



# Northern San Luis Obispo County Coastal Trail Master Plan

July 6, 2012

**PREPARED BY:**

Alta Planning + Design

**PREPARED FOR:**

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments





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1. Coastal Trail Master Plan
2. Appendices

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# 1. Introduction and Summary

This document provides an overview of the background, goals, objectives and study area for the Coastal Trail Master Plan. It describes the public and stakeholder participation process that was integral to the planning process, and the organization of the Master Plan document. It summarizes the geographic conditions in six segments that comprise the overall Study Area and the parameters of the scenic and conservation easements that cover the northern portion of the area. Finally, it summarizes the recommendations of the Master Plan, and the estimated cost.

## 1.1. Purpose of the Northern San Luis Obispo County Coastal Trail Master Plan

The Master Plan for the Northern San Luis Obispo County (SLO) Coastal Trail defines feasible short-term and long-term alignments and improvements for the trail through the region. The Master Plan will serve as a guide to those engaged in constructing individual components of the project and see that efforts will be aimed at a coherent regional trail system. The Master Plan will also serve as an accessible and authoritative guide for the public. The Master Plan is a partnership of the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), and the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in coordination with the County of San Luis Obispo and The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) has convened a Steering Committee to oversee development of the Master Plan. The Steering Committee includes representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Coastal Commission (CCC), SCC, Caltrans, Cambria Community Services District (CCSD), DPR, SLOCOG, and San Luis Obispo County.

This Master Plan addresses the development of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) along a 35-mile stretch of coastline between the Monterey County line and the community of Cayucos. The northern San Luis Obispo County coast is a relatively undeveloped and scenic section of the coast, which serves as the southern gateway to Big Sur and includes the 18-mile long Hearst San Simeon State Park. The area is a popular bicycling route for both local recreational users and through cyclists; its scenic beauty and history attract over a million visitors every year.

## 1.2. California Coastal Trail Background

Throughout history, humans have sought out coastal bluffs, beaches, and the ocean as a source of food and rejuvenation. Trail use along the coast of California dates back to the first inhabitants of the state. Many of today's roads and trails are historic paths once used as transportation and trading routes. The vision for the CCT is rooted in the commitment by the State to provide and maintain coastal access for all Californians and visitors. Since the 1970's the CCC, SCC, and local coastal communities have been working to fulfill this vision.



**Coastline near Ragged Point Conservation Area**

In 1972, Californians passed Proposition 20 that recommended a trail system be established along or near the coast. Subsequently, the Coastal Act of 1976 required local jurisdictions to identify an alignment for the CCT in their Local Coastal Programs.

While this mandate existed for over 20 years, it was not until 1996, when a group of advocates from the non-profit Coastwalk walked the length of the coast from Oregon to Mexico, that the need to implement the people of California's vision for a coastal trail resurfaced. Coastwalk demonstrated that the entire California coast could be followed on foot and the idea of the CCT has continued to grow in the imagination of the public and public officials since that time.

In 1999, the CCT was designated California's Millennium Legacy Trail by the Governor and the White House Millennium Trail Council. This was followed in 2000 by an official assembly declaration (AACR20) of the CCT as an official State trail. In early 2001, the California State Legislature passed SB 908, which directed the SCC to determine what was needed to complete the CCT. A working group of staff from the SCC, CCC, DPR and advocates from Coastwalk met for more than a year to develop the findings in the 2003 report, *Completing the California Coastal Trail*. Since the culminating report in 2003, the SCC and partners have been working with the State's 15 coastal counties to develop plans for completing the vision of the contiguous trail along the 1,200 miles of California coast.

Two relevant reports: *Completing the California Coastal Trail* and *San Luis Obispo County (SLO) Coastal Trail Guide* formed the foundation for the SLOCCT Master Plan's vision, goals and objectives. The reports' goals and objectives are summarized below:

### **1.2.1. Completing the California Coastal Trail (2003)**

CCT objectives from the 2003 report *Completing the California Coastal Trail* include:

- Proximity - Wherever feasible, the Coastal Trail should be within sight, sound, or at least the scent of the sea.
- Connectivity - The Coastal trail should effectively link starting points to destinations.
- Integrity - The Coastal Trail should be continuous and separated from motor traffic.
- Respect - The Coastal trail must be located and designed with a healthy regard for the protection of natural habitats, cultural and archaeological features, private property rights, neighborhoods, and agricultural operations along the way.
- Feasibility - To achieve timely, tangible results with the resources that are available, both interim and long-term alignments of the Coastal Trail will need to be identified.

### **1.2.2. SLO County Coastal Trail Goal and Objectives (2007)**

The following goal and objectives for the SLOCCT were developed in the *California Coastal Trail Guide for San Luis Obispo County*, prepared in 2007 for the SLO County Parks Department:

Goal: Create a continuous trail along the coastline through San Luis Obispo County by working with the public, private landowners, and land management agencies.

Objective I: Whenever possible, site the pedestrian trail along the beach [assumed to include the bluff top]. Where the Coastal Trail is separated from the beach, provide periodic views of the ocean from the trail as well as periodic opportunities to access the beach.

Objective 2: Minimize the impact of the Coastal Trail on adjacent landowners. Whenever possible, the Coastal Trail should go through public lands, especially public recreation areas.

Objective 3: Trail development should avoid or minimize (a) potential disruption and/or impacts to sensitive species and/or habitat and cultural resources, and (b) grading and site alternation.

Objective 4: Focus on establishment of a pedestrian trail to achieve trail continuity. As trail segments are developed, evaluate the feasibility of accommodating other trail users.

Objective 5: Provide Coastal Trail segments which serve various age groups and varying physical abilities.

Objective 6: Connect the Coastal Trail to other recreational resources whenever possible, including the County's trail system, existing and proposed parks and natural areas, parking areas, and alternative transportation routes.

Objective 7: Consider the safety of trail users when siting the trail. This includes consideration of potential trail hazards and provisions for testing the trail if lost or threatened due to erosion, landslides, flooding, or other hazards.

### 1.3. Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The California Coastal Trail network is envisioned to be a continuous interconnected public trail system along the California coastline, designed to foster appreciation and stewardship of the scenic and natural resources of the coast through hiking and other complementary modes of non-motorized transportation.

#### 1.3.1. Northern SLO County Coastal Trail Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Building on and clarifying the prior two reports' vision, goals, and objectives listed above, the current Master Plan process identifies more specific goals and objectives for the SLOCCT. While the overriding goal is a continuous north-south route, it also includes creating trail connections and loops that will accommodate local trips, connect to important local and regional destinations, and provide amenities and support facilities to make the main route and local branches more engaging and functional. More specifically, the main objective of the SLOCCT Master Plan is to create three types of trails:

A continuous paved bike route along Highway 1 through the Study Area;

A continuous pedestrian route along the coast ideally separated from Highway 1. This may be paved or unpaved depending on local conditions and preferences, and potentially could accommodate mountain bike and/or equestrian use, and dog access, depending on location;

Connecting trails to local destinations, including beaches, to provide a complete regional trail network.



**Bicycling is popular along Highway 1**

#### 1.3.2. Master Plan Working Principles

The following principles guide the completion of the SLOCCT Master Plan:

- Reach out to and engage the local community as well as visitors and interested parties from other areas in the creation of the Master Plan.
- See that the knowledge, ideas and preferences of participants are carefully considered.
- Work closely with local, regional, State and federal agencies to plan for the improvement, management and operation of the CCT.
- Understand and respond to environmental conditions so that the trail and associated public access does not detract from the scenic and sensitive places that the trail seeks to make accessible.
- Understand and respect private property rights, as well as secured public access rights, in planning trails and access.
- Identify specific trail projects that can be pursued in the near-term, and projects that will require more detailed studies, planning, and negotiations before implementation.

In addition, more specific design policies and objectives are described in Chapter 4 – Master Plan Recommendations. A more extensive overview of related studies is included in Appendix A – Background Documents

## **1.4. Public Input Regarding the Trail Master Plan**

Every effort was made to let the public know about the project and participate in formulating the Master Plan. A project web site ([slocoastaltrail.com](http://slocoastaltrail.com)) was created early in the process, and linked to the SLOCOG web site. Background information, progress reports and draft documents were posted on the site. A press release was issued by SLOCOG regarding the start of the project, and an article appeared in the San Luis Obispo Tribune/San Luis Obispo.com on April 28, 2011 advertising the first public workshop and the link to the project web site. An article in the same publications announced the availability of the public draft Master Plan on April 13, 2012, including a link to the draft documents on the project web site.

The Consultant Team provided information to and collected input from the community via community workshops and direct public and stakeholder outreach. Input from the two public workshops and direct outreach is summarized below. Appendix C – Stakeholder and Public Outreach, provides detailed documentation of comments voiced during the workshops as well as written comments received.

### **1.4.1. Public Workshop #1**

The following is a summary of comments from the participants at the first Northern San Luis Obispo Coastal Trail Public Workshop on March 28, 2011:

- Elephant seals and harbor seals present an environmental constraint where the trail provides beach access or bluff top access within sight of their colonies that are found along sections of the coastline, and many workshop participants expressed that the trail alignment should avoid them.
- There are several sensitive tide pools along the coastline. At a minimum, interpretive and warning signage should advise trail users to minimize disturbance to them.
- Signage is important for identifying environmentally sensitive areas and for enhancing the visitor experience along the trail corridor. Signs can help to address safety concerns along the corridor and interpret major attractions should as the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse and the elephant seals. However, signs should be simple and understated and not placed at every possible attraction.
- The need to protect environmental resources should be balanced with the need to maintain public access. Surfers in particular are concerned about the accessibility of ideal surfing locations. Many

people enjoy walking on the beach, although placing the official trail alignment on the beach may not be necessary or desirable.

- Several good activity focal points exist along the trail. These include the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse, the San Simeon Visitor Center, and Harmony Headlands State Park.
- While the CCT is likely to follow Moonstone Beach Road through Northern Cambria, several possible alignments were suggested south of Fiscalini Ranch.
- Over the long term, private ownership of land should not present a barrier to the CCT alignment. Workshop participants expressed a desire to acquire the necessary easements to provide a ridgeline trail through the Harmony Headlands.
- Hikers with dogs encounter difficulty using many parts of the coastline. It would be helpful to identify and publicize continuous segments of trail where dogs are allowed.
- Interest was expressed in accessing the State Park Conservation Areas at Ragged Point, Pico Cove and San Simeon and in camping at the former Junge Ranch.

#### 1.4.2. Public Workshop #2

On November 15, 2011, Public Workshop #2 was held to review opportunities and constraints and alternative alignments for the trail. The following paragraph summarizes the ideas and opinions of the participants at the Northern San Luis Obispo California Coastal Trail Public Workshop #2.

While workshop participants were enthusiastic about the need for a complete, connected trail corridor, they also expressed concerns about protecting sensitive resources along the CCT Corridor and suggested that trail sprawl be discouraged. Habitat for marine mammals, snowy plovers, and tidewater goby were mentioned as particular constraints. Questions were raised about accommodations for specific user groups, including wheelchair users, equestrians, and road bicyclists. Participants described existing safety issues for crossing Highway 1 at Hearst Castle and potential issues on any trails sited on streets in Southern Cambria. Interest was expressed in using roads and easements on the USFS lands between San Carpoforo Creek and the SLO/Monterey County line.



**Public workshops allowed the community to provide input**

#### 1.4.3. Stakeholder Interviews

In May 2011, the Consultant Team conducted personal interviews with 12 stakeholders who represent a range of expertise, affiliations and connections to the Study Area. The one-on-one interviews provided a formal setting to gather input from key stakeholders and obtain a wide array of local knowledge and perceptions.

The interviews summarized herein provide insight on local knowledge and perceptions of the Study Area as well as stakeholders' hopes and expectations for the future. (see Appendix C for detailed documentation of the stakeholder interviews).

## Methodology

The interviews were comprised of open-ended questions intended to invite dialogue. This method relies on interviewees to drive the interview session in an open, conversational manner. The aim of the interviews was to collect stakeholder's perceptions on development opportunities and constraints, environmentally sensitive areas, jurisdiction, organizational aims, and visions for the CCT. The design for this fieldwork protocol is derived from anthropological and sociological research standards that stress the importance of investigation that is informant centered, that honors the informant's perception of a problem, and that works toward integrating multiple views of the same issue.



**Environmentally sensitive areas exist along the trail corridor**

## Participants

According to the Consultant Team's policy on human informant data, and in order to protect interview subjects from real or perceived harm, names of interviewees are considered confidential and are not listed. An aggregation of interview data is described below. Interview respondents included representatives from local land conservancies, local government, local volunteer organizations, the local business community and landowners.

## Interviews

A total of 12 individuals participated in the interviews. Nine interviews were conducted in-person, while three interviews were conducted by phone. During the in-person interviews, maps were provided and participants were encouraged to highlight important areas. The notes on these maps were incorporated into this document. Interviews were conducted by the Consultant Team and lasted between 20 minutes and one hour each. Interviewers collected basic demographic data including professional role and affiliation, as well as views and opinions on opportunities and constraints of the Study Area in light of the CCT.

This report describes a "Vision" identified by each user group, then goes on to list data on existing recreational or tourist serving amenities, opportunities and constraints for development, and sensitive environmental features that was gathered through the interview process.

### 1.4.4. Stakeholder Vision

#### Land Conservancies

Land conservancies reported that their primary mission is to protect farmland and other valuable/vulnerable natural resources. While recreational use of this land, such as trail access, is an additional positive benefit, their primary goal is to preserve and conserve land. The Conservancies that participated in the survey also believe that recreational uses can bring additional attention to conservation efforts and make them more effective through increased political awareness, support and additional funding measures. The land conservancies that were interviewed expressed a vision of the CCT that utilizes conserved land in a way that maintains the conservation goals of the organization. For example, one respondent reported that he would

want to avoid conflicting uses that can occur between trail users and agricultural land uses. Respondents also reported that the land should remain as natural as possible. According to the conservancies, an ideal CCT would provide public access while protecting sensitive resources and maintaining viewsheds and working landscapes.

### **Governmental Representatives**

Governmental Organizations envision a trail that is conscious of agricultural resources and property rights issues. An ideal CCT avoids incompatible uses associated with trail users and grazing land as well as potential conflict between trail users and agriculture in general (crop vulnerability, chemical runoff, legal culpability, etc.). Governmental Organizations envision a CCT planning process that engages willing property owners, especially south of Cambria, to create a trail alignment that is compatible with sensitive natural and agricultural resources.

### **Volunteer Organizations**

The volunteer organizations interviewed envision a CCT that stays as close to the water as possible, while protecting sensitive resources such as water quality and habitats. They also see a CCT alignment with little to no heavy construction or significant movement of soils. They believe that one way to do this is to take advantage of the numerous existing trails. Volunteer organizations were also hesitant to encourage alignments that would include boardwalks and handrails due to construction impacts, but still understood that the trail needs to include features that prevent erosion and limit impacts and access to sensitive areas. Several organizations emphasized that they don't want a significant increase in traffic in sensitive locations and areas that are perceived to be only known by locals. One suggestion was to have trail access to these areas publicized through trail maps, but few markers on the trail itself.

### **Private Businesses**

The privately owned businesses and business organizations that participated in the interviews envision a CCT that increases tourist traffic and commerce along the coast while respecting private property rights. Business owners that directly interact with trail users stand to benefit from the project, but some were particularly reticent to give up any land through easements. This was not uniform, though, as some land-owning businesses reported a willingness to provide easements if it meant bringing trail users through their property. In areas that are constrained by property lines, private water rights, or in other ways, one business owner suggested moving the trail alignment to the ridgeline of the coast range.

## **1.4.5. Intercept Survey**

To assess the demographics of visitors to the northern San Luis Obispo County coast and their potential use of the planned CCT, the Consultant Team conducted on-site interviews with visitors. An intercept survey instrument was developed to gather the relevant information. The surveys were conducted at popular coastal visitor destinations including the San Simeon Pier at Hearst San Simeon State Beach (Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011), Elephant Seals Viewing Area (Saturday, July 30, 2011), Harmony Headlands State Park (Saturday, August 6, 2011), and Estero Bluffs State Park (Sunday, August 7, 2011).

The survey responses provide an understanding of the range in visitor demographics, trip itineraries, mode of travel, familiarity and frequency of visitation; demand for a future coastal trail, preferred coastal activities,

desired trail amenities, and economic information. Refer to Appendix C, Stakeholder and Public Outreach for detailed documentation of survey results.

## 1.5. Study Area

The study area includes a 35-mile stretch of coastline between the Monterey County line and the community of Cayucos, shown in Figure I-1. This area is characterized by steep to rolling hills and rocky outcrops of the Coast Range that, moving south, give way to gently sloping valleys, marine terraces, and coastal bluffs. The plain contains several substantial drainages including San Carpofo Creek, Arroyo de la Cruz Creek, Oak Knoll Creek, Little Pico Creek, Pico Creek, San Simeon Creek, Santa Rosa Creek and Villa Creek, which run generally east-west and convey runoff towards the Pacific Ocean. Cattle grazing is the predominant agricultural activity in the hills and on the plain.



**Elephant seals basking in the sun near Piedras Blancas**

Vegetation includes grasslands, oak woodlands, coastal scrub and chaparral. Cultural resource surveys performed in the study area show that it has been inhabited by humans for thousands of years. The corridor also includes a number of rare plant and wildlife species endemic to the region. Scenic vistas exist throughout the study area and are visible from Highway 1, the dominant transportation feature. These vistas typify the highest quality aesthetic resources of the Central Coast, if not the entire State.

Cambria, population 6,500, and Cayucos, population 3,100, are the significant communities in the study area. They are a combination of bedroom communities, agricultural communities, and tourist-oriented commercial areas. Lodging establishments are concentrated along Highway 1, especially in San Simeon, in Cambria along Moonstone Drive, and in Cayucos.

Providing connections to visitor services and destinations is a key opportunity for making the CCT useful to visitors and locals while enhancing the area's tourism-based economy. .

The climate along the Pacific coast will encourage frequent and active use of the CCT, with average high temperatures ranging from 60 degrees in winter to 80 degrees in midsummer. Precipitation is heavily concentrated from December to March, allowing many dry days for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.

For the Master Plan, the corridor is divided into six segments. In each segment, the following are addressed: existing and designated land uses, overview of applicable local plans and policies, and potential land use impacts, including those that would result from inconsistencies with relevant policies.

### 1.5.1. Study Area Segments

For convenience in organization of maps and summaries, the overall study area was divided into six segments, as illustrated in Figure I-1. The segments were further subdivided into smaller sub-segment map areas presented in Chapter 4.

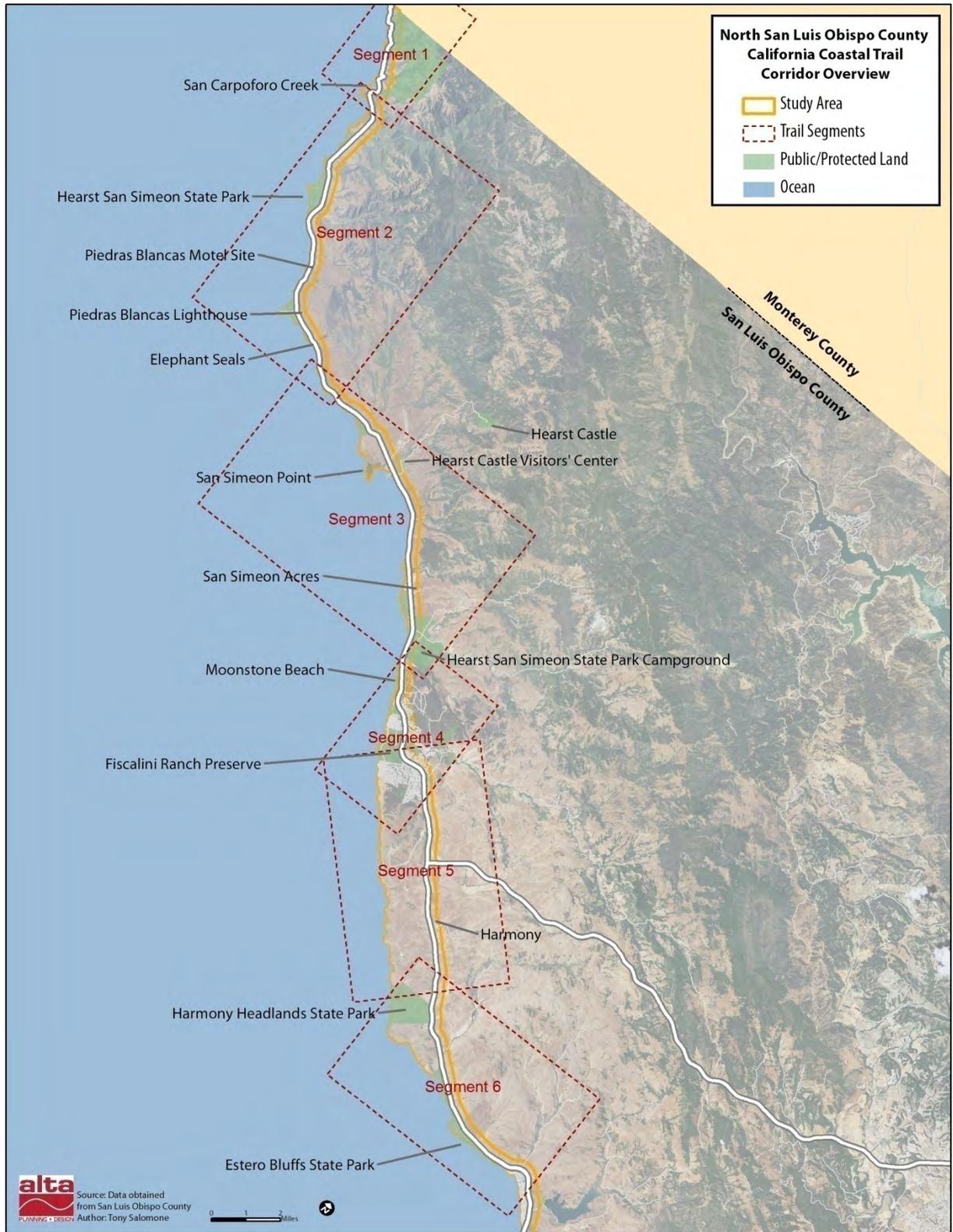


Figure 1-1: California Coastal Trail Corridor

### **Segment 1 – County Line to San Carpoforo Creek**

Segment 1 is located in a rural area at the southern end of the Los Padres National forest within the Big Sur mountain region and includes the Ragged Point Inn, approximately 1.25 miles south of the county line. The Inn provides an event venue, restrooms, gas station, small general store, outdoor café, formal dining facility, and hiking trails. The majority of this segment is characterized by sheer cliffs several hundred feet above the Pacific Ocean. Offshore waters along this segment are part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Estuary, which extends from the community of Cambria north past San Francisco. Informal beach access trails exist north and south of San Carpoforo Creek. Along Segment 1 the trail alignment will likely be located on existing fire roads on USFS land until reaching San Carpoforo Creek. The dominant land uses within this segment are recreation, open space, forest, and agriculture.



**Views of the coastline from the Ragged Point Inn**

### **Segment 2 – Hearst San Simeon State Park – Ragged Point Conservation Area to Piedras Blancas Lighthouse**

Segment 2 stretches approximately eight miles from the south end of San Carpoforo Creek to about three miles north of San Simeon Bay and Hearst Castle. The segment passes through the Ragged Point and Pico Cove Conservation Areas, which are Hearst Corporation lands with scenic and conservation easements to the state, and access easements to DPR, including defined public access corridors for the CCT and limited, docent-guided public access to other portions of the sites. Between these two conservation areas the alignment continues through the north coast portion San Simeon State Park, past the Piedras Blancas Motel site, the Piedras Blancas State



**Piedras Blancas Lighthouse**

Marine Reserve (SMR) and State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), the Piedras Blancas Light Station, and the elephant seal rookery north of San Simeon. The Piedras Blancas SMR and SMCA are two adjoining marine protected areas of nearly 20 square miles, established by the California Fish and Game Commission in 2007 under the California Marine Life Protection Act. De la Cruz Rock, Haystack Rock, and Boot and Slipper Rocks, each designated California Coastal National Monuments, are located within the SMR.

Several formal and informal beach access points exist along this segment, including: 1) informal trails just south of Arroyo de la Cruz Creek; 2) informal trails near the Piedras Blancas Motel, located approximately 1.75 miles north of the Light Station; 3) two parking and viewing areas located along the bluffs surrounding the elephant seal rookery; and 4) various scenic viewpoints and informal parking areas along the coastal bluffs. Much of Segment 2 includes unrestricted views of the coast and Pacific Ocean from Highway 1. The predominant existing land uses in Segment 2 include agriculture, recreation, and open space.

### Segment 3 –San Simeon Point to Cambria

Segment 3 stretches from 3 miles north of San Simeon Bay southward approximately 9 miles to the northern urban reserve line (URL) of Cambria. Offshore waters along this segment are part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Estuary. The segment passes San Simeon Point and Bay, Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument (Hearst Castle), the community of San Simeon, Hearst San Simeon State Park, Exotic Gardens, and limited agricultural and rural residential uses north of Cambria. The Hearst Castle Visitor Center is located approximately 0.25 mile east of Highway 1 adjacent to San Simeon Point.



**William Randolph Hearst Memorial State Beach provides facilities for visitors to Hearst Castle**

Hearst San Simeon State Park is one of the oldest units in the California State Park System. The park includes the Santa Rosa Creek Natural Preserve, the San Simeon Natural Preserve, and the Pa-nu Cultural Preserve, and is adjacent to the Hearst San Simeon Historical Monument, which includes the “castle” and the visitor’s center. The park offers approximately 3.5 miles of trails, camping, a boardwalk, seasonal wetland area, interpretive panels, a Coastal Discovery Center, Ranger-led junior park programs, guided hikes, and many scenic viewpoints. Exotic Gardens is a local tourist attraction noted for its nursery and gardens specializing in succulent plants. The three-acre site is located on the east side of Highway 1 near the north entrance of Moonstone Beach Drive.

Several formal and informal beach access points exist along this segment, including parking and trails just north of the mouth of Oak Knoll Creek, trails just south of San Simeon, and multiple scenic viewpoints and parking areas along the coastal bluffs. Segment 3 includes unrestricted views of the beach and Pacific Ocean.

This segment includes the community of San Simeon, a tourist-oriented community that includes some residential uses. Predominant land uses in Segment 3 include recreation, agriculture, and visitor-serving commercial uses in the community of San Simeon.

### Segment 4 –Cambria

Segment 4 predominantly runs through the urbanized community of Cambria, with views of surrounding residential, open space, and commercial uses. Adjacent areas east of Cambria are generally used for open space and/or grazing. The segment includes the northwestern portions of Cambria where the beachfront commercial and recreational uses include hotels, motels, restaurants and beachfront residences on the east of Moonstone Drive. Leffingwell and Moonstone State Beach Parks are situated west of Moonstone Drive. From Leffingwell Creek pocket beaches and a bluff top boardwalk extend south for close to one mile towards the mouth of Santa Rosa Creek.



**An existing boardwalk in northern Cambria**

Further south is the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, a 439-acre park and open space area owned by the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD). The western portion of the Preserve features another developed segment of the CCT operated by the CCSD. Various residential areas surround the Preserve – Park Hill, East Lodge Hill, and West Lodge Hill. Uses at the Preserve are restricted by the East-West Ranch Public Access and Management Plan and a conservation easement held by the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve.

Several formal and informal beach access points exist along this segment, including:

- Parking areas at the north and south end, and boardwalk paths along the length of Moonstone Beach Drive
- A parking and beach access point at Shamel Community Park
- Trails adjacent to the Park Hill residential area
- Multiple viewing areas along the bluffs and boardwalk at Fiscalini Ranch Preserve
- A walkway down the bluffs at Lampton Cliffs County Park

### **Segment 5 – Harmony Coast**

Segment 5 of the Study Area extends approximately 12 miles, from Highway 46 to Estero Bluffs State Park, including the community of Harmony and Harmony Headlands State Park. Highway 46 intersects Highway 1 in this segment approximately 1.75 miles south of Cambria. The community of Harmony was built around several dairy ranches and a creamery that operated in this location from 1869 to 1955. Population has decreased since closure of the creamery, and the town now consists of a pottery shop, general store, the nearby Harmony Cellars winery, and various abandoned buildings, including a post office.



**A wetland near Monte Cristo Avenue**

Harmony Headlands State Park is a 784-acre coastal park located approximately 6 miles north of Cayucos. The Park provides a small parking area, hiking trails to the coastal marine terrace grasslands, and panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean. Beach access points along this segment include trails and viewing areas associated with Harmony Headlands State Park and Estero Bluffs State Park, and multiple public access points within the community of Cayucos. Land uses within this segment include agriculture (grazing), open space, and recreation, with scattered residential uses.

South of Harmony Headlands State Park, there are some private residences and agricultural lands. An abalone farm exists in the southern portion of the Harmony Headlands, north of the mouth of Villa Creek.

## Segment 6 – Estero Bluffs and Cayucos

Estero Bluffs State Park is an approximately 355-acre park located between Highway 1 and the coastline north of Cayucos. The park is bisected by San Geronimo Creek and Villa Creek, and includes intertidal areas, wetlands, low bluffs, coastal terraces, and a pocket cove and beach at the mouth of Villa Creek. The attractive town of Cayucos is fronted by the broad sandy beaches of Cayucos State Beach and includes a long wood pier and a commercial district with a variety of restaurants, motels, inns and retail shops.



**On-street bicycle facilities in Cayucos**

### 1.6. Hearst Acquisition-Related Easements

In 2005, a series of easement agreements were executed between Hearst Corporation and other land stewards. These easements and their conditions are very important to the location and design of the Coastal Trail on former Hearst lands that are now owned by the state, and on Hearst-retained lands that now have conservation and public access easements owned by the state. The easements are described in more detail in Section 2.2.1. The series of transactions consist of several components that, together, cover the entire 81,777-acre Hearst Ranch:

- The East Side Conservation Easement Area consists of about 80,000 acres of the Hearst Ranch on the east side of Highway 1. Future residential development within this area is restricted to protect the scenic, open space, agricultural, and natural resource values of Hearst Ranch.
- The West Side Public Ownership Conservation Area is about 1,500 acres of former Hearst Ranch on the west side of Highway 1 that has been transferred into State ownership: 949 acres to DPR (including the area under the current highway) and 518 acres to Caltrans to accommodate moving the highway inland (near the Piedras Blancas Motel site).
- Hearst Corporation retains ownership of about 600 acres on San Simeon Point, Ragged Point, and Pico Cove, but conveyed conservation easements to the state that accommodate trails and other limited public amenities for access on a docent-led basis only; there is no open public access to these areas, except that public access is allowed in designated corridors for the CCT across each of the three conservation areas adjacent to Highway 1.
- Caltrans also acquired scenic conservation easements over the Hearst-owned conservation area and holds a separate scenic easement over the Junge Ranch property.

#### 1.6.1. Conditions of the Caltrans Scenic Easement Regarding the California Coastal Trail

The easement exchange and fee title purchase was a complex transaction and an understanding of the documents benefits from some clarification, particularly the “Caltrans Scenic Easement” over the public lands west of Highway 1. The “Grantor” specified in the “West Side Public Ownership Area” easement document is the Hearst Holding Corporation, Inc. and the “Grantee” is the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). However the fee ownership of the Hearst holdings was subsequently transferred

to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), so the scenic easement owned by Caltrans now applies to the State Parks land. Sections of the easement that pertain to the CCT are reproduced below:

From the “West Side Public Ownership Area” easement document, page 6:

**5. Buildings, Facilities and Other Structures.**

(b) **Public Access Facilities.** Grantor may construct, or authorize others to construct, segments of the California Coastal Trail and other “Public Access Facilities”. The term “Public Access Facilities” shall mean and be limited to new trails (including the California Coastal Trail), improved surface parking, roadway access to said parking, informational kiosks, signage, public restrooms, trash/recycling receptacles, and directly related utilities. Grantor is authorized to construct and maintain trails (including the California Coastal Trail) to facilitate public access throughout the Public Ownership Easement Area. Grantor is authorized to maintain existing roads and to construct new roads in accordance with the provisions of Section 9, below. Grantor is authorized to install signage in accordance with the provisions of Subsection 5(c), below. The following scenic protection criteria shall apply to the siting of all Public Access Facilities except trails (including the California Coastal Trail), roads and signage. First, in evaluating the need for such Public Access Facilities in relation to authorized levels of public use of the Public Ownership Easement Area, Grantor shall take into account the availability of offsite parking and public restroom facilities located adjacent to or proximate to the Public Ownership Easement Area. Next, to the maximum extent feasible, Grantor shall site such Public Access Facilities utilizing only existing topography to completely screen the Public Access Facilities from the viewshed of State Route 1. Next, to the extent that viewshed protection utilizing only existing topography for screening is not feasible, Grantor may utilize vegetation and/or grading to completely screen such Public Access Facilities from the viewshed of State Route 1; provided, that such screening shall not be allowed to block views of the ocean from State Route 1. Next, Grantor shall confine the number of points of access to the Public Ownership Easement Area to not more than the number calculated in accordance with San Luis Obispo County Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section . . .

(c) **Signs.** Signs used to protect public safety, to control unauthorized entry or uses, to protect natural and cultural resources, to designate the location of trails (including the California Coastal Trail) and of Public Access Facilities, are permitted; provided, that the locations, designs and sizes of such signs shall comply with the standard criteria of the California Department of Parks and Recreation for such signs in coastal State Parks.

From the “West Side Public Ownership Area” easement document, page 9:

**9. Road Construction.**

With Grantee's prior concurrence, Grantor may construct such new roads as are reasonably necessary to provide access to the Public Access Facilities authorized by Subsection 5(c), above; provided, that each such road shall be sited to minimize its visibility from State Route 1 and constructed to avoid any significant topographic change. New roads shall be unpaved and surfaced with natural-appearing materials compatible with the surrounding native

landscape. No public parking shall be allowed along any road. This section shall not preclude temporary access by Grantee (with prior consent from Grantor) for Highway 1 maintenance purposes.

## 1.7. Organization of the Master Plan

This Master Plan document is organized into the following five chapters with supporting appendices:

1. **Introduction:** provides an overview of the background, goals, objectives and recommendations of the Master Plan. It describes the organization of the document, and the public and stakeholder participation process that was integral to its preparation.
2. **Setting:** provides an overview of the setting of the Master Plan’s Study Area. It summarizes existing land uses; existing attractions and destinations; public lands and access easements; and existing and planned bike facilities. In addition, this Chapter describes existing environmental resources present within the trail corridor and analyses constraints associated with agricultural, biological, and cultural resources, and geologic hazards. Lastly, this Chapter reports on existing economic resources including a summary of services and amenities that support tourism.
3. **Design Standards and Guidelines:** summarizes standards and guidelines for pedestrian, bicycle and trail facilities that may be part of the CCT network. Multiple public agencies own property within the Study Area, including Caltrans, DPR, USFS, and BLM.
4. **Master Plan Recommendations:** describes the recommended improvements that will comprise the Northern San Luis Obispo County network for the CCT. These recommendations reflect pertinent design standards and guidelines; existing conditions, physical opportunities and constraints, regulatory, legal, and guiding documents; and public and agency comments on the preliminary studies and recommendations.
5. **Action Plan:** describes the typical implementation steps to take a CCT project from the Master Plan through construction, along with general timeframes for project steps. It lists the recommended CCT improvements segment by segment, summarized from Chapter 4. For each segment the list includes the types of permits that may be required, the agencies and entities that would likely be parties to the project, and the basic operation and management requirements. Potential project phases and priorities are then described. Finally there is a more detailed description of the permits and approvals that may be required for project implementation.

## 1.8. Summary of Recommendations

The Northern San Luis Obispo County coast is one of the most scenic and unspoiled coastlines in the world – a national treasure. The land stewardship of the Hearst family has protected this region for generations, and the acquisition or permanent protection of the land through the 2005 Hearst Ranch acquisitions by the State of California formalized this legacy. As detailed in the **Chapter 3 - Design Standards and Guidelines**, the acquisition did not entirely transfer the stewardship responsibility, but shared it between DPR, Caltrans, the Hearst Corporation, and peripheral parties to the overlying easements. This specifically recognized the objective of implementing the CCT to provide more opportunities for people to experience the coast in other ways than by automobile.

The setting for the CCT is also very environmentally rich and complex – a near wilderness in spite of the intrusion of Highway 1, with many habitat types and specific species populations that are unique and endangered, as well as historic and prehistoric cultural resources. These resources are summarized in **Chapter 2 - Setting**, and supporting appendices with detailed environmental data. The trail alignments and improvements described in **Chapter 4 –Master Plan Recommendations** were carefully designed to respond to the environmental resources, easement conditions, permitting criteria and performance standards. Additionally, the recommendations were informed by public and stakeholder input and opinions expressed through two public workshops, three steering committee meetings, and extensive communication and coordination among the key landowning and regulatory agencies.

### **1.8.1. Summary of Recommended Coastal Trail Improvements**

The improvements are listed below, moving north to south. They are described and mapped in detail in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 outlines the associated implementation steps, permits, responsible parties, and conceptual project phasing.

#### **Segment 1: County Line to Ragged Point (3.0 miles) (See Figure 1-2)**

1. Widen highway shoulders to 4 feet where feasible due to topographic, resource and geologic constraints (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
2. Verify/formalize CCT connection to US Forest Service ridgeline road and identify a suitable location(s) adjacent to Highway 1 for development of trailhead, signage and mapboard
3. Trail bridge over San Carpoforo Creek
4. Trail undercrossing of Highway 1 bridge and connection on the south side of San Carpoforo Creek
5. Staging area (base rock surface) for approximately 16 cars and 3 horse trailers southeast of creek and highway
6. Driveway and access improvements from highway
7. Prefabricated vault toilet
8. Fencing and gates, including vehicular gate for parking area
9. Restoration and screening plantings – native
10. Trail improvements west of Highway 1 from San Carpoforo Creek to Ragged Pt.
11. CCT signs and wayfinding

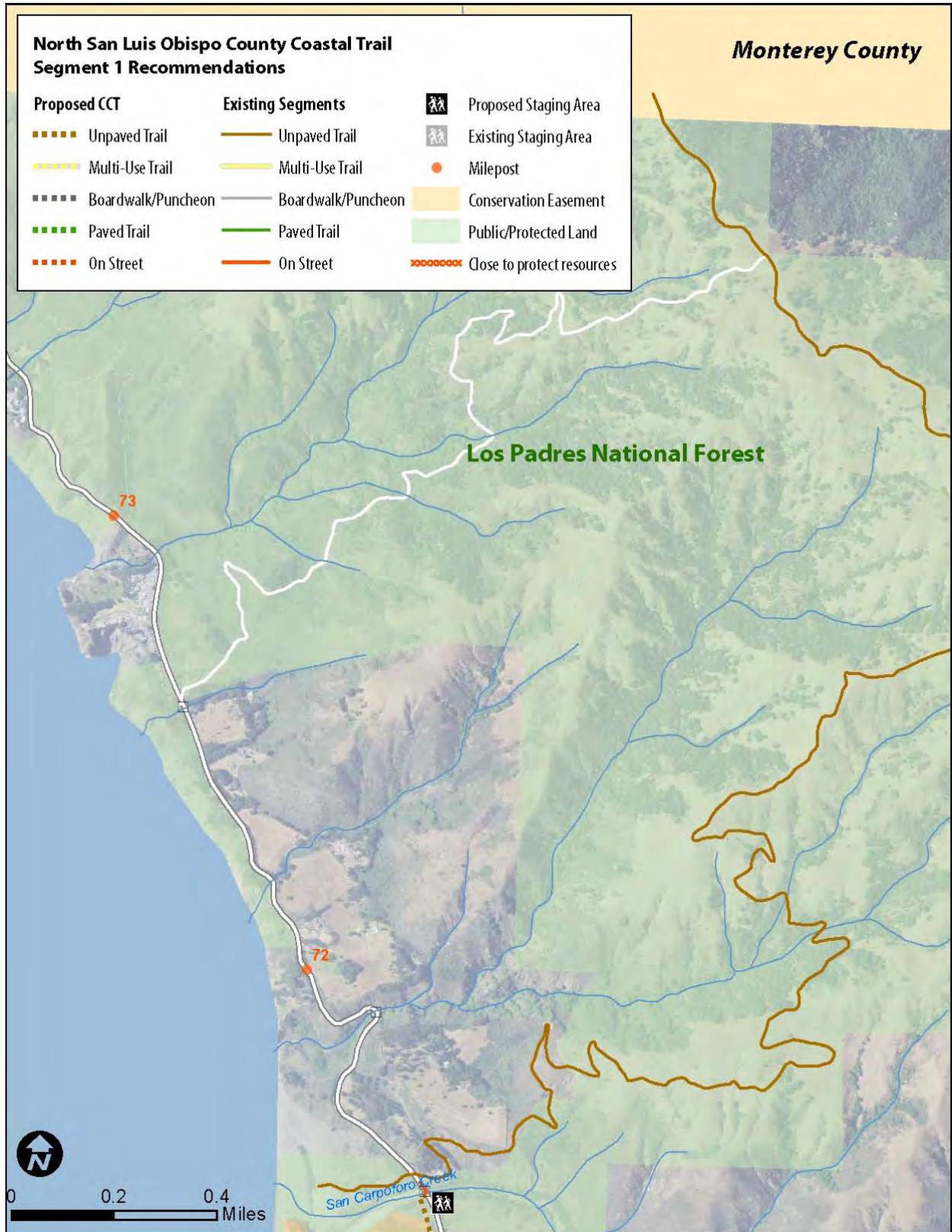


Figure 1-2: Segment 1 Recommended Improvements

## Segment 2: Ragged Point to Broken Creek Bridge (See Figure 1-3)

### Segment 2-1: Ragged Point Conservation Area (1.8 miles)

1. Construct 1.8 miles native surface coastal trail within the Public Access Conservation Area per the easement Access Plan/Recommendations
2. Construct sidepath along embankment with retaining walls at Arroyo Hondo (69-4)
3. Low-visibility fence and gate at trailhead for docent-led tours (parking, access and trail improvements for docent-led tours on Hearst property are assumed to be separate parallel project)
4. Restoration and screening plantings – native
5. Widen highway shoulders to at least 4 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
6. CCT signs and wayfinding



Informal beach access

### Segment 2-2: Ragged Point to Arroyo de la Cruz (2.5 miles)

1. Construct approximately 3.5 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Close and restore about 0.2 miles of existing trail parallel to Arroyo de La Cruz
3. Widen highway shoulders to at least 4 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
4. Bridges, boardwalks or sidepath culvert crossings with retaining walls over 5 minor drainages and Arroyo de los Chinos
5. One consolidated trail bridge over 3 drainages and trail bridge over a fourth
6. Trail bridge or seasonal bridge over Arroyo de La Cruz
7. Improve and formalize existing parking as trail Staging Area just south of Arroyo de La Cruz
8. Restoration and screening plantings – native
9. CCT signs and wayfinding

### Segment 2-3: Highway 1 Realignment Area - Arroyo de la Cruz to Piedras Blancas Lighthouse (Approx. 3.0 mi)

This segment consists of the Highway 1 realignment project, which Caltrans is planning and designing in coordination with DPR. The improvements are summarized in this Master Plan, but are a separate project and process that is already underway.

