

# PLEASURE POINT

## COMMUNITY PLAN

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Pleasure Point Community Plan is the final report of the Pleasure Point Community Planning Process, a project carried out jointly by the County of Santa Cruz Planning Department, Redevelopment Agency and Pleasure Point community members in 2006-07 to address community concerns and neighborhood issues in Pleasure Point. Pleasure Point is a neighborhood unlike any other. Perched atop a coastal terrace bluff overlooking a portion of Monterey Bay that contains a high concentration of surfing breaks, the area is bounded by a coastal lagoon to the west, and two commercial corridors to the north and east. Pleasure Point has developed into a unique and eclectic enclave of irregular lots, modest homes, lush landscaping and a network of neighborhood streets. It is a place where neighbors greet each other, mothers push strollers down the street, and kids ride their bikes without supervision. However, Pleasure Point's coveted beachfront location and increasing housing demand throughout the region have resulted in a type of development pressure never before experienced by the community – namely a recent trend characterized by older, smaller, generally one-story houses (e.g., beach bungalows) on small lots being torn down and replaced by new, larger and bulkier two-story houses that maximize allowed floor area and sometimes are out of scale with their neighbors. The Pleasure Point Community Planning Process was initiated to address this problem and other neighborhood issues.

### PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In the fall of 2006, the County of Santa Cruz, with planning consultants, MIG, Inc., began a community planning process to study and address current development concerns in the Pleasure Point area. Through an extensive public participation process, the planning team explored multiple issues in private residential development and public realm improvements currently facing the community. One specific area of concern for the community was the relatively larger size of new construction and remodels of Pleasure Point's residential buildings.

#### Community Workshop #1



At the heart of this topic of concern as well as the overall project was a community dialogue about a collective definition about “Pleasure Point character” and what elements of Pleasure Point community design should be incorporated in the future development and redevelopment of the area.

The result of that analysis and dialogue is this document, the Pleasure Point Community Plan (Plan). This Plan provides the County with recommended tools to:

- Respect and retain the eclectic and historic character of Pleasure Point
- Guide future development of the neighborhood
- Improve the public realm, including the streetscape environment and circulation.

This Plan articulates the vision, goals and assets of the community and identifies a set of actions that can be implemented to help preserve Pleasure Point’s assets and adhere to the community’s goals. This Plan also provides the County, developers, architects and property owners with a clear set of building, site, landscaping, and circulation design guidelines/criteria that will help attain the community vision that came out of the public participation process. However, this Plan does not address in any detail the commercial areas along Portola Drive or 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, as these were addressed in a previous planning effort in the 1990’s that resulted in the 1995 Pleasure Point Commercial Area Plan.

## **PROJECT STUDY AREA**

The Pleasure Point study area for this project is an approximately 320-acre area bounded by 41st Avenue on the east, Portola Drive on the north, the western shore of Corcoran Lagoon on the west and Monterey Bay on the south. This study area is somewhat larger than what most people consider to be “Pleasure Point”, in that it includes the 26th Avenue neighborhood in addition to the area between Moran Lake and 41st Avenue. As of 2000, approximately 3,819 persons resided in some 1,941 housing units within this area, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Pleasure Point study area is in the unincorporated part of Santa Cruz County, situated between the Cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola, and it lies entirely within the Coastal Zone administered by the California Coastal Commission. Within the Coastal Zone is the “Coastal Appealable Area” encompassing the parcels that lie within 300-feet of the coastline or near coastal waterways, in which Coastal Development Permits are required (involving design review and “discretionary” approval by County Planning), the approval of which requires a public hearing and may be appealed by members of the public. In the remainder of the area (i.e., outside the Coastal Appealable Area), a simple, non-appealable building permit (“ministerial” approval) is generally all that is required (i.e., no public hearing) to build a house or an addition if the application meets all the local zoning requirements. For simplicity, these two areas will be referred to as the “Discretionary Approval” and “Building Permit-Only” (or “ministerial”) areas throughout this document.



