Pismo Beach Downtown Strategic Plan



November 2014

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1 Introduction and Purpose

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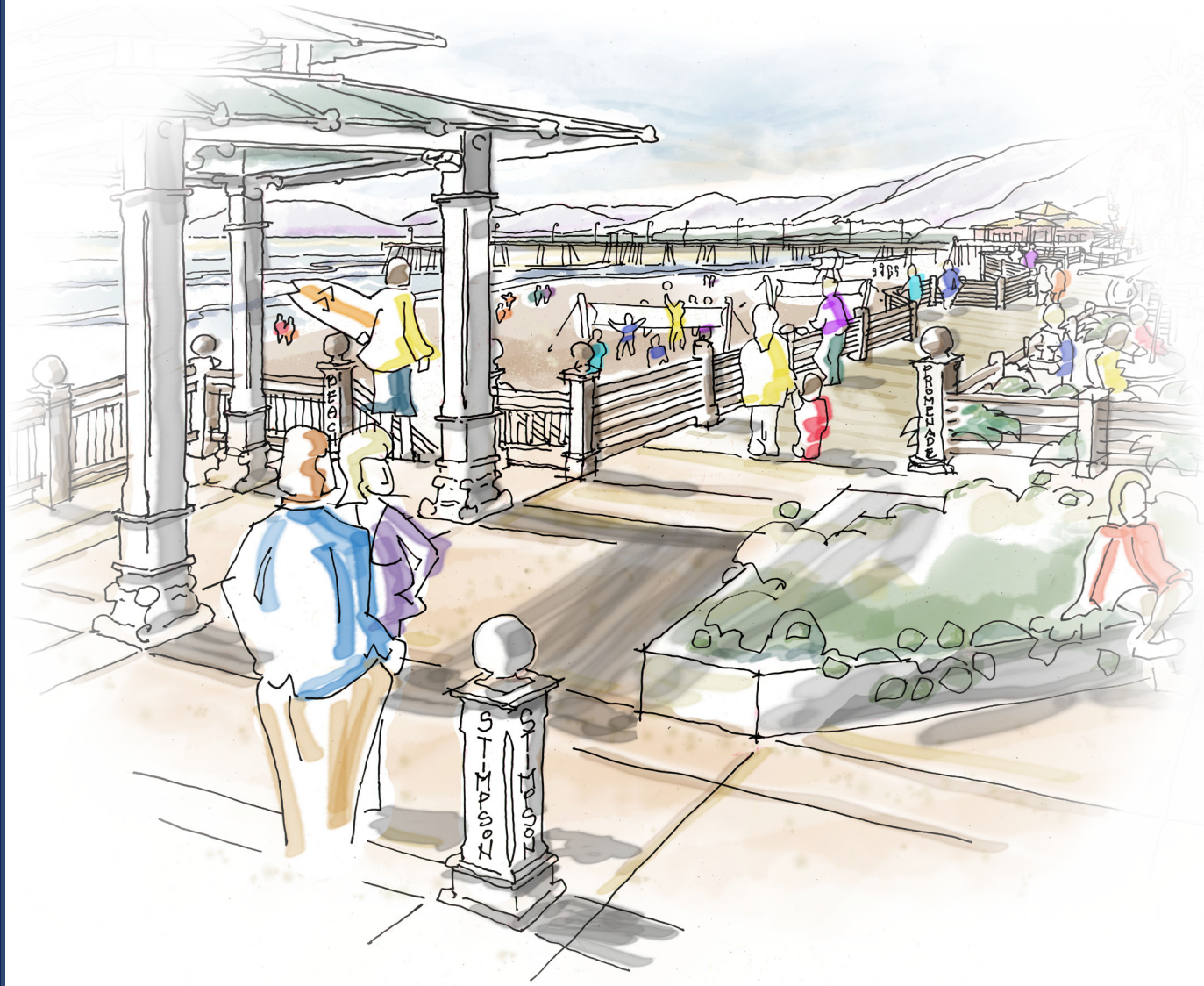
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Pismo Beach Ferris Wheel and Wharf 1894, Courtesy of the Effie McDermott Archives

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

The City of Pismo Beach initiated the preparation of a strategic plan to help shape future development in the City's Downtown. The Pismo Beach Downtown Strategic Plan is a community-based visioning and guidance tool that was developed by the Planning Team, a partnership between the City of Pismo Beach Community Development Department and the consultant team, led by RRM Design Group.

The purpose of the Pismo Beach Downtown Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) is to provide the Pismo Beach community with a vision for the Downtown as it experiences future growth and change. Based on the community's history, values, and aspirations, the Strategic Plan acts as the guiding document for development of the Downtown into a distinctive and unforgettable place.



The base of the Pismo Beach Pier looking west

1.2 History of the downtown

The Downtown as it exists today came into existence at the end of the 1800s when the Pismo Beach Company subdivided the parcels and the Meherin Brothers built the first pier used for freight and commercial operations. John Price, a local businessman, saw Pismo's tourist potential and built the Pismo Beach Hotel (later renamed the El Pizmo Inn) near the base of the pier. This area soon became Downtown Pismo Beach, and was characterized by tourist-serving attractions, such as beach side hotels, a skating rink, a bowling alley, a dance hall, an amusement park with Ferris wheel, and a salt water plunge.

An overflow of tourists provided an impetus for a "Tent City," erected near the site where the old theater and the Clam Digger now stand. The 18' x 24' tents were rented for $8 a week by tourists coming on the Southern Pacific Railroad from Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. Tent City and the original pier lasted until the 1920s, when a new pier and new era of automobile travel provided easy access to the beach and the Downtown. The current pier was reconfigured in 1986, and along with the Downtown, remains as major tourist attraction in the area.

1.3 Strategic Plan Area

The Strategic Plan Area encompasses Pismo Beach's Downtown, which extends from the Pacific Ocean on the west to the border of US Highway 101 on the east, and from the intersection of US Highway 1 (Dolliver Street) and Price Street on the north to Pismo Creek on the south. Figure 1.1 shows the relationship of the Strategic Plan Area to the City and the surrounding area.

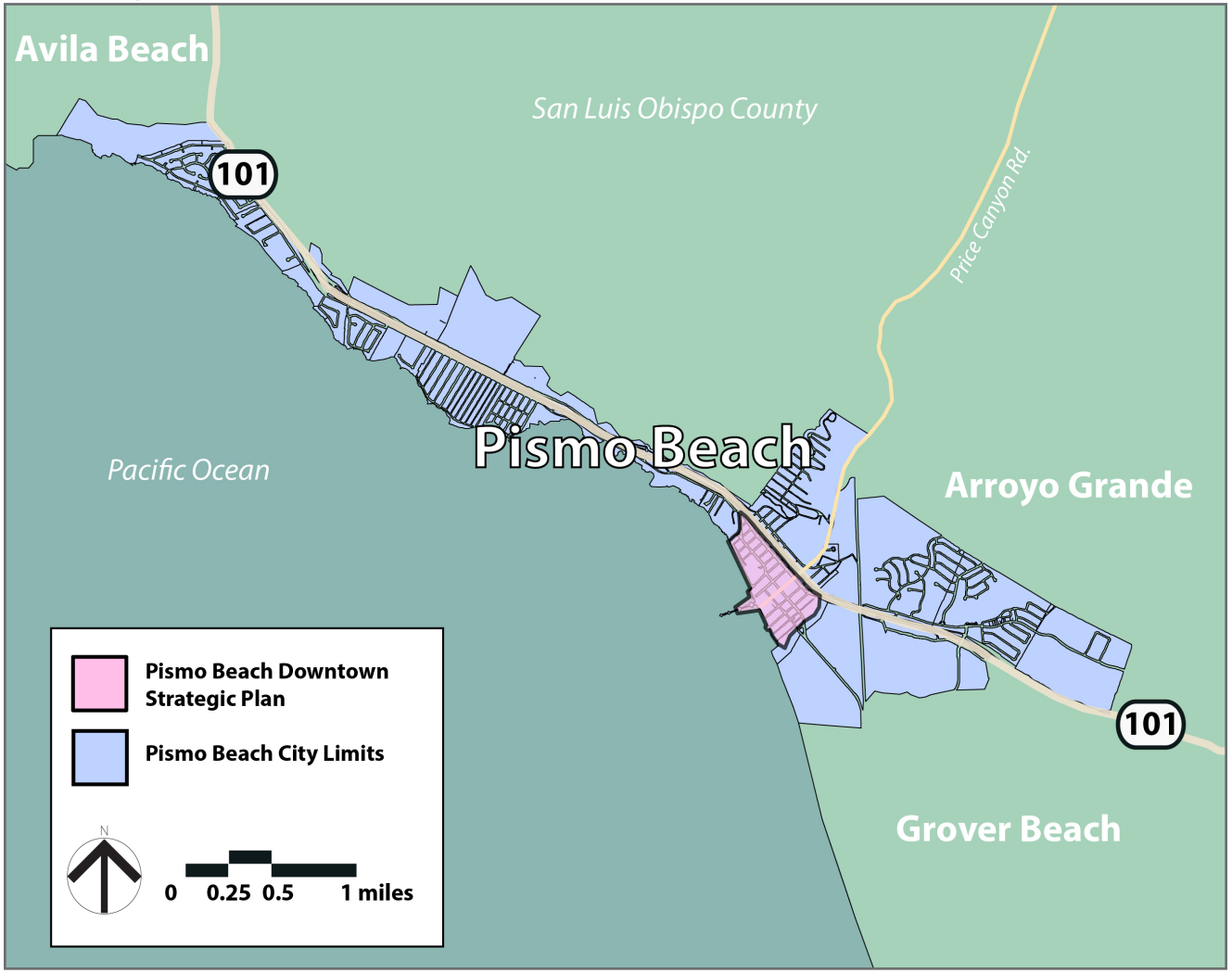


Figure 1.1 - *Strategic Plan Location*

1.4 Other Planning Efforts

Other planning efforts that have contributed to Pismo's Downtown include the Pismo Beach's General Plan, the Local Coastal Plan (LCP), the 1984 Waterfront Revitalization Plan, the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team study (R/UDAT), and the Pismo Beach Complete Streets Plan.

As the City's guiding constitution for physical development, the General Plan established principles aimed at preserving and creating a desirable Pismo Beach. The Downtown is identified by the General Plan as Planning Area K - the Downtown Core, with specific principles that provide guidance in response to its unique characteristics. A couple of overall General Plan principles for the Downtown include P-15: Visitor/Resident Balance and P-16: Historic Ambiance, while specific principles for the Downtown include P-17: Downtown Focus for Residents, and Visitors, P-18: People-Pedestrian Scale, P-19: Historic Preservation. These principles provided good guidance in the development of this Strategic Plan.

The 1984 Waterfront Revitalization Plan and 1989 Regional Urban Design Assistance Team study (R/UDAT) both addressed future renewal of the Downtown. Although some of the work done on these efforts has been implemented, this Strategic Plan adds further details and approaches for revitalizing the Downtown. Strategies that were incorporated from these efforts include the provision of a public plaza at the base of the Pismo Pier, and a restaurant on one of the pier diamonds. The 2013 Pismo Beach Complete Streets Plan provided a framework for enhancing Pismo Beach's road network. This Strategic Plan incorporates key strategies from this effort, such as the roundabout at Price Street, Dolliver Street, and Highway 101; new bike facilities on Dolliver Street; and builds on the Complete Streets Plan by providing additional pedestrian, bicycle, transit, vehicular, and parking opportunities.



A view of Downtown Pismo Beach from the Pismo Pier



Existing seating and showers at the pier plaza



View of the pier looking south

1.5 Community Outreach Process

The Strategic Plan reflects the community's vision and goals for the Downtown. The community collaborated with the Planning Team during departmental meetings, key stakeholder meetings, two community workshops, two Pismo Beach Chamber of Commerce meetings, and tourist surveys.

1.5.1 City Departments Meetings

The scope of the Strategic Plan required the involvement and contribution of the City's various departments. A series of consultations were conducted by the Planning Team in 2013 and 2014 with the Planning Department, Public Works Department, and Public Safety. The feedback from these departments for the Strategic Plan included the need and/or desire to:

- Gather feedback and ideas from the public,
- Create a community-based vision for the Downtown,
- Plan for emergency and police access to the pier area,
- Plan for maintenance and emergency vehicle access to the beach at existing locations,
- Integrate existing approved projects and plan for future development opportunities,
- Consider/integrate relevant information from Pismo R/UDAT document, Complete Streets plan document, General Plan, and Zoning Ordinance, and
- Consider current public art program efforts.

1.5.2 Key Stakeholder Meetings

During October of 2013, interviews with various individuals having strong interests in the Downtown, including residents, parking committee members, property owners, and business operators were conducted. These interviews provided a foundation of background information, as well as issues and ideas for the Downtown. The feedback from these interviews varied, from turning the pier parking lot into a plaza to keeping the Downtown as is. Additional comments included:

- Improve parking options, including structures on Dolliver Street,
- Create better access to the beach,
- Improve family-oriented atmosphere day and night,
- An amphitheater or event area near the pier,
- Improve pedestrian routes,
- Consider turning Hinds Avenue into a two-way street,
- Mixed-use development should be a priority,
- The need for private/public partnership opportunities,
- Reintroduce a Ferris Wheel,
- Turn pier parking into plaza,
- Improve parking near the pier,
- Use Cypress Street bridge as a pedestrian bike bridge,
- Extension of the promenade,
- Consider a plunge (pool) on Addie Street parking lot,
- Respect Pismo's history,
- Need to draw Price Street patrons to pier and beach, and
- Improve the atmosphere that attracts Pismo residents and visitors to the Downtown.