#### DPR Plan for Realignment Area

1. Staging Area at Piedras Blancas Motel site – coordinate use of parking areas with redevelopment of the motel,
2. Construct approximately 2.8 miles of gravel/decomposed granite surface multi-use trail

3. 4 trail bridges – 35 to 95 feet long
4. 210 feet of boardwalk
5. Add CCT signs

**Segment 2-4: Piedras Blancas Lighthouse to South Elephant Seal Boardwalk (1.9 miles)**

1. Close and restore approximately .1 mile of trail on bluff north of the Elephant Seal Parking Area.
2. Bridge or sidepath on top of existing culvert
3. Bridge over drainage
4. Install 4 unit restroom at South Elephant Seal Parking area
5. Restoration and screening plantings for the restroom – native
6. Small boardwalk over drainage in Elephant Seal Parking Area
7. Construct approximately 1.5 miles of native surface coastal trail
8. Construct approximately 25 feet of boardwalk
9. CCT signs and wayfinding



Figure 1-3: Segment 2 Recommended Improvements

**Segment 3: Broken Creek Bridge to Hearst San Simeon State Park (See Figure 1-4)****Segment 3-1: South Elephant Seal Boardwalk to San Simeon Pt. Conservation Area (2.4 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 2.5 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Utilize sidepath over existing culverts to cross 7 drainages, including Adobe Creek)
3. Construct parallel pedestrian bridge to highway bridge across Oak Knoll Creek (60-1)
4. CCT signs and wayfinding
5. Widen highway shoulders to at least 4 feet(assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)

**Segment 3-2: San Simeon Point and W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach (1.9 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 2 miles of native surface coastal trail within the Public Access Conservation Easement
2. Install trail bridge at drainage
3. Install one trail bridge across two adjacent drainages
4. Construct a fence between Hearst bull pasture and trail (approx. 1.5 miles).
5. Install signs to mark on-street portion of trail into San Simeon Point
6. Install crosswalk markings and signs at intersection with San Simeon Pier and Hearst Castle Access Road
7. Install crossing safety improvements, based on study, at intersection of Highway 1 and Hearst Castle Road
8. Construct paved Class I path to Hearst Castle Visitors Center within existing fenced ROW
9. Install paved path from the new crossing south and west through W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach
10. Utilize existing culvert to cross Broken Bridge Creek
11. CCT signs and wayfinding
12. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet(assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
13. Proposed staging area near Sebastian's store and related improvements for docent-led access to San Simeon Point Conservation Area are assumed to be part of a separate parallel project and process

**Segment 3-3: Broken Creek Bridge to Pico Creek (2.7 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 2.6 miles of native surface coastal trail.
2. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across Little Pico Creek
3. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across Pico Creek
4. CCT signs and wayfinding
5. Proposed docent parking area and related improvements for docent-led access to Pico Cove Conservation Area are assumed to be part of a separate parallel project and process

**Segment 3-4: San Simeon Acres and Junge Ranch (1.7 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 1.7 miles of native surface coastal trail – a segment in the highway ROW, and a parallel route nearer to the bluff
2. Construct trail bridge across Arroyo del Padre Juan
3. Construct new trail bridge and utilize existing culvert to cross drainage
4. Utilize existing culvert to cross drainage 53-2
5. Sign existing roads in the village as shared routes for the trail
6. Close and restore trails along the edge of the bluff in Junge Ranch
7. CCT signs and wayfinding
8. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)

**Segment 3-5: Hearst San Simeon State Park Campground (1.2 miles)**

(This segment has locations with almost no space between the highway and the ocean)

1. Construct approximately 0.8 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across San Simeon Creek
3. CCT signs and wayfinding



Figure 1-4: Segment 3 Recommended Improvements

## Segment 4: Northern Cambria to Fiscalini Creek (See Figure 1-5)

### Segment 4-1: Northern Cambria (1.7 miles)

1. Improve native surface trail from View Point access drive to a beach crossing
2. Sign existing Moonstone Beach boardwalk as CCT
3. Coordinate with Cambria CSD project to close path gap along Moonstone near Windsor
4. Improve beach access road at Shamel Community Park (re-grade and erosion control)
5. CCT signs and wayfinding



Beach access in Cambria

### Segment 4-2: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (1.7 miles)

1. CCT signs and wayfinding on existing and new trails and /or on-street routes
2. Develop connection south and east to central Cambria (one of 2 alternatives):
  - a. Construct unpaved trail approx. 0.2 mi. from ridgeline trail to existing Santa Rosa Creek Nature Trail, and construct undercrossing of Santa Rosa Creek highway bridge (Caltrans has previously opposed this concept) to connect to existing Cambria CSD trail and extend south to connect to existing trails to Ramsey Road, and on-street route approximately 0.3 mi. along Ramsey to Burton Drive, OR:
  - b. Construct unpaved trail approximately 0.3 mi. from south end of ridgeline trail, extending north and east to sidepath in highway ROW, which would extend approximately 0.4 mi. east to Burton Drive.

### Segment 4-3: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve to Fiscalini Creek (2.0 miles)

1. Sign approximately 2 miles of on-street route
2. Based on obtaining access rights across private parcel(s) from willing sellers, construct approximately 0.3 mi. of multi-use path through Strawberry Canyon Park to Orville Avenue, and a 0.1 mi. segment of multi-use path from Bradford Street to Gleason Street. Options from this point are:
  - a. Based on obtaining access rights across private parcel(s) from willing sellers, construct approximately 0.3 mi. of multi-use path and a trail bridge across Fiscalini Creek to connect southeast to the highway 1 ROW, OR;
  - b. Sign an on-street route northwest along Green Street to Ardath Drive intersection with Highway 1.



Figure 1-5: Segment 4 Recommended Improvements

## **Segment 5: Fiscalini Creek to Estero Bluffs State Park (See Figure 1-6)**

### **Segment 5-1: Ardath/Hwy 1 Intersection to Harmony Headlands State Park (5.8 miles)**

1. CCT signs and wayfinding
2. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
3. Construct trailhead upgrades at Harmony Headlands State Park including improved roadway signs to designate the trailhead as a CCT staging area
4. As a long-term project, based on acquisition of access from willing sellers, or through conditions on development entitlements, develop a CCT route away from the highway, generally within sight and sound of the ocean

### **Segment 5-2 Harmony Headlands State Park to Estero Bluffs State Park (1.4 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 1.4 miles of paved Class I path southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the Caltrans ROW.
2. Construct new trail bridges or boardwalks across Villa Creek
3. CCT signs and wayfinding
4. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
5. As a long-term project, based on acquisition of access from willing sellers, or through conditions on development entitlements, develop a CCT route away from the highway, generally within sight and sound of the ocean

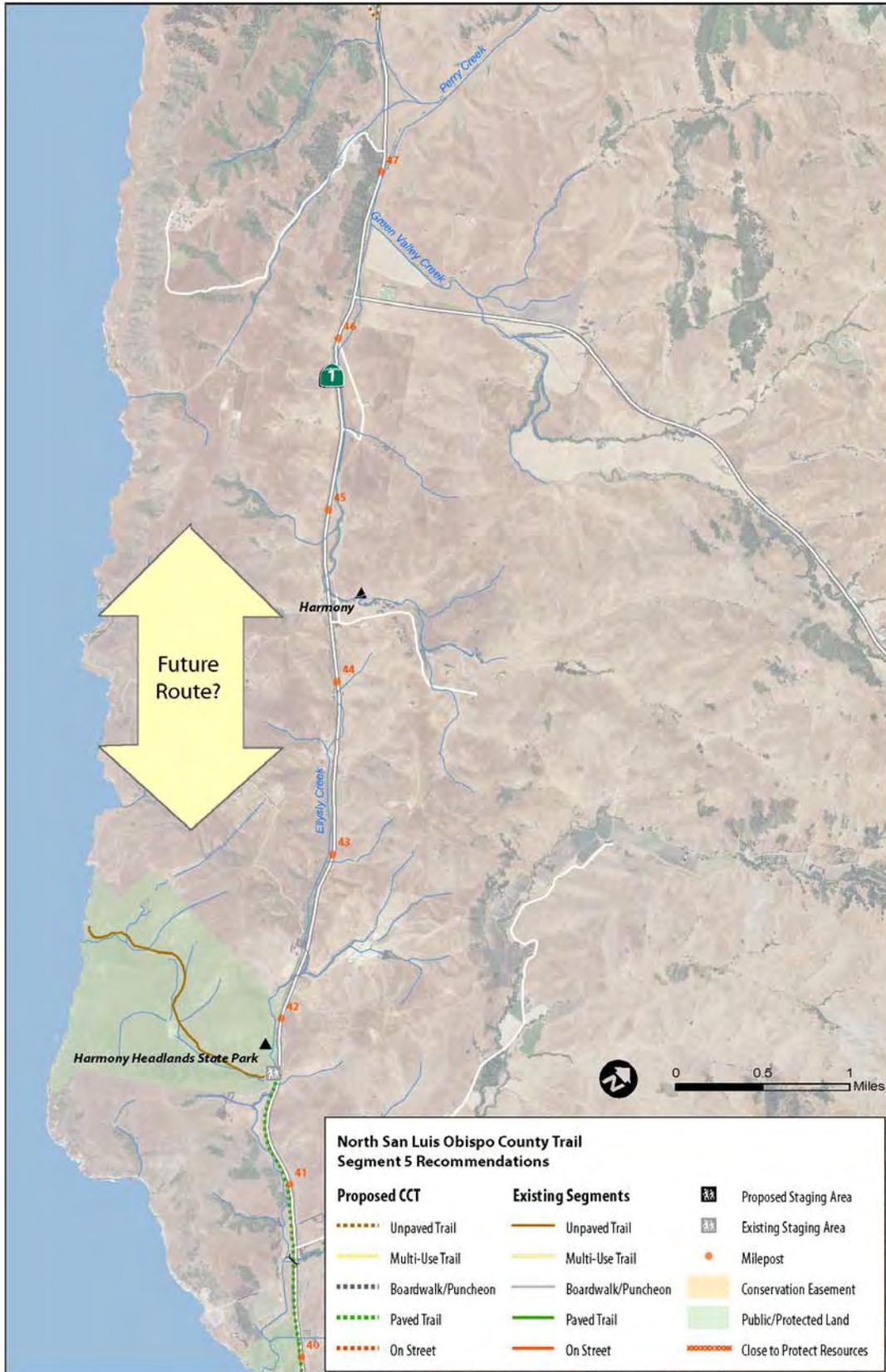


Figure 1-6: Segment 5 Recommended Improvements

## **Segment 6 Estero Bluffs (See Figure 1-7)**

### **Segment 6-1 Estero Bluffs State Park West (1.2 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 1.2 miles of paved (Class I) path southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the ROW
2. Utilize the existing culverts or build new trail bridges to cross 3 drainages
3. Close and restore approximately 0.4 miles of existing blufftop trail
4. Coordinate with pullout consolidation and habitat restoration by Caltrans. Incorporate CCT signs, mapboards at major pullouts where appropriate.
5. CCT signs and wayfinding

### **Segment 6-2 Estero Bluffs State Park East (2.1 miles)**

1. Construct approximately 2.1 miles of paved surface (Class 1) coastal trail southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the ROW
2. Coordinate with pullout consolidation and habitat restoration by Caltrans. Incorporate CCT signs, mapboards at major pullouts where appropriate.
3. Construct 0.8 miles of native surface coastal trail on the bluff
4. Improve or close and restore some existing trails that are in sensitive areas or experiencing erosion or drainage problems
5. Utilize the existing culvert (for paved trail) and build new trail bridges (for unpaved trail) to cross several drainages
6. CCT signs and wayfinding

### **Segment 6-3 Cayucos (0.9miles)**

1. Sign approximately .07 miles of Ocean Ave. as a bicycle route
2. Sign Ocean Ave to redirect non-cyclists to Lucerne Rd and back to Ocean Ave
3. Install new sidewalk approaches to Cayucos Creek bridge
4. Utilize and sign the existing sidewalk or widen existing sidewalk on the bridge over Cayucos Creek
5. Improve connection to existing Class I path along outside of the pier parking area
6. Install CCT signage information at Cayucos Pier parking area



Figure 1-7: Segment 6 Recommended Improvements

## 1.8.2. Estimated Costs

Table 1-1 presents a summary of estimated costs by Segment. Detailed cost estimates are contained in Appendix H, and the features of each element of the trail network are explained in Chapter 4.

**Table 1-1: Preliminary Cost Estimates by Segment**

Preliminary Design, Permitting and Construction Costs <sup>1</sup>	Cost <sup>2</sup>	
	Low	High
Segment 1	\$902,481	\$902,481
Segment 2	\$3,863,415	\$16,289,142
Segment 3	\$13,518,342	\$35,427,199
Segment 4	\$706,441	\$1,947,800
Segment 5	\$2,776,317	\$2,802,337
Segment 6	\$7,043,504	\$8,095,527
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,810,500</b>	<b>\$65,464,486</b>

<sup>1</sup> Construction costs include trail, staging area, and drainage crossing improvements. Implementation includes surveys, technical studies, and design; environmental compliance; and project administration. Permitting includes fees to acquire applicable local, state, and federal permits.

<sup>2</sup> Cost estimates represent the range in cost associated with different drainage crossing improvement options. Segment 1 does not have a range because the drainage crossing solution has been determined to be a trail bridge.

Table 1-2 summarizes the unit costs for many of the trail types and associated drainage crossing options. These costs are based on actual bid prices for comparable facilities on other Coastal Trail or similar trail projects. The drainage crossing options, which in most cases cannot be determined until later stages of design, are the reason for the wide range of potential costs for most trail segments.

**Table 1-2: Typical Unit Costs for Trail Components**

Item	Description/Example	Cost Per Mile/Each
Route Signage	CCT identity and wayfinding, typical info and rule signs along trail route	\$1,000
Paved Trail	Construct paved "Class I" multi-use trail in higher use areas, typically 8' to 12' wide	\$628,000
Multi-Use Trail	Construct improved pervious surface multi-use trail in higher use areas, typically 8' to 12' wide	\$237,000
Unpaved Trail	Construct native surface coastal trails, typically 4' wide, in coastal bluff areas	\$45,000
Close trails and restore	Close and restore unpaved "volunteer" trails in sensitive habitat areas or where unsustainable	\$29,012
Drainage Crossing	Boardwalk/Puncheon 10' wide	\$1,320,000 (\$250 per LF)
Drainage Crossing/ Bridge	350' to 400' Long Steel Bridge	\$1,000,000 (each)
Drainage Crossing/ Bridge	100' Steel Bridge	\$200,000 (each)
Drainage Crossing/ Bridge	15' to 25' Wood Bridge	\$6,250 (each)
Drainage Crossing/ Bridge	40' to 50' Fiberglass Composite Bridge	\$200,000 (each)
Drainage Crossing/Bridge	100' to 200' Steel Bridge	\$700,000 (each)

### 1.8.3. Implementation Strategy Summary

The California Coastal Trail is a very long-term and visionary project. It is opportunity-driven, based on the availability of funds and partnership with other coastal transportation or recreation projects. This Master Plan is intended to be a useful “toolkit” to support implementation of specific projects based on opportunities. SLO County, due to a large degree to the leadership of SLOCOG, has been particularly successful in obtaining funding and developing partnerships to implement trails and other alternative transportation modes projects, including many segments of the CCT.

In northern San Luis Obispo County, coastal trail implementation is strongly linked to California State Parks’ plans and actions in Hearst San Simeon State Park and other DPR-owned lands, and on Caltrans’ current and future plans for realignment of Highway 1 and conversion of the former highway to CCT or other provisions for accommodating the trail along with the highway.

Master Plan **Chapter 5** details the implementation steps, responsible and supporting parties and their roles in implementation, operation, and management. This is presented on a sub-segment basis to provide maximum flexibility in project phasing for grant applications.

Project costs are presented on a segment basis in **Appendix H** to support grant applications and other project implementation steps.

Because implementation is opportunity-driven, there is no specific schedule to implementation, although potential logical phases are discussed in the Action Plan

#### Funding for Implementation

The projects are likely to be mainly funded through grants. There are many potential grant funding sources, as detailed in **Appendix I**. It is impossible to determine in advance which specific programs may fund specific elements, but examples of funding sources for existing SLO trail projects illustrate the range of opportunities:

##### Bob Jones to the Sea Trail:

Phases funded with:

- Congressional earmarks
- City General Funds
- County Parks Fees
- Fish & Game funds
- Transportation Enhancements
- Regional Surface Transportation Program



### Pismo Beach - Grover Beach Promenade

Phases funded with:

- Transportation Enhancements
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
- Regional Surface Transportation Program
- Congressional Earmarks



### Moonstone Beach Boardwalk and Trail

Phases funded with:

- Regional Surface Transportation Program
- Recreational Trails Program
- State Parks
- Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM)
- and more



## **Addressing Operation and Maintenance**

Ongoing resources/funding for trail operation and maintenance (O & M) is often a greater challenge than funding for planning, design, and construction. The challenge has greatly increased in recent years of tightened agency budgets. In this context, some grant programs are funding limited O & M costs, but this is not a permanent solution.

### Who will be responsible?

Most of the trails in the Master Plan area will be operated by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Some would be on U.S. Forest Service land and presumably would be managed by that agency. Other existing trails on the route are managed by BLM and its docents for the Piedras Blancas area; the San Simeon and Cambria Community Services Districts; and receive support from. Future trails in these areas would presumably be managed by the same entities. Finally on-street improvements such as wide shoulders or bike lines for bikes, and markings and signs for on-street routes may be managed by Caltrans or the County Roads Division. In any case, given ever-tightening agency budgets, partnership with volunteers, non-profit organizations such as the Cayucos Land Trust, and often commercial entities, is the wave of the future to enable trails to stay open. These sorts of partnerships are the key to answering the tough question about ongoing maintenance and management for any particular trail project or segment.

### Operation and Maintenance Plan

An O & M Plan should be an integral part of any trail project and aspects of this are often formally required for environmental and encroachment permits. A thorough ongoing O & M program will benefit the basic physical, aesthetic, and biological qualities of the route, and result in many other benefits in as listed below:

- A high standard of maintenance is an effective way of helping advertise and promote the facility as a local and regional transportation and recreational resource;
- The psychological effects of good maintenance can be a deterrent to vandalism, litter, and encroachments;
- Good maintenance is necessary to preserve positive public relations between the adjacent land owners and between public agencies;
- Good maintenance can help make enforcement of regulations on the route more efficient. Local clubs, interest groups, and neighbors will take pride in the facility and will be more apt to assist in its protection;
- A proactive maintenance policy will help improve safety;
- Regular, routine maintenance on a year-round basis will prolong the life of the facility.

### What work is required and what will it cost?

The O & M requirements for trails can vary dramatically based on setting, use, facility type, and management approach. DPR has its' own maintenance guidelines and practices, and this Master Plan does not attempt to analyze or supplement them; rather it provides some general information about O & M requirements and costs so that all parties to future trail projects have a starting point for resolving plans, agreements and budgets. Descriptions of typical O & M costs, examples of actual costs for other trails, and a sample form for estimating O & M costs are provided in the Action Plan chapter, in section 5.4.

#### **1.8.4. Next Steps**

This Master Plan is a planning-level study of the location and configuration of the CCT. Implementation of actual trail projects will require additional site-specific study, planning and design, as outlined in the Action Plan (Chapter 5). Each project will require thorough environmental study and documentation, and review and permitting consistent with the complexity of the improvements, the sensitive resources, and the regulatory and easement requirements. A primary objective of the Master Plan was to identify, and if possible avoid, significant constraints and address the anticipated criteria and requirements.

## 2. Setting

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the setting of the SLOCCT Master Plan's Study Area. It summarizes existing land uses; existing attractions and destinations; public lands and access easements; and existing and planned bike facilities. This Chapter also describes existing environmental resources within the CCT Study Area and analyzes constraints associated with agricultural, biological, and cultural resources, and geologic hazards. Lastly, this Chapter discusses existing economic resources including a summary of tourist-serving services and amenities. **Appendix B: Physical Conditions: Opportunities & Constraints** provides a more detailed review of the physical conditions, opportunities and constraints for the CCT in the Study Area. **Appendix E: Environmental Resources Analysis** provides a more detailed description and maps of the environmental resources in the Study Area.

### 2.1. Existing Land Use

In San Luis Obispo County, the proposed CCT Study Area extends from the Pacific Ocean to approximately 0.25 mile east of Highway 1, and stretches from the San Luis Obispo-Monterey County line to the community of Cayucos approximately 35 miles south. Jurisdictions within the Study Area include the County of San Luis Obispo and its unincorporated areas, DPR, BLM, and Caltrans.

Public lands west of Highway 1 are used by surfers, pedestrians, and other visitors year round, and popular with local residents and tourists. Recreational uses in this area are those typically associated with beaches and bluffs: picnicking, surfing, hiking, walking, wildlife viewing, and sightseeing. Highway 1 is identified as a Class III bike path along the entire length of the project Study Area in the *San Luis Obispo County Bikeways Plan*.

Figure 2-1 shows land uses for the entire project Study Area.

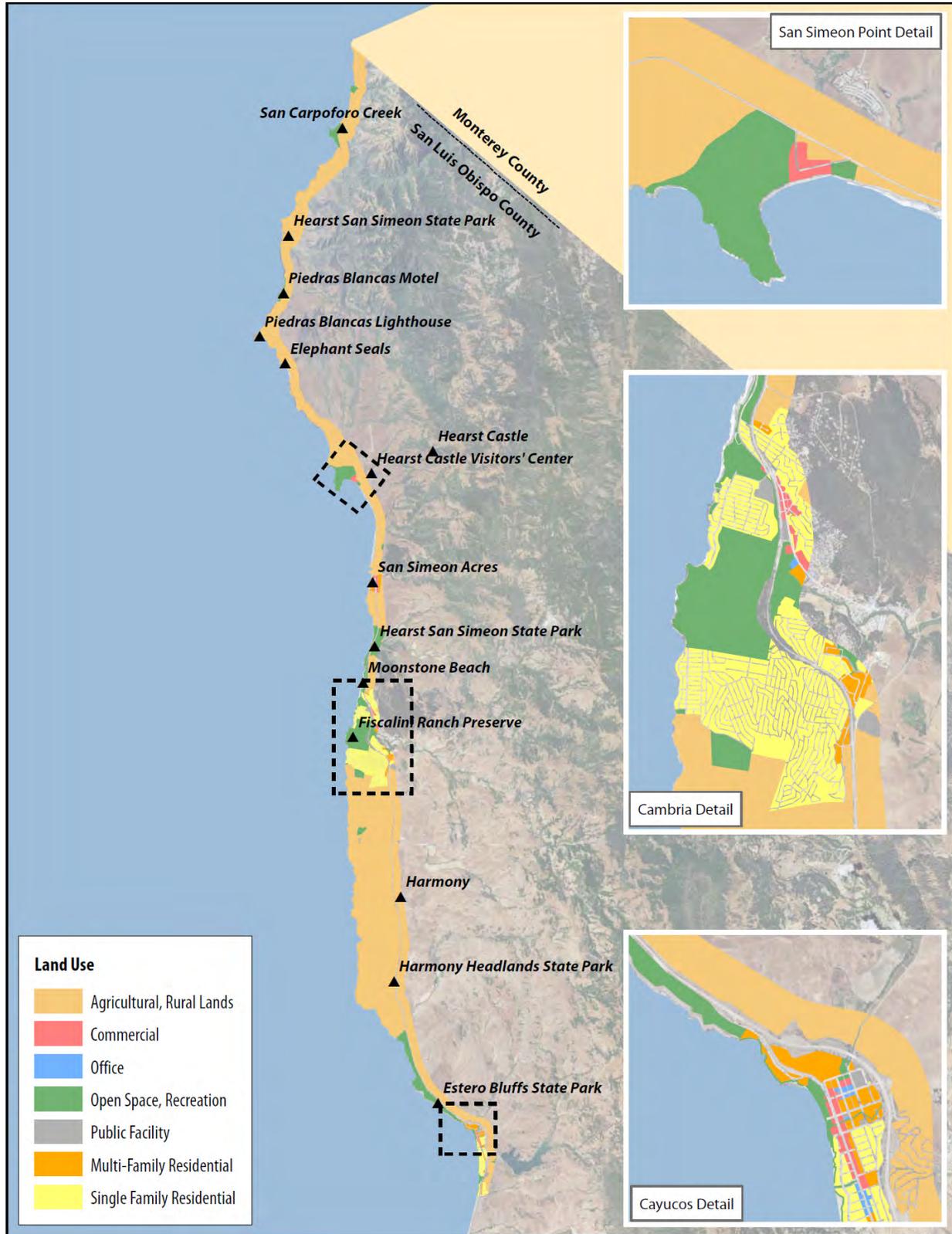


Figure 2-1: Land Use Map

## Land Use Summary Table

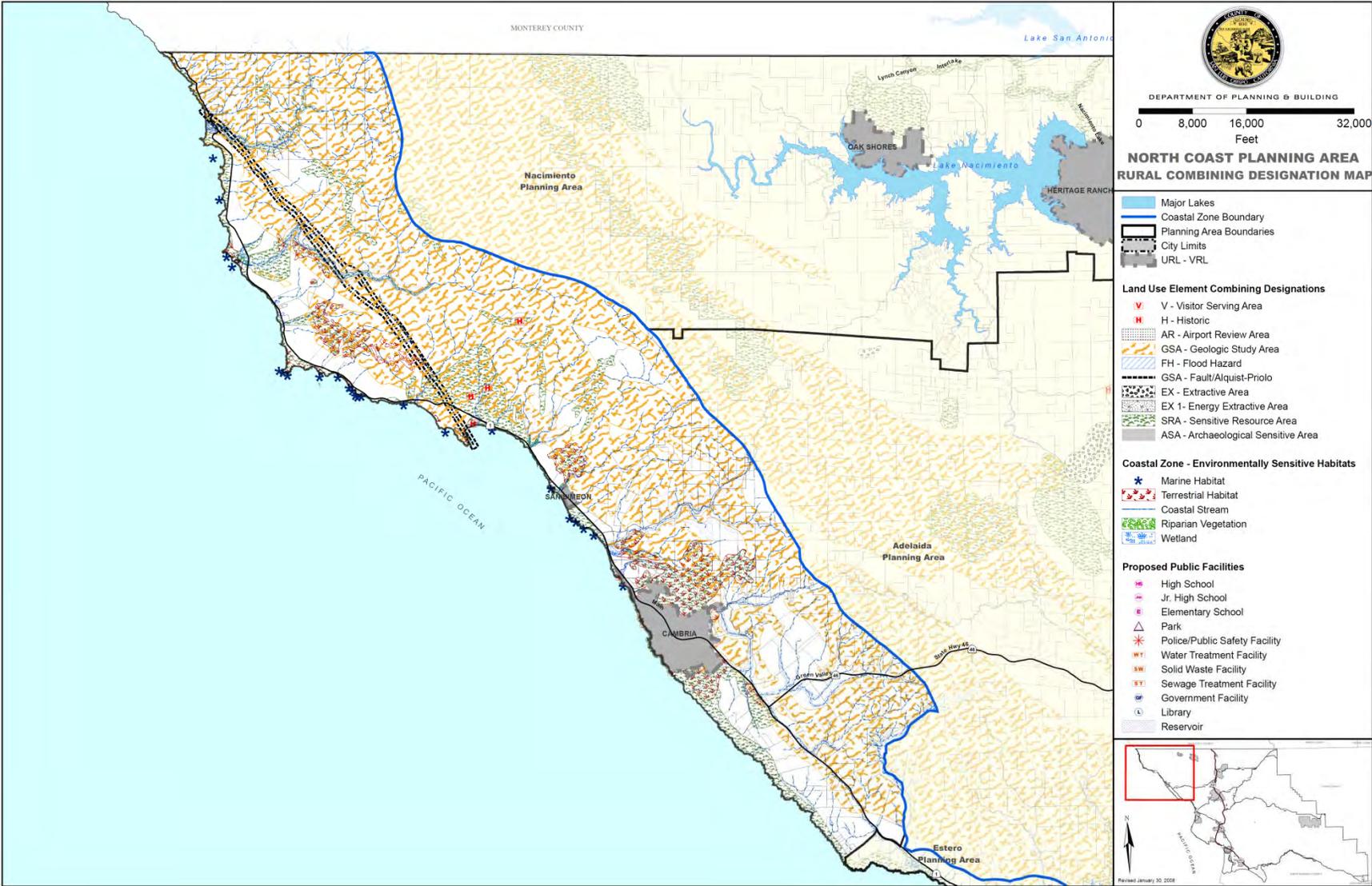
Table 2-1 summarizes the land uses and combining designations for the six segments along the CCT Study Area. Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3 present the North Coast Area and Estero Area Combining Designations, respectively.

**Table 2-1: Land Uses and Combining Designations for Each Segment**

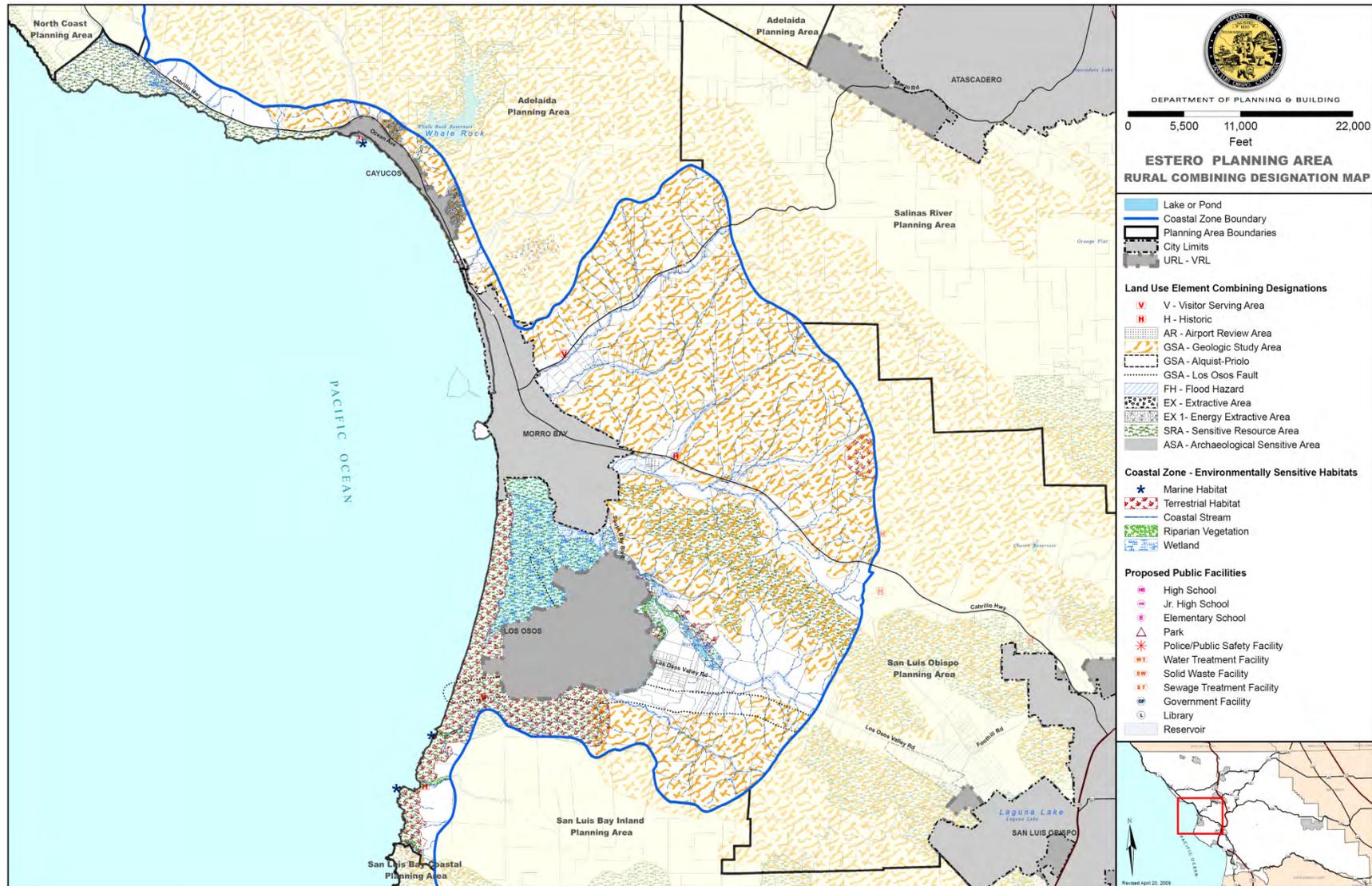
Segment	Land Use Categories	Combining Designations
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Lands</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Zone</li> <li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Landslide Risk</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Faults</li> <li>• Wetland</li> <li>• Marine Habitat</li> <li>• North Coast Area Plan</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Public Facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Zone</li> <li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li> <li>• Marine Habitat</li> <li>• Wetland</li> <li>• Terrestrial Habitat Area</li> <li>• Tsunami Inundation Area</li> <li>• North Coast Area Plan</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Commercial Retail</li> <li>• Residential Multiple Family</li> <li>• Rural Lands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Zone</li> <li>• Williamson Act lands</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Landslide Risk</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Faults</li> <li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li> <li>• Archaeologically Sensitive Area</li> <li>• Marine Habitat</li> <li>• Riparian Vegetation</li> <li>• Terrestrial Habitat Area</li> <li>• Wetland</li> <li>• Tsunami Inundation Area</li> <li>• North Coast Area Plan</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Residential Single Family</li> <li>• Open Space</li> <li>• Commercial Retail</li> <li>• Public Facility</li> <li>• Residential Multiple Family</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Zone</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Landslide Risk</li> <li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li> <li>• Archaeologically Sensitive Area</li> <li>• Marine Habitat</li> <li>• Riparian Vegetation</li> <li>• Wetland</li> <li>• Terrestrial Habitat</li> <li>• Tsunami Inundation Area</li> <li>• North Coast Area Plan</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Rural Lands</li> <li>• Open Space</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Public Facility</li> <li>• Commercial Retail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Zone</li> <li>• Williamson Act land</li> <li>• Geologic Study Area – Landslide Risk</li> <li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li> <li>• Archaeologically Sensitive Area</li> <li>• Terrestrial Habitat</li> <li>• Wetland</li> <li>• Tsunami Inundation Area</li> <li>• North Coast Area Plan</li> </ul>

Segment	Land Use Categories	Combining Designations
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agriculture</li><li>• Rural Lands</li><li>• Open Space</li><li>• Recreation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flood Zone</li><li>• Sensitive Resource Area</li><li>• Estero Area Plan</li><li>• Terrestrial Habitat</li><li>• Wetland</li><li>• Tsunami Inundation Area</li></ul>

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**Figure 2-2: North Coast Area Combining Designations**  
**Source: San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building**



**Figure 2-3: Estero Area Combining Designations**  
 Source: San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

### **2.1.1. Existing Attractions and Destinations**

The CCT alignment will need to consider the presence of existing trail access and recreational amenities. The 2007 Scenic Byways plan identifies the following amenities:

#### **Ragged Point Inn**

Ragged Point is located just south of the Monterey County Line. Interpretive signs, trails, a motel, outdoor café, small grocery store, a restaurant and parking provide accommodations for visitors to enjoy the spectacular views.

#### **San Simeon State Park North Coast**

This recent addition to San Simeon Park includes 13 miles of coastline and with an additional five miles of public access easement on privately owned property. Recreational amenities include hiking trails, restrooms.

#### **Piedras Blancas Lighthouse**

The Piedras Blancas Lighthouse was built in 1874 and has operated since 1875. The BLM is exploring opportunities to keep the lighthouse operating and provide public access to the historic site.

#### **Elephant Seals**

The Elephant Seal Viewing Area is a popular attraction where elephant seals have colonized a beach near Piedras Blancas. They enjoy protection under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The site provides parking, a boardwalk, interpretive signs, kiosks, and guided tours.

#### **Coastal Discovery Center**

The Coastal Discovery Center is a non-profit environmental education facility located across from Hearst Castle. Its mission is to provide education and outreach on the natural and cultural resources of coastal California. The Center's partnership with DPR may provide opportunities for CCT visitors to access its hiking trails, rest areas, interpretive signs, and canoeing and kayaking.

#### **Hearst Castle**

Hearst Castle is the most significant tourist destination along the Study Area, attracting tens of thousands of visitors per year. Though the castle is not directly accessible from the coast, visitors arrive by bicycle, car or tour bus at the Visitor Center near San Simeon.

#### **Hearst San Simeon State Park**

San Simeon State Park is located at the mouth of San Simeon Creek north of Cambria. Coastal bluffs and promontories provide spectacular views of the ocean and shoreline. A 3.3-mile trail currently runs through parts of the San Simeon Natural Preserve. Its amenities include hiking trails, marine life viewing, canoeing and kayaking, camping, benches and tables, parking, and restrooms.

#### **Moonstone Beach**

Moonstone Beach is located in northern Cambria. DPR owns the land west of Moonstone Beach Road, creating opportunities for trails and other recreation amenities. Current facilities include biking paths, hiking,

interpretive signage, benches and tables, parking, and restrooms. A boardwalk was recently constructed on Moonstone Beach.

### **Fiscalini Ranch Preserve**

The Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is located in Cambria. Highway 1 divides the Preserve into East and West projects. Recreational amenities include biking paths, hiking, interpretive signage, benches and tables, and restrooms. Fiscalini Ranch Preserve trails are described in Section 2.2.3.

### **Harmony Headlands State Park**

In 2003, the American Land Conservancy bought the Storni Ranch and deeded it to DPR. Harmony Headlands State Park is located between the village of Harmony and Estero Bluffs State Park. The one-mile Headland Trail winds from the parking lot off of Highway 1 to the shoreline, providing coastal access and panoramic views. Culturally significant Chumash Indian sites are located near the shoreline. Restrooms, parking, and interpretive signage are provided.

### **Estero Bluffs State Park**

Estero Bluffs State Park offers hiking and canoeing or kayaking. There are several parking and access areas connecting Highway 1 to the coastline. Caltrans has been working to consolidate and renovate parking areas along Estero Bluffs.

### **Cayucos State Beach**

Cayucos State Beach is located in the town of Cayucos on Estero Bay. Activities include walking and hiking, marine life viewing, bird watching, canoeing and kayaking, camping, and benches and tables, outside showers, parking, and restrooms are available.

A matrix of existing recreational amenities is shown in Table 2-2. The CCT alignment should connect existing amenities so that trail users may take advantage of those services.

**Table 2-2: Summary of Recreational Amenities**

Location	Milepost	Biking Paths	Walking/ Hiking	Marine Life	Canoeing/ Kayaking	Camping	Benches	Restrooms	Interpretive Signage
Ragged Point			o				o		
San Simeon State Park North Coast			o	o	o	o	o	o	
Piedras Blancas Lighthouse									
Elephant Seals			o	o					o
Coastal Discovery Center			o	o	o		o	o	o
Hearst Castle			o				o	o	o
San Simeon State Park			o	o	o	o	o	o	
Moonstone Beach		o	o				o	o	o
Fiscalini Ranch		o	o				o	o	o
Harmony Headlands SP			o					o	o
Estero Bluffs			o		o				
Cayucos State Beach			o	o	o	o	o	o	

Source: Scenic Byway Corridor Plan (2007)

## 2.2. Public Lands and Access Easements

To the extent feasible, the CCT alignment will utilize public lands and access easements. Public agencies, such as DPR, the USFS, BLM and local jurisdictions, are generally able to accommodate public trail use on their lands and typically have processes in place to construct, manage and operate trail systems. DPR lands, including the 1995 Hearst Ranch acquisition lands, provide a corridor for the CCT north of Cambria. Public lands and easements within the study area are summarized below, from north to south.

