

Introduction

1



Contents

- 1.1 The Plan Area
 - 1.1.1 Location
 - 1.1.2 History
- 1.2 The Specific Plan
 - 1.2.1 Specific Plan Process
 - 1.2.2 Purpose and Intent
 - 1.2.3 Goals and Vision
 - 1.2.4 Planning Districts
 - 1.2.5 Relationship of Specific Plan to Other Plans and Programs
 - 1.2.6 Specific Plan Organization



1

Introduction



The Mill Site Specific Plan is the result of a community-based vision for the redevelopment of the old mill site in Fort Bragg that defines the framework for future redevelopment. This chapter describes the purpose of the Mill Site Specific Plan; and provides an overview of the planning process, the community vision, the regulatory context and the Specific Plan contents.

The City of Fort Bragg and Georgia-Pacific, LLC (Georgia-Pacific) initiated the preparation of Mill Site Specific Plan (Specific Plan) to capture and describe the community's vision for the Mill Site Specific Plan Area (Plan Area) and provide a development framework to guide its future redevelopment. The Specific Plan describes the scale and character of development envisioned for the Plan Area and includes policies and development standards to help ensure that future development is consistent with the community's vision.

This document is sufficiently specific to inform future land use planning efforts and guide redevelopment, while flexible to accommodate the inevitable shift in market conditions, developer interest and community priorities over time.

1.1 The Plan Area

1.1.1 LOCATION

The Plan Area is located on the western edge of the City of Fort Bragg (see Figure 1-1). The City of Fort Bragg is the largest community on the scenic Mendocino Coast and lies midway between San Francisco and Eureka. Nearby communities include Cleone to the north, the City of Willits to the east, and Caspar and the Town of Mendocino to the south.



FIGURE 1-1 PLAN AREA VICINITY

The Plan Area lies between Highway 1 and the Pacific Ocean. It is bounded by MacKerricher State Park (Glass Beach headlands) to the north and Noyo Bay to the south. The Plan Area is unique among properties in Fort Bragg and throughout the California coast because it is a very large, undeveloped oceanfront parcel located with an incorporated city, with access to utilities and with the possibility for reuse and redevelopment. Its 319 acres extend along 3 miles of Fort Bragg's rugged and scenic coastline.

The Mill Site Specific Plan Study Area (Study Area) includes the Plan Area and the adjacent 82-acre coastal trail and parkland area to the west, as shown in Figure 1-2. (Since 2005, the City of Fort Bragg has been working to create a coastal trail and parkland along the western edge of the Study Area. In January 2010, the City of Fort Bragg acquired 82 acres of parkland and oceanfront property with State of California Coastal Conservancy funding. The design of the trail is well underway and construction is expected to begin in 2012.

The City purchased part of its new coastal trail and open space property using a \$4.2 million grant from the California Coastal Conservancy. Georgia-Pacific donated a 100-foot-wide corridor encompassing over 57 acres along the site's coastal bluffs for a trail. The corridor is slated to become part of the California Coastal Trail, which will eventually extend 1,200 miles along the entire coastline of California.

