

## 5 EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

Santa Cruz has a variety of citywide regulations that should be considered in the development of the Ocean Street Area Plan. This chapter briefly describes the relevant regulations, including the City’s General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Redevelopment Plan. It also discusses code enforcement issues in the Plan Area and describes how the City’s coastal zone affects the Plan Area.

### A. General Plan

Santa Cruz’s current General Plan, adopted in 1992, calls for the City to “prepare a corridor plan for Ocean Street that provides for understandable visitor access to the Beach.” It also says that the City should create design guidelines for “areas of community importance,” including Ocean Street, “to preserve and enhance areas contributing to the City’s built character.” In addition, it includes several policies and action programs to enhance the character of the most important entrances to Santa Cruz, including Ocean Street.<sup>1</sup>

The General Plan’s land use map applies several different land use designations to parcels in the Plan Area, as shown in Figure 5-1. These land use designations are intended to specify what land uses may be established in the future. Current designations include:

- ◆ **Community Commercial (CM).** Accommodates retail, service and office establishments that serve the community’s general needs. Most of the Plan Area falls within this designation.
- ◆ **Neighborhood Commercial (NC).** Intended for small-scale commercial uses that serve residential neighborhoods. The commercial area at the intersection of Ocean Street and Barson Street uses this designation.
- ◆ **Community Facilities (CF).** Applied to government offices, civic buildings and similar uses, including the County Government Center.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Santa Cruz, 1992, *General Plan and Local Coastal Program 1990-2005*, Volume I: pages 88, 95 and 96.

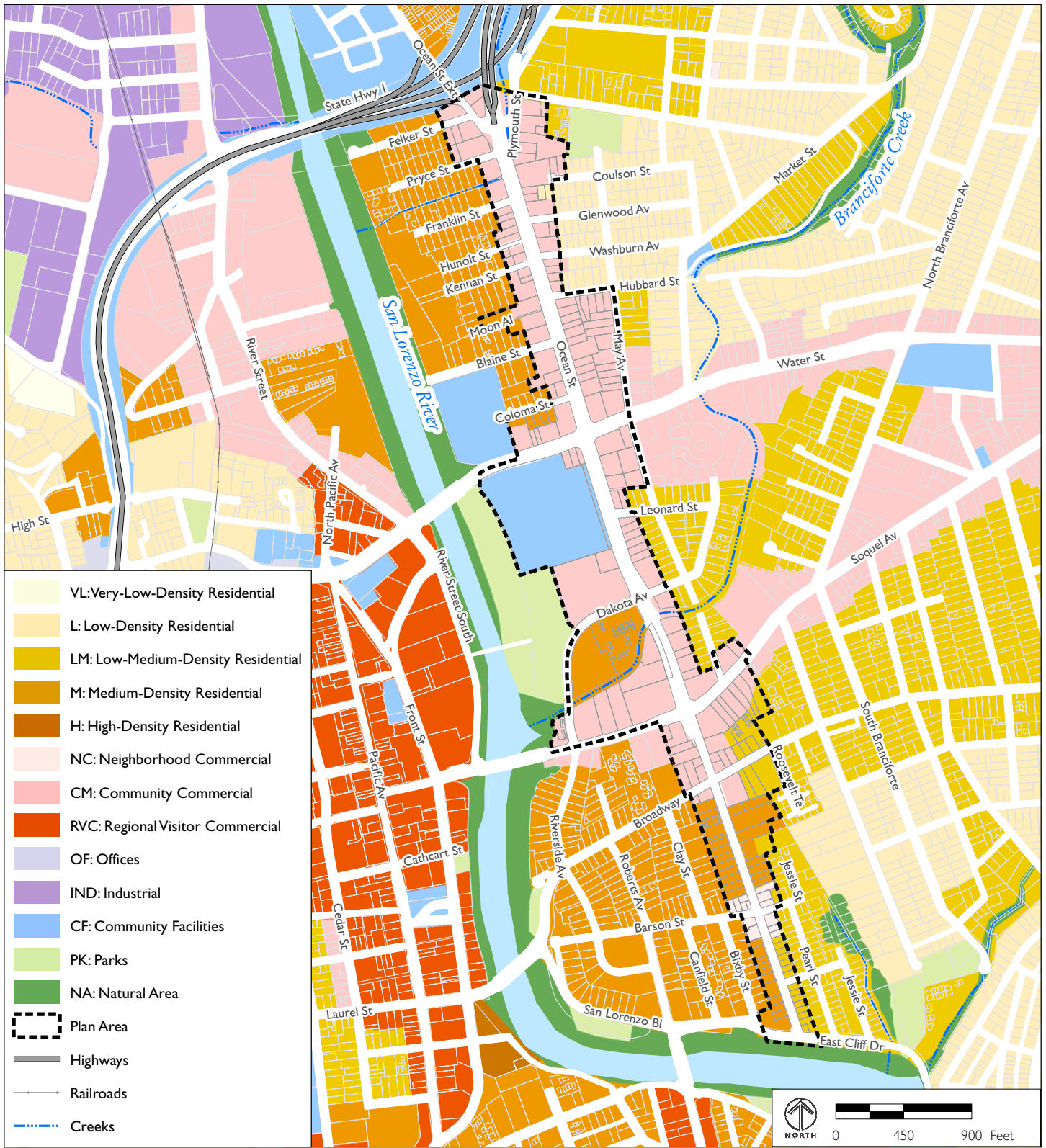
- ◆ **Low-Medium-Density Residential (LM).** Accommodates somewhat greater densities than a typical single-family neighborhood, ranging from 10.1 to 20 dwelling units per acre. Includes portions of Broadway, as well as parts of Ocean Street south of Barson.
- ◆ **Medium-Density Residential (M).** Accommodates more intensive multi-family uses, ranging from 20.1 to 30 dwelling units per acre. Includes most residential areas in the Plan Area south of Broadway, as well as a portion of Coloma Street, just north of Water Street.