North of MP 73.2, land west of the highway is privately owned. Los Padres National Forest encompasses land in the study area east of the highway, except for the mile immediately north of San Carpoforo Creek, which is private. Los Padres National Forest also includes two small parcels west of the highway between the Ragged Point Inn and San Carpoforo Creek.

South of San Carpoforo Creek, the corridor continues on USFS or Hearst Corporation property with a public access easement to San Simeon State Park North Coast. This new acquisition into the park system offers ten miles of shoreline interrupted by only one privately-owned parcel, until reaching Hearst Corporation land with a public access easement at Pico Cove, which are subject to access restrictions. Publicly owned land continues through San Simeon State Park and Moonstone Beach Drive until entering Cambria.

There are several parks and trails within Cambria leading to the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, where the existing Marine Terrace Trail provides an ideal alignment for the CCT. The southern part of Cambria is characterized by residential neighborhoods and vacation homes, with few publicly-owned parcels.

South of Cambria, private land ownership on both the east and west sides of Highway 1 through approximately six miles of the Harmony Headlands presents public access challenges for the CCT. Harmony Headlands State Park then provides opportunities for public access as well as provision of visitor amenities. South another mile and a half through privately owned coastline, DPR manages the area near Estero Bluffs, though the trail may be hindered by the instability of coastal bluffs. Finally, a long public beach through Cayucos provides additional public land that may be available for the trail alignment.

### 2.2.1. Hearst Ranch Acquisition

The 2005 Hearst Ranch Acquisition by the State of California limited development on approximately 82,000 acres and opened up approximately 18 miles of coastland to the public, securing approximately 18 miles of new CCT right-of-way. The development limit protected scenic, open space, agricultural, and natural resources east of Highway 1 and transferred approximately 1,500 acres of the Ranch to the state on the west side of Highway 1 between Pico Cove and Ragged Point. This acquisition accommodates 518 acres for the Caltrans Piedras Blancas Highway 1 Realignment and provides 949 acres to DPR, including the West Side Public Ownership Conservation Area and the Junge Ranch West Side Conservation Area, which were transferred in fee to DPR.

Hearst retained ownership of the 78,000 acres east of the highway, but a conservation easement was granted to the State to permanently protect these lands from development. This did not include the right for public access. Hearst retained ownership of lands at San Simeon, Ragged Point, and Pico Cove but conveyed public access conservation easements for trails and limited public amenities. The public access easement includes the right of the State to develop a continuous portion of the CCT to run across these easement areas.

Figure 2-4, reproduced from documents prepared for Hearst Corporation, provides an overview of the various easements and fee title lands that were conveyed in the acquisition.

### **West Side Scenic Conservation Easement (2005)**

The West Side Scenic Conservation Easement document describes the parameters of the Public Ownership Easement Area (easement area), which includes 832 acres west of Highway 1 between the Monterey County boundary and Cambria. The easement is held by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). It covers land now owned by DPR. The document's purpose is to assure that the easement area will be preserved and protect the scenic viewshed from Highway 1 while allowing public access.

The easement document forbids any activity that would substantially reduce the Conservation Values in the easement area for more than a transient period, using the Scenic Easement Baseline Report as a reference. The Hearst Corporation maintains the right to graze and to allow access to the general public for the CCT. The easement document contains certain restrictions on public access, including

- Access during daytime hours only
- Noncommercial passive recreation only
- No fires

The easement generally forbids the installation or operation of structures within the easement area, except for incidental ranch facilities, public access facilities, and signs. Public access facilities include trails, improved surface parking, roadway access to parking, informational kiosks, signage, public restrooms, trash receptacles, and directly related utilities. While the easement imposes few restrictions on the placement of trails, it does establish criteria for other public access facilities. These facilities should:

- Consider the availability of nearby offsite restroom and parking facilities;
- Use existing topography to the extent possible to screen facilities from Highway 1;
- Where it is not feasible to use existing topography, grading and vegetation used to screen the facilities should not block views of the ocean from Highway 1;
- Provide no more than one point of access to the easement area per mile of coastal frontage.

### **Public Access Conservation Easement (2005)**

DPR was granted a Public Access Conservation Easement for certain areas west of Highway 1 as part of the Hearst Ranch acquisitions. The primary purpose of the easement is to permit permanent and perpetual Public Access within the Public Access Easement Area. The Easement is also intended to preserve the scenic beauty and natural qualities of the area, limit erosion caused by public use, and to protect the private and public investment in the Easement.

The Hearst Corporation retained ownership of the Public Access Easement Area, which consists of the Ragged Point Conservation Area, the Old San Simeon Village Conservation Area, San Simeon Point Conservation Area, and Pico Cove Conservation Area. The Easement document anticipates the CCT and additional opportunities for public access in the conservation areas.

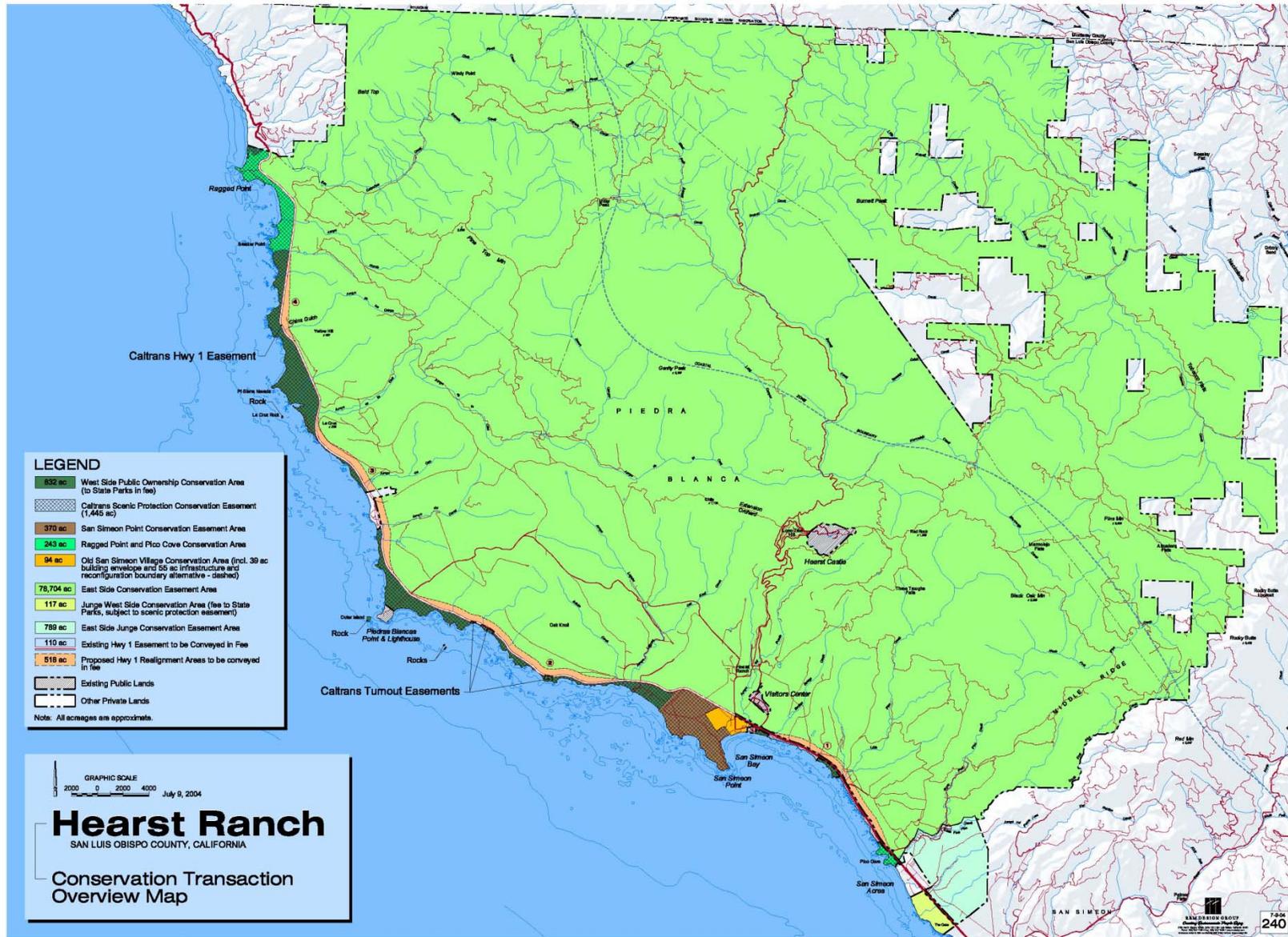


Figure 2-4: Overview of the Easements and Fee Title Lands Conveyed in the Hearst Acquisition

Through the West Side Public Access Conservation Easement, DPR received a public access easement to San Simeon Point, Ragged Point, and Pico Cove. Exhibit D of the document includes *Access Parameters* describing general parameters for public access in the Conservation Areas. In addition, the easement document contains a *Recommended Access Plan*. The parameters and recommendations seek to balance public access with preservation of the site's natural resources and agricultural uses. The Recommended Access Plan describes existing trails on the site and provides descriptions of recommended trail segments and related features, which include connections from the trailhead to San Simeon Point, the West Overlook, and several vista points.

The Access Plan recommends that San Simeon Point be accessible to the public at least 300 days per year, but that public access is limited to 100 visitors per day and no more than 25 people at any time. A docent or park ranger could enforce these limitations.

At Ragged Point and Pico Cove, the Access Plan prioritizes protection of the existing agricultural uses of the site while providing limited public access. There will be major restrictions on public access to these lands. For example, they will not be open to daily visitor access; only for docent-led tours. Visitors will be limited to 20 per day and no visitor amenities will be provided, such as restrooms or trash receptacles. Bicycling is not considered an allowable public use. The Access Plan provides a description of recommended trails in the park.

Each area contains a delineated easement area parallel to the highway that is designated for the CCT alignment. The trail area is approximately 100 feet wide, with some variation depending on site-specific conditions. The CCT should be designed, constructed, and maintained so as to minimize impact to natural resources and sited within designated areas, shown in this Plan's recommendations. In addition, certain restrictions apply to the trail's use, including:

- Access during daylight hours only
- No structures, parking facilities or other facilities except trail, fencing, and signage
- No fires or picnics
- No motorized vehicles

A more detailed description of the Access Plans is provided in **Chapter 4: Master Plan Recommendations**, along with map exhibits reproduced from the Access Plans. The full text of the easements and supporting documents is provided in an appendix to the CCT Master Plan, and is posted on the project website ([slocoastaltrail.com](http://slocoastaltrail.com)).

### **Highway 1 Realignment Areas**

It is anticipated that there are four areas where Highway 1 will need to be realigned eastward in the foreseeable future due to coastal bluff retreat. The future realignments are shown on the appropriate segment maps in **Chapter 4: Master Plan Recommendations**. Area three, between Piedras Blancas and Cambria is currently being designed. The actual configuration of these realignment areas is to be determined through the design process. A separate agreement established the principles of their transfer to the State, and included scenic and conservation easements.

## Junge Ranch Conservation Easements

The Hearst-owned lands known as the Junge Ranch were acquired through a separate set of easements, with fee title of the land west of the highway going to DPR, with a conservation easement to Caltrans, and the American Land Conservancy.

### 2.2.2. Publicly Accessible Beach and Coastal Bluff Areas

Public trails adjacent to the CCT Study Area provide opportunities to connect to destinations in DPR, Cambria, and USFS Lands.

Throughout San Simeon State Park North Coast, access points to the DPR lands are very narrow and require the user to navigate a sharp turn. A typical entrance to San Simeon State Park North Coast appears at the right. These entrances are not ADA-accessible and can be challenging even for able-bodied, larger people. However, DPR may not wish to encourage access at all of these locations.



**Hearst San Simeon State Park typical entrance**

### Inventory of Scenic Vistas

The 2007 Scenic Byways Plan identifies 21 scenic vistas along the corridor between Ragged Point and Cayucos, including three Caltrans-designated scenic vistas identified in the easement documents (see Table 2-3). Scenic vistas are typically pull-outs off of Highway 1. These pullouts may be paved or unpaved, and may or may not have striped parking spaces. These scenic vistas often provide coastal access on informal hiking trails.

**Table 2-3: Inventory of Scenic Vistas**

PM	Location	Size	Amenities
72.9	Ragged Point	20 spaces	Full-service restaurant and hotel, benches, vistas
65.3	Piedras Blancas Hotel	3.2 acres	Currently under study.
63	North Elephant Seal	20 spaces	None
62.7	South Elephant Seal	50 spaces	Boardwalk, Interpretive Signage, Kiosk, Benches
61.6		20 spaces	None
60.4		0.4 acres	None
58.1	W.R. Hearst State Beach	150 spaces	Interpretive signage, kiosks, exhibits, Coastal Discovery Center, restrooms, benches, tables
56.1		40' x 600'	None
55.5		30 spaces	None
54.8		12 spaces	None
53		25' x 330'	None
52	Moonstone Beach	30 spaces	Restrooms, benches, tables, interpretive kiosk
39.6		10 spaces	None
39.5		15 spaces	None
38.8		60' x 440'	None

PM	Location	Size	Amenities
38.6		50' x 340'	None
38		50' x 1200'	None
37.6		50' x 340'	None
37.4		60' x 600'	None
37.1	Estero Bluffs	50' x 480'	None
36.7		N/A	None

Source: 2007 Scenic Byways Study

### 2.2.3. Existing Trails and Public Access Areas

Trails along the Study Area encompass wide ranges of trail conditions and managing agencies, from volunteer beach-access trails to formal boardwalks. Informally developed trails exist on many DPR, USFS, and BLM lands along the Study Area as well as on private lands. The following paragraphs describe the more formally improved facilities, moving from north to south, that have been, or may be, designated as a part of the CCT.

#### Elephant Seal Boardwalk

A boardwalk currently provides visitors opportunities to view the elephant seal colony along the beach. Features currently include benches, interpretive signage, and two parking areas. The boardwalk ranges in width from six to 10 feet and connects to a developed soft-surface trail. The southern end of the boardwalk ends abruptly. A connection back to Highway 1 will likely be needed to ensure a continuous CCT.



**The Elephant Seal Boardwalk**

#### Junge Ranch

Junge Ranch is a part of San Simeon State Park located between San Simeon Village and San Simeon Creek. Its 0.8 miles of uninterrupted coastline and broad coastal terrace present key opportunities for the CCT. A primitive trail accessed from Vista Del Mar Avenue roughly parallels the coastal bluff. The trail descends to the beach to cross a moderate drainage and continues along the coastal bluff before turning towards Highway 1.

The site may also provide opportunities for mitigation because the existing trail passes through wetland areas. These trails could be closed and the wetlands restored, redirecting hikers to less sensitive habitats.

#### Cambria Trails

The Moonstone Beach Boardwalk begins on DPR land north of the village of Cambria. It continues for over a mile between Moonstone Beach Drive and the ocean, with several access points connecting to nearby hotels and residences. The Santa Rosa Creek Trail leads from Windsor Boulevard to Fiscalini Ranch, making connections to downtown Cambria.

### **Fiscalini Ranch**

There are several existing recreational trails on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve.<sup>1</sup> The existing Bluff Trail closely follows the shoreline and is presently open only to hikers. The Marine Terrace Trail is 20 feet wide, ADA-compliant, and accessible to all types of trail users, including emergency vehicles. These trails are accessed from the north on Windsor Boulevard and terminate at the southern edge of the Preserve at South Windsor Boulevard and Marlborough Lane. There are therefore several opportunities for the CCT to cross the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve on existing trails. Additional trails may be available along the ridgeline or returning to Highway 1.



### **Estero Bluffs Trail**

Estero Bluffs State Park poses an interesting opportunity and challenge for the development of the CCT. The existing trail is marked by vertical accesses connect parking areas on Highway 1 to the beach and a minimally developed trail parallels the coastal bluff.

## **2.2.4. Trails Potentially Connecting to the CCT**

Much of the Study Area is on land managed by DPR. Trails adjacent to the CCT Study Area provide opportunities to connect to destinations in DPR, Cambria, and USFS Lands.

### **San Simeon State Park**

San Simeon State Park is one of the oldest units in the California State Park system, encompassing wetland and upland habitats. A 3.3-mile trail runs through parts of the San Simeon Natural Preserve and the Washburn Campground. A 0.4-mile segment of the trail is accessibly designed, including a boardwalk that overlooks seasonal wetlands. The trail includes scenic overlooks, rest-stop benches, and interpretive panels with information on wildlife and habitat. Connection with the CCT is possible at San Simeon Creek.



**The Santa Rosa Creek Trail in Cambria connects to Fiscalini Ranch**

### **Cambria Trail Connections**

The boardwalk parallel to Moonstone Beach Drive is recommended to become a part of the CCT, and there are many other trails in and around the village of Cambria that provide access to its attractions, shopping districts, and residential areas. The Santa Rosa Creek West Trail stretches for approximately 1.5 miles between the Waste Water Treatment Plant, the

<sup>1</sup>Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Master EIR

West Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, and Highway 1. Trails cross Highway 1 along Santa Rosa Creek, through the East Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, continuing to Santa Lucia Middle School. Strawberry Canyon Park in Cambria also provides a short hiking trail.

### Harmony Headlands State Park

Located in Harmony Headlands State Park, the one-mile Headlands Trail is signed with the CCT insignia and will provide vertical access to the beach from the likely trail corridor along Highway 1.

## 2.3. Existing and Planned Bike Facilities

Most of the study area is under the jurisdiction of the San Luis Obispo County Bikeways Plan, updated most recently in 2010. A list of on-street bicycle facilities in the Study Area appears in Table 2-4.

**Table 2-4: Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities**

Location	Start	End	Class
<b>Existing Bikeways</b>			
Highway 1	Monterey County Line	Cayucos	3
Moonstone Beach Drive	Highway 1	Windsor Boulevard	3
Windsor Boulevard	Highway 1	Shamel Park	2
Windsor Boulevard	Shamel Park	Fiscalini Ranch Preserve	3
Main Street	Windsor Drive	Cambria Road	3
Main Street	Cambria Road	1500 Main Street	2
Main Street	1500 Main Street	Highway 1	3
North Ocean Avenue	Highway 1	Cayucos Creek	2
North Ocean Avenue	Cayucos Creek	E Street	3
<b>Proposed Bikeway</b>			
Main Street	Cambria Road	1500 Main Street	2

### 2.3.1. Existing Bicycle Facilities on Highway 1

Review of bicycle access conditions on Highway 1 within the Study Area (moving north to south) shows that access varies from good to virtually absent:

- On the winding and steep road to Ragged Point from the Monterey / San Luis Obispo County line a shoulder ranges from very narrow to absent.
- For the next five miles between milepost (MP) 65 and the bridge over San Carpoforo River at mile marker MP71 the shoulder width varies between a narrow shoulder, soft shoulder and absent. Near the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse, there are environmental protection areas that are fenced-off and signposted with “no stopping or parking” signs.
- Towards Piedras Blancas, the Highway 1 shoulder begins to widen to approximately 3 to 5 feet.
- Moonstone Beach Drive a designated Class III bike route at the north end of Cambria, is an alternative route to Highway 1 for cyclists featuring traveler amenities such as popular rest and picnic areas at State Park beaches, bed & breakfasts and motels with coast views.

- A Class I pathway exists as recreational segment of Cambria’s bicycle network connecting the south village business district to residential areas to the west and Moonstone Beach State Park to the north. Cyclists wishing to maintain continuity of travel and speed are more likely to stay on the highway travel lane rather than utilize the meandering, recreational Class I pathway adjacent to the road.
- Along the scenic two-lane highway, shoulders south of Hearst Castle to Cayucos vary between 8 and 10 feet and are generally adequate for on-road cycling. Considering on-road cycling, vehicle speeds that exceed 55 mph and intermittent coastal-winds pose safety concerns.

### **2.3.2. Planned Bicycle Facilities on Highway 1**

The Caltrans Highway Design Manual standards call for an eight-foot shoulder on all highways where feasible.<sup>2</sup> This is to provide a breakdown lane for vehicles, but it also accommodates bicycles. Where highway improvements are being implemented, Caltrans’ policy is that this eight-foot shoulder standard shall be met unless an exception to standards is justified by specific conditions and review process. If a project to provide more room for bicycles, or any other significant improvement, is undertaken, Caltrans standards require the project to provide eight foot shoulders or demonstrate why eight feet is not feasible. The Transportation Concept Report for Highway 1 in Caltrans District 5 includes the goal of widening non-standard lanes and shoulders between State Route 46 and San Carpoforo Creek. In the rugged terrain north of San Carpoforo Creek, four-foot shoulders are planned where possible. All existing bridges along Highway 1 in the project Study Area currently have eight-foot shoulders, except for the bridge at San Carpoforo Creek.

## **2.4. Environmental Resources**

This section analyzes existing environmental resources present within the Study Area. A detailed analysis is contained in Appendix A. The analysis considers constraints associated with agricultural, biological, and cultural resources, and geologic hazards. The environmental constraints, when coupled with the economic and engineering constraints as described in other sections, are intended to provide a basis for building consensus among project stakeholders regarding the preferred alignment.

### **2.4.1. Agricultural Resources**

#### **Agricultural Resources within the Study Area**

Although portions of the Study Area contain good soils; lack of water, high winds, and excessive fog limit agricultural productivity. Protected valleys allow for small scale development of intensive agricultural uses, such as avocado orchards, berries, and other fruits. However, these limited agricultural uses generally occur further inland, outside of the Master Plan Study Area. Most crops grown in the valleys of Villa Creek, Green Valley, Santa Rosa Creek, and San Simeon Creek are used to supplement cattle feed. The most typical uses are oat hay and irrigated pasture.

Approximately 72 percent of land in the project Study Area is zoned for Agriculture use. Cattle grazing is the predominant agricultural use in the CCT Study Area. The open slopes and rainfall make it one of the county’s

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<sup>2</sup> The citations for the shoulder widths can be found in the Highway Design Manual (HDM) Indices 302.1, 302.2, 307.2, and 307.3. Index 307.3 contains the reference to Design Information Bulletin (DIB) 79, which concerns the applicability under conditions typically found on projects in the Big Sur area.

best dry-range areas. The major agricultural land holding in the North Coast planning area is the Hearst Ranch, which encompasses approximately 77,000 acres in San Luis Obispo County.

### Important Agricultural Soils

Soil characteristics are critical for agriculture. Soils, coupled with climatic conditions and the availability of water largely determines whether agriculture is feasible and, if so, what type. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has identified eight soil “classes.” Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use. These soils are typically used for vegetables, seed crops, orchards, and other irrigated specialty crops and irrigated field crops. Class VIII soils and landforms have limitations that nearly preclude their use for commercial crop production. However, some grazing occurs on these lands. Much of the soil in the Study Area is rated Class VIII.

County policy discourages the conversion of highly productive soils to other uses or loss of these soils through erosion or other disturbances. Trail projects can result in direct conversion of soils, but also indirectly as a result of loss of soils if they are located in such a way that leaves agricultural production infeasible. For example, a trail that bisects a 20-acre parcel leaving a one-acre and a 19-acre piece converts the one-acre piece into a remainder (this is referred to as an “orphaned parcel”).

Within the Highway 1 right-of-way throughout the entire Study Area, soils have most likely been previously disturbed by the construction of the highway. There is also no expectation that these soils would be cultivated, due to their proximity to the highway and separation from other soils by fencing.

### Agricultural Improvements

Agricultural operations that include improvements such as agricultural roads, barns, storage systems, fruit trees, and drainage or irrigation systems, are more likely to be able to support agriculture in the long-term because they are established and the need for capital investment is lower than on sites without them. Based on a field survey and use of aerial photos, barns and other agricultural accessory structures within the Study Area are relatively limited. There are a few agricultural ponds in the Study Area. Agricultural roads are relatively common in the Study Area and intersect Highway 1 in numerous places.

### Agricultural Land Use Incompatibilities

The rural nature of the project Study Area results in few existing land use incompatibilities. Tourism is popular within the Study Area, and tourists can unintentionally affect agricultural operations by disturbing livestock or trespassing. Because most recreational/tourist activities are focused west of Highway 1 and most agricultural activities are east of Highway 1, conflicts are not likely to be a substantial issue.

## **2.4.2. Biological Resources**

The Biological Constraints Maps contain a combination of data obtained from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), San Luis Obispo County 2009 Vegetative Mapping, San Luis Obispo County Oak Woodland maps, San Luis Obispo County geologic maps, the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and information from recent studies and reports conducted in the Study Area. These maps are intended to allow broad scale planning with regard to biological constraints by providing general habitat and sensitive species location information.

The natural habitats in the study area provide suitable conditions for a variety of special-status plant and animal species. Although numerous occurrences of sensitive species are listed on the CNDDDB, many occurrences are not listed, and many more are likely to be discovered during this and other projects. It is therefore appropriate to use known habitat types and their potential to contain sensitive species as a basis for this general overview. For example, herbaceous (grassland) is the most common habitat type present in the study area, and provides suitable conditions for sensitive plant species, and nesting areas for songbirds and burrowing owls. Riverine (stream) habitats such as those present at Villa, Pico, San Carpoforo, and other creeks, as well as ponds and wetland areas, have potential to support a variety of sensitive aquatic species, including steelhead trout, the red-legged frog, and the southwestern pond turtle. The Piedras Blancas Realignment Final Environmental Impact Report discusses coastal prairie as a sensitive resource that occurs in this area.

Table 2-5 lists the major habitat types present in the study area, and correlates those habitats with known or potential occurrences of special-status species. The approximate locations and extent of each habitat type listed in Table 2-5 is illustrated in the Draft Constraints Maps in the Appendix. Other known or potentially sensitive biological areas such as marine mammal haul-outs, documented sensitive species occurrences, and serpentine soil areas, are also included.

**Table 2-5: General Constraints and Special-Status Species of the Study Area**

Habitat Type	General Constraints	Special-status Species Associations
Marine/Estuarine/Beaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waters of the U.S. (below high tide mark) USACE 404 permit required.</li> <li>• Waters of the State. RWQCB 401 permit required.</li> <li>• Regulated by CDFG. 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement required.</li> <li>• Potential habitat for sensitive plant and animal species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western snowy plover (sandy beaches)</li> <li>• Potential “haul-out” areas for elephant seals (sandy beaches)</li> <li>• Tidewater goby (estuarine)</li> <li>• Steelhead migration (estuarine)</li> <li>• Southwestern pond turtle (estuarine)</li> <li>• California red-legged frog (estuarine)</li> <li>• California sea-blite</li> <li>• Salt marsh bird’s beak</li> </ul>
Riverine (streams/riparian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waters of the U.S. USACE 404 permit required.</li> <li>• Waters of the State. RWQCB 401 permit required.</li> <li>• Regulated by CDFG. 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement required.</li> <li>• Potential habitat for sensitive aquatic animal species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steelhead migration corridor (larger streams)</li> <li>• Southwestern pond turtle</li> <li>• California red-legged frog</li> <li>• Two-striped garter snake</li> <li>• Willow flycatcher (nesting)</li> </ul>
Freshwater Emergent / Forested Wetland (freshwater marsh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waters of the U.S. USACE 404 permit required.</li> <li>• Waters of the State. RWQCB 401 permit required.</li> <li>• Regulated by CDFG. 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement required.</li> <li>• Potential habitat for sensitive aquatic animal species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern harrier (nesting)</li> <li>• Tricolored blackbird (nesting)</li> <li>• Southwestern pond turtle</li> <li>• California red-legged frog</li> <li>• Two-striped garter snake</li> <li>• Willow flycatcher (nesting)</li> </ul>
Shrub (Coastal scrub, Coastal dune scrub, Northern coastal bluff scrub)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered sensitive by CCC.</li> <li>• Potential habitat for sensitive plant and animal species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compact cobwebby thistle.</li> <li>• Blochman’s dudleya.</li> <li>• Loggerhead shrike (nesting).</li> </ul>
Herbaceous (grasslands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains areas of native grassland.</li> <li>• Contains areas of coastal prairie.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compact cobwebby thistle</li> <li>• Jones’s layia</li> </ul>

Habitat Type	General Constraints	Special-status Species Associations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential habitat for sensitive plants and nesting birds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American badger</li> <li>Burrowing owl</li> <li>Horned lark (nesting)</li> </ul>
Oak Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive habitat</li> <li>Potential habitat for nesting birds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raptor nesting habitat (potential)</li> <li>Other nesting birds</li> </ul>
Monterey Pine Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive species and habitat</li> <li>Potential habitat for nesting birds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raptor nesting habitat (potential)</li> <li>Monarch butterfly roosting</li> </ul>
Serpentine Soil Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contain a high percentage of sensitive plant species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive plants</li> </ul>

*Species associations within each habitat type are based on presence of suitable habitat and on known occurrences. Many other special-status species, including migratory birds, have potential to occur in the study area.*

### 2.4.3. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are likely to present constraints on the development of the CCT. Important cultural sites occur throughout the Study Area but are concentrated near creeks. The mitigation of impacts to cultural resource sites can be time-consuming and costly. It is therefore recommended that the trail alignment avoid such sites whenever possible. Note: SWCA, the lead environmental consultant, is currently researching the specific sites that are intersected by the potential trail corridor.

#### Cultural Resources Documentation

A list of documentation required for cultural resource impacts includes the following.

- Archaeological Survey Report (ASR):** The identification phase for cultural resources studies typically involves conducting a records search, consultation with Native Americans, conducting an archaeological field survey of the project Area of Potential Effects (APE), and documenting the results of the survey (both prehistoric and historical archaeological properties) in an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR).
- Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER):** An HRER documents evaluations of historical archaeological resources. The HRER is also used to evaluate built-environment resources (structures such as bridges, residences, barns, levees, dams, etc.).
- Historic Properties Survey Report (HPSR):** The HPSR is the summary document that Caltrans uses as its consultation and decision-making document. Caltrans refers to the HPSR when requesting State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) concurrence on determinations of eligibility or ineligibility for properties that were evaluated as part of the project. It is considered an "umbrella document" which incorporates information from the ASR and HRER.

### 2.4.4. Geologic Conditions

Geologic conditions discussed in this section include bluff retreat, landslides/instability, and erosion and sedimentation. This section also includes a discussion of relevant local regulations. General geologic conditions as well as specific geologic hazards are discussed in the context of the six Master Plan trail segments/maps. Appendix A includes figures with potential geologic constraints identified.

### Bluff Retreat

Bluff retreat can shorten the useful life of existing trails, increase maintenance costs, and force potential trail alignments inland.

Generally, the CCC requires new development to be sufficiently setback from bluff edges to last 100 years, with consideration also given to anticipated sea level rise.

These requirements are flexible for restoration and recreational/trail projects that don't include habitable structures or significant, permanent infrastructure improvements. The Moonstone Beach boardwalk was constructed well within the 100-year setback delineation because it could be easily removed or moved.



**Riprap placed to protect the highway from bluff retreat**

The average rate of bluff retreat throughout the Study Area is approximately two feet per year.<sup>3</sup> Site-specific bluff retreat studies vary from 2.7 inches at Fiscalini Ranch, to 1.5 feet along the Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector Trail, to 5 to 6.5 feet per year at the Highway 1 Piedras Blancas Realignment.<sup>4</sup> The realignment project will remove the riprap currently protecting the highway just north of the Piedras Blancas Motel site. Therefore, it is likely that erosion will overcome the abandoned roadway.

### Landslides/Geologic Study Areas

Landslides are not generally a constraint along the Study Area. There are exceptions north of San Carpoforo Creek, where the topography is marked by steep slopes and loose soils, and through the Harmony Headlands, where the Highway 1 corridor is cut into the hillside, creating relatively steep slopes on either side.

The County has identified Geologically Sensitive Areas (GSAs), where Coastal Development Permit applications need to be accompanied by a report prepared by a certified engineering geologist and/or registered civil engineer. Trail projects located in these areas may be subject to more intensive engineering requirements and have higher long-term maintenance costs.

### Erosion and Sedimentation

Possible erosion issues exist throughout the Study Area. Along Highway 1, especially within Segment 5 through the Harmony Headlands, small slope failures result in soil being transported onto the shoulder and, at times, the travel lanes of Highway 1.

Trail construction and use can increase erosion of adjacent lands. Removal of vegetation and changes to localized drainage patterns can exacerbate bluff retreat. Heavy use of unauthorized trails to bluff edges or beaches have increased erosion of adjacent soils and the bluff. Erosion



**Erosion due to a heavily used volunteer trail near Piedras Blancas**

<sup>3</sup> Pacific Institute, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> SWCA, 2009, Caltrans 2010

associated with unauthorized, poorly maintained, and/or heavily used trails also present opportunities for restoration and improved trail strategies.

### **Naturally-Occurring Asbestos**

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has identified asbestos as a toxic air contaminant. The entire Master Plan Study Area is located in a Naturally-Occurring Asbestos Zone, signified by the presence of serpentine rock. Grading projects in serpentine rock larger than 1 acre will require an Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan and an Asbestos Health and Safety Program.

### **Faulting/Seismicity**

The Study Area is subject to seismic activity due to its proximity to numerous faults. Seismic activity could induce liquefaction, potentially resulting in damage to property, roads, and infrastructure, including bikeways. If new bridges are proposed, liquefaction could induce settlement and lateral spreading of soils and failure of bridge abutments.

## **2.5. Economic Resources**

This section describes existing user demographics, economic trends, existing amenities and services, and anticipated future amenities in the Study Area. Findings and Recommendations are summarized at the conclusion of this analysis. As described earlier, the Study Area for the North San Luis Obispo County Coastal Trail is defined as the land between the Monterey and San Luis Obispo County line to the north and Estero Bluffs State Park to the south, a driving distance of just under 35 miles. While Big Sur is outside the Study Area, it is referenced in this analysis due to its influence on resources and use patterns and the services it can potentially provide to users entering or leaving the Study Area.

### **2.5.1. Economic and Demographic Trends**

A significant number of visitors tour the study each year. The Cambria Chamber of Commerce estimates that approximately one million people visit Cambria each year.<sup>5</sup> The Study Area is also the southern gateway to Big Sur with over three million visitors each year. Highway 1, which is designated as the San Luis Obispo North Coast Scenic Byway, is one of the focal points of tourism activity in San Luis Obispo County.

Hearst Castle State Historical Monument (Hearst Castle) is the most frequented location in the DPR system with approximately 660,000 visitors per year.<sup>6</sup> Information on Hearst Castle visitors was used as an indicator of characteristics of visitors to the Study Area. Hearst Castle staff provided anecdotal records on the number of visitors, place of origin, and age.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest number of Hearst Castle visitors is from Southern California followed by guests from the Bay Area and the Central Valley. Less than one percent of Hearst Castle visitors are from San Luis Obispo County. The remaining visitor population, in order of frequency, comes from states bordering California, Canada, the United Kingdom, other European countries, and Australia and New Zealand. The 660,000 visitors per year represent the maximum number that can currently be accommodated through tours of the castle based on

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<sup>5</sup> M. Carson, Personal Communication, June 22, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Scenic Byways Plan, 2007, J. Allen, Hearst Castle, Personal Communication, June 22, 2011

<sup>7</sup> J. Allen, Hearst Castle, Personal Communication, June 22, 2011

funding. The demand for visiting the monument is much higher and numbers could be higher if such a level could be accommodated.

During the tourist season of June through August, the range in visitors' age is relatively broad with no one age group dominating. During the offseason of September through May, the visitors are predominately couples, ages 45 to 65. Ten percent of the castle's visitors are on commercial tours while 90 percent arrive in private vehicles. Bicyclists are infrequent at Hearst Castle, making up less than one percent of the visitors.

While most visitors to Hearst Castle stay in hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and inns, others stay with family or friends, and the smallest segment stays at campgrounds.

California's population is projected to grow 25 percent over the next 20 years.<sup>8</sup> At this pace, there will be 49.2 million people living in California by the year 2030. This translates to approximately 500,000 new residents per year. This statistic suggests the potential for a growing "local" market for tourist serving amenities, particularly in Big Sur.

The northern coast of San Luis Obispo is an international tourist destination. As the southern gateway to Big Sur, tourists travelling along Highway 1 pass through the area and enjoy scenic coastal views with convenient access to amenities. As discussed earlier, the area south of Cambria includes Harmony Headlands and Estero Bluffs State Parks, which feature hiking trails in an undeveloped setting. To the north of San Simeon are the Hearst Castle, California's only publically accessible elephant seal haul out and rearing area, and the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse.

Across the entire Study Area, there are countless surf spots, hiking trails, and unique habitats including coastal dunes, wetlands, and coastal bluffs. In the spring and fall, the coast plays host to migrating sea birds, shore birds, raptors, songbirds and grey and humpback whales. Highway 1 is also a premier cycling destination.

### **2.5.2. Services and Amenities**

This section summarizes the existing tourist serving amenities in the Study Area. For the purposes of this report, the term "tourist serving amenities" represents lodging, restaurants and cafes, grocery stores, and restrooms. Tourist serving amenities are primarily clustered in San Simeon and Cambria, with a handful located throughout the Study Area. Additional clusters of tourist serving amenities are present in Cayucos to the south and Ragged Point and Gorda to the North, outside of the Study Area. Tourist serving amenities are shown in Figure 2-5.

#### **Lodging**

Indoor Lodging: There are approximately 30 hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts within the Study Area. Near the northern edge of the Study Area, Ragged Point Inn offers rooms starting at \$199. In San Simeon, rooms during the tourist season (June-August) range from \$50 to \$200 dollars per night. In Cambria, rooms range from \$90 to \$215 in the summer season. The study found that only two hotels in the Study Area offer rooms under \$99 per night during the tourist season. To the north of the Study Area, in Big Sur, there are few lodgings available and most are over \$100 per night. To the south, however, in Morro Bay and Cayucos, there

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<sup>8</sup> California Department of Finance, 2007

are an abundance of affordable lodging options, especially in the offseason. Generally, room rates during the offseason are considerably less expensive.

There is only one hostel within the Study Area, the Bridge Street Inn, in Cambria. The nightly rate for a bed in a shared room begins at \$25. Private rooms can be rented for \$65 per night.

**Tent and Recreational Vehicle Camping:** There are two formal campgrounds in the Study Area, both in Hearst San Simeon State Park. They are San Simeon Creek Campground, which has 115 campsites for tents and recreational vehicles, and Washburn Campground with 60 primitive campsites. In total, there are 175 sites for camping ranging in cost between \$20 and \$35 per night (per site). Both campsites are on the east side of Highway 1. There are a number of developed campsites just north of the Study Area in Big Sur and several recreational vehicle and tent campgrounds in Morro Bay.

Unauthorized camping in state parks is prohibited, but backpackers may currently use informal campgrounds on USFS land in the Study Area.

### **Restaurants and Cafes**

There are nearly 45 restaurants in the Study Area. While most of the restaurants are in Cambria and San Simeon, the Ragged Point Inn and Sebastian's General-Store Café in San Simeon provide dining options in the northern section of the Study Area.

Restaurants in the Study Area range in prices and offer a wide variety of options including American, Italian, Mexican, Chinese, and barbecue style food. Just south of the Study Area boundary are Cayucos and Morro Bay which also feature a large variety of food types and price ranges. Between Cambria and San Simeon is Harmony Cellars, which offers wine tastings and is open year around.

### **Grocery Stores and Markets**

There are over ten grocery or convenience stores and markets in the Study Area. These vendors are relatively evenly distributed throughout and include a wide range of shop types, from supermarkets to liquor stores to artisanal craft foods.

### **Restrooms**

Public restrooms along Highway 1 include Hearst Memorial State Beach, San Simeon State Park, Piedras Blancas Motel, and public parks in Cayucos. Some of these are portable restrooms and do not provide running water. There is a public restroom and water at Ragged Point Inn. Restrooms at the various lodging, food, and service providers in San Simeon, Cambria, and Cayucos are generally reserved for customers.

### **Other Amenities**

Additional amenities types in the Study Area include a bike shop, a pharmacy, an art gallery and a kennel (dogs are not allowed on DPR land). The San Simeon Chamber of Commerce's website identifies two gift shops in the historic beach town. The Cambria Chamber of Commerce's website reports 20 specialty shops, 13 art galleries, eight apparel shops, five antique shops, three florists, three culinary shops, two pharmacists, one book store, one hardware store, and one bicycle shop. Additional "other" amenities include an artisanal glass blowing studio and kennel in Harmony, and other small gift shops scattered through the Study Area. Cayucos and Morro Bay to the south also feature numerous retail and service providers.