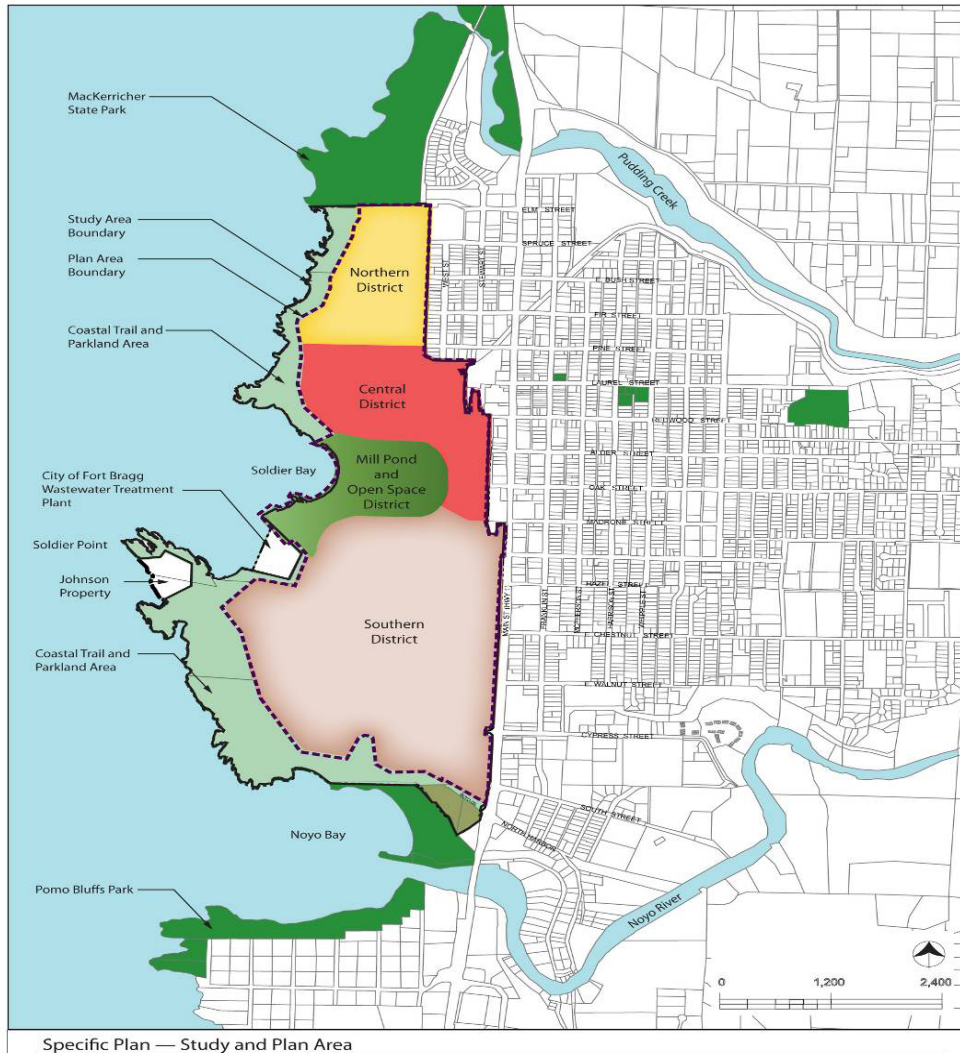


FIGURE 1-2 MILL SITE SPECIFIC PLAN STUDY AREA

1.1.2 HISTORY

The timber industry has long been a major economic engine in Northern California. For more than 100 years, the lumber and timber products industry characterized the Plan Area. Due to the size and nature of the timber operations and the historic significance of the industry to the region's economy, the City of Fort Bragg largely developed around the timber operations.



Mid-20th century exterior of ULCo Mill.

Courtesy of Noyo Hill House

Sawmill operations in Fort Bragg began with Macpherson's Lumber Mill, established in 1858 at the mouth of Noyo Bay. A relatively small outfit compared to the eventual peak

output at the mill, Macpherson's Mill spearheaded Fort Bragg's transformation from a military outpost to a lumber town. Incorporation of the Fort Bragg Redwood Company on June 26, 1885 marked the beginning of major sawmill operations, which continued until lumber operations were terminated in November 2002. At the peak, the mill employed approximately 2,000 people; in 1998 it employed approximately 500 people and by 2000, approximately 175 people.

The Plan Area, now largely vacant, occupies approximately one-fourth of the City of Fort Bragg and nearly all of the City's access to the ocean. In the years following closure of the mill, Georgia-Pacific has worked closely with state and local agencies to prepare the Plan Area for its transition to other uses. These efforts included environmental assessment and site remediation, demolition of antiquated structures, and preparation of the Mill Site Specific Plan.

1.2 The Specific Plan

1.2.1 SPECIFIC PLAN PROCESS

The Fort Bragg City Council (City Council) adopted a Statement of Position Regarding Reuse of the Georgia-Pacific Mill Site in 2005. The statement endorses a set of Community-Based Planning Principles for the redevelopment of the Plan Area that were established through a 2004 community outreach process (the Mill Site Reuse Study). The City Council intended that the endorsed planning principles would guide the development of the Specific Plan.

The City of Fort Bragg and Georgia-Pacific initiated the Mill Site Specific Plan process in 2007 as a collaborative effort to plan for future development of the Plan Area.