Santa Cruz is currently preparing General Plan 2030, a major update to the City's General Plan. Although this update is still underway, General Plan 2030 will repeat the current General Plan's call for enhancements to Ocean Street's character. In addition, it will designate some portions of the Ocean Street corridor as higher-intensity "Mixed Use Visitor Commercial" areas, where visitor-serving uses such as hotels will be strongly encouraged. The City expects to adopt General Plan 2030 in 2009.

#### *B. Zoning Ordinance and Code Enforcement*

The zoning districts in Santa Cruz's Zoning Ordinance, which implements the General Plan, correspond very closely to the City's General Plan designations. Zoning districts used in the Plan Area include:

- ◆ **Community Commercial (CC).** Matches the General Plan's CM designation. Allows a wide variety of commercial uses; hotels and motels are allowed with an administrative use permit, which is issued by City staff at their discretion. Buildings may be up to 3 stories and 40 feet tall.
- ◆ **Neighborhood Commercial (CN).** Matches the General Plan's NC designation. Allows a small number of commercial uses, such as food and beverage stores, as of right; however, a discretionary permit is required for most uses. Buildings may be up to 2 stories and 30 feet tall.



Source: City of Santa Cruz GIS, 2007

FIGURE 5-1

**GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**



- ◆ **Public Facilities (PF).** Matches the General Plan’s CF designation. Applied to government offices such as the County Government Center. Buildings may be up to 50 feet tall.
- ◆ **Multiple Residence—Low-Density (RL).** Matches the General Plan’s LM designation. Accommodates somewhat greater densities than a typical single-family neighborhood. Buildings may be up to 2.5 stories and 30 feet tall.
- ◆ **Multiple Residence—Medium-Density (M).** Matches the General Plan’s M designation. Accommodates more intensive multi-family uses. Duplexes may be up to 2.5 stories and 30 feet tall; buildings with three or more units may be up to 3 stories and 35 feet tall.