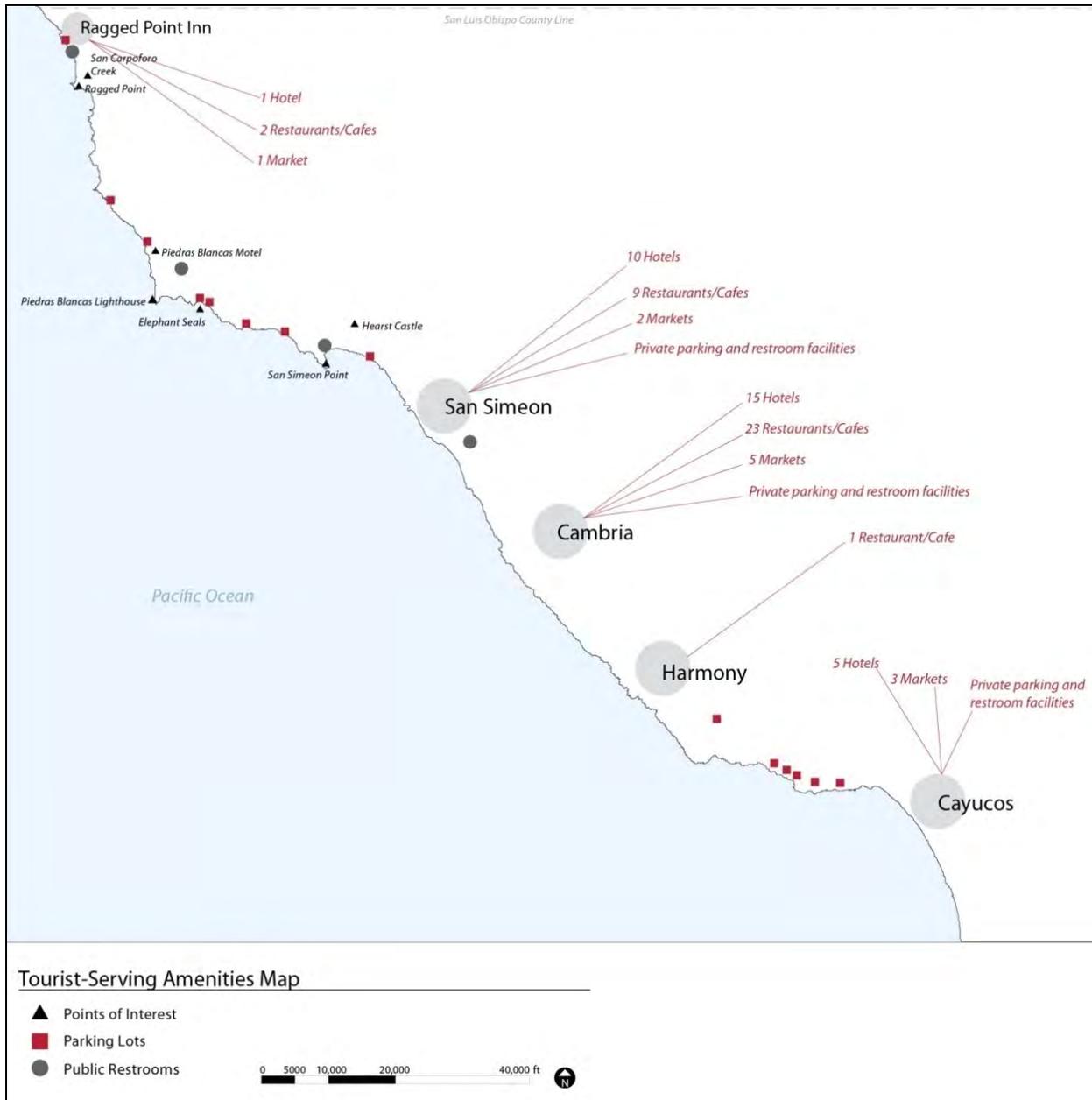
### **Anticipated New Amenities**

According to the San Luis Obispo County Planning and Building Department, there are no new amenities being proposed in the Study Area. However, the Piedras Blancas Motel Site has been the subject of an alternatives and feasibility analysis and will likely be redeveloped.

In May 2005, the Trust for Public Land purchased the Piedras Blancas Motel site with \$4.5 million in grant funding from the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) and federal and private funds. The property features 25 acres of coastal bluffs, two beaches, and a half-mile of shoreline located midway within the 18-mile long Hearst San Simeon State Park. The site is seven miles north of San Simeon, nine miles south of the San Luis Obispo/Monterey County line, and one mile north of the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. The motel complex is comprised of 11 lodging units, a café, laundry room, manager's apartment, and adjacent storage area.

Later in 2005, the property was transferred to DPR. Although the motel has been closed to the public since 2005, the site offers day-use parking, a publically accessible (portable) restroom, and convenient beach access.

In 2010, The SCC and DPR in conjunction with Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. released the Piedras Blancas Motel Feasibility Study and Reuse Alternatives report, which analyzed potential redevelopment scenarios. Recommended alternatives range from light structural improvements of existing buildings to the construction of tent cabins. The initial recommendation points to conducting the minor structural improvements and operating the facility as a low cost hostel with additional outdoor recreational vehicle and primitive tent camping.



**Figure 2-5: Tourist Serving Amenities in the Study Area**

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### 3. Design Standards and Guidelines

The Design Standards and Guidelines chapter summarizes standards and guidelines for pedestrian, bicycle, and trail facilities that may be part of the Coastal Trail network. Multiple public agencies own property within the study area, including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The vast majority of the trail would be located within state property; primarily State Parks land and, to a lesser extent, Caltrans right-of-way (ROW). Coastal Trail facilities will need to meet the design criteria of the applicable federal, state, and local standards. The design standards and guidelines presented in this chapter have been incorporated into the recommendations presented in Chapter 4, Master Plan Recommendations.

There are federal, state, and local environmental regulations that apply to trails and other forms of development. These requirements are discussed in the Action Plan chapter in the context of permit requirements for pedestrian, bicycle, and trail facilities.

#### 3.1. Summary of Design Guidelines and Regulations

Table 3-1 identifies the topics addressed in each of the design guidelines and regulations contained in this chapter.

**Table 3-1: Summary of Design Guidelines and Regulations**

Design Guideline or Regulation	Topics Addressed
<b>Federal</b>	
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)	
Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared roadways (lane width, on-street parking, signing)</li> <li>• Bike lanes (widths, intersections, symbol guidelines)</li> <li>• Shared use paths (separation from roadways, width, clearance, design speed, grade, sight distance, intersections, signing, marking, drainage)</li> <li>• Other design considerations (bicycle facilities through interchange areas, traffic signals, bicycle parking, accessibility requirements)</li> </ul>
The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board)	
Proposed Guidelines for Public Rights-of-Way (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum standards for sidewalks, street crossings, and other elements of the public rights-of-way (including walkways and sidewalks, street or highway shoulders where pedestrians are not prohibited, crosswalks, islands and medians, overpasses and underpasses, on-street parking spaces and loading zones, and equipment, signals, signs, street furniture, and other appurtenances provided for pedestrians)</li> </ul>

Design Guideline or Regulation	Topics Addressed
Draft Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Recreational) Trails (surface requirements, maximum slope, clear tread width, passing spaces, signs, resting intervals, gates and barriers)</li> <li>• Outdoor recreation access routes (surface requirements, maximum slope, clear width, passing spaces, slopes, resting intervals)</li> <li>• Beach access routes (surface, clear width, slopes, resting intervals)</li> <li>• Picnic and camping facilities</li> </ul>
U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Amendment to the ADA Regulations Regarding the Use of Wheelchairs and Other Power Driven Mobility Devices 28 CFR part 35 (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires managers of public facilities, including trails, to accommodate people with disabilities who wish to use various types of non-wheelchair powered vehicles for access</li> <li>• See California Department of Parks and Recreation Departmental Notice No. 2011-02: Permissible Uses of Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD)</li> </ul>
<b>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)</b>	
Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public traffic</li> <li>• Caltrans adopted the updated California MUTCD (CA MUTCD) in January 2012</li> </ul>
Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared-use paths (access to path, path surfaces, changes in level, grades, rest areas, width, passing spaces, railings, signs)</li> <li>• Recreation trails (path surfaces, changes in level, grades, rest areas, width, passing spaces, trails through steep terrain, steps, edge protection, signs)</li> <li>• Outdoor recreation access routes (surface, clear tread width, openings, tread obstacles, protruding objects, passing space, cross slope)</li> </ul>
<b>State</b>	
<b>California Coastal Commission (CCC)</b>	
California Coastal Act of 1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires each of the state's coastal cities and counties to adopt a long-term management plan, known as a Local Coastal Program</li> <li>• See County Local Coastal Program</li> </ul>
<b>California Coastal Conservancy</b>	
Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal resource protection, access easements, the construction and location of lateral and vertical accessways, overlooks, trails, and coastal bikeways</li> <li>• Trail easements (width, setback, desired connections, alignment in relation to shoreline)</li> </ul>
Completing the California Coastal Trail Plan (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal trail wayfinding (sign placement, emblem design)</li> </ul>

Design Guideline or Regulation	Topics Addressed
<b>California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)</b>	
Highway Design Manual (HDM) (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class I bikeway/shared use path (width, clearances, grade, separation from highways, design speed, sight distance, horizontal and vertical curves)</li> <li>• Class II bike lane (width, placement, at-grade interchange design)</li> <li>• Class III bike route (bike route criteria, at-grade interchange design)</li> <li>• Multipurpose trails</li> <li>• Clear recovery zones</li> </ul>
California Highway Barrier Aesthetics (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier design</li> </ul>
California MUTCD (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs (application, placement)</li> <li>• Pavement markings (word messages, symbols, arrows, reflectorization, patterns and colors on shared-use paths, demarcating obstacles, dimensions)</li> <li>• Traffic signals and crossing beacons (application, placement)</li> </ul>
<b>California Department of Parks and Recreation</b>	
Trail Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail design, construction, survey, operations and maintenance standards</li> </ul>
Accessibility Guidelines (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility standards</li> <li>• Recommendations and regulations for compliance with accessibility laws</li> <li>• Signs (placement standards, minimum character sizes, level of information required)</li> </ul>
Brand Standards Handbook (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specification for the State Park Logo and its use</li> <li>• Standard colors and example designs for park entrance and directional signs</li> </ul>
Departmental Notice No. 2011-02: Permissible Uses of Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes standards for OPDMD access (size, weight, speed, noise, emissions)</li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	
<b>County of San Luis Obispo</b>	
General Plan Parks and Recreation Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian (trail tread widths, horizontal and vertical clearances, and maximum gradients)</li> <li>• Bike (trail tread widths, horizontal and vertical clearances, and maximum gradients)</li> <li>• Horse (trail tread widths, horizontal and vertical clearances, and maximum gradients)</li> <li>• Multi-use trails (trail tread widths, horizontal and vertical clearances, and maximum gradients)</li> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• Trail amenities</li> </ul>

Design Guideline or Regulation	Topics Addressed
Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan - Framework for Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines coastal accessways</li> </ul>
Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan - Coastal Plan Polices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoreline access policies</li> </ul>
North Coast Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refers to Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (lateral and vertical access)</li> <li>• Refers to Cambria Communitywide Standard 23. Bridge Replacement and Repair (bridge access)</li> <li>• Refers to San Simeon Acres Circulation Program (land use connections)</li> </ul>
Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal zone development policies and standards (blufftop setbacks)</li> <li>• Coastal access requirements</li> </ul>
Site-Specific Documents (Hearst Ranch Scenic and Conservation Easements)	
West Side Scenic Conservation Easement (held by Caltrans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for CCT segments and public access facilities, which are defined as new trails, improved surface parking, information kiosks, signage, public restrooms, trash/recycling receptacles, and directly related utilities</li> <li>• Siting and screening requirements</li> <li>• Sign locations, designs and sizes must meet DPR standards for signs in coastal State Parks</li> </ul>
West Side Public Access Conservation Easement (held by State Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal Trail Alignment Zone</li> <li>• Allows for trail, fencing, and signage</li> <li>• Other facilities (e.g., structures, parking facilities) are prohibited</li> <li>• Recommendations for the CCT within the Ragged Point, Pico Cove, and San Simeon Point conservation areas</li> </ul>
West Side Junge Ranch Scenic Conservation Easement (held by the American Land Conservancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for CCT segments and public access facilities, which are defined as new trails, improved surface parking, information kiosks, signage, public restrooms, trash/recycling receptacles, and directly related utilities</li> <li>• Siting and screening requirements</li> <li>• Sign locations, designs and sizes must meet DPR standards for signs in coastal State Parks</li> </ul>

## 3.2. Transportation Facilities versus Recreational Trails

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be separated into two general categories: transportation facilities and recreational trails. Distinct design standards and guidelines may apply to each category as described below.

### 3.2.1. Transportation Facilities

Transportation facilities typically pass through or connect developed areas and serve as part of the multi-modal transportation system. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities may be required to meet transportation facility

design standards in order to receive state or federal funding, comply with owner or regulatory agency access or design standards, or to secure approval of an encroachment permit within state right-of-way.

Section 887 of the Streets and Highways (S&H) Code defines a "nonmotorized transportation facility" as a facility designed primarily for the use of pedestrians, bicyclists, or equestrians; it may be designed primarily for one of these uses or it may be designed as a joint-use facility. The S&H Code further states that a nonmotorized transportation facility may be part of the highway (such as a shoulder) or it may be separated from highway traffic for exclusive nonmotorized use (such as a bike path or sidewalk). Transportation facilities must comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG). All standards set forth in Caltrans Highway Design Manual Chapter 1000 shall be met in order for a Class I, II, or III bikeway to serve as a transportation facility.

### **3.2.2. Recreational Trails**

With recreational trails, the trail is the destination. Recreational trails typically connect and traverse open space areas and natural features, rather than developed areas. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) describes recreation trails as trails designed to provide a recreational experience. Use of a recreation trail is a choice made by those individuals who desire the experience that the trail provides. Recreation trails should provide users with disabilities with access to the same range of trail experiences offered to other users at the site. This means that trails should be designed to reach destinations or points of interest and travel through various environments. Providing access to people with disabilities is best achieved by providing trail information in multiple formats and by minimizing grade, cross slope, barriers, and the presence of surfaces that are soft or unstable<sup>1</sup>. Recreational trails may be single use (e.g., hiking, biking, or equestrian only) or multi-use facilities.

### **3.2.3. Selection of Facility Category**

Site conditions, such as steep topography, can limit the types of trail facilities appropriate at a given site. For example, Class I bikeways have a maximum grade of five percent (except for short segments). In order to negotiate grades greater than five percent, a pathway meeting Class I bikeway design standards must incorporate one or multiple switchbacks, depending on the grade and length of the slope. Class I bikeways along long, steep slopes that must incorporate multiple switchbacks create undesirable, circuitous routes. A recreational trail, which in the case of the CCT includes multi-use pathways, allows for steeper running grades and design features such as stairs, and may be more appropriate for lengthy, steep slopes.

In general, more grant funding is available for construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that serve as transportation facilities than those that serve primarily recreational purposes. Transportation pathways typically serve a wide range of users and connect residential land uses with transit, commercial, institutional, office, and recreational uses. Due to these characteristics, transportation pathways are more likely than recreational pathways to offset vehicular trips, potentially easing roadway congestion and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and urban runoff. Pathways meeting Class I bikeway/ADA-accessible pathway design standards provide greater transportation benefits than pathways that do not meet these standards and are eligible for a larger pot of grant funding for construction. While a recreational trail is less expensive to construct than an ADA-compliant pathway or Class I multi-use path, funding sources for recreational

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<sup>1</sup> FHWA. Designing Sidewalk and Trails for access, Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide.

pathways are limited. The CCT in northern San Luis Obispo County will feature segments designed to transportation standards, and segments designed as recreational trails.

### 3.3. Federal Standards and Guidelines

#### 3.3.1. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

The AASHTO Guidelines for the Development of Bicycle Facilities is the leading national document with guidelines for designing on-street bicycle and facilities and shared use paths. The most recent version of this nationally recognized document is the 3rd Edition, dated 1999. An updated version is currently in draft form, dated 2010.

##### Rural Roads

The 2010 Draft, “AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Bicycle Facilities,” makes several recommendations to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians on rural roadways. Adding or improving paved shoulders on rural roadways with higher speeds or traffic volumes has many safety benefits for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Expanded shoulders provide space for maintenance operations, to escape potential crashes, or for temporary storage of disabled vehicles. They extend the service life of the road by reducing edge deterioration and further improve sight distances in areas with curves and cut sections. Paved shoulders can benefit pedestrians as well by providing a place for them to walk in locations where there is no sidewalk and the current roadside condition is unsuitable for walking.

Roadway retrofits for bicycle facilities are best accomplished as part of repaving or reconstruction projects. On uncurbed cross sections with no vertical obstructions immediately adjacent to the roadway, paved shoulders should be at least four feet (1.2 m) wide to accommodate bicycle travel. Rugged terrain and other physical features however, may impact the amount of horizontal space available for a roadway section. In retrofit situations where minimal right-of-way is available, a minimum width of three feet (0.9 m) of operating space is allowed between the edge line of the vehicle travel lane and the edge of pavement (where there is no curb). Where physical space is limited, additional real estate for shoulders may be gained by restriping roadways to decrease the width of vehicle travel lanes. The AASHTO Draft Guide states the following:

*“Where the total width of the outside travel lane is 14 feet (4.3 m), it would be preferable to instead provide a 10-11 foot (3.0 - 3.4 m) travel lane and a 3 - 4 foot (0.9 - 1.2 m) shoulder. Re-striping a 14 feet (4.3 m) travel lane as a 12 foot (3.7 m) lane and a 2 foot (0.6 m) shoulder is not recommended. Since the paved shoulder would not accommodate bicycle operating width, and trying to avoid or repeatedly crossing an edge stripe is uncomfortable, bicyclists would need to ride in the travel lane instead. Even if a bicyclist manages to ride (partly or mostly) on such a narrow paved shoulder, this design may convey a misleading impression of adequate width to a motorist overtaking the bicyclist in the adjacent travel lane,*



**“Share the Road” sign assembly  
(W11-1 + W16-1P)**

*when in fact it would be necessary for the motorist to be driven at least part way into the next lane in order to pass the bicyclist with adequate clearance.”*

Signs should be used on rural roadways where non-motorized users are anticipated, to alert motorists that bicyclists may be encountered and that they should be mindful and respectful of them. Options available include the “Share the Road” sign assembly (W11-1 + W16-1P).

The AASHTO Draft Guide further states that rumble strips create a potential hazard for bicyclists and are not recommended to be used on shoulders where cycling is anticipated. If they are to be used, a minimum clear path of four feet from the rumble strip to the outside edge of the paved shoulder should be provided.

#### AASHTO Design Guidelines

- Paved shoulders should be at least four feet wide
- In retrofit situations where minimal right-of-way is available, paved shoulder should be a minimum of three feet wide
- Where physical space is limited, additional width for shoulders may be gained by restriping roadways to decrease the width of vehicle travel lanes

#### **Shared Use Paths**

A shared use path allows for two-way, off-street bicycle and pedestrian use. These facilities are frequently found in parks, along rivers, beaches, and in greenbelts or utility corridors where right-of-way exists and there are few conflicts with motorized vehicles.

#### AASHTO Design Guidelines

- Width:
  - Minimum for a two-way shared-use path (only recommended for low traffic situations): 10 feet
  - Recommended for high-use areas with multiple users such as joggers, bicyclists, rollerbladers and pedestrians: 12 feet or greater
  - 8-foot-width may be used for a short distance due to physical constraints
- Lateral clearance: 2 feet or greater shoulder on both sides.
- Overhead clearance: 8 feet minimum, 10 feet recommended.
- Maximum design speed for shared-use paths: 20 mph. Speed bumps or other surface irregularities should not be used to slow bicycles.
- Grade:
  - Recommended maximum: 5%
  - Steeper grades can be tolerated for a maximum of 500 feet
- Railings
  - Protective railings, fences, or barriers should be a minimum of 42 inches

- 48-inch railing height is recommended where there are hard corners or sharp curves on a given path, particularly on bridge approaches. Vertical balusters are not recommended for railings designed to provide protection for bicycles to prevent snagging bicycle pedals or handlebars.

### **Sidepaths**

A sidepath is a shared use path located immediately adjacent and parallel to a roadway. AASHTO provides guidelines for the appropriate use of sidepaths but states that a “pathway adjacent to the road is generally not a substitute for the provision on on-road accommodation such as paved shoulders or bike lanes.” Sidepaths can be considered under the following conditions:

- The path will generally be separated from all motor vehicle traffic.
- Bicycle and pedestrian use is anticipated to be high.
- To provide continuity with an existing path through a roadway corridor.
- The path can be terminated at each end onto streets with good bicycle and pedestrian facilities, or onto another well-designed path.
- There is adequate access to local cross-streets and other facilities along the route.

### **AASHTO Design Guidelines**

- A sidepath should satisfy the same design criteria as shared use paths in independent corridors.
- A minimum 5-foot separation between the sidepath and a high-speed roadway is recommended. Where the separation is less than 5 feet, a physical barrier or railing should be provided.

### **3.3.2. The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 had major significance for those who plan and design any type of publicly-used facility, including trails. The Access Board is responsible for developing accessibility guidelines for new construction and alterations of facilities subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which applies to state and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities – virtually every type of facility that is open to the public, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, paths, and trails.

The Access Board has developed draft accessibility guidelines for public rights-of-way, including walkways and sidewalks, parking areas, and associated features. A draft version of the final guidelines has been published for Outdoor Recreation Areas, including Outdoor Recreation Access Routes between developed facilities, and trails. The Access Board has recently initiated an effort to develop guidelines for shared use paths.

### **Sidewalks and Pedestrian Routes**

The federal guidelines for the accessibility of sidewalks, street crossings, and other elements of the public rights-of-way are contained in the Proposed Guidelines for Public Rights-of-Way, dated July 26, 2011 and available at [www.access-board.gov/prowac/index.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/index.htm).

These guidelines cover facilities for pedestrian circulation and use in the right-of-way, including walkways and sidewalks, street or highway shoulders where pedestrians are not prohibited, crosswalks, islands and medians, overpasses and underpasses, on-street parking spaces and loading zones, and equipment, signals, signs, street furniture, and other appurtenances provided for pedestrians. They contain detailed guidance and links to other technical standards and guidelines, such as the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD) 'Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities', American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, July 2004 and 'Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access', FHWA/US DOT September 2001. The Guidelines are proposed rules that are expected to be adopted as law in the near future. The July 2011 Proposed Guidelines are an update of the 2005 Revised Draft Guidelines.

The Guidelines define two types of pedestrian facilities:

1. **Pedestrian Access Route** - A continuous and unobstructed walkway within a pedestrian circulation path that provides accessibility.
2. **Pedestrian Circulation Path** - A prepared exterior or interior way of passage provided for pedestrian travel.

In California, the Division of the State Architect (DSA) is the agency that develops, adopts and publishes regulations to address the state's own standards for access to people with disabilities to comply with ADA and in some cases exceed the federal standards. See: California Access Compliance Reference Manual, Division of the State Architect, 2003 or latest version.

### **Recreational Trails**

Recreational trails can and by law must be designed for access by people with disabilities, where feasible. There are separate, more flexible standards for recreational trails from urban bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities and routes that connect developed facilities. The standards include exceptions and exemptions for trails where meeting standards would detract from the resources that the trail is accessing, or where this is physically infeasible.

The federal guidelines are contained in the Draft Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, dated December 18, 2009, available at [www.access-board.gov/outdoor/](http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/).

These guidelines cover trails, outdoor recreation access routes, beach access routes, and picnic and camping facilities. The Guidelines are a proposed rule that is expected to be adopted as law in the near future. No changes are expected.

The Guidelines define two types of trail facilities:

1. **Outdoor Recreation Access Route**- A continuous unobstructed path designated for pedestrian use that connects accessible elements within a picnic area, camping area, or designated trailhead.
2. **Trail**- A route that is designed, constructed, or designated for recreational pedestrian use or provided as a pedestrian alternative to vehicular routes within a transportation system.

### **Rules for Shared Use Paths**

Shared use paths (also called multi-use paths) often serve recreational purposes while providing off-road transportation routes for pedestrians, cyclists, roller skaters, and others. Currently there are no adopted

federal rules or guidelines specific to the design of shared use paths for access to people with disabilities. The Access Board is initiating rulemaking to address shared use paths and held a public information meeting on the subject at the ProWalk/ProBike 2010 Conference in September in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The primary general design standard for shared use paths is the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guidelines for Bicycle Facilities.

### Comparison of Federal Standards

Table 3-2 summarizes the key federal standard dimensions for the various types of trail, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

**Table 3-2: Key Standards for Trail, Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

	<b>Class I Shared Use Path*</b>	<b>Pedestrian Access Route</b>	<b>Ramp</b>	<b>Outdoor Recreation Access Route **</b>	<b>Trail ***</b>
<b>Width</b>	8' min (low use areas) 10' w/ 2' shoulders ideally	48" min with 60" min. passing space every 200' or less	60" min	36" min. with 60" min. passing space every 1,000' or less	36" min. with 60" min. passing space every 1,000' or less
<b>Gradient (Running Slope)</b>	< 5% (< 1:20) any length 5-6% (1:20-16.7) for up to 800' 7% (1:14.3) for up to 400' 8% (1:12.5) for up to 300' 9% (1:11.1) for up to 200' 10% (1:10) for up to 100' 11+% (1:9.1) for up to 50'	1:20 (5%) max – any steeper treated as a ramp  Sidewalks that abut a roadway can be as steep as the roadway and still be compliant	8.33% (1:12) max with max 30" rise/ 30' length between landings at top, bottom 60" x 60", max 2% gradient; landing 72" long x 60" at change in direction	1:20 (5%) any length 1:12 (8.33%) for up to 50' 1:10 (10%) for up to 30' with resting intervals 60" long, as wide as trail and max 1:33 (3.33%) gradient	1:20 (5%) any length 1:12 (8.33%) for up to 200' 1:10 (10%) for up to 30' 1:8 (12.5%) for up to 10' with resting intervals 60" long, as wide as trail and max 1:20 (5%) gradient  No more than 30% of the total trail length shall exceed 1:12
<b>Cross-slope</b>	5% max	2% max	2% max	1:33 max (3.33%) or up to 1:20 (5%) where required for drainage	5% max
<b>Surface</b>	Smooth, paved	Smooth, paved	Smooth, paved	Firm and stable; there are specific standards	Firm and stable; there are specific standards
<b>Handrails</b>	--	--	Required on both sides of any ramp w/ rise greater than 6"	--	--

\* AASHTO Guideline – there are no ADA guidelines yet

\*\* All Outdoor Developed Area facilities may be exempted from the Guidelines under the following conditions (1019):

1. *Compliance is not feasible due to terrain.*
  2. *Compliance cannot be accomplished with the prevailing construction practices.*
  3. *Compliance would fundamentally alter the function or purpose of the facility or the setting.*
  4. *Compliance is precluded by the: Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531 et seq.); National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.); National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 470 et seq.); Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 1131 et seq.); or other Federal, State, or local law the purpose of which is to preserve threatened or endangered species; the environment; or archaeological, cultural, historical, or other significant natural features*
- \*\*\* Additional exceptions to 1019 apply to an entire trail as identified in 1017.1*

### **U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Amendment to the ADA Regulations Regarding the Use of Wheelchairs and Other Power Driven Mobility Devices 28 CFR part 35**

As of March 15, 2011, a federal ADA ruling went into effect that requires managers of public facilities, including trails, to accommodate people with disabilities who wish to use various types of non-wheelchair powered vehicles for access. This issue seems to be more a concern than a common problem at this stage. By law, an assessment and policy prepared by the managing agency is the only limiting factor on the types of vehicles or devices that visitors may use. By law, the agency does not have to modify its facilities to accommodate the allowed devices, so the access requirement is different than for other ADA access.

California State Parks has adopted a policy for access by Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs), which are motorized accessibility devices that do not meet the definition of a wheelchair. See Section 4.4 of this chapter.

### **3.3.3. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) FHWA has adopted a policy statement that bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist. FHWA references the use of the best currently available standards and guidelines such as AASHTO and the MUTCD. Furthermore, all federally funded transportation enhancement (TE) projects must be in full compliance with ADAAG.

#### **Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)**

The MUTCD defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public traffic. The MUTCD is published by the FHWA under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F. The MUTCD is a compilation of national standards for all traffic control devices, including road markings, highway signs, and traffic signals. It is updated periodically to accommodate the nation's changing transportation needs and address new safety technologies, traffic control tools and traffic management techniques.

The MUTCD is the national standard, but state transportation agencies differ in how they comply with MUTCD standards. Some states adopt the MUTCD as their standard. Other states adopt the national MUTCD along with a state supplement that might prescribe which of several allowable options are selected for the state's specific purposes. Still other states, California included, use the national MUTCD as the basis for developing their own State Traffic Control Device manuals, which must be in substantial conformance to the national MUTCD. Caltrans adopted the California MUTCD (CA MUTCD) in January 2012 (see Section 4.3 of this chapter).

## **Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide**

The FHWA's Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access, Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide (2001) is another key resource for ADA-compliant sidewalk and trail design. The Design Guide provides planning, assessment, and design guidance for trails. For the purposes of the guidebook, a trail is defined as a path of travel for recreation and/or transportation within a park, natural environment, or designated corridor that is not classified as a highway, road, street, or sidewalk. In Chapter 12 (planning) and Chapter 13 (assessment), recreation trails and shared-use paths are discussed as one unified topic. In the design chapters (Chapters 14 and 15), shared-use paths and recreation trails are discussed separately.<sup>2</sup>

## **3.4. State Standards and Guidelines**

### **3.4.1. California Coastal Commission (CCC)**

Policies in the California Coastal Act of 1976 guide the conservation and development of California's 1,100-mile coastline with the goal of protecting California's coastal resources and providing for their wise use. The Act establishes the California Coastal Commission as a permanent state coastal management and regulatory agency and requires each of the state's coastal cities and counties to adopt a long-term management plan, known as a Local Coastal Program (LCP). Each LCP consists of a land use plan, zoning ordinances and other implementing actions. In enacting the Coastal Act, the legislature declared that a basic goal of the state for the coastal zone is to:

- Maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize recreational opportunities in the coastal zone consistent with sound resource conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners. (Section 30001.5)

The Legislature makes explicit that the Coastal Act policies are applicable to all state agencies (Public Resources Code Section 30402). And, under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, specified federal agency activities are reviewed by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) as well. This delegated responsibility is termed the "federal consistency process." Under this process, the Coastal Commission reviews plans or actions by, for example, the National Marine Sanctuary, Los Padres National Forest, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

All of the potential CCT alignments in northern SLO County are in the Coastal Zone. All new development in the Coastal Zone is subject to first obtaining approval of a coastal development permit (CDP) from either San Luis Obispo County or the CCC—or a federal consistency concurrence from the CCC. No development may proceed without approvals through these review processes. SLO County has a certified LCP, meaning that it is responsible for handling the majority of CDP applications. But, for appeals of a locally-approved CDP, or in retained-jurisdiction areas, and for consolidated CDPs, the Coastal Commission itself will continue to review proposed developments.

Many elements of new trail construction cited in the CCT Master Plan will likely meet the definition of "development." For existing facilities, Coastal Act Section 30610 excludes many ordinary, non-expansive repair and maintenance activities from the CDP requirement. But, Commission Regulations define those

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sidewalk2/index.htm>

classes of repair and maintenance activities that do pose a potential risk of substantial environmental impact and therefore may require a CDP as well.

Chapter 3, Article 2 (Sections 30210 through 30214) of the Coastal Act contains six policy sections addressing public access and development between the first public road and the shoreline. This includes the duty to maximize public access opportunities in new developments, as more completely elaborated in Section 30210. The full text of applicable public access policies from the Coastal Act is included in Chapter 2 of the County's *Coastal Plan Policies* document.

Generally, the CCC requires new development to be set back from bluff edges so that the development would be safe from bluff retreat for at least 100 years. The San Luis Obispo County standard is 75 years. As defined in the California Coastal Act, the term "development" includes the placement of any solid material or structure; grading or removing of any material; and construction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure (PRC 30106). The recommended setbacks are required to factor in anticipated sea level rise. The CCC does make exceptions to the setback requirements for restoration and recreational/trail projects that do not include habitable structures or significant, permanent infrastructure improvements (e.g., the Moonstone Beach boardwalk in Cambria).

Additional policies contained in Coastal Act Chapter 3 include not only those governing the protection and provision of public access and recreation, but also those that protect agriculture, archaeological features, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, scenic views, and the rural character of two-lane State Highway Route 1. Each of these policies could potentially affect the alignment and implementation of the Coastal Trail in northern SLO County.

### **3.4.2. California Coastal Conservancy**

#### **Coastal Accessway Standards**

The California Coastal Conservancy's Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development (Standards) provide guidelines for the location, size, and type of accessways along the California coast. The California Coastal Commission and Conservancy adopted these Standards to ensure a consistent approach is used for access construction. Since sites and circumstances vary along the coast, the application of these Standards is flexible. Specifications for construction of certain parameters will vary depending on the LCP requirements or Commission permit conditions. The Standards apply to all new and existing development.

The Standards provide guidance on thirteen topic areas, including coastal resource protection, access easements, the construction and location of lateral and vertical accessways, overlooks, trails, and coastal bikeways. Concerning trails, the Standards state that specifications for construction will vary according to the LCP. In general, trail easements should be a minimum of twenty-five feet in width and should never be closer than ten feet to an existing residence. Trails should be established on ocean front parcels, depending on the topographic conditions. These trails should connect: a) the shore with inland units of the federal, state, or local park systems; b) access easements; or c) the road with a scenic overlook. Such trails must avoid geologically unstable and erosive soils. Prime agricultural soils should also be avoided except where the trail will not interfere with agricultural production. Trails can feature steps, footbridges, appropriate paving materials, an adequate trail drainage system, trash receptacles, benches, barriers, restrooms and signs.

### **California Coastal Trail Siting and Design Standards**

The CCT trail is intended to be designed and implemented to achieve the following goals:

- Provide a continuous walking and hiking trail as close to the ocean as possible.
- Provide maximum access for a variety of non-motorized uses by utilizing alternative trail segments where feasible.
- Maximize connections to existing and proposed local trail systems.
- Ensure that the trail has connections to trailheads, parking areas, interpretive kiosks, inland trail segments, etc. at reasonable intervals.
- Maximize ocean views and scenic coastal vistas.
- Provide an educational experience where feasible through interpretive facilities.

The trail should be located along or as close to the shoreline where physically and aesthetically feasible. Where it is not feasible, inland bypass segments should be aligned as close to the shoreline as possible. Shoreline segments that cannot be accessed at all times, due to tide fluctuations, should have alternative inland route options.

Where gaps in the CCT are identified, interim trail options should be identified to guarantee trail continuity. When opportunities become available to relocate the trail to the specification noted above, efforts should be made to do so. The interim trail should meet the design standards for the CCT.

Efforts to minimize impacts to environmentally-sensitive habitat and prime agricultural lands should be made to the utmost feasible extent. Sections of the trail may be closed seasonally to protect sensitive species. Trail access points should be limited to “pass and repass,” with alternative alignments provided if necessary and feasible. Mitigation of any necessary impacts can include boardwalk, reducing trail width, protective fencing and adequate drainage along the edges of agricultural land.

The CCT should include existing oceanfront trails, paths and support facilities (e.g., public shorelines, parks, and beach facilities) where appropriate and feasible.

Locating the CCT on vehicular roadways should be avoided if possible. Where not possible it is desirable to:

- Position the trail off of the pavement, but within the public right-of-way.
- Separate the trail from traffic by a safe distance or by the use of physical barriers.
- Physical barriers should not obstruct or detract from the scenic views and visual character of the area.
- Roadway crossings should be made with overpasses, underpasses, or other alternative at-grade crossings.
- At-grade crossings should include appropriate directional and traffic warning signage.

Support facilities (parking and trailhead facilities) should be provided to encourage access to the CCT.

### Coastal Trail Wayfinding

General Coastal Trail signing standards are identified in the 2003, “Completing the California Coastal Trail Plan.” The plan acknowledges the importance of coordinating with the local public land managers for sign implementation but identifies the following general standards:

- Identification signs for the Coastal Trail should be placed at all staging areas, trailheads, junctions, and special features.
- Signage along major inland connecting trails should direct users to the Coastal Trail.
- The location of CCT staging areas should be indicated from highways and major roadways.
- Signs should use international symbols as much as possible.
- ADA-compliant portions of the trail should be clearly indicated.

In 2006, the Coastal Conservancy adopted a trail emblem to provide a brand identity to the trail. The California Coastal Trail Emblem and Signage Applications plan provides specifications for the application trail emblem. There are many uses of the trail emblem. It can be incorporated into trailhead signs, map kiosks, and directional signs, trail markers, coastal access road markers, or in brochures, websites, guides, and public awareness materials.



**Figure 3-1: CCT emblem can be displayed on a brushed aluminum or on a reflective white or grey background.**

### 3.4.3. California Department of Transportation

#### Highway Design Manual (HDM)

The State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Highway Design Manual is used by Caltrans staff and non-Caltrans project managers and planners proposing designs for projects within the Caltrans right-of-way. The design standards cover a wide array of design focus areas including drainage, pavement, and basic design policies. Chapter 1000 specifically focuses on bikeway planning and design. Any trail designated to encroach into or travel within Caltrans right-of-way shall be designed per Chapter 1000 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual.

To review information from all chapters of the design manual please see the entire document online at: [www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/hdm/hdmtoc.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/hdm/hdmtoc.htm)

### Bikeway Design Standards

Caltrans has defined three types of bikeways in Chapter 1000 of the Highway Design Manual: Class I bikeway/shared use path, Class II bike lane, and Class III bike route.

#### *Class I Bike Path*

Class I bikeways are facilities with exclusive right-of-way for bicycles and pedestrians, with cross flows by motorists minimized. Experience has shown that if significant pedestrian use is anticipated, a completely separate facility for pedestrians is necessary to minimize conflicts. The anticipated range of users and forecast level of use by different user groups should dictate the design of each specific facility. At a minimum, Class I bikeways require a minimum 8-foot-wide paved surface and a minimum of 2-foot-wide clear, graded shoulders on both sides. For moderate to high-use segments, a wider paved surface of 10 to 12 feet (minimum) should be considered. In areas where a variety of users are expected, expanded unpaved shoulders should be included where possible. Class I bikeways immediately parallel and adjacent to highways must be separated from automobile traffic by a 5-foot horizontal separation or a 2-foot separation with barrier, per the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. Under certain circumstances, Caltrans may approve exceptions to the Class I bikeway design standards.

#### *Class II Bike Lanes*

A bike lane provides a striped lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway. When bike lanes are adjacent to marked on-street parking, five feet is the minimum width of bike lane. When bike lanes are adjacent to on-street parking that is not marked with a parking stripe or stall marking, 11 feet or 12 feet (depending on the type of curb) is the minimum width of the bike lane where parking is permitted. Where parking is prohibited, the minimum bike lane width is four feet, if no gutter exists, and five feet, if a normal two-foot gutter is present. Wherever possible, the width of bike lanes should be increased six feet to eight feet to provide for greater safety.

#### *Class III Bike Route*

A bike route provides a right-of-way designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians or motorists. Chapter 1000 does not present minimum widths for Class III bikeways, as the acceptable width is dependent on many factors, including the volume and character of vehicular traffic on the road, typical speeds, vertical and horizontal alignment, sight distance, and parking conditions.

### Clear Recovery Zone

The Clear Recovery Zone (CRZ) is addressed under topic 309-Clearances in the California HDM. CRZ widths are identified for the specific type of roadway facility. Within the North SLO CCT project study area, Highway 1 is classified as both a conventional highway and a freeway/expressway<sup>3</sup> and the CRZ distances are as follows:

- From Rugged Point to San Carpoforo Creek – 20 ft (Conventional Highway)
- From San Carpoforo Creek to Cayucos– 30 ft (Freeway and Expressway)

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<sup>3</sup> 309.1 (2) Clear Recovery Zone (CRV)

The Caltrans Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report identifies the descriptive characteristics of the roadway. Table 3-3 highlights the segments within the CCT study area.

**Table 3-3: Highway 1 Segment Descriptions from the Caltrans Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report**

Location	Functional Class	Facility Type	ROW Width	Lane Width	Shoulder Width	CRZ Width
<b>Segment 9C</b>						
Freeway End N/O Cayucos to SR 46 MP36.80-MP45.99	Rural Minor Arterial	Expressway	100'	12'	8'	30'
<b>Segment 10A</b>						
SR 46 to Main St in Cambria MP45.99-MP48.26	Rural Minor Arterial	Expressway	100'	12'	8'	30'
<b>Segment 10B</b>						
Main St Exit to San Simeon MP48.26-58.24	Urban Minor Arterial & Rural Minor Arterial	Expressway	100'	12'	8'	30'
<b>Segment 10C</b>						
San Simeon to San Carpoforo Creek MP 58.24 – MP71.34	Rural Minor Arterial	Conventional Highway	60'-100'	9'-12'	4'-8'	20'
<b>Segment 11</b>						
San Carpoforo Creek to SLO/Mont County Line MP71.34-74.32	Rural Minor Arterial	Conventional Highway	60'	10'	1'-2'	20'

When the standard CRZ widths are “impractical,” the HDM provides guidance for minimum clearances for all objects that are closer to the edge of traveled way than the clear recovery zone distance<sup>4</sup> as follows:

- Freeways and Expressways: eight feet (shoulder width) and four feet minimum when shoulder is less than four feet wide
- Walls: Minimum 10 feet
- Conventional highways without curbs: standard shoulder width or minimum four feet when shoulder is less than four feet wide

When a Class I Bike Path is closer than five feet from the edge of the shoulder and is within the CRZ, a physical barrier is required. Suitable barriers include a chain link fence or dense shrubs. Low barriers (e.g., dikes, raised traffic bars) next to a highway are not recommended because bicyclists could fall over them and into oncoming automobile traffic. In instances where there is danger of motorists encroaching into the bike path, a positive barrier (e.g., concrete barrier, steel guardrail) should be provided.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 309.1 (3) Minimum Clearances

<sup>5</sup> 1003.1(5) Separation Between Bike Paths and Highways

### California Highway Barrier Aesthetics

Caltrans published a report on highway barrier aesthetics in 2002 that provides guidance for barriers.<sup>6</sup> The report provides an overview of barrier design options which may be beneficial within the scenic easement of Highway 1. The photos below provide two examples.



*A cable barrier is less costly than metal beam guardrail and is can be easier to maintain.*



*Type 60 Textured concrete barrier along Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, CA.  
(Photo credit: District 5 Landscape Architecture Office)*

### California MUTCD (2012)

The California MUTCD (CA MUTCD) is published by Caltrans and is issued to adopt uniform standards and specifications for official traffic control devices in California. Traffic control devices are defined as all signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, or bikeway by authority of a public agency or official having jurisdiction, or, in the case of a private road, by authority of the private owner or private official having jurisdiction. The CA MUTCD is not applicable to privately-owned and maintained roads or commercial establishments in California, unless the particular city or county enacts an ordinance or resolution to this effect.