Before 2007, the City had guided several planning efforts related to the Plan Area. Key efforts included:

- Georgia-Pacific Mill Site Reuse Study (2004) – funded by the State of California Coastal Conservancy
- Market Study Update (2005)
- City Council Statement of Position Regarding Reuse of the Georgia-Pacific Mill Site (2005)
- Draft Coastal Trail Master Plan (2007)
- Noyo Center Development Program (2008)

The findings of this earlier work informed the Specific Plan process.

The City of Fort Bragg and Georgia-Pacific developed a community outreach strategy early in the Specific Plan process to ensure that a cross-section of the community had access to and were involved in the planning efforts for the Plan Area. Based on input from City staff, the City Council and Georgia-Pacific, outreach consisted of the following:



Community Workshop #2

- Community Workshops
 - #1 Background and Issue Identification
 - #2 Design Charrette
 - #3 Design Concept Evaluation
- Stakeholder/Focus Group Meetings (met with 12 different interest groups)
- Coastal Commission Staff Meetings and Workshops
- Ad-Hoc Committee Meetings
- Planning Commission/City Council Study Sessions
- Project Center
 - Website
 - Georgia-Pacific newsletter

Land use concepts and comments that stemmed from the nearly four-year community outreach process were used to inform the Specific Plan process.

1.2.2 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of the Specific Plan is to provide the land use and policy framework for redevelopment of the 319-acre Plan Area. Building upon a wide range of interests and aspirations across the community and region, the Specific Plan provides the framework for a diversity of land uses, including residential, visitor-serving, commercial retail, mixed-use, education and research, industrial and other employment-generating uses, and open space areas including passive and active recreation areas as well as natural reserve areas.

1.2.3 GOALS AND VISION

A. Goals

A set of Specific Plan goals were identified based upon the planning principles endorsed by the City Council and community input received. The goals describe the ultimate purpose of the Specific Plan and were used to guide the preparation of the Specific Plan. The goals are as follows:

1. Support the shift of Fort Bragg's local economy to a more diverse economy that provides high-quality jobs suited to the local workforce and that includes tourism, artisanship, and industries appropriate to the coastal setting.
2. Encourage vibrant and economically sustainable redevelopment of the Plan Area that offers diverse employment, housing, retail, cultural, and entertainment opportunities.
3. Facilitate entitlements for development in the Plan Area that are economically viable to the owner and developer(s) in order to make needed investments in desired community facilities, open space, and infrastructure.
4. Create a community with places that are easily accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers alike and well connected to other parts of Fort Bragg.
5. Create an enjoyable public realm with a strong sense of place that takes advantage of the site's unique setting and complements Fort Bragg's coastal town character.
6. Build upon the Plan Area's unique coastal features and resources and improve its environmental health.

B. Vision

Building on these overarching goals, the City of Fort Bragg, Georgia-Pacific, and the community created a vision for the Plan Area.

The Mill Site Specific Plan is envisioned to be a sustainable, attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian- and bike-friendly extension of the City of Fort Bragg. It will be a seamless extension of the existing community, continuing the neighborhood fabric of roadways and land use patterns, westward to the coast. With sustainable development as a priority, future development will use resources in a manner that does not compromise the choices and

quality of life for future generations. The Specific Plan's diverse mix of uses will help to spur investment and provide job opportunities for the local economy. The following elements are central to the vision:

- **The Coastline.** After years of being fenced-off private property, the Plan Area will offer views of and access to the coastline for the Fort Bragg community. The multi-use coastal trail will traverse the waterfront bluff top and parkland for the length of the Plan Area. The Coastal Drive will offer views, parking opportunities, and access to the trail for residents and visitors. Streets will be oriented to terminate at the coastline providing unobstructed ocean views.
- **Walkability.** A five-minute walk will connect residents and visitors to the oceanfront multi-use trail, retail and common areas, and the existing downtown. As a pedestrian- and bike-friendly neighborhood, the Plan Area will have sidewalks, bike lanes, and a pedestrian greenway interconnecting the Plan Area and providing direct connections to the coast.
- **Public Spaces.** In addition to generous sidewalks and paths, new development in the Plan Area will provide a community park with a town plaza and farmers' market pavilion, along with a neighborhood park with room for a ball field and tot lot. These features will encourage community gatherings. In addition, the Plan Area will contain wetland enhancement areas and open space connections to Fort Bragg Landing.
- **Central Business District Extension.** A mixed-use shopping and dining district will be centrally located on the Redwood Avenue extension of Fort Bragg's Central Business District (CBD). Wide sidewalks, street trees, and benches will draw shoppers and visitors from the hotels, resorts and other visitor serving uses at the western edge through the shopping district to the Fort Bragg CBD. At the heart of the district, a community park and gathering space will foster a sense of community and provide a space for people to relax, play and interact.
- **Employment and Future Growth.** The Southern District will provide the opportunity for a range of high-quality jobs. The mill site, at its height, employed over 2,000 coast residents. The Southern District of the Plan Area will be a hub for sustainable, high-quality jobs for the 21st century. It will also include a significant 80-acre Urban Reserve zone intended to accommodate future growth and uses envisioned by a future community.
- **Open Space and Habit Restoration.** The protection of natural resources and habitats is central to the Specific Plan. Restoration of Maple Creek and the Mill Pond area will significantly improve the habitat value of wetlands and riparian zones in the Plan Area. Wildlife corridors will connect the various open space features of the Plan Area and retain the quality of open space.

