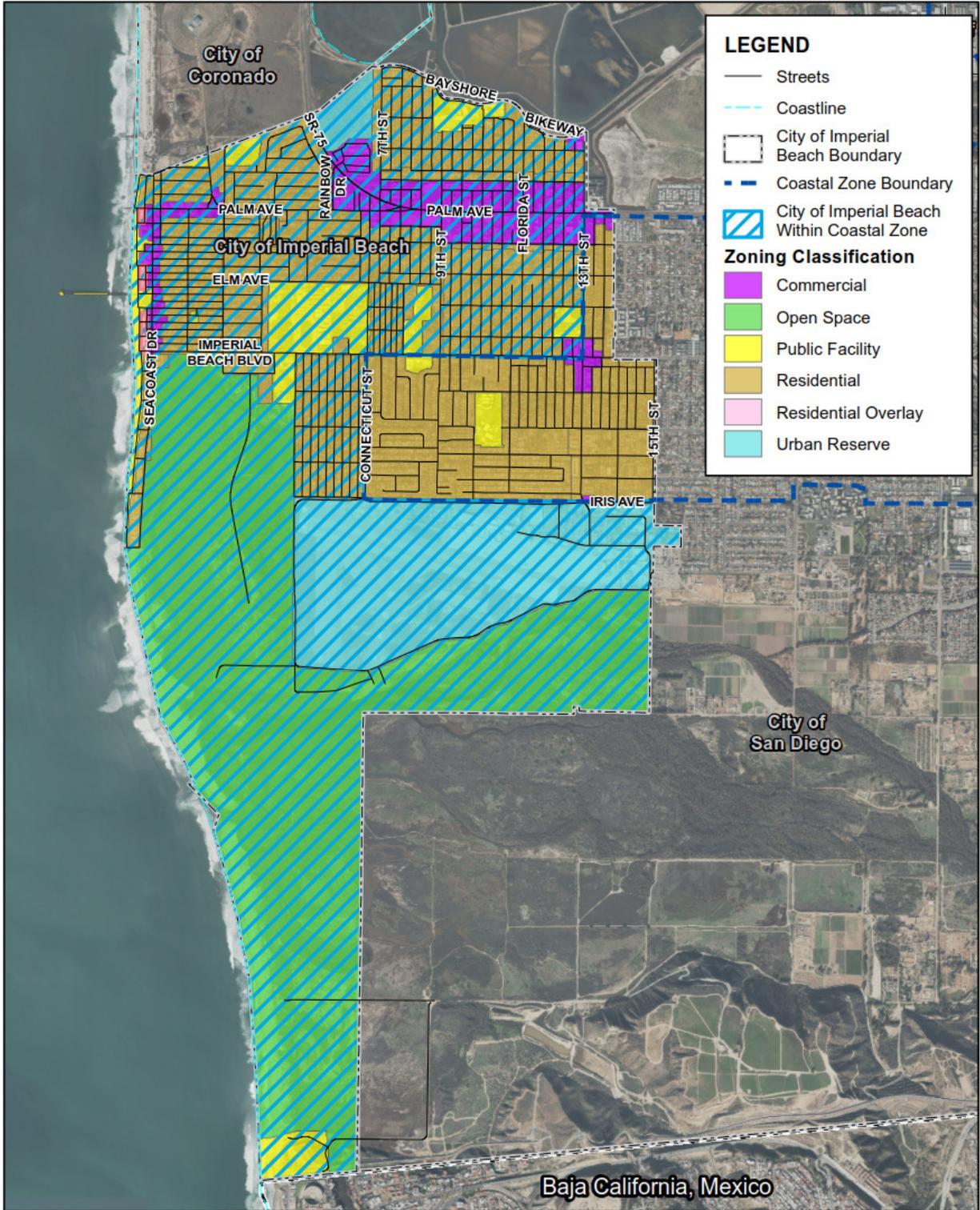
## 2.1 Land Use Framework

### Discussion

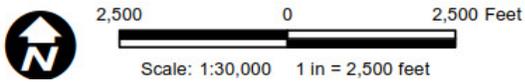
The California coast is an extremely desirable place to live, work and recreate that belongs to all the people. As such, congenial and cooperative use by both residents and visitors is a priority for the City. Such use should capture the best attributes of the City and creatively determine the acceptable place, scale, intensity, rate and methods for development consistent with resource protection and the retention of the character of a small, beach-oriented town. Environmentally protected open space habitat in the Tijuana River watershed is the predominant land use in the City. The urban areas are developed primarily with residential areas, small commercial businesses, and the U.S. Navy Outlying Landing Field (NOLF) Imperial Beach - Ream Field. A limited number of buildings are utilized for industrial uses within commercial zones; the City does not have an industrial land use designation.

The density and intensity of development are defined for each land use category depicted on the Land Use Plan, as shown on Figure L-1. Designations establish a range of maximum densities or intensities. Table L-2 establishes General Plan Land Use designations, describes the intent of each designation, and identifies zones that implement each designation. The zones are adopted in the City of Imperial Beach Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning is an important tool to implement the General Plan's land use map and policy direction. Where the General Plan provides land use designations and density/intensity standards, the zoning code specifies permitted uses and development standards (such as building height and setbacks) that are consistent with the Plan and furthers its implementation. The zoning code is also a part of the Local Coastal Program Implementation Plan (IP). Additional guidance on the design of the built environment is found in the Design Element.



Source: SanGIS 2014, 2017; City of Imperial Beach 2017; California Coastal Commission 2006



**FIGURE L-1  
LAND USE MAP**

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
IMPERIAL BEACH

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## Coastal Act Policies

Imperial Beach is a coastal community, bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, San Diego Bay to the north, and the Tijuana River watershed to the south. As a public agency administering or supporting activities within the coastal zone, the effect of actions on coastal resources shall be considered to achieve the policies of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.

A broad policy goal of California's Coastal Management Program is to maximize the provision of coastal access and recreation consistent with the protection of public rights, private property rights, and coastal resources as required by the California Constitution and provided in Section 30210 of the Coastal Act. Several additional policies contained in the Coastal Act, which are herein incorporated into the General Plan/Local Coastal Program, work together to meet this objective. The Coastal Act requires that development not interfere with the public right of access to the sea (Section 30211); provides for public access in new development projects with limited exceptions where adequate access exists nearby (Section 30212); encourages the provision of lower cost visitor and recreational facilities (Section 30213); addresses the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access (30214); specifies the need to protect ocean front land suitable for recreational use (Section 30221); gives priority to the use of land suitable for visitor serving recreational facilities over certain other uses (Section 30222); requires the protection of upland areas to support coastal recreation, where feasible (Section 30223); and encourages recreational boating use of coastal waters (Section 30224).

The public's right to access is supported by the availability of adequate parking, public transportation, and multi-modal facilities to serve coastal access and recreation uses. Support facilities such as parking lots, restrooms, and public use areas also contribute to ensuring maximum coastal access. Thus, the designation, administration, and development of land uses in the City are required to maintain maximum access and broad recreational opportunities for all in beach and coastal areas. Additionally, under the California Coastal Act, uses and facilities that are designed to enhance public opportunities for access, recreation, and use of coastal resources are of the highest priority. The Imperial Beach Land Use Plan identifies open space, beach and commercial areas that provide for local and visitor access to, and use of, the coastal resources. See Section 2.5 of this element and the Parks, Recreation, and Coastal Access Element for further information.

Coastal Act policies that are related to Land Use are provided in greater detail at the end of this element.

### Policies

- 2.1.1 Maintain a balanced community, with an appropriate mix of residences, workplaces, and services.
- 2.1.2 Regulate building intensity and housing unit density consistent with the

- designations established by the Land Use Plan (Figure L-1).
- 2.1.3 Require all land use proposals to respect, preserve and enhance, to the extent feasible, the ocean, beach, San Diego Bay and the Tijuana River Valley as the most important natural resources of Imperial Beach.
  - 2.1.4 Implement the Land Use Plan by applying consistent zoning designations that further the implementation of General Plan land uses and policies.
  - 2.1.5 Determine the compatibility of uses not identified on Table L-2 through a discretionary permit process.

<b>TABLE L-2 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</b>		
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Minimum / Maximum Intensities</b>	<b>Implementing Zone(s)</b>
<b>Single Family Residential</b> Low density single-family detached neighborhoods that maintain the small-town beach character of the community. Uses should be limited to detached residential units and residential compatible uses.	Maximum Building Height: 2 stories Maximum Density: 7-11 units per net acre	R-1-6000 R-1-3800
<b>Residential Low</b> Low density single-family neighborhoods with detached or attached residential dwelling units on a single lot. Uses should be limited to residential units and uses deemed compatible.	Maximum Building Height: 2 stories Maximum Density: 14 units per net acre	R-3000 R-3000-D
<b>Residential Medium</b> Detached and attached single family and multi-family dwellings in a moderately intense residential living environment. Uses should be limited to residential units and uses deemed compatible.	Maximum Building Height: 2 -3 stories Maximum Density: 21 units per net acre	R-2000
<b>Residential High</b> Multi-family units in a variety of configurations for a living environment that includes landscaping, recreational amenities, and a compact urban beach-living environment. Residential compatible uses permitted.	Maximum Building Height: 2 -3 stories Maximum Density: 29 units per net acre	R-1500
<b>General Commercial Mixed-Use</b> Business and services that meet local neighborhood and visitor-serving needs in a commercial or mixed-use format that may include multi-family residences. Variety in configuration is encouraged with all development providing a strong relationship to the street and supporting a pedestrian-oriented setting.	Maximum Building Height: 3-4 stories Maximum Density: 43 units per net acre	C/MU-1
<b>Seacoast Commercial Mixed-Use</b> Beach visitor-serving focused land use incorporating services, businesses, and	<b>Maximum Building Height:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotels: 4 stories by Specific Plan</li> <li>• All other uses: 3 stories</li> </ul>	C/MU-2 CMU/RO

<b>TABLE L-2 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</b>		
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Minimum / Maximum Intensities</b>	<b>Implementing Zone(s)</b>
<p>multi-family units in a pedestrian-oriented community character along the primary beach area.</p> <p><b>Seacoast Commercial Mixed-Use Overlay</b>            Overlay area preserving opportunities for the continuation of single-family residential uses, in the area bounded by Ocean Boulevard (the beach) to the west, Ocean Lane on the east, Imperial Beach Boulevard on the south, and Palm Avenue on the north. Single-family land uses and mixed-use and multi-family residences are permitted in addition to uses permitted in the Seacoast Corridor.</p>	<p><b>Maximum Density:</b> 29 units per net acre; an additional one unit per lot may be permitted subject to the compliance with specified development incentives and the approval of a conditional use permit.</p>	
<p><b>Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use</b>            Business and services that meet local neighborhood needs in a commercial or mixed-use format that may include multi-family residences. Variety in configuration is encouraged with all development providing a strong relationship to the street and supporting a pedestrian-oriented setting.</p>	<p><b>Maximum Building Height:</b> 3 stories  <b>Maximum Density:</b> 29 units per net acre; an additional one unit per lot may be permitted subject to the compliance with specified development incentives and the approval of a conditional use permit.</p>	C/MU-3
<p><b>Commercial Recreation - Ecotourism</b>            Land provided to meet the demand for goods and services required primarily by the recreation and ecotourist visitor. Supports City economic development goals.</p>	<p><b>Maximum Building Height: 2 stories</b></p>	C/R-ET
<p><b>Open Space</b>            Land set aside for the protection of sensitive and fragile natural resources that require carefully management such as the Tijuana River Valley. Limited uses allowed by Conditional Use Permit.</p>		PF
<p><b>Urban Reserve</b>            Natural preserve and/or military service areas that may be maintained in the current state or adaptively reused as a different future uses. Specific Plan required for conversions and reuse of any Urban Reserve areas.</p>	<p><b>Maximum Building Height / Density / Intensity:</b> Future use and maximum density or intensity of will be determined as part of the Specific Plan.</p>	UR
<p><b>Public Facility</b>            Land devoted to public facilities and utilities including but not limited to: public schools, parks, the beach and civic facilities. See the Facilities and Services Element and the Parks, Recreation, and Access Element for additional standards. Residential compatible uses permitted.</p>	<p><b>Maximum Building Height: 4 stories</b></p>	PF

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## 2.2 Sustainable Development

### Discussion

Sustainable development is often defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The State of California has taken a leadership role in working toward sustainable, resilient, healthy communities, including mandating the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Regional goals for sustainable development are expressed in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) incorporated into San Diego Forward: The Regional Plan, in accordance with the Sustainable Communities Act of 2008 (also known as SB 375, Steinberg). The regional SCS focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicle use. It integrates the Imperial Beach General Plan land use plan, along with the other general plans in the region, that together show a regional commitment to a smart growth land use pattern with the highest development densities/intensities occurring within the transit-served urban core. The SCS links the land use pattern to transportation investments that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet state-mandated targets.

The Imperial Beach General Plan is consistent with, and furthers implementation of the region’s Sustainable Communities Strategy through:

- Providing opportunities for infill and redevelopment, including supporting mixed-use development to focus growth within areas served by transit and existing infrastructure;
- Preservation of open spaces for habitat conservation and recreational uses;
- Complete streets policies to enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the City and to neighboring jurisdictions; and
- Inclusion of policies to reduce the City’s carbon footprint and prepare a climate action plan.

See the Conservation and Ecotourism Element Section 4.2 for additional information and a guide to where additional policies related to climate change and sustainability are found throughout the General Plan.

### Policies

- 2.2.1 Locate and promote infill and new development in a manner that will not have adverse impacts on coastal resources.
- 2.2.2 Encourage land uses and improvements that reduce energy and water consumption, waste and noise generation, air quality impacts and support other comparable resource strategies for a sustainable Imperial Beach.
- 2.2.3 Encourage adaptive reuse of buildings and sites to utilize existing infrastructure while enhancing the character of the community.
- 2.2.4 Support concentration of redevelopment and higher-intensity residential and non-residential development in areas with existing supportive infrastructure and in proximity to transit access.

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## 2.3 Residential Uses and Neighborhoods

### Discussion

The City of Imperial Beach is dedicated to preserving the small-town beach community character that make it special for residents and visitors. However, limited land resources, increasing population across the State of California and a highly constrained housing market, continues to create pressure to increase the size, density, and intensity of development. Additionally the City strives to achieve a balanced housing stock that meets the varied needs of all income segments of the community. To manage these pressures, the approach to residential neighborhoods in Imperial Beach is to focus density and redevelopment at key locations, and remain committed to the retention of stable, owner-occupied, single family neighborhoods. See the Design Element for additional related policies.

Land use decisions, redevelopment, and City programs provide the means and incentives to encourage upgrading and rehabilitation of existing housing and, where possible, enhancement of public services. Implementation of land use policies related to residential neighborhoods are closely tied to needs and strategies discussed in the Housing Element.

### Policies

- 2.3.1 Allow for a variety of housing types, densities, and sizes.
- 2.3.2 Maintain a high quality, livable residential environment that implements the Land Use Plan
  - a. Protect single family neighborhoods from through traffic and overflow parking demands from other uses.
  - b. Avoid the introduction or intrusion of higher intensity uses into single-family neighborhoods.
  - c. Permit residential uses and uses deemed compatible with residential uses in residential areas.
- 2.3.3 Locate higher density uses near public transportation facilities, with consideration for multi-modal access, and convenient location of goods and services.
- 2.3.4 Develop and adopt zoning code amendments to appropriately integrate accessory dwelling unit regulations in accordance with state law (Chapter 720, Statutes of 2016).

## 2.4 Commercial and Mixed-Use Areas

### Discussion

Commercial and mixed-use areas are fundamental to maintaining a healthy tax base that supports the City's economy and the ability to provide quality coastal resource access. Community-serving commercial and mixed-use areas are envisioned to be enjoyable places to work, shop, and promote beach visitor patronage within the City. See the Design Element for additional discussion of the character of the built environment, and supportive policies.

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### **Seacoast Corridor**

The Seacoast Corridor is a pedestrian-oriented visitor-serving commercial and mixed-use area that serves as the quintessential Southern California beach town destination. Beach access combined with pedestrian activity and small-town beach-focused businesses create a vibe and character for the area that is appreciated by residents and visitors alike. To maintain this key commercial and recreational destination, careful consideration and regulation of land uses, including active commercial uses, character of the built environment, and visitor-serving amenities is required. See Section 2.5 in this element for additional visitor-serving use discussion.

### **Bayfront Corridor**

Commercial and mixed-use development located along Imperial Beach's Bayfront offers excellent opportunities for visitor-serving commercial, recreation, and public services and access uses. See the Conservation and Ecotourism Element for policies relating to expanding Bayfront commercial uses in a manner that supports the City's conservation and economic development goals.

### **Palm Avenue/State Route (SR) 75**

Palm Avenue/State Route 75 serves as the major community entrance to Imperial Beach whether entering the City from I-5 or the City of San Diego on the east side, or entering from Silver Strand Boulevard and the City of Coronado on the north side. The 1.2 mile segment of SR 75 (currently in the relinquishment process) serves as a major community artery and commercial/mixed-use business area. The corridor is a mix of pedestrian- and auto-oriented businesses that is expected to maintain its eclectic character even as additional pedestrian-oriented businesses and multi-family housing are added. See the Design Element for additional policies.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor is the neighborhood serving business district of Imperial Beach. Providing a mix of commercial and mixed-use development the area should provide goods and services primarily for the residents of Imperial Beach and employees/visitors to NOLF IB Ream Field in a pedestrian-oriented format.

## **Policies**

- 2.4.1 Provide for, and encourage, a range of visitor-serving and mixed-use development along Palm Avenue and Seacoast Drive that support use of coastal resources, provision of commercial services, and capture a greater share of local spending.
  - a. Maintain an appropriate balance between visitor-serving uses and neighborhood-supporting commercial uses.
- 2.4.2 Provide attractive and stimulating commercial and mixed use developments that contribute to Imperial Beach's small beach town character.
- 2.4.3 Foster new commercial and mixed-use businesses and development in proximity to transit access, to provide goods and services to residents and visitors.

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- 2.4.4 Provide for and encourage the development of a broad range of uses in the City's commercial centers and corridors that reduce the need to travel to adjoining communities and capture a greater share of local spending.
  - 2.4.5 Enhance the Palm Avenue/State Route (SR) 75 Commercial / Mixed-Use Corridor.
    - a. Promote pedestrian activity by requiring ground floor active commercial uses for all properties with frontage along Palm Avenue.
    - b. Prepare and implement plans and tools that support modernization, improvement, and business attraction/retention; beautifies the area with pedestrian, landscape, and façade improvements; and manages parking and multi-modal access for improved business activity.
    - c. Continue collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions to foster coordinated implementation of improvements.
  - 2.4.6 Promote the Seacoast Corridor as a commercial and mixed-use area that maintains and enhances the visitor-serving, pedestrian-oriented character of the area.
    - a. Focus development in a manner that maintains and enhances multi-modal public access to the coast consistent with Coastal Act Section 30252.
    - b. Continue to transition existing residential uses to new visitor-serving commercial uses.
    - c. Promote pedestrian activity by requiring ground floor active commercial uses for all properties facing Seacoast Drive and Palm Avenue west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
    - d. Allow residential development on properties that do not have frontage along Seacoast Drive and Palm Avenue west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
    - e. Seek to provide a range of lower-cost and overnight accommodations.
    - f. Provide opportunities for increased density with approval of a conditional use permit in accordance with the Imperial Beach Zoning Ordinance.
  - 2.4.7 Cultivate the 13th Street Corridor as a pedestrian-oriented commercial and mixed-use district that primarily serves neighborhood residents.

## **2.5 Coastal Priority and Visitor-Serving Commercial Uses**

### **Discussion**

Visitor-serving and recreation uses in Imperial Beach include the public beaches, beach access and coastal accessways, segments of the Bayshore Bikeway, and San Diego Bayfront areas. Parks and recreation are further discussed in the Parks, Recreation, and Coastal Access Element.

### **Coastal Dependent Uses**

Coastal dependent uses are those activities that rely on utilization of or access to coastal resources such as the ocean, water, or shoreline. These are uses that cannot be replaced or duplicated on inland property. The ocean, beach, and the land immediately adjacent to the coastline are recognized by the State of California and the California Coastal Act as an irreplaceable natural resource to be enjoyed by the entire City and region. This unique, narrow strip of land should receive careful recognition and

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planning. Consistent with the California Coastal Act, the purpose of the beach and coastline is to make available to the people, for their benefit and enjoyment forever, the scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the ocean, beach and related lands.

The Imperial Beach Bayfront area is a unique and environmentally sensitive area of the San Diego Bay. Opportunities and constraints for development and access to this area have been the subject of numerous studies, reports and surveys.

### **Coastal Related Uses**

Imperial Beach is working toward providing, enhancing and expanding visitor-serving commercial uses to support coastal access and recreation in a manner that is compatible with the small town beach-oriented character of the City. Visitor-serving uses will include lower-cost visitor and recreational facilities in line with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. See also the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, Section 4.9.

### **Policies**

- 2.5.1 While the opportunities for full deep-water bay access from the Imperial Beach portion of the San Diego Bayfront are limited by extensive environmental and economic constraints, the City should continue to evaluate opportunities for increased public access and recreation opportunities.
- 2.5.2 Protect, encourage, and, where feasible, provide lower cost visitor and recreational facilities. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.
- 2.5.3 Support economic vitality by protecting existing visitor serving uses, and encouraging new visitor-serving facilities on underutilized property.
  - a. Provide land use areas and actively pursue additional visitor-serving (tourist-oriented businesses) uses such as hotels/motels, entertainment attractions, restaurants, and shopping along the beachfront, San Diego Bayfront and inland areas.
  - b. Encourage visitor-serving retail uses in all commercial land use designations.
  - c. Prioritize development of visitor-serving and commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation in the Seacoast Corridor and along Palm Avenue over other residential or non-residential development.
  - d. Identify Visitor Serving Commercial uses as a permitted or conditionally permitted use with designated commercial zones.
- 2.5.4 Enhance coastal access and recreation through creation of an ecotourism/recreational corridor along the Imperial Beach Bayfront incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths and complementary uses. See also the Mobility Element, the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, and the Parks, Recreation, and Coastal Access Element.

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- 2.5.5 Encourage new overnight accommodation development within the City, where feasible, to provide a range of room types, sizes, and room prices in order to serve a variety of income ranges.
    - a. Permit short-term vacation rentals in all commercial land use designations.
    - b. Protect the character and integrity of residential neighborhoods by prohibiting rentals of less than 30 days in all residential land use designations.

## **2.6 Airport Land Use Compatibility and Military Coordination**

### **Discussion**

Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach (NOLF IB), locally referred to as 'Ream Field, is a U.S. Government Naval installation that is a part of Naval Base Coronado. Activities on the installation include naval operational handling of overflow helicopter squadrons traffic from adjacent North Island installations. The southeastern portion of the base is part of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR).

NOLF IB is the site of much of the Navy's West Coast helicopter training. Helicopters stationed at NAS North Island routinely fly to NOLF Imperial Beach to conduct training and practice. A diverse set of missions are flown by stationed and transient aircraft at NASNIA and NOLF Imperial Beach. Aircraft operations involving deployment to and from ships, post-Naval Aviation Depot (NADEP) maintenance check flights, fleet replacement training, operational support flights, transient operations, and pilot currency are routinely flown in the area. The US Navy has continued to invest in the Naval Base, including construction of a 600-acre coastal campus for SEAL training and support.

The City of Imperial Beach supports the Navy's mission and will continue to coordinate with the U.S. Government to ensure compatibility with military and airport planning and operational efforts. Ream Field is designated in the General Plan as an Urban Reserve, to indicate that a future specific planning effort would be required if the military were ever to relinquish use of the property. The Navy prepared an Air Installation Compatibility Use Zones (AICUZ) for this facility as well as the North Island Naval Air Station (NASNI) most recently in 2011. The current AICUZ has a planned operational horizon year of 2020.

### **Policies**

- 2.6.1 Continue to support U.S. Government activities and personnel associated with military operations at Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach (NOLF IB) Ream Field.
- 2.6.2 Coordinate with the Navy to address traffic, congestion, infrastructure, and habitat conservation issues associated with base operations and expansion.
  - a. Strive to increase use of transit and alternative modes of transportation to the base. See also the Mobility Element.

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- b. Seek Department of Defense contributions to infrastructure improvements to achieve mutual benefits for the Naval Base and the City of Imperial Beach
  - c. Pursue shared use facilities, including a fire station and public works yard, to address mutual needs.
- 2.6.3 Encourage development of supportive facilities and services to serve Naval base employees and visitors, while increasing Imperial Beach’s tax base.
- 2.6.4 Notify the U.S. Government of land use or development activities within 1,000 feet of NOLF IB to ensure compatibility with military plans and operations.
- 2.6.5 Support continued retention of 606 acres of the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge to remain under control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 2.6.6 Maintain compatibility with Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI) and Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach (NOLF) Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) noise and safety contours.

## **2.7 Environmental Justice and Healthy Communities**

### **Discussion**

Environmental justice is defined in state planning law as the “fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Gov. Code § 65040.12(e).” Environmental justice is achieved when everyone, regardless of race, culture, gender, disabilities, or income, enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards. Furthermore, it is achieved when everyone has equal access to, and meaningful participation in, the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work. The State of California requires that general plans identify disadvantaged communities within their boundaries and develop policies to: reduce health risks, promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

As applied to implementation of the Coastal Act, the California Coastal Commission views environmental justice as inherent in its efforts to protect California’s coast and ocean commons for the benefit of all the people. Environmental justice-supportive policies related to protecting coastal resources, and providing public coastal access and lower-cost recreation for everyone, is found in the Conservation Element, as well as the Parks, Recreation and Coastal Access Element.

Environmental justice and social equity goals relate closely to policies supporting healthy communities. The physical environment, as well as the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age (collectively known as the social determinants of health) have a profound effect on how healthy people are over the course of their lives<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, communities that have open

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<sup>1</sup> Change Lab Solutions. 2015. *Health in All Policies in General Plans*.  
[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/HIAP\\_ModelGeneralPlans\\_FINAL\\_20150728.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/HIAP_ModelGeneralPlans_FINAL_20150728.pdf)

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space and recreational opportunities, high quality and affordable housing, and safe multi-modal transportation options, as well as access to resources such as affordable healthy foods, medical services, living-wage jobs, and quality educational services experience better health outcomes.

In Imperial Beach, and the South Region of San Diego County more broadly, there are three particular risk factors — tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity — that contribute to four chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease & stroke, diabetes, and lung disease) that cause almost 60 percent of all deaths<sup>2</sup>. The City of Imperial Beach is committed to collaborating with local and regional health organizations and agencies on programs to reduce exposure to tobacco, promote access to healthy food, and encourage opportunities for physical activity. In addition, general plans can affect many of these social determinants of health by addressing the following issues<sup>3</sup>:

- Clean air, water, and soil
- Access to parks and open space
- Access to healthy food
- Preservation of agricultural land
- Access to good jobs and economic opportunity
- Healthy and affordable housing
- Safe, convenient, and accessible transportation systems
- Sustainable development and climate change
- Social connection and community engagement

Because community health is an interdisciplinary issue, a range of policies that address these social determinants of health are interwoven throughout the elements contained in the General Plan. However, key community health policies are included below and in the Mobility Element to provide a focus on the City's efforts to provide leadership in community health matters.

## **Policies**

### *Reduce Health Risks*

- 2.7.1 Increase community food sovereignty by encouraging, through healthy retail, community food production and other means, that fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods are available in all neighborhoods of Imperial Beach.
- 2.7.2 Support provision of convenient access to healthy foods in all neighborhoods and commercial areas.

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Add 2011 NASNI AICUZ to list of References. Draft NASNI ALUCP should be issued for public review and comment later in 2017.

<sup>2</sup> County of San Diego Health and Human Services. 2015. *3-4-50: Chronic Diseases in San Diego County – South Region, 2000-2013*. [http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/CHS/3-4-50/3-4-50\\_South\\_Detailed\\_Brief\\_2015.pdf](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/CHS/3-4-50/3-4-50_South_Detailed_Brief_2015.pdf), accessed September 18, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Change Lab Solutions. 2015. *Health in All Policies in General Plans*. [http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/HIAP\\_ModelGeneralPlans\\_FINAL\\_20150728.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/HIAP_ModelGeneralPlans_FINAL_20150728.pdf), accessed October 5, 2017.

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- 2.7.3 Promote the economic feasibility of agriculture and preserve farmland in the Tijuana River Valley while encouraging the development of urban agriculture.
  - 2.7.4 Encourage both indoor and outdoor smoke-free workplaces, multifamily housing, and parks (other outdoor gathering places) to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.
  - 2.7.5 Reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by fostering a social, retail and physical environment that supports healthy choices, access to treatment services, and enforcement of existing regulations.

*Promote Civil Engagement*

- 2.7.6 Proactively and meaningfully engage community residents in the planning and development process by using culturally-appropriate and accessible channels, including: providing appropriate language services, providing child care, (holding meetings, focus groups, and/or listening sessions at a variety of venues throughout the community, and using participatory facilitation techniques.
- 2.7.7 Consult with California Native American tribes to provide them with an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early planning stage, for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to cultural places. See also the Conservation and Ecotourism Element.
- 2.7.8 Implement development policies to protect the public health, safety, and welfare equitably among all segments of the population. Address the needs of those who are disenfranchised in the process.

*Prioritize Public Facilities*

- 2.7.9 Prioritize and allocate citywide resources to provide public facilities and services to communities in need. Greater resources should be provided to communities where greater needs exist. See also the Parks, Recreation and Coastal Access, and Public Facilities elements.
- 2.7.10 Strive to achieve meaningful participation for all community residents in the siting and design of public facilities.
- 2.7.11 Provide equal access to public facilities and infrastructure for all community residents.