View looking south east towards Downtown Pismo



Downtown Pismo



Community members providing input during Workshop #1



Community members identifying issues and ideas during the prioritization exercise

1.5.3 Community Workshop #1

Community Workshop #1 concentrated on defining the character and essence of the Downtown, identifying potential issues, and capturing the community's vision for the future. Participants brainstormed and prioritized issues and ideas, into six categories including: The Essence of Pismo, Branding and Image, Building Characteristics and Aesthetics, Circulation and Parking, the Pier and Pier Plaza, and Pismo - What could it be? After which, they prioritized their comments and recommendations using a tape dot exercise. The second half of the workshop involved community members in a design charrette where they put their ideas onto aerial photo maps. Participants emphasized the uniqueness of the Downtown and identified its essence as "Classic California." Some of the feedback captured included:

- Pismo as "Classic California",
- A multi-use plaza/amphitheater at the base of the pier,
- Incorporate underground parking (at pier),
- Keep the parking lot (at pier),
- Enlarge the pier diamond or plaza,
- Protect ocean views,
- Commercial uses such as a restaurant on the pier,
- Extend the promenade and improved connections to and from local neighborhoods,
- Extend angled parking on Price Street,
- Complete the coastal trail (through promenade extensions)
- Underground utilities,
- Increase outdoor dining opportunities,
- Create pedestrian-only zones,
- Use vibrant lighting throughout the Downtown,

- Redevelop the Addie Street parking lot,
- More street trees, green spaces, and landscaping, and
- Widen sidewalks with outdoor dining opportunities.

1.5.4 Community Workshop #2

During Community Workshop #2 the planning team presented a draft of the Vision Statement, and the Vision Plan that were based on the input received during Community Workshop #1. The community then provided their feedback to the Vision Statement and to the Vision Plan, which included:

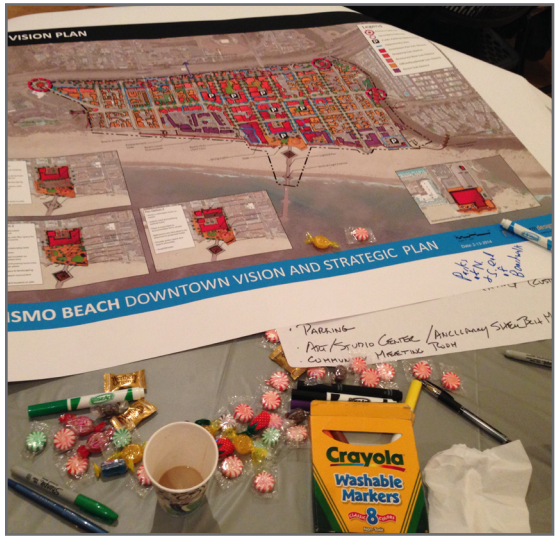
- Replacing pier parking with a public plaza,
- The creation of Playgrounds,
- Incorporating more steps to the beach,
- Shuttles from parking lots and hotels to Downtown,
- Closing Pomeroy Street as a pedestrian only street,
- More restrooms at the pier plaza, and
- Inclusion of a restaurant on the pier.

Elements of the Vision Plan that the community liked included:

- The extension of the promenade,
- The Ferris wheel,
- The Addie Street lot with plunge,
- The slides,
- Public art, including the monument letters spelling out Pismo Beach,
- The amphitheater,
- Gateway signage,
- Structured parking on Dolliver Street,
- Underground parking at pier plaza, and
- A shuttle system.



Community members providing input to Vision Statement during Workshop #2



Community member edits to the vision plan



View north on the promenade towards the pier and pier plaza



Looking north on Pomeroy Avenue

1.5.5 Second Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Two meetings with the Chamber of Commerce were held to gain additional feedback from the local business community. The first Chamber meeting focused on introductions of the planning team and the Strategic Plan process. The second Chamber meeting introduced Strategic Plan concepts and a focus on the plaza feature in front of the pier. The attendees were primarily Downtown business owners and voiced a need for parking in proximity to the pier and the Downtown businesses. They expressed the need to continue to provide access for police to patrol the plaza and pier area for safety. They also discussed the operational challenges of servicing businesses if streets are closed off to vehicular traffic.

1.5.6 Hotel Survey

During 2013, the City conducted a survey of tourists staying at local hotels. Many of the respondents were from the Central Valley and other areas of California, and said that they visited Downtown Pismo from one to two times per year. The survey asked the respondents what they most liked about the Downtown, what they least liked, and what types of shops/services/restaurants/activities they would like to see in the Downtown. The summary of their feedback is as follows:

- They most liked the dining, shopping, pier, and promenade.
- They least liked the lack of parking, the lack of night life, and the unclean aspects of the Downtown.
- Many people wanted to keep the pier as is, while others wanted to add a restaurant on the pier, newer restrooms, outdoor vendors, and amusement attractions.

2 The Community's Vision

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Looking south toward Downtown Pismo

2.1 Vision Statement

Downtown Pismo Beach is a "Classic California" beach town. Downtown Pismo's vibrant energy will continue to make Pismo Beach an attractive and accessible destination for families of all ages and incomes to stay, play, and relax. We are committed to an economically prosperous and friendly downtown experience as we:

- Create a new downtown focal point with a multi-use area at the base of the pier that will be a year-round destination for locals and visitors;
- Use quality development, design elements, and signage to support a welcoming environment for visitors and guests, including enhanced downtown gateways, a clean, pedestrian-friendly beach, and strong pedestrian connections;
- Provide safe and efficient parking opportunities to improve access to businesses, minimize negative impacts to ocean views, and complement public spaces;
- Continue efforts to connect streets and paths for improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront and downtown neighborhoods and businesses;
- Improve the streetscape for enhanced street life with wider sidewalks, outdoor dining, seating, pocket parks, lighting, landscaping, signage, and public art;
- Extend the promenade, both north and south, and expand the pier uses to maximize recreation opportunities, improve coastal access, and enhance community connectivity;
- Create opportunities for new dining, shopping, lodging, recreation, and living for a broad range of tastes and incomes;
- Minimize traffic and congestion with improved transit and alternative forms of transportation;
- Increase downtown's economic viability with policies and incentives for year-round business opportunities that will provide more services, including dining and shopping, for visitors and the residents within Pismo Beach.



Figure 2.1 - ***Vision Plan***

2.2 Vision Plan

Figure 2.1 reflects the intent of the Vision Statement and illustrates key concepts, such as the pier and plaza redevelopment, the promenade extension, key City gateways, streetscape enhancements, and an improved multimodal circulation network.

2.3 Branding

Since its earliest history in the 1880s, Pismo Beach has promoted itself as a seaside resort and get-away destination. Often referred to as the "Town of El Pizmo" or "El Pismo by the Sea", many early promotional images capitalize on the wide beach, warm weather, and natural beauty of the area.

By the mid 20th century, a distinct graphic character of casual playfulness had become Pismo's dominant theme and is often the inspiration for more recent promotional materials. This is exactly the visual personality that we feel is appropriate for Pismo today – a bit of nostalgia and memories of a simpler time. The prominent inclusion of the signature Pismo Clam seems like an obvious choice along with a retro wordmark that can function across varying media.











Late 19th and early 20th century examples

















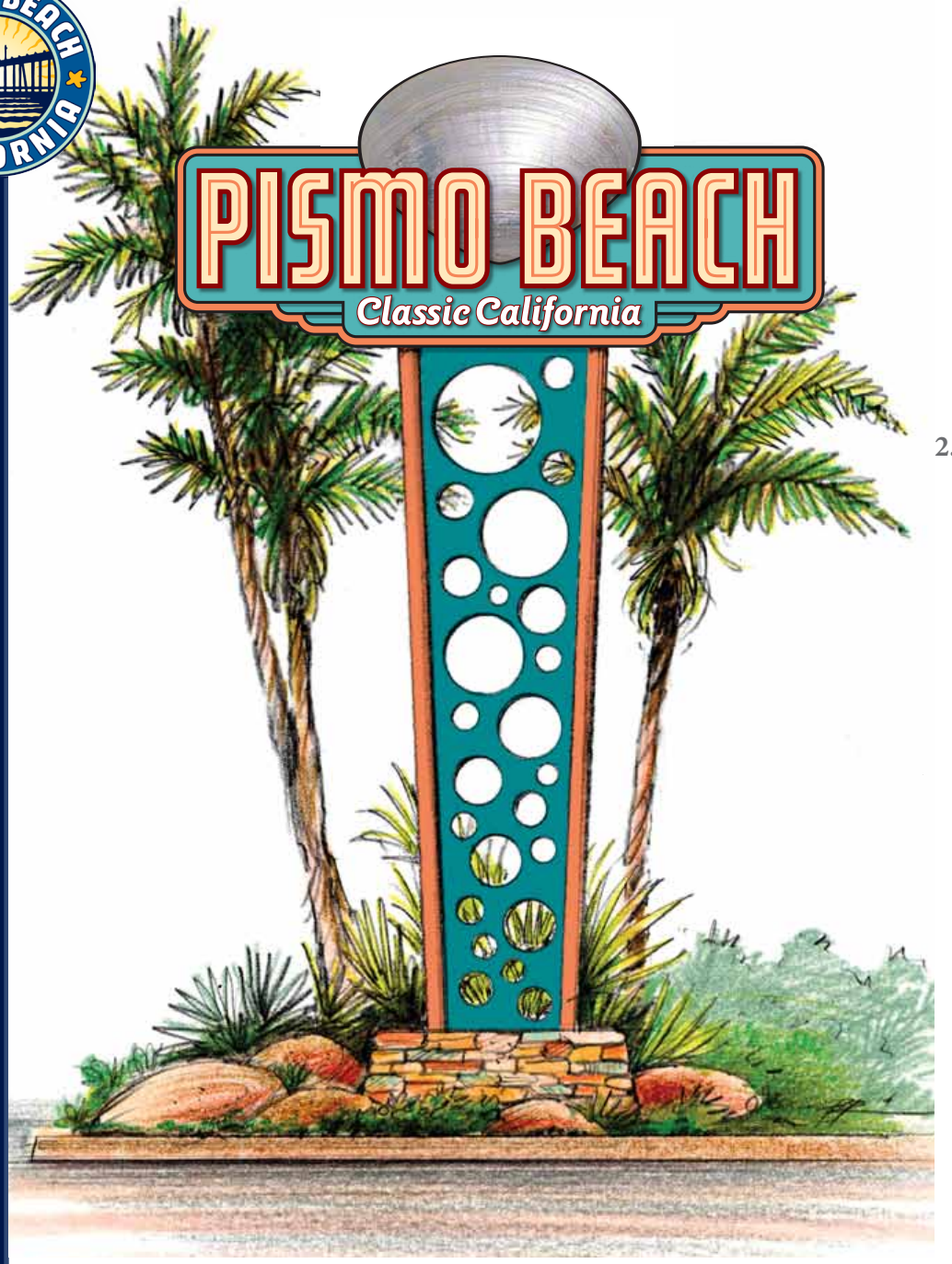








Many graphic applications in use today capitalize on nostalgic themes



2.3.1 Community Entry Concept

The entry structure and wordmark take their cues from early 20th century promotional signage and graphics, but include the "Classic California" theme to help integrate other components of the City's brand. Welded steel, sculpted clam, and neon illuminated graphics all contribute to the nostalgic character. Traditional Southern California beachfront landscape design, at key entry locations reinforces the concept.

2.3.2 Wordmark

The wordmark is designed for maximum legibility while maintaining a 1930s graphic personality. The clam, which has always been Pismo's iconic symbol, has been prominently incorporated. Both full color and black and white versions have been developed for versatile application across multiple media.