1.2.4 PLANNING DISTRICTS

The Specific Plan identifies four distinct districts to help guide implementation of the Specific Plan in a manner consistent with the vision:

- Northern District
- Central District
- Southern District
- Mill Pond and Open Space District

A. Northern District

The Northern District is envisioned to be a traditional residential neighborhood that extends from the existing West Fort Bragg neighborhood to the coastline and connects to the future mixed-use commercial uses in the Central District.

Safe and inviting streets lined with sidewalks, street trees, and front porches will create a pedestrian-focused walkable neighborhood. A centralized neighborhood park and greenway will provide a sense of community and recreational gathering opportunities.



Illustrative rendering of green corridor.

A variety of lot sizes and residential housing types will be developed throughout the Northern District. Single-family homes are encouraged immediately adjacent to the existing West Fort Bragg neighborhood, and higher-density housing is encouraged near Pine Street where the Northern District meets the Central District. The Specific Plan encourages a mix of lot sizes along the western edge, adjacent to the coastal trail and parkland area.

A north/south green corridor is planned through the entire Northern District to allow enhanced pedestrian access within the Northern and Central Districts and provide additional opportunities for stormwater treatment. A neighborhood park and wetland enhancement feature within the greenway will establish a natural focal point in this district.

B. Central District

The Central District is of critical importance to the overall implementation of the Specific Plan and its vision for a diverse mix of land uses within the Plan Area.

The Central District will include an extension of Fort Bragg’s existing CBD via Redwood Avenue. Retail shops, restaurants, and hotels are planned to line vibrant, well-furnished sidewalks enhancing the pedestrian and shopping experience in the expanded CBD. In the CBD extension, mixed-use buildings will frame Redwood Avenue with commercial retail on the ground floor and residences or offices above the ground floor as shown in Figure 1-3. Parking lots will be tucked behind buildings, with pedestrian paseos connecting to Redwood Avenue. Toward the western end of Redwood Avenue, less intense development consisting of visitor-serving accommodations will transition to open space on the coastal trail.

A three-acre community park and gathering space will serve as a community focal point at the heart of this shopping and dining district and connect Redwood Avenue to the Mill Pond open space area. The park will offer opportunities for community events and celebrations (music, festivals, art shows, and picnics). A farmers’ market pavilion and plaza area is planned to accommodate additional gathering, entertainment and festivity space, as shown in Figure 1-4.

An industrial arts sub-district is envisioned in the area west of the Skunk Train Depot. This sub-district will provide opportunities for artisan shops, industrial arts production and sales, live/work units, and a cultural and performing arts events space. Reuse of an existing industrial building is envisioned as a potential asset to the industrial arts sub-district.

Visitor-serving commercial uses, including a hotel/resort and conference center, are planned to take advantage of the coastal views at the western edge of the district. Multi-family housing will provide a transition from the Northern District residential area to the Central District shopping and dining core. The resort and residential areas will infuse this shopping and entertainment district with vitality, creating a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

C. Southern District

The Southern District will provide job creation opportunities and preserve land for future development, as the majority of the Southern District is identified as an Urban Reserve Zone. Employment-generating uses will be allowed in the employment, industrial, and highway commercial zone and in the eastern part of this district adjacent to Highway 1.



Illustrative rendering of Coastal Drive at Cypress Street.