The CA MUTCD incorporates the FHWA's MUTCD (2009 Edition) and all policies on traffic control devices issued by Caltrans that have been issued since January 21, 2010 and other editorial, errata, and format changes that were necessary to update the previous documents.

On state highways, the CA MUTCD shall not supersede Caltrans' Standard Plans, Standard Specifications or the Special Provisions publications but all Standard statements of the CA MUTCD shall be met. On state highways, whenever there is a discrepancy between the specifications and requirements contained in the CA MUTCD, and those contained in Caltrans' Standard Plans, Standard Specifications or the Special Provisions

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/barrier\\_aesthetics/barrier-aesthlfinal.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/barrier_aesthetics/barrier-aesthlfinal.pdf)

publications, Caltrans' Standard Plans, Standard Specifications or the Special Provisions publications shall govern.

#### **3.4.4. California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)**

##### **Trail Handbook**

DPR's Trail Handbook serves as the guideline for trail design, construction, survey, operations and maintenance standards. This handbook is widely used as a reference guide for recreational trail construction. Reaching the decision to build a new trail, implementing significant modifications to an existing trail, or revising the allowed uses on an existing trail requires both staff specialist review and public input. While a new trail, a major trail modification, or a change in designated trail use can be implemented on a single trail basis, park-wide and regional trail system planning remains the preferred and the most effective avenue for identifying and establishing interrelated recreational trail corridors, thus mitigating resource impacts and reducing construction and maintenance costs.

Currently there is no edition of this handbook published online. To request information on obtaining a copy of the handbook, contact the California State Parks Archives at (916) 653-6519.

##### **Accessibility Guidelines (2009)**

DPR Accessibility Guidelines (Guidelines) present principles for providing accessibility within state parks. The Guidelines are the primary tool provided by the California State Parks Accessibility Program to accomplish its mission of guiding the creation of universal access to California State Parks. The Guidelines embody a compilation of accessibility standards, recommendations and regulations for compliance with accessibility laws, particularly those established by the Federal Access Board, and are intended for use throughout California State Parks. According to the Guidelines, all persons and entities should independently confirm standards, recommendations, laws and regulations related to accessibility.

The Guidelines include standards and recommendations for numerous facilities common to parks, including trails. As stated in the Guidelines, every effort should be made to install and maintain accessible trails. To this end, the Guidelines contain standards for accessible trails such as maximum running slopes, minimum width and frequency of resting spaces, maximum acceptable gaps in the trail surface, optimal clearances and signage requirements. The Guidelines further state that accessible trails should represent the most significant features and environmental experiences unique to the area.

The Guidelines provide guidance on the level of information required on trailhead, direction and regulatory and safety signs. It also provides guidance on placement standards and minimum character sizes based on viewing distance from which they will be read. Trailhead signs, map kiosks, and direction signs should describe trail conditions in order to provide information so that persons with disabilities can determine if they can traverse the trail. Trail conditions could include average grade, cross slope, width of trail, trail surface and average size of obstacles. Identification and description signs (such as a restroom sign) must meet Title 24 and ADA standards for permanent signs. Finally, the Accessibility Guidelines also provide standards for accessible exhibits which would include the trail map kiosks and interpretive signs and media.

### Brand Standards Handbook

California State Parks Brand Standards Handbook, January 2007 provides branding standards in order to create a strong, unified style and tone for the State Parks Department. The handbook provides specification for the State Park Logo (Figure 3-2) and its use as well as standard colors and example designs for park entrance and directional signs (Figure 3-3).



Figure 3-2: CA State Park logo



Figure 3-3: The Trailhead sign at Harbony Headlands State Park follows the design guidelines in the Branding Handbook (left). Concept designs for direction signs (right).

### Departmental Notice No. 2011-02: Permissible Uses of Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD)

California State Parks has adopted a policy for access by Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs), which are motorized accessibility devices that do not meet the definition of a wheelchair. OPDMDs include Segways, ATV's, golf carts, and any other vehicle with a motor. In California State Parks (excluding those designated as California Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Areas), standards for OPDMD access are as follows:

- Size: OPDMDs shall not be wider than 36 inches or longer than 48 inches.
- Weight: The overall weight of the device and user(s) shall not exceed 550 pounds.
- Speed: OPDMDs shall not be operated at speeds in excess of five miles per hour. Devices capable of exceeding speeds of five miles per hour will not be prohibited from use but individuals observed exceeding the speed limit will be subject to citation and penalties.

- Noise: OPDMDs shall not produce noise levels in excess of 70 decibels.
- Emissions: OPDMDs shall not exceed zero emissions during use.

Vehicles that follow these standards are allowed on signed and designated Class I accessible or multiple use trails and on controlled access roads that are open to multiple recreational uses such as fire roads.

## 3.5. Local Standards and Guidelines

### 3.5.1. County of San Luis Obispo

#### General Plan

##### Parks and Recreation Element

Appendix B of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan contains trail design standards for pedestrian, bike, horse, and multi-use trails, signage, and trail amenities applicable to facilities on properties within the County's jurisdiction. The Appendix specifies trail tread widths, horizontal and vertical clearances, and maximum gradients for each of the trail types. The Appendix identifies sight distances and surfacing for bike paths. It also provides guidance on trail amenities, including tree planting, sign posts, fencing, and erosion control.

#### **County of San Luis Obispo Local Coastal Program (LCP)**

Land use and development within the coastal zone are subject to provisions of the County's LCP, which are contained in four documents:

- Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan - Framework for Planning;
- Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan - Coastal Plan Polices;
- North Coast Area Plan; and
- Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance.

These documents work together to implement the LCP. The documents are summarized in **Appendix E**. A brief description of each component as it relates to trail and trail amenity design are provided below.

##### Land Use Element and Local Coastal Program – Framework for Planning

This document serves as the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan for the County's coastal zone. It provides a framework for County decisions on land use, development, and circulation. General Goal No. 12.c encourages improved access to the coast through the acquisition and development of coastal accessways, trails, and parks, in appropriate locations. Framework for Planning identifies areas within the coastal zone where shoreline access is important. Coastal accessways are a principally permitted use in all land use categories in the Coastal Zone. Principally permitted uses are both allowable and encouraged. Framework for Planning defines coastal accessways [C3] as land areas, pathways, and improvements that may be used for access to the shoreline or other coastal resource such as a stream. They may include pathways, trails, or overlooks and may be improved or unimproved. Typical improvements may include parking, lighting, structural improvements such as retaining walls, stairs, signs, picnic tables, and restrooms.

**North Coast Area Plan**

*Land Use Element and Local Coastal Program*

Part of the County General Plan, the North Coast Area Plan (NCAP), allocates land use throughout the planning area. The North Coast Planning Area extends from the Monterey County Line to Point Estero. General Goal 17 from the NCAP is to provide public access to the shoreline, consistent with the need to protect natural resource areas from overuse.<sup>7</sup> In particular, the NCAP calls for:

- Developing all feasible vertical and lateral pedestrian access easements to and along the shoreline, consistent with other public access goals of this plan.
- Developing a Coastal Trail through the communities.
- Developing all other feasible pedestrian circulation systems in the coastal zone.
- Providing a bike path system for the planning area.
- Providing conspicuous signage for all public easements.

The NCAP provides an overview of existing and potential coastal accesses and a detailed table describing their locations. The preferred California Coastal Trail alignment and accesses in Cambria are illustrated below. The NCAP also identifies the need for additional public access easements through the North Coast area. The development of a regional bikeway system, signage, and trail management are objectives of the NCAP as well. Specific improvements include a roadside park or overlook for Northwest San Simeon Acres, a blufftop trail that links to beaches for San Simeon Acres, and a safer crossing of Highway 1.

The NCAP identifies the CCT as a key access opportunity for the public and includes a table, reproduced below, specifying requirements to implement the CCT in Cambria and San Simeon Acres.

**Table 3-4: California Coastal Trail Implementation, North Coast Area Plan**

Description	Implementation
Lateral Access	Access dedications with new development projects pursuant to Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.04.420 Coastal Access Required
Vertical Access	Access dedications with new development projects pursuant to Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.04.420 Coastal Access Required
Bridge Access	Provide space for bicycles and pedestrians with bridge replacement and repair projects pursuant to Cambria Communitywide Standard 23. Bridge Replacement and Repair
Development, signage, management, and maintenance of the CCT	Areawide Circulation Program #2 Trails
Develop regional bikeways system integrated with the CCT	Areawide Circulation Program #6 Bicycle Improvements
Connect the CCT to the community trail network	Cambria Circulation Program #8 Pedestrian Improvements - The Cross-Town Trail.
Link residences, motels, and beach areas to the CCT	San Simeon Acres Circulation Program #1 Pedestrian Improvements
Open and manage access easements	Areawide combining designation program #4 Coastal Access Implementation Plan
Access improvements, including public pathways and overlooks	Cambria Combining Designation Program #8 Shoreline Access - Street Improvements - West Lodge Hill, San Simeon Acres Combining Designation Program #19 Shoreline Access – Pico Avenue Stairway

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 8, Coastal Access.

Portions of Highway 1 have already been improved as a Class II bikeway. The alignment identified in the NCAP advocates upgrades to Class I Bikeways where feasible and consolidating support facilities for the Highway 1 Bikeway and the CCT. Secondary routes that access existing parks and special recreation areas are also recommended.

### Coastal Plan Policies

#### *Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan*

This document states the policy commitment of the County to implement the mandates of the Coastal Act. Coastal Plan Policies apply to all four coastal zone areas in San Luis Obispo County - the North Coast, Estero, San Luis Bay, and South County. Chapter 2 of the Coastal Plan Policies document outlines shoreline access policies and issues related to shoreline access for each of the four coastal planning areas in the county.

### Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO)

San Luis Obispo County's Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO) (Title 23) details the Coastal Zone development policies and standards. Relevant development standards from the CZLUO have been summarized below. Additional detail, including the text of these standards and relevant goals and policies from relevant Plans (local, state and federal), can be found in **Appendix E**.

Site Design Standards, Section 23.04.118 - Blufftop Setbacks: This may be the most significant design and approval issue for the CCT. This section requires that new development or expansion of existing uses on blufftops be designed and set back from the bluff edge a distance sufficient to assure stability and structural integrity and to withstand bluff erosion and wave action for a period of 75 years without construction of shoreline protection structures that would require substantial alterations to the natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs. A site stability evaluation report by a Certified Geologist or Licensed Engineering Geologist is required to determine the 75 year bluff erosion setback. The recommended setbacks are required to factor in anticipated sea level rise.

Generally, the California Coastal Commission (CCC) requires new development to be set back from bluff edges to be safe from bluff retreat for at least 100 years, as compared to the County standard of 75 years. The CCC does make exceptions to the setback requirements for restoration and recreational/trail projects that don't include habitable structures or significant, permanent infrastructure improvements. The wooden boardwalk on the bluff overlooking Moonstone Beach in Cambria was constructed well within the 100-year setback delineation. This was accepted because the boardwalk could be removed or moved inland if necessary.

#### *Other Standards and Criteria*

Other standards and criteria relevant to the CCT in the CZLUO tend to be general performance criteria without specific quantified design standards. Pertinent sections for the CCT include:

Site Design Standards, Section 23.04.050 - Non-Agricultural Uses in the Agriculture Land Use Category: this is the case for most of the route.

Site Design Standards, Section 23.04.210 - Visual Resources, which specify a 100-foot setback from the edge of the highway right-of-way for new development, which at minimum would include restrooms and other structures.

Section 23.04.420 - Coastal Access Requirements specifies design standards for coastal accessway signage (see **Appendix E**).

Combining Designation Standards, Section 23.07.084. Geologic Study Areas: The County has identified Geologic Study Areas (GSAs) - areas with a high landslide hazard and/or other conditions which make them geologically unstable. Projects located within a GSA need to be provide a report prepared by a certified engineering geologist or registered civil engineer. GSAs are located on the trail corridor in Segment 1 near Ragged Point and through the Harmony Headlands.

Combining Designation Standards, Section 23.07.170 - Environmentally Sensitive Habitats: This section pertains to development in designated Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs). The section specifically allows Coastal Accessways such as the CCT as a project type that would be allowed in an ESHA. The policies require restoration of damaged habitats in conjunction with such projects (see Appendix E):

*Projects located within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas that have been damaged shall be conditioned to require the restoration, monitoring, and long-term protection of such habitat areas through a restoration plan and a accompanying deed restriction or conservation easement. Where previously disturbed but restorable habitat for rare and sensitive plant and animal species exists on a site that is surrounded by other environmentally sensitive habitat areas, these areas shall be delineated and considered for restoration as recommended by a restoration plan.*

Other Combining District standards pertain to Shoreline Areas, Flood Hazard Areas, Archeologically Sensitive Areas, Streams and Riparian Vegetation, Terrestrial Habitat and Marine Habitat. Generally these standards require a 100-foot setback for development from these resources, except where permitted through a Coastal Development Permit. The CCT and similar natural area access improvements are specifically allowed in these areas, subject to meeting the performance standards of the ordinance.

#### *County Shoreline Access Policies*

Shoreline Access Policies from the County Coastal Plan pertaining to the CCT are summarized in Appendix E. These are supportive of CCT objectives and typical improvements and specifically mention the CCT. They do not provide specific design standards; rather general performance criteria.

Shoreline Access, Policy 9: Restoration and Enhancement of Shoreline Access Areas, supports the policy that CCT projects should include restoration of degraded habitats:

*Areas that have been severely degraded through overly intense and unrestricted use should be restored by such techniques as re-vegetation with native plants, trail consolidation and improvement and through the provision of support facilities such as parking, defined trail and/or beach walk stairway systems, trash receptacles, restrooms, picnic areas, etc. In extremely degraded areas (especially sensitive habitat areas), a recovery period during which public access would be controlled and limited may be necessary.*

### **3.5.2. Site-Specific Documents**

#### **Hearst Ranch Scenic Conservation Easements**

In 2005, a series of easement agreements were approved between Hearst Corporation and other land stewards. Three easements apply to properties within the Master Plan area:

#### West Side Scenic Conservation Easement

Caltrans holds the 1,445-acre west side scenic conservation easement, which applies to properties within the Master Plan area that are west of Highway 1, but not including Junge Ranch and select properties. The west

side scenic conservation easement anticipates both the CCT and other public access facilities. The easements do not prohibit alteration of scenic views, provided that impacts are minimized.

The west side scenic conservation easement anticipates and allows for CCT segments and public access facilities, which are defined as new trails, improved surface parking, information kiosks, signage, public restrooms, trash/recycling receptacles, and directly related utilities. Except for trails, roads, and signage, public access facilities should be sited to take advantage of existing topography to the extent feasible to block the facilities from the view from Highway 1. If use of existing topography alone is not feasible to screen the public access facilities, vegetation or grading may be used to block the facility from view of Highway 1, as long as this does not block the view of the ocean from Highway 1. The proposed siting of public access facilities is subject to an easement consistency review by Caltrans. The locations, designs, and sizes of signs must meet DPR standards for signs in coastal state parks. While the west side scenic conservation easement offers specifics with regard to paving materials for road construction, it does not specify the types of surfaces that can be used for trails.

#### **West Side Public Access Conservation Easement**

DPR holds the 832-acre west side public access conservation easement, which applies to the Ragged Point Conservation Area, Pico Cove Conservation Area, San Simeon Point Conservation Area, and the Old San Simeon Village Conservation Area. The west side public access easement anticipates both the CCT and other public access facilities within the Coastal Trail Alignment Zone. The easements do not prohibit alteration of scenic views, provided that impacts are minimized.

Exhibit D (Access Parameters) of the west side public access conservation easement includes exhibits that identify areas within which the CCT may be located. The access parameters allow for trail, fencing, and signage; however, structures, parking facilities, and other facilities (except as identified above) are prohibited. Exhibits D-2 and D-3 contain detailed recommendations for the CCT within the Ragged Point, Pico Cove, and San Simeon Point conservation areas.

#### **West Side Junge Ranch Scenic Conservation Easement**

Caltrans holds an easement that applies to the 117-acre Junge Ranch on the west side of Highway 1. The easement anticipates and allows the CCT and other public access facilities (e.g., new trails, improved surface parking, roadway access to parking, informational kiosks, signage, public restrooms, and directly related utilities). The easement further states that, to the maximum extent feasible, public access facilities must be sited to utilize only existing topography to provide screening from Highway 1. If this is not feasible, vegetation or grading may be used to screen the facilities from view of Highway 1.

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## 4 Master Plan Recommendations

This Chapter describes the recommended improvements that will comprise the Northern San Luis Obispo County network for the California Coastal Trail (CCT). These recommendations reflect the pertinent design standards and guidelines, existing conditions, physical opportunities and constraints, regulatory, legal, and guiding documents, and public and agency input throughout the project. The recommendations also reflect key stakeholder’s comments on draft documents. The CCT will serve many types of trail users and pass through myriad physical settings and jurisdictions. In some cases, parallel routes serve different user types, such as road bicyclists. The CCT will be a “braided trail” providing both “lateral access” along the coast, and “vertical access” that connects the main trail with destinations, beaches, and visitor-serving amenities.

**Section 4.1** provides specific design policies and objectives for the Northern SLO County Coastal Trail, based on key criteria from legal, regulatory, and land use planning documents, or based on study, planning and design for the trail, including comments from the public and stakeholder agencies and organizations.

**Section 4.2** describes the proposed types of facilities and alternatives for facilities where choices will need to be resolved in subsequent stages of study and design. It discusses some of the key issues and approaches for the CCT. It includes geographically-specific recommendations for shoulder widening to accommodate bicyclists in the northern portion of the Study Area.

**Section 4.3** describes and illustrates the recommended improvements and related projects segment by segment, moving north to south from the County line to the project limits in Cayucos.

### 4.1 Master Plan Design Policies and Objectives

These specific Master Plan policies and objectives for the alignment and design of trails and related facilities complement overarching goals, objectives and principles set forth in prior CCT documents, as summarized in the body of the Master Plan and detailed in Appendix A. In all cases, the trail route and design will be refined and resolved through the processes and criteria established by the Local Coastal Plan, Area Plans, Coastal Zoning, legal conditions of easements, and environmental regulations and permits, as described in **Chapter 2: Setting**, **Chapter 3: Design Standards and Guidelines**, and **Chapter 5: Action Plan**.

1. Align the trail as close as possible to the coastal bluff edge while avoiding sensitive resource areas and construction that would impact scenic views from Highway 1, or involve construction of significant facilities within the 75 to 100 year coastal bluff retreat zone.

Close existing trails that enter sensitive areas or otherwise cause impacts; use existing trails and trail alignments whenever possible to minimize additional disturbance and intrusion into coastal habitat.

2. Carefully consider the visual impact of trail facilities on the Highway 1 scenic corridor, and select route and design alternatives that create the least amount of change and visibility.
3. Align and design trails and facilities to minimize maintenance requirements.
4. Use local materials, recycled materials and products, and other sustainable trail design techniques.
5. Generally maintain a 25 foot setback from the bluff edge for new unpaved trails and existing trails incorporated into the trail network.

6. Use 200 feet from the high tide line as a general guideline for trails and related facilities to be outside of the 75 to 100 year bluff retreat zone, based on a rough average retreat rate of 2 feet per year.
7. Bridge and highway shoulders are not appropriate locations for designated CCT alignments for pedestrians. Pedestrian alignments require separation from the highway, and if near the highway, a barrier between the vehicles and the trail users.
8. In some cases, due to the challenge of crossing major drainages or where there is insufficient space along the coastal bluff, the creation of a formal CCT alignment may be feasible only in conjunction with future realignment of Highway 1 in response to coastal bluff retreat.
9. Avoid the construction of any new culverts; boardwalks or trail bridges are preferred methods of crossing wet areas and drainages.
10. Avoid planning significant, permanent improvements west of 200 foot line from the current high tide line, or determine the appropriate 75 to 100 year setback through site-specific studies.
11. Provide trails to take people where they want to go, with a range of coastal environmental experiences, beach access, and viewpoints, subject to the limits of sensitive resources and public access.
12. Provide or identify safe, convenient connections across barriers, such as creeks and major roads, and across or under Highway 1 to connect the trail to activity areas and destinations.
13. Provide or identify the support facilities that people will need to make effective use of the trail – parking/staging areas, restrooms, maps and signs for information, guidance and environmental education.
14. Provide a continuous Coastal Bike Route by pursuing the widening of shoulders where they do not exist at a minimum 4 foot width along Highway 1, and by designating on-street routes on local streets, or routes on existing or new paths.
15. Coordinate with Caltrans to plan, implement, and protect the CCT as a part of the Highway transportation corridor (while the CCT is consistent with Caltrans policy for Complete Streets, it is not inherently part of State Route 1 unless it is physically located within the highway ROW).
16. Encourage Caltrans to widen Highway 1 shoulders to accommodate bicyclists, consistent with the Caltrans Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report.
17. Coordinate with and facilitate the implementation of arrangements and improvements for access to the three Hearst-owned conservation easement areas that allow docent-led access – Ragged Point, Pico Cove, and San Simeon Point, consistent with the recommendations and concept plans in the Hearst acquisition easement documents.
18. This Master Plan does not designate trail uses. Specific use designations and regulations are left up to the managing agencies, per their standards and the pertinent regulations and agreements. Trail use types are discussed to some extent in conjunction with specific segment descriptions.
19. A route for the CCT south of Cambria within view of the ocean is a long-term objective of the Master Plan. This route is not geographically defined and is subject to the acquisition of access rights for the trail, as discussed in the descriptions of specific trail segments.

## 4.2 Trail and Support Facility Types

This section describes and defines the specific types of trails and related improvements shown on the map legend and discussed in the segment by segment recommendation descriptions in Section 4.3. The types and locations of most of these features are shown on the legend and maps. Others are described in the text and in illustrations in this section and in the site-specific descriptions in Section 4.3.

The maps also describe sensitive resources that the trail alignment avoids to the extent feasible. These include historic sites, areas documented in the National Wetlands Inventory, and deposits of serpentine rock. These resources are combined in one layer to facilitate their protection.

### 4.2.1 Trails

#### Unpaved Trails

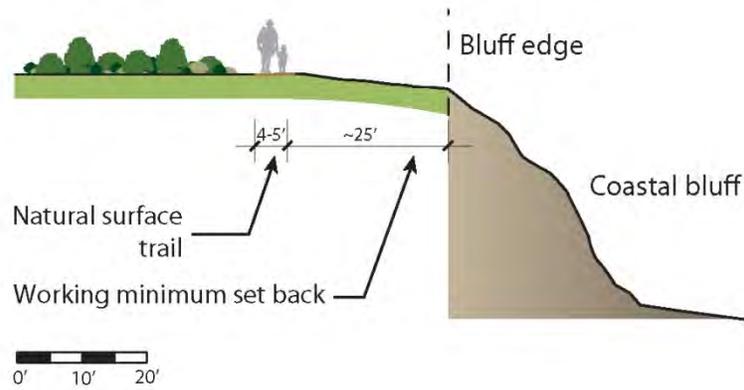
Unpaved trails, also termed natural, native, or soft surface trails, will be the primary CCT trail type outside of developed areas and high-use corridors. These trails are minimally-improved facilities, as illustrated in Figure 4-1, with signage typically the only constructed improvement except for bridges and boardwalks. Where these structures would be significant and/or visually obtrusive, or the trail would impact sensitive resource areas, it may be necessary to route the trail in the Highway 1 ROW to take advantage of existing drainage crossings.

Many parts of the recommended alignment follow existing unpaved trails, primarily on DPR land, but some sections are on other public agency land and in one case on private hotel property. These existing paths or trails vary from informal tracks one or two feet wide, to formally designed and constructed paths or dirt roads. Since most of the existing trails trend toward the former narrow condition, they will likely need upgrades and minor localized re-routes to meet CCT standards. Per CCT Steering Committee discussion, the working minimum setback for realigned or new natural surface trails from the edge of the coastal bluff is 25 feet. Such simple trail facilities are not “development” and are not subject to the 75 year lifespan bluff setback or the requirements for geological study to determine setback.

An existing trail that is proposed to be used as part of the CCT route may require minor improvements such as widening, surfacing, drainage improvements, minor re-routes and short boardwalk drainage or wet area crossings. These improved trail areas are not specifically identified on the maps, and the improvement details are left to future stages of planning and design, but a placeholder budget is provided in the cost estimates corresponding to the extent of the improved trails in each segment.

#### Beach Routes

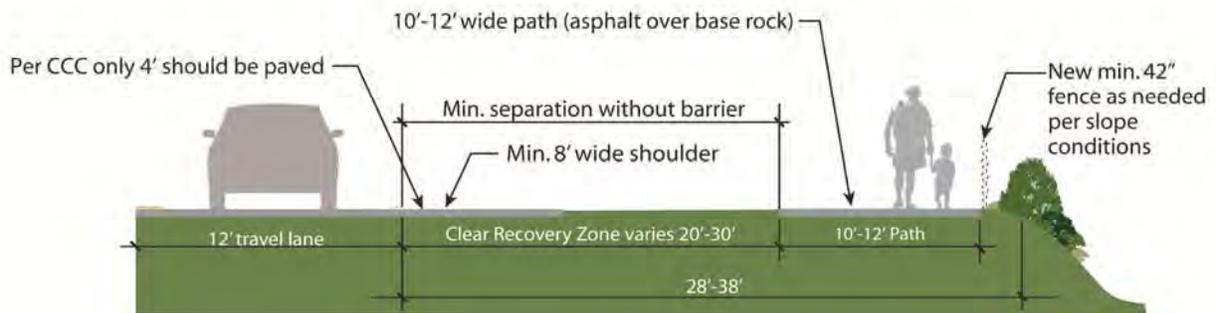
A beach route is an area where the beach is accessible by the public and not limited by private ownership or the presence of sensitive habitat. These are not specifically designated as trails in the plan because they will not be improved or maintained. They also pose a degree of risk to the user due to tidal changes or the presence of wildlife. However, this plan does not recommend limiting access to public beaches.



**Figure 4-1: Typical Natural-Surface Bluff Edge Trail**



**Figure 4-2: Typical Surfaced Multi-Use Trail**



**Figure 4-3: Typical Paved (Class I) Trail**

### **Trails to Close**

Some existing trails, typically unpaved “volunteer” trails that were created by users, are recommended to be closed because they may impact sensitive resources, cause erosion or siltation, or present potentially hazardous situations or management problems. Closure could simply entail signage; potentially unobtrusive low barriers, such as temporary symbolic fencing; and in some cases active steps to restore a natural condition, such as ripping and seeding. The specifics are left to future more detailed stages of planning and design, but a placeholder budget is provided in the cost estimates corresponding to the extent of the closed trails in each segment.

### **Multi-Use Trails**

A multi-use trail could be paved, but in this context is defined as a trail 8 to 12 feet wide, surfaced with base rock or other quarry material such as decomposed granite (DG) to provide a firm, stable all-weather surface that can accommodate pedestrians, some bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers and power-driven mobility devices, as illustrated in **Figure 4-2**. DPR does not contemplate constructing paved trails or paths as part of the CCT on its properties in SLO County. In the Piedras Blancas highway realignment area and potentially in other high-use areas, DPR is considering multi-use paths as described above.

The Caltrans scenic easements do not specify the types of surfaces that can be used for trails. Both Caltrans scenic easements offer specifics with regard to paving materials for road construction (West Side Easement Area: section 10, page 9; West Side Public Ownership Area: section 9, page 9).

### **Boardwalks and Puncheons**

Boardwalks are often used for trail segments crossing wetland areas or other sensitive, unstable substrate, such as sand dunes. Another name often used for a low boardwalk is a puncheon. These facilities are discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.5, Bridges and Drainage Crossings, below. They exist on much of the recommended route in Cambria, including trails along Moonstone Drive and on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. The use of boardwalks on the CCT should be limited to areas where other solutions are not feasible, as boardwalks are expensive to construct and maintain, and are potentially obtrusive in a natural setting.

These structures may be supported on log or timber “sleepers” resting directly on the ground, or may be supported on footings. In sensitive settings fiberglass reinforced recycled plastic timber sleepers have been preferred by the California Department of Fish and Game over pressure treated timbers, because the recycled timbers do not leech chemicals into the water or soil, yet are very resistant to deterioration. These structures typically have a low height, and do not include a railing, so visual impact is minimized. However a railing should be provided adjacent to deep water or steep drop offs.

Boardwalks and puncheons can be relocated or removed and the site easily restored. For this reason they have been approved within the 75 to 100 year bluff retreat setback area for development. The Elephant Seal boardwalk is a good example of such a facility – it is in Caltrans right-of-way and required an encroachment permit. The improvements included boardwalk, puncheon, and DG trail.

### **Paved Trails**

Paved trails (also commonly referred to as Class I bike routes or multi-use paths), are typically 8 feet wide or wider, with asphaltic concrete (AC) paving, as illustrated in **Figure 4-3**. Such facilities exist on portions of the CCT route in Cambria. They often have striping and marking for the control of bicycle, pedestrian and

other non-motorized users, as detailed in **Chapter 3: Design Standards and Guidelines**. The only locations in the Master Plan where new paved Class I paths/paved multi-use trails are proposed are in Cambria at Moonstone Drive near Windsor Drive; potentially at the Strawberry Canyon Trail connection to Burton Drive at the south end of Cambria; and in the Caltrans right-of-way along the Estero Bluffs.

### **On-Street Routes**

An on-street route is a signed route for bikes and/or pedestrians that is located in the roadway or shoulder of typically low-speed low traffic volume streets. Some portions have sidewalks or paths, and in other cases pedestrians would have to use the roadway. This may be designated as a Class III signed bike route as defined in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual and summarized in the **Design Standards and Guidelines** section of this Master Plan, and also a signed/marked pedestrian route in the case of the CCT. There are some short sections of on-street routes in the recommended alignment in San Simeon Village and to the south of the Junge Ranch. A long series of on-street routes extends north and south of the Fiscalini Preserve in residential areas of Cambria.

## **4.2.2 Staging and Parking Areas**

A staging area is trail agency terminology for a parking area with associated space and facilities to prepare for a trail hike or ride. A staging area is also a trailhead in the sense that it should provide direct connection to the trail, information about using the trail, and potentially a gate(s) to control access. Only one new staging area is proposed as part of the Master Plan – at San Carpofo Creek. Improvements are proposed at two existing parking areas. Other existing parking areas are identified as key staging areas for the CCT without any necessary improvements, except potential CCT signage.

Some staging areas are shown on maps reproduced from or reflecting access parameters in the Hearst Ranch acquisition documents. These would serve Hearst Ranch lands with restricted public access easements, where access is allowed only when escorted by designated docents. These are reproduced in the Master Plan for context, but the Master Plan does not propose any changes to the concepts contained in the easements for access to these private conservation areas, and they are considered separate projects from the CCT.

### **Trailheads**

A trailhead is a designated public access point to the CCT, usually at a staging area with parking, but potentially at a point where users from nearby neighborhoods or visitor serving areas can enter. Trailheads usually feature some signage and map and/or written information about the trail and its use. Many of them have available on-street parking adjacent. Trailheads are not included in the map legend, but they are implied in many locations and the significant ones are labeled on the recommendations maps and described in the text.

Beyond the specific recommendations outlined in this chapter, Park managers will evaluate the feasibility and need for improving trailheads and/or parking areas when considering the implementation of this Master Plan's recommendations.

### **Existing Staging/Parking Areas**

There are many existing parking areas along Highway 1 on or near the trail route, ranging from formally improved and designated DPR facilities to improved designated scenic overlook viewpoints to informal

unimproved roadside pullouts. Three scenic viewpoints are identified in the Coastal Plan and in the scenic and conservation easement documents, which allows greater flexibility in their improvement than other areas.

### **Pullouts**

Clearly established informal pullout areas are noted on the maps, but use, improvement, or closure of these pullouts is not addressed in the Master Plan, and is left to the discretion of the managing agencies – Caltrans and DPR, and in some cases Hearst Corporation or other adjacent landowners.

### **4.2.3 Signs**

The CCT will require basic trail signs and markers, and in some locations such as staging areas and trailheads, trail user orientation signs and maps, and site identity and vehicular-oriented signs. Per Coastal Act case law, a new sign pipe or post is considered “development”, and needs at minimum a County administrative waiver from a Coastal Development Permit, but most signs are included as part of a larger overall project permit.

Appendix G presents concepts for the types and locations of signage that would be provided for the CCT. The Caltrans Scenic Easement prohibits interpretive signage and allows only signs that “comply with the standard criteria of the DPR for such signs in coastal State Parks.” Interpretive signs are allowed in designated scenic vista areas and in areas that were not part of the Hearst acquisition and Scenic Easement, and are an important objective established in the 2007 *Highway 1 Scenic Byway Corridor Plan*.

### **4.2.4 Fences, Gates and Stiles**

Fencing is generally not required between the CCT and Highway 1, and DPR typically avoids fencing to reduce visual intrusion, because it imposes a significant maintenance cost and doesn’t necessarily deter entry. The expectation is that the current cattle fences west of the highway will be allowed to deteriorate and gradually will be removed – the CCT improvements and costs only include fencing and gates at staging areas, as described in that subsection. If in the future, DPR desired to institute grazing as a management tool on former Hearst lands, this would require fencing from the highway.

Fences and gates are needed between the public access corridor and docent-led access areas at Ragged Point, Pico Cove and San Simeon Point, as noted in the access recommendations contained in the easement documents. Fencing will also be required between the public access CCT corridor established at San Simeon Point and the adjacent bull pasture. This fencing is not included in the CCT improvements list and costs, as the docent-led access improvements are assumed to be separate projects with separate plans and implementation process.

Trail entry gates, stiles and fencing are recommended to be ranch-type wood, pipe, and/or wire consistent with the former ranching use and agricultural setting. Actual fence type (smooth or barbed wire, wood or T-post) would be determined as part of site-specific design.



**Stile/gate that accommodates pedestrians, but excludes wheelchairs and bicycles.**



**Self-closing gate that permits powered vehicles.**

The photo at left above shows an existing DPR stile, but this is not accessible, which is a goal of the CCT, even if the trail segment isn't improved or designated as accessible. The alternative would be a self-closing gravity/spring loaded gate, as illustrated in the photo at right above.



**Agricultural gate crossing a trail corridor**



**Hiking trailhead gate that permits hikers and wheelchair users, but excludes bikes and horses**

Two designs for a hiking trailhead gates are pictured above. The design at right, known as a “kissing gate” accommodates pedestrians and wheelchairs but excludes bikes and horses, as well as motorcycles. This can also be constructed with conventional wood and wire fencing materials.

Due to a recent federal ruling regarding allowing access to powered vehicles that may be used by people with disabilities, a simple trail gate that can be opened and closed by visitors with gravity and/or spring loaded automatic closing may be the best solution.

## 4.2.5 Bridges and Drainage Crossings

There are many drainage crossings along the route, varying from very minor and ephemeral to major creeks with deep gullies and/or broad floodplains. Crossing these drainages is one of the most significant challenges and variables for the CCT Master Plan.

Where they do not have a name, trail drainage crossings are referenced on the maps in relation to Caltrans Highway 1 mileposts (MP). These mileposts are numbered by Caltrans, increasing numerically from south to north, in contrast to the north to south CCT route descriptions. Therefore the drainage crossings in each trail segment are listed south to north (e.g. Drainage 70-2 is the second drainage north of mile post 70).

Drainage crossings, or any other work that impacts them, may require permits from the California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and potentially the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers if wetlands or standing or running water is impacted. Approval of the Regional Water Quality Control Board may also be required. These potential requirements are described in detail in the **Action Plan** chapter.

There are two basic alternatives for crossing these drainages: 1) cross on a bridge, which could vary from a simple puncheon or boardwalk to a major highway bridge; or 2) cross on a culvert. Options, issues and approaches are discussed in detail below.

### Culverts

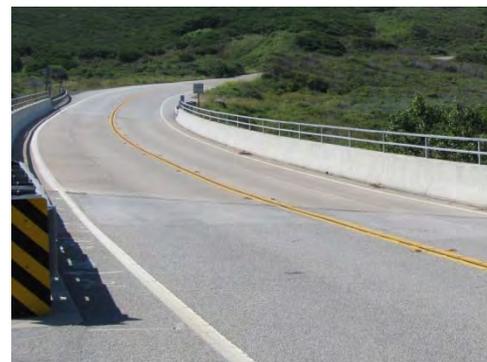
A culvert is basically a pipe or more elaborate concrete box placed in the drainage channel and covered with earth fill. In DPR design standards culverts are not used due to their impact on natural creeks and habitat. Instead trail bridges or boardwalks are used to cross drainages, depending on size and conditions. However, routing the trail into the State right-of-way to cross over an existing highway culvert would be an acceptable alternative, and an alignment along the highway is preferred by DPR in locations where a trail or trail bridge would impact sensitive resources. Routing the trail in the State right-of-way and along the roadside creates special design and permitting challenges, as discussed below in **Section 4.2.6**.

### Alternatives for Major Drainage Crossings

There are several major drainages along the route that typically feature long highway bridges crossing broad floodplains that exhibit high maximum storm flows and typically year-around creek flows. In other cases there are deep ravines that the highway crosses with deep fill prisms over a culvert. Both of these situations present significant challenges for the CCT.

#### Using the Highway Bridge – not a route for pedestrians

Except for San Carpoforo Creek, all highway bridges have 8 foot shoulders that can accommodate bicycles, and brave pedestrians. However, it isn't appropriate to designate the shoulder as the trail route, with two-way pedestrian traffic, and in some cases potentially wheelchairs and horses, sharing the same southbound shoulder with southbound bikes. Barriers separating the shoulder from the travel lane are not acceptable to Caltrans; the availability of the shoulder for safety purposes is a higher priority. All of the bridges are relatively recently constructed and are in good condition, and Caltrans has no plans for their replacement,



**Bridge shoulders are not a recommended pedestrian route**

except in conjunction with eventual highway realignment projects, so reconstruction is not a viable option.

#### Trail Bridge Cantilevered off Highway Bridge – Not Practical

One option for trail crossings at wide drainages/long highway bridges is retrofitting the bridge with a cantilevered trail bridge attached to the side of the existing bridge, as illustrated in the example in the adjacent photo. However, this approach would be a significant challenge to resolve structurally, and is unlikely to secure Caltrans approval (no precedent was found on a Caltrans bridge facility). Such a project is likely to be significantly more expensive than a separate trail bridge, which is relatively common solution in these situations. By consensus of the Steering Committee, this option was eliminated as a drainage crossing alternative.



**The Kauai River in Hawaii features a cantilevered trail bridge**

#### Long Span Trail Bridges

An alternative to a cantilevered structure would be to construct a steel or concrete trail bridge parallel to the existing bridge, ideally at a lower elevation to reduce visibility from the highway bridge. The challenge is that environmental and permitting agencies will not want bridge footings or abutments to be placed in the flood plain, or to impact riparian vegetation, cultural resources, or other resources that tend to be concentrated in and around these drainages. The additional visual impact is another significant concern. Caltrans prefers short low-visibility bridges to comply with scenic easement objectives. In at least one case, at Little Pico Creek, there are bridge footing remnants from the old highway bridge that could potentially be used to support a trail bridge. But the feasibility and cost/benefit would need to be carefully investigated.

Any of these long span trail bridges or highway bridge retrofits would be a very expensive projects, and depending on the location, could be within the 75 to 100 year coastal bluff retreat zone and highway realignment area, and thus inconsistent with CCT Master Plan policy regarding significant structures in the near-term bluff retreat zone.

Where there is a relatively long span involved, good temporary construction access for bridge installation, and distance and/or riparian vegetation to screen (as at San Carpoforo Creek), a prefab steel bridge may be appropriate, such as the bridge at Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria, shown in the adjacent photo. This would typically feature a deep drilled concrete pier foundation, and concrete headwalls. Such a bridge could be designed to carry patrol and maintenance vehicles, but probably not a fire truck. The span of a prefab steel bridge could be 200 feet or more, depending on the design and the load capacity requirements. A significant factor with steel bridges, especially in a seacoast environment, is rust. The salt



**Bridge at Santa Rosa Creek in Cambria**

can accelerate rusting so that minor structural members are rusting through after 15 to 20 years, and major members may have a lifespan of 30 to 50 years without regular efforts to prep and paint, which is unlikely to be feasible in this setting.

Arroyo Hondo and other steep, deep drainages will have poor access conditions for building bridge footings and building or placing bridges – temporary roads would have to be built down both sides, and even then access may require tracked equipment and special/costly foundation construction and bridge placement techniques. It may be infeasible to get a crane close enough to some sites to place a prefab steel bridge.

#### Fiberglass Trail Bridges - preferred for medium spans

An alternative to a steel or wood bridge is a prefabricated site-assembled fiberglass bridge like the composition bridge shown at right. These lightweight bridges have been used successfully in SLO area State Parks and other similar settings. These bridges are simple and visually unobtrusive, consistent with the provisions of the Caltrans Scenic Easements and Coastal Zone policies. They can be placed and assembled on site without the use of heavy equipment, and thus will have much less initial impact than a prefab steel bridge or a site-built steel or concrete bridge. They can be installed on timber crib foundations, or founded directly on the top of bank.