PISMO BEACH
Classic California

3 Districts and Land Use



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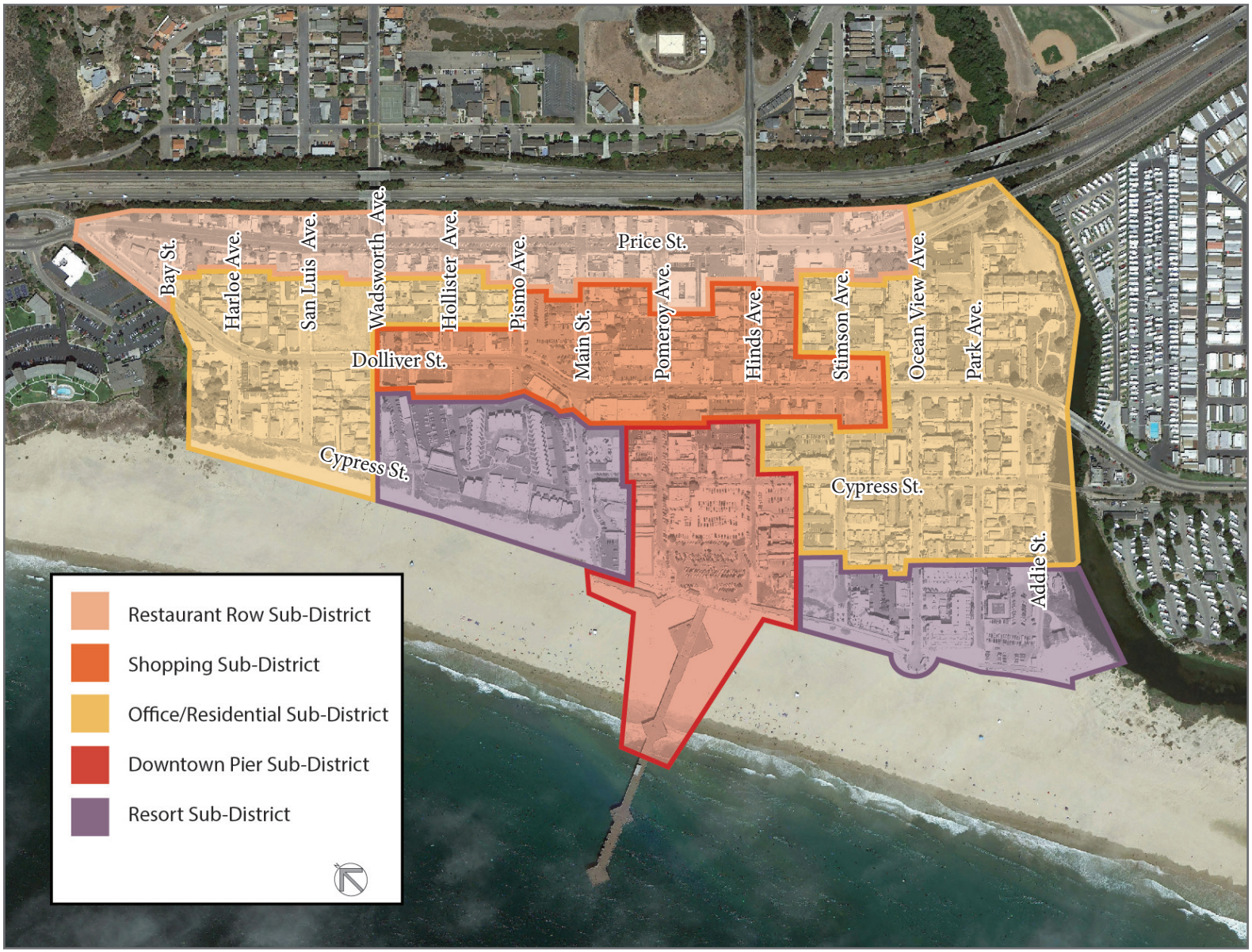


Figure 3.1- ***Sub-Districts Map***

3.1 Sub-District Plan

While the Strategic Plan looks at the Strategic Plan Area as a unified whole, several "sub-districts" were identified during the planning process as having distinct cultural and economic attributes and land use commonalities.

These sub-districts include the Restaurant Row Sub-District, the Shopping Sub-District, the Office/Residential Sub-District, the Downtown Pier Sub-District, and the Resort Sub-District. Figure 3.1 provides the geographical location of the Sub-Districts within the Planning Area Boundary.

General Plan polices and zoning designations should be updated to reflect the community-based vision and principal uses identified in these sub-districts.



Restaurant Row Sub-District

3.2 Restaurant Row Sub-District

Restaurant Row is an active dining sub-district, focused on dining opportunities that serve both locals and visitors. Key attributes include:

- Cafes, wine bars, and restaurants with outdoor dining options,
- Streets lined with trees,
- String lighting in trees,
- Enhanced diagonal parking with planters and street trees,
- Enhanced intersections with bulb-outs, accent paving, crosswalks, and landscaping,
- Street signage that welcomes visitors to Pismo Beach and directs people to the pier and parking areas,
- Extend diagonal parking north, and
- Gateway and directional signage.

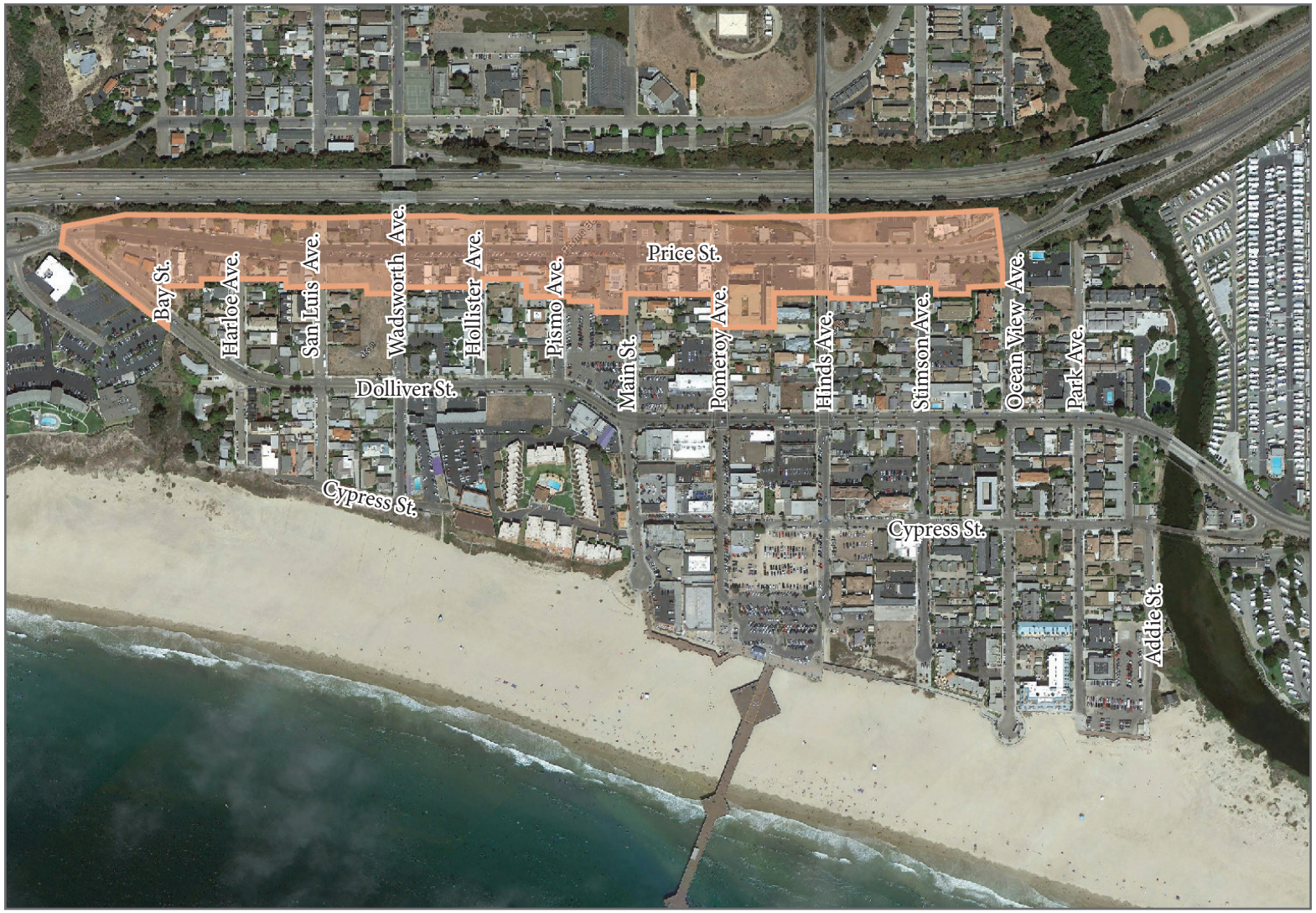


Figure 3.2 - ***Restaurant Row Sub-District Map***



Shopping Sub-District looking southwest on Dolliver Street

3.3 Shopping Sub-District

The Shopping Sub-District is a vibrant shopping neighborhood that provides a variety of visitor and local shopping opportunities. Key attributes include:

- Shops that line the streets and sidewalks,
- Street scene with street furniture, banners, and lighting that provide strong connection from Price Street to the pier and beach,
- Paseos and sidewalks connecting to neighboring districts and parking,
- Parking structure with retail on ground floor along Dolliver Street, and
- Intersection enhancements along Dolliver Street at Main Street, Pomeroy Avenue, and Hinds Avenue.

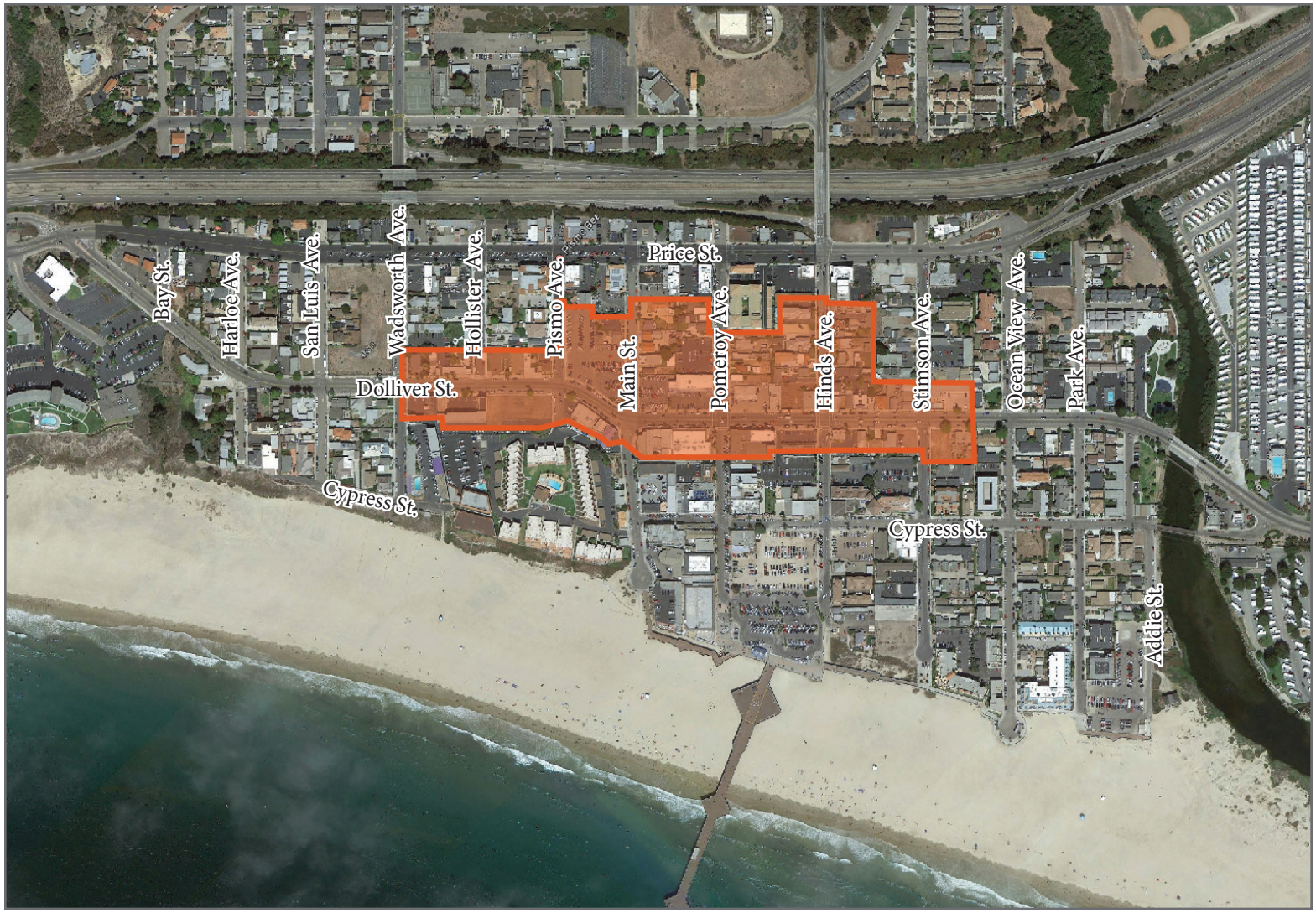


Figure 3.3 - ***Shopping Sub-District Map***



The bridge at Pismo Creek on Cypress Street in the Office/Residential Sub-District



Office/Residential Sub-District looking east on Park Avenue

3.4 Office/Residential Sub-District

The Office/Residential Sub-District is a mix of residential and office uses that support the surrounding downtown core. Key attributes include:

- Offices and service uses, such as financial, legal, medical and dental offices,
- Opportunity for new office uses such as "high tech,"
- Residential that adds vibrancy to the downtown with "eyes on the street" in the evenings and will continue to contribute to downtown businesses.
- Residential-serving uses, such as a pharmacy, dry cleaners, or a corner market,
- Small visitor-serving lodging such as bed and breakfasts or small inns.

