Land Use Element

Vision

When people ask us why we live in Manhattan Beach, we tell them about the many features that make our community unique and that contribute to the high quality of living the City offers. We talk about the low crime rate and sense of safety, the spectacular beach and ocean vistas, the small-town feel with friendly residents and diverse neighborhoods, the walkstreets that provide easy access to the Strand and the beach, the quality City services, and the aesthetic character of our residential neighborhoods and Downtown. Our residents and our City have committed resources and energy to maintain this vibrant community as a highly desirable place to live, work, and play.

As we look to the future, we envision Manhattan Beach continuing to be a community of high quality, both functionally and visually. We see distinctive residential neighborhoods that accommodate the varied needs of our diverse residents. Our vibrant Downtown enhances the small-town character and caters to both residents and visitors. Commercial districts meet our shopping needs and provide employment. In addition, certain commercial districts provide opportunities for mixed-use development, including multifamily residential. Open space is well landscaped and maintained, and offers a range of recreational opportunities. We envision a place where new uses blend with established development. We envision Manhattan Beach where quality development remains a high priority.

The residential character of neighborhoods creates a small-town atmosphere.

Consistent with this vision, City leaders will continue to take land use actions that maintain and promote Manhattan Beach as a truly distinctive town within the metropolitan Los Angeles area. Responding to the desire of our residents, this Land Use Element contains goals and policies that will help attain a balanced land use pattern, manage growth, and achieve a sustainable and high-quality community.

Manhattan Beach — A Chronology

Manhattan Beach today is a desirable community for many. Its history began back in 1872 when Colonel Blanton Duncan built the first house at First Street and Sepulveda Boulevard and became the first resident of the area.[1]

Despite Manhattan Beach's urbanized character today, the City has an agrarian history. Manhattan Beach was part of Rancho Sausal Redondo ("Round Clump of Willows"), a land grant from Mexico consisting of 22,500 acres given to Antonio Ygnacio Avila in 1837. The Rancho was later sold to Sir Robert Burnett from Scotland for sheep and cattle raising. In 1873, Burnett leased the land to Daniel Freeman, who increased the stock and planted citrus trees. However, the 1875 drought weakened the livestock industry, and Freeman turned to dry farming. While Freeman purchased the land from Burnett in the 1880s, financial difficulties forced Freeman to sell off the land, and real estate development followed.

Manhattan Beach got its name by the flip of a coin. In the early 1900s, the larger developers in the area – George Peck and John Merrill -- agreed that only one name should be given to the area. George Peck, who owned the northern section of the area, was calling his area Shore Acres, after a Santa Fe junction sign. John Merrill, who was laying out the southern section, was calling his area Manhattan after his hometown in New York. A half-dollar coin was flipped and "Manhattan" became the name of the area. The railroad changed the junction name to Manhattan in 1902 presumably to coincide with the area name change.

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[1] This history of Manhattan Beach has been compiled from excerpts from the Manhattan Beach Historical Society; *A Walk Beside the Sea* by Jan Dennis, 1987; *I'll Take Manhattan, A Pictorial History* by Bonnie Beckerson, 2000; and *Manhattan Beach 90266, A Pictorial History* by the Manhattan Beach Historical Society, 1995. The City appreciates the works local residents have pursued to document and memorialize the foundations of our community.

With the introduction of "modern" transportation, development followed and the character of the area changed. In 1888, the Santa Fe Railroad laid tracks from Los Angeles to the Redondo Beach wharf, passing through the area now known as Manhattan Beach. Santa Fe terminated its passenger service in 1918, failing to compete with Red Car (Pacific Electric) passenger rates. In 1903, the Pacific Railway Company (later merged with the Pacific Electric in 1910) installed a track along the oceanfront extending from Los Angeles to Santa Monica and then south to Redondo Beach, passing through Manhattan Beach. The electric trolley had five stops in Manhattan Beach, including one at Marine Avenue.

See the Circulation Plan of the Infrastructure Element for the Transportation History in Manhattan Beach.