## **Coastal Act Policies – Land Use**

Section 30213 -Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred

Section 30221 - Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area

Section 30222 - The use of private lands suitable for visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation shall have priority over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependent industry

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Section 30250 -New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases for agricultural uses, outside existing 37 developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels

Section 30252 - The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

Section 30255- Coastal-dependent developments shall have priority over other developments on or near the shoreline. Except as provided elsewhere in this division, coastal-dependent developments shall not be sited in a wetland. When appropriate, coastal-related developments should be accommodated within reasonable proximity to the coastal-dependent uses they support.

Section 30220 Coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities that cannot readily be provided at inland water areas shall be protected for such uses.

Section 30221 Oceanfront land; protection for recreational use and development Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area. (Amended by Ch. 380, Stats. 1978.)

Section 30222 Private lands; priority of development purposes The use of private lands suitable for visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation shall have priority over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependent industry.

Section 30222.5 Oceanfront lands; aquaculture facilities; priority Oceanfront land that is suitable for coastal dependent aquaculture shall be protected for that use, and proposals for aquaculture facilities located on those sites shall be given priority, except over other coastal dependent developments or uses.

Section 30252 The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

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# 3.0 MOBILITY ELEMENT\*

*Let's not forget that so often when we talk about the city's problems - say, traffic congestion - we overlook the fact that they are also evidence of the city's vitality. Cities' work, despite all the prophecies of chaos and doom.*

Christian Science Monitor

*\*This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## Goals

- ❖ A city with safe, efficient, and complete streets that meets the needs of all users.
- ❖ A pedestrian-oriented, small beach town atmosphere where people can comfortably and safely walk or bicycle
- ❖ Provision of a coordinated land use and mobility system that supports sustainable development, mobility choices, and healthy, active living
- ❖ A well-connected mobility network that embraces innovative technologies and supports mobility choices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled

## Background

The quality of life and economic vitality of Imperial Beach is dependent upon a safe and efficiently operating mobility system. The Mobility Element establishes the framework for the City's approach to complete streets, regional access, and the increased use of active transportation in order to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Specific aspects of the mobility system include:

### Complete Streets

"Complete streets" is a term to describe a system that meets the needs of all users of the streets, defined to include pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transportation, motorists, children, seniors, persons with disabilities, movers of commercial goods and emergency vehicles. Complete Streets provide opportunities to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while enabling active travel and opportunities for physical

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activity. It also facilitates the improvements of, but not limited to, new or widened sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signal heads, traffic calming features, bicycle facilities, bicycle racks, lighting, signage, public transportation stops, access to schools, and commercial/retail and mixed-use land uses.

### **Regional Access**

Imperial Beach is dependent on its transportation connections to the rest of the region and pro-actively works with other cities and organizations to preserve and improve this regional access. Major transportation system planning, funding, programming, and implementation occurs at the regional level through the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Imperial Beach, along with the other 17 cities and the County, work through SANDAG to chart the region's future growth and transportation investments through development and adoption of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The most recent RTP was incorporated into San Diego Forward, The Regional Plan, adopted by the SANDAG Board in 2015. The RTP is updated every four years.

### **Safety, Environmental Sensitivity, Energy Efficiency**

The City strives for safety, environmental sensitivity, multi-modal effectiveness and energy efficiency in all transportation designs and improvements. In this system, pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths, and public transit receive the same attention as facilities designed for the automobile.

### **Service Levels for Streets and Signalized Intersections**

The City has a longstanding policy that arterials and local streets should be designed to operate at service level "C" or better during average daily traffic volume (ADT) conditions, and that signalized intersections under peak hour conditions should operate at service level "D" or better. The City acknowledges that a lower standard is acceptable for special events and seasonal beach related traffic. However, the City anticipates transitioning from a level of service to a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metric as the primary means to determine transportation impacts, in accordance with Senate Bill 743 (Steinberg, 2013).

### **Visitor Parking and Traffic**

The City's small-town character and coastal location regularly attract daily visitors. When the weather and beach conditions are attractive, beach parking demand often exceeds supply. Where practical, the City should work toward increasing coastal access while reducing parking demand and greenhouse gas emissions through increased use of walking, bicycling, transit and ridesharing, and innovative use of transportation demand management.

### **Quality and Aesthetics**

Since people move through and about Imperial Beach on the circulation system, their impression of the community is based on the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the system, as well as its functional characteristics. The environment of each neighborhood is also heavily dependent on the quality of the street scene. The City values the

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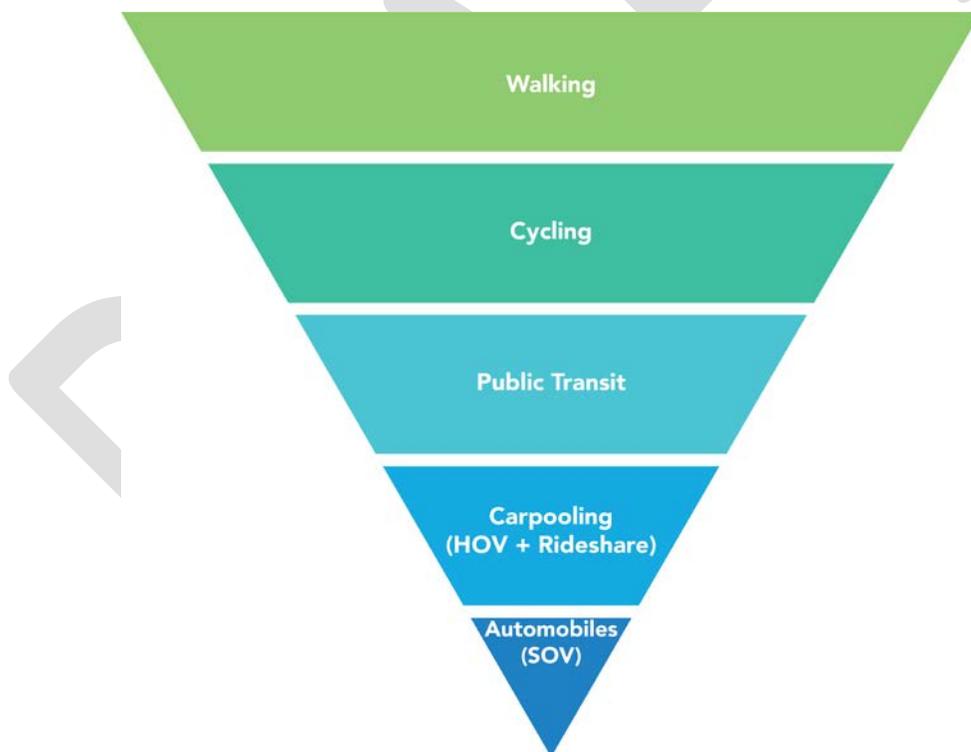
aesthetic qualities of all roadways and transportation facilities.

### **Innovative Technologies and Strategies**

The mobility system as a whole can operate more efficiently and safely through the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM). ITS utilize technology to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of multimodal transportation systems. ITS can be used to increase vehicle throughput and reduce congestion, among other benefits. TDM refers to programs and strategies that manage and reduce traffic congestion by encouraging the use of transportation alternatives. Looking forward, Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) have the potential to provide a range of benefits to Imperial Beach and the region and are paramount to consider in planning efforts

### **Sustainable Transportation Hierarchy**

A modal hierarchy of users, as shown on Figure M-1, provides a framework to inform planning, design, and operational decisions. The hierarchy is intended to consider and give priority to the most vulnerable users of the roadway and the most resource efficient transportation modes.



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## **Coastal Act**

### **Discussion**

Coastal Act section 30252 relates to circulation. This section states: the location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing non-automobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation resources by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.

## **3.1 Street System**

### **Discussion**

#### **Street Typology System & Overlays**

The City's Street Typology system categorizes streets based on street character, adjacent land uses, functionality, and intended users. The system serves to supplement the City's Street Classification system and reflects the City of Imperial Beach's commitment to providing Complete Streets. The Street Classification system (Figure M-2 [to be added]) remains as a separate measure to evaluate vehicular operations.

Street Overlays complement the Street Typologies, acknowledging that portions of Imperial Beach's roadways may serve a special use and require additional design considerations.

#### **Street Typologies**

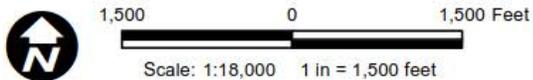
- Arterial Thoroughfare
- Multimodal Boulevard
- Neighborhood Connector
- Residential Street
- Multi-Use Path

#### **Street Overlays**

- Ecoroute Overlay
- Truck Route Overlay



Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017



**FIGURE M-2**  
**STREET CLASSIFICATIONS**  
LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
IMPERIAL BEACH

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Each Street Typology and Overlay is identified in the following pages, including an overview of the purpose, the respective characteristics, and identification of the respective streets. The Street Typology and Overlay system is intended to provide guidance for the selection of design elements by taking into consideration the context of the local environment, such as land use type and concentration, and the competing needs of all transportation modes. Figure M-3 displays the Street Typologies and Overlays (*new graphic to be developed*).

## **Arterial Thoroughfares**

### **Overview**

Arterial Thoroughfares are 4- and 6-lane roadways providing key vehicular access to Imperial Beach. They accommodate greater volumes of vehicular traffic due to greater vehicular network connections, traverse many of the City's signalized intersections, and generally provide for vehicular priority without compromising the safety of other modes.

### **Description by Mode**

#### *Pedestrian*

Intersections facilitate safe pedestrian crossings through high visibility marked crosswalks, advance stop bars, and pedestrian countdown signals with lead pedestrian intervals at signalized intersections. Pedestrian crossing distances can be reduced through curb extensions and/or curb bulb-outs where feasible. Landscape strips between the sidewalk and roadway are also an effective tool to further separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic. On wide streets, center medians may be provided as pedestrian refuges.

#### *Bicycle*

Bicycle facilities that provide a dedicated right-of-way for the sole use of bicyclists, such as cycle tracks, bike lanes or buffered bike lanes, are most appropriate for these roadways.

#### *Transit*

Transit stop designs that are incorporated into roadways in a manner that reduces conflicts with vehicles and cyclists can effectively maximize rider safety.

#### *Vehicular*

Arterial Thoroughfares that strive for vehicular operational efficiency without compromising the safety of other modes are critical to the efficient movement of people and goods and must

### **Applicable Streets**

State Route (SR) 75 / Palm Avenue, east of 7th Street. As of 2017, the City was working with Caltrans on SR 75 relinquishment. Relinquishment is a process to remove a state highway, either in whole or in part, from the State Highway System. With respect to SR 75, Imperial Beach would gain local control over design, operations and maintenance.

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## ***Multimodal Boulevard***

### **Overview**

Multimodal Boulevards are 2- and 4-lane roadways providing the primary access to the City's commercial core, coastal areas, and other key destinations. They are utilized by local residents and visitors alike and are designed for the safe mobility of all transportation modes. This typology is designed to support high levels of pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists through traffic calming measures, attractive landscaping, and multimodal facilities. Wayfinding signs should be scaled and designed to appeal to all transportation modes and users.

### **Description by Mode**

#### *Pedestrian*

Pedestrians are accommodated by wider sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, median islands, and decreased crossing distances through curb extensions or curb bulb-outs. Context sensitive pedestrian amenities (e.g. seating, public art, trash receptacles, shading, etc.) emphasizes pedestrian mobility and creates a more inviting environment. Pedestrian scale lighting is encouraged, especially within the commercial areas and adjacent to transit stops. When feasible, landscape strips between the sidewalk and roadway further separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic and improve comfort and safety.

#### *Bicycle*

Bicycle facilities improve bicycle mobility and emphasize the roadways as a safe place to ride. Bicycle parking is to be provided at strategic, visible locations.

#### *Transit*

Existing and future transit stops will be clearly identifiable and accentuated with amenities (e.g. seating, shelters, information kiosks, and trash receptacles). Wayfinding will direct transit users to key destinations such as the beach, pier, and civic center.

#### *Vehicular*

On-street parking will be maximized to the extent possible without compromising the safety or mobility of other modes.

### **Applicable Streets**

- Seacoast Drive
- 9th Street
- 13th Street
- Palm Avenue, west of 7th Street
- Imperial Beach Boulevard

## ***Neighborhood Connector***

### **Overview**

Neighborhood Connectors are generally undivided 2-lane roadways that traverse

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neighborhoods, providing connections across the City. They are fronted by residential land uses and schools and provide essential connections. They are utilized primarily by local residents. The efficient movement of all modes is important along these roadways, however, maintaining slow speeds should be a priority.

### **Description by Mode**

#### *Pedestrian*

Landscaping and traffic calming measures are encouraged to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Pedestrian amenities are lower priorities along Neighborhood Connectors. When feasible, provide a landscape strip between the sidewalk and roadway to further separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

#### *Bicycle*

Bicycle routes are recommended for Neighborhood Connectors. Bicycle parking and wayfinding are lower priorities, with exceptions being streets accessing the Bayshore Bikeway or falling within the City's Ecoroute Overlay.

#### *Transit*

Transit is not currently present or planned along Neighborhood Connectors.

#### *Vehicular*

Neighborhood Connectors are designed to slow vehicular speeds through traffic calming features such as curb bulb-outs/extensions, speed bumps, and chicanes. Roundabouts and neighborhood traffic circles can be utilized to slow vehicles while improving operations.

### Applicable Streets

- 3rd Street
- Connecticut Street
- 7th Street
- 11th St, south of Imperial Beach Boulevard
- Florida St, north of Imperial Beach Boulevard
- 15th Street
- Cypress Avenue
- Elm Avenue
- Iris Avenue, west of Connecticut Street
- Oneonta Ave, Connecticut St to 9th Street
- Holly Avenue, east of 9th Street
- Iris Avenue, east of 13th Street

### **Residential Streets**

#### **Overview**

Residential Streets provide direct access to the City's single family and multi-family homes. These are generally undivided 2-lane roadways that accommodate the lowest vehicular volumes of all four street typologies described.

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Maintaining low vehicular speeds is critical to maintaining the character of Imperial Beach's residential neighborhoods and the safety of people within. Similar to Neighborhood Connectors, landscaping and traffic calming measures provide safety and comfort enhancements for all users. Bicycle parking, wayfinding and pedestrian amenities are low priorities along Residential Streets.

### Applicable Streets

All other streets not identified under previous typologies.

### ***Multi-Use Path***

#### **Overview**

Multi-Use Paths provide a dedicated right-of-way physically separated from the roadway and intended for the exclusive use by non-motorized transportation modes, primarily walking and bicycling. These facilities support recreational and utilitarian trips, offering alternative connections that may be more direct than the roadway network.

Signage is an effective method to emphasize the shared use nature of these facilities and reiterate bicyclists are to yield to pedestrians. Additional signage placed along connecting roadways is also effective for directing users to Multi-Use Path access points. See also the Parks, Recreation and Coastal Access Element for information on the California Coastal Trail.

### Applicable Segments

Bayshore Bikeway along the northern City boundary, east of 7th Street.

### ***Ecoroute Overlay***

#### **Overview**

An Ecoroute Overlay accentuates Imperial Beach's environmental assets including South San Diego Bay, the Tijuana River Estuary, the dunes on South Seacoast Drive, the beach, the pier and the breakwaters. The Ecoroute supplements designated Street Typologies, and is not a typology in itself.

Distinctive signage and in-pavement markings designate the routes and interpretive stations are provided that explain the different ecosystems, the major roles and players in them and how they are connected together. The 1994 General Plan recommended establishment of the Ecoroute, which was incrementally implemented as street resurfacing occurred. The final segments were completed in December 2013.

### Applicable Streets

- Seacoast Drive, south of Palm Avenue
- 3rd Street, south of Imperial Beach Boulevard
- 5th Street, south of Grove Avenue
- Connecticut Street, south of Elm Avenue
- 7th Street, north of Elm Avenue
- Palm Avenue, west of 7th Street

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- Imperial Beach Blvd, west of 3rd Street

### ***Truck Route Overlay***

#### **Overview**

The Truck Route Overlay emphasizes the importance of safe and efficient truck and freight movement throughout Imperial Beach. The Truck Route Overlay acknowledges that additional design considerations must be made to ensure roadways are can accommodate truck traffic and additional modes.

Designated Truck Routes limit the amount of heavy traffic and noise through residential neighborhoods, retain neighborhood character, and protect views. Lane widths, parking restrictions, turning radii, and access to the various land uses trucks serve all require attention along roadways identified with the Truck Route Overlay.

#### Applicable Streets

- SR-75/Palm Avenue, from northern City limits to 13th Street – also serves as the designated route for oversized truck loads in Imperial Beach
- Imperial Beach Boulevard, 9th Street to eastern City limit
- 13th Street, from Palm Avenue to southern City limit
- 9th Street, from SR-75/Palm Avenue to Imperial Beach Boulevard or neighborhood traffic circles.

### **Policies**

#### *Complete Streets Principles*

- 3.1.1 Incorporate Complete Streets principles into all transportation projects at all phases of development, including planning and land use decisions, scoping, design, implementation, and performance monitoring.
- 3.1.2 Supplement the City's Street Classification system with the Street Typology System and Overlays described in this element to further implementation of Complete Streets.
- 3.1.3 Use the modal hierarchy of users shown as Figure M-1 to inform planning, design, and operational decisions. The hierarchy is intended to consider and give priority to the most vulnerable users of the roadway and the most resource efficient transportation modes.
- 3.1.4 In accordance with state law, develop a metric and thresholds of significance for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), or adopt regional standards when available, to replace level of service as the primary determinant of transportation impacts. Consider emergency vehicle response times prior to implementing in-road features.

#### *Multi-Modal Street Design and Access*

- 3.1.5 Require cross sections, the general right-of-way width, and configuration for each street and highway meet City specifications.
- 3.1.6 Ensure that all street and highway designs further the goal of providing safe and efficient circulation, as well as an aesthetically pleasing urban form.

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- 3.1.7 Facilitate safe pedestrian crossings through high visibility marked crosswalks, advance stop bars, and pedestrian countdown signals with lead pedestrian intervals at signalized intersections at Arterial Thoroughfare intersections.
    - a. Reduce pedestrian crossing distances through curb extensions and/or curb bulb-outs, where feasible.
  - 3.1.8 Employ traffic calming measures, specifically on Multimodal Corridors and Neighborhood Connectors, as a measure to enhance public safety.
  - 3.1.9 Ensure crosswalks in locations with a high volume of pedestrian traffic, use high-visibility pavement markings, such as continental crosswalks, or stamped concrete, brick, or similar paving materials as an extra warning to motorists.
    - a. Stamped concrete, brick, or similar paving materials should not impede or hinder the ability of bicycles to use designated bike lanes.
  - 3.1.10 As deemed necessary, require developers to dedicate right-of-ways and street improvements associated with their projects.
  - 3.1.11 Locate driveways for corner properties on arterials or collectors as far away from the intersection as possible. Encourage joint access driveways shared by abutting uses.
  - 3.1.12 Maintain narrow driveway widths in order to retain a pedestrian street scale and ensure minimum and maximum curb cut widths conform to the Municipal Code.
  - 3.1.13 Prohibit new street curb cuts or parking layouts requiring backing into the street where residential properties abut both an alley and a street designed as an Arterial Thoroughfare, Multimodal Boulevard, or Neighborhood Connector.
  - 3.1.14 Where residential properties abut both an Arterial Thoroughfare, Multimodal Boulevard, or Neighborhood Connector and a residential street, access shall be taken only from the residential street. Other residential properties abutting both an alley and residential street should primarily take access from the alley with the exception that one 16-foot wide curb cut allowing no more than two vehicles to back into the street may be allowed.
  - 3.1.15 Provide clear and ample wayfinding signage for key facilities such as the beach, pier, Tijuana River Valley and Wildlife Refuge, Border Field State Park, the City Hall complex and City parks.
    - a. Provide signage at varying scales and locations as a means to appeal to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.
  - 3.1.16 Plan and design projects to consider current and planned adjacent land uses and local transportation needs, while incorporating the latest and best practice design guidance. Each project must be considered both separately and as a part of a connected regional network to determine the level and type of treatment necessary for all foreseeable users.
  - 3.1.17 Integrate infrastructure or features that improve mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders of all ages and abilities into all street design projects. Allow exclusion of such infrastructure when documentation indicates one of the following bases for exemption:
    - specific modes are prohibited by law;
    - the cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need;
    - there is a clear absence of current and future need; or
    - environmental impacts outweigh the potential benefits.

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- 3.1.18 Ensure street design standards support, not impede, the inclusion of Complete Streets principles as a means to ensure the needs of all users of the street are met, regardless of age, ability or mode of travel; and are coordinated with related policy documents, such as the Bicycle Transportation Plan, as well as future updates or new comprehensive active transportation planning documents.
  - 3.1.19 Ensure that transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and public transportation stops, are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and meet the needs of people with varying disabilities.
  - 3.1.20 Prioritize implementation of infrastructure and street design features that improve or promote the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation riders.
  - 3.1.21 Identify improvements to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to coastal and recreational resources such as the beach, Imperial Beach Pier, public parks and Bayshore Bikeway; and to public transportation stops, schools, and commercial/retail and mixed-use land uses. Examples of improvements may include, but are not be limited to, new or widened sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signal heads, traffic calming features, bicycle facilities, bicycle racks, lighting, and signage.
  - 3.1.22 Collaborate with SANDAG and pursue local measures to encourage application of Intelligent Transportation Systems and Transportation Demand Management strategies to reduce vehicle miles travelled, parking demand and greenhouse gas emissions, while increasing active transportation.

#### *Location-Specific Recommendations*

- 3.1.23 Collaborate with the City of San Diego to establish a future right-of-way to connect the I-905 freeway interchange and Ream Field. This right-of-way should traverse Tocayo Avenue and include the establishment of a right-of-way to the east of Tocayo Avenue.
- 3.1.24 Collaborate with the City of San Diego and Caltrans to rename Coronado Avenue as Imperial Beach Boulevard or as an alternative to recognize both names on the freeway interchange signs.
- 3.1.25 Require street and mobility system improvements be evaluated for implementation, including any required environmental review, in association with other Mobility Element policies as project-level implementation opportunities arise.
- 3.1.26 Collaborate with adjoining jurisdictions and private developers to implement improvements to Palm Avenue that were identified through the SR 75 relinquishment process.

#### *Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)*

- 3.1.27 Strive for the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems to reduce congestion and air pollution from motor vehicles.
  - a. Replace fixed-time signals with fully-actuated and/or interconnected signals.
  - b. Optimize signal timing, ideally including adjustments at least every three years.

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- c. Interconnect signalized intersections in accordance with the regional Traffic Flow Improvement strategy.
- 3.1.28 Support the planning, procurement, and implementation of Autonomous Vehicle (AV) technologies as a way to further advance Imperial Beach’s goals related to transportation, air quality, access and equity.
- a. Evaluate development parking requirements as AV technologies become more commonplace in Imperial Beach and the surrounding region.
  - b. Ensure all AVs operate compatibly with other roadway users, with an emphasis on non-motorized transportation users.
  - c. Collaborate with federal, state, regional, other local, and private sector partners as AV technologies become more prevalent.

## 3.2 Public Transit

### Discussion

The City supports the availability of transit service as a means to reduce automobile congestion, to provide transportation for those who have no other form of transportation, as a means to reduce air pollution, and as a service to visitors. The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) is the public transit service provider for Imperial Beach, the urbanized areas of San Diego County, and the rural parts of East County (Figure M-4). MTS provides bus and rail services directly or by contract with private operators. MTS coordinates all its services and determines the routing, stops, frequencies and hours of operation.

The SANDAG Smart Growth Concept Map (2016) identifies the intersection of 9th Street and Palm Avenue as an area where consideration should be given to establish a transit/mobility hub as a means to promote the area as a Community Center providing mixed-use, mixed-income development including retail, restaurant, entertainment, hospitality, and residential uses along the mixed-use transit corridor.

Land Use Element policies provide direction on locating residential, commercial, and recreational uses in relationship to each other so as to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit ridership. Policies also call for major employment, retail, and entertainment districts, and major coastal recreational areas to be well served by public transit and easily accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

### Policies

- 3.2.1 Coordinate with regional planning and transportation agencies to improve transit services in the City of Imperial Beach.
  - a. Implement Rapid Bus Route 905 as identified in the Regional Transportation Plan.
  - b. Explore the potential for an expanded multi-modal transfer station on SR 75/Palm Avenue.
- 3.2.2 Consider establishing a transit mobility hub at the intersection of 9th Street and Palm Avenue. As deemed necessary, require new developments to provide or assist in funding transit facilities such as bus shelters and turnouts.

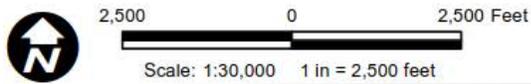
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- 3.2.3 Promote ridesharing and provide ridesharing information to the public.
  - 3.2.4 Collaborate with SANDAG and others to implement Transportation Demand Management initiatives included in the Regional Transportation Plan.
  - 3.2.5 Incorporate transit stop design into roadway design to reduce conflicts with vehicles and cyclists and maximize rider safety.
  - 3.2.6 Ensure existing and future transit stops are clearly identified and accentuated with amenities (e.g. seating, shelters, information kiosks, and trash receptacles).
  - 3.2.7 Use wayfinding signage to direct transit users to key destinations such as the beach, pier, and civic center.
  - 3.2.8 In accordance with the Land Use Element, locate new commercial and higher density residential development in locations with existing or planned transit services to the extent feasible.

DRAFT



**FIGURE M-4  
BUS ROUTES**

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
IMPERIAL BEACH

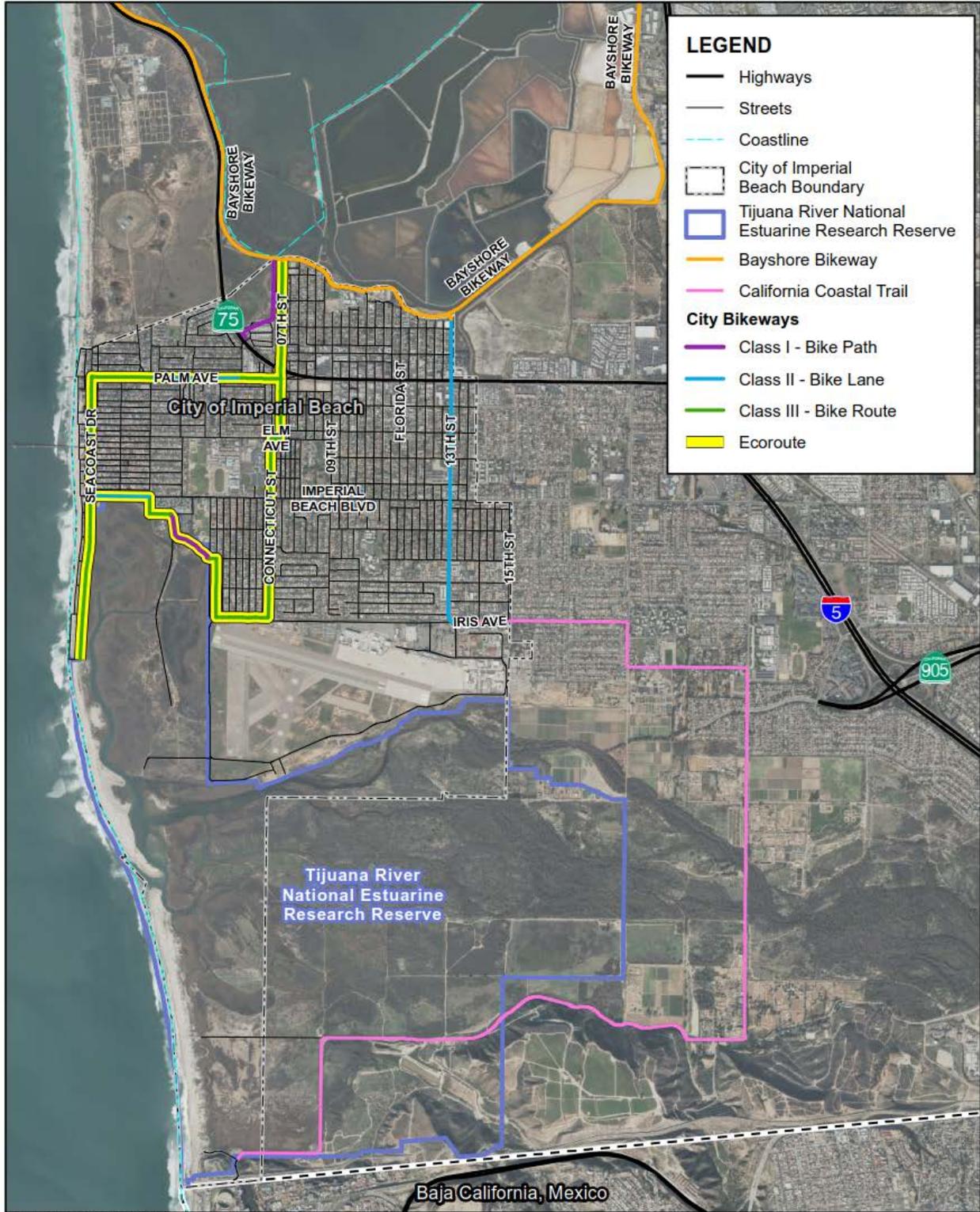


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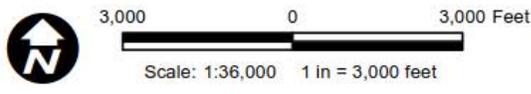
### **3.3 Bicycle Circulation**

#### **Discussion**

Bikeways are located and classified as shown in Figure M-5. The Bikeway Plan provides for the safe and efficient mobility of bicyclists and is designed to tie into the City of San Diego's bicycle facilities on Palm Avenue and provide connections to the Bayshore Bikeway and key points of interest within Imperial Beach. The City highly values bikeways as they are a complement to Imperial Beach's small town residential character and recreation emphasis, are an effective alternative to automobile travel, maximize the impact on air quality and energy conservation and provide convenience to residents and visitors. Bicycle facilities will be incorporated to improve bicycle mobility and emphasize the roadways as a safe place to ride. In particular, bicycle connections and routes are emphasized to connect to public areas such as the beach, City Hall and parks and in other public facilities in order to encourage bicycle use.