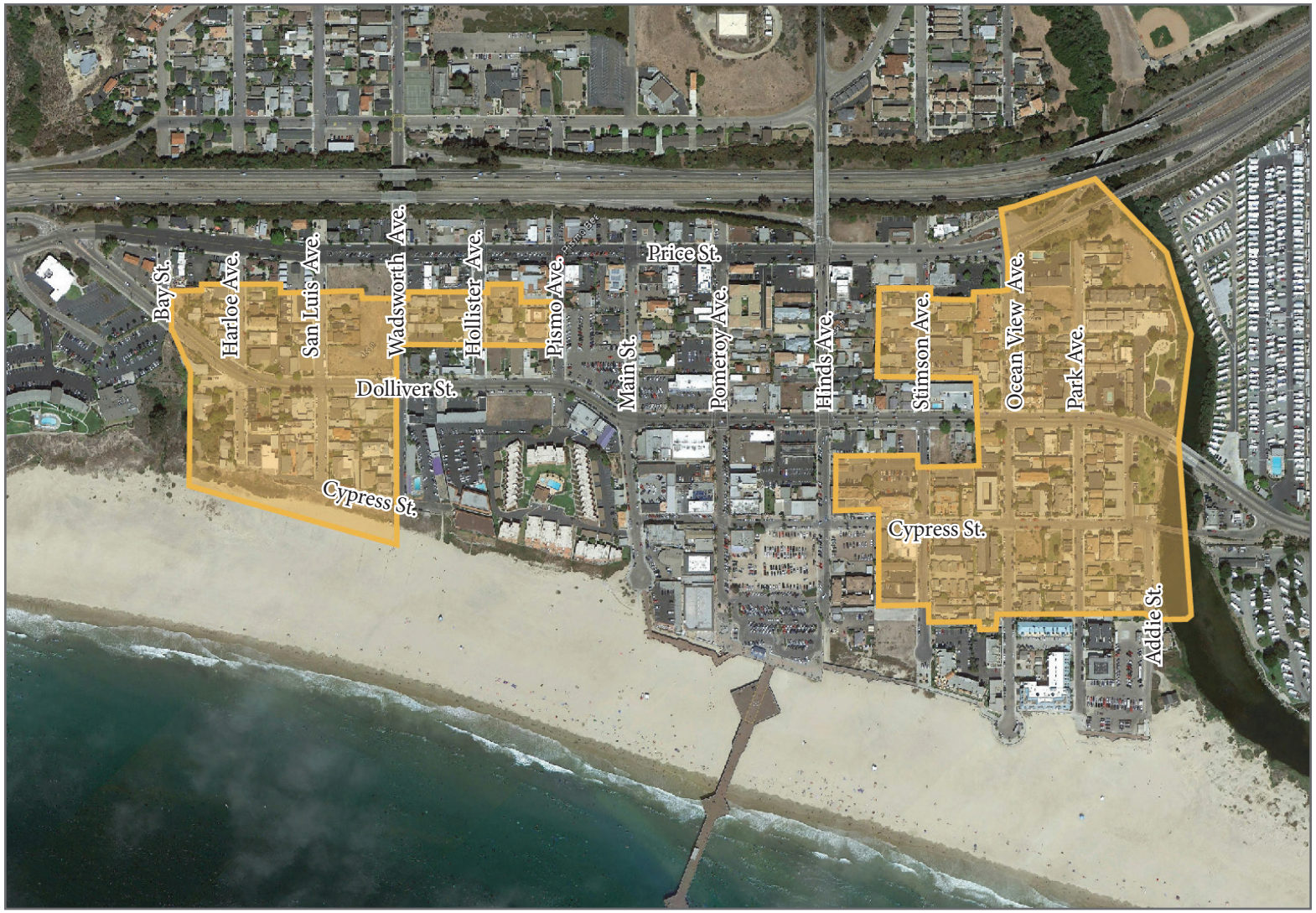


Figure 3.4 - ***Office/Residential Sub-District Map***



Overhead street lighting can be used on Pomeroy Avenue to help create a festive and safe atmosphere



Looking east towards the Downtown Pier Sub-District

3.5 Downtown Pier Sub-District

The Downtown Pier Sub-District is envisioned as the focal point of the Downtown that provides both local and regional visitors with a year-round, multi-use gathering destination. Key attributes include:

- Primary retail and entertainment destination for the Downtown,
- High-quality shopping, dining, and entertainment activities,
- Green space, enhanced landscaping, and plaza space,
- Enhanced streetscapes with street trees, benches, and streetlights,
- Year-round destination that serves both visitors and Pismo Beach residents,
- Strong connections to the beach, pier, and promenade,
- Pier improvements with restaurant use,
- Downtown focal point with multi-use area,
- Opportunities for outdoor dining on paseos, sidewalks, and plaza,
- Support for redevelopment of underutilized and vacant parcels to frame and activate the pier plaza, and
- Create a family oriented atmosphere,
- Hotel development on upper floors of buildings as a conditional use,
- Mixed-use development with residential units on upper floors.

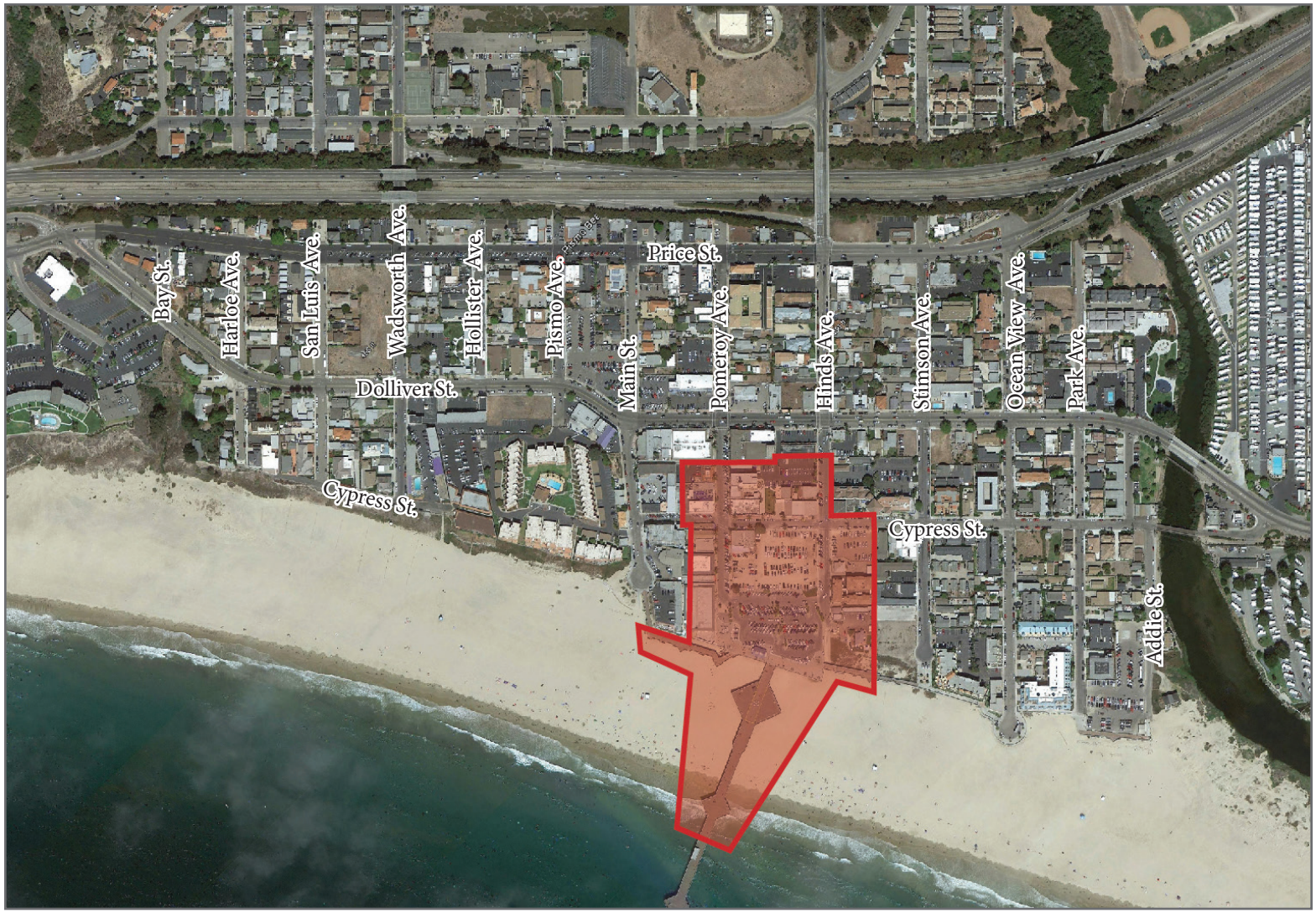
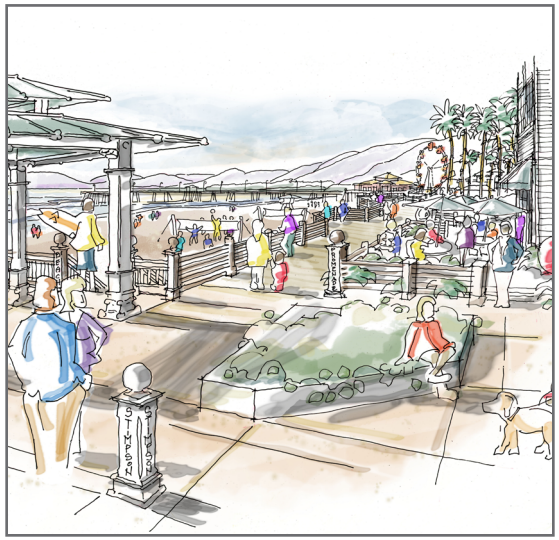


Figure 3.5 -*Downtown Pier Sub-District Map*



Resort Sub-District

3.6 Resort Sub-District

The Resort Sub-District is located along the beach front and anchors either end of the Pier Sub-District with hotel and resort uses. These visitor-serving uses provide lodging to Pismo Beach's valued visitors that help support our downtown businesses. Key attributes:

- Primary area for hotels and resorts,
- Beach access and ocean views,
- Pedestrian promenade connecting parking, streets, and pier plaza areas,
- Extending promenade, both north and south,
- Hotel restaurants and semipublic spaces opening up to promenade, and
- Enhance Addie Street parking lot with landscaping and surfer amenities.