In 1908, the Peck's Pier and Pavilion were built as a real estate promotional attraction at 33rd Street for dances, parties, picnics, and roller-skating. The wooden pier was destroyed in 1913 by a storm, and the pavilion was demolished in the 1920s due to timber rot.

Initially, housing construction was minimal. As each year passed, construction activities increased. Almost all of the early buildings were small wooden beach cottages. Families would come from Pasadena and other parts of Los Angeles on the trolley or the Santa Fe train. Manhattan Beach was promoted as a place to vacation; few stayed year-round. As the community grew, the first church in Manhattan Beach, the Community Church, was established in 1905. At the time of the City's incorporation on December 7, 1912, the permanent residential population was estimated at 500 to 600 people.

Although the City incorporated as Manhattan Beach, the full name was not registered with the Washington, D.C. Postal Service until the Postmaster changed the name to Manhattan Beach on March 1, 1927 to avoid confusion with the 14 other Manhattans in the country at that time.

The first City Hall was located on Center Street (now Manhattan Beach Boulevard) between the Strand and Manhattan Avenue. The City Hall was relocated in 1914 but moved to its current location at 15th Avenue and Highland Avenue in 1916. City Hall was condemned in 1971 after the San Fernando earthquake. The present City Hall building was constructed on the same site in 1975.

Manhattan Beach is built on sand. In the early days, the dunes were a major problem. Some were 50 feet to 70 feet high and difficult to level.   In the late 1920s, the Kuhn Brothers Construction Company supplied Waikiki Beach with Manhattan Beach sand.   This practice continued for almost ten years. Today, sand dunes are still obvious in the north end of Manhattan Beach where Sand Dune Park is located.

Choosing the Downtown for Manhattan Beach was not without controversy. The street to have the pier was regarded as the street at the center of business. While Center Street had been

Many of the first buildings in Manhattan Beach were built on sand. Today, evidence of sand can be seen on vacant properties and Sand Dune Park.

See Figure Int-2 in the Introduction of this General Plan for population growth history in Manhattan Beach.

considered the center since it had the first buildings, some developers wanted to name Marine Avenue (22nd Street before it was renamed) the Downtown, as it was the geographic center of the City. In 1918, the Marine Pavilion was constructed on the north end of Manhattan Beach as a compromise for those who wanted the City Pier and Downtown to be located at Marine Avenue. The new City Pier was dedicated at Center Street in 1920, and Center Street became the center of Downtown. The Marine Avenue Pavilion was destroyed by fire in 1941.

The 1940s and 1950s were Manhattan Beach's growth period. Population in the City increased dramatically from 6,393 in 1940 to 33,934 in 1960. The 400-home Liberty Village bounded by Redondo Avenue, Aviation Boulevard, Marine Avenue, and Manhattan Beach Boulevard broke City building permit records and became the biggest housing tract in town.

As the City continued to grow, annexation became inevitable. The 30-acre El Porto area was annexed from Los Angeles County to the City in November of 1980, and El Porto transferred from the El Segundo School District to the Manhattan Beach School District.

The Metlox Potteries Company was established in 1927 at 1200 North Morningside Drive. The Metlox Company began its operation with the manufacturing of ceramic and neon tube signs, including the marquee for the Pantages Theatre built in 1928. Later productions included artware, dinnerware, and Disney figurines. The 1950s and 1960s represented the peak of Metlox business activities. Business declined in the 1970s due to foreign imports and closed in 1989. Today, Metlox represents one of the few remaining property with significant development potential in the City. A commercial development and public parking facility currently under construction is transforming the site into a key Downtown location. Adjacent to the site, a new Fire and Police facility within the Civic Center complex will link the Metlox site and the Downtown.

Manhattan Beach - 2002

Located nineteen miles southwest of Los Angeles near the south end of Santa Monica Bay, Manhattan Beach is a densely populated community of less than four square miles. As we entered the new millennium, almost 34,000 people lived in the City, reflecting a stable population that grew by six percent in the last decade of the twentieth century. This limited growth reflects the built-out character of the community.