Source: SanGIS 2014, 2017; City of Imperial Beach 2017; TRNERR 2017



**FIGURE M-5**  
**CONSOLIDATED**  
**BIKEWAYS**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH

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## **Policies**

- 3.3.1 Ensure the City's Bikeway Plan provides for the safe and efficient mobility of bicyclists.
  - a. Connect to the City of San Diego's Class II bicycle facilities on Palm Avenue.
  - b. Connect to the Bayshore Bikeway, to key points of interest within Imperial Beach, and to the Ecoroute Bikeway.
  - c. Update as needed and continue to implement the City's Bikeway Plan.
- 3.3.3 Encourage the construction of an additional leg of the Bayshore Bikeway paralleling Highway 75 for a distance of approximately 3,000 feet.
  - a. This route would be located on the east side of State Highway 75, from Rainbow Drive north to a connection with the Bayshore Bikeway. Such a route would provide a desired connection to the City beach and pier plaza area.
- 3.3.4 Support bikeways within the City and adjoining jurisdictions.
  - a. Install bicycle storage facilities in public areas, such as the beach, City Hall and parks and in other public facilities in order to encourage bicycle use.
  - b. Require the provision of bicycle storage facilities as a condition of approval on new development applications for proposed commercial, hotel or major residential projects and/or provided at mass transit and bus system facilities, or designated transit stops.
  - c. Support bicycle facilities providing a dedicated right-of-way for the sole use of bicyclists, such as cycle tracks, bike lanes or buffered bike lanes, for arterial thoroughfares.
  - d. Provide bicycle parking at strategic, visible locations.
  - e. Utilize signage to emphasize the shared use nature of Multi-Use Paths and reiterate bicyclists are to yield to pedestrians. Signage will be placed along connecting roadways to direct users to Multi-Use Path access points.

## **3.4 Pedestrian Circulation and Active Living**

### **Discussion**

Imperial Beach is committed to providing walkable, pleasant streets through the implementation of widened sidewalks, cohesive paving materials, pedestrian-scale lighting, pleasing landscaping, and safe crossings for all residents and visitors. Increased walking is a part of a healthy active lifestyle that supports healthy communities and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. See the Design Element for policies related to creating an active pedestrian streetscape.

### **Policies**

- 3.4.1 Require that sidewalks be provided for all new developments.
- 3.4.2 Locate the sidewalk so that parkway (a landscape strip for trees and vegetation) is located between the sidewalk and the vehicle travel way, wherever possible.

- 3.4.3 Discourage the use of sidewalks for use as a bicycle route or bicycling facility, unless designed and designated as a multi-use path. Encourage treatments to create a pleasant walking experience including concern for views, paving materials, landscaping, street furniture and pedestrian scaled lighting.
- 3.4.4 Provide context sensitive pedestrian amenities (e.g. seating, public art, trash receptacles, shading, etc.) to emphasize pedestrian mobility and create a more inviting environment.
- 3.4.5 Strategically locate public plazas, pocket parks, and public art to create an attractive, safe and comfortable pedestrian streetscape. Encourage pedestrian scale lighting, especially within the commercial areas and adjacent to transit stops.

## 3.5 Parking

### Discussion

Parking supports the long-term needs of the residents, businesses, beach-goers and visitors of Imperial Beach, but is a major factor contributing to the cost of housing and often results in an auto-oriented urban form. The City seeks to support coastal access goals, and provide a reasonable amount of parking where and when it is needed, while also improving walkability and the small-town character of the City. The overall intent is to encourage a more pedestrian oriented atmosphere near the beach, and develop properties near the ocean with commercial and recreational uses that maximize the recreational and economic benefits of the coast while balancing the need for parking.

#### Parking Requirements

*Per the City of Imperial Beach Zoning Ordinance, which also serves as a part of its LCP Implementation Plan, parking standards for the commercial/mixed-use zones are as follows*

- *Commercial – C/MU-1 and C/MU-3 zones: 1 per 500 gross sq. ft. of commercial use.*
- *Commercial – C/MU-2 zone: 1 space per 1,000 gross sq. ft. of commercial use.*
- *Multiple-family residential – C/MU-1, C/MU-2, and C/MU-3 zones: 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit.*
- *Hotel without cooking facilities – C/MU-1, C/MU-2, and C/MU-3 zones: 1 space per guest room.*
- *Hotel with cooking facilities – C/MU-1, C/MU-2, and C/MU-3 zones: 1.5 spaces per guest room.*

*For all other zones, the standards are:*

- *Residential: 1.5 to 2.0 spaces per dwelling unit.*
- *Hotel/Motel: 1 space per guest room.*
- *Commercial: varies from 1 space per 50 sq. ft. to 1 space per 500 sq. ft. of building.*
- *Bars and restaurants: 1 space for each 75 sq. ft. of net floor area, plus 1 per 2 employees at largest work shift*

Parking demand may shift over time based on the cost of driving, the quality of transit service, the availability and condition of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and the aesthetics and safety of the urban environment. More recently, the growth in ridesharing via smart phone applications is resulting in changes to how people travel. Future deployment of autonomous vehicles is anticipated to result in a dramatic change the mobility landscape, especially as it relates to parking. Parking needs may be greatly

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reduced as vehicles will not be required to park as close to destinations and may be more efficient with space. As technologies advance and behaviors shift, the City needs to be flexible in its policy approach to ensure the full benefits of these advancements are realized.

## **Policies**

- 3.5.1 Provide and manage parking so that it is reasonably available when and where it is needed.
- 3.5.2 Provide parking for both residents and visitors as part of new development, in accordance with the City's Zoning Ordinance/LCP Implementation Plan..
  - a. Consider flexibility in parking requirements to address reduced parking demand as a result of access to high quality transit services, reduced auto ownership, shared parking opportunities, provision of car sharing opportunities or other means.
  - b. Strive to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking through measures such as parking structures, shared parking, and managed public parking while still providing appropriate levels of parking.
- 3.5.3 Encourage the consolidation of off-street parking for several uses to improve walkability, allow for a more pedestrian-oriented environment, reduce the number of street ingress and egress points, and facilitate well-designed, small-lot infill development.
- 3.5.4 Encourage shared parking for properties located west of Seacoast Drive and on Seacoast Drive.
- 3.5.5 Utilize off-site parking facilities, transportation demand management strategies, and shared parking in commercial/mixed-use areas.
- 3.5.6 Restrict recreational vehicles and heavy-duty trucks from on street parking along local streets.
- 3.5.7 Approve shared parking only when technical evidence is presented to justify the shared use and is to the satisfactory of the City's Traffic Engineer.
- 3.5.8 Permit In-lieu parking only when it can be demonstrated that the in-lieu fee is sufficient to provide off-site parking and the City has developed a program for such off-site parking. This program shall require an LCP amendment.
- 3.5.9 Where feasible, permit public use of private parking facilities currently underutilized on weekends and holidays (i.e., serving office buildings) in all commercial/mixed use zones located within ¼ mile of the beach.
- 3.5.10 Encourage convenient alternatives to automobile use throughout the Commercial/Mixed-Use Districts by requiring employers to provide incentives for alternative transit use such as providing employee transit passes or subsidies, ridesharing programs, preferred parking for carpooling and on-site shower facilities.
- 3.5.11 Maximize on-street parking on multimodal boulevards to the extent possible without compromising the safety or mobility of other modes.

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## 3.6 Performance Measures

Monitoring the performance of multiple modes of mobility helps strengthen the understanding of multimodal travel patterns, and related responses to investments, by establishing baseline measures and continually monitoring changes to these metrics over time.

- 3.6.1 Collaborate with regional SANDAG, MTS, universities and others, or establish a City monitoring program to evaluate multimodal performance and outcomes of infrastructural and operational improvements, and land use/development changes.
- 3.6.2 Establish a series of locations for reoccurring bicycle and pedestrian counts. Locations to consider may include existing and planned bicycle facilities, near the beach, parks, and recreational resources, commercial/retail corridors, and identified school routes.
- 3.6.3 Monitor transit rider boarding and alighting data by stop, as provided by MTS.
- 3.6.4 Track bicycle and pedestrian involved collisions by location, time of day, day of week, and primary collision factor to better understand potential safety issues facing the most vulnerable of transportation users. Use this information to better inform the development of recommended infrastructure and programmatic improvements. Similarly, this information can be used to better understand effectiveness of safety enhancements.
- 3.6.5 Annually track implementation of multimodal improvements, such as new bicycle facilities, pedestrian crossings, curb ramps, sidewalks, transit stop enhancements, and transit operational improvements.
- 3.6.6 Measure the reach of programmatic efforts related to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit activities. This should include the number of participants engaged in various programs, such as Safe Routes to School or bicycle education programs, as well as those intended to be reached through larger encouragement, campaigns.

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# 4.0 CONSERVATION AND ECOTOURISM\*

*A city where one cannot walk of an evening into the open, wherein millions live and die without seeing the spring flowers and the June foliage and the autumn harvest, from year's end, is an incubus (nightmare) of civilization.*

Frederic Harrison  
The Meaning of History

*\*This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## Goals

- ❖ Protection of the natural, coastal, and cultural resources of Imperial Beach, including water bodies
- ❖ Reduced greenhouse gas emissions to meet state and local goals
- ❖ Improved water and air quality
- ❖ Restored or enhanced coastal resources
- ❖ Promotion of ecotourism and economic health consistent with the protection of coastal resources

## Background

California planning law requires the General Plan to include both a Conservation Element and an Open Space Element to address the conservation, development, and use of natural resources; and the importance of open space for habitat and conservation, recreational, and visual resource uses. Because conservation and open space issues are closely interrelated, they are discussed in this element with respect to conservation of resources; and in the Parks, Recreation, and Coastal Access Element with respect to recreation and visual resource purposes. In addition, it is intended that

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this Conservation and Ecotourism Element serve as the Water and Marine Resources and the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) components of the Imperial Beach Local Coastal Program.

Open space and conservation planning are fundamental components of the Imperial Beach General Plan. From the standpoint of actual physical patterns and form, these components can be viewed as coordinating and guiding decisions related to the land and water areas which influence and shape the quality of the City. The Conservation and Ecotourism Element takes into consideration those open space areas necessary for the preservation and conservation of natural resources, for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, and for the protection of areas with historic/cultural value.

Imperial Beach's natural resources, including its 3.5 miles of beach frontage and the Tijuana River Estuary, are central to its character, image, quality of life, and economy. Conservation and protection of ocean, beach, bay, estuary, and natural ecosystems are a key focus of the General Plan/LCP. The unique physiographic characteristics of Imperial Beach are recognized as the foundation for all other aspects of the community. These characteristics are highly valued as they enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike and provide the basis for the many of the scenic, historic, economic, recreation, open space, and ecological values of the community.

Imperial Beach is also an integral part of the larger California coastal community, linked by shared public coastal resources that are prized by the state, national and international community. Cooperative, accessible, and equitable use of these resources by both residents and visitors is an important goal. The Conservation and Ecotourism Element guides the City in protecting and preserving natural and cultural resources and addressing climate change all in the context of meeting community needs and planning for future development, redevelopment, and ecotourism.

Natural and cultural resource topics and their background information are discussed in the following categories in this Element:

- Climate Change
- Urban Forestry
- Beach and Coastline
- Biological Resources
- ESHA
- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Ecotourism

## **California Coastal Act**

### **Discussion**

A chief objective of the Coastal Act is the preservation, protection, and enhancement of coastal resources, including land and marine habitats, and water quality. The rarest and most ecologically important habitats are protected from development. Several policies contained in the Coastal Act, which are herein incorporated into the General Plan/Local Coastal Program, work together to meet this objective. For example, the Coastal Act

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requires the protection of ESHA against any significant disruption of habitat values. In addition to the protection of ESHA, streams and associated riparian habitat also are protected in order to maintain the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters. Marine resources are also protected to sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and to maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms. The Coastal Act sections related to the Conservation and Ecotourism Element are provided at the end of this element.

## 4.2 Climate Change

### Discussion

Climate change is occurring globally and is caused largely by human activity. Climate change is already resulting in adverse impacts to the environment, as well as human health, safety, and well-being. California has taken a leadership role in addressing climate change, with a growing body of legislative and regulatory actions that extend mandates and opportunities to California's local governments, businesses, and residents. The City of Imperial Beach is committed to doing its part to curtail greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) that contribute to climate change, and to build resilience to current and projected impacts. The General Plan addresses policies to address sustainability, environmental justice, healthy communities, sea level rise and other stressors resulting from climate change. For information on climate adaptation and sea level rise resiliency, see the Safety Element. Additional cross references are found in Table CE-1 in this section.

The General Plan provides the policy framework for GHG reduction measures detailed in the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP includes: a baseline emissions inventory, GHG reduction targets, measures to achieve the reductions, and a plan for future monitoring. CAP measures were selected based on their: ability to achieve reduction targets; cost-effectiveness; consistency with local goals and priorities; and potential to provide secondary, or indirect environmental, economic, health, or community co-benefits.

Major emissions categories addressed in the CAP are:

- **Energy** (electricity and natural gas). In general, energy emissions are generated through the combustion of fossil fuels to generate electricity or directly provide power (e.g., natural gas combustion for water heating). The energy sector includes the use of electricity and natural gas in residential, commercial, industrial, and government land uses within the jurisdictional boundaries of Imperial Beach. SDG&E provides electricity and natural gas service within Imperial Beach
- **Transportation.** Using travel models and vehicle fuel emissions factors, the transportation sector estimates emissions for vehicle trips occurring within the community. Generally, the inventory and measures reflect half of the length of vehicle trips that start or end within the community as well as all that occur solely

within the community. For more information on reducing vehicle trips, see the Mobility Element.

- **Solid Waste.** Solid waste emissions are generated from the waste decomposition process, during which only organic (i.e., carbon-based) materials release GHGs. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions are generated under aerobic conditions (i.e., in the presence of oxygen), such as when composting. Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, two common greenhouse gases, are generated under anaerobic conditions (i.e., in the absence of oxygen), as in many landfill environments.
- **Potable Water.** The water sector includes energy emissions associated with water treatment, distribution, and conveyance.
- **Wastewater.** The wastewater sector includes emissions resulting from the wastewater treatment process

**Table CE-1 Issues Related to Climate Change in the General Plan**

<b>GP/LUP Element</b>	<b>Climate Planning Topic</b>
Land Use	Sec. 2.2 Sustainable Development
	Sec. 2.4 Mixed Use Development
	Sec. 2.7 Environmental Justice
Mobility	Sec. 3.1 -3.4 Complete Streets and Multi-Modal Uses
Conservation	Sec. 4.2 Climate Change
	Sec. 4.3 Urban Forestry
	Sec. 4.7 Air Quality (including City Fleet)
	Sec. 7.1 Sea Level Rise
Safety	Sec. 7.2 Shoreline Protection/Coastal Hazards
	Sec. 7.4 Fire Hazards
	Sec. 7.6 Disaster Preparedness
Design	Sec. 8.3 Sustainable Coastal Development

## **Policies**

### *Overall*

- 4.2.6 Adopt and implement a Climate Action Plan that is aligned with state requirements for greenhouse gas emission reductions, while achieving local co-benefits.
- 4.2.7 Monitor implementation of the Climate Action Plan to ensure its effectiveness over time, and adjust measures as needed to achieve mandated targets.
- 4.2.8 Support regional coordination on Climate Action Plan implementation to help ensure estimated reductions occur while leveraging ongoing partnerships and actions among neighboring jurisdictions.
- 4.2.9 Pursue federal, state, and regional funding opportunities to implement the Climate Action Plan.

### *Emissions Categories*

- 4.2.10 Encourage greater use of multi-modal transportation options, including walking,

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- biking, and transit.
  - 4.2.11 Collaborate with SANDAG to include mobility system improvements, in Regional Transportation Plan updates, that serve Imperial Beach and contribute to vehicle miles traveled -based GHG reductions.
  - 4.2.12 Increase energy efficiency in existing buildings and outdoor lighting.
  - 4.2.13 Increase use of renewable energy sources community-wide.
  - 4.2.14 Promote the efficient use of water in buildings and landscapes.
  - 4.2.15 Increase diversion of waste materials that can be composted, recycled, or otherwise beneficially reused.
  - 4.2.16 Enhance and expand the City's urban forest.
  - 4.2.17 Improve access to healthy local food.

## 4.3 Urban Forestry

### Discussion

Trees in the urban environment provide significant contributions to the quality of life for residents and visitors. The City's urban forest includes publically and privately owned trees and vegetation. Trees help clean the air, create aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and increase property values. Trees contribute to Climate Action Plan and climate resiliency goals through sequestering carbon, providing shade that saves energy used for air conditioning, and reducing the urban heat island effect. The term "heat island" describes urban areas that are hotter than nearby rural or open space areas.

*Urban Forestry is the cultivation and management of native or introduced trees and related vegetation in urban areas for their present and potential contribution to the economic, physiological, sociological, and ecological well-being of urban society. – California Urban Forestry Act of 1978*

### Policies

- 4.3.1 Increase the City's urban tree canopy cover and maximize the benefits of trees.
  - a. Seek resources and take actions needed to plant, care for, and protect trees in the public right-of-way and parks.
  - b. Plant large canopy shade trees, where appropriate and with consideration of habitat and water conservation goals.
  - c. Seek to retain significant and mature trees.
  - d. Foster partnerships, volunteerism, and citizen action to support the urban forest.
- 4.3.2 Require the planting of trees through the development permit process, and consider tree planting as mitigation for carbon emissions, storm water runoff, and other environmental impacts as appropriate. See also the Design Element.
- 4.3.3 Support public outreach efforts to provide information on the environmental and economic benefits of trees.
- 4.3.4 Develop and maintain an active civic landscaping plan for all public landscaped areas under City management to promote the urban forest.

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- a. Strive to allocate funds in the annual budget for the landscaping and maintenance of street medians and parkways.
  - b. Develop priorities for landscaping projects to which annual budgets are keyed.
  - c. Investigate outside sources of funding for landscape improvement projects and subsequent maintenance, such as volunteer programs, public/private partnerships, and special districts.
  - d. Develop a list of plant materials (especially trees) most suitable to the City of Imperial Beach in terms of ecological suitability, cost, form (preferably tall, broad form and densely foliated), hardiness, maintenance and aesthetic value. Give preference to species that are drought- and salt-tolerant to the extent feasible.
  - e. Develop street tree master plans for key corridors.
  - f. Prepare a tree preservation ordinance to protect heritage and significant trees in the community.

## **4.4 Biological Resources**

### **Discussion**

This section provides an overview of local topography, vegetation, and wildlife. The City is rich in biological resources due to its unique position on the San Diego Bay, the Tijuana Estuary, and the Pacific Ocean (see Section 4.5 for a more detailed description of the biological resources). Information on the California Marine Protected Areas at the Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area is found in the Parks and Coastal Access Element.

### **Topography**

Imperial Beach is characterized by relatively flat topography compared to the rest of the San Diego region. There is, however, some vertical relief, with the highest ground level in the urbanized area located at forty-five feet above mean sea level (AMSL). Most of the area lies at less than thirty feet above sea level. The extreme southern end of the City has bluffs which rise to approximately fifty feet above sea level. Some natural dunes exist along the beaches and are most pronounced in the estuary area. Surface drainage is generally to the west, towards the ocean, and to the north, towards San Diego Bay.

### **Vegetation**

Imperial Beach can be divided into two general areas: (1) the urbanized area, and (2) the undeveloped area. Little natural vegetation is present in the urbanized area. The domestic vegetation consists of landscaping, mainly ornamental trees, some street trees, shrubbery and a variety of ground covers. Most of the landscaping can be found on private property. Landscaping on city streets, school grounds and playgrounds is conspicuously lacking which is most evident along major streets, in the commercial areas and in the beach area. In that the Tijuana River Estuary occupies most of the City's undeveloped land and is still in its natural state, the native vegetation that exists is

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abundant, life supporting, and in some cases, unique (see Section 4.5 and Figure CE-1).

### **Wildlife**

Because of the urbanized nature of the developed area of the City, existing significant wildlife habitats within such areas are nonexistent. The types of wildlife that do exist are those that have adapted to, or are compatible with, urbanization and do not have to compete with humans for survival. The undeveloped area primarily consists of the Tijuana River Estuary that includes significant wildlife.

### **Policies**

- 4.4.6 Require that new development avoid or minimize impacts to, and provide mitigation for, any adversely impacted special status, threatened, listed, or endangered plant and animal species consistent with all state and federal regulations.

## **4.5 ESHA**

### **Discussion**

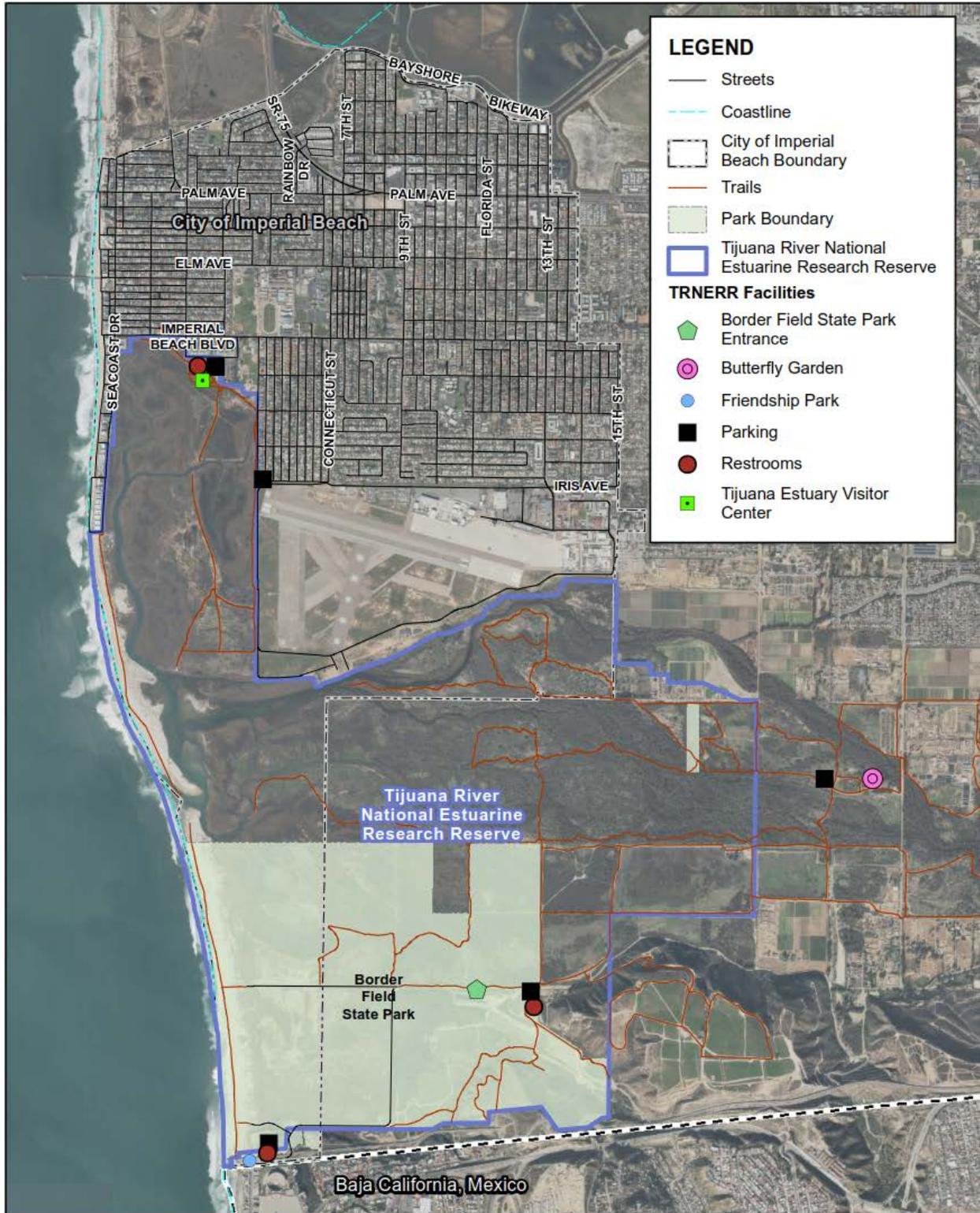
The San Diego Bay and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) are the two primary areas supporting biological resources, and potentially ESHA, within and adjacent to the City. Accordingly, this section provides an overview of the biological resources in San Diego Bay and TRNERR.

### **San Diego Bay**

Imperial Beach is bordered on the north by the South San Diego Bay Unit of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) which includes the portions of the Otay River subject to tidal influence. The refuge encompasses 2,620 acres of intertidal mudflats, eel grass beds, salt marshes, and submerged tidelands in San Diego Bay. It supports numerous endangered and threatened species of plants and animals, provides habitat for resident and overwintering waterfowl, seabirds, and shorebirds, and is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway. Major habitat restoration of the former western salt ponds started in 2010 and is ongoing.

### **Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve**

Along the City's southern border is the Tijuana River Valley which contains one of the largest intact coastal wetland systems in Southern California. Unlike most other coastal ecosystems in the region, which have been fragmented or lost altogether, the valley has contiguous beach, dune, salt marsh, riparian, and upland ecosystems. The lower section of the Tijuana River Watershed encompasses 2,293 acres of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR). The TRNERR includes the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge (managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Border Field State Park (managed by the California Department of Parks). Approximately 928 acres of the TRNERR are located within Imperial Beach city limits.



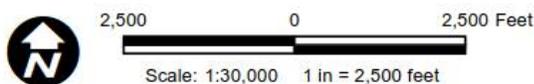
Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017; TRNERR 2017; CA State Parks 2016

**LEGEND**

- Streets
- Coastline
- City of Imperial Beach Boundary
- Trails
- Park Boundary
- Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

**TRNERR Facilities**

- ◻ Border Field State Park Entrance
- Butterfly Garden
- Friendship Park
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Tijuana Estuary Visitor Center



**FIGURE CE-1**  
**TIJUANA RIVER NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH

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The TRNERR contains a highly variable system that may best be termed an "intermittent estuary." It is a coastal body of water that is influenced by both marine and river waters. During the winter-wet season, its waters are diluted by rainfall and stream flow, while during the rest of the year; it is an extension of the ocean. It supports a range of natural plant and animal communities that are especially adapted to withstand the variable salinities that occur when sea and fresh waters mix and provides habitat for a variety of rare and endangered species.

The TRNERR has been ecologically influenced by its highly variable environment, which is very much a function of both its watershed and adjoining land uses. Land management practices on both sides of the border have greatly influenced the quantity and quality of water entering the estuary.

Eight major natural habitats exist within the TRNERR. They include transition from upland to wetland, riparian salt marsh, salt panne, brackish marsh, estuarine channels and tidal creeks, intertidal flats, and dunes and beach. The estuary has been substantially altered by catastrophic events and human disturbances. However, with the exception of the brackish marsh habitat, which appears to be directly dependent on urban runoff, most of the habitats present today represent variations on what existed at the turn of the century.

In 2010, the TRNERR prepared an updated "Comprehensive Management Plan". The key goal of the Comprehensive Management Plan is "to protect, restore and enhance the viability of key coastal habitats and species and preserve the region's cultural heritage while encouraging compatible public use, education and research." In addition, as of 2017, planning was underway for the Tijuana Estuary Tidal Restoration Program- a large multi-phased wetland restoration program involving up to 500 acres of restoration. Its primary objective is to restore valuable habitat processes that have been lost, and to increase the exchange of water in a tidal cycle. This will enhance flushing, improve water quality, and enhance natural processes that deliver sediment from the watershed to the ocean (Revell, 2016). The City recognizes and supports the importance of the TRNERR for its ecological and open space values.

## **Policies**

- 4.5.6 Respect the borders of the TRNERR, and outside of wetlands areas, require a buffer of 50 feet for any new development to ensure that it does not encroach on the habitat within the TRNERR. See Policy 4.5.7 for wetlands buffers.
- a. In no case may the buffer be reduced to less than 25 feet.
  - b. Allowable structures within the buffer can include native vegetation, public improvements and ancillary backyard structures such as patios, patio covers, irrigation, pools/spas, fencing and similar structures.
- 4.5.7 Assist in the implementing of the Estuaries Resource protection program, which calls for a buffer area to be established for each new development adjacent to wetlands.

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- a. The width of a buffer area will vary depending upon an analysis, with a minimum of 100 feet unless the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Coastal Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that a proposed buffer less than 100 feet may still protect the resources of the habitat area. If the project involves substantial improvements or increased human impacts, such as a subdivision, a wider buffer area may be required.
  - b. For wetlands, the buffer area should be measured from the landward edge of the wetland to the face of any new structures.
- 4.5.8 Coordinate and control as appropriate the urban run-off into the TRNERR.
- 4.5.9 Support the efforts of habitat preserve managers to adaptively manage the TRNERR to ensure adequate connectivity, habitat range, and diversity of topographic and climatic conditions are provided for species to move as climate shifts.