They can be disassembled and moved if necessary, meeting the CCC objectives for “adaptive retreat” when they are in the coastal bluff retreat zone, and making them more adaptable if they need to be moved for any other reason. The limitation of these bridges is that they have a limited maximum span of approximately 50 feet, and while they can support horses and ATV-type trail maintenance vehicles they cannot support full size patrol, maintenance, or emergency response motor vehicle weights, should that be a requirement. It is assumed that this is not a requirement for the CCT due to the close proximity of the highway or other roads along the entire route.

#### Wood Trail Bridges – solution for short spans

Wood trail bridges are often used for relatively low cost and rustic appearance, but long span wood bridge



**Fiberglass trail bridge under construction**



**Fiberglass trail bridge**



**Trail on minor drainage crossing: a wood footbridge**

construction requires nearly the same level of site access and foundation support as a steel bridge, and the life span of wood is limited. Short wood trail bridges may be the best alternative where the span is as short as 8 to 20 feet. Below 8 feet the structure is assumed to be a boardwalk.

### Boardwalks and Puncheons

These are described under trail types because they are defined by location on the recommendations maps. There may be little structural or cost difference between a boardwalk and a wood trail bridge. A puncheon is a very low boardwalk that doesn't require railings, and will typically be less expensive than a bridge or boardwalk.

### Seasonal Bridges

As discussed under Long Span Trail Bridges, the constraints and process for implementing a major trail bridge are significant. At least one of the major drainages, Arroyo de la Cruz, has been studied in detail by DPR's Trail Designer, who concluded that the only viable solution, although an undesirable one, is a "seasonal pipe bridge" - a pedestrians-only structure that is supported on pipes driven into the creek bed, as shown in the photo.



**Seasonal "pipe bridge" on the Eel River**

The bridge structure is removed each year before the rainy season, and re-installed in the Spring. This option is a last resort because DPR and other agencies do not have sufficient staff to place, remove and maintain such bridges. They may be objectionable to environmental agencies such as the Department of Fish and Game as they intrude into the stream channel, and have a minor impact during their annual placement and removal, and could be destroyed and cause further impacts if not removed before a high flow event. Finally, they are less than ideal for accommodating trail users because they are seasonal, and are not likely to be accessible for people with disabilities.



**Temporary suspension trail bridge**

An alternative seasonal bridge type could be a suspension bridge as in the adjacent photo. This may reduce impacts on the channel, but would have the same or worse issues of usability and accessibility.

## **4.2.6 Sidepaths**

Where warranted to protect sensitive resources, or where there is insufficient physical space or lack of public access, or to cross a drainage on an existing highway culvert, the CCT may be routed in the State right-of-way adjacent to Highway 1. A two-way multi-use trail or path that is routed in the right-of-way adjacent to a

roadway is often termed a “sidepath.” Most of the proposed locations for sidepaths for the CCT in the area north of Cambria are to take advantage of highway culvert drainage crossings. In other cases they are proposed to protect sensitive resources on DPR land, or because there is no available area outside the right-of-way for public access.

The design and feasibility of a sidepath depends on the available space and conditions west of the Highway, and Caltrans design criteria. The main design issues will be setback from the road shoulder for safety, generally avoiding visual or environmental impact, and provision of a safety barrier between the road and the trail where warranted by proximity. As with any improvements in the State right-of-way, they would be subject to an encroachment permit from Caltrans, compliance with the Highway Design Manual, and in the case of most of the route north of Cambria, would be subject to review of compliance with the Caltrans Scenic Easement, and standards of the Local Coastal Plan and potentially other environmental standards and ordinances.

Based on the Highway Design Manual and the Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report, and depending on what Caltrans would accept in issuing an encroachment permit and review for consistency with the Scenic Easement, the available space required for a CCT sidepath could vary significantly.

In preliminary discussions about design issues and options, Caltrans District 5 staff indicated that a wider clear recovery zone<sup>1</sup> than dictated by minimum standards may be required, for safety and to reduce the visual impact of the trail in the Scenic Easement area. They also indicated that a cable barrier may be preferable to a concrete or steel barrier. Caltrans will be resistant to the installation of a barrier where it is not already present or required for highway safety purposes, due to the visual intrusion in the Scenic Easement Scenic Highway setting, and due to maintenance requirements. Similarly, a fence or railing to separate the trail from steep drop-off areas could be objectionable visually.<sup>2</sup>

Potential variations on sidepath design are described and illustrated below.

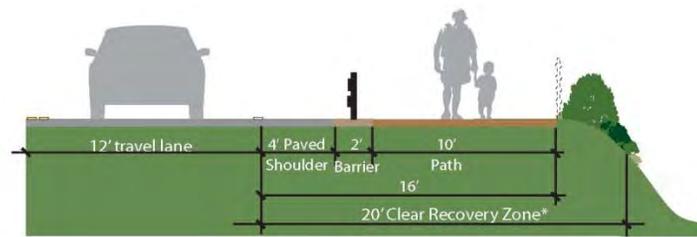
#### **Type A – Minimum Shoulder with Barrier and Wide Path**

- This could potentially occur behind an existing barrier, in which case the shoulder could be even less than the minimum 4 feet. Where a new barrier was established the absolute minimum dimensions would be 4 feet from the edge of the travel lane/fog stripe, plus 2 feet for the barrier and a minimum of approximately 10 feet for the trail (a total of at least 16 feet-as illustrated in **Figure 4-4**) – but this could only occur where the existing shoulder is four feet or less and it is demonstrated to be “impractical” to stay out of clear recovery zone.

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<sup>11</sup> Defined by the Caltrans Highway Design Manual as “An area clear of fixed objects adjacent to the roadway to provide a recovery zone for vehicles that have left the traveled way”.

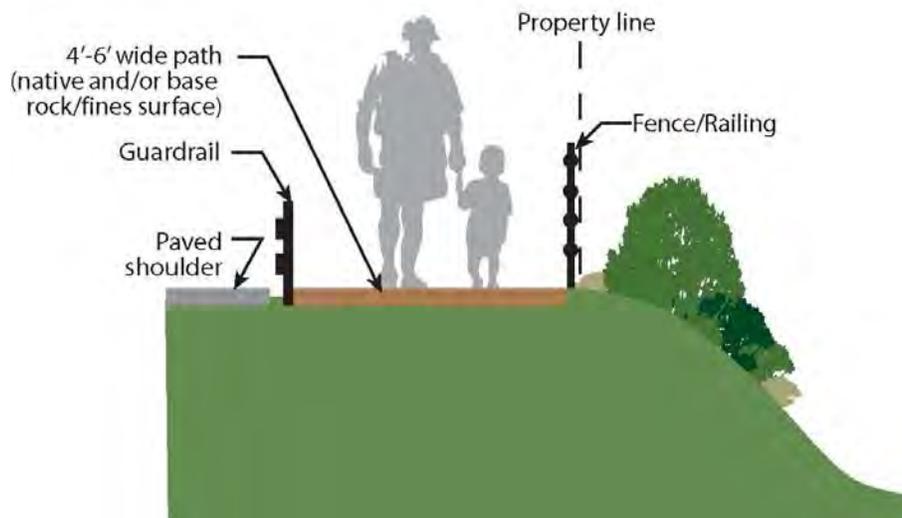
<sup>2</sup> Steve Price, Caltrans District 5, personal communication, December, 2011.



**Figure 4-4: Type A - Path within Clear Recovery Zone, existing shoulder 4' or less**

**Type A-1 – Minimum Shoulder with Barrier and Narrow Path**

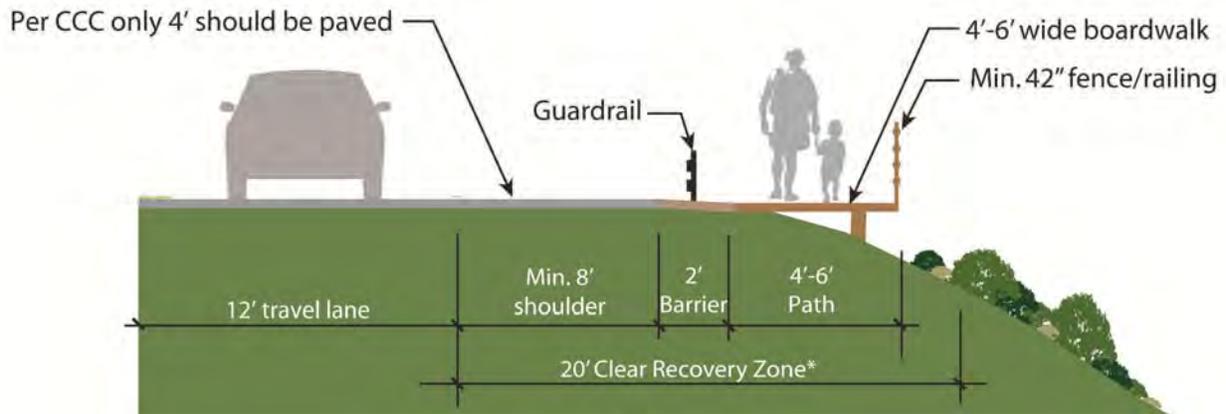
Figure 4-5 shows a situation where there isn't sufficient space for a "multi-use" width path, and a narrower pedestrian trail is provided. The width isn't directly tied to whether there are other users besides pedestrians – width is more a factor of overall levels of projected use, although to accommodate equestrian access there would ideally be room for a separate equestrian track, and ideally if bicycles are allowed the path/trail would be wider, as per Type A.



**Figure 4-5: Narrow Pedestrian Sidepath**

**Type A-2 – Minimum Shoulder with Barrier and Narrow Path on Embankment**

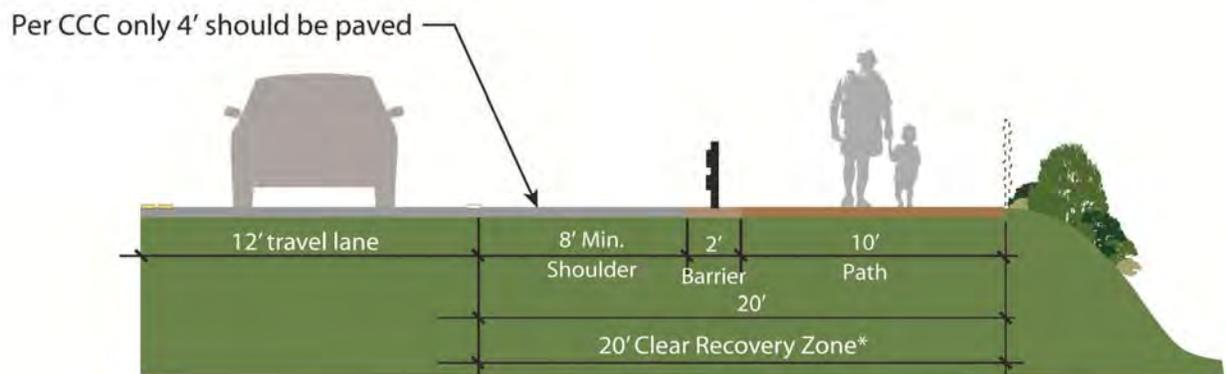
This is a situation in which there is little, if any, flat ground beyond the shoulder. The trail would have to be built on a hillside or highway embankment either with cut and fill slopes, with retaining walls, or with a structure elevated above the slope as illustrated in Figure 4-6, if a stable foundation could be created. This sidepath design is subject to Caltrans approval of the design and issuance of an encroachment permit. Maintaining slope stability will be a key design issue.



**Figure 4-6: Narrow Pedestrian Sidepath on Embankment**

**Type B – 8 foot Shoulder with Barrier and Wide Path**

- Eight feet for the shoulder plus 2 feet for the barrier, plus 10 feet for the trail (20 feet total– as illustrated in Figure 4-7).



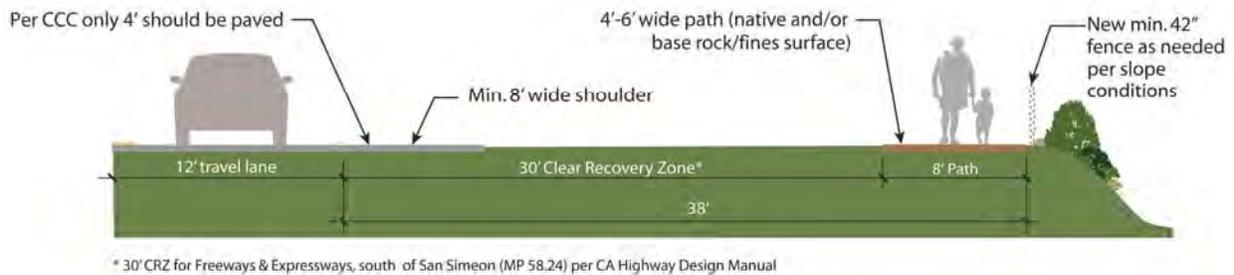
**Figure 4-7 Type B - Path within Clear Recovery Zone, existing shoulder 8' minimum**

**Type C – Standard Clear Recovery Zone, No Barrier and Wide Path**

- Twenty foot clear recovery zone north of San Simeon, plus 2 feet for the barrier (if required by Caltrans/desired for trail user protection – standards may not require), plus 8 feet for the trail (30 feet total – as illustrated in Figure 4-8).
- Thirty foot clear recovery zone south of San Simeon plus 2 feet for the barrier (if required by Caltrans/desired for trail user protection – standards may not require), plus 8 feet for the trail (38 feet total – as illustrated in Figure 4-9).
- Potentially more space depending on Caltrans requirements and site conditions.



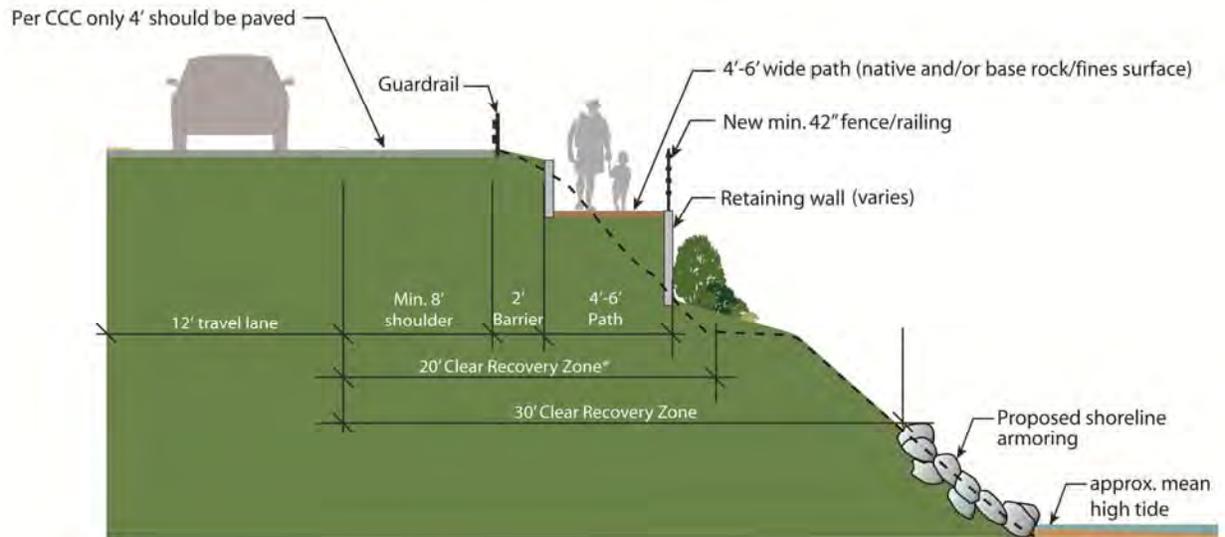
**Figure 4-8: Type C -Path outside 20' Clear Recovery Zone**



**Figure 4-9: Type C -Path outside 30' Clear Recovery Zone**

**Type D – Sidepath in Narrow Shoreline Band**

- Figure 4-10 shows a typical potential sidepath condition along a narrow shoreline band. These conditions and locations are discussed further below under CCT in Bluff Retreat Areas. These conditions occur where the existing/minimum shoulder is 8 feet.
- Where insufficient level space is available for the sidepath, it could potentially be built on a slope or embankment, either with cut and fill slopes, or with retaining walls as illustrated in Figure 4-11, or with a structure elevated above the slope, if a stable foundation could be created, subject to Caltrans approval of the design and issuance of an encroachment permit. Maintaining slope stability will be a key design issue.



**Figure 4-10: Type D- Shoreline sidepath with retaining walls and potential shoreline armoring**

### Coastal Act Concerns

Sidepath retaining walls, such as those illustrated in Figure 4-10 may not be considered structures that could be relocated to comply with the “adaptable retreat” policy for the 75 or 100 foot Coastal Bluff retreat zone. An additional consideration for design is that Coastal Act policy calls for minimizing the extent of paving along rural Highway 1. Thus while Caltrans standards dictate an 8 foot paved shoulder as part of sidepath improvements, and an 8 foot shoulder is desirable for the Pacific Coast Bike Route/CCT, Coastal Act policies call for a maximum 4 foot wide paved shoulder as the standard in rural and natural settings. The Caltrans District 5 concept for highway improvements north of San Carpoforo Creek includes 4 foot wide shoulders due to the rugged topography. Highway Design Manual standards call for 8 foot wide paved shoulders; however, less width could justify a design exception. Railings or fences above a retaining wall are a concern for Caltrans due to visual impact. Also, while CCC standards call for a railing that is 42 inches high, Caltrans standards for railings on bicycle facilities may call for a 48 inch height.

### CCT in Bluff Retreat Areas

Within the CCT Study Area there are several locations where there is little, if any, usable space remaining on the coastal side of the highway outside of the highway right-of-way, as illustrated in Figure 4-11 and Figure 4-12. In some cases, the highway itself is already threatened by coastal bluff retreat, or soon will be, especially with the anticipated accelerated impacts of sea level rise. Outside of the current highway realignment project area at Piedras Blancas, these conditions are most severe between Old San Simeon Village and Pico Cove, and in locations between San Simeon Creek and Moonstone Beach Drive. The other three Highway 1 Realignment Areas established in the Hearst Ranch acquisition reflect this accelerated coastal bluff retreat condition, but there is no specific timeline for their implementation.



California Coastal Records Project - 2004



Google Earth- 2011

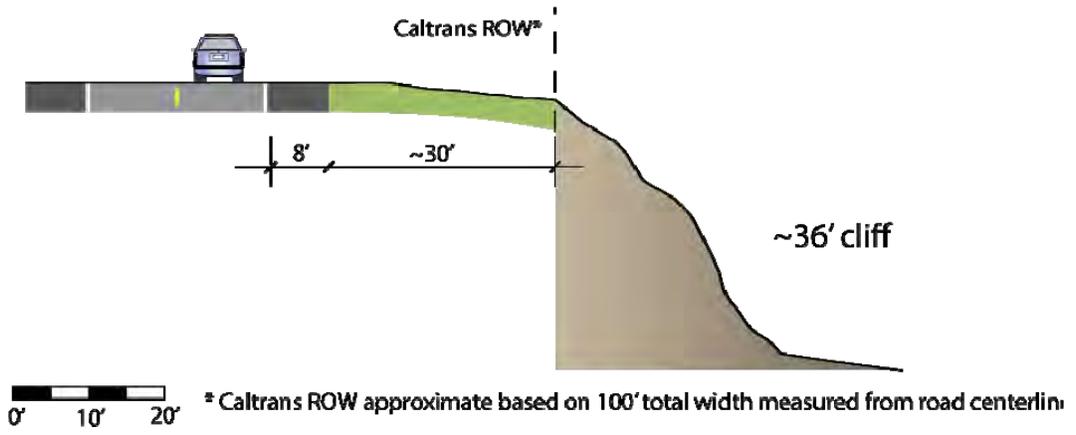
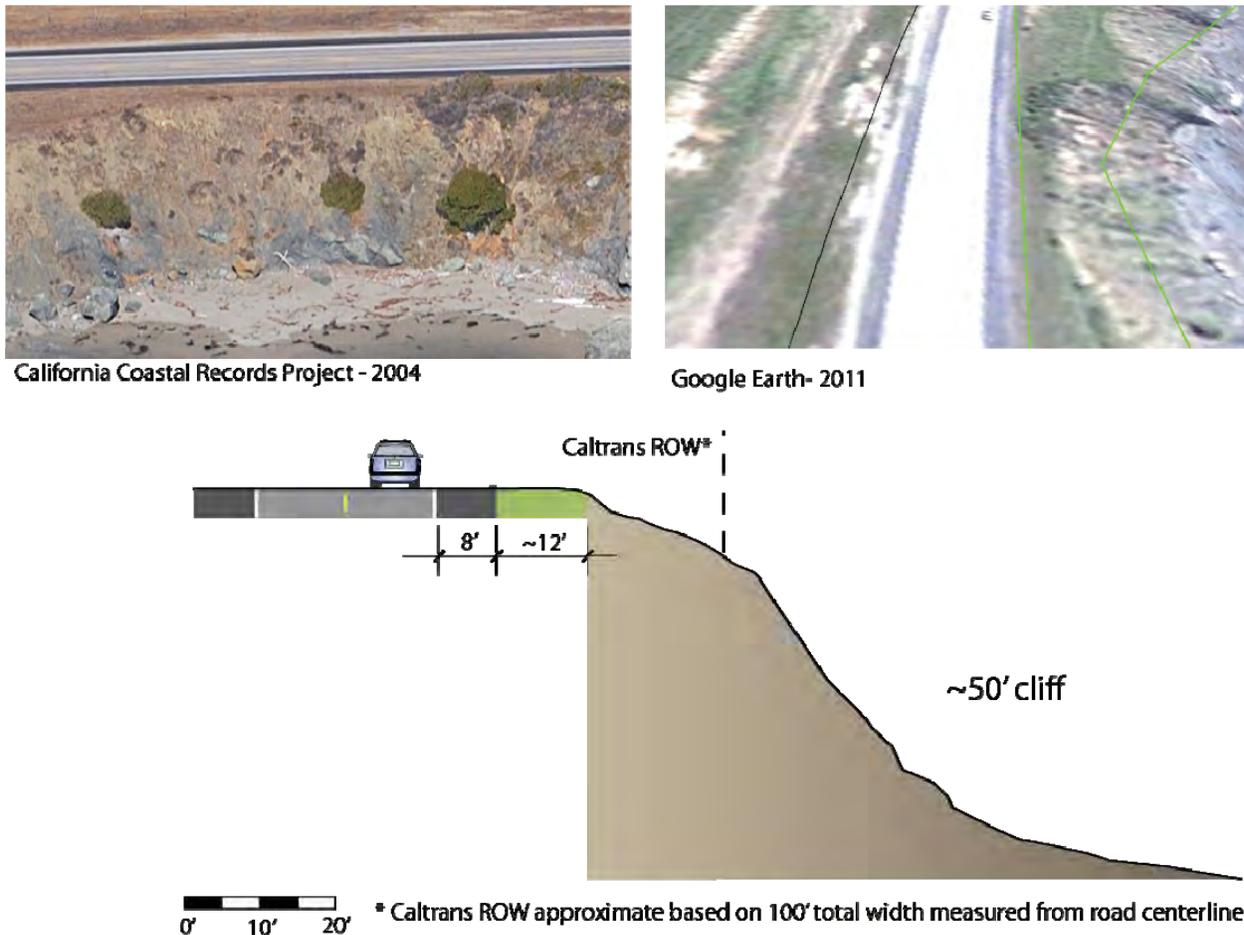


Figure 4-11: CCT in bluff retreat cross section from MP 55.2, north of Moonstone Beach Drive



**Figure 4-12: CCT in bluff retreat cross section from MP 57.3, south of Hearst Castle**

Information available for the Master Plan did not include precise site-specific data for the rate of bluff retreat. To generally characterize the issue, the inventory and mapping of conditions for the CCT identified two coastal bluff retreat area classifications based on review of aerial photos (oblique views for general conditions and cross-sections from the Coastal Records Project, dated 2004 and Google Earth photos from 2011 for the approximate horizontal dimensions):

1. Areas where there was less than 20 feet of available relatively level land between the Highway shoulder/edge of pavement and the bluff edge, and;
2. Areas where there was between 20 and 40 feet of available relatively level land between the Highway shoulder/edge of pavement and the bluff edge.

The detail of the inventory is presented in Appendix F.

The dimensions, information and method used for the inventory are generalized – any site specific planning should be based on more accurate topographic information and site-specific assessment of coastal bluff retreat. However the inventory provides the basis for guidelines for trail improvements in these narrow areas as summarized below.

In areas that have less than 20 feet of space available next to Highway 1, the trail would be within the 20 or 30 foot clear recovery zone and would almost certainly be within the 75 to 100 year bluff retreat zone, given an average projected retreat rate of 2 feet per year. These locations may not provide room for the CCT at all within a 10 to 20 year period, unless significant structures and/or shoreline protection were provided. Even after project funding is secured, it could take 3 to 5 years to complete the site-specific design, environmental and permitting process, and construction to implement such a significant CCT facility (if it could be permitted at all), so there would be additional coastal bluff retreat compared to the conditions inventoried for this Master Plan.

It may be inappropriate as public investment and inconsistent with Local Coastal Plan or Coastal Act policies to propose significant structural improvements for the CCT, even if they could be removed and relocated, in one of these very near-term bluff retreat areas. These locations may exist as gaps in the CCT system, with only informal connection along the highway shoulder or on the beach where it is passable, until such time as the highway is realigned and the CCT is accommodated, similar to the Piedras Blancas project.

Areas with 20 to 40 feet of available space are likely to have room to implement a simple unpaved Coastal Trail without significant permanent structures – either within or outside of the right-of-way. However, drainage crossings or slopes may require bridges, boardwalks, retaining walls or other structures, which may be within the 75 to 100 year bluff retreat setback area. Their permit approval would be subject to determination of low visual and environmental impact, and that they could be removed and relocated.

As a general guideline, any significant improvements that are located closer than 200 feet from the bluff edge could potentially be within the 75 to 100 year coastal bluff retreat zone, but because the retreat rates vary from site to site, the zone can only be clearly defined based on site-specific geotechnical study.

This is a guideline rather than a standard; a site-specific geotechnical study would be required to establish the bluff retreat rate for any project that involved significant permanent structural improvements or “development”, and in any case, significant permanent structures should be a last resort for accommodating the CCT, and should only be considered where they present the least overall impact.

#### **4.2.7 CCT Relationship to the State Highway**

The CCT is considered part of the Highway 1 facilities, accommodating bike and pedestrian travel, consistent with Caltrans policy to integrate alternative transportation modes, as documented in [Deputy Directive 64 - Revision 1 - Complete Streets: Integrating the Transportation System](#), and [California Assembly Concurrent Resolution 211 \(ACR 211\)](#). The Highway Transportation Concept Plan, easements and agreements related to the Hearst acquisition easements and San Luis Obispo County Coastal Plan and Area Plan policies all reflect the policy that Caltrans will support the implementation of the CCT. This pertains to situations where coastal bluff retreat impacts the CCT as well as the highway.

Where the CCT is established in the Highway right-of-way, and in the future when Caltrans undertakes shoreline protection as an interim measure to protect the highway, consideration should be made for shoreline protection to preserve minimum space for the CCT. Caltrans would not extend such protection to include the CCT if it is not within the highway ROW.

Where the highway is threatened by coastal bluff retreat, and/or space for the CCT in or immediately adjacent to the shoreline side of the Highway 1 right-of-way is threatened, Caltrans will cooperate with CCT planners

and designers, based on project-specific agreements, to plan, design, and implement shoreline protection for the CCT as an integral part of Caltrans' efforts to protect the Highway 1 facility.

Based on project-specific design and maintenance agreements, Caltrans should take responsibility for maintenance of the shoreline protection for the Highway and the CCT in these situations. Where and when the Highway is relocated inland due to coastal bluff retreat, Caltrans will coordinate with SLO County, the SCC, the CCC, DPR, and/or other CCT partners, to plan and implement the relocation of the CCT, as is occurring at the Piedras Blancas realignment.

#### **4.2.8 Highway Crossings**

There is one location, at San Carpoforo Creek, where the recommended alignment crosses the Highway. In other cases connections to the east side of the Highway exist or are recommended to connect to important visitor destinations and facilities, and other trails. These crossings may also allow bicyclists travelling on the northbound (east) or southbound (west) shoulders of Highway 1 to cross to these destinations more safely. There are two ways to create a formal crossing of the Highway: an at-grade crossing, or an undercrossing at an existing highway bridge.

##### **At-Grade Crossings**

There are four existing signalized bike/pedestrian crossings on Highway 1 in the Study Area, all within Cambria. The only at-grade crossing recommended in this Master Plan is at the entrance to the Hearst Castle Visitor's Center opposite San Simeon Road, to accommodate trail users and other bicyclists and pedestrians. Establishing a new crosswalk on a State highway can be challenging due to heavy, fast traffic and Caltrans' standards for warrants and safety concerns. Hybrid beacons or other actuated pedestrian crossing treatments may be appropriate for this location. In any case, a formal study of the need, feasibility, and design of such a crossing would be a necessary step. An at-grade crossing is also conceptualized in San Simeon Village in the North Coast Area Plan, but the Master Plan does not incorporate this as a recommendation.

##### **Bridge Undercrossings**

Undercrossings exist or could potentially be created where highway bridges cross major drainages. A new undercrossing is recommended on the south side of the San Carpoforo Creek Bridge. Existing undercrossings are located at the San Simeon State Park campground on the north and south sides of San Simeon Creek. Another undercrossing exists on the south side of the Pico Creek Bridge. Given their connections to other unpaved trails, these undercrossings are envisioned to be unpaved, but could be paved to provide more formal access. Depending on configuration of the bridge and the surrounding site, such undercrossings may be subject to seasonal flooding, an important issue for their feasibility and design.

#### **4.2.9 Shoulders for Road Bikes**

The goals of the CCT include accommodating bicycles along the entire length of the coast, at a minimum along the shoulders of Highway 1. For long-distance or "through" cyclists and serious local cyclists, the highway shoulder is the most desirable location, provided there is adequate paved width; at minimum four foot shoulders outside the vehicle lanes and ideally eight-foot shoulders where feasible, as this is the Caltrans standard shoulder width per the Highway Design Manual. Serious cyclists typically prefer shoulders to a mixed-use path or trail that is shared with pedestrians, especially if the separated facility is more circuitous.

North of San Carpoforo Creek, due to the rugged topography, the Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report identifies a concept of four foot shoulders<sup>3</sup>, although in most cases the shoulders north of San Carpoforo are less than four feet. The Highway is signed and designated as a Class III bike route, with bikes and cars sharing the lanes. Eight foot shoulders exist in many, but not all, parts of the Study Area south of San Carpoforo Creek.

For the CCT Master Plan the conditions of the shoulder and adjacent right-of-way were analyzed along the Highway 1 corridor to estimate the current shoulder width and the general conditions for and feasibility of shoulder widening to 8 feet.

A more detailed study of the existing width and feasibility of widening the highway shoulders was recently completed for Highway 1 along the entire Big Sur Coast as far south as San Carpoforo Creek.<sup>4</sup> The study concluded that widening the shoulders through this area was extremely challenging due to topographic and geologic constraints.

For the Master Plan, Highway 1 was classified according to whether 8 foot shoulders exist, and where they do not; and the relative challenge of creating them, based on an aggregate of factors. Factors evaluated include the width of the existing shoulder, topography adjacent to the existing shoulder (the most significant factor), presence of culverts or bridges, cross streets, presence of numerous mature trees, and the presence of sensitive resources that shoulder widening would likely affect. The specific combinations of factors are available in the GIS analysis, which was provided to SLOCOG and partners as a product of the Master Plan.

Figure 4-13 through Figure 4-16 show examples of relevant cumulative conditions reflected in the analysis.

Figure 4-17 presents the findings of the shoulder widening feasibility analysis. Two parallel colored lines on the maps indicate the existence or relative feasibility of eight foot paved shoulders on the east and west sides of the highway.

The segments were classified as follows:

- Purple – Eight-foot shoulder exists
- Green – Eight-foot shoulder could be constructed relatively easily
- Yellow – Eight-foot shoulder could be constructed with moderate difficulty
- Red – Eight-foot shoulder would require major construction to implement

The photos below illustrate locations along Highway 1 that represent typical combination of factors corresponding to the above relative challenge levels for shoulder widening.

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<sup>3</sup> State Route 1 Transportation Concept Report, vi, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Big Sur Bike Route Improvements Feasibility Study, Alta Planning+Design for California Coastal Conservancy, May 2011



**Figure 4-13: An existing eight foot shoulder (purple) with ample room to install a sidepath**



**Figure 4-14: A shoulder that could easily be widened to eight feet (green)**



**Figure 4-15: A shoulder whose widening would require moderate grading/fill**



**Figure 4-16: A roadway whose shoulder would require significant construction to widen - tree removal and retaining walls**

The area north of San Carpoforo Creek is evaluated in detail in the separate Highway 1 Big Sur Area Study referenced above. Shoulders from the San Luis Obispo County line to San Carpoforo Creek vary from 4 feet to nonexistent, and opportunities to widen are extremely limited due to very steep topography and unstable slopes, as well as adjacent sensitive resources.

Figure 4-17 shows shoulder conditions and constraints from San Carpoforo Creek to San Simeon Point. Eight foot shoulders are present in some locations. Shoulders are more typically 4 feet wide; in some cases less. Generally, there are few to moderate constraints to shoulder widening, although in this scenic and sensitive setting any change poses concerns. It is assumed that 8 foot shoulder will be provided within the Piedras Blancas Realignment Project area as a part of the realignment project.

Eight foot shoulders exist between San Simeon Point south through Cambria, and south from approximately half way between Harmony Headlands State Park and Estero Bluff State Park to the start of the freeway portion of Highway 1 near the southeast end of Estero Bluffs.

Portions of the shoulders between Cambria and Harmony Headlands State Park are 8 feet wide, while other portions are narrower. The conditions and feasibility for widening are shown in **Figure 4-50** of this Chapter because the shoulder widening is the only improvement recommended for Segment 5-1: Fiscalini Creek to Harmony Headlands State Park.

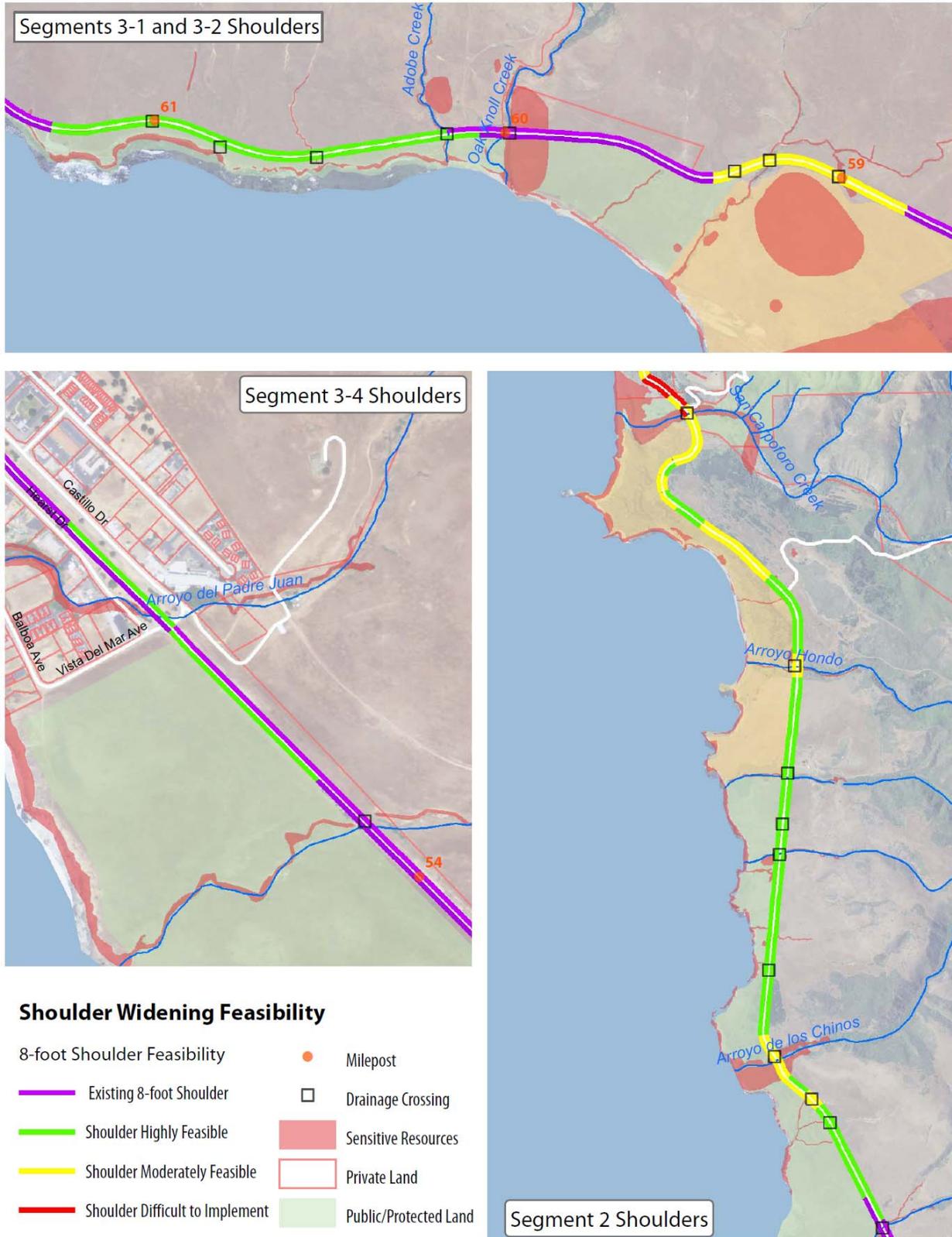


Figure 4-17: Shoulder Width and Widening Feasibility – San Carpoforo Creek to San Simeon Point

### 4.3 Recommended Alignment

This section presents descriptions of the recommended CCT alignments and access support facilities such as staging areas, trailheads, and signs through northern San Luis Obispo County, beginning in the north at the Monterey County line and continuing south to Cayucos. The descriptions address the primary north-south CCT and lateral connections to the bluffs and beach and to inland destinations or trail connections. The CCT is divided into six major segments, each of which is shown in an overview map. Most segments are divided into sub-segments that provide a greater level of detail for each trail type. Some trail segments included in the recommended braided network of CCT routes and connections are already completed or are addressed through separate efforts. Other sections, such as the trails on Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, are constructed and signed with the CCT insignia. Some may exist as informal volunteer trails to be upgraded and others are newly proposed.

Throughout the CCT Study Area, the recommendations seek a balance between feasibility, environmental impact, cost to construct, and the usefulness and potential enjoyment of the proposed trail improvements. Alternatives are recommended where there are potential longevity concerns; where they may be easier to implement but may result in a trail that is less direct or more distant from the ocean; or where they may enhance the trail experience, but carry a greater financial cost or environmental impact.

A secondary goal of the CCT Master Plan is to determine the conditions and improvements needed to accommodate bicyclists on wide shoulders through the Study Area as presented earlier and for Segment 5-1 below.

## Segment 1-1: County Line to Ragged Point (3.0 miles)

### Photos



**Existing USFS roads accommodate pedestrians, and potentially off-road bicyclists, through Los Padres National Forest.**



**An existing beach access point north of San Carpoforo Creek currently allows visitors close proximity to seasonal snowy plover habitat.**

### Description

Ownership: USFS, Caltrans, private

Figure 4-18 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 1-1. Highway 1 passes through very steep topography from the San Luis Obispo County line to San Carpoforo Creek, and has shoulders varying from four feet to virtually zero. A separate detailed study of the feasibility of widening the highway shoulders was recently completed for the entire Big Sur coast as far south as San Carpoforo Creek.<sup>5</sup> The study concluded that widening the shoulders throughout the Big Sur coast was extremely challenging due to topographic, resource and geologic constraints. In addition, a community-based effort to plan a Big Sur Coastal Trail is currently underway, coordinated by office of Congressman Sam Farr and State Assemblyman Bill Monning of Monterey County. This study is focused on connecting existing trails and roads, including USFS Roads.

Steep hills, cliffs, unstable slopes and private parcels preclude a continuous CCT route next to the highway or near the shoreline along Segment 1-1. Therefore the proposed CCT route along this segment follows an existing unpaved road in Los Padres National Forest extending from the ridgeline down to Highway 1 at San Carpoforo Creek. This recommended route would not require improvements to accommodate hiking, equestrian, or potentially mountain bike use. The road crosses an area of private land near Highway 1, but the USFS owns an access easement over this road that is assumed to allow public trail (not public vehicle) access.

There is an existing USFS trailhead northwest of the creek with parking for two to three vehicles on the roadside at a gate leading to the beach. This trail leads to western snowy plover habitat and signs warn users not to disturb the birds. This location is not a safe place to cross the highway, and this trailhead is not

<sup>5</sup> Big Sur Bike Route Improvements Feasibility Study, Alta Planning+Design for California Coastal Conservancy, May 2011

considered feasible to improve or designate for CCT purposes. When the recommended staging area and associated trail connections are developed, it may be appropriate for the USFS to close this existing access point.

From the USFS road on the northeast side of the highway and creek, the route would need to continue on USFS and DPR land on the west side of the Highway to connect to trails in the public access easement area on the Hearst Ragged Point lands in Segment 2. Connections across San Carpoforo Creek and the highway are needed.

The San Carpoforo Creek highway bridge (drainage 71-1) has a narrow two-foot wide striped shoulders which do not adequately accommodate pedestrians, as the bridge is too long for most pedestrians to cross during a gap in traffic. The options to retrofit the highway bridge to add a cantilevered structure accommodating the trail is not practical or cost-effective due to the challenges of ensuring bridge structural integrity. The recommended solution is to construct a trail bridge approximately 180 feet long east of the highway bridge on USFS Land. This will be less expensive and simpler due to avoidance of the process associated with modification of the highway bridge.