The City's prestigious coastal location creates a housing market where detached homes maintain high values and results in the highly efficient use of the limited land. Almost 70 percent of the land area is developed with residential uses (Table LU-1). With approximately 15,000 housing units in 2002, the City ranked as the 15th most densely populated city in Los Angeles County, among similar cities such as Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, and Santa Monica.

More than 1,600 businesses of various sizes contribute to the local economy, the majority of which are small local businesses that employ fewer than 10 employees.[2] Overall, commercial and industrial businesses occupy fifteen percent of the land area. The balance of the City is dedicated to parks, open space, and public facilities such as exceptional public schools, the National Guard Armory, and public utility sites.

Table LU-1
Land Use Distribution – 2002

Use	Net Acres	% of Total
Residential	1,406	69.7%
Commercial	207	10.3%
Industrial	73	3.6%
Parks and Open Space (a)	146	7.3%
Public Facilities	142	7.0%
Other Uses (b)	43	2.1%
Total	2,017	100.0%

Notes: (a) Parks and Open Space does not include parking areas, such as the parking lots adjacent to the Manhattan Beach Pier, making this number less than the Parks and Open Space total in Table LU-2.

(b) Other Uses include parking lots, religious institutions, and vacant lots identified during the 2002 land use survey.

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[2]   Info USA, 2003.

Distinct Neighborhoods

Manhattan Beach is a city of distinct neighborhoods that people recognize: the Sand Section, Downtown, North End/El Porto, the Tree Section, the Hill Section, Manhattan Village and mall, and the Eastside (Figure LU-1). These neighborhoods often have general boundaries that overlap with each other. Within some of these neighborhoods are smaller, more defined areas with their own unique characteristics, and each of these areas often do not have a district boundary.
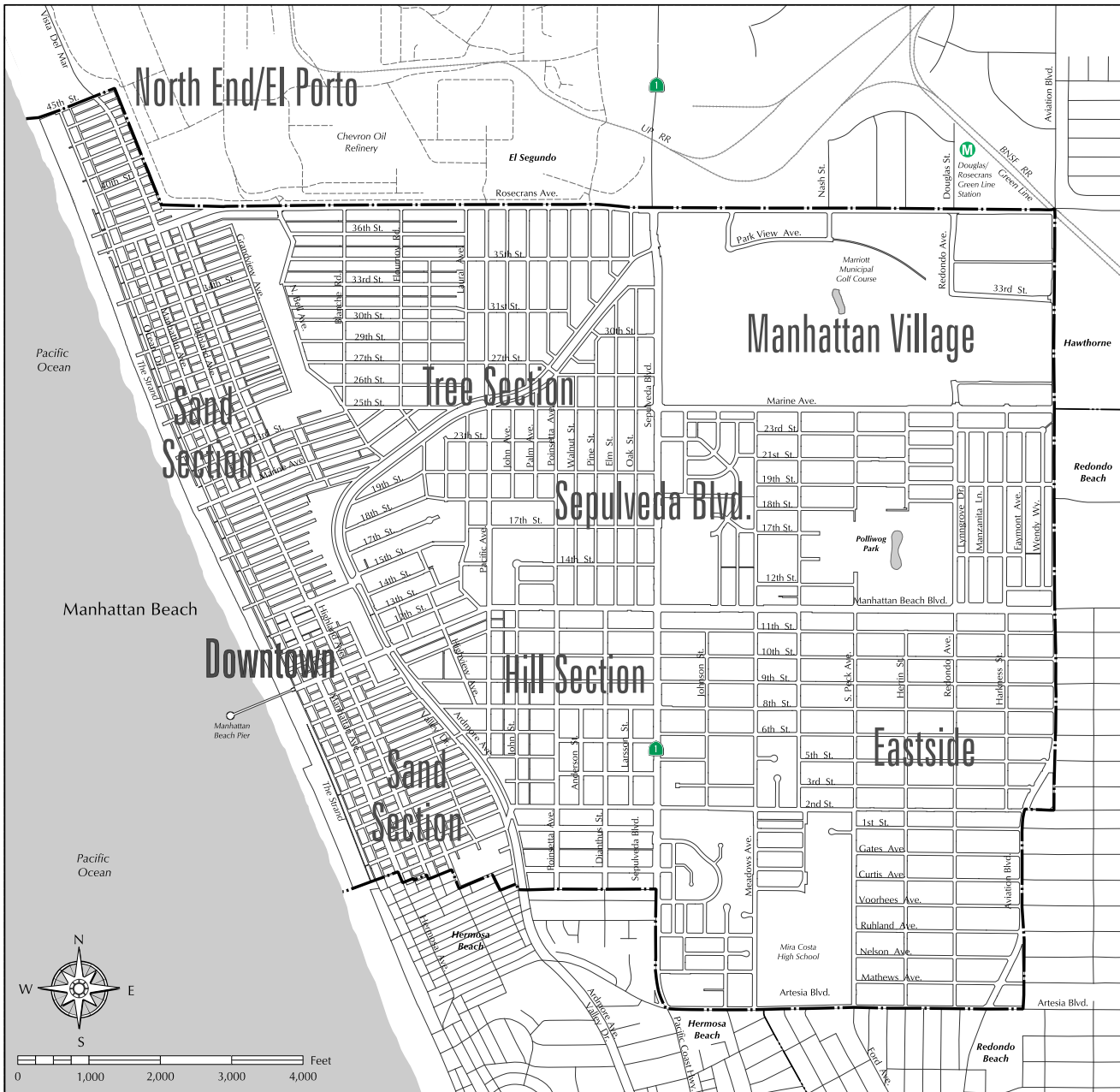
Sand Section