## 4.6 Water Quality

### Discussion

The City of Imperial Beach is committed to reducing the impacts of urban activity on receiving water quality within City boundaries to the maximum extent practicable. The City's approach to managing watersheds and protecting water quality is found in its Water Quality Improvement Plan and Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program.

### Municipal Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4)

The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is the regulatory agency responsible for ensuring water quality protection of receiving waters from discharges of storm water out of the municipal separate storm sewer system. The Municipal Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4), issued by the RWQCB, requires all development and redevelopment project to implement storm water source control and site design practices to minimize the generation of pollutants. Additionally, the MS4 Permit requires new development and significant redevelopment projects to implement Structural Storm Water Best Management Practices to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff and control runoff volume. The San Diego RWQCB requires Imperial Beach, and other jurisdictions ("copermittees") that have responsibilities to implement the MS4 Permit, to develop a Water Quality Improvement Plan to improve the water quality of storm water discharges into the receiving waters of the Tijuana Estuary, Pacific Ocean, and the tidally influenced area of the Otay River.

The City of Imperial Beach Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program (JRMP) is a comprehensive plan that documents the multiple storm water management programs that the City implements to effectively prohibit non-storm water discharges to the MS4,

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and reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practical. The purpose of the JRMP is to organize and describe the strategies the City will implement to protect water quality. The strategies in the JRMP are informed by the adaptive management process built into the Water Quality Improvement Plans and are intended to be reviewed and updated as necessary to achieve the desired outcomes in water quality.

### **Pacific Ocean Shoreline and Tijuana River Estuary**

Imperial Beach boasts 3.5 miles of beach frontage and approximately 928 acres of the TRNERR. It is widely known that the most significant source of bacteria impacting ocean and estuary water quality in Imperial Beach is the periodic input of sewage-contaminated flows from the Tijuana River and surrounding canyons in Mexico. During winter months the shoreline from the international border to Coronado experiences frequent beach closures from elevated bacteria levels when rainfall causes Tijuana River flows to exceed the capacity of the diversion systems that are operated jointly by the U.S. and Mexico governments. Under most dry weather conditions, the diversion systems effectively protects beach water quality by capturing and sending cross border sewage-contaminated flows to either the International Wastewater Treatment Plant (operated by the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission) or into the City of Tijuana's sewer collection system.

Stormwater flows also bring substantial amounts of sediment and trash into Imperial Beach's coastal environment, from sources in both the United States and Mexico. Sediment and trash cause water quality impairments, threaten life and property from flooding, degrade valuable riparian and estuarine habitats, and impact recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Although significant progress has been made, there still remains significant work to control pollution in the Tijuana River. The Imperial Beach City Council and Mayor have an important role in the policy making process that influence the state, federal, and bi-national solutions to these issues. The City has a long history of binational collaboration to improve conditions in the Tijuana River from uncontrolled flows of sewage, trash, and sediment across the international border. Numerous agencies, government programs, and non-governmental organizations already collaborate on programs to address pollution in the Tijuana River.

### **Policies**

- 4.6.1 Continue to collaborate on bi-national solutions to control Tijuana River pollution and improve conditions.
- 4.6.2 Collaborate with MS4 Copermittees to implement Water Quality Improvement Plans for the San Diego Bay and Tijuana River watershed management areas.
- 4.6.3 Preserve, and where possible, create or restore areas that provide water quality benefits, such as riparian corridors and wetlands, and promote the design of new developments so that it protects the natural integrity of drainage systems and water bodies.
- 4.6.4 Avoid conversion of areas particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss and/or establish development guidance that identifies these areas and protects

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- them from erosion and sediment loss.
- 4.6.5 Minimize the amount of impervious surface and directly-connected impervious surfaces in areas of new development and redevelopment and maximize the on-site infiltration of runoff.
- 4.6.6 Encourage runoff management practices that minimize the volume of urban runoff discharged to receiving waters in areas where minimizing impervious surface is not possible.

## 4.7 Air Quality

### Discussion

Air quality is defined by the concentration of pollutants related to human health. Ambient concentrations of air pollutants are determined by the rate and location of pollutant emissions released by pollution sources, and the atmosphere's ability to transport and dilute such emissions. Natural factors that affect transport and dilution include terrain, wind, atmospheric stability, and sunlight.

The City of Imperial Beach is located in the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB), which comprises the entire San Diego region. Ambient air quality conditions in the San Diego Air Basin are influenced by such natural factors as topography, meteorology, and climate, in addition to the amount of air pollutant emissions released by existing air pollutant sources.

The climate of Imperial Beach is largely controlled by the strength and position of the semi-permanent high pressure center over the Pacific Ocean. Because coastal areas are well ventilated by fresh breezes during the daytime, they generally do not experience the same frequency of air pollution problems found in some areas east of Imperial Beach. A common atmospheric condition known as a temperature inversion affects air quality in the Basin. The atmospheric pollution potential of an area is largely dependent on a combination of winds, atmospheric stability, solar radiation, and terrain. The combination of low wind speeds and low inversions produces the greatest concentration of air pollutants.

Since 1970, air quality has been regulated at the federal level under the Clean Air Act (CAA). The CAA authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for air pollutants of nationwide concern. The EPA has established six criteria air pollutants. These pollutants include ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), and lead (Pb). PM<sub>2.5</sub> particulate matter has recently been added to this listing; however, data to document ambient conditions or quantify these emissions do not yet exist. Primary standards for air pollutants were established to protect public health, while secondary standards were

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established to protect the public welfare by preventing impairment of visibility and damage to vegetation and property. <sup>1</sup>

Poor air quality can lead to negative health outcomes and can affect quality of life. People most likely affected by air pollution include children, the elderly, athletes, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. The following uses are considered sensitive because they tend to support those more vulnerable to poor air quality conditions: residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, athletic facilities, long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes. Moreover, certain air pollutants also contribute to depletion of the beneficial stratospheric ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, contribute to acid rain and climate change, and cause damage to man-made materials through processes including metal deterioration, paint erosion, and damage to structural surfaces such as glass, concrete, brick, and tile.

Planning measures to improve air quality can help reduce the level of pollutants in the air, thereby leading to improvements in public health, welfare and quality of life. Air pollution falls beyond the limits of control of any one jurisdictional authority. While there are certain actions which can be taken locally, positive control of air pollution requires a coordinated program including federal agencies, the state government, all general-purpose governments, and many of the special purpose districts in the air basin.

### **Policies**

- 4.7.1 Work with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) to meet state and federal ambient air quality standards in order to protect residents, regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location, from the health effects of air pollution.
- 4.7.2 Review new developments to ensure that they meet acceptable air quality standards as set forth by the state and SDAPCD, preferably through the environmental assessment process.
- 4.7.3 Coordinate with SDAPCD in evaluating exposure of sensitive receptors, such as residences, schools, and playgrounds, to toxic air contaminants, and require that projects incorporate strategies to protect public health and safety.
- 4.7.4 Purchase low-emission vehicles for the City's fleet use available clean fuel sources for trucks and heavy equipment, whenever feasible.

## **4.8 Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources**

### **Discussion**

#### **Archaeological Resources**

Archaeological resources include sites that represent the material remains of Native American societies and their activities, and ethnohistoric sites that represent Native

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Housing Element 012313 Final Neg Dec SCH 2012111006

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American settlements occupied after the arrival of European settlers in California. Such archaeological sites may include villages, seasonal campsites, burial sites, stone tool quarry sites, hunting sites, traditional trails, and sites with rock carvings or paintings. Archaeologically sensitive areas are sites that contain or have the potential to contain archaeological resources.

Paleontological resources are the remains and/or traces of prehistoric life, exclusive of human remains, and including the localities where fossils were collected and the sedimentary rock formations from which they were obtained/derived.

A review of archaeological records for the Imperial Beach area indicates that there are presently no identified archaeological sites of major importance. Several minor sites have, however, been identified; the largest of which covers approximately ten acres along the Otay River channel along the northern City boundaries. Two smaller sites also have been recorded in the same general area along the farthest southern reach of the San Diego Bay. For the most part, these identified sites are composed of the remains of shellfish gathering activities, and associated discarded tools. No evidence of permanently inhabited villages have been found to date. All three sites in the northern part of the City are currently heavily impacted by existing urban uses. Another site has been located and excavated at the far southern end of Imperial Beach at Border Field State Park. All these sites appear to be associated with the Early Milling La Jolla culture, which dominated the South Bay area between 7000 and 5000 years ago. Other sites have reportedly been encountered near the Oneonta Slough during construction activity, although it is not known whether steps were taken to preserve the reported sites or whether it was in fact a true archaeological site.

### **Historical Resources**

Previous reviews of historical records for the Imperial Beach area indicated that there are no identified historical sites of major importance (historical record reviews were not conducted for the 2018 LCP-focused General Plan Update). In terms of historical resources, there appears to have been a U.S. cavalry post on the present site of Westview Elementary School. There is also photographic evidence that at one time a "wave-action" device was constructed at or near the municipal pier. The purpose of this device was apparently to harness the energy from the waves falling to shore.

### **Policies**

- 4.8.1 The City shall develop or ensure compliance with protocols that protect or mitigate impacts to archaeological and cultural resources. Determinations of impacts, significance, and mitigation shall be made by qualified archaeological (in consultation with recognized local Native American groups), historical, or paleontological consultants, depending on the type of resource in question.
- 4.8.2 The City shall, within its power, maintain confidentiality regarding the locations of archaeological sites in order to preserve and protect these resources from vandalism and the unauthorized removal of artifacts.

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## 4.9 Ecotourism

### Discussion

The long-term economic health of Imperial Beach is intimately linked to its rich natural amenities and classic small Southern California beach town character. Its sandy beaches, access to the Tijuana Estuary, and the San Diego Bay make it a regional destination. Visitors from around the region, state, country, and Mexico come to enjoy the sandy beaches, surf, and natural scenery. For many neighboring cities and communities Imperial Beach functions as the south San Diego County beach destination. As a result tourism, and particularly eco-tourism, forms the primary base sector of the local economy and the foundational component for future economic development and a strong fiscal base. Revenues from tourism and visitors including transit occupancy and sales taxes make up a significant portion of the City's tax base and overall economic activity. Maintaining and enhancing these natural amenities and visitor-serving uses while preserving community character should remain priorities in the future.

Beaches throughout the San Diego region that maintain wide sandy beaches consistently attract more attendance than other narrower beaches. An established and growing body of studies and surveys shows this to be a trend throughout the state as a whole. Estimates for beach attendance in Imperial Beach generally have averaged well over 400,000 visitors for year. These visitors include both overnight and daytime visitors that spend money at hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other establishments. Additional visitors come to enjoy the rich wildlife and natural scenery of the Tijuana River Estuary and the San Diego Bay.

Imperial Beach shares borders and interests with numerous local, state, federal, and international agencies, as well as the Port of San Diego. These entities impact Imperial Beaches natural resources and economic development. Strong partnerships and collaboration will continue to be important.

The following policies are intended to ensure that Imperial Beach's natural resources are core considerations moving forward in its economic development strategy. See also the Land Use Element Section 2.5.

### Policies

- 4.9.6 Prioritize development of visitor serving and commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal access and recreation on land planned for visitor-serving commercial and/or recreational facilities.
- 4.9.7 New visitor-serving uses should not displace existing low-cost visitor-serving uses unless an equivalent replacement is provided where feasible.
- 4.9.8 Encourage the development of lower-cost overnight and extended stay accommodations and suitable for families and eco-tourism visitors.
- 4.9.9 Collaborate with local, regional, or state education and research institutions, and natural resource-focused non-profits to support or provide eco-tourism

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- information and activities.
- 4.9.10 Support eco-tourism to increase understanding and enjoyment of coastal resources.
  - 4.9.11 Consider using a portion of Transient Occupancy Tax (“TOT”) revenues for uses such as supporting and promote area businesses, and sand replenishment/retention programs that will benefit both residents and visitors.
  - 4.9.12 Continue to support visitor-serving development along the Bayshore Bikeway that emphasizes the growth of eco-tourism and is consistent with protecting and enhancing the natural processes and aesthetics of the San Diego Bay shoreline.
  - 4.9.13 Explore opportunities to relocate the City Public Works Yard and develop the site and other suitable San Diego Bay shoreline properties for visitor serving and ecotourism purposes.
  - 4.9.14 Pursue opportunities to increase pedestrian access to the San Diego Bay including improving street ends and expanded pedestrian facilities along the Bayshore Bikeway.
  - 4.9.15 Market Imperial Beach as a pre-eminent beach and eco-tourism destination.
  - 4.9.16 Continue collaboration with agencies such as the Unified Port of San Diego, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the TRNERR to enhance the beach, San Diego Bay shoreline, Tijuana River Estuary, and trail networks.
    - a. Upgrade street ends and the Imperial Beach Pier to enhance public access and community character.
    - b. Further exploration of the wetland restoration of Pond 20.
    - c. Maintain and improve access to coastal resources and the estuary
    - d. Improve water quality.
    - e. Support research, cultivation, and farming (aquaculture) of coastal resources, and other eco-tourism endeavors, in a sustainable manner.
    - f. Seek opportunities to enhance and expand the existing trail network, including the California Coastal Trail.
  - 4.9.17 Implement a signage and wayfinding program to attract Bayshore Bikeway cyclists to visit the Bikeway Village and Seacoast Commercial District.

### **Coastal Act Policies - Conservation**

Section 30236 Channelizations, dams, or other substantial alterations of rivers and streams shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible, and be limited to (1) necessary water supply projects, (2) flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the floodplain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development, or (3) developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

Section 30230 Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain

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the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

Section 30231 The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface waterflow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30233 (a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following:

- (1) New or expanded port, energy, and coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.
- (2) Maintaining existing, or restoring previously dredged, depths in existing navigational channels, turning basins, vessel berthing and mooring areas, and boat launching ramps.
- (3) In open coastal waters, other than wetlands, including streams, estuaries, and lakes, new or expanded boating facilities and the placement of structural pilings for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities.
- (4) Incidental public service purposes, including, but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.
- (5) Mineral extraction, including sand for restoring beaches, except in environmentally sensitive areas.
- (6) Restoration purposes.
- (7) Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource-dependent activities.

Section 30240 (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas. (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

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# 5.0 PARKS, RECREATION, AND COASTAL ACCESS ELEMENT\*

*Park and recreation standards serve as one of the bench marks against which the quality of life within a community can be measured.*

Roger A. Lancaster  
Director of Research & Project Coordinator  
National Recreation and Park Association

*\* This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## Goals

- ❖ A city with abundant public beaches, parks and recreational amenities to support a healthy environment and high quality of life for residents and visitors
- ❖ Preservation and enhancement of public beaches and coastal resources that contribute to the city's identity and scenic beauty
- ❖ Recreational amenities that support a healthy community and a strong economy
- ❖ A city that provides access to beaches and parks that supports the enjoyment of recreational opportunities for all

## Background

Imperial Beach's coastline, ocean, parks, and preserves define its character, contribute to a healthy environment and quality of life for residents and visitors, and support the area's economy and emerging eco-tourism sector. These resources reinforce the City's identity as a small beach-oriented town, and make the City an enjoyable, scenic and aesthetically pleasing place to live, work, play, and visit. The Parks and Recreation

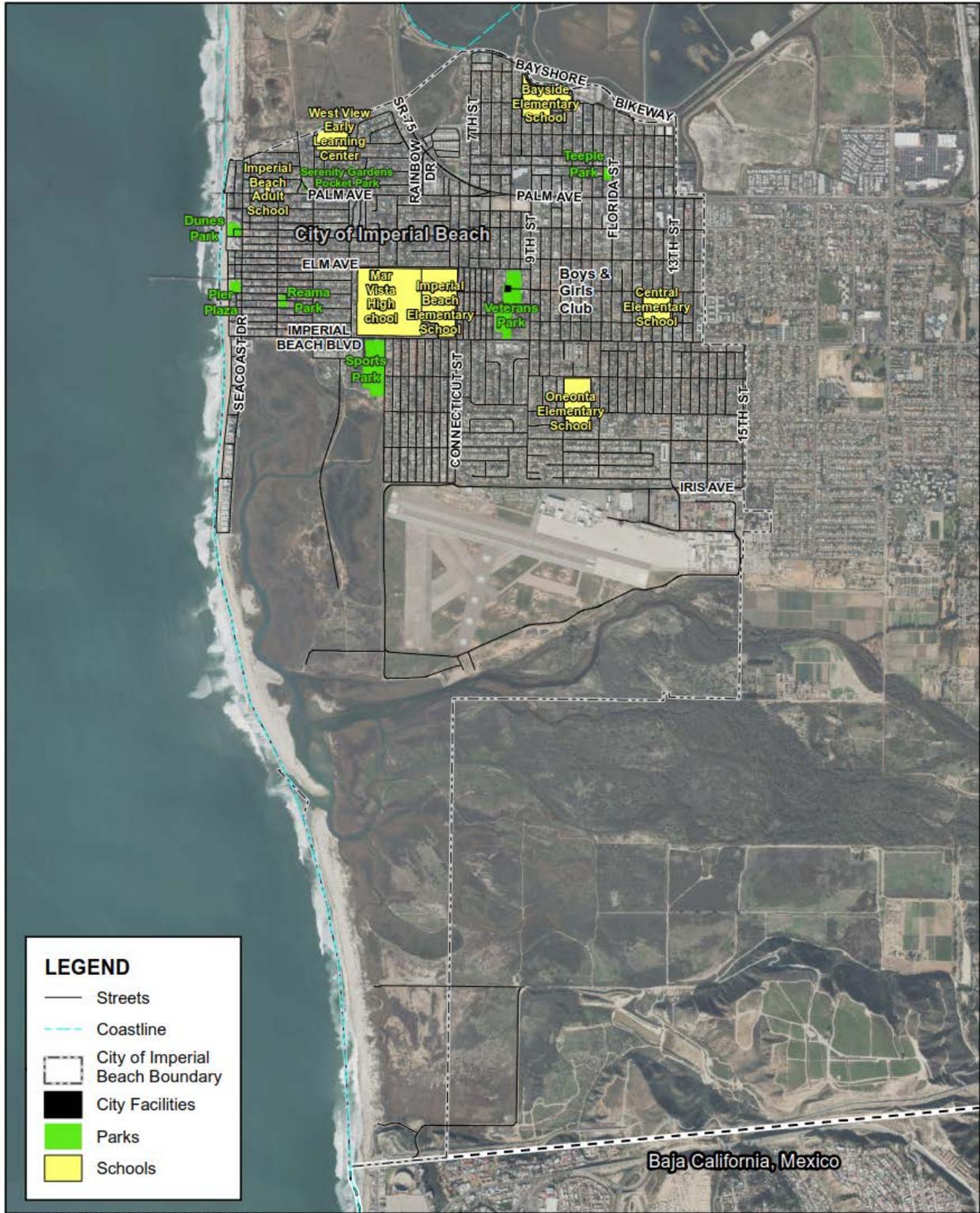
Element is an optional element of the General Plan, while the Public Access section is required by the California Coastal Act. This element focuses on the recreational value of the City's parks and beaches. Additional complementary policies are found in the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, and the Mobility Element.

The City of Imperial Beach owns and maintains approximately 21.4 acres of park land in seven sites consisting of Sports Park, Reama Park, Dunes Park, Veterans Park, Teeple Park, Serenity Gardens Pocket Park, and Pier Plaza. The recreational programs within these parks are operated by the Imperial Beach Boys and Girls Club. In addition to City parks, the following recreational facilities are located within the City limits: Border Field State Park, the City Beach, the Imperial Beach Boys and Girls Club, the Mar Vista High School's athletic fields, Pier Plaza, Tijuana River Estuary Visitor Center and related trails, and the playgrounds of six elementary schools. Other recreational facilities include Marina Vista Center, the Senior Center, and the Conference Center located in the Civic Center complex. Parks and open spaces draw visitors that contribute to the economy, are amenities that make Imperial Beach a desirable place to live and work, and provide opportunities for exercise for a healthy active lifestyle.

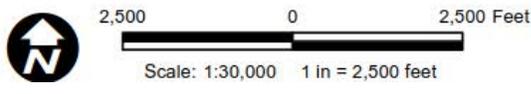
The City's parks, beaches and other active recreational facilities are listed on Table P- I, and mapped on Figure P- I. In addition, the existence of two state parks/beaches in the immediate area (Border Field State Park to the south and Silver Strand State Beach to the north) and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) also help to provide additional public recreational and beach access points and open space for City residents and visitors.

<b>Table P – I - City Parks and Schools by Acreage</b>		
Facilities	Designated Acreage	Facilities
<b>Parks Total</b>	<b>31.3</b>	
Dunes Park	.7	Volleyball, horseshoe, picnicking, children's playground
Pier Plaza & Pier	2.6	Fishing, picnicking, benches
Reama Park	.7	Tot lot, picnic, grass area
Sports Park	7.8	Gym and indoor recreation facilities, picnic areas, six fully lighted ball fields, a skate park, children's playground, an outdoor basketball court, a large (passive) grass play area and restrooms
Veterans Park	6.69	Picnic, grass play areas, children's playground, bandstand/gazebo, dog park, and a senior/ community center with kitchen and restrooms
Serenity Gardens Pocket Park	.20	Need description
Teeple Park	.70	Playgrounds, picnic benches, and barbecues
Sandy Beach	9.8	Beach (South end of Seacoast Drive to Northern City Limits)
Imperial Beach Boys & Girls Club	1.7	Recreation building, baseball field, basketball court
<b>Schools Total (Park and</b>	<b>45.6</b>	

<b>Recreation Acreage Only</b>		
Bayside Elementary School	7.7	Mini-park, 2 baseball fields, basketball, volleyball & wall board courts, running track, and play equipment
Central Elementary School	3.1	2 baseball fields, basketball, volleyball and 2 wall board courts, and play equipment
Imperial Beach Elementary School	2.7	Soccer/baseball field, basketball and volleyball courts, and play equipment
Mar Vista High School	20	Basketball, football field, running track, two swimming pools, and baseball and soccer fields
Oneonta Elementary School	7.6	2 soccer/baseball fields, baseball and volleyball courts, and play equipment
West View Early Learning Center	4.5	Mini-park, baseball fields, baseball, volleyball & wall board courts, and play equipment
<b>Parks and Schools Total</b>	<b>76.9</b>	
<b>Total Regional Facilities (within City Limits)</b>	<b>928</b>	
Border Field State Park	317	Picnic, beach, hiking and horseback trails
Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (outside of Border Field State Park)	611	Visitor center and trails
*Acreages are rounded and may not sum.		



Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017



**FIGURE P-1**  
**PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH

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## Looking Forward: Recreational Needs Assessment

The City's existing park land, including school sites, parks, and the beach but excluding the estuary and Border Field State Park, total approximately 76.9 acres.

Within the City's urbanized lands, the City is focused on maintaining and enhancing existing active use facilities, looking for new and diverse strategies to expand park and recreation opportunities, and striving for equity in the distribution of programs and facilities. Consequently, the City will strive to meet recreational needs through joint use agreements, investments in existing facilities, seeking creative ways to meet park needs, and taking advantage of opportunities that may arise as new development occurs. For example, many of the residents' needs are being accommodated due to the joint use agreements between the City and the Elementary School District and the Port District. The Port District agreements are for public areas along San Diego Bay and the Pier, and the waterfront plaza area adjacent to the Pier. Passive recreational opportunities in open space lands is further discussed in the Conservation and Ecotourism Element.

**Figure P-2** identifies which areas of the City are within walking distance of City parks and schools; the areas most in need of additional parks are the northeast and southeast areas of the City.

## Coastal Act Policies

### Discussion

A broad policy goal of the State of California is to maximize the provision of coastal access and recreation consistent with the protection of public rights, private property rights, and coastal resources as required by the California Constitution and provided in Section 30210 of the Coastal Act. Several additional policies contained in the Coastal Act, which are herein incorporated into the General Plan/Local Coastal Program, work together to meet this objective.

The Coastal Act requires that development not interfere with the public right of access to the sea (Section 30211); provides for public access in new development projects where adequate access does not exist nearby, with limited exceptions (Section 30212); encourages the provision of lower cost visitor and recreational facilities (Section 30213); addresses the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access (30214); specifies the need to protect ocean front land suitable for recreational use (Section 30221); gives priority to the use of land suitable for visitor serving recreational facilities over certain other uses (Section 30222); requires the protection of upland areas to support coastal recreation, where feasible (Section 30223); and encourages recreational boating use of coastal waters (Section 30224).

The public's right to access is supported by the availability of adequate parking and multi-modal facilities to serve coastal access and recreation uses. Support facilities such as parking lots, restrooms, and picnic areas also contribute to ensuring maximum coastal access in the City. The Coastal Act policies related to parks, recreation,

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beaches, and public shoreline access are provided for reference at the end of the element.

## **5.1 Parks and Recreation**

### **Discussion**

To fully utilize the natural advantages of Imperial Beach's location and climate, a variety of park and recreational opportunities are provided for residents and visitors of all ages, incomes and lifestyles. City residents and visitors benefit from a variety of parks including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, activity centers, special use and all-purpose parks.

Shared or "joint use" of parks, athletic fields, open space resources and other recreational facilities is an important strategy to cost-effectively expand recreational opportunities available to the public, made possible by the City's continued coordination with the school districts and other county, state, and federal agencies. The City's Park and Recreation facilities are described in this section. The City's coastal resource-based parks are addressed in Section 5.2 of this element.

### **Dunes Park**

This .73-acre park is located at the Daisy Avenue Street end, four blocks north of Pier Plaza between the beach and Seacoast Drive. Improvements currently include picnic tables, bathrooms, showers, grassy area, water fountains, basketball hoop, a play structure, and public parking.

### **Veteran's Park**

This centrally located 6.69-acre city park includes a picnic area, very large (passive) grass play areas, children's playground, bandstand/gazebo, dog park, and a senior/community center with kitchen and restrooms. Adjacent to the park is the Boys and Girls Club facility (on City land) and the County library, which includes a shared community room. With modification of the grassy play area, there would be space available for additional active recreational facilities, if desired.

### **Reama Park**

This small neighborhood park of approximately 0.72 acre is located on Second Street between Elkwood and Elder Avenues. Dedicated in 1962, this park was named after the late Councilmember Harold Reama. Facilities include a children's playground, picnic area and passive grass area. No organized recreational programs occur at this location.

### **Sports Park**

This fully developed park and recreation center is located at 425 Imperial Beach Boulevard. Facilities include: gymnasium and indoor recreation facilities, picnic areas, six fully lighted ball fields, a skate park, children's playground, an outdoor basketball court, a large (passive) grass play area and restrooms. The two T-ball fields on the

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southern edge of the Sports Park are located on Tijuana Estuary property. The Boys and Girls Club's recreational program which is operated from this facility includes dance lessons, softball leagues and organized activities for the Boys and Girls Club.

### **Teeple Park**

Located in a residential neighborhood, Teeple Park has playgrounds as well as picnic benches and barbecues.

### **Serenity Gardens Pocket Park**

#### **Need description**

### **Elementary Schools**

The City of Imperial Beach has a history of joint use agreements with the South Bay Union Elementary School District that allow the City to use school facilities for recreational purposes. The Boys and Girls Club offers after school programs on all six of the District's school sites in Imperial Beach. The school district's policy is to permit the public to use the school grounds in the evenings and on the weekends when school is not in session. The elementary school sites have a mix of sports fields and courts, playground equipment, running tracks and work-out stations.

### **Mar Vista High School**

Approximately 20 acres of the 33-acre school site is devoted to outdoor recreation. Facilities include a football field and track, two outdoor swimming pools, and baseball/soccer fields. The community has access to the basketball courts and athletic fields when they are not in use by the school.

### **Imperial Beach Boys and Girls Club**

This 1.7-acre recreational facility is located on City property and is bounded on two sides by Veterans Park. In addition to the large recreational building, there is one lighted softball field, and one basketball court on the site. Programs offered include arts and crafts, athletics, social recreation, and youth group programs. This program receives no financial support from the City.

### **Policies**

- 5.1.1 Provide a variety of facilities and programs to meet the recreational needs of a diverse population, including children, teens, adults, persons with disabilities, elderly, and visitors.
  - a. Balance the scheduling of programmed and non-programmed use of parks and recreation facilities to provide access to a diversity of users.
  - b. Provide free and lower cost opportunities for residents and visitor to enjoy the coastal environment.
- 5.1.2 Pursue increased active and passive recreational opportunities for the general public in the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR),

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- Border Field State Park, the beach and the San Diego Bayfront.
- 5.1.3 Provide safe and convenient linkages within and between park facilities and open space areas.
  - 5.1.4 Use oceanfront land for recreational and recreation-related uses whenever feasible.
  - 5.1.5 Continue to maintain coordination with the school districts to maximize the shared use of school and City facilities for park and recreational purposes.
  - 5.1.6 Develop parks or public spaces in conjunction with schools if future opportunities arise as a result of changing enrollment patterns, charter school development, school relocation or expansion, or other unforeseen conditions.
  - 5.1.7 Recognize the contribution of the private sector to parks and recreation and encourage cooperative continuation and expansion of such contributions.
  - 5.1.8 Develop recreation programs to meet the needs of citizens and visitors. Monitor and adjust programs as necessary over time.
  - 5.1.9 Pursue joint use and cooperative recreational programs with City residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations, neighboring cities, the Port District, the County of San Diego, and state and federal agencies.
  - 5.1.10 Pursue the creation of a linear park along the City Bayfront that incorporates walkways, bike trails, landscaped areas, rest areas with benches and tables, a promenade bridge over the Otay River Channel, an amphitheater for special events, gazebo, information center and other features.
  - 5.1.11 Pursue expansion of the park system. Options to be considered include but are not limited to:
    - a. Work with the Navy to pursue joint use of the Navy lands for recreation/open space resource.
    - b. Encourage the school districts to expand the school sites as property may become available and as needs warrant.
    - c. Pursue a park at the northwest corner of Silver Strand and Carnation Avenue.
    - d. Encourage provision of public spaces, such as plazas and pocket parks, space in association with new development.
  - 5.1.12 Strive for equity in the provision of park/recreational/open space facilities so that all residents live within ¼ mile walking distance of a park, beach or open space resource.
  - 5.1.13 In addition to park land, pursue other park system improvements such as enhanced sports fields, fitness stations along pedestrian routes, trailhead amenities, and recreation center building expansions.