In the near term, only limited development and interim uses will be allowed within the Urban Reserve zone. The Urban Reserve zone also permits development of a hotel/resort overlooking Noyo Bay and a research and education center between Coastal Drive and the coast in the western portion of the district.



FIGURE 1-3 ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING OF REDWOOD AVENUE EXTENSION FROM DOWNTOWN FORT BRAGG INTO THE PLAN AREA



FIGURE 1-4 ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING OF COMMUNITY PARK AND FARMERS' MARKET PAVILION ON REDWOOD AVENUE

Cypress Street will be the gateway to the Southern District and the industrial, commercial, and employment zones. Land uses in this area are planned to include auto-oriented light industrial and employment-generating uses, such as office or research and development campuses. The light industrial and commercial land uses anticipated for this area are not intended to be pedestrian-scale or retail-oriented uses, which are accommodated in the Central District.

D. Mill Pond and Open Space District

This district will provide for the restoration of the Mill Pond Complex (23 acres) to natural conditions including seasonal wetlands, a perennial stream, riparian habitat and coastal grassland and shrub habitats. The primary purpose of the Mill Pond Complex is to enable the removal of the dam and the restoration of the former Maple Creek that connected the Maple Street riparian area with the beach at Fort Bragg Landing. When completed, the restoration will provide stormwater treatment and detention benefits, habitat, and ocean and beach access, and opportunities for passive recreation.

1.2.5 RELATIONSHIP OF SPECIFIC PLAN TO OTHER CITY PLANS AND PROGRAMS

California Government Code Sections 65450 through 65457 grant local planning agencies the authority to prepare a Specific Plan for the purpose of establishing systematic methods to implement the General Plan.

The Fort Bragg Coastal General Plan (Coastal General Plan) and Coastal Land Use and Development Code (Coastal LUDC) designate the majority of the Plan Area as Timber Resources Industrial (IT). Coastal General Plan Policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2 specifically require the preparation of a Specific Plan prior to rezoning of lands that are designated Timber Resources Industrial. The Mill Site Specific Plan fulfills that requirement.

The Specific Plan policies will be added to the Coastal General Plan and the Specific Plan development standards will be added to the development standards in the Coastal LUDC as part of an amendment to the Fort Bragg Local Coastal Program (see below). The Specific Plan provisions will be identified in those documents with the Specific Plan logo.

All development in the Mill Site Specific Plan Area must also comply with the Citywide Design Guidelines. The Citywide Design Guidelines include certain guidelines that only apply within the Plan Area.

All subsequent development projects and related activities in the Plan Area must be consistent with this Specific Plan, the Coastal General Plan, and the Coastal LUDC. All development projects must comply with the policies and standards contained in the Coastal General Plan and Coastal LUDC. Refer to Chapter 8, Implementation and Phasing.

A. Local Coastal Program

The Fort Bragg Local Coastal Program (LCP) – comprised of the Coastal General Plan, Land Use and Development Code and Zoning Map – outlines the policies, standards and regulations with which all development in the City’s Coastal Zone must conform. The Coastal General Plan sets policies on a wide range of topics including land use, resources protection, storm water management, transportation, community design, safety, energy, and sustainability.

The Plan Area lies entirely within the Coastal Zone. The Specific Plan establishes land use categories and zoning districts that will be incorporated into the LCP through an amendment to the LCP.

B. Coastal General Plan

The Coastal General Plan constitutes the Land Use Plan of the City’s LCP and sets forth specific land use designations for all properties within the City that are within the Coastal Zone. These designations are classified into major land use categories, including Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Other (e.g., harbors, open space, agriculture, etc.). The Coastal General Plan also describes the specific types of uses intended for each category, and depicts them on the City’s Land Use Designations Map.

The Coastal General Plan currently designates most of the Plan Area as Timber Resources Industrial (IT). A few smaller portions of the Plan Area have designations other than IT. These include two small rectangular tracts of land along the Plan Area’s eastern boundary designated Central Business District (CBD) and Heavy Industrial (IH). These designations are similar to the land use designations of adjacent parcels outside the Plan Area boundary.

A Specific Plan must be consistent with the local agency’s adopted General Plan. An amendment to the Coastal General Plan to change the land use designations and incorporate applicable policies from the Specific Plan, will be required as part of the City Council’s consideration of the Specific Plan.