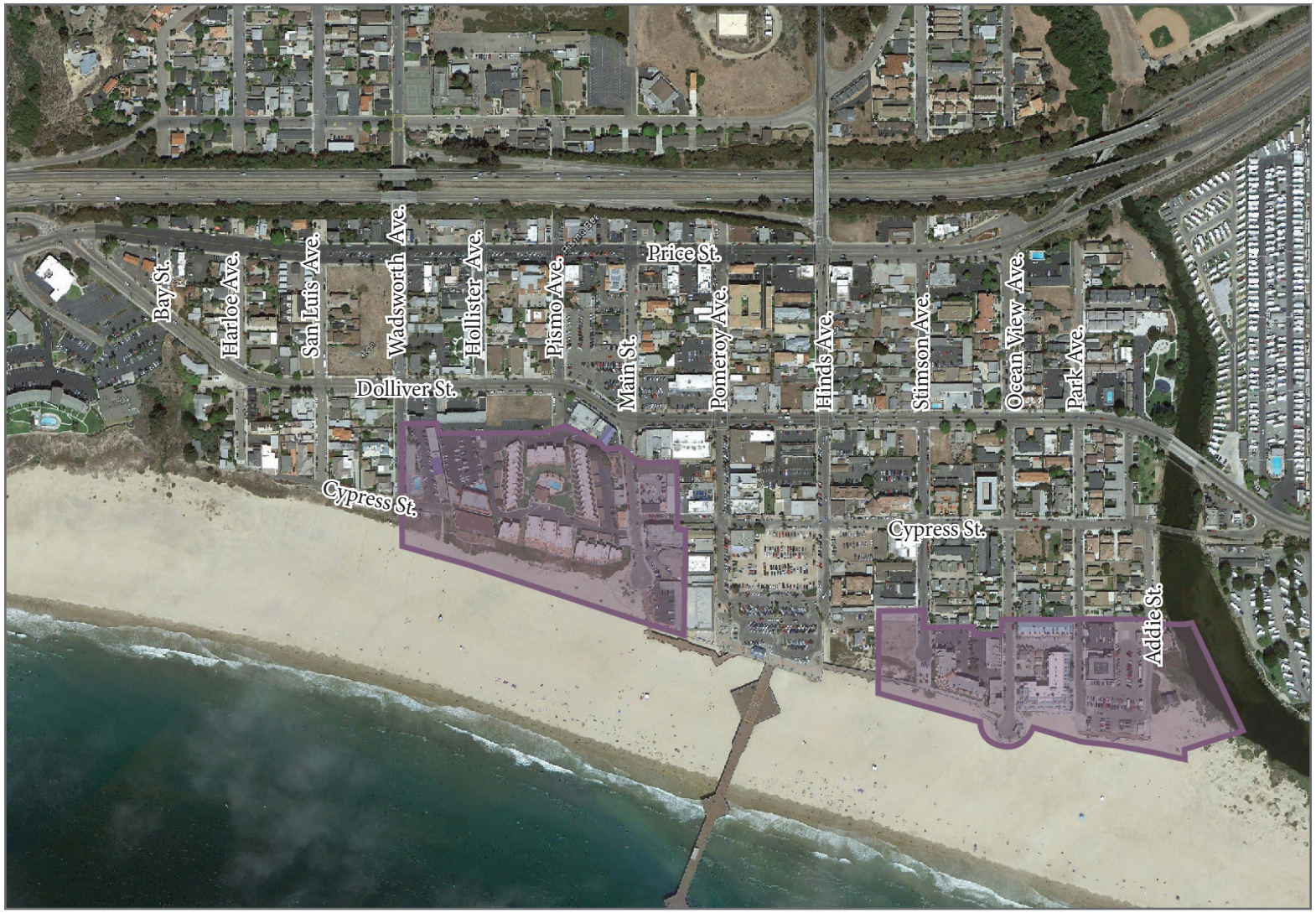


Figure 3.6 - ***Resort Sub-District Map***

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4 Built Environment

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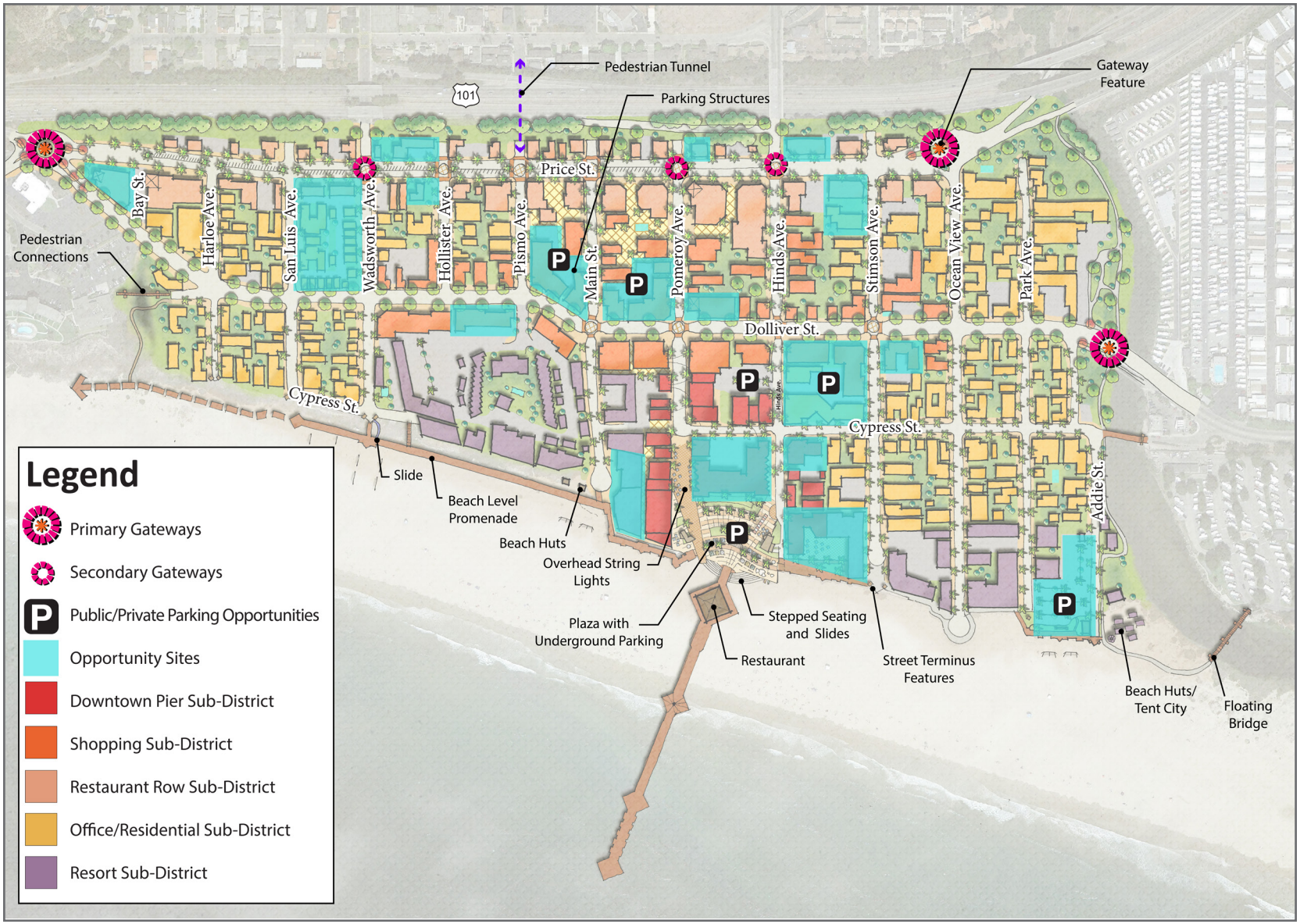


Figure 4.1 - ***Opportunity Sites Map***

4.1 Opportunity Sites

While the Downtown remains popular with both tourists and locals alike, new development opportunities will reinforce its continued success. Some sites in the Strategic Plan Area have the potential to affect the area as a whole and set the stage for further change. These have been identified in Figure 4.1 as opportunity sites. These opportunity sites exist in all of the Strategic Plan Area sub-districts as either vacant or underutilized parcels in key locations. A focus on appropriate development of opportunity sites will provide a catalyst for change that better serves the community.



Placemaking capitalizes on the Downtown's assets, history, and potential for the creation of a unique and nostalgic destination

4.2 Placemaking

The Strategic Plan recognizes the need for a holistic approach in evaluating changes that occur in the Downtown. Placemaking is an approach that capitalizes on the Downtown's assets, history, and potential for the creation of a unique and nostalgic destination.

4.2.1 Street Terminus Features

Many of the streets within the Strategic Plan Area terminate with views of the Pacific Ocean. Iconic structures can be used to frame these views, providing a visual connection to the beach, and helping to establish the overall sense of place. Structures should be designed to include an overlook and veranda with vertical elements that work in conjunction with the perspective looking down the street.



Vertical elements should work in conjunction with the perspective of the street to frame views



Embankment slides serve the dual role of providing a fun element and increasing beach access

4.2.2 Slides

With the elevation change from the plaza and streets to the beach, there is an opportunity for the placement of slides. Slides provide a whimsical element for play that serves a dual role by increasing beach access. Slides should be located next to steps to provide adequate access and viewing for parents and on-lookers. The two proposed locations for slides are at the Wadsworth Avenue/Cypress Street stairs to the beach at the volleyball courts, and at the pier plaza to the beach.



Community Entry Gateway Concept

4.2.3 Gateways

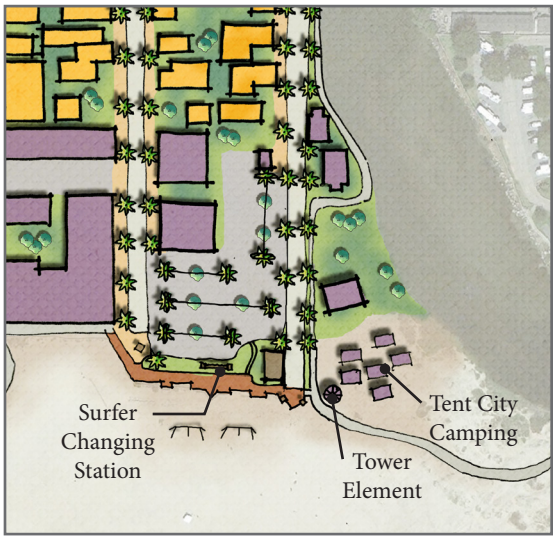
New gateways will be instrumental in providing a sense of arrival into the Downtown. Gateways announce entry in the Downtown and set the tone for improved streetscapes, wayfinding systems, and the overall character of the Downtown. The design of the gateway should include signage, landscaping, and lighting, and should evoke the "Classic California" character of Pismo Beach. Primary gateways should be placed at major entry points into the Downtown, including the intersection of US Highway 1 (Dolliver Street) and Price Street, the Price Street off-ramp from US Highway 101, and the US Highway 1 crossing at Pismo Creek. Secondary gateways should reinforce the theme of the primary gateways and should be located at key intersections along Price Street such as the intersection of Wadsworth Avenue, Pomeroy Avenue, and Hinds Avenue.

4.2.4 Addie Street Terminus

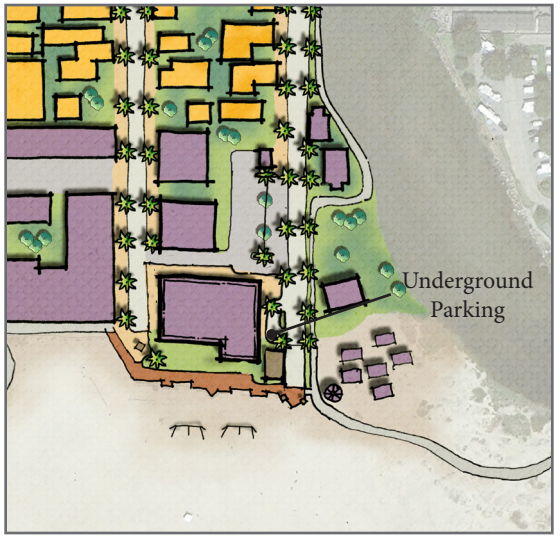
The Addie Street parking lot is in a unique and highly visible location. The southern end of the promenade also culminates at Addie Street. A vertical element or tower is envisioned to create a visual terminus to the southern end of the promenade. This tower element could be a viewing tower with stairs, a slide or a structure that would serve the Tent City camping near Addie Street. The tower and Tent City can provide additional tourist and visitor-serving amenities to this end of downtown. The tent city camping would be a series of tent structures that could be rented out for camping. Tent City reflects back on the historic "Tent City" structures used for overnight accommodations in the 1920s in Pismo Beach. The Strategic Plan suggests two options for the Addie Street parking lot:

- Option 1: This option enhances the parking area with palm trees, improved restroom buildings, and surfer changing stations.

- Option 2: This option reintroduces the historic plunge or pool back to Pismo Beach. Plunges were common in beach towns in the early 1900s and have been rebuilt in some communities. They can serve both the younger population with swim clubs, polo clubs, and recreational swimming as well as the senior population. The introduction of a plunge would require underground parking to serve the plunge and would most likely be a public/private partnership venture.



Option 1: Retain surface parking, enhance restroom buildings, and add surfer changing stations



Option 2: The redevelopment of the Addie Street terminus into a nostalgic plunge



New and improved pathway and paseo connections throughout the Downtown

4.2.5 Pathways and Paseos

A pathway network, consisting of alleys and paseos, helps create a sense of place and are a vital component of the pedestrian character of Pismo's Downtown. The Strategic Plan provides for improved connections to existing pathways, and new routes that provide mid-block pedestrian access throughout the Downtown. Pathways should incorporate decorative pavers, fountains, landscaping, public art, and other decorative features to help attract foot traffic and create a sense of place and human scale.They should also be appropriately illuminated for nocturnal visibility and safety.



Outdoor dining contributes to a lively and attractive atmosphere

4.2.6 Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining contributes to a lively and attractive atmosphere and should be encouraged throughout the Downtown. While many of the existing sidewalks in the Downtown remain narrow; sidewalk expansion can occur at intersections and underutilized parking spots to provide additional room for outdoor dining. Pathways and paseos are also appropriate for outdoor dining and can provide for a more intimate setting. A location where this might occur is on Cypress Street, between Main Street and Pomeroy Street. This leg of Cypress Street could be closed to through traffic and a portion of it could be enhanced as a paseo for outdoor dining.

4.2.7 Price Street to Beach Connections

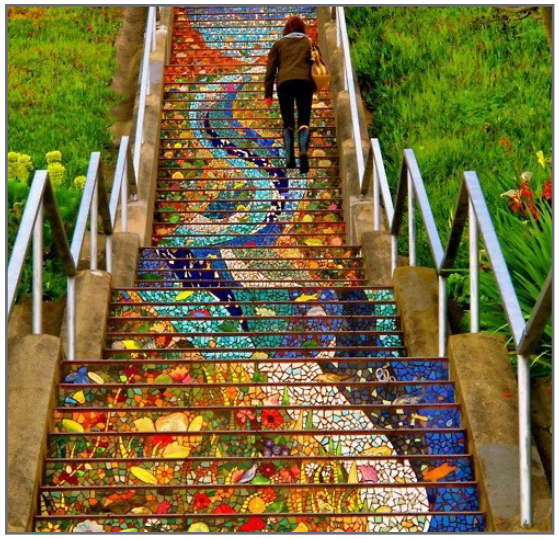
Improved connections from Price Street to the beach will help draw patrons through the Downtown to experience the great dining, shopping, and beach experience that Pismo has to offer. Elements that will contribute to the overall experience include street lighting, banner signs and hanging flower baskets on street lights, and sand-blasted footprints in the sidewalk. These whimsical elements increase the visual interest of the street and provide a strong visual link between the Restaurant Row, Shopping, and Downtown Pier District.



Sand-blasted concrete with footprints could provide an inexpensive and whimsical connection between Price Street and the beach



Banner signs can provide visual interest on the street



Public art should represent the character and identity of the community



Artistic bike racks provide public art and are functionally usable

4.2.8 Public Art

Public art should represent the character and identity of the community, and helps to foster a sense of pride and responsibility in public spaces. Public art should reflect the character of Downtown Pismo Beach, and should be placed in prominent locations or gathering spaces where it is accessible to the public. Public art can be expressed though paving, mosaics, sculptures, street furniture, bike racks, and signage. The City should consider the adoption of a public art program to help implement and select public art pieces.