## **5.2 Public Coastal Access**

### **Discussion**

The public's right of access to the state's navigable waters is protected by the California Constitution, which states: "No individual, partnership or corporation, claiming or possessing the frontage for tidelands of a harbor, bay inlet, estuary, or other navigable water in this State, shall be permitted to exclude the right-of-way to such water whenever it is required for any public purpose, not to destroy or obstruct the free

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navigation of such water, and the Legislature shall enact such laws as will give the most liberal construction to this provision, so that access to the navigable waters of this State shall be always attainable for the people."

The ocean and the beach are the principal recreational and visitor-serving land uses and attractions in Imperial Beach and provide no-cost and low-cost recreational opportunities for residents and the general public. The City of Imperial Beach has 17,600 linear feet of shoreline. Approximately 12,000 feet (68%) is either publicly owned or has direct vertical or lateral access to the ocean. This includes 6,000 linear feet of sandy beach owned by the State of California within the Border Field State Park in the southwestern corner of the City.

The Coastal Commission requires "lateral" and "vertical" coastal access. The Coastal Commission Shoreline Access Interpretive Guidelines define "lateral access" as a way of providing public access and use along and parallel to the shoreline. Lateral access in Imperial Beach consists of Ocean Boulevard and usable areas of the City's dry sandy beach, which fluctuates in size with daily, monthly, and seasonal tidal activity and based on beach nourishment activities and other sediment loading occurring locally and regionally, and access along the San Diego Bay provided by the Bayshore Bikeway and parallel pedestrian facilities.

"Vertical" access refers to access from the first public roadway to the shoreline and is not necessarily vertical in the context of an elevation change. Vertical and Lateral Accessways are mapped on Figure P-4.



Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017

**FIGURE P-4**  
**VERTICAL AND LATERAL**  
**COASTAL ACCESS**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH



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The most heavily used public accessways are located at Pier Plaza and the surrounding beaches where there is public parking both on and off-street. Throughout the City Beach area, there are frequent access-ways which supports maximum public access to the coast.

For the purposes of public access, the beach area can be divided into five resource areas. These resource areas are:

- Imperial Beach Pier and Pier Plaza
- Imperial Beach City Beach
- Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Borderfield State Park
- San Diego Bayfront and Bayshore Bikeway

### **Imperial Beach Pier and Pier Plaza**

The City pier is one of Imperial Beach's main public visitor serving and recreational facilities. The pier was reconstructed most recently in 1987 and is approximately 30 feet wide and 1,500 feet long and is used for both sightseeing and fishing. Lights on the pier allow for visitor and fishing uses at night. As the owner of the pier, the San Diego Unified Port District may in the future add charter boat fishing and restaurant concessions.

Imperial Beach Portwood Pier Plaza includes grassy expanses, picnic areas, a tot-lot, entertainment stage, and access to the pier and beach. Portwood Pier Plaza also includes tributes to Imperial Beach's long history as a surfing destination, including a colorful collection of surfboard benches. Each bench bears a plaque that tells the story of how Imperial Beach's big waves had an impact on the surfing pioneers from 1937 to the 1950s. The crowning piece of the plaza is Surfhenge – a towering colorful public art monument to surfing.

### **Imperial Beach City Beach**

Imperial Beach is known for its 3.5 miles of white sand beaches and big waves. The City Beach is the open sandy beach area both north and south of the city pier. The beach is accessible from the Pier Plaza parking lot and has wide vertical access points for easy egress and ingress to the beach and ocean. The entire City Beach area is subject to daylight lifeguard monitoring.

### **Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve**

As discussed in the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, approximately 928 acres of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) are located within the City limits of Imperial Beach. The remaining acreage is within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego. California State Parks operates the TRNERR Visitor Center and maintains Border Field State Park. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, several regional agencies and local

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municipalities share ownership and management responsibilities at the Reserve.

The Reserve provides four miles of trails through uplands, saltmarsh and mudflats as well as access to the beach. Located next to one of the four entrances to the Refuge is the Visitor Center at 301 Caspian Way. The Visitor Center's 6,800 square feet of space provide for an exhibit hall, education laboratory, audio/visual room, administrative offices, reference library and map and photo library.

### **Border Field State Park**

Border Field State Park is located adjacent to Mexico generally within the City limits of Imperial Beach. The Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve Estuary separates the State Park from the populated areas of the City. Border Field State Park comprises approximately 396.4 acres of land, with 317.0 acres located within the City of Imperial Beach. Nearly 372 acres of the park is operated by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. This property includes the lagoon and salt marshes, about 30 acres of steep slopes at the edge of the floodplain, and about 10 acres of flat plateaus overlooking the floodplain and beach.

The State Park is accessed through Monument Road, which runs through the City of San Diego. Monument Road is a two-lane road in poor condition and subject to flooding. Within the State Park, public beach access is provided via the parking area on the coastal strand directly adjacent to the beach. Additionally, a lateral (parallel) passive access-way exists along the beach. No direct access to the beach is provided from Monument Mesa due to the bluff top topography of the area. An active access-way does however exist along the top of the mesa. Beach access is supported by a 280-car parking lot, and amenities include picnic sites, restrooms, a historical monument on Monument Mesa, and a parking area at a horse staging area.

The facility is devoted to passive recreation such as picnicking, hiking, walking along the beach, swimming in the ocean, and horseback riding. Horse-riding trails traverse through the Tijuana River Valley to the Pacific Ocean and a large picnic area on the bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The State Park is landscaped with walking paths and supports light sports activities and contains tables and benches for those wishing to have a picnic. There is a 10-foot paved walkway from the picnic area down the bluff to the beach.

### **Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Protected Area**

The Tijuana River Mouth State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) Marine Protected Area (MPA) is located in the waters adjacent to Border Field State Park. MPAs are established by the State of California to conserve and restore ocean wildlife and habitat. MPAs contribute to healthier, more resilient ocean ecosystems that can better withstand a wide range of impacts such as pollution and climate change. By protecting entire ecosystems rather than focusing on a single species, MPAs are powerful tools for conserving and restoring ocean biodiversity, and protecting cultural resources, while allowing certain activities such as marine recreation and research.

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### **San Diego Bay Tidelands-San Diego Unified Port District**

The San Diego Unified Port District (Port District) manages the Imperial Beach tidelands (which is defined as the area located between the mean high tide line to a point in the submerged lands no longer subject to tidal action/influence of the Pacific Ocean), and the Imperial Beach Pier. The Port District leases from the City all of Ocean Boulevard from the north end of the City to a point 300 feet south of South Seacoast Drive. Other property in the City of Imperial Beach, which is leased (as opposed to owned) by the Port District include Dunes Park, Pier Plaza and easements over the street ends of Imperial Beach Boulevard and Palm Avenue.

The beach is located approximately five miles east of Interstate 5, and a mile south and west of State Route 75, a state highway (currently in the relinquishment process) bisecting Imperial Beach as it passes from the City of Coronado to the City of San Diego. Access to the City of Imperial Beach from Interstate 5 is taken from either Palm Avenue, or from the Coronado Avenue/Imperial Beach Boulevard corridors. Imperial Beach is served by the Metropolitan Transit System, which provides bus service to the area, as well as the Bayshore Bikeway which is a bike path that runs along the Silver Strand from Coronado to the South San Diego Bayfront in Imperial Beach. See the Mobility Element for additional information.

### **The San Diego-Eastern Arizona Railroad Right-of-Way**

This right-of-way located at the northern boundary of the City was originally dedicated in 1876 as an 80 to 120 foot wide, by .9 mile long strip of land. In 1912, the San Diego-Eastern Arizona Railroad obtained part of the right-of-way for a line to transport people from San Diego to the Hotel Del Coronado and back. Currently, the City has an agreement with the Railway Company that allows the City to use portions of the right-of-way for the Bayshore and Bernardo Shores bikeways, as well as community park purposes. The existing railroad track within the property is covered and protected in place.

### **California Coastal Trail**

The California Coastal Trail is a continuous trail system traversing the length of the state's coastline. The California Coastal Trail is intended to:

- Provide a continuous walking, biking and hiking trail as close to the ocean as possible;
- Provide maximum access for a variety of non-motorized uses by utilizing alternative trail segments where feasible;
- Maximize connections to existing and proposed local trail systems;
- Ensure that all segments of the trail have vertical access connections at reasonable intervals;
- Maximize ocean views and scenic coastal vistas; and,
- Provide an educational experience where feasible through interpretive facilities.

See the Mobility Element for information on how the Coastal Trail connects to the City's multi-modal mobility system.

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## Policies

- 5.2.1 Maintain free public beach access.
- 5.2.2 Provide physical access to the City's coastal resource areas for all segments of the population, without creating a public safety concern, overburdening the City's public improvements, or causing substantial adverse impacts to adjacent private property owners.
- 5.2.3 Site, design, and manage access-ways to seabird nesting and roosting sites, sensitive rocky points and intertidal areas, and coastal dunes. See also the Conservation Element for policies related to access to Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA).
- 5.2.4 Design and site new development to ensure continued public access to, and recreation along, the shoreline and trails.
  - a. If there is no feasible alternative that can eliminate or avoid an adverse access impact, then the feasible alternative that would result in the least significant adverse impact shall be required.
  - b. Some impacts may be mitigated through the dedication of an access or trail easement where the project site encompasses an LCP mapped access or trail alignment, where the City, county, state, or other public agency has identified a trail used by the public, or where prescriptive rights exist.
  - c. Do not displace public parking areas serving recreational uses unless a strategy to provide comparable public access is provided.
  - d. As feasible, new non-visitor serving office or commercial development should provide public parking for beach access during weekends and holidays.
- 5.2.5 Continue collaboratively working with the San Diego Unified Port District to ensure that the Port Master Plan (PMP) adequately addresses lands the Port owns and leases in Imperial Beach.
  - a. Ensure that the Imperial Beach Pier provides maximum public enjoyment and a wide variety of recreational opportunities, and is adequately maintained for the long term.
  - b. Develop new shoreline-related uses on both Port District owned property and on property leased to them by the City
- 5.2.6 Coordinate with state and federal agencies to develop guidelines for the use of the Tijuana Estuary.
  - a. Control access and utilization by the installation of appropriately designed and posted access-ways.
  - b. Continue to develop a working relationship with California State Parks staff in a coordinated effort to make the Border Field State Park area, and its access to the beach, a resource that is available to the public.
- 5.2.7 Maintain and enhance the environmental integrity of all beach areas
- 5.2.8 Gain and improve access-ways located in proximity to public parking areas and public transportation routes.

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- a. Encourage the use of access-ways through the installation of appropriate signage that indicates, where applicable, the existence and location of nearby public parking areas.
  - b. In the unimproved right-of-way of Ocean Boulevard north of Imperial Beach Boulevard, the City may construct improvements that provide, preserve or enhance public access at the street ends and parks, whether vertical or lateral or both, and which will continue to allow access for equipment for emergency and maintenance purposes.
- 5.2.9 Retain all existing street ends under City ownership that provide public access to coastal resources, including bays, for streets, parks, open space or other public use.
- a. Protect public view corridors and do not permit buildings to be located within or bridging the streets.
  - b. Prepare detailed design plans for each street end to maximize public access and enjoyment.
- 5.2.10 In the event that public access and the public interest may be served by the alteration or development of Ocean Lane or alleys west of Seacoast Drive, the City may consider vacation when:
- a. Ocean Lane or alley vacation would permit development requiring consolidation of two or more lots, including the public right of way, and;
  - b. A development would involve a use related to public recreation and/or visitor serving facilities, and;
  - c. In either a or b above, the new development shall incorporate within its planning and building design:
    - (1) A means of maintaining or restoring physical public access to the shoreline, and;
    - (2) A means of maintaining visual public access to the shoreline, and;
    - (3) A means of ensuring multi-modal access. See also the Mobility Element.
- 5.2.11 No individual, partnership or corporation claiming or possessing the frontage of a harbor, bay inlet, estuary, or other navigable water in Imperial Beach, shall be permitted to exclude the right-of-way to such water whenever it is required for any public purposes, including public rights obtained by prescriptive easement, nor destroy or obstruct the free navigation of such water. The City of Imperial Beach shall protect and enhance beach access and continue to formalize prescriptive rights.
- 5.2.12 Limit new public beach structures to those that support or enhance public recreation or marine safety related activities. No development, other than shoreline protection devices permitted pursuant to the LUP, may be permitted on sandy public beach areas, except lifeguard stations, public beach access, and trash and recycling receptacles.
- 5.2.13 Accessible improvements may be permitted when sited and designed to minimize adverse impacts to public access, visual resources, ESHA, and marine resources.
- 5.2.14 Any permitted structures shall be the alternative with the least impact on coastal resources and recreation, the minimum size necessary, and shall

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- provide any necessary mitigation.
- 5.2.15 In general, concessions should be confined to non-sandy beach areas.
- 5.2.16 Coordinate with the County of San Diego, Coastal Conservancy, SANDAG, the City of San Diego, the Port District, and other appropriate agencies to plan and provide the California Coastal Trail, a continuous public right-of-way, and other public trail facilities, as close to the California coastline as possible.
- a. Design the trail to foster appreciation and stewardship of the scenic and natural resources of the coast through hiking and other complementary modes of non-motorized transportation.
  - b. Complement the trail through the provision of linkages to additional recreational resources such as Border Field State Park and International Friendship Park, as a means to maximize public access to the trail, beaches, and scenic vistas.
  - c. Collaborate with other agencies to work toward the establishment of additional, complementary pedestrian and bicycle facilities and multi-use corridors, including, but not limited to, the San Diego-Eastern Arizona Railroad Right-of-Way/Public Easement.

### **Coastal Act Policies – Parks, Recreation and Coastal Access**

Section 30210. Requires maximum access and broad recreational opportunities for all people in beach and coastal areas.

Section 30211 Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation. "New Development" is further defined in Section 30211 (b).

Section 30214 (a) The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case including, but not limited to, the following: (1) Topographic and geologic site characteristics. (2) The capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity. (3) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses. (4) The need to provide for the management of access areas so as to protect the privacy of adjacent property owners and to protect the aesthetic values of the area by providing for the collection of litter. (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the public access policies of this article be carried out in a reasonable manner that considers the equities and that balances the rights of the individual property owner with the public's constitutional right of access pursuant to Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. Nothing in this section or any amendment thereto shall be construed as a limitation on the rights guaranteed to the public under Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. (c) In carrying out the public access policies of this article, the commission and any other responsible public agency shall consider and encourage the utilization of innovative access management techniques, including, but not limited to, agreements with private organizations which would minimize management costs and encourage the use of volunteer programs.

Section 30220:

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

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Section 30221:

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

Section 30222:

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

Section 30223:

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

Section 30224:

Increased recreational boating use of coastal waters shall be encouraged, in accordance with this division, by developing dry storage areas, increasing public launching facilities, providing additional berthing space in existing harbors, limiting non-water-dependent land uses that congest access corridors and preclude boating support facilities, providing harbors of refuge, and by providing for new boating facilities in natural harbors, new protected water areas, and in areas dredged from dry land.

Section 30234.5 The economic, commercial, and recreational importance of fishing activities shall be recognized and protected.

Section 30251 The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.

Section 30252:

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

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# 6.0 FACILITIES AND SERVICES ELEMENT\*

*We will strive for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many; we will unceasingly seek to quicken the sense of public duty; we will revere and obey the city's law--; we will transmit this city not only, not less, but greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.\**

Oath of the Athenian City-State

*\*This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## **Goals**

- ❖ Provision of adequate public facilities concurrent with new construction
- ❖ Timely upgrades and improvements to public facilities and services to protect the health and welfare of residents and visitors to Imperial Beach
- ❖ Consideration of sea level rise in the planning and design of public facilities

## **Background**

The manner in which public facilities and services are provided in California jurisdictions, as well as the manner in which they are funded, has changed considerably since the 1970s. Continued population growth and technological advances require a more regional approach to the planning and provision of some facilities and services that were once the exclusive concern of municipalities. At the same time, fiscal constraints and legislative actions have shifted funding methods from a reliance on the general obligation of taxpayers to a greater emphasis on requiring new development to "pay its own way." The Facilities and Services Element is a guideline to indicate future needs as the City continues to evolve. Funding to meet these needs will come from a variety of sources that must be considered in the annual capital improvement and budget planning processes.

In the following discussion, not all services and facilities are under the direct control of the City. However, the policy commitments of the City greatly affect the ability of other

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agencies to provide appropriate levels of service to Imperial Beach residents and visitors. Mobility facilities are discussed in the Mobility Element, and parks and recreational facilities are discussed in the Parks, Recreation and Coastal Access Element of this Plan.

## **Coastal Act**

### **Discussion**

The Coastal Act policies related to Facilities and Services require a number of measures, including the following: the distribution of public facilities throughout an area to mitigate against the impacts of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area (Section 30212.5); a plan to assure development would not result in any detrimental increase in runoff water (Section 30170); the protection of facilities serving the commercial fishing and recreational boating industries (Section 30234); the protection of the economic, commercial, and recreational importance of fishing activities (Section 30234.5); that the capacity of new or expanded public works facilities be limited to the capacity necessary to address the needs of the development (Section 30254 and Section 30254.5); that permits associated with proposed development will not modify, adopt conditions, or take any action in conflict with any determination by the State Water Resources Control Board or any California regional water quality control board in matters relating to water quality or the administration of water rights (Section 30412 of the California Public Resources Code); the identification and protection of sensitive resource values (Section 30525); and that no sewer projects will be denied, restricted, or conditioned in order to implement housing policies or programs (Section 30607.2). The Coastal Act policies that are related to Facilities and Services are provided at the end of this element.

## **6.1 Capital Improvement Planning and Financing**

### **Discussion**

Imperial Beach is an established City with a framework of public facilities in place. As the City matures and changes over time, it will continue to address an ongoing need to fund upgrades, retrofits, and replacement of aging infrastructure. In addition, the City faces new and growing challenges as a result of sea level rise and other impacts of a changing climate.

Key public facilities include:

**Public Works Yard.** The Public Works Yard is presently located on Cherry Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets on the San Diego Bayfront. These facilities house the City maintenance and operations personnel, and equipment. The fully developed site is approximately 1.79 acres. Although the facilities are adequate, they do not need to be located on a bayfront site.

**Civic Center.** The majority of municipal facilities of the City of Imperial Beach, including the Sheriff's station, Fire department, City Council chambers, City Hall conference

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center and administrative offices, are located in the Civic Center complex on Imperial Beach Boulevard. This complex consists of four separate buildings and related parking on approximately 2.7 acres. The existing size and location of the facilities are considered adequate for the City's staffing needs.

**Library.** The Imperial Beach Library, located at 810 Imperial Beach Boulevard, is part of the greater San Diego County library system. A new, beach-themed 15,000 square-foot library opened in 2017, replacing the previous 5,000 square-foot facility. Many elements and amenities of the new library are a result of collaboration with the County, Friends of the Imperial Beach Library, the City of Imperial Beach, and community members. The library is owned and maintained by the County.

## **Policies**

- 6.1.1 New development in the City shall pay its own way.
- 6.1.2 Maintain an up-to-date Capital Improvement Program in order to effectively plan and budget for needed facilities and upgrade service deficiencies. Locate public utilities and public works facilities that are not dependent on the ocean or bay away from the ocean or bayfront to the extent possible. These facilities should be screened from public view and designed in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses.
- 6.1.3 Consider sea level rise in the design and location of public facilities.
- 6.1.4 Pursue relocating the Public Works Yard to a non-bayfront site. Alternative sites include, but are not limited to: Ream Field, sites outside the City limits, and splitting the yard into more than one site.
  - a. Pursue private/public partnerships to facilitate redevelopment of the Public Works Yard site.
  - b. Incorporate public amenities into any redevelopment proposal.

## **6.2 Fire and Emergency Services**

### **Discussion**

Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided by the City of Imperial Beach Fire Department located in the Civic Center complex. The Fire Department operates one engine daily and houses a reserve engine at the fire station. The engine has a 24-foot ground extension ladder, which can reach the second story of a building. Though the Fire Department does not have a Ladder Truck Company on-site, the cities of San Diego, Coronado, and Chula Vista are available to respond, via automatic aid agreements, to all structural fires and rescue emergencies.<sup>1</sup>

*(This section is not a part of the Local Coastal Program Update. Text updates are forthcoming.)*

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<sup>1</sup> Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and Commercial Zoning Amendments Project Environmental Impact Report, August 2012.

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## **Policies**

- 6.2.1 Explore ways to improve the City's fire rating at every opportunity, to maintain a rating no higher than 4.

## **6.3 Law Enforcement**

### **Discussion**

The demand for law enforcement services in Imperial Beach is determined not only by the needs of residents but also by visitors to the City, particularly the beach area. As tourist activities increase, there may be a need for additional law enforcement activities.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department provides contract law enforcement services to the City of Imperial Beach. Based out of the Imperial Beach Station at the Civic Center Complex, the Sheriff's Department personnel provide all aspects of law enforcement services, including patrol, traffic, crime prevention and investigations, and Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving (COPPS) to the City's residents, businesses, and visitors. Additionally, the Imperial Beach Station provides law enforcement services to residents who reside in the unincorporated communities of Bonita, Sunnyside, Lincoln Acres, Proctor Valley, Otay Valley, and Otay Mesa.

There is no accepted uniform standard for number of police per 1,000 population. Additionally, there is no direct correlation between number of police and crime rates. Communities vary substantially based on density, characteristics of land use, and other factors.

Additional law enforcement is provided by the Sheriff's F-7 involvement program, which is a volunteer patrol program consisting of retired persons trained for community protection and patrol assignments. Activities include: daily senior citizen safety checks, vacation property checks, and an "eyes on the road" patrol program. The Sheriff's office will continue to enhance and maintain this program.

San Diego County's overall crime rate for the 2016 calendar year was 21.99 reported crimes per 1,000 people. Reported crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. The violent crime rate (per 1,000 population) in the San Diego region increased in the later part of the 1980s, reaching a peak of 9.76 in 1992. Since then, it generally declined to a 37-year low in 2014 (3.28) followed by small changes in 2016 (3.33). Imperial Beach's 2016 rate was lower than the County's overall crime rate at 16.15 reported crimes per 1000 people. According to the 2016 crime statistics kept by SANDAG, the City of Imperial beach ranked 5 out of 18 cities for crime (1 being best).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Source: SANDAG, Thirty-Seven Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2016, by Cynthia Burke, Ph.D, 2017. [http://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid\\_2113\\_21861.pdf](http://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_2113_21861.pdf)

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## **Policies**

- 6.3.1 Maintain public information and school educational programs in crime prevention and drug education.
- 6.3.2 Assist residents and businesses in developing neighborhood and commercial protection programs.
- 6.3.3 Strive to maintain crime rates below the County average and better than the majority of San Diego County cities.

## **6.4 Public Rights-of-Way**

### **Discussion**

#### **Alleys**

Most of the alleys within the City limits are paved. It is the City's policy to pave all unimproved alleys and the City has plans to pave the remaining unimproved alleys.

#### **Drainage**

Surface run-off, a condition intensified by development as a result of soil compaction and an increase in the amount of impervious surfaces, is presently handled by the street system and a small storm drain system. Most of the captured run-off is deposited directly into the San Diego Bay, Pacific Ocean or the Tijuana Estuary.

The risk of flooding due to surface run-off and coastal flooding is increasing due to sea level rise. Key findings from the Imperial Beach Sea Level Rise Assessment Study (SLR Study, 2016) include:

- Tidal inundation already impacts many of the key storm water outlets that drain into the Bay and Estuary particularly during high tides.
- Nearly 800 feet of wastewater pipe is currently exposed to existing erosion hazards.
- Five pump stations are currently vulnerable to coastal flooding.
- Presently, 1.7 miles of roads are potentially subject to coastal erosion from a 100-year wave erosion event.
- All of the beach accesses and oceanfront properties are in existing coastal erosion and coastal flood hazard zones associated with a 100-year wave event

See also the Safety Element for additional information on sea level rise hazards and resiliency strategies.

#### **Sidewalks**

Although much of the City is served by sidewalks, sidewalks are missing in a variety of areas. Sidewalks can be particularly important in providing access to schools, parks, the beach and commercial areas. Installation of new sidewalks or improvements to existing sidewalks, if necessary, is required with all building permits for construction projects above a designated threshold.

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Many parts of the City have non-contiguous parkways, which provide a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and the street. When landscaped and planted with trees, parkways help create a pleasant, attractive and safe pedestrian way. See also the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, and the Design Element for additional guidance regarding street trees.

### **Streets**

The public roads in Imperial Beach have been improved with pavement. Generally, the public right-of-way has also been improved with curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Regular maintenance to the City's road system has been financed through the City's share of "Prop A" funds - a sales tax passed by the voters of San Diego County. Additional funding sources will be needed when the sales tax measure expires.

### **Undergrounding of the Utilities**

The City has completed the undergrounding of utilities along the Highway 75/Palm Avenue corridor. The City has also established a utility underground conversion district on Imperial Beach Boulevard, from Seacoast Drive to the eastern City limits. The City Council prioritizes undergrounding projects as funding becomes available.

### **Policies**

- 6.4.1 New construction adjacent to alleys shall be required to bring the alley up to City standards or provide an approved lien contract.
- 6.4.2 Continue to pave all alleys in the City. Pursue improvements in storm water conveyance facilities in response to sea level rise impacts.
- 6.4.3 Develop programs to solve localized Imperial Beach drainage problems. Such programs shall include working with the City of San Diego and the U.S. Navy as necessary.
- 6.4.4 Provide sidewalks in an area that is not contiguous with the paved street and curb. The area between the street curb and the sidewalk shall be used for a landscaped parkway planted with street trees. This policy shall be implemented as part of development approvals except in areas already committed to curb side sidewalks. Parkway shall not be paved except where satisfactory trees have been planted and decorative paving material is used, such as bricks or pavers.
- 6.4.5 Encourage property owners to complete missing portions of sidewalks and, for larger areas, to sponsor the creation of sidewalk assessment districts.
- 6.4.6 Require improvements to existing sidewalks, or construction of new sidewalks with all building permits for construction above a certain threshold. Seek to maintain non-contiguous landscaped parkways to foster an attractive and safe pedestrian environment, and to help capture stormwater. Where a wider clear sidewalk path is desired, paving may occur with City oversight to achieve a pedestrian and environmentally friendly design.
- 6.4.7 Pursue the undergrounding of utilities on major streets as funding becomes available.

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## 6.5 Schools

*(This section is not a part of the Local Coastal Program Update. Text updates are forthcoming.)*

## 6.6 Solid Waste Disposal

### Discussion

Solid waste disposal for Imperial Beach is currently provided at the Otay Landfill. The Otay Landfill Solid Waste Facility has an estimated remaining capacity of 33,070,879 cubic yards and an estimated closure date of April 2021 (CalRecycle 2011).<sup>3</sup> The City of Imperial Beach has already instituted the separation of yard clippings from the remainder of the trash and the recycling of aluminum cans, tin cans, glass bottles, newspapers and two types of plastic. In addition, this element includes policies to support composting, which would encourage further diversion of solid waste from the landfill.

### Policies

- 6.6.1 Emphasize source reduction to residents and businesses to decrease the amount of solid waste generated.
- 6.6.2 Maintain a recycling program to minimize impacts on regional solid waste disposal sites.
- 6.6.3 Diversify collection and processing of compostable materials to prioritize their highest and best local use.
- 6.6.4 Adopt streamlined regulations that support composting by local residents, community groups and businesses.
- 6.6.5 Support purchasing of locally produced compost and mulch for applications in water-wise landscaping, carbon sequestration, stormwater and erosion control projects.

## 6.7 Wastewater Services

### Discussion

The City of Imperial Beach is a member of the San Diego Metropolitan Sewerage System (Metro). The City operates its own sewerage collection system and transports the sanitary waste to Metro's South Bay Interceptor which conveys it to the regional water treatment plant on Point Loma.

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<sup>3</sup> Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and Commercial Zoning Amendments Project Environmental Impact Report, August 2012.

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Infiltration, defined as water entering the sewer system from the groundwater table, is a significant problem. Portions of the City's system are already susceptible to sea water infiltration. For example, the 2016 Revell Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment report found a number of pump stations, manholes, and a substantial portion of pipe along the coast, San Diego Bay, and Tijuana Estuary to be vulnerable to coastal flooding under existing conditions. This vulnerability will be exacerbated as sea level rise increases due to the close proximity of the ocean, and the depth of the pipe relative to sea level. Impacts are anticipated to extend progressively inward and occur during high tides, coastal flooding, and from coastal erosion. These vulnerabilities can be decreased through flood proof retrofits of pump stations, pipes, and manholes; coastal protection; and elevation of electrical and other similar components.