The USFS has identified the creek as an area of high ecological significance due to the presence of rare and sensitive species and high quality habitat. Planning of any trails, bridge and staging area improvements will require careful study, planning and design to avoid impacting these resources.

In either bridge scenario, a trail undercrossing of the highway bridge is needed to allow trail users to cross from the east to the west side, as there is not a safe location for a surface crossing given the curved alignment of the highway. This undercrossing, and the access to the staging area, would require an encroachment permit from Caltrans with associated maintenance/management agreement. **Figure 4-19** illustrates the potential parallel bridge and undercrossing. The undercrossing may need to be closed seasonally due to high winter flows in the creek.

### **San Carpoforo Staging Area**

This is the only new staging area proposed in the Master Plan. It would be the primary access point at the north end of the San Luis Obispo County CCT system, and could serve trail users heading south through the public CCT corridor established by scenic and public access easements on the Ragged Point Conservation Area. The parking/staging area is proposed southeast of the creek and the highway in a former pasture area. This location would provide access with minimal impact. This area is not within the scenic or conservation easements associated with the Hearst Ranch acquisition, but it is covered by County Coastal Plan policies discussed in the **Design Standards and Guidelines** section.

A conceptual layout for the staging area, bridge, undercrossing and trailhead is shown in **Figure 4-19**. The parking area would be base rock surfaced, except for handicapped parking stalls and restroom access, which would be paved to conform to ADA standards. The parking is envisioned to include space for approximately 16 cars and for three horse trailers. A low rail fence or post and cable barrier would surround the parking area. A vehicular gate would enable the lot to be closed at night and there would be a paved apron. This location may not be appropriate for left turns in and out due to highway speed and sight distance. The entrance could be configured to allow only right turns in or out, or the need/feasibility of a left turn pocket could be studied during subsequent stages of design. In any case, the design of safe ingress/egress to comply with Caltrans standards will be a requirement to secure an encroachment permit.

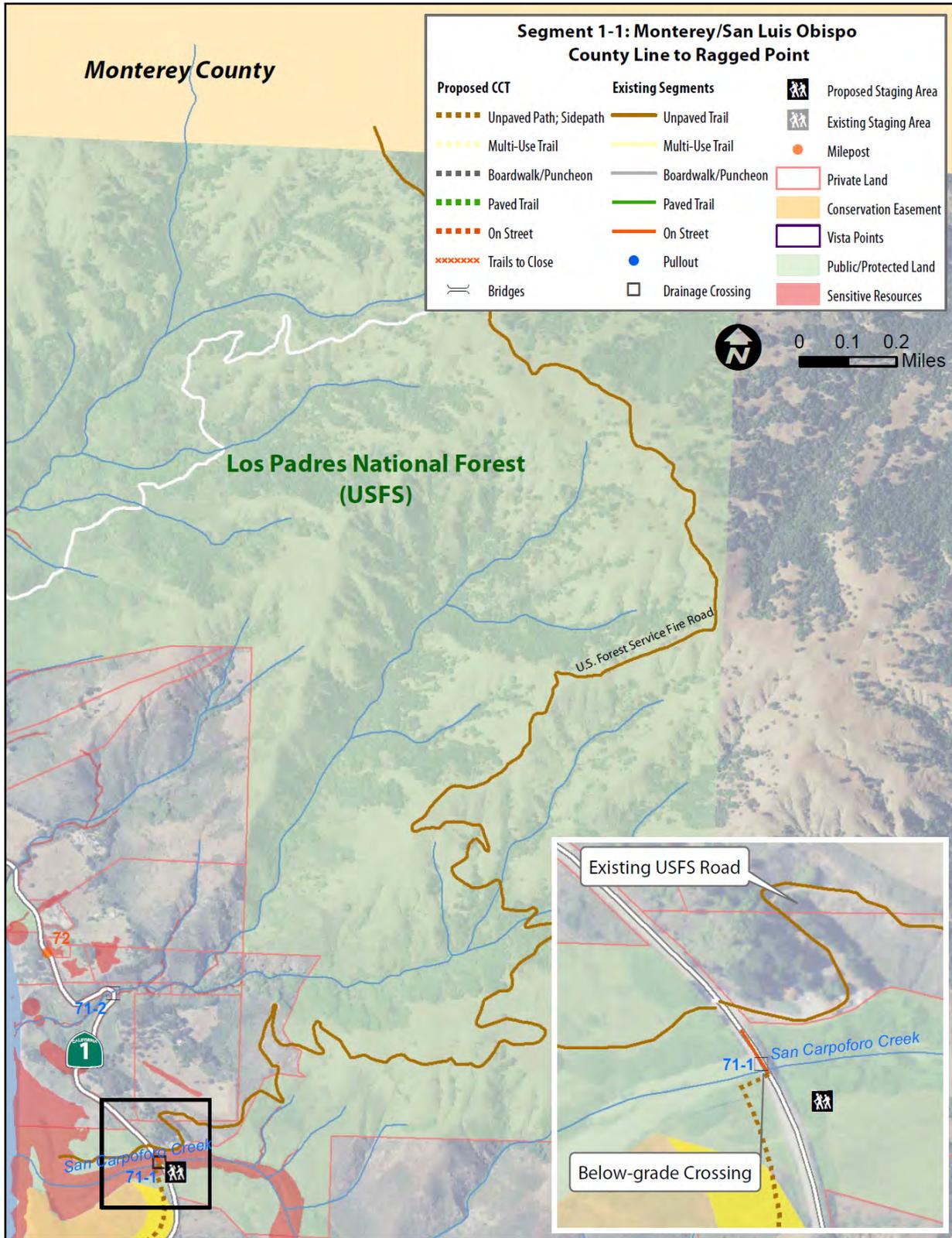


Figure 4-18: Segment 1-1 Recommendations

Facilities at the staging area would include a vault toilet designed and sited for low visibility (prefabricated concrete unit), a signboard or kiosk with map and information about the trail system and its use; and potentially a bench and/or picnic table(s). If equestrian use is to be fully accommodated, a hitch rail and a water supply would be desirable. Additional wayfinding and trail use information would be needed at the extensions of the trail to the north and south, and a trail gate would need to be installed at the existing vehicular gate leading to the USFS road to the ridge.



**Figure 4-19: Recommended staging area, bridge, and undercrossing at San Carpoforo Creek**

### Segment 2: Ragged Point to Broken Bridge Creek

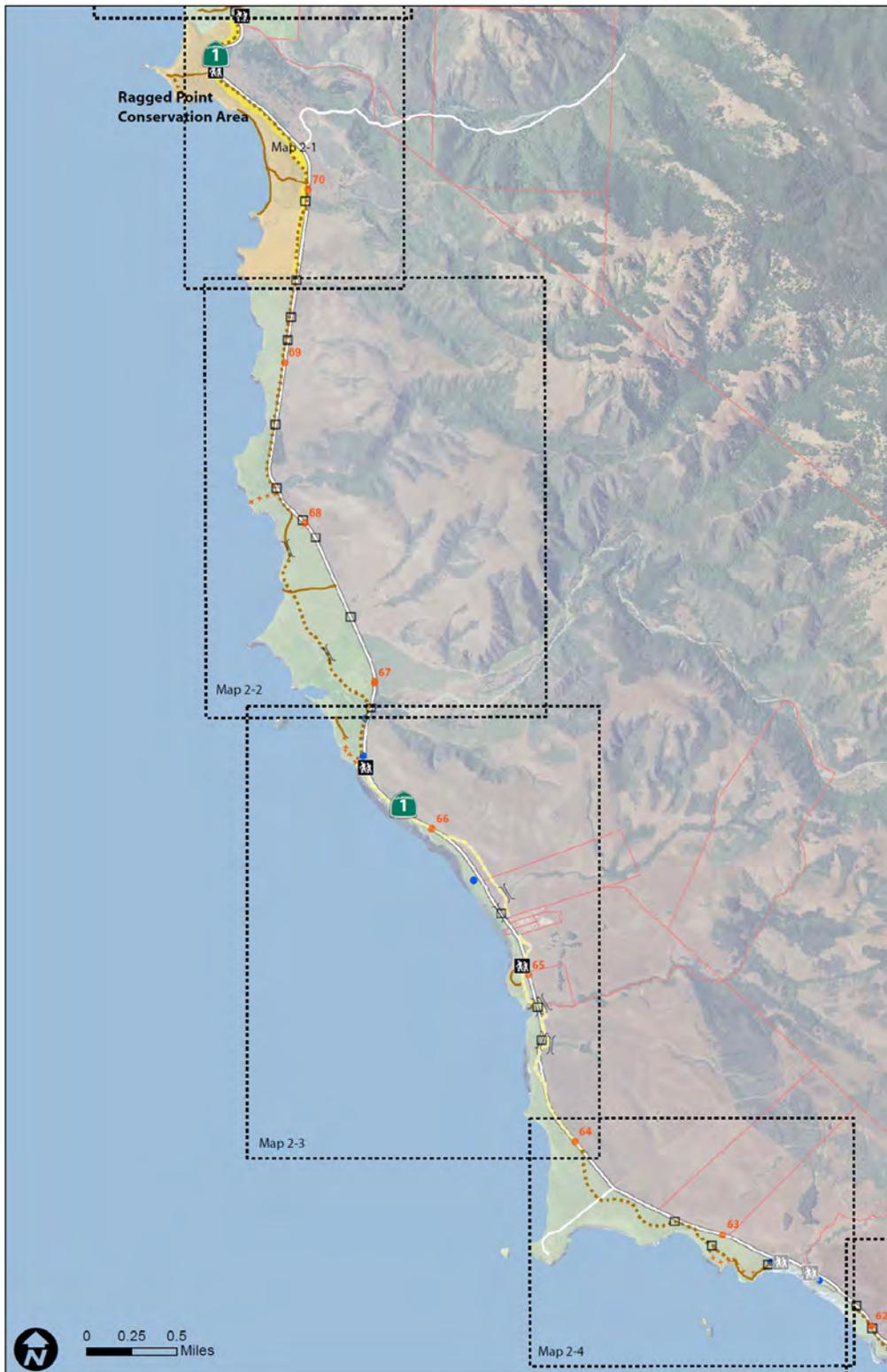


Figure 4-20: Subsegment Extents – Segment 2

## Segment 2-1: Ragged Point Conservation Area (1.8 miles)

### Photos



**Ragged Point and the beach to the south is an especially scenic location along the San Luis Obispo County coast.**



**These bicyclists could be accommodated on a shoulder, which could be easily widened in most cases pedestrian sidepath.**

### Description

Ownership: Hearst Corporation, DPR, Caltrans

While Hearst Corporation retained ownership of the Ragged Point Conservation Area, DPR acquired a conservation and public access easement over the site that allows docent-led access to the interior of the property, and a public trail corridor for the CCT west of Highway 1. This CCT Master Plan is intended to be consistent with the concepts for access contained in the easement documents. The concepts and parameters from the Conservation Easement document (Recommendations) are summarized here. The full text and exhibits from the easements are available on the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments website ([www.slocog.org](http://www.slocog.org)) and the project website ([slocoastaltrail.com](http://slocoastaltrail.com)). **Figure 4-21** and **Figure 4-22** illustrate the concepts for Ragged Point access prepared by consultants for Hearst as part of the conservation easement transaction process.

The access parameters contained in the Ragged Point Conservation Area Easement provide for docent-led, daytime tours from (a) controlled access point(s) with restricted visitor numbers. Recommendations for access to Ragged Point contained in the easement documents include the following parameters:

- Provide monthly public access on Sundays
- Limit visitor density to a maximum of 20 visitors per scheduled day
- Limit public uses to passive recreation and provide trash receptacles only at docent vans and trailheads
- Relocate hazardous trails away from bluffs and install post and rope fencing or guardrails
- Install transparent fencing to separate cattle and hikers if grazing is expected to occur year-round
- Thin or trim vegetation to widen trail

- Require that tour programs comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
- Limit improvements only to those necessary to keep the trails open and safe
- Prohibit permanent structures
- Provide only gated, non-paved, off-road parking areas for shuttle vans near trailheads; visitor parking cannot be provided at isolated trail sites
- Consider portable restroom accommodations
- Create new Ragged Point trail segments: North Trailhead to Bluff, South Trailhead to Beach, Beach Trail, and Coast Ranch Trail

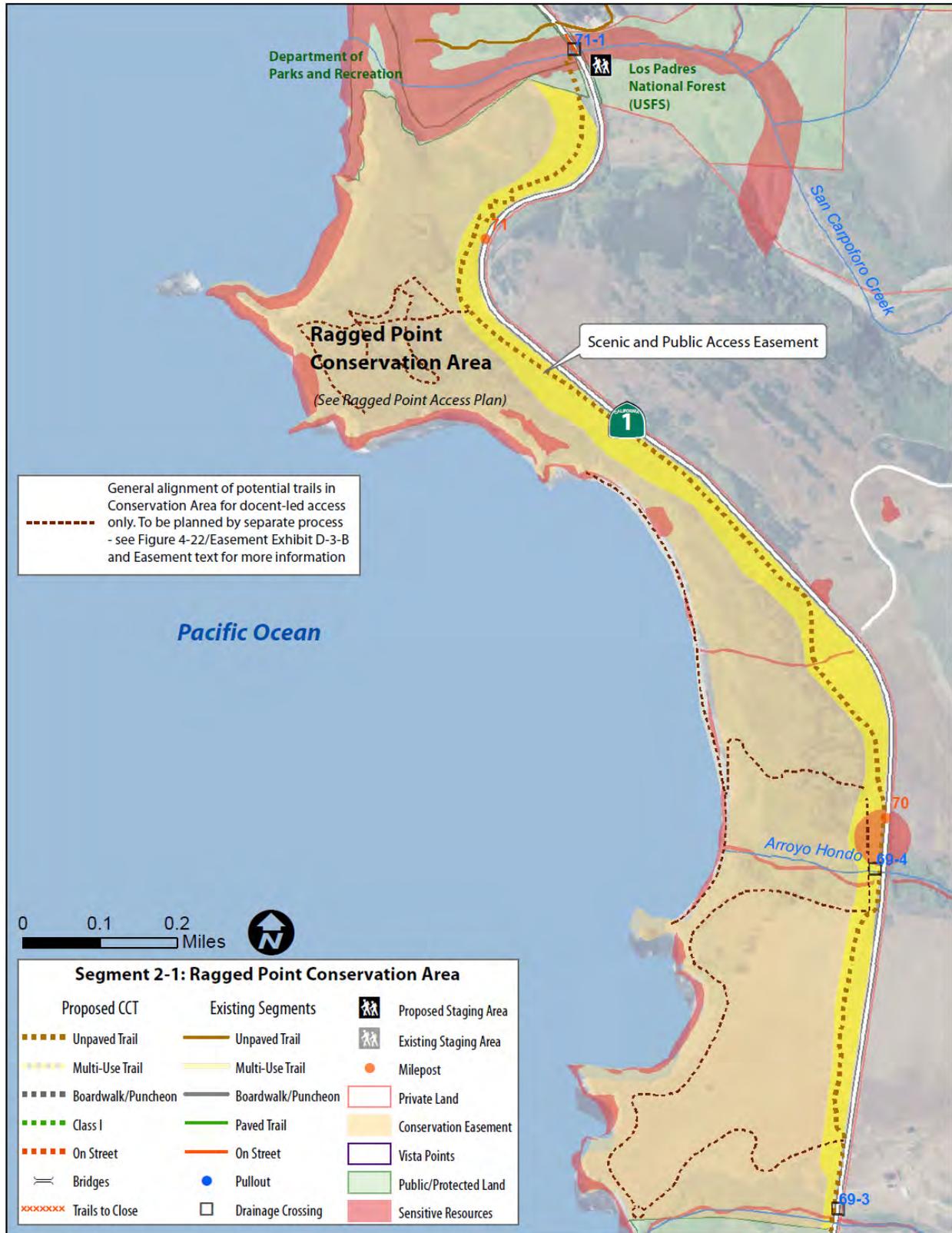


Figure 4-21: Segment 2-1 Recommendations



Figure 4-22: San Simeon Point Access Concepts from Easment Document

Most of the trails envisioned in the Recommendations in the easement document exist, and would require only minor improvements. The Easement Recommendations include a trailhead for docent-led tours to be operated by DPR or a non-profit entity. This would be located at the existing pullout at MP 70.9. Signs or a low-visibility ranch-type fence and gates would presumably be needed to separate the docent-led access area from the public trail corridor.

The terrain in the scenic and public access easement owned by Caltrans and DPR is generally relatively gentle and will require minimal grading to accommodate a native surface Coastal Trail. The slopes on the south side of the San Carpoforo Creek drainage and north of Ragged Point are steeper and will require climbing turns in the trail to achieve a gradient that complies with DPR and ADA standards. The trail must be carefully aligned to provide accessible grades and minimize impacts on the thick coastal scrub vegetation, and site-specific environmental resources.

Arroyo Hondo (Drainage 69-4) is the only significant drainage along this segment. The steep, likely unstable side slopes and dense riparian vegetation dictate that the best solution is to route the trail over the highway culvert. The existing highway shoulder does not provide adequate width for a sidepath, so the concept is to route the trail on the embankment below the highway, using retaining walls or potentially an elevated structure to provide the protection trail connection, as illustrated for Sidepath Type A-2. This solution would require an encroachment permit from Caltrans and a finding of consistency with the Scenic Easement. Assurance that the design did not adversely impact the stability of the embankment, and acceptable compliance with Highway Design Manual Standards would also be required.

## Segment 2-2: Ragged Point to Arroyo de la Cruz (2.5 miles)

### Photos



**A typical culvert where crossing would require a sidepath along the highway.**



**Trail gate and stile between the highway and DPR land.**

### Description

Ownership: DPR

Figure 4-24 illustrates the recommendations for the northern portion of Segment 2-2. This segment features the best example of coastal prairie grasslands and associated rare plant species along the entire San Luis Obispo coast. The trail is routed closer to the highway on DPR land in order to minimize impact on this resource and discourage use of existing informal trails. The area is generally flat grassland and construction of trails would not require significant earthwork.

Drainages 69-3, 69-2, 69-1, 68-4, 68-3 and 68-2 – Arroyo de los Chinos, are medium to large scale drainages with culverts under Highway 1. 69-1 is located within a historical site area and just north of an emergent wetland. These drainages have eroding side slopes.

Two alternatives for all of these drainages include:

1. Cross on top of culvert adjacent to existing guardrail (see Sidepath Type A-1, Figure 4-5). There is approximately 14'-20' feet clear between guardrail and top of headwalls and would require retaining wall and safety fence. Crossing 69-1 within the road ROW could help to minimize impacts to the emergent wetland just south of the crossing by aligning the trail outside of the wetland.
2. A separated trail bridge or boardwalk would provide a better user experience, but would impact wetlands at drainage 69-1. A bridge located near the eroding coastline at 68-3 would be at risk of failure over time. A bridge at 68-2 would impact riparian vegetation.

Figure 4-25 illustrates the recommendations for the southern portion of Segment 2-2. In this area there is a broader coastal terrace and fewer sensitive resources. The trail is routed closer to the ocean.

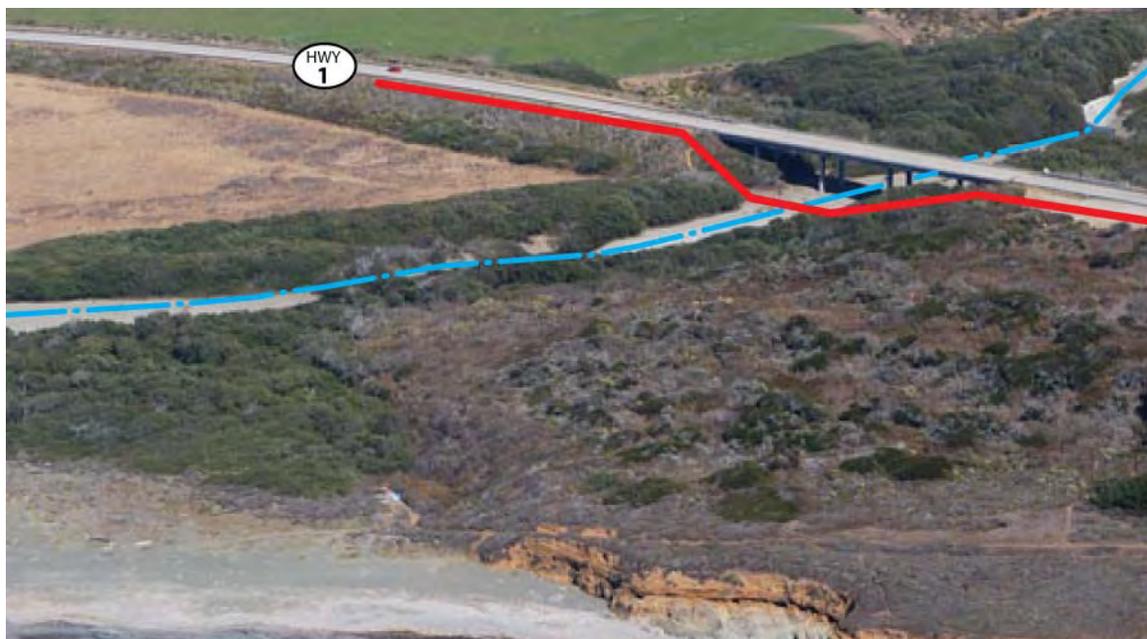
Drainages 67-2, 67-3 and 68-1 are relatively small with culverts under Highway 1. The small drainages converge into one channel near coastal bluff. The riparian vegetation is narrow closer to Highway 1 and increases at the confluence. There is eight feet between guardrail and culvert headwall on each, with a slope between of approximately 3:1 horizontal to vertical. It is recommended to cross these three drainages after the confluence with one trail bridge. A trail bridge is also recommended over drainage 67-1.

The crossing at Arroyo de la Cruz (drainage 66-1), located at the southern end of this segment, features a long highway bridge with existing eight-foot shoulders.

The alternatives for a trail crossing of Arroyo de la Cruz, have been studied in detail by DPR’s Trail Designer, and it was concluded that the only viable solution, although an undesirable one, is a “seasonal pipe bridge” - a pedestrians-only structure that is supported on pipes driven into the creek bed, or potentially a suspension bridge, as discussed in Section 4.2.5 of this Chapter. The alternatives for crossing Arroyo de la Cruz and other major drainages should be studied in more detail during the next stage of site-specific analysis, planning and design, to confirm and design the seasonal bridge, or develop a different alternative.



**Typical small-scale drainage along this segment.**



**— Drainage      — Channel geometry**

**Figure 4-23: View of Arroyo de la Cruz**

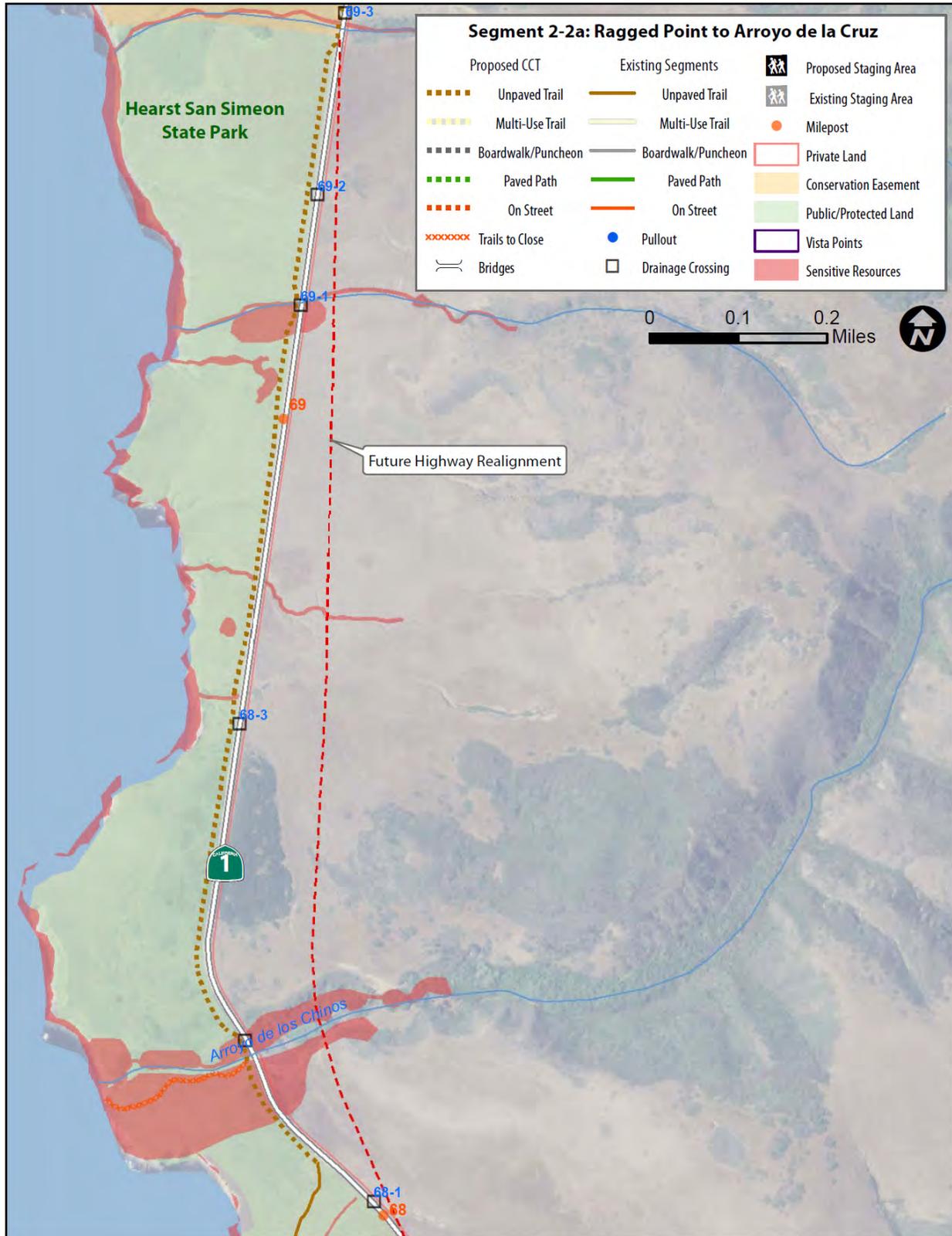


Figure 4-24: Segment 2-2 Recommendations (Map 1)

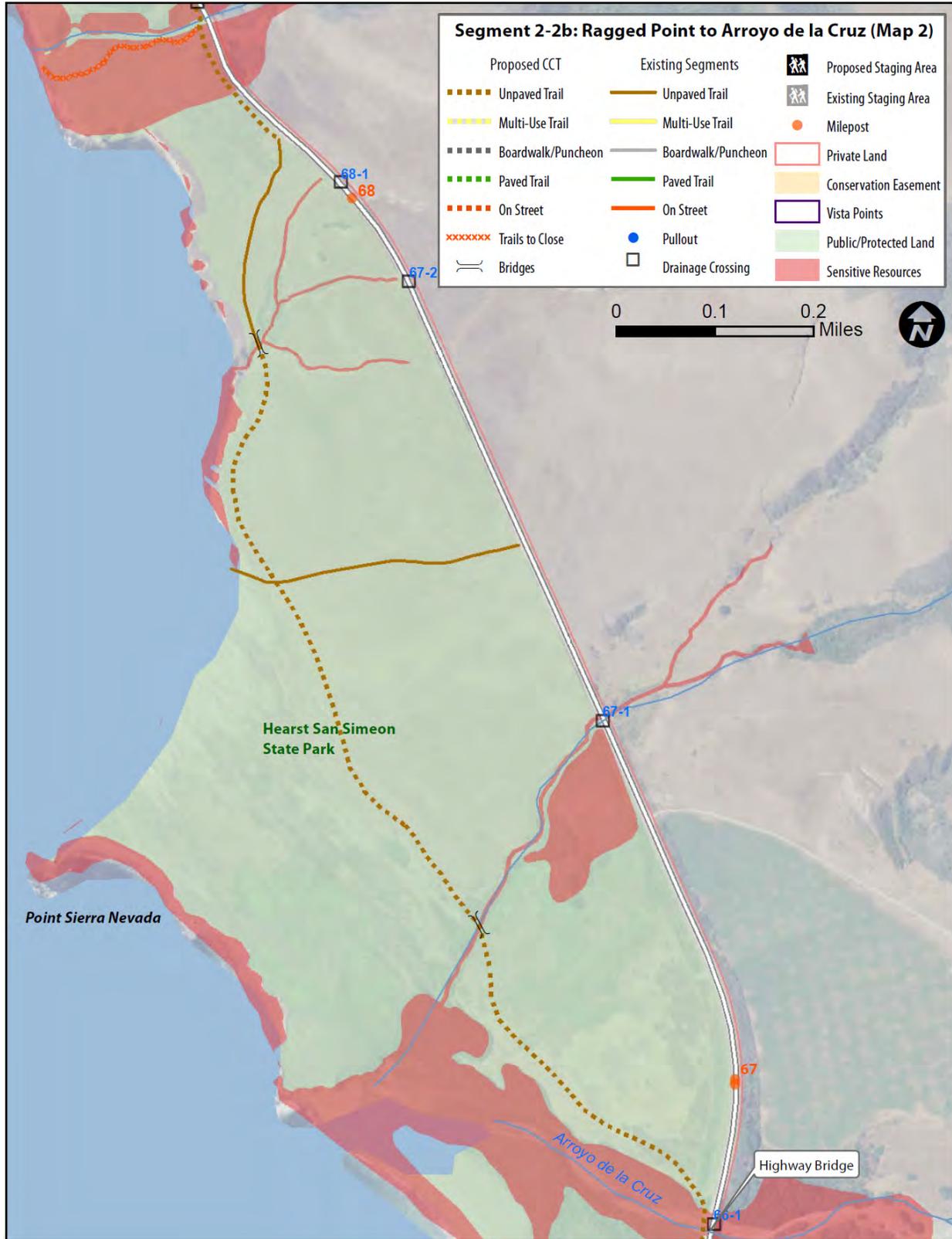


Figure 4-25: Segment 2-2 Recommendations (Map 2)

## Segment 2-3: Highway 1 Realignment Area - Arroyo de la Cruz to Piedras Blancas Lighthouse (3.0 mi)

### Photos



**Beach access near the Piedras Blancas Motel.**



**A bicyclist rides in the shoulder on the segment of Highway 1 to be realigned.**

### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans

Figure 4-28 illustrates the recommendations within Segment 2-3. Most of this area is within the Caltrans Highway 1 realignment project area. The realignment project, beginning south of Arroyo de la Cruz, will relocate 2.8 miles of highway threatened by bluff erosion. This section of coastal bluffs has retreated at an average of 20 inches per year, reflecting a significant constraint for the long-term location of the CCT. The realignment ends just before the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse.

The project will relocate the highway an average of 475 feet east of the existing corridor. Land west of the new highway, consisting of approximately 1,500 acres of Hearst Ranch property would be transferred to State ownership, with 949 acres going to DPR (including the area under the current highway) and 518 acres going to Caltrans to accommodate the new highway.

An existing small parking area south of the Arroyo de la Cruz Bridge is proposed to be improved and designated as a CCT staging area, subject to an encroachment permit from Caltrans (see Figure 4-26). This would be an 8 space base rock surfaced lot located within the highway right-of-way on a disturbed, partially paved former portion of the highway that was abandoned when the current bridge was constructed. There would be a low rail or post and cable barrier around the lot to delineate it, and a vehicular gate to control use. A new asphalt driveway entrance and acceleration/deceleration aprons would be the minimum vehicle access improvements. Basic signs would inform and guide users regarding trail access. This trailhead could provide access to trails across the Arroyo De La Cruz flood plain (presumably via a boardwalk), or beach access to the south via a relatively flat ADA accessible pathway along the coastal terrace down to the sandy beach. Habitat in existing disturbed areas would be restored in conjunction with the project.



**Figure 4-26: Concept Design for Arroyo de la Cruz bridge crossing and staging area**

The trail connection to the south is envisioned to be an unpaved, native surfaced trail, but the point of transition to a surfaced multi-use path will need to be resolved. Potentially the latter could extend to the staging area.

DPR is currently working on trail designs and negotiating with Caltrans regarding the specific arrangements for accepting the former highway right-of-way within the realignment area and creating the CCT. Figure 4-27 is a recent concept plan prepared by DPR for the CCT in this area. A portion of the abandoned roadway will be used for part of the CCT.

Caltrans standards for restoration of landforms on abandoned highway segments call for removal of existing culverts and restoration of natural drainage channels. The culverts would be replaced by bridges or boardwalks over the restored drainages. The DPR concepts for the Bypass area include permeable gravel or DG surfaced trail consisting of a portion of the former roadway or new connections, and potentially a parallel equestrian trail, accommodating users from nearby ranches and from an equestrian parking area anticipated along the abandoned portion of highway in front of the Piedras Blancas Motel. These concepts highlight the

need to consider where the improved pedestrian trail and equestrian trail will continue on the adjacent DPR lands to the north and south.

In 2005, DPR acquired the Piedras Blancas motel property, which includes 25 acres of coastal bluffs, two beaches, and a half mile of shoreline within Hearst San Simeon State Park, as well as the modest house and single story motel complex. The site presently offers day-use parking and convenient beach access. A SCC funded study<sup>6</sup> in 2010 identifies alternatives for rehabilitating the site and analyzes the financial feasibility of developing and operating low-cost lodging such as a hostel, and possibly an RV park and tent cabin facilities. In the site design for the motel reuse plan the CCT is shown on the current Highway 1 ROW, though beach access to the south of the motel site would continue. Docent led tours for the nearby BLM managed Piedras Blancas Lighthouse currently begin at the Piedras Blancas motel property. Access to the Lighthouse site is controlled with a gate at the south end of the motel site.

DPR current studies related to the highway realignment include consideration of utilizing the paved driveway between the old Piedras Blancas Motel and the ranch house located roughly 1,000 feet south of the motel on DPR property as paved trail.

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<sup>6</sup> Piedras Blancas Motel Feasibility Study and Reuse Alternatives, Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. for State Coastal Conservancy, 2010

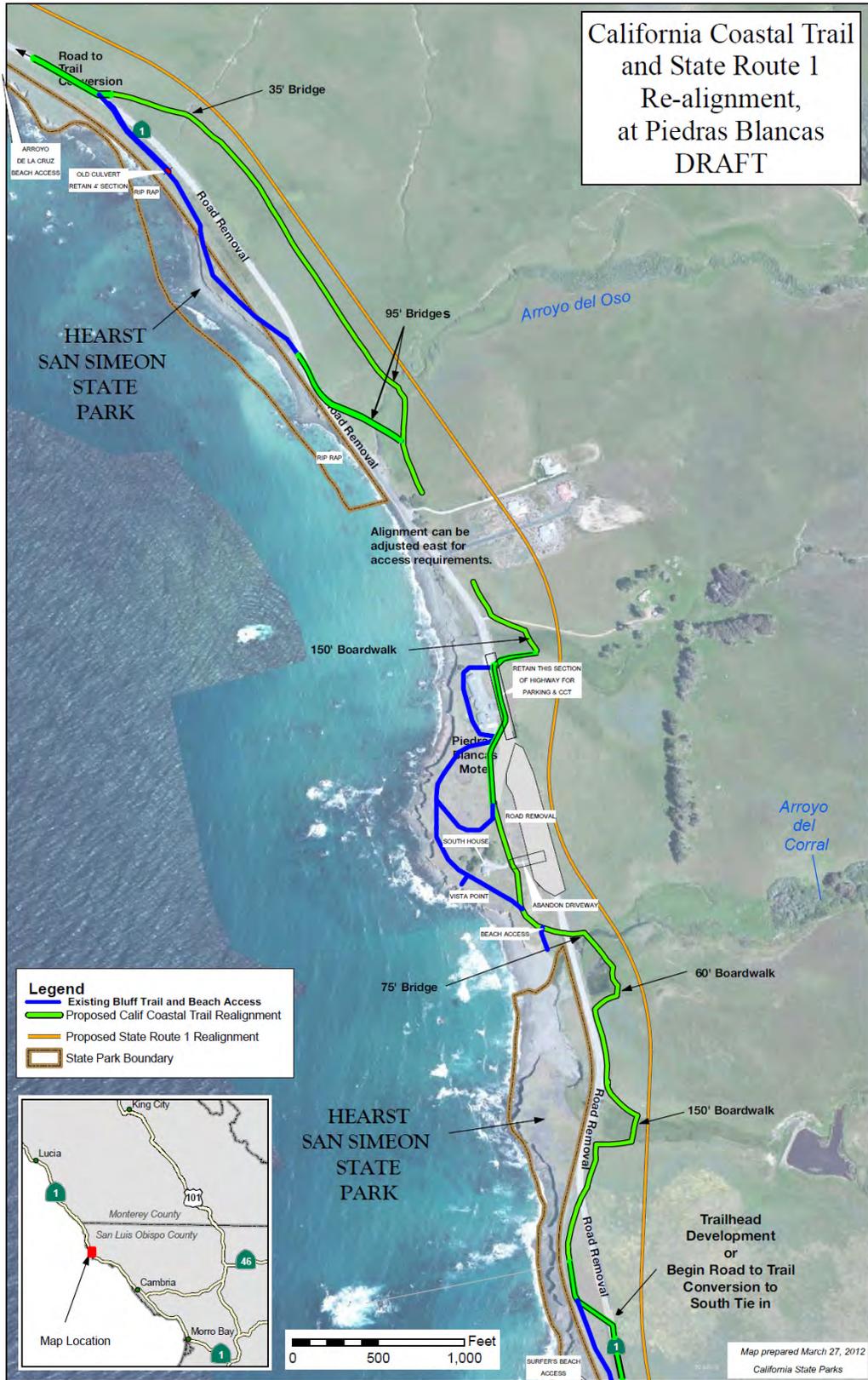


Figure 4-27: DPR Plan for Highway 1 Realignment Area

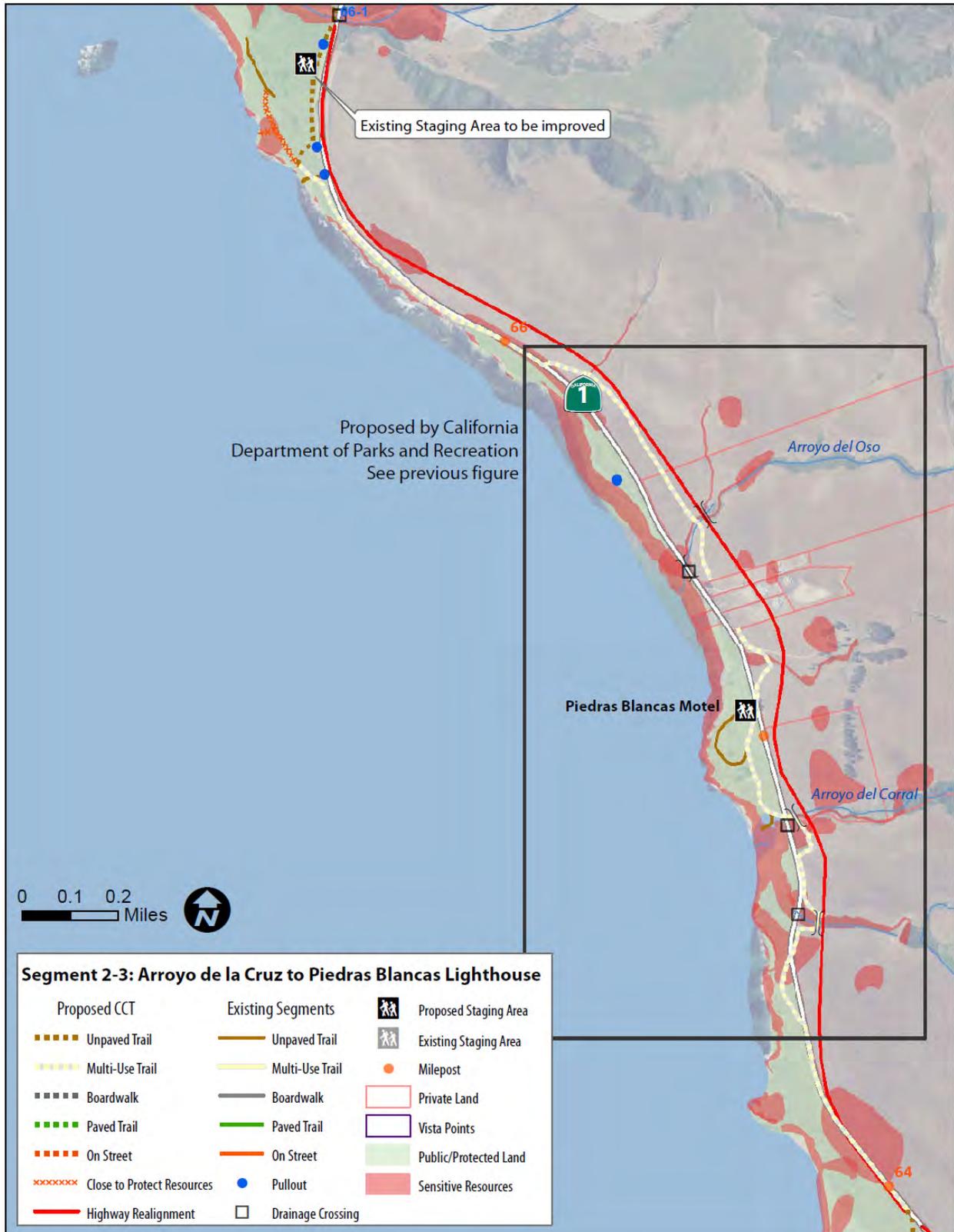


Figure 4-28: Segment 2-3 Recommendations

## Segment 2-4: Piedras Blancas Peninsula to South Elephant Seal Boardwalk (1.9 miles)

### Photos



**A combination of boardwalk and unpaved path at the Elephant Seal viewing area could accommodate CCT pedestrian use**



**A short connector will be required to provide access between the end of the Elephant Seal Viewing Area and the proposed sidepath**

### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans, BLM

Figure 4-29 illustrates the recommendations for the northern portion of Segment 2-4.