4.3 Accessibility

The Strategic Plan seeks to provide an environment that is accessible to all persons. By helping to implement the Pismo Beach Complete Streets Plan, the Strategic Plan encourages accessibility for all modes of transit equally, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motor vehicles, and transit. The Strategic Plan also encourages accessibility compliance, with treatments such as a new ramp leading from the pier/plaza to the beach. Any existing deficiencies should be addressed, and all improvements within the Downtown should seek to serve the disabled population.

4.4 Beach Access

The Strategic Plan also plans for increased access to the coast through the promenade extension, plaza redesign, and slide features. Any future improvements should also plan for accessibility to the coast.

5 Pier Plaza and Pier



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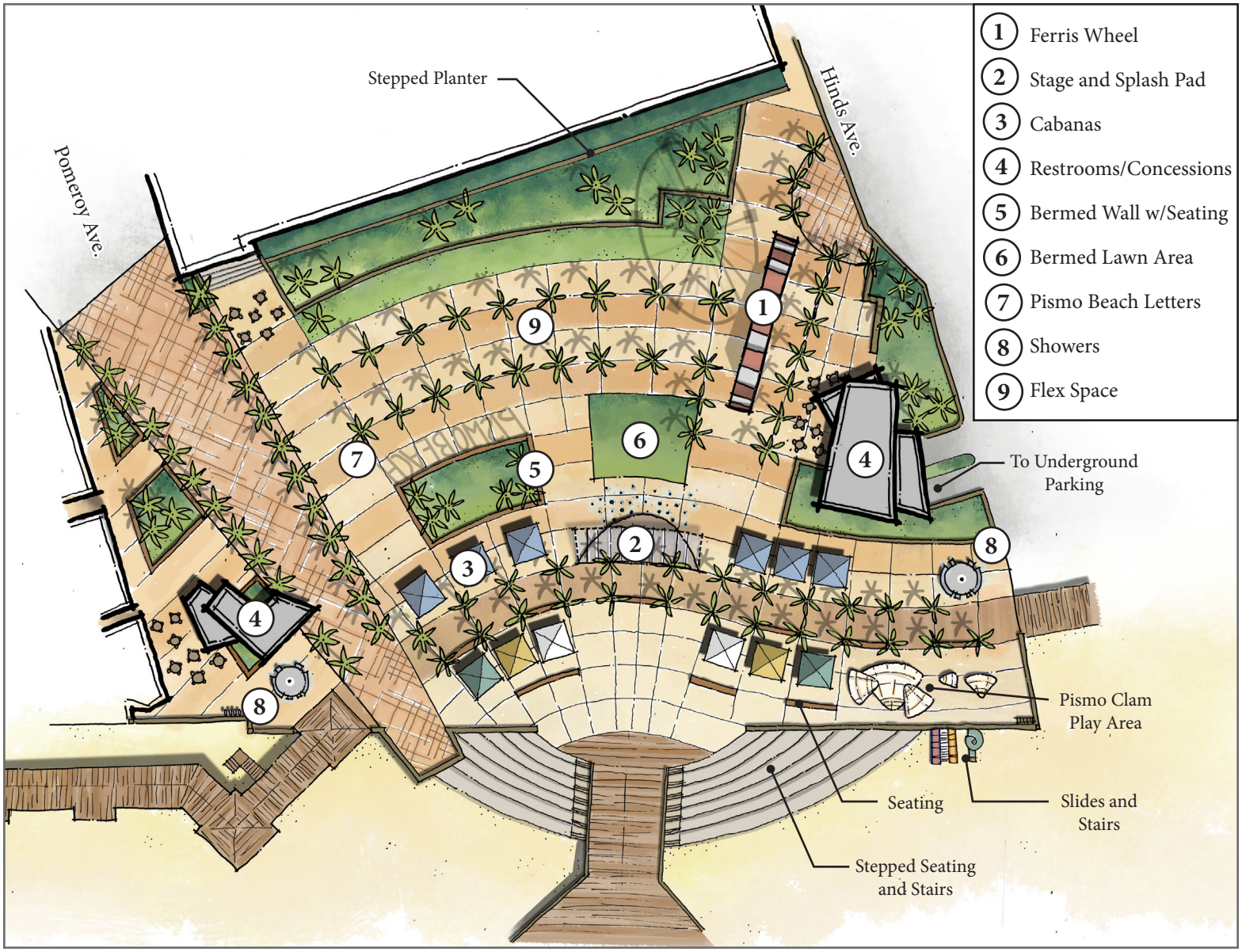


Figure 5.1 - ***Pier Plaza Long-Term Vision Perspective***

5.1 Pier Plaza Long-Term Vision

The long-term vision for the pier plaza helps to realize the full potential of the site by undergrounding all parking beneath the plaza and turning Pomeroy Avenue into a pedestrian street from Cypress Street to the pier plaza. The entirety of the plaza is used as a year-round public space for recreation, entertainment, and leisure. Vehicular access to the underground parking is provided from Hinds Avenue, and internal pedestrian stairways are provided on each end of the plaza adjacent to the restrooms. Emergency vehicle access is provided to the pier from Pomeroy Avenue, and to the beach from Hinds Avenue.

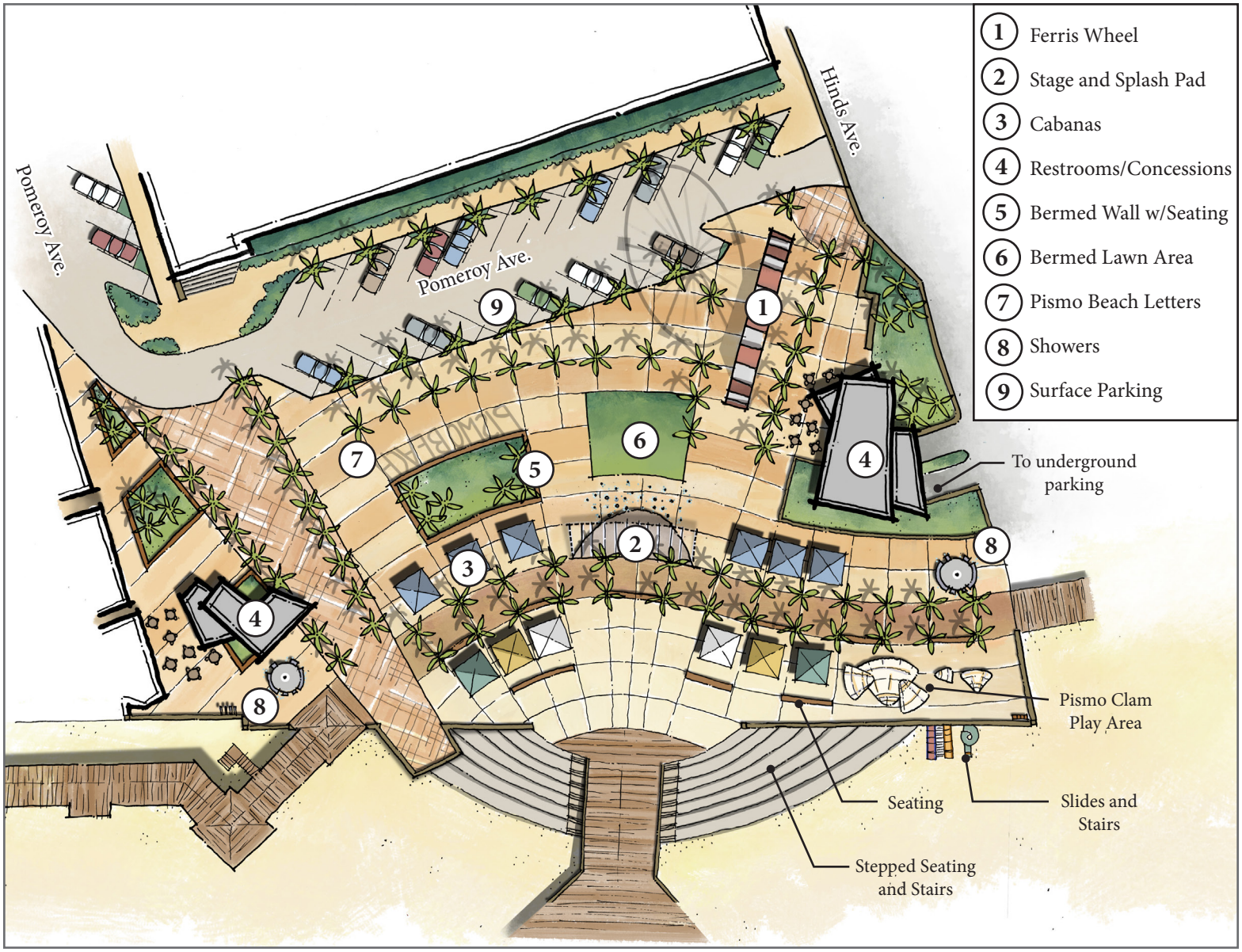


Figure 5.2 - ***Pier Plaza Interim Option Perspective***

5.2 Pier Plaza Interim Option

The interim option for the pier plaza recognizes the long-term vision as a multi-part undertaking, and helps to implement the community's vision for the site in the more immediate future. The interim option keeps Pomeroy Avenue open to one-way traffic towards the beach, and connects through to Hinds Avenue. A main street character with diagonal parking, sidewalks, and palm trees would be created along the inland side of the plaza. This option would need to be combined with additional parking opportunities, such as a parking structure at the corner of Main Street and Dolliver Street and/or underground parking below the plaza. Drop-off points would be integrated at the ends of Pomeroy Street and Hinds Avenue. Emergency and maintenance vehicles access would be designed into the plaza.



New beach access will be incorporated from the pier plaza view stairs and slides



A large public space should be integrated into the overall design of the plaza

5.3 Plaza Features

The public expressed specific desires for the pier plaza during the community outreach process. These desires are expressed as key plaza features that should be incorporated into the pier plaza interim option and/or long-term vision.

5.3.1 Beach Access

Today, only two narrow stairways connect the beach to the pier plaza area. The pier plaza vision provides for greatly increased beach access via new stepped seating and slides. The stepped seating is envisioned on the north side of the pier as a seating area where people can enjoy majestic views of the northern coast. The stepped seating on the south side provides views of the beach with the Pismo Dunes as a backdrop. The slides provide a whimsical element for play that serves a dual role by increasing beach access.

5.3.2 Flex Space

A large public space should be integrated into the overall design of the plaza. The pier plaza vision imagines a flex-space that can serve as amphitheater and event area. Programming for the flex space could include seasonal and holiday events, a farmer's market, specialty events such as car shows, and concerts. The pier/plaza vision includes a raised stage to provide increased visibility for performances. A splash pad fountain can be integrated into the flex space. It can be a splash pad for children on hot days, but turned off to create an amphitheater setting for events.

5.3.3 Monument Letters

The pier plaza is envisioned as a completely unique and matchless place. Iconic elements, such as monument letters, will be key to this vision. The monument letters would read "Pismo Beach" and would be constructed to allow people to sit, climb, and interact with them.



Example of monument letters that allow people to sit, climb, and interact

5.3.4 Ferris Wheel

A particularly well-liked idea from the community outreach process was the addition of a Ferris wheel at the pier plaza similar to the original Ferris wheel from the 1890s. This would serve as a fun and nostalgic feature that would attract visitors traveling on the 101 freeway and it would be an iconic feature for Pismo Beach. The Ferris wheel would draw families to the Downtown during the day and at night, while providing a safe atmosphere with more lighting and additional eyes on the plaza. Riders on the Ferris wheel would experience the Downtown from a completely unique perspective and experience unmatched views of the pier, beach, and ocean.



Pismo Beach Ferris Wheel and Wharf 1894, Courtesy of the Effie McDermott Archives

5.3.5 Temporary or Permanent Cabanas

Temporary or Permanent Cabanas could be leased out for events, art shows, or small vendors like someone snow cones. These structures could also serve as an additional outpost for local Downtown businesses.



Splash are a draw for families and help people cool off on hot days



The pier plaza should provide showers and restrooms near beach access locations

5.3.6 Splash Pad

A splash pad should be provided for public water play and should be featured in a central place in the pier plaza to allow for multiple points of access and viewing. This feature would draw families to the pier plaza and help people cool off on hot days. The water could also be shut off to transform the plaza into an event venue.

5.3.7 Showers and Restrooms

Showers and restrooms are essential for providing comfort and convenience. The pier plaza vision provides showers near beach access locations and restrooms situated at either end of the plaza so as not to obstruct views.

5.3.8 Landscaping and Trees

Landscaping should be seamlessly integrated into the pier plaza. Drought tolerant species are appropriate for the beach environment, and will greatly reduce the plaza's water and maintenance needs. Community members expressed the desire for some turf or landscaped areas, which could be raised and mounded to avoid pedestrian traffic and excessive maintenance, and would instead serve as sitting, picnicking, and viewing areas. Palm tree species evoke a California beach experience and should be used throughout the pier plaza to minimize blocked views. Attractive and low maintenance hardscape treatments, such as pavers and concrete, should also be incorporated into the overall design of the pier plaza.