Manhattan Beach Pier is a symbol of our community. The Community Resources Element discusses the Pier in more detail.

Manhattan Beach treasures its two miles of beach frontage and forty acres of recreational beach area. The Sand Section, or Beach Area, as it is also known, generally extends inland from the beachfront to Grandview Avenue and Valley-Ardmore, encompassing Downtown Manhattan Beach and North End/El Porto. Aside from some commercial uses in the Downtown and North End, the 400-acre area is developed primarily with apartments and condominiums. Lots in the Sand Section are small, usually less than 3,000 square feet in size. With more than 5,600 housing units, the Sand Section is the most densely populated neighborhood in the City. Parking in the Sand Section is in short supply, as many of the housing developments were built prior to stringent parking requirements, and warm weather brings beachgoers and visitors who compete with residents for on-street parking.

Access to the beach for residents and visitors is easy via the Strand, as well as the walkstreets — pedestrian features unique to Manhattan Beach that add to the neighborhood character. These public rights-of-way create view corridors to the ocean, and the permitted encroachments by adjacent residential and commercial uses provide landscaping that softens the urban edges.

A Local Coastal Plan (LCP) has been prepared by the City for guidance over development in the coastal area. The LCP has been approved by the California Coastal Commission, thereby allowing the City to issue coastal development permits here, as well as for development in the Downtown and North End.

Legend
— ·· — City Boundary

North End/El Porto

Chevron Oil Refinery

El Segundo

Rosecrans Ave.

Vista Del Mar

45th St.

40th St.

UP RR

Nash St.

Douglas St.

Douglas/ Rosecrans Green Line Station

M

BNSF RR

Green Line

Aviation Blvd.

Park View Ave.

Marriott Municipal Golf Course

Redondo Ave.

33rd St.

Hawthorne

36th St.

35th St.

33rd St.

31st St.

30th St.

29th St.

27th St.

26th St.

25th St.

23rd St.

19th St.

18th St.

17th St.

15th St.

14th St.

13th St.

Ardmore Ave.

Elm Ave.

Laurel Ave.

Blanche Rd.

Elms Park Rd.

N. Redondo Ave.

Poinsettia Ave.