The Code Compliance Division, a part of the City’s Planning and Community Development Department, is charged with ensuring that property owners in Santa Cruz meet the requirements of the Municipal Code, including the Building Code and Zoning Ordinance. The portion of Ocean Street south of Broadway is one of Code Compliance’s target areas. Since 1992, the City has received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to proactively inspect this area and identify possible code violations. Code compliance specialists also work with the Police Department to inspect some properties when warrants are issued to search the premises. Although Ocean Street property owners’ compliance with code requirements has improved since 1992, significant code violations have been reported at two motels within the Plan Area since 2004.<sup>2</sup>

### *C. Redevelopment Plan*

Much of the Plan Area is within the Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency’s Merged Project Area, which encompasses Ocean Street as well as Downtown Santa Cruz, the Beach Area, River Street, Mission Street, Harvey West and

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<sup>2</sup> Personal communication with Alex Khoury and Linda Garner, Planning and Community Development Department, City of Santa Cruz, October 24, 2007.

the Westside Industrial area. The Merged Project Area combines redevelopment areas that were previously adopted in 1984 and 1986; it was expanded following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake to provide for the reconstruction of Downtown and the improvement of other areas in Santa Cruz.<sup>3</sup>

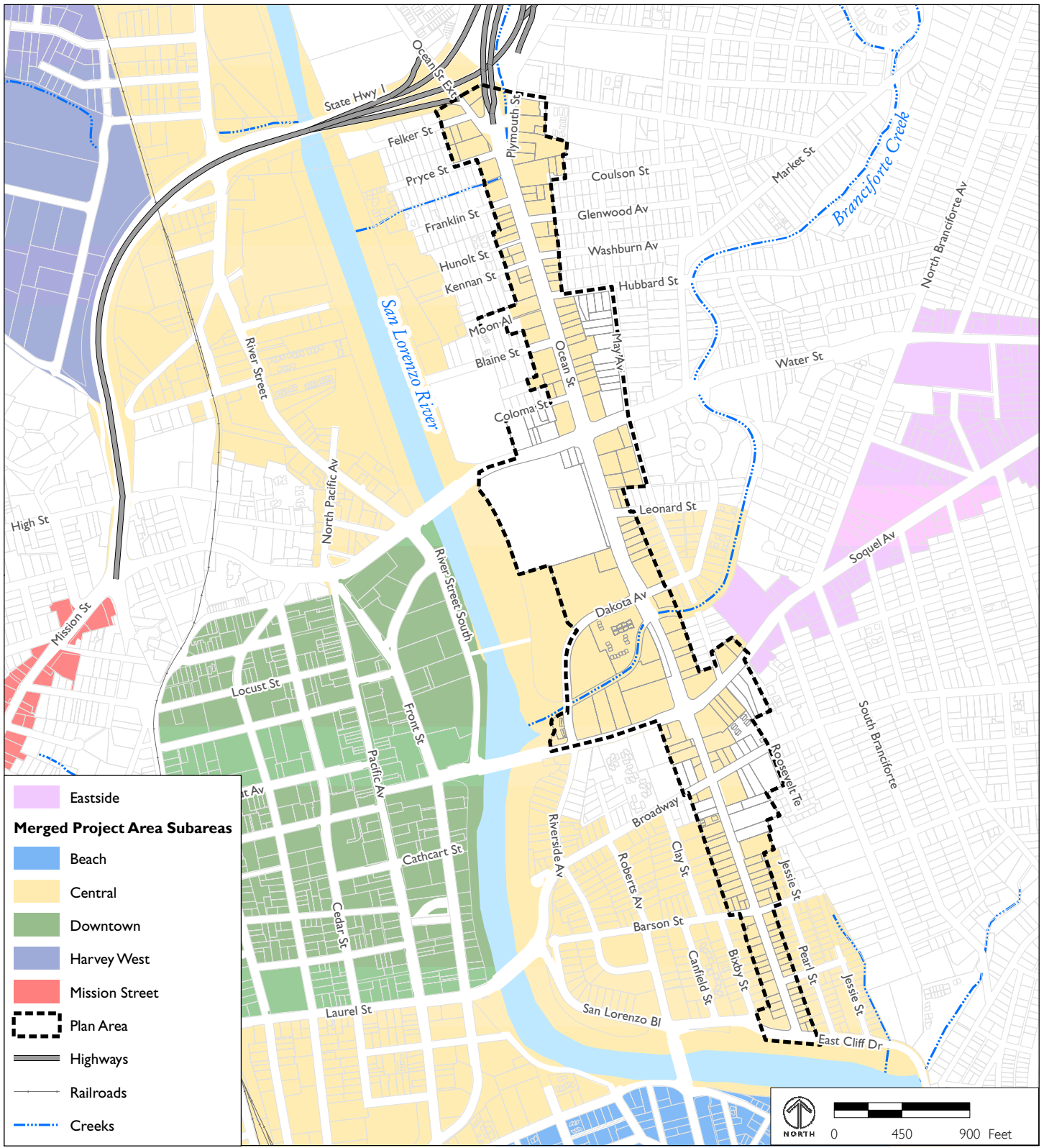
Figure 5-2 shows the boundaries of redevelopment areas in and around the Ocean Street Plan Area. The map includes subareas within the Merged Project Area, which are not formally-adopted boundaries but are used by the Redevelopment Agency for planning purposes. Because much of Ocean Street is in the Merged Project Area, it may be possible to pay for improvements to Ocean Street using “tax increment financing,” which is created by increases in the assessed value of properties in the Merged Project Area. In addition, the Redevelopment Agency can help to secure grants and other funding sources for improvements to Ocean Street.