## **Policies**

- 6.7.1 Develop whatever agreements are necessary with the San Diego Area Wastewater Management District to provide sewer treatment capacity to accommodate the General Plan's projected growth.
- 6.7.2 Encourage federal, state, and other responsible agencies to address the problems of drainage, sewage and beach pollution associated with the Tijuana River Valley.
- 6.7.3 Continue to upgrade the sewage system based on the 1990 Sewage System Master Plan. Evaluate the need to incorporate results from the City Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment into future updates.

## **6.8 Water Services**

### **Discussion**

*(This section is not a part of the Local Coastal Program Update. Text updates are forthcoming.)*

#### **Coastal Act Policies – Public Facilities**

##### **Section 30212.5**

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

##### **Section 30170**

No development may occur in the area described in this subdivision until a plan for drainage of the parcel to be developed has been approved by the local government having jurisdiction over the area after consultation with the commission and the Department of Fish and Game. The plan shall assure that no detrimental increase occurs in runoff of water from the parcel to be developed and shall require that the facilities necessary to implement the plan are installed as part of the development.

##### **Section 30254**

New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division; provided, however, that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway Route 1 in rural areas of the coastal

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zone remain a scenic two-lane road. Special districts shall not be formed or expanded except where assessment for, and provision of, the service would not induce new development inconsistent with this division. Where existing or planned public works facilities can accommodate only a limited amount of new development, services to coastal dependent land use, essential public services and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state, or nation, public recreation, commercial recreation, and visitor-serving land uses shall not be precluded by other development.

**Section 30254.5**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission may not impose any term or condition on the development of any sewage treatment plant which is applicable to any future development that the commission finds can be accommodated by that plant consistent with this division. Nothing in this section modifies the provisions and requirements of Sections 30254 and 30412.

**Section 30412<sup>4</sup>**

- (a) In addition to Section 13142.5 of the Water Code, this section shall apply to the commission and the State Water Resources Control Board and the California regional water quality control boards.
- (b) The State Water Resources Control Board and the California regional water quality control boards are the state agencies with primary responsibility for the coordination and control of water quality. The State Water Resources Control Board has primary responsibility for the administration of water rights pursuant to applicable law. The commission shall assure that proposed development and local coastal programs shall not frustrate this section. The commission shall not, except as provided in subdivision (c), modify, adopt conditions, or take any action in conflict with any determination by the State Water Resources Control Board or any California regional water quality control board in matters relating to water quality or the administration of water rights. Except as provided in this section, nothing herein shall be interpreted in any way either as prohibiting or limiting the commission, local government, or port governing body from exercising the regulatory controls over development pursuant to this division in a manner necessary to carry out this division.
- (c) Any development within the coastal zone or outside the coastal zone which provides service to any area within the coastal zone that constitutes a treatment work shall be reviewed by the commission and any permit it issues, if any, shall be determinative only with respect to the following aspects of the development:
  - (1) The siting and visual appearance of treatment works within the coastal zone.
  - (2) The geographic limits of service areas within the coastal zone which are to be served by particular treatment works and the timing of the use of capacity of treatment works for those service areas to allow for phasing of development and use of facilities consistent with this division.
  - (3) Development projections which determine the sizing of treatment works for providing service within the coastal zone.

The commission shall make these determinations in accordance with the policies of this division and shall make its final determination on a permit application for a treatment work prior to the final approval by the State Water Resources Control Board for the funding of such treatment works. Except as specifically provided in this subdivision, the decisions of the State Water Resources Control Board relative to the construction of treatment works shall be final and binding upon the commission.
- (d) The commission shall provide or require reservations of sites for the construction of treatment works and points of discharge within the coastal zone adequate for the protection of coastal resources consistent with the provisions of this division.
- (e) Nothing in this section shall require the State Water Resources Control Board to fund or certify for funding, any specific treatment works within the coastal zone or to prohibit the State Water Resources Control Board or any California regional water quality control board from requiring a

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<sup>4</sup> Note that this is Section 30412 of the California Public Resources Code. This is not a Section of the Coastal Act.

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higher degree of treatment at any existing treatment works.

**Section 30525**

Sensitive resource values; identification; protection in promulgation of local coastal program

- (a) Every state agency that owns or manages land or water areas within the coastal zone, including public beaches, parks, natural areas, and fish and wildlife preserves, shall identify the sensitive resource values within those areas that are particularly susceptible to adverse impacts from nearby development that is not carefully planned. Every such agency shall also identify the location and type of development that would have a significant adverse impact on those sensitive resource values.
- (b) Every agency subject to this section shall advise the appropriate local government of particular considerations that should be evaluated during the preparation of a local coastal program and which, in the opinion of such agency, may be necessary to protect identified sensitive resource values. In addition, the work undertaken pursuant to this section shall be completed in a timely manner in order to maximize the opportunity for the public, affected local governments, and the commission to consider this information fully during the preparation, review, and approval of the appropriate local coastal program.
- (c) Work already completed pursuant to former Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 31300) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, added by Chapter 1441 of the Statutes of 1976, and in conformity with this section, that identifies sensitive resource values within publicly owned or managed land and water areas of the coastal zone shall be considered by local government and the commission in the course of carrying out this chapter.
- (d) For purposes of this section, "sensitive resource values" means those fragile or unique natural resources which are particularly susceptible to degradation resulting from surrounding development, the adverse effects of which have not been carefully evaluated, mitigated, or avoided. Examples include, but are not limited to, environmentally sensitive areas, as defined in Section 30107.5, areas uniquely suited for scientific or educational purposes, and specific public recreation areas where the quality of the recreational experience is dependent on the character of the surrounding area.

**Section 30607.2**

- (a) No new coastal development permit or amendment to any existing permit for a sewer project shall be denied, restricted, or conditioned in order to implement housing policies or programs.

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# 7.0 SAFETY ELEMENT\*

*Men come together in cities for security; they stay together for the good life.*

Aristotle

*\*This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document*

## Goals

- ❖ A resilient City that is prepared to reduce risk to life and property from fire, flood, climate change, geologic and seismic-related, and other hazards.
- ❖ Shoreline management that enhances the shoreline environment while also providing recreational opportunities and property protection.
- ❖ Cost-effective shoreline management tactics that have a positive impact on the region's economy and equitably allocates costs among local, regional, state, and federal sources.
- ❖ Increased disaster preparedness and resiliency through regional collaboration.

## Background

California General Plan law requires the Safety Element to address means of protecting the community from unreasonable risks associated with fire, flood, climate change, geologic and seismic hazards. This Element also implements provisions of the California Coastal Act pertaining to minimizing hazard potential in the Coastal Zone. Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges for cities throughout the state; sea level rise, increased temperatures, drought, wildfires, and degraded habitat are just a few of its wide-ranging impacts that present challenges to public safety, health, and the economy. In Imperial Beach, sea level rise is a particularly critical challenge due to its low-lying elevation and location adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, San Diego Bay and Tijuana River Estuary shorelines that essentially bound it with water on three sides. However, Imperial Beach, through its long-standing commitment to open space preservation, has increased its resiliency to coastal hazards as its open spaces buffer the City from ocean processes (such as natural erosion, tides, and storm events). The City's open space resources also have recreational, economic, and biological

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importance, as discussed in the Conservation and Ecotourism, and Recreation and Coastal Access elements.

The Imperial Beach coastline is part of the Silver Strand Littoral Cell, which is a segment of coastline involved in the complete cycle of littoral transportation and sedimentation. Under natural conditions, a littoral cell is supplied with sand and sediment by rivers and streams that flow into the ocean within the limits of the cell. Since the mid-1800s, sand migration from the Tijuana river delta and the seacliffs at Playas de Tijuana, along with periodic City beach replenishment projects, have been the primary source of new beach sand in Imperial Beach. Sand supplied to the coast have been affected by three dams: Morena, Barrett and Rodriguez. These dams impound about 70 percent of the entire watershed area draining through the Tijuana River (Patsch and Griggs 2007) and have reduced the sand supply by an estimated 49 percent (Willis and Griggs 2003). Sand transport in this area of the Pacific Ocean is predominantly to the north, although some material moves to the south. The width of the City's beach has varied greatly over the years with beach erosion and sand loss being particularly evident during the winter storm season.

With this reduction in supply, erosion has ensued. In addition to periodic beach sand replenishment, the primary strategy utilized to protect public and private property along the coast has been armoring and the construction of groins. Two groins were constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s in a largely unsuccessful attempt to retain sand and prevent erosion, leading to widespread coastal armoring. The different primary categories of adaptation strategies that available for sea level rise are presented in the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategies discussion box.

Imperial Beach faces additional safety challenges from tsunamis, earthquakes, and urban fires. Tsunamis represent a threat to Imperial Beach due to the City's low-lying geography. Earthquakes can trigger tsunamis and can cause liquefaction that could dramatically impact the city. Wildfires do not represent a significant threat due to an elevated water table and the urbanized nature of the area; however, fire is always a threat in an urbanized environment. The Safety Element includes policies and actions related to each of these hazards to reduce risk, and increase community resiliency and adaptive capability.

This Safety Element complies with SB 379 requirements, codified as California Government Code section 65302(g)(4), to address climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency in general plans. These issues are also addressed in the City's Climate Action Plan, and discussed in the Conservation and Ecotourism Element, and elsewhere in the General Plan. The integration of climate change policies throughout the plan helps to ensure that climate change will be a core consideration of future planning decisions, programs, and actions.

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## **Coastal Act**

### **Discussion**

Managing development to respond to coastal hazards is a key component of a local coastal program. The Coastal Act policies direct new development to reduce risks to life and property and avoid substantial changes to natural landforms. The Coastal Act policies that are related to the Safety Element are provided at the end of the element.

## **7.1 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Planning**

### **Discussion**

Effective adaptation and reduction in risks will require maintaining and enhancing natural infrastructure, such as beaches and wetlands, and improving the resiliency of manmade infrastructure. Implementation to address the near- and long-term hazard risks from sea level rise will require substantial funding and collaboration. Potential funding sources at the federal, state, regional, and local levels must be identified and pursued, and collaboration among Imperial Beach, neighboring jurisdictions and communities, and regional, state, federal, and international agencies is crucial. Imperial Beach is not equipped with the funding or authority to handle sea level rise on its own. Sea level rise requires a broader systems approach in addition to the policies and programs the City can implement of its own accord.

An important component in the long-term capacity of Imperial Beach to adapt to an increase in hazards associated with sea level rise is a regular reassessment of the amount and rate of change over time. This will be influenced by future emissions levels and other global and regional factors. Utilizing the best available science is necessary to more fully understand future risks.

The timing of adaptation strategies will need to respond to these regular reassessments. Rather than set a hard timeframe for adaptation strategies, it is important to base them on trigger points using quantifiable data obtained from local and regional monitoring. Once data shows these trigger points have been reached it would act as a signal to implement additional identified adaptation strategies. The protection of natural resources and public and private property is critical to the economy, community character, and quality of life of Imperial Beach. The planning and implementation of adaptation strategies that focus on the protection and enhancement of both public and private property is a priority. Strategies such as beach nourishment, dunes and living shorelines, in conjunction with existing hard armoring, will be evaluated with the objective of increasing the resiliency of both existing and future development. While there may be cases where managed retreat is necessary in the long-term, it should only be considered where there are no feasible, cost-effective alternatives. At the same time it is important to take into account the economic lifetime of structures in the siting, design, and planning of development.

While the lifetime of a particular development will vary depending on its location and particular characteristics, Table 7.1 provides a foundational baseline for evaluating the economic lifetime of development.

Table 7.1 Potential Anticipated Economic Lifetime of Development	
Development Type	Lifetime (Years)
Ancillary development or amenity structures such as trails, playgrounds, parking lots, shoreline restrooms, and other similar structures	5-25
Residential or commercial structures	75-100
Critical infrastructure	100-150

Unlike many other coastal communities, the Imperial Beach coastal shoreline is comprised almost entirely of low-lying sandy beach. Development and redevelopment that incorporates multiple adaptive strategies such as increased setbacks, increased base floor elevation, and innovative design will be more effective than single strategy approaches. Because the City’s developable lands are already urbanized, strategies will be incrementally implemented as properties redevelop.

There are aspects of Imperial Beach’s existing urban form that can be capitalized on to increase resilience to sea level rise. The grid street network in particular can be utilized to enhance safety and emergency access to the coast, the San Diego Bay, and the Tijuana Estuary. Coastal flooding and inundation may negatively impact the use of frontage roads that run parallel to the coast and San Diego Bay in particular; however, the grid network can provide continued access to the shoreline via the perpendicular orientation of streets. Streets that are multi-modal in nature maintain and enhance safe access for both emergency services and the public, and promote sustainability and quality of life. Strategies such as phased raising of roads and public infrastructure, to be evaluated as a part of ongoing capital improvements planning and programming, can lessen the anticipated impacts of future sea level rise.

## **Policies**

### ***Planning and Programs***

- 7.1.1 Update sea level rise maps at least every ten years consistent with the best available climate change science, and make them available on the City website along with materials that clearly explain their contents and meaning.
- 7.1.2 Establish a beach and shoreline management plan to support adaptation of beach and shoreline areas along the coast, the San Diego Bay, and the Tijuana Reserve Estuary.
  - a. Monitor beach and shoreline conditions, including evaluating the impacts of shoreline protection devices and sea level rise.
  - b. Prioritize beach nourishment and living shoreline adaptation strategies where feasible.
  - c. Establish trigger points for the implementation of adaptation strategies based on annual quantifiable sea level rise measurements from the La Jolla Tide Gauge.

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- 7.1.3 Continue to coordinate with federal, state, regional, and local agencies and organizations to establish and fund programs for periodic sand nourishment of beaches.
  - 7.1.4 Continue to coordinate with SANDAG and other coastal cities to implement the regional beach replenishment program and the adopted "Shoreline Preservation Strategy for the San Diego Region."
  - 7.1.5 Partner with the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) to pursue joint adaptation planning and strategies to ensure that existing and future Sea Level Rise impacts do not restrict emergency and public access to the Tijuana Estuary.
  - 7.1.6 Partner with the TRNERR to explore the feasibility of utilizing sand from the Tijuana River for beach nourishment, dunes, and living shoreline protection.
  - 7.1.7 Leave potentially hazardous areas undeveloped and leave sufficient open space adjacent thereto to ensure public health, access, and safety.
  - 7.1.8 Pursue the establishment of a Sand Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program (SCOUP) program in Imperial Beach. Once in place, inform applicants, for new development in the City and in surrounding areas that do not have permitted SCOUP programs, of the City's SCOUP program and encourage them to participate.
  - 7.1.9 Evaluate and pursue funding for natural infrastructure pilot projects to protect assets from sea level rise and increased storm surges.
    - a. Design projects to achieve co-benefits that enhance natural and recreational resources, and improve public access.
    - b. Partner with neighboring jurisdictions where feasible to research and monitor existing pilot projects, plan projects, and pursue joint funding.

### ***Development Design and Siting***

- 7.1.10 Require the completion of geo-technical investigations concerning potential soils, geologic, seismic and/or flood hazards, and sea level rise (see also Policy 7.1.1).
  - a. Determine which land uses are appropriate for the site
  - b. Determine what measures could be undertaken to reduce risks to life, public and private property, and natural systems throughout the anticipated economic life of the development.
- 7.1.11 Establish incentives to encourage the retrofit, redevelopment, and replacement of buildings and properties to meet or exceed construction building codes, including increased building elevation, setbacks, and other measures that would reduce sea level rise hazard risks, and increase resiliency and adaptive capacity.
- 7.1.12 Require preparation of a Removal and Restoration Plan as a condition of approval for development subject to coastal hazards throughout the development's anticipated economic life, to ensure that should the development meet any removal criteria the property owner would be responsible for removal.
- 7.1.13 Require new development to provide adequate drainage and erosion control facilities that convey site drainage in a non-erosive manner to minimize hazards resulting from increased runoff and erosion.

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- a. Restore disturbed or degraded natural drainage systems where feasible, except where there are geologic or public safety concerns.
  - b. Employ construction and post-development Best Management Practices (BMP) plans that specify BMPs and how they will be implemented, monitored, and maintained.
- 7.1.14 Evaluate hazard risks when reviewing proposals to adjust lot lines in areas subject to existing or future sea level rise impacts.
- a. Restrict emergency and critical use facilities from all high-risk areas: Relocate facilities if feasible.
  - b. Identify and implement adaptive measures to increase resiliency to existing and future sea level rise throughout the anticipated economic life of facilities where relocation is not feasible.
- 7.1.15 Require setbacks of at least 50 feet for buildings proposed to be developed or redeveloped in locations where there are seacliffs. Ensure that buildings will be structurally sound and not contribute to: erosion, geologic instability or destruction of the site or surrounding area; or require the construction of protective devices that would alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

## **7.2 Shoreline Protection /Coastal Hazards & Sea Level Rise Response**

### **Discussion**

Shoreline protection in Imperial Beach has consisted of groins, coastal armoring, and periodic beach replenishment. The implementation of these strategies has historically occurred without a comprehensive strategy to address shoreline protection. The increasing threat of sea level rise requires a more strategic and comprehensive approach. An approach that protects private and public property while also enhancing the natural amenities and visitor-serving economy of Imperial Beach is needed. Shoreline protection that prioritizes the use of soft and/or living shoreline protection, and actions such as beach nourishment, dune creation/enhancement, wetlands protection, and other similar strategies in conjunction with existing protection devices is the preferred path forward. Without this hybrid approach, the existing groins and coastal armoring are likely to provide insufficient protection over time. The costs of shoreline protection will be considerable over time. In addition to a more comprehensive citywide approach, collaboration with other agencies is key both in terms of planning and pursuing funding to implement solutions.

### **Policies**

- 7.2.1 Prioritize and encourage the use of soft, natural, and living shoreline protection methods as alternatives to hard shoreline protective devices.
  - a. Evaluate soft shoreline protection devices and methods for their coastal resource impacts and require implementation of measures to mitigate negative impacts on shoreline process and habitat.
- 7.2.2 Allow the repair and maintenance of existing shoreline protective devices that do not result in an enlargement, where feasible, or extension of armoring and

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- are necessary to protect structures from identified coastal hazards.
- a. Ensure that repair and maintenance projects do not result in seaward encroachment of the shoreline protective device.
  - b. Require repair and maintenance projects to address and mitigate all coastal resource impacts the shoreline protective device is having, including with respect to local sand supply, public views and public recreational access.
  - c. Repair and maintenance of more than 50 percent of a shoreline protection device constitutes replacement and is subject to requirements pertaining to new shoreline protection devices.
- 7.2.3 Allow coastal armoring to protect and maintain safe beach accessways, including new coastal armoring for beach restoration for a publicly owned beach.
- a. Limit the size and scope of the armoring to the minimum amount necessary.
  - b. Require it to be placed as far landward as possible to minimize impacts to beach processes and maximize the provision of safe lateral beach access.
- 7.2.4 Evaluate modifications to the existing groins consistent with the goal of enhancing the shoreline environment, maintaining and/or increasing beach width, and public access, while also providing recreational opportunities and property protection.
- 7.2.5 Continue the sand mitigation fee for replacement or construction of armoring and require the utilization of fees for sand replenishment and/or retention as a first priority. Allow fees to be utilized for public access and/or recreation projects where no near-term sand replenishment and/or retention projects are available for allocation.
- 7.2.6 Explore the establishment of an assessing entity to fund shoreline adaptation including but not limited to beach nourishment and living shoreline protection.
- 7.2.7 Evaluate and seek out other federal, state, regional, and local revenue sources for the City's shoreline protection, management actions and programs.
- 7.2.8 Utilize suitable sand excavated during grading for permitted development for beach replenishment.
- 7.2.9 Permit revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, shoreline protection devices and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing principal structures or public beaches in danger from erosion, and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply.
- a. Interim devices may be allowed prior to completion of a comprehensive shoreline protection plan designed for the area, provided they do not encroach seaward of a string line of similar devices.
- 7.2.10 New development fronting on Ocean Boulevard north of Imperial Beach Boulevard shall incorporate an engineered vertical seawall in its design if it is determined that shoreline protection is necessary. Such a seawall shall, except for required toe protection, be located within the private property of the development and designed to be sufficient to protect the development from flooding during combined design storm and high tide events.
- 7.2.11 Design public improvements to avoid shoreline protection devices, if possible

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and require the minimum necessary protection that does not extend onto the beach further seaward than the authorized vertical shoreline protection on either side of the access improvements.

- a. Restrict the shoreline protection alignment from extending further seaward than the inland extent of Ocean Boulevard right-of-way in areas without continuous shoreline protection devices.
- b. In the case where shoreline protection devices are necessary for public improvements shoreline protection devices may extend seaward a sufficient distance to accommodate a transition to the existing groin. Design all improvements to minimize impacts to shoreline sand supply.

7.2.12 Develop a coastal shoreline protection device ordinance for the design and construction of new and replacement seawalls and revetments.

- a. Include erosion management measures such as irrigation controls, landscaping ordinances, and other measures suitable to the changing nature of the Imperial Beach shoreline.

## **7.3 Flooding**

### **Discussion**

Imperial Beach is susceptible to local, nuisance flooding, and flood plain inundation. Nuisance flooding associated with high tides is the most frequent form of flooding. Stormwater flooding occurs during combined rainfall and high tides. As sea level rise increases the impacts of flooding are expected to increase, resulting in gradually extending the reach of flooding further inland and exposing additional structures, roads, stormwater, and other infrastructure. Sea level rise is also expected to reduce drainage to the ocean, the San Diego Bay and the estuary resulting in more frequent and longer duration of nuisance flooding. The citywide or neighborhood-focused adaptation strategies in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 can reduce the impacts of flooding throughout the City while development specific siting and design can further increase sea level rise resilience and adaptive capacity.



Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017; FEMA 2017

**LEGEND**

- Streets
- - - Coastline
- - - City of Imperial Beach Boundary
- 100-year Flood Plain



2,500 0 2,500 Feet

Scale: 1:30,000 1 in = 2,500 feet

**FIGURE S-1**  
**100-YEAR FLOOD PLAIN**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH

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## Policies

- 7.3.1 Restrict primary flooding areas to open space use and avoid the development of structures. If structures are necessary require them to be temporary, moveable, and/or capable of withstanding future flooding throughout the anticipated economic life of the development with requiring off-site flood protective works or channelization.
- 7.3.2 Develop and maintain an adequate flood control program.
  - a. Restrict development in obvious areas of future flooding unless adequate flood protection measures are developed.
  - b. Require the minimum finished floor level for structures be above the known or projected flood plain level wherever feasible.
  - c. Prevent encroachment on existing water courses.
  - d. Restrict development to open 100-year floodplain areas that remain uncommitted to development as identified on Figure S-1. No permanent structures or filling shall be permitted in the floodplain and only uses compatible with periodic flooding shall be allowed.
- 7.3.3 Educate property owners of existing development and proposed development and redevelopment about the FEMA flood insurance incentives to increase base floor elevation building elevations above the required minimum finished floor level.
- 7.3.4 Collaborate with local, regional, state, federal, and international agencies to identify flood control strategies and funding sources.
- 7.3.5 Identify and establish temporary and/or permanent vehicle, public transit, and pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities that can be used safely during flooding events.
  - a. Implement alternate routes based on established sea level rise trigger points.
- 7.3.6 Evaluate the phased elevation of roads and critical infrastructure for inclusion in the City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) based on sea level rise trigger points.

## 7.4 Fire Hazards

### Discussion

Fire hazards, including brush land and structure type, are a significant problem in San Diego County and throughout California. State law requires cities to update their general plan safety elements to address the risk of fire in state responsibility areas and very high fire hazard severity zones. Imperial Beach does not have any Very High Hazard Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) within its boundaries, although there are areas that are adjacent to the City (to the southwest and to the east) that fit this classification. There is a small area within TRNERR that is called out as a “State or Federal Responsibility Area VHFHSZ.” However, given that Imperial Beach is an urbanized community surrounded by water on three sides, it is not considered at high risk for wildland-urban interface fires. Therefore, urban fire hazards are the main concern in Imperial Beach.

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Population density, proximity of structures and different uses, electric and natural gas use and infrastructure, and other factors present a high risk of fire. Some of the primary structures and land uses that present fire risks in Imperial Beach are:

- Single Family Residential Buildings
- Multi-Story Buildings
- Medical Facilities
- Schools
- Community centers, senior centers, and other indoor public assembly facilities
- Gas and electric utility lines
- Transportation, storage, and use of flammable materials
- The Imperial Beach Pier

Generally, adequate water supplies for fire suppression exist throughout the City. Water is a critical element in fire protection. Of all the factors considered by fire insurance underwriters, water supply is the most heavily weighed (see Facilities and Services Element).

### **Fire Prevention and Safety**

Fire prevention measures are usually undertaken for the safety of residents and property, as well as to reduce insurance premiums. Regulations that reduce fire risks are described in this section.

- The Building and Fire Codes are the most important regulatory codes from the standpoint of fire safety, but are intended to serve only as minimum standards.
- The Zoning Ordinance helps prevent the construction of unsuitable or hazardous structures.
- Subdivision regulations are used to reduce the risk of fire as they govern the process of dividing land into building sites.
- Weeds are a fire hazard. Weed abatement ordinances, strictly enforced, can eliminate this potential hazard.

Certain structures can be classified as "fire hazardous" and should be considered as public nuisances. Fire hazardous buildings are those which, upon ignition, permit the rapid spread of fire. They are generally characterized by substandard electrical wiring, open stairwells and obsolete heating facilities. Emergency access is another critical aspect for addressing fire hazards. As mentioned previously in Section 7.1, the grid street network facilitates emergency access. Focused street improvements can improve fire access throughout the city, including to shoreline development. As the City evolves, and especially as Sea Level Rise increases, emergency fire access to certain parts of the city, especially areas such as South Seacoast Drive, may become more restricted.

## **Policies**

- 7.4.1 Ensure that new development and redevelopment has or provides sufficient emergency fire access and that it is maintained throughout the anticipated economic life of the development.

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- 7.4.2 Ensure that individual street and transportation improvements do not result in loss of emergency fire access. In cases where an individual improvement diminishes or eliminates access on that street ensure there are alternate routes with sufficient access.
  - 7.4.3 Ensure that the latest versions of the adopted Building and Fire Codes are adopted and enforced.
  - 7.4.4 Ensure that public and private landowners implement site specific safety measures that mitigate to a low risk condition fire hazards to neighboring public and private properties.
  - 7.4.5 Work cooperatively with other agencies and private interests to educate private landowners on the benefits of fire-safe measures (including fire-rated roofing and construction materials) and vegetation management, to achieve a low risk condition.

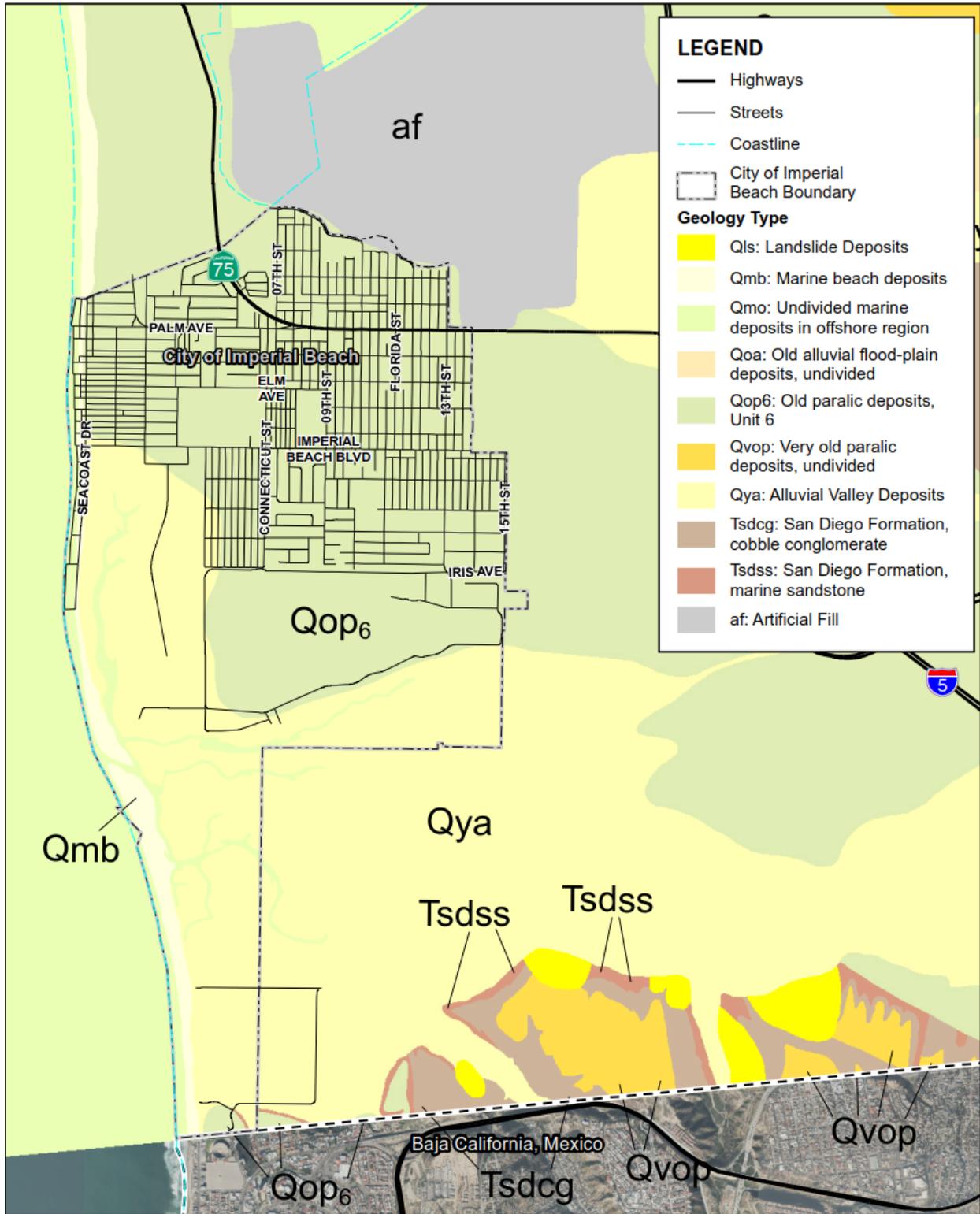
## **7.5 Geological and Seismic Hazards**

### **Discussion**

#### **Local Geology**

Like most of the South Bay area, Imperial Beach is underlain by the San Diego Formation, a tertiary shallow water marine deposit of Pliocene Age. An important feature of this formation is the fact that it is locally fossiliferous. The formation consists of chiefly dense, easily pulverized, silty, very finely bedded sandstones.