Walnut St.

Pine St.

Elm St.

Oak St.

Sepulveda Blvd.

Pacific Ave.

John Ave.

Palm Ave.

Tree Section

Manhattan Village

Marine Ave.

Sepulveda Blvd.

23rd St.

21st St.

19th St.

18th St.

17th St.

12th St.

Polliwog Park

Lynngrove Dr.

Manzanita Ln.

Faymont Ave.

Wendy Wy.

Redondo Beach

Manhattan Beach Blvd.

Pacific Ocean

Sand Section

30th St.

27th St.

Manhattan Beach

Downtown

Manhattan Beach Pier

The Strand

Highland Ave.

Ardmore Ave.

Valley Dr.

Hill Section

Johnson St.

John St.

Anderson St.

Larsson St.

11th St.

10th St.

9th St.

8th St.

6th St.

5th St.

3rd St.

2nd St.

1st St.

Gates Ave.

Curtis Ave.

Voorhees Ave.

Ruhland Ave.

Nelson Ave.

Mathews Ave.

Eastside

S. Peck Ave.

Herrin St.

Redondo Ave.

Hankness St.

Aviation Blvd.

Sand Section

Poinsettia Ave.

Dianthus St.

Sepulveda Blvd.

Meadows Ave.

Mira Costa High School

Artesia Blvd.

Pacific Ocean

Hermosa Beach

Hermosa Ave.

Ardmore Ave.

Valley Dr.

Pacific Coast Hwy.

Hermosa Beach

Ford Ave.

Redondo Beach

Artesia Blvd.

N
W   E
S

Feet
0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000

MANHATTAN BEACH

GENERAL PLAN

Figure LU-1
Neighborhoods Map
MANHATTAN · BEACH · GENERAL · PLAN

Downtown

Downtown Manhattan Beach is generally defined by 15th Street on the north; Valley-Ardmore on the east; 8th, 9th and 10th Street on the south; and on the west by the Strand and Ocean Drive. An area of over forty blocks that radiates from the intersection of Highland Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, the Downtown is characterized by a variety of restaurants and small specialty shops and services that cater to both residents and visitors to the beach.

The Civic Center and the new Safety Facility represent the municipal heart of Downtown, where City Hall and the adjacent mixed-use commercial center enhance the Downtown's village character, encourage pedestrian activity, and create a gateway to Downtown businesses.

Downtown Manhattan Beach enjoys commercial success but also faces many challenges. Traffic congestion (especially along Highland Avenue, Manhattan Avenue, and Manhattan Beach Boulevard), pedestrian/automobile conflicts, parking shortages, and new buildings and businesses that can be out of scale and character with the existing environment are key concerns residents and the business community have noted as important to address.

In 1996, the City adopted the Downtown Strategic Action Plan (DSAP) to articulate a community vision for the Downtown, identify issues, and establish a framework for future decisions. As a result of the DSAP, in 1998 the City adopted the *Downtown Manhattan Beach Design Guidelines* as a planning tool to shape the function and appearance of Downtown. The *Guidelines* establish three overarching themes for Downtown:

- Preserve the small-town village character of downtown Manhattan Beach

- Preserve and enhance the pedestrian orientation of downtown Manhattan Beach

- Protect and encourage streetscape amenities

North End

The North End neighborhood includes the small community known as El Porto, which was annexed from the County of Los Angeles to the City in November of 1980. The North End neighborhood generally extends from 33rd Avenue north to the City limit in El Segundo at 45th Street, and from the ocean to Grandview Avenue, Rosecrans Avenue, and Crest Avenue. The neighborhood encompasses a mix of residential and commercial uses, and the El Porto Area also has the highest residential density in the City. Despite the density, most buildings are low-profile structures of two or three stories. To ensure that the low-profile image is preserved, the City established the North End Commercial Design Overlay District.