The Redevelopment Agency’s 2005-2009 Implementation Plan describes a number of successful initiatives that are currently under way within the Merged Project Area. For example, the Agency’s Storefront Improvement Program helps businesses improve the façades of their buildings through architectural enhancements and decorative signage. This program has been in place since 1994. Over the past decade, the program has been used most frequently along Mission Street and River Street, in conjunction with major street improvements.

The Implementation Plan also provides goals and objectives for fostering economic development in the Merged Project Area, many of which are directly relevant to Ocean Street. For example, the Implementation Plan calls for the Agency to encourage the growth of off-season tourism “through urban design improvements, promotion and development of visitor attractions and provision of a variety of overnight accommodations.” It also recommends working with developers to create more diversity in the city’s hotel and motel ac-

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<sup>3</sup> City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency, 2006, *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2006*: page 1.



Source: City of Santa Cruz GIS, 2007

FIGURE 5-2  
 REDEVELOPMENT AREAS





commodations, and it calls for the Agency to create a façade improvement program specifically targeted at hotels. Furthermore, it calls for land to be assembled “into parcels suitable for modern, integrated development.”<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the Implementation Plan includes recommendations for creating and rehabilitating affordable housing units in the Merged Project Area. It notes that the City’s efforts to increase its affordable housing supply have been focused on Downtown Santa Cruz and the Beach Area, along with Mission Street, Water Street and Soquel Avenue. The Redevelopment Agency has not emphasized the construction or rehabilitation of housing on Ocean Street.<sup>5</sup>

#### *D. Coastal Zone*

Like other coastal cities, Santa Cruz has a coastal zone that is subject to the requirements of the California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code Section 30000 et seq). The Coastal Act is intended to “protect, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and artificial resources.”<sup>6</sup> All of the State’s coastal cities and counties have a coastal zone, except for areas under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). The coastal zone typically extends 3,000 feet inland from the ocean’s high tide mark, although State law defines many exceptions to this general rule.

South of Broadway, most of the Ocean Street Plan Area is within Santa Cruz’s coastal zone, as shown in Figure 1-1 in Chapter 1 of this report. Development within the coastal zone requires a Coastal Permit. However, the City currently issues Coastal Permits for most parts of Santa Cruz, including

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<sup>4</sup> City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency, 2005, *Implementation Plan 2005-2009*: pages 17, 18 and 23.

<sup>5</sup> City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency, 2005, *Implementation Plan 2005-2009*: pages 49 to 51.

<sup>6</sup> State of California, *Public Resources Code*, Section 30001.5.

**CITY OF SANTA CRUZ**  
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Ocean Street, because its Local Coastal Program (LCP) has been certified by the California Coastal Commission (CCC).