5.4 Pier Improvements

With its unparalleled location and iconic design, the Pismo Pier is one of the Central Coast's major tourist draws. This Strategic Plan capitalizes on this asset by enhancing the existing structure with targeted improvements. During the community outreach process, the public expressed specific improvements that they desired. These desires are articulated as key pier features that should be incorporated with the pier plaza development.

5.4.1 Pier Lighting

Soft lighting should silhouette the pier, accenting its unique diamond design, and contributing to nocturnal ambiance. These silhouette lights could illuminate with the movement of the tides, providing a harmonious experience in the Downtown. Vertical lighting could be integrated into the second pier diamond to provide an after dark focal point from Pomeroy Avenue.

5.4.2 Pier Diamond Structure

The late 1980s and early 1990s Urban Waterfront Master Plan envisioned a large structure containing the first pier diamond. The long-term vision of this Strategic Plan conceptualizes a similar, but more minor structure at the first pier diamond. The structure could accommodate an iconic restaurant or several outposts for existing downtown businesses. Through-ways would be provided for pedestrian and emergency access.

5.4.3 Vending

The interim option for the first pier diamond envisions it as a space for food vendors. These vendors could be housed in nostalgic airstream trailers, for example, and serve as an additional outpost for existing downtown businesses.



Perspective sketch of the 1980s-1990s Urban Waterfront Master Plan pier diamond structure



Pier vendors could be housed in nostalgic airstream trailers



Emergency vehicle access should be provided to the pier and pier plaza at Pomeroy Avenue



Existing emergency vehicle access at Main Street

5.5 Public Safety

Emergency vehicle access is maintained throughout the Strategic Plan Area, and continued access to the beach is provided at Main Street, Hinds Avenue, and Park Avenue. Additional emergency vehicle access should be provided to the pier and pier plaza at Pomeroy Avenue. New development on the pier and pier plaza should provide access for emergency vehicles.

6 Circulation and Parking

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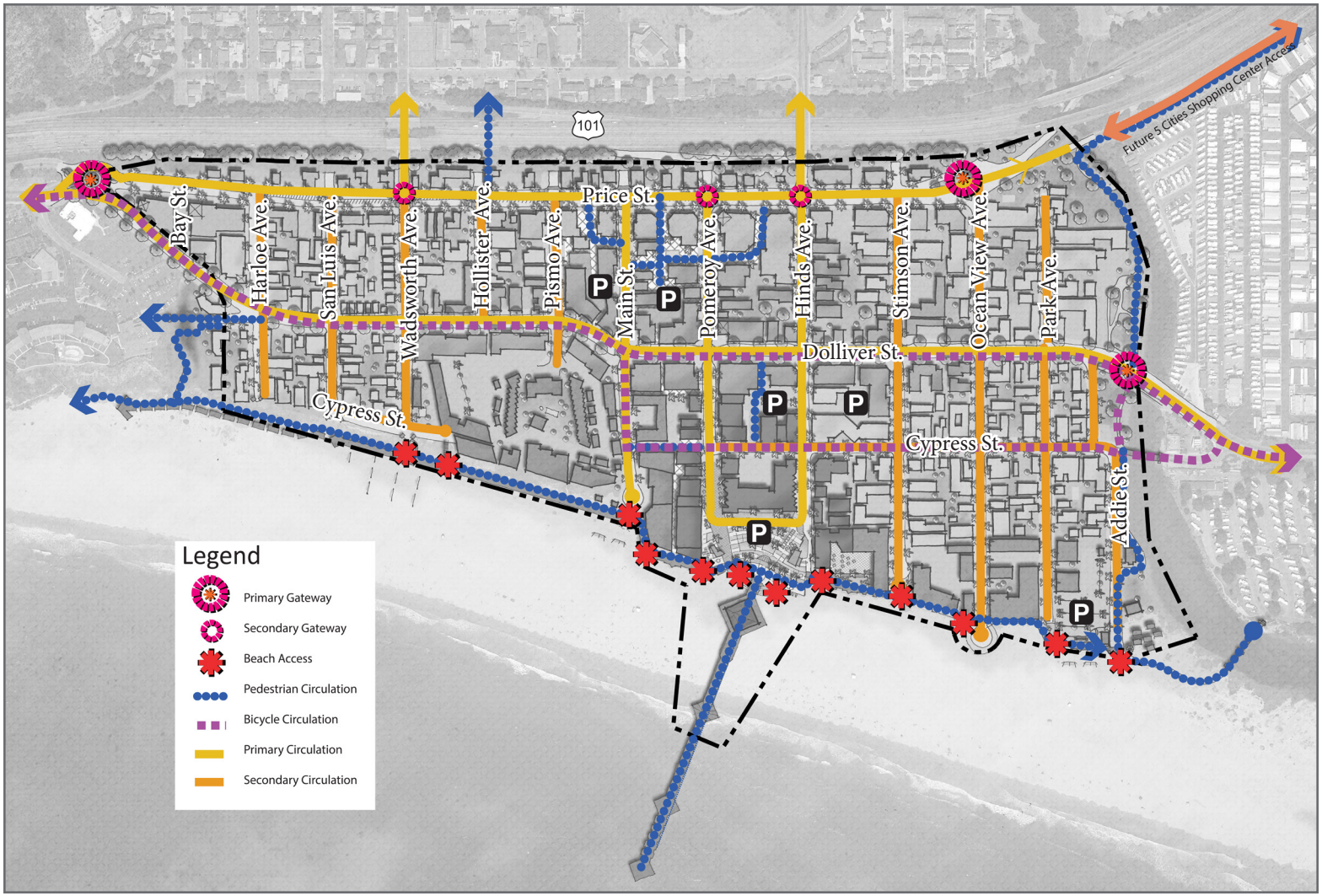


Figure 6.1 - ***Circulation Concept Map***

6.1 Circulation Concepts

The Downtown should improve circulation by relying on a variety of transportation modes, such as transit, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle. The Strategic Plan recognizes existing multimodal efforts, such as the Pismo Beach Complete Streets Plan, by continuing to connect streets and paths for improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront and downtown neighborhoods. Providing safe and convenient options to bike, walk, and shuttle to the Downtown will reduce the need for automobiles and will relieve traffic and parking congestion. The Strategic Plan encourages improvements that will support this concept as well as parking and signage improvements, which will help with circulation. The Strategic Plan also suggests additional parking opportunities to improve access to businesses and minimize negative impacts to ocean views.

Figure 6.1 reflects the key circulation concepts of the Strategic Plan, including primary and secondary circulation routes, parking areas, the bike route on Dolliver Street, bike boulevard on Cypress Street, interior bicycle and pedestrian connections, and the extensions of the promenade.



New bike routes will help to relieve traffic and congestion in the Downtown



Bike and pedestrian improvements can enhance safety within the Downtown

6.2 Pedestrian and Bike Circulation

The size and scale of the Downtown make it an excellent place to bike and walk. Specific improvements that can enhance the safety and experience of pedestrians and bicyclists include the provision of a bike boulevard on Cypress Street, the conversion of the bridge at Pismo Creek on Cypress Street to a pedestrian and bike-only crossing, and the extensions of the promenade. Additionally, the intensification of development in the Downtown presents an opportunity to both enhance the existing paseo system and encourage new paseo expansion. Stronger pedestrian and bike connections to the hotels north of Downtown will encourage visitors to bike and walk, reducing traffic congestion and parking demands.



A bike boulevard can include strategies such as directional "chevrons" and signage

6.2.1 Bike Boulevard

A bike boulevard is a low-speed street, which has been optimized for bicycle traffic with strategies such as directional "chevrons" and improved signage. Vehicles are allowed to travel on this roadway; however, it is primarily used by local traffic only. The proposed bike boulevard on Cypress Street will extend the entire length of the street, from Main Street to Highway 101 just outside of the Strategic Plan Area. The bike boulevard will lower speeds and give priority to bicyclists, improving circulation and bicyclist comfort and safety.

6.2.2 Pedestrian and Bike Bridge

The proposed pedestrian and bike crossing re-envisions the existing bridge at Pismo Creek on Cypress Street. The bridge is currently underutilized by vehicular through traffic, and the pedestrian and bike-only crossing works in concert with the Cypress Street Bike Boulevard in creating improved connections, comfort, and safety. The bridge will increase pedestrian and bike accessibility from the local neighborhoods and recreational vehicle parks directly to the south of the Strategic Plan Area. Small electric vehicles such as golf carts may also be allowed on the bridge.



A bike and pedestrian bridge would increase accessibility to the Downtown from local neighborhoods

6.2.3 Promenade Extensions

The existing Pismo Beach promenade extends from the terminus of Main Street on the northern end to the terminus of Addie Street on the southern end. A new promenade extension to the north will help connect the neighborhoods and hotels to the north with the Downtown. This extension would be lower to minimize the blocking of views. Existing stairs to and from the beach, at hotels and streets such as Wilmar Avenue, should connect to the extended promenade.



New promenade extensions will help provide coastal access and new pedestrian routes



Example of a bike share system

6.2.4 Bike Share

A bike share is a system whereby bicycles are made available for shared use on a short-term basis. Bike shares would be well-suited to the Downtown, and could encourage residents and visitors to use bikes as an alternative mode of accessing the Downtown. This would have positive environmental benefits, free additional parking spots, and provide a fun way to travel to and from the Downtown.



Example of a shuttle that could be used to transport people to and from the Downtown

6.2.5 Shuttle Program

A shuttle program could be used to transport people to and from the Downtown and satellite parking areas. Potential areas for satellite parking include sites east of the 101 Freeway and to the north and south of Downtown. The pedestrian/bike bridge at Pismo Creek could serve as a potential drop-off location and could encourage the pedestrian orientation of the Downtown.

6.3 Streetscape

Streetscape improvements and public amenities create a unique and inviting atmosphere, while providing a consistent and cohesive theme that will unify and highlight the distinctive character of the Downtown.

6.3.1 Price Street

As a primary entry to Pismo Downtown, Price Street should be prioritized for streetscape improvements. The diagonal parking median is popular with the residents and businesses. This median can be easily enhanced by the addition of permanent landscaped planters and trees framing the diagonal parking in the center of the street. Palm trees should be planted in planters around the diagonal parking, and along sidewalks, to enrich the streetscape while ensuring that views are maintained. Trees should be lighted with string lights, creating an inviting atmosphere for the Restaurant Row Sub-district.



Price Street improvements





Figure 6.2 - ***Price Street before improvements...***

...and after improvements



Example of crosswalks with enhanced paving

6.3.2 Dolliver Street/Highway 1

As a primary corridor though downtown connecting Downtown with the Shell Beach hotels to the north and the residents and recreational vehicle parks to the south, Dolliver is also a priority for streetscape enhancement. Streetscape improvements for this important thoroughfare should include street trees, wider sidewalks where feasible, and intersection enhancements at Main Street, Pomeroy Avenue, Hinds Avenue, and Stimson Avenue. Intersection enhancements include bulb-outs/extended sidewalks with landscaping, street lights, and crosswalks with special paving.

6.3.3 Main Street, Pomeroy Avenue, and Hinds Avenue

These three streets provide a direct link from Price Street Restaurant Row through the Downtown, to the pier and beach. Streetscape improvements should include banners and/or flower baskets on street lights, sand-blasted patterns in the pavement leading to the pier, landscaped planters at intersections, and sidewalk widening where feasible.

6.4 Parking Concepts

Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, which promotes pedestrian and bike-friendly streetscapes and development will cause a gradual transition to a "park-once/walk-many" environment. Parking supply should be ample and balanced; however, it should not overshadow the creation of a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown.

With limited land resources and the additional costs typically associated with infill development, provision of on-site parking is often financially challenging. One of the vision principles of this Strategic Plan is to provide safe and efficient parking opportunities to improve access to businesses, minimize negative impacts to ocean views, and complement public spaces. Strategies such as public/private partnership opportunities, structured parking, and in-lieu fee incentives will help achieve this vision and should ease the financial burden that parking places on new development. Figure 6.3 shows the location of strategic parking areas as well as the parking garages, outlined in blue.

In-lieu fees should not discourage upgrades to existing buildings due to their cost. The City should evaluate existing in-lieu fees and determine if they are discouraging property owners from doing improvements to their buildings. If so, they should be modified.