North End is the most densely developed area in the City. Parking shortage is an ongoing challenge faced by residents and City planners.
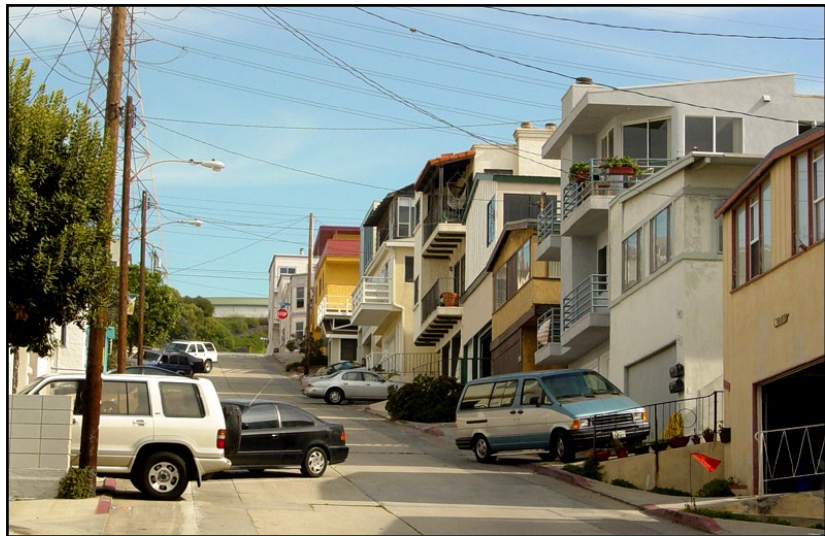
Commercial uses consist primarily of local- and neighborhood-serving businesses, with a few restaurants and shops oriented toward beachgoers and night-time visitors. The limited parking serves to constrain the expansion of established shops and restaurants and the diversification of businesses. As a popular beach area, particularly for surfing, beachgoers create additional parking demands. Many streets are also hilly and difficult to walk up and down. The local business community recognizes the advantages of working together to enhance business opportunities and create a more cohesive appearance for the area. The North End Business Improvement District continues to explore ways to beautify the streetscape and address parking issues.

Tree Section

The Tree Section is generally bounded by Rosecrans Avenue, Sepulveda Boulevard, Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Valley Drive/Ardmore Avenue, and Grandview Avenue. The streets east of Pacific Avenue are named after trees – Palm, Walnut, Pine, Elm, and Oak – and the entire area has many mature trees, giving the Tree Section its descriptive name. Several distinctive features define the character of this neighborhood, which consists almost exclusively of single-family residences, with commercial uses and high-density housing along Manhattan Beach Boulevard and senior housing at Valley Drive and Sepulveda Boulevard. The strip of residential development along Manhattan Beach Boulevard, between Ardmore Avenue and Pacific Avenue bordering the Hill Section and the Downtown, is permitted for more intensive residential development. The American Martyrs Catholic Church and private school are also located in the Tree Section.

The Grandview area lies within the Tree Section and borders the Sand Section. This area contains the historical remnant of the large sand dunes that once extended down to the beach but were slowly leveled when the Kuhn Brothers Construction Company began supplying Waikiki Beach with Manhattan Beach sand in the 1920s. The Gaslamp District, Sand Dune Park, Ladera Elementary School, Grand View Elementary School, the Public Works Yard, and National Guard Armory are all located in this area.

The neighborhood has maintained an almost rural feel, with most areas having an absence of sidewalks, curbs, and gutters and varying street widths. Some property owners have established private landscaping improvements and parking areas within the undeveloped portion of the public right-of-way. While this practice presents certain public safety and code enforcement challenges, it contributes substantially to the charm of the Tree Section.

Residents have invested significantly in tree planting over the years, resulting in many mature trees thriving in front yards. Some concern has been expressed over a noticeable loss of long-established trees with home remodeling and expansion and the changed streetscape associated with such activity. In 1993, the City adopted the Tree Protection Ordinance to protect front yard trees in the Tree, Section and in 2003 the ordinance was expanded Citywide, except for the Sand Section.

Cars park under the generous shade of stately Eucalyptus trees.