## PROJECT METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

The Pleasure Point Community Plan planning process involved a strong and meaningful public participation component. Specifically, multiple stakeholder interviews and three well-attended public workshops were conducted. Community feedback was solicited throughout the process and played an integral role in the refining of various elements of the several project documents that were produced, including this Plan.

The project was organized into three phases:

- Phase I: Analysis of existing conditions and development of the community vision and character
- Phase II: Development of community planning document elements and design guidelines/standards
- Phase III: Production and review of draft and final planning and design guidelines/standards documents

Phase I involved three forms of analysis: review of background material, site analysis, and interviews. Interviews with community leaders and other local residents, local architects and developers, business improvement association, business owners, community groups, and government agencies (including the California Coastal Commission, the Santa Cruz County Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Planning, and the County Redevelopment Agency) contributed to the existing conditions analysis. Through review of the Santa Cruz County General Plan, the County Code, Coastal Zone Regulations, recent meeting minutes and written comments from the County Board of Supervisors' Neighborhood Compatibility-related agenda items, infrastructure studies done in prior years, the Moran Lake and Monarch Butterfly Habitat Plan completed by the County Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Public Works' street "Design Criteria", MIG gained an understanding of Pleasure Point's context and history. Walking tours of the project area were conducted to observe and document current conditions, such as land uses, building types, circulation, streetscape, historic and environmental resources, and social and cultural influences. These tours provided an understanding of specific design details and potential areas of conflict. The information gained from these activities was compiled and summarized in the first of the project's written reports: the Existing Conditions Summary Report (most of which is incorporated into Chapter 2 of this Plan).

Working with County staff, MIG planned, conducted and documented the first of three community workshops on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2007. Approximately 65 community members attended this workshop. The focus of this first workshop was to identify priority issues, problems, opportunities, and challenges. Following a large group discussion, MIG and County Staff engaged community members in a small group format that allowed participants to dialogue together in groups of 10-16 persons.

### Community Workshop #1



## Chapter 1: Introduction

In Phase II, following Community Workshop #1, the planning team synthesized community comments captured in the first workshop and drafted the overarching community character elements and goals in a community vision statement, as well as some general design recommendations for future improvements that are in harmony with the community character. These vision elements and general design recommendations were presented in Community Workshop #2, held on June 7, 2007, for community feedback and refinement. This workshop was also well-attended, with over 65 community members present. MIG and County Staff worked with small groups of residents to review and refine the proposed design elements, work through conflicting building and site treatments, and attempt to find solutions to circulation/infrastructure and building design, bulk and massing problems. At the end of the workshop, each group's ideas were presented to all the participants for comparison purposes.

The third phase involved MIG and County Staff taking the emerging recommendations into their final stage. The community's ideas and feedback, as well as feedback from County representatives, were taken into consideration in the formulation of planning team's recommendations. MIG then developed draft design standards and guidelines for public discussion at Community Workshop #3, which was held on September 15, 2007 and was attended by over 55 community members.

The proposed standards, guidelines, recommendations, and implementation measures were further refined based on community input at Workshop #3 and compiled in this Community Plan. MIG will present this Plan to the County Board of Supervisors on August 19, 2008. Members of the public are encouraged to attend this presentation to provide comments.

### Community Workshop #2



### Community Workshop #3



## **DOCUMENT OVERVIEW**

The remainder of the Pleasure Point Community Plan consists of the following chapters:

### **Chapter Two: Existing Conditions**

Synthesizes existing physical, infrastructure & economic conditions, reviews the area's local, regional and historical context, and identifies the key assets, challenges and opportunities in the study area.

### **Chapter Three: Vision and Goals**

This chapter describes the overarching elements of the Pleasure Point community character and goals for how to retain the area's existing character in the context of future development in the area.

### **Chapter Four: Recommended Design Standards, Guidelines and Recommendations**

Chapter Four presents proposed standards, guidelines and recommendations for private and public improvements to the Pleasure Point area that are in keeping with the area's character and the community's stated goals.

### **Chapter Five: Implementation**

Chapter Five outlines the proposed implementation measures for County to begin implementing the proposed standards, guidelines and recommendations presented in the Plan.