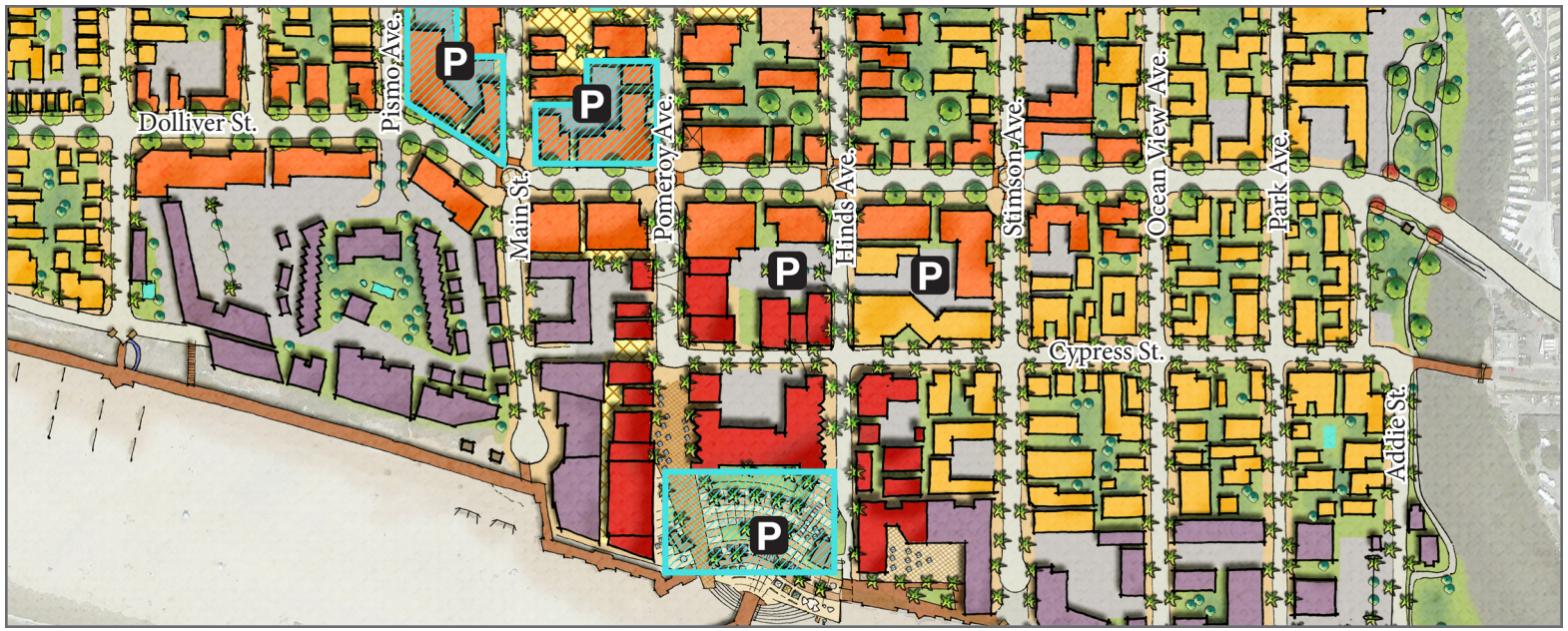


Figure 6.3 - ***Strategic Parking Areas***

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7 Implementation

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Downtown Pismo looking south on Pomeroy Avenue

7.1 Implementation

The Strategic Plan identifies many opportunities for public improvements and recommendations for land uses. Implementation of the Strategic Plan is critical to carry out the community's vision.

7.2 Financing

Among other public improvements, the Strategic Plan identifies streetscape, landscaping, parking, public art, and public plaza improvements to enhance the appearance and function of the Downtown. The City should budget for the recommended improvements and should consider a variety of funding sources to finance them, including, but not limited to: assessment districts, development impact fees, developer exactions through the development agreement process, public/private partnerships, revenue bonds, general fund debt obligations, and Federal, State and Regional Grant programs. Another method of financing is to provide incentives in the form of exceptions to development standards for future private development projects in exchange for including improvements that benefit the City or exceed minimum building code standards such as energy efficiencies.

7.3 Capital Improvement Program and Budgeting

The cost of capital improvements identified in the Strategic Plan and the maintenance of these improvements should be included in the City's Capital Improvement Program and utilized for development of a financing plan noted in Section 7.2. These tools will be used as a part of the City Council's development of the City's budget.



Wayfinding signage Concept

7.4 Strategic Plan Administration

The Strategic Plan serves as a vision for the Pismo Beach Downtown area. Where the Strategic Plan is silent, the City's Local Coastal Program, Zoning Regulations, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Beach Access Plan, or Complete Streets Plan shall prevail. The City will work with existing property and business owners in the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

7.5 Amendments

Over time, sections of the Strategic Plan may need to be revised to correspond to then current conditions. Amendments to the Strategic Plan may be authorized by the City Council.

7.6 Implementation Enhancement Opportunities

Implementation will include both City and private investment. The Strategic Plan paints a vision to guide these future investments. There are a number of projects and programs that the City can implement to execute the vision for Downtown Pismo. Some of these items will take further study and design, while others can be implemented immediately. The City should appropriate funds in its budget for cost of enhancement projects and the maintenance of these enhancements.

Short-term downtown enhancement opportunities:

1. Gateway signs
2. Wayfinding and parking signs
3. Banners/hanging flower baskets
4. Overhead string lights in Pier Sub-District
5. Parking incentive program (i.e. in-lieu fees adjustment)

6. Downtown circulation study
7. Price Street median and intersection enhancements
8. Bike share program
9. Selection and installation of bicycle racks, reflective of public art
10. Pilot project closure of a portion of Cypress Street between Pomeroy Avenue and Main Street for outdoor gathering and dining with temporary overhead string lights and seating.
11. Public art program completion and implementation
12. Beautification of existing parking lots
13. Improve and maintain sidewalks in downtown
14. New trash cans

Longer term downtown enhancement opportunities include:

1. Shuttle program
2. Pier Plaza design refinement
3. Pier plaza implementation
4. Dolliver/Main Street parking structure
5. Streetscape enhancements
6. Street terminus features
7. Sand-blast sidewalks with footprints connecting Price Street to Pier
8. Boardwalk extensions
9. Embankment slide near volleyball courts (Wadsworth Avenue/ Cypress Street)
10. Bike boulevard on Cypress Street
11. Pedestrian and bike bridge enhancements (at Cypress Street)
12. Parking lot and surfer station enhancements at Addie Street
13. Pier lighting, silhouetting the pier
14. Restaurant on the pier

There are additional steps that can be taken to implement the regulatory framework and guide future development of the key opportunity sites listed in the Strategic Plan. These can include zoning overlay areas, General Plan amendments, or a Downtown Specific Plan.

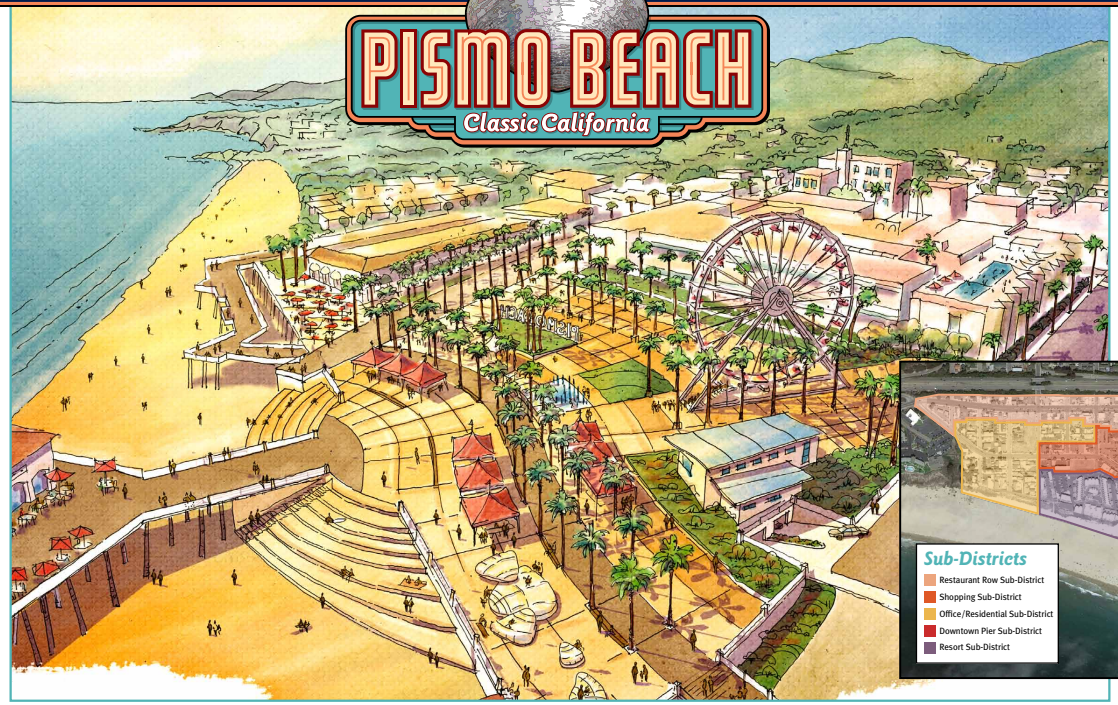


Pismo Beach Downtown Vision Plan

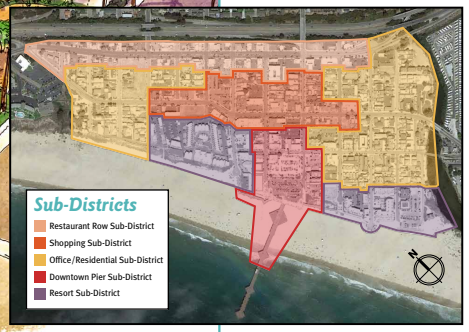
Downtown Pismo Beach

is a classic California beach town. Downtown Pismo's vibrant energy will continue as an attractive and accessible destination for families of all ages and incomes to stay, play, and relax. We are committed to an economically prosperous and friendly downtown experience as we:

- Create a new downtown focal point with a multi-use area at the base of the pier that will be a year-round destination for residents and visitors
- Use nostalgic development and program elements to support a welcoming environment for visitors and guests, including enhanced downtown gateways and pedestrian-friendly connections
- Provide safe and efficient parking opportunities to improve access to businesses, minimize negative impacts to ocean views, and complement public spaces
- Continue efforts to connect streets and paths for improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront and downtown neighborhoods
- Improve the streetscape for enhanced street life with outdoor dining, lighting, landscaping, signage, and public art
- Extend the promenade and expand the pier uses to maximize recreation opportunities, improved coastal access, and community connectivity
- Create opportunities for new dining, shopping, lodging, recreation, and living opportunities for a broad range of tastes and incomes
- Minimize traffic and congestion with improved transit and alternative forms of transportation
- Increase downtown's economic viability with policies and incentives for year-round business opportunities.



While the Strategic Plan looks at the area as a unified whole, several "sub-districts" were identified during the planning process as having distinct cultural and economic attributes and land use commonalities. General Plan polices and zoning designations should be updated to reflect the community-based vision and principal uses identified in these sub-districts.



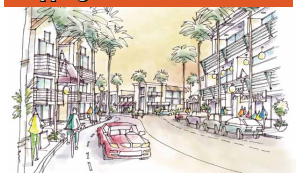
Restaurant Row Sub-District



An active dining district, focused on dining opportunities that serve both locals and visitors.

- Cafes, wine bars, and restaurants with outdoor dining options
- Streets lined with trees
- String lighting in trees
- Enhanced diagonal parking with planters and street trees
- Enhanced intersections with bulb-outs, accent paving, crosswalks, and landscaping
- Street signage that welcomes visitors to Pismo Beach and directs people to the pier and parking areas
- Extend diagonal parking north along Price Street
- Gateway & directional signage

Shopping Sub-District



A vibrant shopping neighborhood that provides a variety of visitor and local shopping opportunities.

- Shops that line the streets and sidewalks
- Street scene with street furniture, banners, and lighting, that provide strong connection from Price Street to the pier and beach
- Paseos and sidewalks connecting to neighboring districts and parking
- Parking structure with retail on ground floor along Dolliver Street
- Intersection enhancements along Dolliver Street at Main Street, Pomeroy Avenue, and Hinds Avenue

Office/Residential Sub-District



A mix of residential and office uses that support the surrounding downtown core.

- Offices and service uses such as financial, legal, medical and dental offices
- Opportunity for new office uses such as high tech
- Residential that adds vibrancy to downtown with "eyes on the street" in the evenings and will continue to contribute to downtown businesses
- Residential-serving uses such as a pharmacy, dry cleaners, or corner market
- Small visitor-serving lodging such as bed and breakfasts or small inns

Downtown Pier Sub-District



Envisioned as the focal point of the downtown that provides visitors with year-round, multi-use gathering destinations.

- Primary retail and entertainment destination for Downtown
- High-quality shopping, dining and entertainment activities
- Green space, enhanced landscaping, and plaza space
- Enhanced streetscapes with street trees, benches, and streetlights
- Year-round destination that serves visitors and Pismo Beach residents
- Strong connections to the beach, pier, and promenade
- Pier improvements with restaurant use
- Downtown focal point with multi-use area
- Opportunities for outdoor dining on paseos, sidewalks, and plaza
- Redevelopment of underutilized parcels to frame and activate the pier plaza
- Create a family-oriented atmosphere
- Hotel development on upper floors of buildings as a conditional use
- Mixed-use development with residential units on upper floors

Resort Sub-District



Located along the beach front and anchors either end of the Pier Sub-District with hotel and resort uses. These visitor-serving uses provide lodging to Pismo Beach's valued visitors that help support our downtown businesses.

- Primary area for hotels and resorts
- Beach access and ocean views
- Pedestrian promenade connecting parking, streets, and pier plaza areas
- Extending promenade, both north and south
- Hotel restaurants and semipublic spaces opening up to promenade
- Enhance Addie Street parking lot with landscaping and surfer amenities

rrm design group
PIERRE RADEMAKER DESIGN

Pismo Beach Downtown Vision Plan