Sepulveda Boulevard

Sepulveda Boulevard is the only State Highway in Manhattan Beach. As a major transportation corridor for the South Bay region, Sepulveda Boulevard also functions as a commercial corridor. With the heavy traffic volumes and associated noise impacts, adequate buffering of the residential uses behind Sepulveda Boulevard from such impacts is important. At the same time, Sepulveda Boulevard is identified in the 6th Cycle Housing Element as an opportunity area with an abundance of resources that support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income households. Hence, Sepulveda Boulevard also serves as an appropriate location to accommodate a variety of housing types, including mixed-use and high-density, multifamily residential. The scale and character of commercial development along Sepulveda Boulevard is also an important community concern. In response to these issues, the City adopted the Sepulveda Boulevard Design Guidelines to provide a framework for future development along this corridor.

Hill Section

The Hill Section is generally bounded by Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Boundary Place, and Valley Drive/Ardmore Avenue. This section, at the south end of the City, includes some of the largest residential lots in Manhattan Beach, with many homesites afforded ocean and Downtown Los Angeles vistas and beyond. The Hill Section contains mostly single-family residences, with commercial uses along Manhattan Beach Boulevard, and apartments and townhomes along the west end of Manhattan Beach Boulevard. The commercial areas along Manhattan Beach Boulevard in proximity to Sepulveda Boulevard can also benefit from the resources that support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes for low-income households. As such, the Housing Element has identified opportunity areas along Manhattan Beach Boulevard to serve as an appropriate location to accommodate a variety of housing types, including mixed-use and high-density, multifamily residential.

Due to the large lots and spectacular vistas, the Hill Section commands some of the highest real estate prices and contains some of the largest homes in the City. The large lots, as well as the practice of combining lots, provide opportunities to build homes of 5,000 square feet or larger.

Manhattan Village

Manhattan Village occupies an area that was once devoted to extensive industrial uses, including a Chevron oil field. The

historic pattern of ownership facilitated large-scale master planning of the area when market conditions caused the oil field to close. Manhattan Village, which is bordered by Rosecrans Avenue to the north, Aviation Boulevard to the east, Marine Avenue to the south, and Sepulveda Boulevard to the west, contains a diverse mix of complementary uses, including the City's only gated residential community. Residential uses include low-density single-family homes, medium-density townhouses, and high-density, multifamily residential due to its proximity to various resources that support a mix of different housing types and densities. The subareas within Manhattan Village include The Village (containing residential uses), Manhattan Village Mall, Raleigh Studios, Manhattan Beach Country Club, Northrop Grumman, Rosecrans Corridor commercial, and a senior housing development. The Manhattan Village Mall and Manhattan Market Place commercial and business centers provide larger-scale retail and professional service businesses than Downtown, and serve as an employment center for residents throughout the South Bay. In addition to businesses and homes, Manhattan Village contains several major recreational features: the Marriott Municipal Golf Course, Marine Avenue Park, Manhattan Village Park, and Marine Sports Park (formerly a TRW parking lot that was developed into a park in 2002).

The Marriott Municipal Golf Course – an oasis within our built-out community. See the Recreation and Parks section of the Community Resources Element for more information.

Eastside

The Eastside, bounded by Marine Avenue, Aviation Boulevard, Artesia Boulevard, and Sepulveda Boulevard, contains distinct neighborhoods of single-family homes. Many of the homes were constructed as part of the 1940s and 1950s post-war tract homes (e.g., Liberty Village). Higher-density housing and commercial uses front Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Artesia Boulevard, and Aviation Boulevard.

Families enjoying outings at Polliwog Park. See the Recreation and Parks section of the Community Resources Element for more information.

Many young families reside in the Eastside, and Polliwog Park is used extensively for family outings. Five schools are located in the Eastside, including the City's only public high school, Mira Costa High School, and only middle school, Manhattan Beach Middle School. Other distinct areas within the Eastside include the Poets Section, Manhattan Heights, and Liberty Village.