The more recent Quaternary deposits include three general types of material. A narrow strip of beach deposits, whose deposition is mainly caused by ocean currents and wave action, is found along the entire coastline of Imperial Beach. The urbanized area of the City is almost entirely underlain by the Baypoint formation, which consists of recent marine mud. The surface geology of the Tijuana River Estuary consists of alluvial material. This deposition was caused by the Tijuana River's erosive action upstream. The alluvial material consists of layers of sand and gravel, as well as larger stones. Imperial Beach's geology is shown in Figure S-2.



**FIGURE S-2  
GEOLOGY**

LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
IMPERIAL BEACH



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## Seismic Hazards

Virtually any land bordering the Pacific Ocean is subject to those effects of the movements of the earth's crust known as earthquakes. Even though Southern California is known for its earthquakes, actual losses to life and property have been small. In fact, these losses have been much less than other areas of the world, which routinely suffer from tornadoes, epidemics, hurricanes or earthquakes. It is generally agreed, however, that the potential for severe earthquake damage does exist, and that local authorities should provide some measure of security against that potential. The purpose of the Safety Element is, therefore, to set forth policies and programs which will help protect life and property from preventable damage due to seismic activity.

Available data indicate there are three major regional zones of faulting within the San Diego region: (1) the San Jacinto Fault Zone, located in the eastern part of the county, is considered to be a major active branch of the San Andreas fault system, the maximum probable earthquake from this fault is between 7.5 and 7.8 on the Richter scale; (2) the Elsinore fault zone paralleling the San Jacinto fault zone is the largest known active fault in the county of San Diego. It is approximately 135 miles long. The area of most probable activity is between Lake Elsinore and Vallecito Valley, a distance of about 60 miles. The maximum probable earthquake magnitude from this fault is 7.6; and (3) the Rose Canyon fault zone, paralleling the Pacific coastline, is considered to be the possible southeasterly extension of the Newport-Inglewood fault zone, which was the source of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake.

The Sweetwater and La Nacion Faults are located 4 to 6 miles inland from and parallel to the Rose Canyon fault and San Diego Bay. Presumably, they are related to the fault system which created the depression now occupied by San Diego Bay and Mission Bay. These two faults do not appear to have been active in recent time. The La Nacion is the closest fault to Imperial Beach, being located about two miles east of the City.

The San Diego region has historically been seismically quiet (less than 4.0 on the Richter scale) although at least 23-recorded epicenters of 2.0 to 3.0 have been recorded since 1948. Historic records in the San Diego region date back 200 years. Of that period, the last 40 years represent accurate technical data. The Elsinore and San Jacinto faults have exhibited enough activity to warrant making statements on their respective degree of activity as follows:

- For the Elsinore fault: one in 60 years at 7.3 magnitude; one in 100 years at a magnitude of 7.6 (maximum credible); and
- For the San Jacinto fault: one in 90 years at 7.3; and one in 100 years at 7.8 magnitude (maximum credible, McEven and Pinckey).

Recent research also suggests that the Rose Canyon Fault has considerable destructive potential and is capable of producing a magnitude 6.9 earthquake. Its proximity to Imperial Beach would mean an earthquake could dramatically impact Imperial Beach and could trigger a near-shore tsunami. Estimates suggest that the fault produces one substantial earthquake every 700 years with the most recent one occurring in 1862 that may have measure around 6.0. Potential geologic or seismic

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hazards are described below.

### **Ground Shaking**

Ground shaking is the oscillation or vibration of earth materials resulting from an earthquake. It is the most commonly experienced earthquake phenomenon because it may be felt tens or hundreds of miles from the earthquake epicenter. Assuming there are no known faults within Imperial Beach, and the nearest fault is the La Nacion, located 2 miles east of the City, it can reasonably be predicted that any damage from future earthquakes will be due to local ground shaking originating from a more distant source.

Ground shaking hazards are most likely to occur in areas of Imperial Beach underlain by loose, water-saturated, unconsolidated materials commonly referred to as deposits. The severity and type of ground shaking depends on several factors including: (1) earthquake magnitude and duration; (2) distance from the earthquake's epicenter; (3) local subsurface conditions; and (4) type of construction material used.

In general, much of Imperial Beach lies upon deposits which are poorly consolidated or unconsolidated aggregates of silt, sand and gravel. There is high potential of earthquake damage to structures located on this material.

### **Liquefaction, Lateral Spreading and Differential Compaction**

#### ***Liquefaction***

Resultant ground shaking during an earthquake will tend to compact loose deposits of cohesionless soils. It is generally recognized the higher the groundwater level the greater the shaking. If the soils are saturated, the compaction will result in an increase in the water pressure in the soil. With increased water pressure, the water within the soil will tend to flow upward and may turn the soil deposit into "quicksand" due to loss of shear strength. Flow to the ground surface may be manifested by sand boils and a gradual sinking or differential settlement of structures. Liquefaction of deeper strata may be manifested by ground cracking and lurching. Where soil thicknesses vary or where subsoil conditions are erratic, differential compaction of the soil layers may occur resulting in differential settlement of the ground surface. In extreme cases, buildings could literally sink into the ground.

The results of laboratory tests and investigations of liquefaction sites indicate that uniformly graded materials (those predominantly of one size such as beach sand) are more susceptible to liquefaction than well-graded materials and that, for uniformly graded soils, fine sands tend to liquefy more easily than do coarse sands, graded soils, silts or oil. In addition, loose soil deposits will tend to liquefy more readily than denser deposits and shallower strata, more than deeper strata. Further, intensity of ground shaking and duration of ground shaking play an important role. The longer the duration of strong shaking, the more likely it is that liquefaction will occur. Since the intensity and duration of ground shaking are somewhat proportional to earthquake magnitude, liquefaction is more likely to occur during moderate to strong earthquakes. When it

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does occur, the effects are severe with extensive damage resulting from shifting, tilting and floating.

It is emphasized that liquefaction potential depends upon many factors; in addition to ground water levels, are factors such as soil type, relative density and the intensity and duration of ground shaking. Due to the structure of the soils and the high water table within the City limits, liquefaction poses the biggest threat of serious damage in the event of moderate or major seismic activity.

### ***Lateral Spreading***

Lateral spreading is caused by ground shaking that triggers the movement of soils towards an unsupported surface or slope (not necessarily steep). Extensive damage to buildings can result from the mass flow of land areas, particularly along waterfront areas and on soft, saturated clays.

### ***Differential Settlement***

The occurrence of differential settlement has been well documented in many major earthquakes and results from the non-uniform settlement of loose and medium-dense granular soils during ground shaking. Differential settlement often results in serious structural damage to buildings and underground utilities.

A general lack of available data precludes a detailed evaluation of ground failure hazards in Imperial Beach. A review of the data that have been collected and a review of the history of seismic events in the San Diego region has not revealed any documented instance of ground failure, other than that of landslides. It should not be concluded, however, that ground failure may not occur due to future seismic activity. It is likely that the soil and ground water conditions in the coastal areas, bay margins, and especially the bay fill areas are places for the potential hazards identified above to occur.

### ***Fault Displacement***

Ground fractures may occur during an earthquake where there are uncompacted soils or an abrupt change in depth of the bedrock beneath the subsoil. Some soils affected by seismic vibrations may be compacted or lurch sideways causing cracks in the ground.

The closest fault to Imperial Beach is the La Nacion Fault, located about 2 miles east (running in a north/south direction) of Imperial Beach. It is not likely, therefore, that extensive fault displacement will occur in Imperial Beach.

### ***Subsidence and Uplift***

Subsidence and Uplift often accompany fault movement. Such movement affects harbor levels, the flow of water in canals and tunnels and distorts land survey lines. This phenomena is typically associated with the withdrawal of groundwater or petroleum, with large limestone deposits; with volcanism; or with hydro compaction. None of these constitute a significant problem in Imperial Beach.

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### **Groundwater Problems**

Because of the presence of the estuary and lands that are periodically inundated, the groundwater level in Imperial Beach is relatively high, less than 25 feet in the urban areas of the City, and as close as eight feet to the surface at Ninth Street and Imperial Beach Boulevard.

The presence of shallow groundwater, in conjunction with other soil parameters, can be of great consequence in terms of ground stability during an earthquake i.e., liquefaction. The largest area subject to this hazard is around the margin of the San Diego Bay.

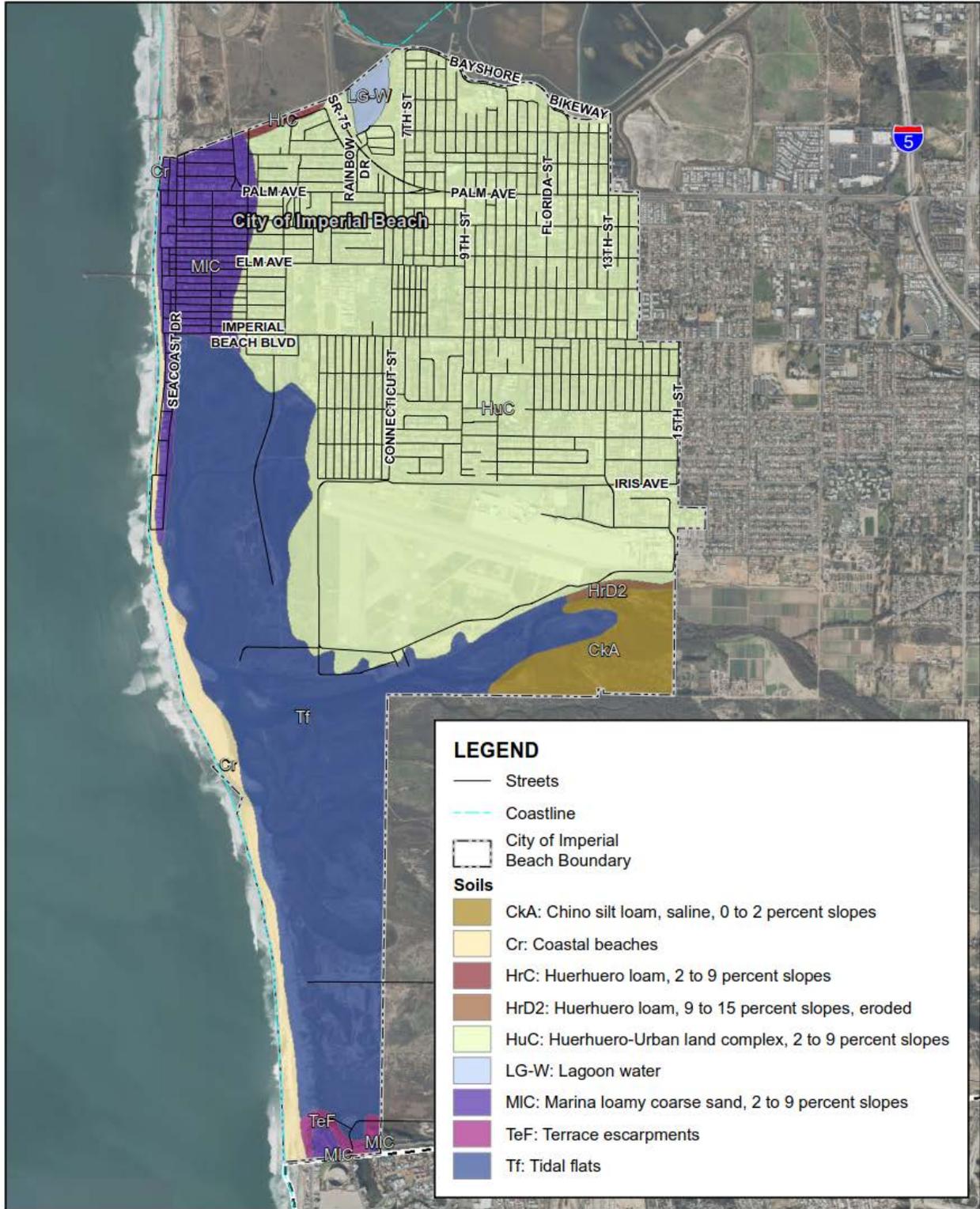
Studies of recent earthquakes have concluded that some liquefaction has occurred in every major earthquake observed around the world in the past ten to fifteen years.

For liquefaction to potentially occur, three conditions are necessary: 1) generally cohesionless soils, 2) groundwater, and 3) moderate or major earthquake. In Imperial Beach, as in other areas along the Pacific Coast, as well as throughout the world, all three conditions or potential conditions exist in varying degrees.

### **Expansive Soils**

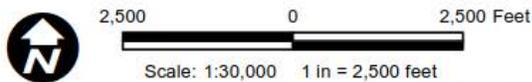
An expansive soil is one which will substantially increase in volume when wetted and, because the process is reversible, will shrink when it dries. This is characteristic of cohesive, clay-like soils.

Expansive soils are a common feature and problem throughout Southern California. Not only do direct damage costs amount to many millions of dollars each year (for Southern California), but the damage is usually reflected in lower property values and resulting tax revenues. The problems resulting from expansive soils can be controlled by proper engineering and construction practices. The presence or absence of expansive soils is therefore not considered a critical factor in overall land planning. What is critical is to ensure that proper engineering and construction practices are observed. The City should remain cognizant of the problem. Soils in Imperial Beach are shown in Figure S-3.



Source: SanGIS 2014; City of Imperial Beach 2017; USDA 2016

**FIGURE S-3**  
**SOILS**



LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
IMPERIAL BEACH

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## **Landslides**

Since the terrain of Imperial Beach is generally flat, landslides cannot be considered a significant hazard. There are, however, small cliffs within Border Field State Park and at the south end of Seacoast Drive. Limited landslides may occur in these areas during an earthquake of sufficient magnitude.

## **Tsunamis**

A Tsunami is a sea wave generated by a submarine earthquake, landslide or volcanic action. While the possibility of a major tsunami from either of the latter two events is considered to be extremely remote for Imperial Beach, a tsunami caused by a submarine earthquake is considered possible. Submarine earthquakes are common around the edges of the Pacific Ocean, as well as other areas. Therefore, all of the Pacific Coastal areas are subject to this potential hazard to a greater or lesser degree.

Tsunamis travel across the ocean as powerful, long, but low waves; perhaps 50 miles long and only one or two feet high. Traveling at almost 500 mph in the Pacific, such a wave in the open causes no problems; and, in fact, the slope of the wave front may be imperceptible to a ship at sea. However, as the tsunami waves approach the coastline, they are affected by shallow bottom topography and the configuration of the coastline, which transform the waves into very high, potentially devastating waves. Even if large waves do not occur, strong currents (as high as 40 feet per second) can cause extensive damage. Near-source tsunamis can occur from earthquakes that are generally less than 200 kilometers away and of 6.5 magnitude or greater. The waves from these tsunamis are likely to be extremely powerful and can impact the shore in 3 – 15 minutes. Faults such as Rose Canyon could trigger such an event. Even though most of Imperial Beach lies within the category of low-lying shoreline, it is not possible to predict the likelihood or magnitude of a major tsunami.

## **Policies**

- 7.5.1 Restrict development so that no portion of any habitable structure should be built across any fault should one be discovered.
- 7.5.2 Ensure that the City keeps up-to-date on the seismic potential of the Rose Canyon fault as further research is conducted.

## **7.6 Disaster Preparedness**

### **Discussion**

The possibility of major disasters, including earthquakes and tsunamis, requires ongoing preparation. Imperial Beach and San Diego County actively participate in a program of disaster preparedness and relief for those extraordinary emergency operations of both governmental and nongovernmental groups. Imperial Beach has taken steps to increase disaster preparedness through its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and as a participating jurisdiction in preparation of the San Diego County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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The Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan is a countywide plan that identifies risks and ways to minimize damage by natural and manmade disasters. The document presents a risk assessment for coastal storms, erosion, tsunamis, dam failures, earthquakes, flooding, rain-induced landslides, liquefaction, wildfires, and manmade hazards. The plan is a comprehensive resource document that serves many purposes such as enhancing public awareness, creating a decision tool for management, promoting compliance with state and federal program requirements, enhancing local policies for hazard mitigation capability, and providing inter-jurisdictional coordination. The federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires all local governments to create such a disaster plan in order to qualify for hazard mitigation funding.

San Diego County's plan was last revised in 2010, and is currently being revised to reflect changes to the hazards threatening San Diego as well as the programs in place to minimize or eliminate those hazards. This revision will include an evaluation of the impact climate change is having on the natural hazards facing San Diego.

In advance of the update to the multi-jurisdictional plan, the City of Imperial Beach has taken steps to improve resiliency to climate change through preparation of the Imperial Beach Sea Level Rise Assessment Report (2016) and Local Coastal Program-focused General Plan Update (anticipated in 2018).

## **Policies**

- 7.6.1 Minimize injury, loss of life, and property damage from natural and manmade hazards.
- 7.6.2 Continue to maintain an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which is compatible with, and complementary to, that of the County. Update the plan as the understanding of the threat of earthquakes, tsunamis, fire, and other potential disasters evolves.
- 7.6.3 Participate in the development of, and adopt future updates to the San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as necessary to maintain eligibility for federal post-disaster grant funding.
- 7.6.4 Continue to promote public awareness of potential hazards and disaster preparedness.
- 7.6.5 Initiate education programs in lower grades using displays and demonstrations that would expose younger children to the nature and danger of fire. Such programs would tend to replace their natural curiosity with a sense of respect.
- 7.6.6 Support or sponsor exhibits and presentations in secondary schools which demonstrate the more involved aspects of fire dynamics; i.e., major contributing factors to fire hazard and the relationship of fire to the natural ecology. Encourage parental cooperation and assistance in overall fire education programs.
- 7.6.7 Develop a public information program to familiarize the citizens of the region with the Public Safety Element. School Districts and agencies which deal with the aged, handicapped and susceptible industries should be encouraged to develop educational programs relative to public safety awareness.
- 7.6.8 Seek out opportunities to educate the public about the threats from, and

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- 7.6.9 disaster preparedness for, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other hazards  
Continue to seek public input to inform strategies, response plans, evacuation routes, and prioritization of public improvements related to disaster preparedness and resiliency.

### **Coastal Act Policies - Safety**

#### **Section 30235:**

Revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes shall be permitted when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion, and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply. Existing marine structures causing water stagnation contributing to pollution problems and fish kills should be phased out or upgraded where feasible.

#### **Section 30236:**

Channelizations, dams, or other substantial alterations of rivers and streams shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible, and be limited to (1) necessary water supply projects, (2) flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the flood plain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development, or (3) developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

#### **Section 30253:**

New development shall do all of the following:

- (a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.
- (c) Be consistent with requirements imposed by an air pollution control district or the State Air Resources Board as to each particular development.
- (d) Minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled.
- (e) Where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

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# 8.0 DESIGN ELEMENT\*

*Communities should be planned with an eye to the effect made upon the human spirit of being surrounded by beauty instead of ugliness.*

*Thomas Jefferson*

*\* This draft element is provided for discussion purposes only, to gain early public input on draft policies being considered as a part of the Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Program (GP/LCP) focused update. The draft proposes new sections and focused amendments to meet current state LCP and general plan guidance, using the adopted Imperial Beach GP/LCP as a base. A track-changes version is available upon request. Photos and other graphic formatting enhancements will be included with the next public review draft document.*

## **Goals**

- ❖ Preservation of Imperial Beach’s small beach-town character
- ❖ Preservation and enhancement of public views that celebrate the City’s relationship to the coast and visually connect people to Imperial Beach’s distinctive environment
- ❖ A built environment that contributes to the aesthetic enjoyment of both residents and visitors, supports healthy active living, and contributes to the economic well-being of the community
- ❖ A City that is designed for walkability, sustainability, and coastal resiliency

## **Background**

The Design Element is an optional General Plan topic under the state planning law. The intent of this Element is to meet Coastal Act requirements for the protection of scenic and visual qualities of the City and promote integrity of the community’s small beach-town character. Imperial Beach’s location along the Pacific Ocean coastline shapes its character and provides scenic views of the ocean from numerous vantage points. The relationship to the ocean and bay are critical components of the Imperial Beach identity. The interplay between the built and natural environment poses unique opportunities and challenges in balancing community life with resiliency and environmental stewardship along the coast.

The character of Imperial Beach’s environment presents both special opportunities and special perils. The opportunity lies in the richness of the City’s natural, coastal setting. The peril lies in the fragile nature of Imperial Beach’s environment and in the speed with

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which it can be destroyed. The community is located within the “square-shaped” confines of the San Diego Bay and Silver Strand; the Oneonta Slough and Tijuana River Estuary; and the Pacific Ocean, and one is always aware of the setting in a way that is not true of other areas. In such a restricted and exposed environment, it takes little in the way of inappropriate buildings, tangles of overhead wires or jumble of signs and lost views to create ugliness in the place of beauty.

From a natural and built environmental standpoint, Imperial Beach has a number of unique qualities. These include:

- **A large variety of views and natural settings**  
Generally, wherever one is located in Imperial Beach, there is a vista within close proximity. This may be an open vista to the Pacific Ocean, a panorama of surf and ocean, views of tidal infill at sunset or the sweeping view of the Playa de Tijuana skyline and Tijuana bullfight ring contrasting with the natural openness of the Tijuana River Estuary.
- **A sense of place**  
The natural elements of the terrain in Imperial Beach create an identifiable sense of enclosure, while a strong focal point is evident in the Pacific Ocean.
- **A small-scale, man-made environment**  
Imperial Beach neighborhoods are primarily comprised of one or two story buildings, with heights up to 30 feet permitted in certain areas.
- **Linear Movement**  
In Imperial Beach the major vehicular routes generally follow the natural configurations of the land, allowing for convenient routes of travel within the community, scenic views, and an enhanced sense of place.
- **Extensive Open Space**  
The open space in Imperial Beach presents an extraordinary design opportunity not only because of its extent, but also because of its location and specific characteristics.

Visual and scenic resources specific to Imperial Beach include the following:

- **The Pacific Ocean**  
The ocean is perhaps the most scenic resource in Imperial Beach. The views of the Pacific Ocean in Imperial Beach can be enhanced if they are enframed or seen through an appropriate screen. The ocean is open space, a focus of major views, an attraction to visitors and a place of human activity.
- **The Tijuana River Estuary**  
The Tijuana River Estuary offers one of the most unique scenic resources. The Tijuana River Estuary can be viewed from several vantage points, a few of which

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are the Mesa bluff-top in Border Field State Park, the southern terminus of Seacoast Drive and along Imperial Beach Boulevard.

Depending from where the Tijuana River Estuary is viewed, the perception of the area changes dramatically. This is due to the interplay of different visual aspects. Views from along Imperial Beach Boulevard focus on the Tijuana bullfight ring and Mesa Bluff-top area, which act as the terminal features of the vista. This terminal point sets the theme of the view; a vast expanse of open space separating two urban areas, in fact, two countries.

From the end of the Seacoast Drive, a different perspective of the Tijuana River Estuary is achieved. Here, the narrow waterways form a visual axis. The axis, essentially, is a linear element transversing the view. The waterways, in fact, become the dominant feature. The perceived view is of a wet-land type habitat between the shore and inland development.

The final viewing point is the Mesa bluff-top of Border Field State Park. This spot, itself a terminal point of another vista, produces a reverse interest view. From the bluff-top, one views a panoramic coastline scene ranging from the beaches below, along the coast past the estuary to Imperial Beach and Coronado.

The Estuary and Slough define the boundary between the urbanized City and the natural undeveloped City. This space has had an influence on all the people of Imperial Beach, either as a recreational resource, a place to go for solitude, or as an environmental resource.

- **NOLF IB Ream Field**

This represents a scenic resource in that it draws spectators to view the helicopters. This particular vista is ideally suited to passive recreational activities for many, while simultaneously representing a prime source of noise pollution to others.

- **The City Beach**

A unique scenic resource, the City beach encompasses the area from the northern City limits, south to the International Border. This area has numerous focal points ranging from the City Pier, to the variety of building types, to the sandy beach. Daytime views include the Coronado Islands, the beach itself, the ocean, the Silver Strand, Coronado, Point Loma, and Downtown San Diego. Nighttime views include lights on the pier, lights on the ocean, Point Loma, the Coronado Bridge, Coronado and Downtown San Diego.

- **Salt Evaporation Ponds (Salt Ponds) and South San Diego Bay**

The Salt Ponds act as the gateway to Imperial Beach as one enters into the City along State Route 75 (SR 75) from either the Silver Strand area or from Interstate 5. Unlike the Pacific Ocean, these ponds are small enough to be easily

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understood visually. They serve as important gateways to the City. There are excellent nighttime views of the Coronado Bridge and Downtown San Diego.

## 8.1 Community Design Character

### Discussion

As discussed in the Land Use Element, the small scale “classic Southern California” beach-oriented community is important to the identity of Imperial Beach. The City has maintained a fairly low-intensity scale that is rich in character and diversity. Imperial Beach is primarily comprised of one- and two-story buildings organized in neighborhoods and functional areas that are generally compact and well defined.

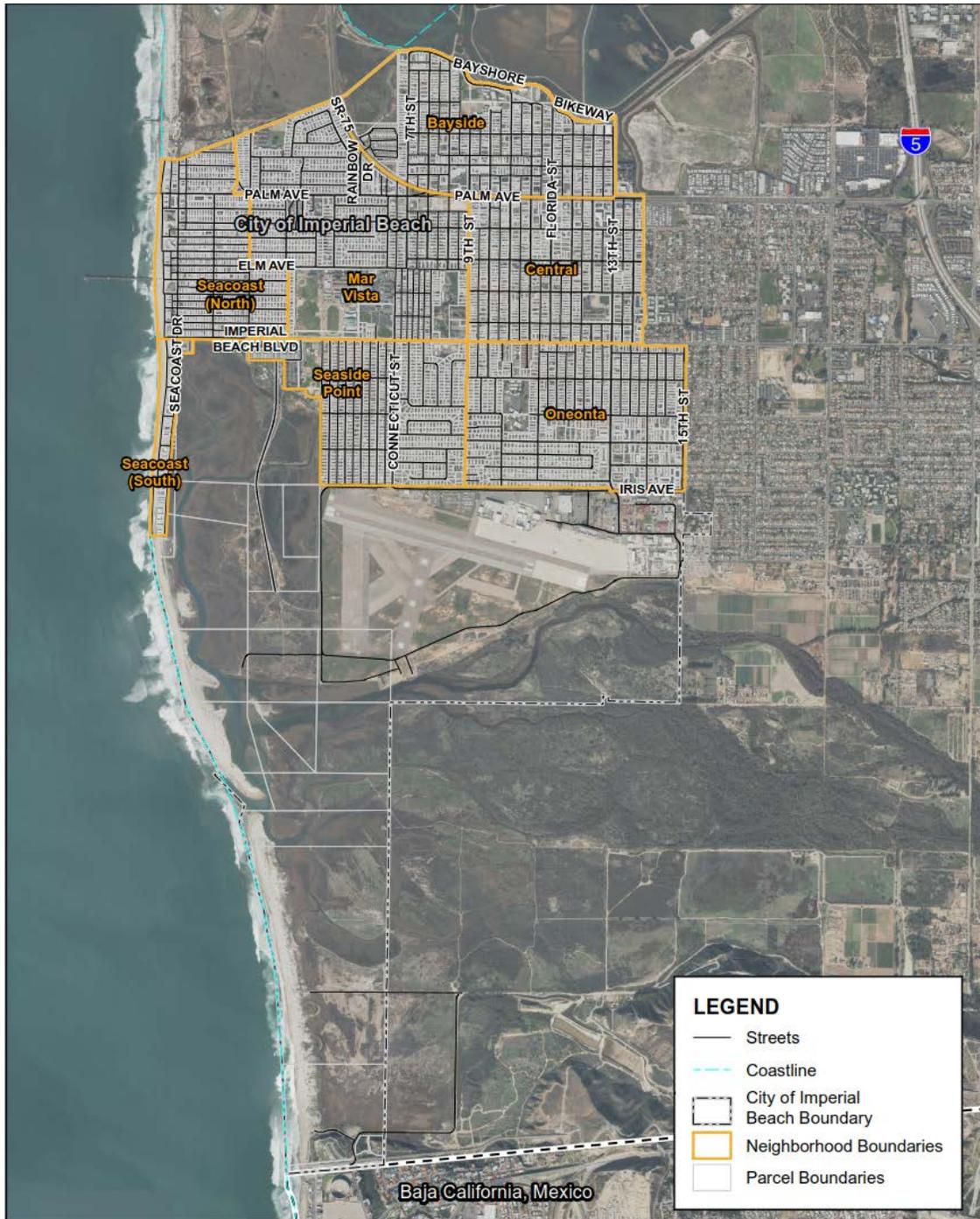
These neighborhoods and functional areas are shown in Figure D-1:

- Seacoast. The area comprised of the municipal pier and the City beach north of Imperial Beach Boulevard; this area has important physical and built form relationships to the San Diego Unified Port District jurisdiction and coastal resource areas.
- South Seacoast. The linear beach front residential developments south of Imperial Beach Boulevard along Seacoast Drive.
- Tijuana Estuary District. The area encompasses the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, Slough National Wildlife Refuge, and Border Field State Park.
- Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach (NOLF IB), locally referred to as Ream Field.
- Bayside District, located north of Palm Avenue/State Route 75.
- Residential neighborhoods of Mar Vista, Central, Seaside Point and Oneonta.
- The Tijuana Estuary and Naval Outlying landing Field Imperial Beach (NOLF IB), locally referred to as Ream Field, are not depicted in Figure D-1. They can be found in Figure CO-1 and LU-1.