C. Coastal Land Use and Development Code

The Fort Bragg Coastal LUDC constitutes the Implementation Program of the City’s LCP. The Coastal LUDC clarifies the policies of the Coastal General Plan by classifying and regulating land uses and development occurring on properties within the City’s Coastal Zone boundary.

Consistent with the Coastal General Plan land use designation, the majority of the Plan Area is currently zoned for IT uses. Similarly, a few small tracts of land within the Plan Area have other zoning classifications. For example, two small tracts of land along the eastern boundary of the Plan Area are zoned CBD and IH, matching the zoning of adjacent parcels

not within the project boundary. A triangular tract at the Plan Area's southeastern-most tip is zoned Highway Visitor Commercial (CH).

An amendment to the Coastal LUDC to incorporate the new zoning districts and development standards from the Specific Plan will be required as part of the City Council's consideration of the Specific Plan.

D. Citywide Design Guidelines

The Fort Bragg Citywide Design Guidelines are intended to (1) promote a desired level of future development quality; (2) clarify expectations for high-quality design; (3) serve as a source for evaluation criteria for project review; (4) provide a method to help ensure objectivity, consistency, and predictability in the design review process; and (5) promote a clear identity and sense of place for the entire community of Fort Bragg. These guidelines, which are in addition to but not part of the LCP, acknowledge the valued architectural characteristics and development patterns within Fort Bragg today. The guidelines, therefore, do not seek to impose an overriding style or an artificial theme. They do seek to assist in promoting the positive design characteristics existing throughout Fort Bragg that make it a unique place.

The Citywide Design Guidelines apply to both the Coastal and Inland Areas of Fort Bragg and will be applied to all development within the Plan Area during review of proposed projects (new construction, additions, remodeling, and relocation). The design elements of each project (including site design, architecture, landscaping, signs, and parking design) will be reviewed through the City's Design Review process. Certain design guidelines will be identified in the Citywide Design Guidelines as only applying within Mill Site Specific Plan Area.

1.2.6 SPECIFIC PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Specific Plan is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction.** Outlines the Specific Plan goals and vision, defines the Plan Area, provides a brief history of the Plan Area and the community outreach process undertaken in preparation of the Specific Plan, discusses the purpose of the Specific Plan, outlines the authority for adopting the Specific Plan and its relationship to existing regulatory documents, and provides an overview of the contents of the Specific Plan.
- **Chapter 2 – Land Use Development Standards.** Defines the land use designations and zoning classifications created by the Specific Plan; includes the Land Use Plan and development limitations; and identifies land use policies, development standards and allowable land uses for development within the Plan Area.

- **Chapter 3 – Multi-Modal Circulation, Streetscape, and Stormwater.** Describes the transportation and circulation plan that provides for automobiles, transit, pedestrians, and bicycling and the connection of streets, parkways, trails, and bicycle lanes, and details associated policies for stormwater management.
- **Chapter 4 – Sustainable Design Plan.** Provides direction for integrating sustainable development strategies into future development in the Plan Area.
- **Chapter 5 – Open Space, Parks, and Resource Conservation.** Details policies for preserving, restoring and developing open space, parks, coastal access, and natural areas for natural resource protection.
- **Chapter 6 – Hazards.** Establishes policies to protect the community from risks associated with site hazards.
- **Chapter 7 – Utilities and Public Services.** Provides an overview of public facilities and utilities in the City of Fort Bragg and identifies improvements necessary to implement the Specific Plan.
- **Chapter 8 – Implementation and Phasing.** Provides implementation measures for improvements and a discussion of project phasing.
- **Chapter 9 – Glossary and List of Acronyms.** Provides definitions of terms and acronyms used in the Specific Plan or otherwise relevant to the Specific Plan.

Policies, programs, and development standards are provided throughout the Specific Plan to help regulate and guide the form and character of development. Policies are included within each chapter and are numbered in accordance with the section topic (e.g., Policy LU-1, Policy LU-2, Policy MM-1, and Policy MM-2). Consistent with the Coastal General Plan’s definition of a policy, policies in the Specific Plan are action-oriented requirements that bind the City’s action and establish a standard of review to determine whether land use and development decisions are consistent with the Specific Plan. Programs are actions, activities, or strategies that will be carried out by the City or a project sponsor (as stated within each program) in response to a specific policy. Development standards are included in tables within each relevant chapter. Development within the Plan Area is also subject to the existing Citywide Design Guidelines.