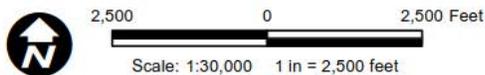
The Imperial Beach Library, which opened in 2017, is an outstanding example of design that conveys the City’s beach-town character and commitment to sustainability. It is a coastal-themed building with materials reminiscent of beach cottages, and a roof that was designed to capture the feel of a breaking wave. The library was constructed as a net zero energy building and with sustainable building materials.

All development within the commercial/mixed-use zones is subject to the Commercial/Mixed-Use Zones Design Guidelines, per the City of Imperial Beach Zoning Ordinance, which provides specific direction for achieving high-quality, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use retail and commercial areas. Development in these areas must also

adhere to other applicable design guidelines and standards, including the Landscape Design Guidelines for Seacoast Drive.



**FIGURE D-1**  
**FUNCTIONAL AREAS**  
 LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE  
 IMPERIAL BEACH



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## Policies

### *Citywide Design and Coastal Views*

- 8.1.1 Develop sites adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas in a manner that maintains public view corridors and prevents impacts consistent with Coastal Act Section 30240.
- 8.1.2 Protect public views to the beach, bay, estuary as well as to other scenic resources from major public viewpoints (see Figure D-2). Development that may affect a public view shall be designed and sited in a manner so as to preserve or enhance designated view opportunities. Street trees and vegetation should be chosen and sited so as not to block views upon maturity.
- 8.1.3 Require development design - including neighborhoods, streets and individual properties - that is pleasing to the eye, rich in variety, harmonious with existing development, and emphasizes the relationship to the ocean and bay.
- 8.1.4 Design new development to relate to Imperial Beach's existing and evolving high quality design
  - a. Require that all development is located, sited, and designed to maintain compatibility with established or desired community character, scale, and diversity of architectural design.
  - b. Encourage architectural designs reflective of a traditional California seaside community.
  - c. Strive for excellence and diversity in design through consideration of the following:
    - Avoid uniformly repetitious buildings and modules and unbroken expanses of wall.
    - Encourage balanced and coordinated variety in height, materials and color.
    - Vary setbacks of buildings. Additionally, setbacks should be considered where transitions occur between mixed-use development and single-family residential.
  - d. Use simple palettes of landscape materials in masses to complement or screen various parts of the building(s) and achieve a park-like setting.
  - e. Size and design signs, walkways and parking area lights and other elements of development to be low keyed, but effective in scale, color and brightness.
- 8.1.5 Design development projects to respect, work with, and enhance the natural features of the land.
  - a. Integrate natural scenic amenities such as mature trees, watercourses and views into project design.
  - b. Orient and construct structures to take advantage of the beneficial features of the climate and be protected from the negative ones in order to reduce energy consumption and increase the enjoyment of the residents.
- 8.1.6 Regulate project uses and design to create harmonious relationships between adjoining uses.
  - a. The pattern of existing neighborhoods should be respected. A development should be integrated with the adjacent neighborhood if the project size or natural boundaries dictate, or the design should create one or more

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- separate and strong neighborhood identities.
- b. Structures should relate to neighborhood structures both within and adjacent to the development and not create a harsh contrast of scale, style or color.
  - c. Areas of noisy activity and areas of quieter use should be separated by space or buffers, both within and between projects.
  - d. Lighting and signs should be designed, located and directed so as not to disturb adjacent uses.
  - e. Where 3- or 4-story structures are developed adjacent to existing 1-or 2-story structures, the new development shall be designed to respect the scale of the 1- and 2-story structures. Such designs could include a wider side yard setback for the 2nd and 3rd story, hip roofs, or similar features. Within the commercial/mixed-use areas, such scale-reducing design features could include varying wall planes, setbacks, and upper-story stepbacks that reduce overall massing and provide roof treatments that are complementary to adjacent properties.

#### *Review Process*

- 8.1.7 Adopt City design guidelines to be used in the design review process.
- 8.1.8 Require design review for all residential properties of 2 dwelling units or more, all new mixed-use development, and all new non-residential development structures.

#### *Residential Development*

- 8.1.9 Provide open space in all residential developments as appropriate to the needs of the residents and the types of units.
  - a. In lower density areas, generally provide yards or patios.
  - b. In medium or higher density developments, provide usable private outdoor areas, and indoor and outdoor common areas that foster a sense of community such as interior courts, community rooms, patios or roof gardens.
- 8.1.10 Group buildings into "neighborhoods" or clusters and be oriented so that building entryways are visible to encourage neighborhood surveillance.
- 8.1.11 Where separate units face onto a common open space, the design should relate specific portions of the open space to each unit. This has been shown to increase individual responsibility for surveillance as well as upkeep.
- 8.1.12 Include and provide for a number of amenities such as adequate storage areas, pathways, and attractive landscaped areas.

#### *Commercial and Mixed Use Design*

- 8.1.13 Require active uses on the ground floor facing primary commercial corridors and in proximity to transit access.
- 8.1.14 Integrate pedestrian scale design and user amenities into mixed-use development.
  - a. Provide visual and physical transitions between new and lower scale

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- buildings by incorporating building relationships to the street and incorporating pedestrian-oriented features.
- b. Design building's street-facing facades to provide transparency and support active ground floor uses.
- 8.1.15 Where appropriate, the residential component of mixed-use developments should be informed by residential design policies and zoning requirements.
  - 8.1.16 Implement visitor serving commercial development standards that encourage pedestrian activity through the design and location of building frontages and parking provisions. Reduce the visual prominence of parking lots along major corridors when new development or redevelopment occurs.
  - 8.1.17 Continue to enhance the Seacoast Corridor as a pedestrian-oriented visitor-serving destination by managing and regulating redevelopment and use transitions to reinforce scale and character through strong building relationships to the street and pedestrian-oriented features.
  - 8.1.18 Encourage safe and enjoyable browsing by customers through coordinated and attractive signs, walkways, patios, display windows, and entrances. Optimally, the entrance to such an enjoyable area should be designed to be obvious to the passing motorist and pedestrian, and be linked to the public sidewalk and the parking area.
  - 8.1.19 Design parking lots to be attractively landscaped, and safe for the motorists and pedestrians walking from their cars or the street.

## **8.2 Public Realm and Public Facilities**

### **Discussion**

An attractive, walkable City promotes healthy community activities and supports a quality environment for a strong economy. The character and form of Imperial Beach exudes attractive community attributes especially in beach-visitor focused areas. Public realm features such as continuous sidewalks, thematic palm street trees and right-of-way landscaping further contribute to the visual quality of the City. When paired with the strong architectural character of the built environment public realm features and public facilities can be prime community amenities. Policies in this section focus on the quality, location, and maintenance of public realm and public facilities for long-term community quality.

### **Policies**

#### *Signage*

- 8.2.1 Design and locate signs to minimize impacts to visual resources.
  - a. Signs approved as part of commercial development shall be incorporated into the design of the project and shall be subject to height and width limitations that ensure that signs are visually compatible with surrounding areas and protect scenic views.
  - b. Free-standing pole or roof signs are prohibited.
  - c. Advertising signs and banners are prohibited in public beaches and beach parks.

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- 8.2.2 Prohibit placement of signs other than traffic or public safety signs, which obstruct views to the ocean, beaches, bay or estuary from public viewing areas, and scenic roads.
  - 8.2.3 Develop a uniform public information sign program.
    - a. Reduce visual clutter associated with signage.
    - b. Limit the size, design, and location of signage consistent with legibility and legal parameters.
    - c. Relate signs in character, material, size, shape, height, placement and color to the sites and buildings of which they are a part.
  - 8.2.4 Provide curbside visible street numbers or directory maps for all types of structures and be visible at night for the convenience of police, fire, guests and customers.
  - 8.2.5 Build an identity sign at “Old Palm” Avenue to strengthen the sense of place in this commercial corridor and complement economic development objectives.

#### *Tree-Covered City Image*

- 8.2.6 Promote the evolution of a green, tree-covered image for the City (see also the Conservation Element - Urban Forestry). Require appropriate specimen-sized trees as part of new development or City projects.
  - a. Preserve whenever possible mature trees, tree masses, and tree rows of significant aesthetic or historic quality, consistent with the public safety.
  - b. Require public and private projects to avoid destruction of significant trees when preservation is economically realistic and consistent with sound planning and horticultural practices.
  - c. Protect the City's most significant landmark trees, tree masses and tree rows on a permanent basis and not just at the time of project review.
  - d. Encourage the planting of additional new trees throughout the City.
- 8.2.7 Provide landscaping, including the preservation and planting of large trees and open space, to ensure a pleasing and open landscaped vista to the residents and passersby and to promote a tree-covered City image.
- 8.2.8 Design and landscape visible public improvements to blend into their backdrop.
  - a. Major linear improvements, such as major roadways should be well landscaped.
  - b. Design water and stormwater management structures to be constructed of materials and colors so as not to draw attention to their alteration of nature. Where the purpose of the structure permits, it should be landscaped to aid in its camouflage.
- 8.2.9 Utilities which cannot be feasibly placed underground due to their high voltage or other safety or cost considerations should be located and designed in such a fashion as to provide the least visual and environmental impact on the community.

#### *Revitalization*

- 8.2.10 Support long-term property maintenance and community revitalization to retain an attractive, human-scale, beach- oriented small town atmosphere.
  - a. Continue and expand a public and private graffiti removal program.

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- b. Consider the provision of rehabilitation assistance in residential neighborhoods to eliminate code violations and enable the upgrading of residential properties.
  - c. Promote aggressive enforcement of City codes, including building, zoning, and health and safety, to promote building and property maintenance. Particular attention shall be given to removal of illegal uses.
  - d. Promote commercial area revitalization through storefront and landscape improvement loan and grant programs.
  - e. Promote revitalization of the City through the installation of public improvements such as street and alley lighting, undergrounding of utilities, and street, sidewalk, alley, median and landscape improvements.
  - f. Complete, through the use of assessment districts or other means, the construction of missing sidewalks with high priority to:
    - Streets leading to the beaches,
    - Streets used by children walking to school, and
    - Streets that provide good pedestrian access to commercial areas and transit.
  - g. Actively pursue grant programs to accomplish the above activities.
- 8.2.11 Encourage the provision of public art and spaces for cultural use as a means to distinguish and enliven spaces.
- 8.2.12 Design projects to encourage “eyes on the street” as a means to discourage and deter crime through the location of physical features, activities and people to maximize visibility.

## **8.3 Sustainable Coastal Development**

### **Policies**

- 8.3.1 Develop and implement modified site planning and building design regulations to build resiliency to sea level rise.
- a. Develop incentives to encourage the redevelopment of vulnerable properties.
  - b. Evaluate options to adjust building envelope regulations to offset loss of site area due to sea level rise.
  - c. Consider requiring increased setbacks as needed to preserve public walkways and sandy beach areas.
- 8.3.2 Increase base floor elevation of new development to reduce future stormwater flooding impacts.
- 8.3.3 Design projects to encourage the use of transit.
- a. Collaborate with transit planners to incorporate transit facilities into the design of public and private projects. This may include: architectural integration of transit into project design; site planning that focuses higher intensities/densities near transit; and the provision of bus shelters/benches, turnouts, schedule signs, and real-time information.
  - b. Design safe, convenient accessible sidewalks and connections from transit stops to building entrances.
- 8.3.4 Create street frontages with architectural and landscape interest that provide

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- visual appeal to the streetscape and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- a. Consider design features such as street facing windows and entrances, planting of street trees and front yard landscape, or other means.
  - b. Minimize the visual impact of parking.
- 8.3.5 Design development to respect and enhance the view and safety of the passerby.
- a. Structures and open space areas should be arranged so that open space qualities of a development are apparent from outside the development.
  - b. Public rights of way should be designated not only for the safety and enjoyment of the motorist, but also for the pedestrian, jogger and bicyclist.
- 8.3.6 Design developments with an eye to safety without giving the appearance of a fortress or a sea of concrete or asphalt.
- a. Parking lots along Seacoast Drive, Palm Avenue, and Imperial Beach Boulevard shall have internal landscaping to visually break the hard lines of the parking lot.
  - b. Design parking areas to separate vehicles and pedestrians whenever possible and ensure adequate visibility when the two must cross.
- 8.3.7 Design developments using sustainable or “green” building practices to conserve energy and water, work toward healthful air quality, and achieve other environmental benefits.
- a. Incorporate energy-saving design features such as appropriate building and roof orientations and architectural features, reduced glass area where appropriate, adequate insulation, heat efficient spaces and arrangements, solar and wind energy capturing systems and energy efficient utilities and appliances.
  - b. Use water-saving systems and encourage best management practices in developments.
  - c. Explore implementation of alternative conservation measures and technology as they become available.
  - d. Encourage developments to exceed code requirements to maximize use of sustainable or “green” building techniques and help implement the Climate Action Plan.
- 8.3.8 Require developments to protect water quality and provide for watershed protection (see also Conservation and Ecotourism Element – Water Quality).
- a. Minimize the amount of impervious surfaces and directly connected impervious surfaces in areas of new development and redevelopment and where feasible slow runoff and maximize on-site infiltration of runoff.
  - b. Implement pollution prevention methods supplemented by pollutant source controls and treatment through the use of small collection strategies located at, or as close as possible to, the source to minimize the transport of urban runoff and pollutants offsite and into the storm water sewer system.
  - c. Prior to making land use decisions, utilize methods available to estimate increases in pollutant loads and flows resulting from projected future development. New development and redevelopment shall incorporate structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to mitigate the projected increases in pollutant loads and flows.

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# 9.0 NOISE ELEMENT

*Nothing marks the change from the city to the country so much as the absence of grinding noises. The country is never silent. But its sounds are separate, distinct, and, as it were, articulate.*

Henry Ward Beecher

## Goals

- ❖ [The control of excessive annoying sounds and vibrations.](#)
- ❖ [Land uses that are compatible with noise levels to support public health, welfare, and safety](#)

## Background

The Noise Element is a required element under the California Planning Law. [The Noise Element was adopted as a part of the 1994 General Plan Update, and was not updated as a part of the 2018 General Plan/Local Coastal Program Update. However, updated noise contour maps related to Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach are included as Figure N-2 based on the Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan prepared in 2015.<sup>1</sup> In addition, minor formatting edits were prepared for consistency with the rest of the General Plan.](#)

There is general agreement that the average urban noise levels are continuing to climb and now constitute a serious detraction from the quality of life in many cities. For most people, the usual consequences of noise are associated with an interference with speech and other communication, a distraction at home and on the job, the disturbance of rest and sleep, and the disruption of various recreational pursuits. All of the foregoing can be considered components of the quality of life. Beyond the level of such inconveniences or disruptions, extreme and prolonged noise levels can cause hearing loss (either temporary or permanent), aural pain, nausea, loss of muscular control and blurring of vision. The effects of noise are therefore, widespread and include both psychological and sociological effects, as well as physiological effects.

Although many of the findings related to noise lend themselves to a variety of interpretations, there is general agreement on a number of factors:

<sup>1</sup> [San Diego County Regional Airport Authority Airport Land Use Commission, Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach, Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, October 14, 2015.](#)

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1. Noises of sufficient intensity have caused irreversible hearing damage.
  2. Noises have produced physiological changes in humans and animals that in many instances have not resulted in adaptation.
  3. The effects of noise are cumulative and, therefore, the levels and duration of noise exposure must be taken into account in any overall evaluation. The recognition of this fact has been translated into legislation specifying limits of total permissible noise exposure in various urban settings.
  4. Noises can interfere with speech and other communication.
  5. Noises can be a major source of annoyance by disturbing sleep, rest and relaxation, thereby resulting in stress.
  6. When community noise levels have reached sufficient intensity, social action has occurred to reduce their effects. This has often taken the form of creating new organizations (or using existing ones) to press for regulation by means of laws, ordinances and standards and is one of the primary reasons why a Noise Element is mandated by the State.

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In order to determine the existing noise environment in Imperial Beach, a noise study was conducted in January 1994. [This A technical report on noise findings was is included as an appendix to the 1994 General Plan, and remains on file with the City.](#)

Noise is generally measured in decibels (dB), which is a scale used to quantify sound intensity. Additionally, since the human ear is not equally sensitive to all sound frequencies, human response is factored in by a process called "A-weighting" written as dB(A).

State law requires a Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL). All habitable rooms including hotel/motel rooms must meet an interior CNEL of 45 dB(A). A 65 dB CNEL exterior noise exposure generally allows the criteria standard to be met as long as windows can normally be closed to shut out the noise.

Imperial Beach has three primary sources of noise. The main source of noise consists of traffic on the City's arterial streets. The existing and projected CNEL at the 65 dB level is shown in Figure N-1 for SR-75, Palm Avenue, Imperial Beach Boulevard and 13th Street. The distance from the centerline of the streets to the 65 dB CNEL line is projected to increase between 3 to 17 feet at build out under the 1994 General Plan. The distance to the 65 dB CNEL for all other streets is less than 50 ft. from the street centerline and are not shown due to the lack of accuracy, predictability and impact.

A second source of noise consists of helicopter activity from Ream Field. [Figure N-2 \(forthcoming\) shows noise contours documented as a part of the -Naval Outlying](#)

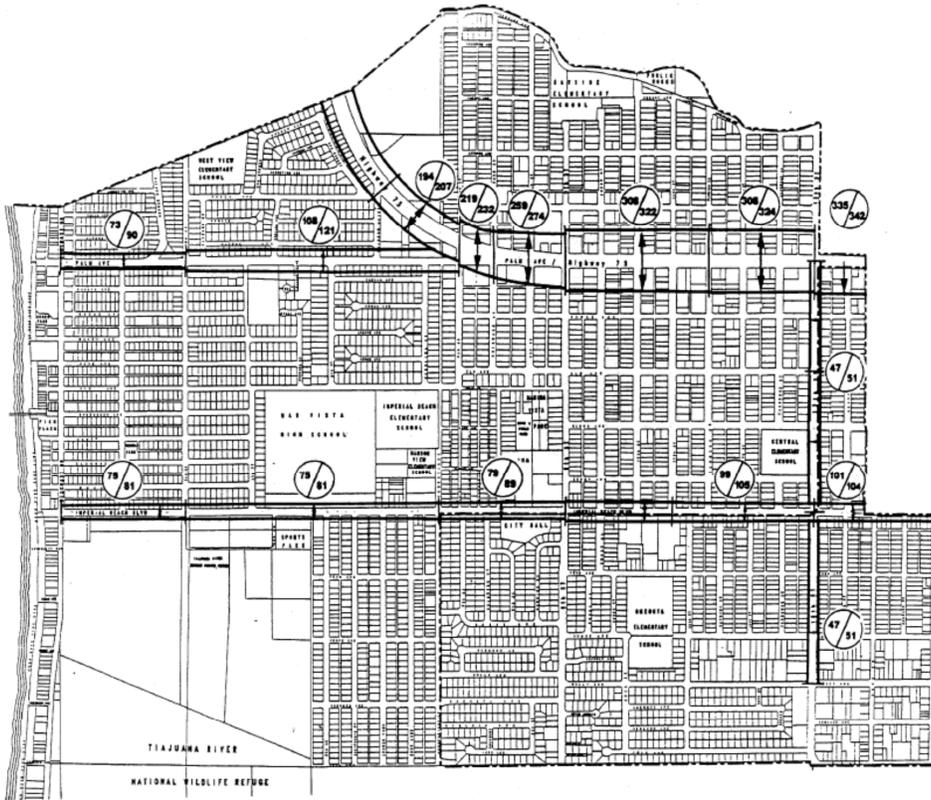
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~~[Landing Field Imperial Beach Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan prepared in 2015. The activity level of the helicopters varies considerably from day to day. Figure N-2 shows the noise conditions for 1988. Additionally, the Figure shows an up-dated 65 dB CNEL line based on a 1992 study. Adverse helicopter noise impacts the South Seacoast, Tijuana Estuary, Seaside Point and Oneonta neighborhoods.](#)~~

The third source of noise comes from temporary construction including demolition of existing pavement, earth moving equipment and finish construction. Heavy equipment noises range from 72 to 90 dB(A) at 50 feet from the source.



**LEGEND**

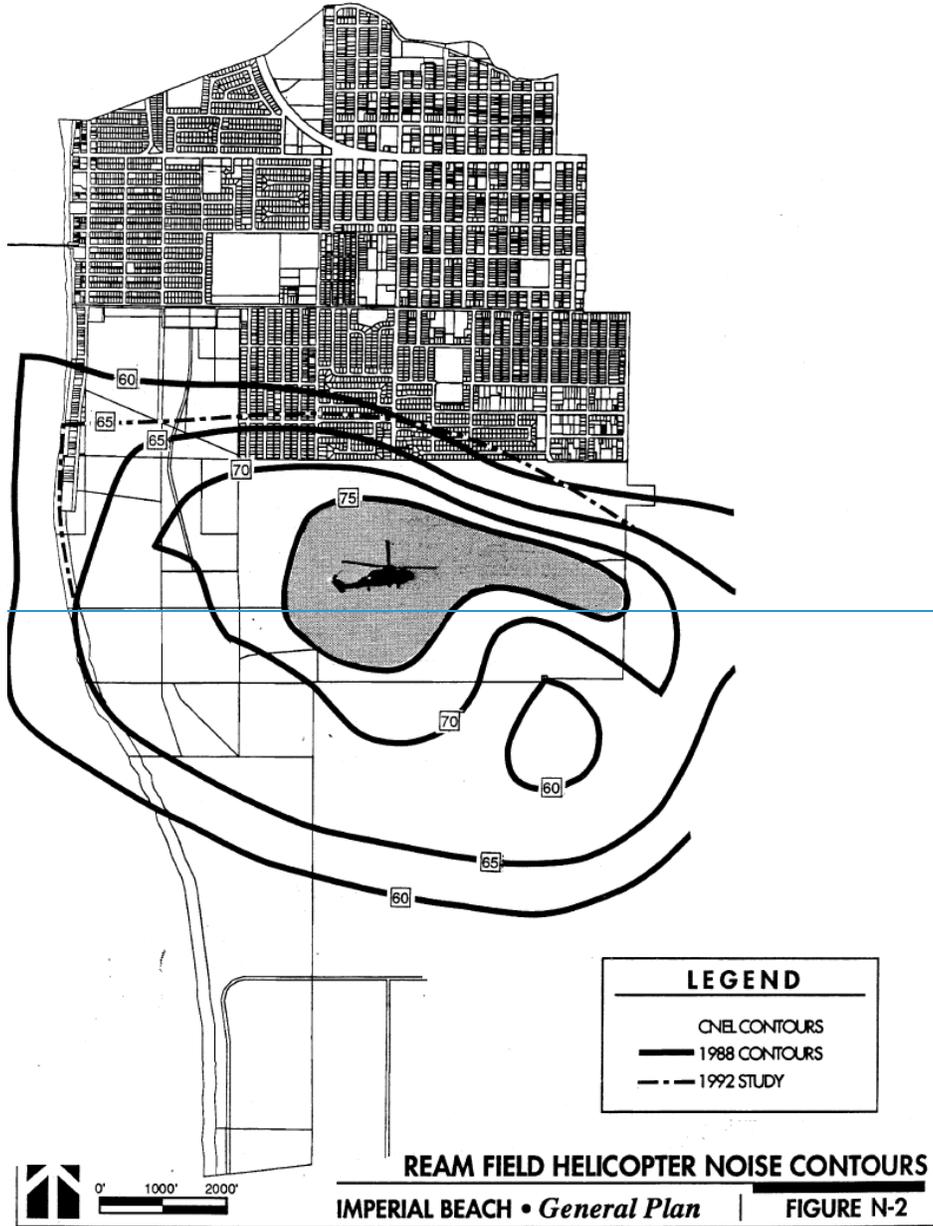
	EXISTING DISTANCE FROM CENTER LINE OF ROAD TO 65dB CNEL
	PROJECTED DISTANCE FROM CENTER LINE OF ROAD TO 65dB CNEL WITH PLAN BUILD OUT



**EXISTING & PROJECTED 65dB CNEL NOISE CONTOURS**

**IMPERIAL BEACH • General Plan | FIGURE N-1**

Figure N-2 will be replaced in the next draft.



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# GOAL

## GOAL 12 EXCESSIVE NOISE

It is the intent of the City to regulate and control unnecessary excessive and annoying sounds and vibrations emanating from uses and activities within the City, and to prohibit such sounds and vibrations as are detrimental to the public health, welfare and safety of its residents.

### Policies

#### ~~N-1 Noise Ordinance~~

~~9.1.29.1.1~~ The City shall develop and adopt an ordinance to control noise levels. The ordinance shall set forth specific noise levels (dB meter readings) that are unacceptable and not permitted in the City.

#### ~~N-2 Commercial Vehicles~~

~~9.1.49.1.2~~ ~~The City shall~~ Establish regulations limiting the routes, speeds, and operating hours of vehicles generating noise nuisance such as trucks and buses. Trucks over 5000 lbs. load capacity should be limited to Highway 75, unless they are making deliveries. ~~(See also Circulation Element, Policy C-8.)~~

#### ~~N-3 Public Events~~

~~9.1.69.1.3~~ ~~The City should r~~ Require organizations to submit plans and obtain permits to hold public events in the City. There should be controls placed upon the scheduled start and completion times and the use of noise producing devices such as public address systems and musical amplifiers.

#### ~~N-4 Complaint Center~~

~~9.1.89.1.4~~ A formal complaint center should handle noise complaints. There should be periodic advertising of the noise ordinances and its requirements and encouragement of the public to register complaints.



#### ~~N-5 Land Use Compatibility-Transportation~~

~~9.1.109.1.5~~ ~~The City shall r~~ Require all new development to meet the exterior noise requirements of the

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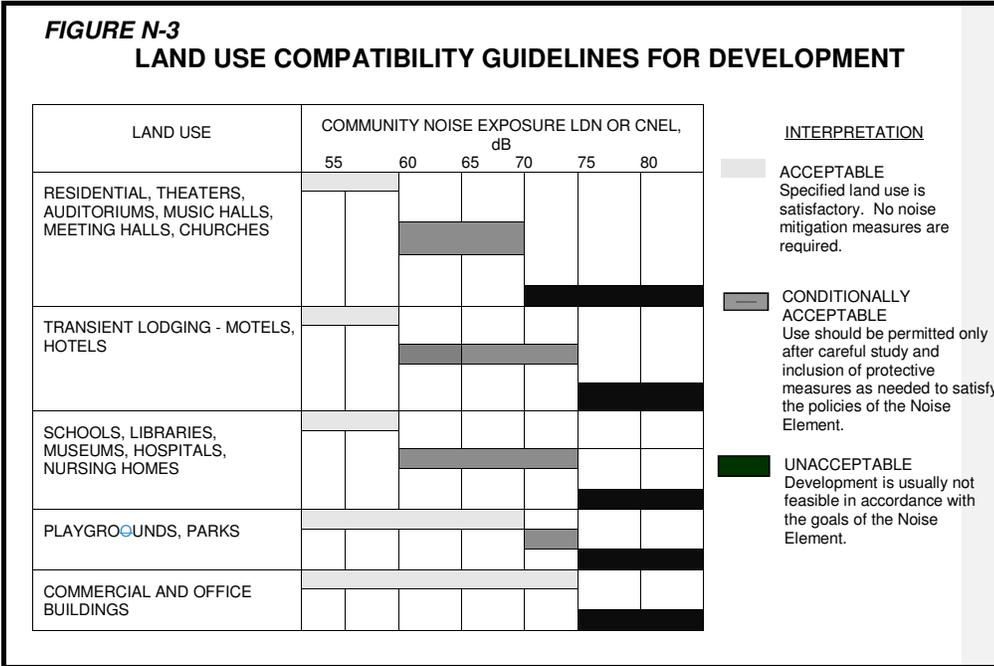
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compatibility guidelines shown in Figure N-3.

9.1.6 For areas where the noise environment is conditionally acceptable for a particular land use, development shall be allowed only after noise mitigation has been incorporated into the design of the project to reduce noise levels to acceptable levels.

9.1.11 For areas where the noise environment is unacceptable for the development of a given use, development is usually not appropriate, and must be evaluated through the appropriate environmental document, ~~and shall be allowed only upon the completion of an environmental impact report and the adoption of a statement of overriding social-economic impact.~~

**FIGURE N-3  
LAND USE COMPATIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT**



**N-6 Technical Reference Manual**

To meet the requirements of the Government Code regarding technical information to be included in the Noise Element, the Noise Impact Study ~~was is herein~~ adopted by reference [as a part of the 1994 General Plan Update](#), and included in the Appendix to the General Plan.

**Commented [FY1]:** The highlighted references above are kind of self referencing and don't have much teeth given the policies above. Isn't there a more specific noise ordinance or municipal code requirements that could be referenced instead?

*There isn't much to be seen in a little town, but what you hear makes up for it.*

*Elbert Hubbard*