The Piedras Blancas Lighthouse is designated as an Outstanding Natural Area and is the subject of ongoing efforts to restore native coastal plant habitat. A system of trails exists, with lighthouse access limited to docent-led hikes. A well-used network of volunteer trails exists along the bluff tops on DPR lands north and south of the lighthouse.

Future plans for the Lighthouse area may eliminate the need for tour groups to meet at the motel. The BLM is developing an access plan for the Lighthouse that includes a small parking area off the main access road, as well as new or realigned trails. The recommended alignment follows an unpaved path through the Natural Area until joining the highway at approximately MP 63.2.

The CCT is proposed to extend away from the highway through the center of the peninsula, in the form of an unpaved trail routed away from sensitive resource areas.

Figure 4-30 illustrates the recommendations for the southern/eastern portion of Segment 2-4. At a cove at near MP 63.2 coastal bluff retreat has left less than 20 feet of available land between the edge of the highway pavement and the edge of the bluff. This is within an area that is designated for future highway realignment, but there is no specific timeline for the realignment. Assuming there is sufficient space to create a highway sidepath for the trail (probably Type D) that meets Caltrans standards for setback and/or barrier, this section of trail would have a short life span without associated shoreline protection efforts. However, shoreline

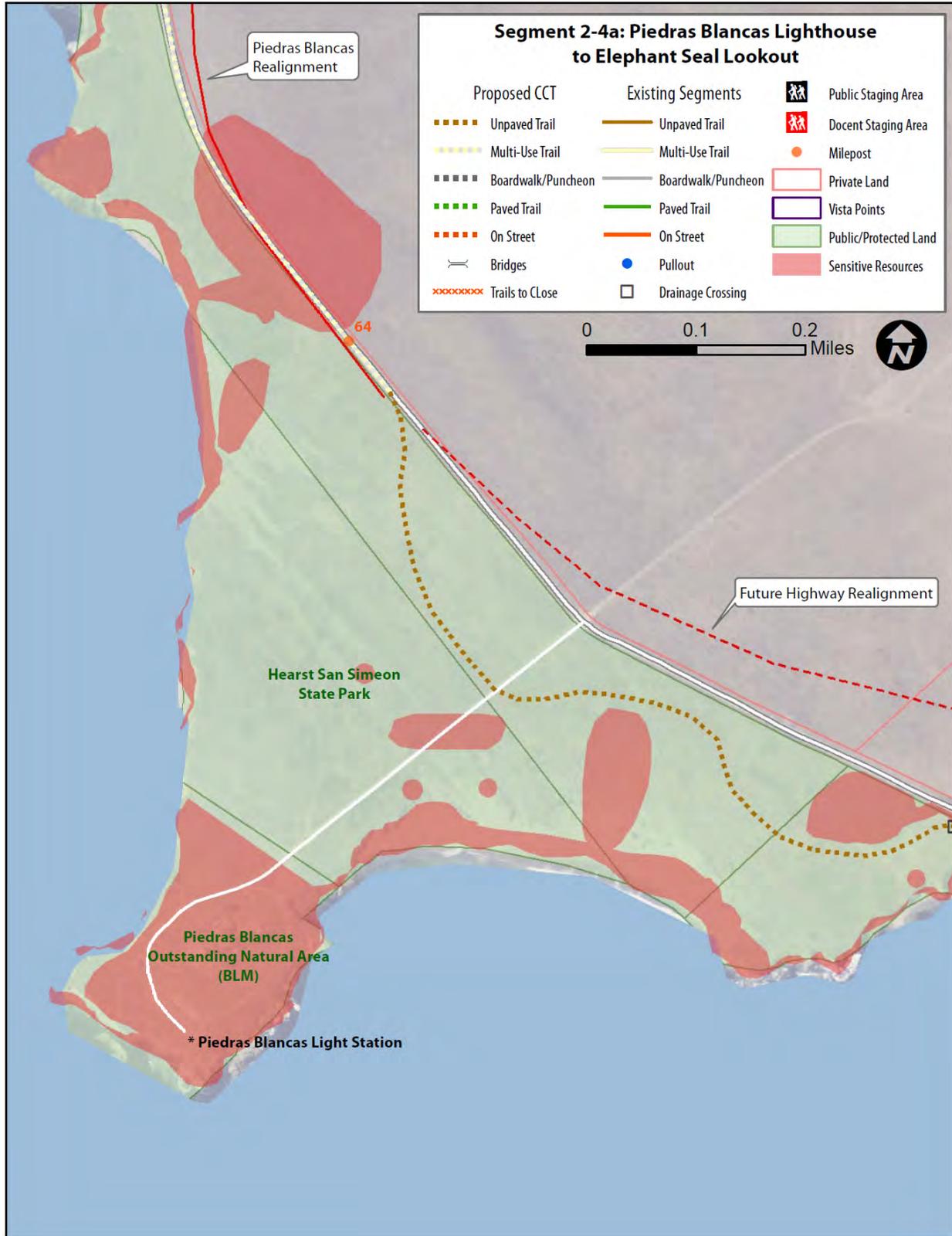


Figure 4-29: Segment 2-4 Recommendations (Map 1)

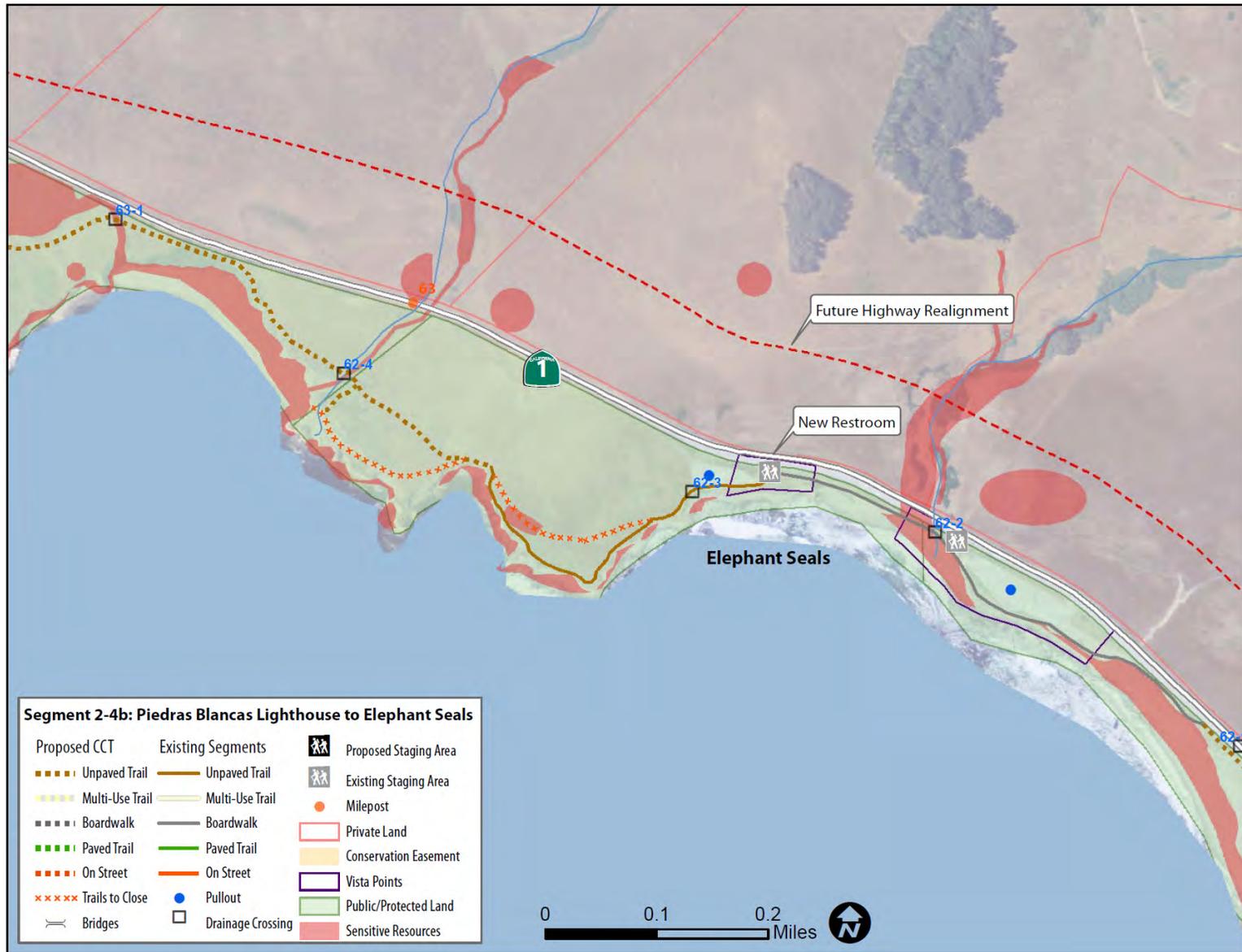


Figure 4-30: Segment 2-4 Recommendation (Map 2)

protection would be inconsistent with CCC guidelines. If a formally improved CCT configuration could not be resolved, the trail might exist as an informal connection until such time as the highway is realigned.

The CCT route follows a proposed realigned unpaved trail from the highway ROW to an existing unpaved trail leading to the north Elephant Seal viewpoint parking area. Two existing unpaved trails are proposed to be closed – a northerly section that extends close to an elephant seal haul out and through sand dunes, and a southerly segment that is redundant to the existing blufftop trail/proposed designated CCT route.

Drainage 63-1 is a small-scale drainage with an existing culvert under Highway 1. Narrow shoulders and constrained width over the existing culvert constrain the feasibility of a sidepath. A small trail bridge may be required to cross.

Drainage 62-4 is a medium drainage with freshwater forested/shrub wetland riparian habitat that would require a small trail bridge, presumably of wood construction. The riparian vegetation width is approximately 50 feet.

A new restroom is proposed at the northern existing Elephant Seal parking area to support its function as a CCT staging area. This parking area is located at an elevation well below the highway (see Figure 4-31). The proposed restroom would be located against the highway embankment and screened with native vegetation so it would not be visible from the highway. The restroom would be a vault-type toilet, as no water or sewer service is available at the site. It is envisioned to be a prefabricated concrete unit with four stalls.



**Figure 4-31: Elephant Seals Staging Area Proposed Restroom**

Drainage 62-3 is a small drainage crossing over a culvert collecting parking lot runoff. A low footbridge over the culvert or locating the trailhead in the north east corner of the paved parking lot adjacent to the proposed restroom is recommended to meet ADA standards for connection from the parking lot to the trail (see photo below).



**Looking north from northern most Elephant seal parking lot, people must cross the drainage (62-3) from the parking area.**

### Segment 3: South Elephant Seal Boardwalk to Hearst San Simeon State Park



Figure 4-32: Subsegment Extents – Segment 3

## Segment 3-1: South Elephant Seal Boardwalk to San Simeon Point Conservation Area (2.4 miles)

### Photos



**Caltrans right-of-way provides wide shoulders and there is ample room for a parallel unpaved trail.**



**A large pullout, popular with surfers and kiteboarders, provides informal parking and a trailhead that could be improved.**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, Hearst Corporation

Figure 4-33 and Figure 4-34 illustrate the recommendations for the northern/western portion of Segment 3-1. This segment has a series of locations where the coastline is very close to the highway. This area is designated as a future Highway 1 bypass project. The medium-term viability of the CCT west of the current highway at several points is likely to involve discussion on significant shoreline protection. However, shoreline protection is inconsistent with CCC, County, and DPR policies, and would only occur if Caltrans undertook it as an emergency measure to protect the highway. Ideally, in this case, protection for the CCT would also be a consideration.

Specifically, at approximately MP 61.4 coastal bluff retreat has left less than 20 feet of available land between the edge of the highway pavement and the edge of the bluff. The recommended sidepath would need to be located immediately adjacent to the highway shoulder. It would connect the Elephant Seal Viewing Area to a pullout at MP 61.3. There may not be space to create a highway sidepath for the trail that meets Caltrans standards in terms of setback and/or barrier. In any case, this section of trail would have a short life span. If a formally improved CCT configuration could not be resolved, the trail might exist as an informal connection until such time as the highway is realigned. A trailhead is recommended here to take advantage of the existing parking. Because the available space on the bluff is limited, minor drainage crossings are proposed to be accomplished by routing the trail adjacent to the highway at a series of existing culverts, rather than providing new separate crossing structures until Oak Knoll Creek/Arroyo Laguna.

Drainage 62-1, 61-3, 61-2, 61-1, and 60-4 are small drainages with concrete or steel pipe culverts under Highway 1. The highway typically has 8' wide paved shoulders. There is estuarine wetland and marine habitat within

100 feet of Highway 1 along this segment of the CCT. The trail is proposed to cross these drainages on a sidepath in the highway right-of-way (similar to crossing Type C or Type D). If this proves infeasible, a short trail bridge or boardwalk adjacent to the highway embankment may be necessary.

Figure 4-34 illustrates the recommendations for the southern/eastern portion of Segment 3-1. Sensitive resources and a series of drainage crossings generally constrain the unpaved trail alignment to a route parallel to the highway.

Drainage 60-3 is a small drainage with a steel pipe culvert under Highway 1. The highway typically has 8' wide paved shoulders. The trail is proposed to cross this drainage on a sidepath in the highway right-of-way (similar to crossing Type D).

Drainage 60-2, Adobe Creek, is a medium scale drainage with culvert under Highway 1. Freshwater forested/shrub wetland riparian habitat adjoins the drainage. There is an approximately 14 foot graded shoulder adjacent to edge of pavement with an additional 10 to 15 feet of herbaceous vegetation. The trail is proposed to cross this drainage on a sidepath in the highway right-of-way (similar to crossing Type C).

Oak Knoll Creek (also known as Arroyo Laguna), is a major drainage (60-1), presenting a challenge for trail connection. The alternatives are to construct a trail structure that is attached to the west side of the existing 110' long highway bridge, build a separate trail bridge, or have a seasonal bridge as discussed in Section 4.2.5 of this Chapter.

There is an existing beach access immediately west of the San Simeon Point Conservation Area that should remain. The trail then enters the public CCT corridor established by the San Simeon Point Conservation Area and associated Public Access Easement.

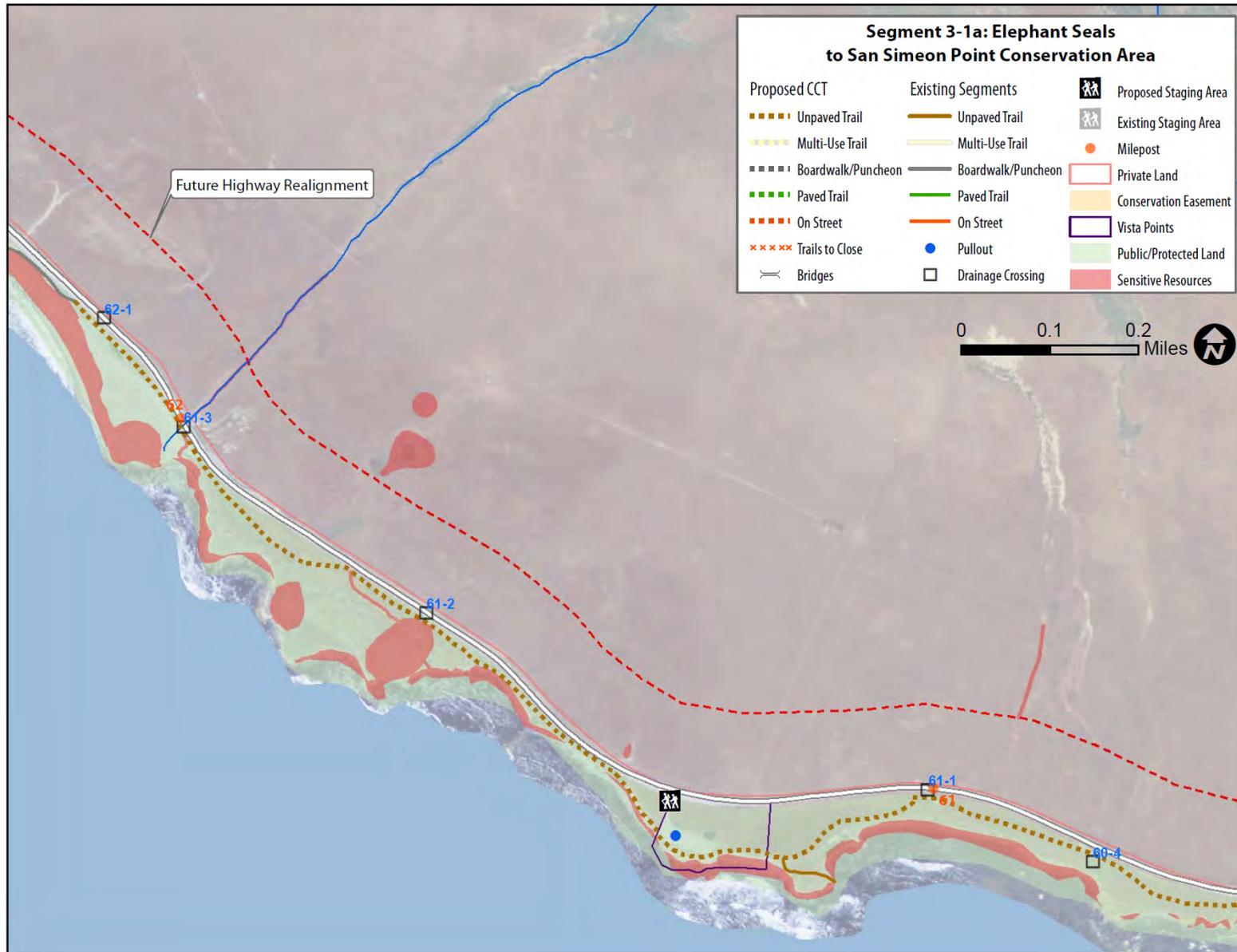


Figure 4-33: Segment 3-1 Recommendations (Map 1)

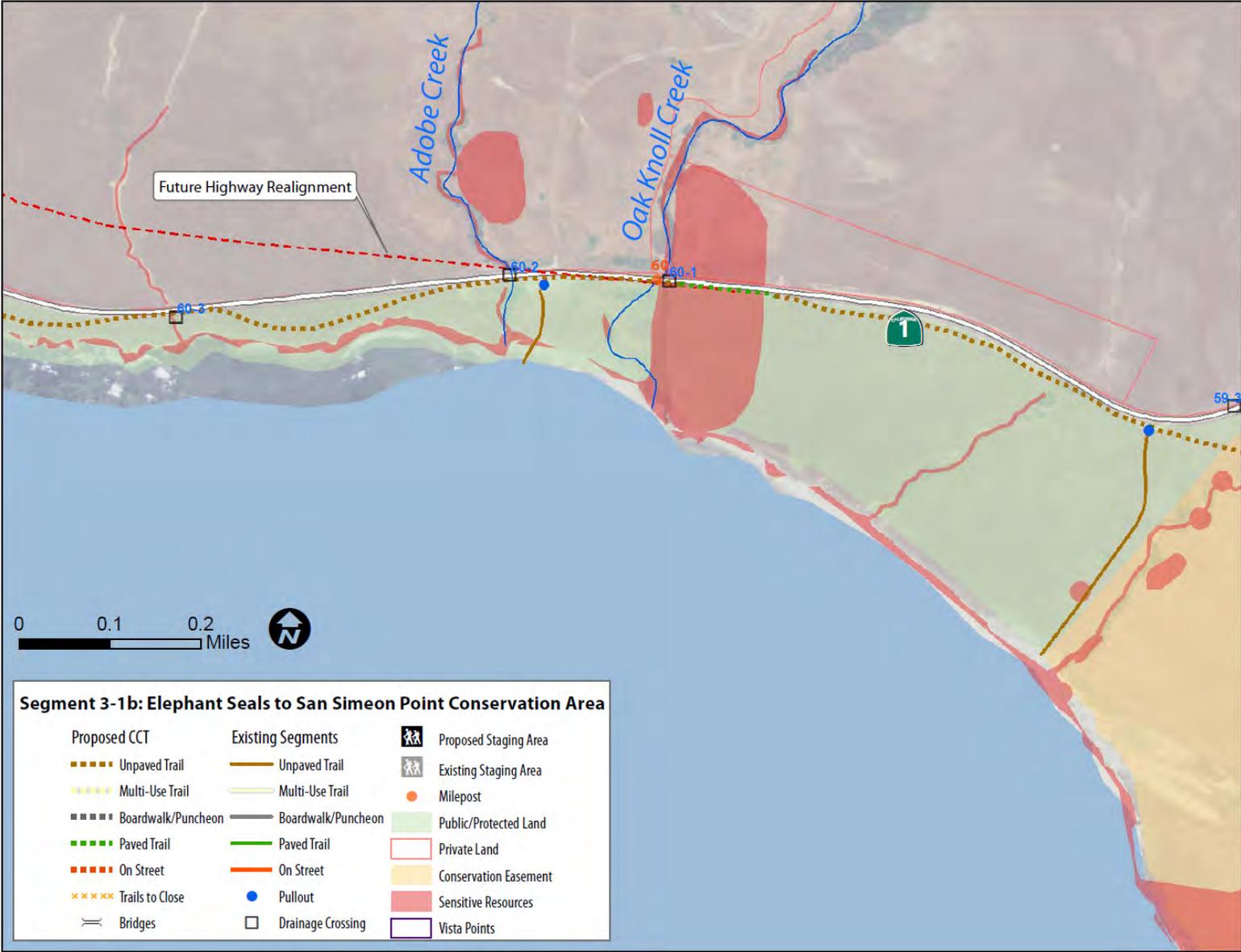


Figure 4-34: Segment 3-1 Recommendations (Map 2)

## Segment 3-2: San Simeon Point and W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach (1.9 miles)

### Photos



**W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach**



**San Simeon Road would accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists as a portion of the California Coastal Trail**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, Hearst Corporation

Figure 4-35, Figure 4-36, and Figure 4-37 illustrate the CCT alignment and associated trailhead and parking recommendations for Segment 3-2. The CCT route continues as an unpaved trail in Scenic and Public Access Easements adjacent to the highway through the San Simeon Point Conservation Area. The trail runs atop a small ridge above the highway and continues along an existing ranch road to San Simeon Road, where it continues on the road across Arroyo del Puerto into W.R. Hearst Memorial Beach and continues to Broken Bridge Creek.

Drainage 59-3 is a medium-scale drainage an existing plastic pipe culvert adjacent to Highway 1. The drainage would be crossed by short (40 to 50 foot) wood trail bridge within the existing Scenic and Public Access Easement.

Drainage 59-2 is a tributary into drainage 59-1, a medium scale drainage with forested/shrub wetland habitat. Both drainages have existing culverts under Highway 1. At drainage 59-1, two corrugated steel pipe culverts adjacent to Highway 1 direct flow into emergent wetland. It is recommended to cross both drainages with one trail bridge approximately 75 feet long.

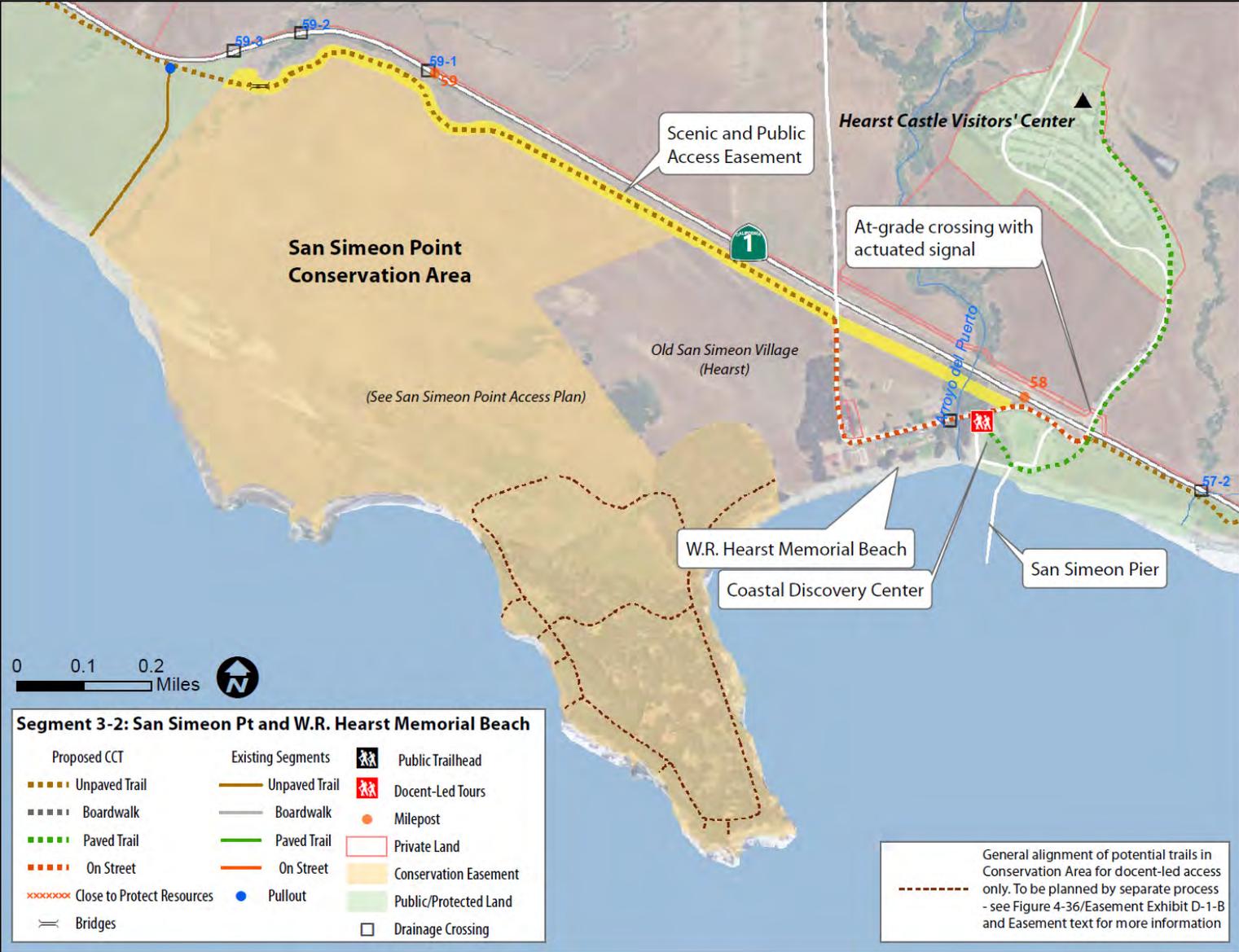


Figure 4-35: Segment 3-2 Recommendations

Drainage 58-1 is a large-scale drainage crossing of Arroyo del Puerto on San Simeon Road. The existing bridge is approximately 50 feet long and 18 feet wide. To avoid crossing this drainage, the CCT would follow San Simeon Road as an on-street route. San Simeon Road is a low-speed, low-volume roadway where bicycles could share the roadway and pedestrians could use the shoulder. Docent-led access to the San Simeon Conservation Area, as described below, will begin in the vicinity of Sebastian's General Store. San Simeon Road is a desirable side route and connection to the trailhead for docent-led hikes, as well as the adjacent store. There is little room to provide a sidewalk or path along San Simeon Road, and many visitors park on the side of the street. To facilitate pedestrian access it is recommended that parking be prohibited on at least one side of the road for the entire length so that the shoulder is available for pedestrians.

### **Conservation Area Access**

The DPR-owned Public Access Conservation Easement and the Caltrans-owned Scenic Conservation Easement that cover the three Conservation Areas at Ragged Point, San Simeon Point, and Pico Cove set forth the parameters for the limited public access and public access improvements allowed at each area. Each easement includes specific provisions for the location of the public CCT, and specific parameters and plans for facilities to allow docent-led access to other portions of the site. This Master Plan does not affect the parameters for access to the three Conservation Areas. The concepts and parameters from the Conservation Easement document (Recommendations) are summarized here for context. The full text from the easements is provided on the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments website ([www.slocog.org](http://www.slocog.org)) and on the project website ([slocoastaltrail.com](http://slocoastaltrail.com)).

Trails within defined zones identified in each Conservation Area will be accessible during daylight hours only. Structures, parking or other facilities are prohibited except for those that comprise the trail, fencing, and signage. All trails must be designed and constructed to minimize impact to natural resources. Each zone within the Conservation Areas, except for the Old San Simeon Village Conservation Area, also has additional specific access parameters.

The San Simeon Point Conservation Area access parameters include accommodating up to 100 people per day, having a single controlled point of access, providing access no less than 300 days per year, and minimizing accessory structures.

San Simeon Point Recommendations from the easement document are summarized as follows:

- Prepare a Management Plan to identify the intensity of use and trail construction, such as soil type, slope, and vegetation types.
- Limit the amount of visitors allowed at the site at any one time
- Provide a fixed and limited number of parking spaces with parking time limits
- Coordinate parking and trailhead management to control visitor density
- Provide a gated single point of entry with transparent/attractive fencing, docent booth, and kiosk
- Remain open to the public an average of five to six days per week, given staff availability
- Limit public uses to passive recreation and provide trash receptacles only at trailheads
- Provide trail markers at trail junctions

- Construct fencing to separate visitors from the bull pasture
- Install fencing, guardrails, and signage to increase public safety
- Close hazardous trails and those that are difficult to navigate
- Emphasize opportunities to experience open space and provide access to such experiences to individuals in wheelchairs
- Make minor improvements, such as trail signs and parking, that do not impact the character of San Simeon Point
- Create new trail segments: Point of Entry/Trailhead, Point of Entry to the Point, The Point to West Overlook, East-West Connector, and Vista Point/Return to Trailhead
- Locate Point of Entry/Trailhead at the beginning of the forest adjacent to the bluff looking over the San Simeon Bay
- Provide feeders into the trailhead from the parking lot in the Old San Simeon Village Area and from the trail up from San Simeon Cove Beach
- Site the Point of Entry to the San Simeon Point trail segment along the existing dirt path and encourage visitors to stay along the path by using a gravel pathway or boardwalks bounded by post and rope fencing, guardrail, or native vegetation, as well as signage
- Provide a viewing area and amenities, such as benches and interpretive exhibits, at the Vista Point/Return to Trailhead
- Map exhibits included in the easement documents for San Simeon Point show a system of trails on the Point for docent led access, closure of some existing beach access trails, a trailhead, a parking area, a Trail Visitor Center site, and a CCT Alignment Zone adjacent to Highway 1. These exhibits are reproduced in **Figure 3-12** and **Figure 3-13**. They show the recommended trail system on the Point, parking, location of the Visitor's Center, and trailhead. These would presumably be built by DPR. The Recommended Access Plan also recommends the formation of a non-profit organization to manage ongoing access and operations.

Many visitors to the busy Hearst Castle Visitors Center arrive by bus and walk to the State Beach and the Coastal Discovery Center. With the development of the CCT and the docent access at San Simeon Point, as well as future improvements in old San Simeon Village, interest in walking bicycling between destinations and activities in this area will increase. A paved path is recommended as a CCT spur to connect from the Visitors Center along Hearst Castle Road, across Highway 1 at grade to San Simeon Road. Establishing a crossing at this intersection will require detailed study and warrants must be met for the installation of crossing improvements. To respond to potential safety issues with pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the highway at this point, a conceptual plan for installation of a crosswalk with warning lights is presented in **Figure 4-38**. This is only one alternative for how the crossing could be improved, if warranted. Any improvements would need to be resolved through an intersection control evaluation process, consistent with Caltrans standards.



Drainage 57-2, Broken Bridge Creek, is a medium-scale drainage in a concrete box culvert. There is approximately 65 feet between edge of pavement and the top of the headwall, providing ample room to cross the drainage on top of the existing culvert. Setting the trail alignment back from the culvert headwall and providing a vegetative buffer would provide an enhanced trail experience without the need for a safety fence.



Figure 4-37: Old San Simeon Village Area (OSSV) – Based on Easement Exhibit F-1

Segment 3- Hearst Castle Crossing



RECOMMENDATIONS (PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS)

- (A) Install pedestrian crossing signal.
- (B) Install high-visibility crosswalk with advance stop bar.
- (C) Pedestrian signal push-button to actuate red light on Highway 1.
- (D) Bicycle detector to actuate red light on Highway 1.
- (E) Reduce turning radius for the right-turn slip-lane at the northeast corner.
- (F) 8' wide paved shoulder.

Figure 4-38: Highway 1 Crossing Improvements at Hearst Castle Road

## Segment 3-3: Broken Bridge Creek to Pico Creek (2.7 miles)

### Photos



**Bicyclists can use the bridge shoulder to cross Little Pico Creek, but there is a significant barrier for continuing the CCT for pedestrians**



**Touring cyclists riding on the existing shoulder**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, Hearst Corporation

Figure 4-39 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 3-3. The main CCT route continues as an unpaved path on the west side of the highway in a relatively narrow strip of bluff between Broken Bridge Creek and Little Pico Creek. This segment has a series of locations where the coastline is very close to the highway. Specifically, at approximately MPs 57.3 and 55.6 coastal bluff retreat has left less than 20 feet of available land between the edge of the highway pavement and the edge of the bluff, while there is between 20 and 40 feet remaining at approximately MPs 57.1, 56.2, and 55.4. The trail would need to be a sidepath in the Caltrans right-of-way in these locations, in some cases located immediately adjacent to the highway shoulder

This area is designated as a future Highway 1 bypass project. The lifespan of the CCT west of the highway in this narrow band of coastal bluff is likely to be the medium-term at best at several points without significant shoreline protection efforts. However, shoreline protection would be inconsistent with CCC, County, and DPR policies, and would only occur if Caltrans undertook shoreline protection as an emergency measure to protect the highway. Ideally in this case, protection for the CCT would also be a consideration.

There may not be space to create a highway sidepath for the trail that meets Caltrans standards in terms of setback and/or barrier. This section of trail would have a short life span. If a formally improved CCT configuration could not be resolved, the trail might exist as an informal connection until the highway is realigned, which would include resolution of a long-term alignment for the CCT.



Figure 4-39: Segment 3-3 Recommendations

If improvements are undertaken for a short-to-medium term CCT alignment in this Segment, there are four drainages to cross, in addition to the coastal bluff “pinch points”:

Drainage 57-1 is a small crossing along coastal bluff. Crossing adjacent to Highway 1 is recommended to avoid unstable bluff slopes and minimize impacts to bluff habitat (see Sidepath Type A, **Figure 4-4**).

Drainage 56-1, Little Pico Creek, is a large-scale drainage with a major highway bridge. The existing bridge is approximately 475 feet long with eight-foot wide paved shoulders. Options to create a separate trail crossing include a trail bridge, or a seasonal bridge. Remnants of footings for the old highway bridge still exist in the creek to the west of the current bridge. Potentially these could be adapted to support a trail bridge.

Drainage 55-1 is a medium size drainage crossing. There is approximately 85 feet between the edge of pavement and the culvert headwall, allowing ample space for a trail to cross on top of existing culvert and minimize impacts to wooded/shrub riparian habitat.

Pico Creek, drainage 54-3, is a large-scale drainage with a broad, deep canyon and a major highway bridge. The existing bridge is approximately 800 feet long with eight-foot wide paved shoulders. A pedestrian undercrossing of the bridge previously existed at the south end, providing access from San Simeon Acres to Pico Cove, as discussed in the next section.

Pico Creek is beyond the south end of the nearest Highway 1 Realignment Area designated in the Hearst Ranch acquisition documents. Thus establishing a route for the CCT in conjunction with a future highway realignment project is not a potential solution for the CCT connection. The land to the northwest of the creek and highway is the Pico Creek Conservation Area, owned by the Hearst Corporation with conservation, scenic and public access easements held by the State, as discussed below. This drainage contains many sensitive resources. The options for creating a trail connection are the same as at the other major drainages/highway bridges; a separate trail bridge or a seasonal bridge located within the State highway right-of-way or public access corridor established in the easements. However, the conservation easement and sensitive resources in this drainage further constrain the feasibility of at least a separate or seasonal bridge, and any solution will require detailed study and further planning.

### **Conservation Area Access**

Hearst Corporation retained ownership of the Pico Cove Conservation Area, while DPR acquired a conservation and public access easement over the site that allows docent-led access to the interior of the property, and a public trail corridor for the CCT west of Highway 1. This Master Plan does not affect the parameters contained in the Easement document. The concepts and parameters from the Conservation Easement document (Easement Recommendations) are summarized here for context, and the full text from the easements is provided on the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments website ([www.slocog.org](http://www.slocog.org)) and on the project website ([slocoastaltrail.com](http://slocoastaltrail.com)). **Figure 4-40** is reproduced from the exhibits in the Easement document.

Pico Cove Conservation Area Public Access Parameters describe docent-led, daytime tours from controlled access points with small visitor numbers. Specific recommendations contained in the Conservation Easement document include:

- Provide monthly public access on Sundays
- Limit visitor density to a maximum of 20 per scheduled day

- Limit public uses to passive recreation and provide trash receptacles only at docent vans and trailheads
- Relocate hazardous trails away from bluffs and install post and rope fencing or guardrails
- Install transparent fencing to separate cattle and hikers if grazing is expected to occur year-round
- Thin or trim vegetation to widen trail
- Require that tour programs comply with ADA requirements
- Limit improvements to those that are necessary to keep the trails open and safe
- Prohibit permanent structures
- Provide only gated, non-paved, off-road parking areas for shuttle vans near trailheads; visitor parking cannot be provided at isolated trail sites
- Consider portable restroom accommodations
- Create new Pico Cove trail segments: Pico Cove North Bluff Trail and Pico Cove South Loop Trail



Figure 4-40: Pico Cove Conservation Area- Easement Exhibit D-3-A

## Segment 3-4: San Simeon Acres and Junge Ranch (1.7 miles)

### Photos



**Existing unpaved trail at the south end of Junge Ranch leads to bluff areas that are suitable for a small walk-in camping area.**



**An existing unpaved path through the Best Western Cavalier property currently provides public access above the shoreline**

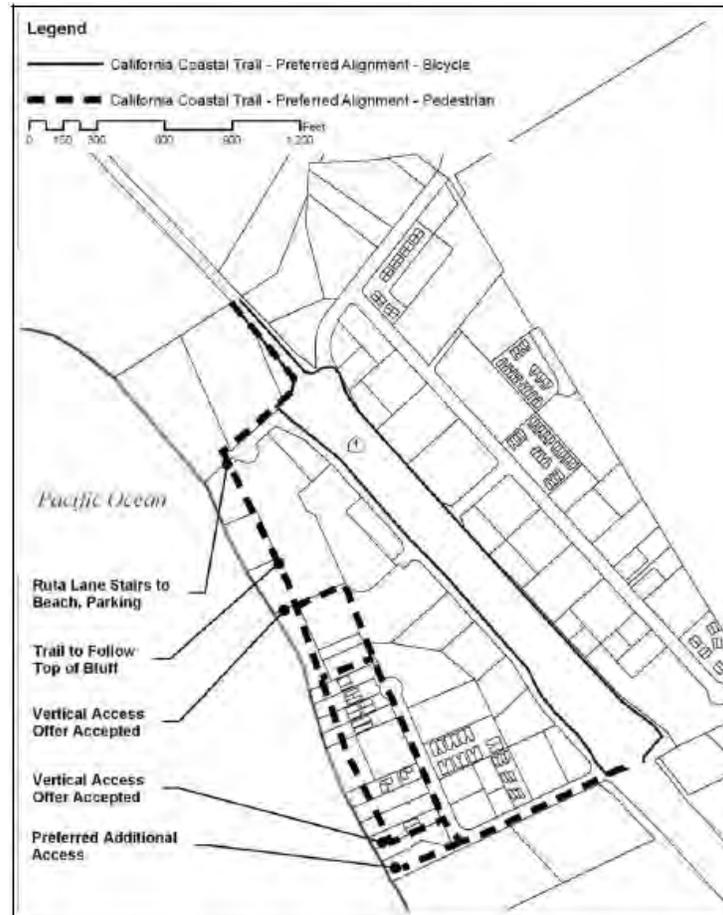
### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County, San Simeon Community Services District, private

Figure 4-41 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 3-4. Several hotels and visitor-serving amenities are located in San Simeon Acres. A bicycle route is available on the eight foot shoulders of Highway 1, and it may be desirable to sign CCT connecting bike routes on parallel side streets. Existing privately-owned blufftop paths in front of several hotels provide public access to the bluffs and beaches on the west side of Highway 1 at the north end of San Simeon Acres. With permission, these could potentially be designated as the CCT. There is also a public beach access point at the end of Pico Avenue.

A pedestrian undercrossing of Highway 1 at the south end of Pico Creek Bridge was previously established, but was closed due to homeless camping activity and low public use. Potentially this connection could be re-opened as part of the CCT network in conjunction with overall bicycle and pedestrian access improvements in San Simeon Acres.

The North Coast Area Plan (NCAP), an element of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan (last revised November 2009), contains recommendations regarding the CCT, and for bicycle and pedestrian connections, particularly in San Simeon Acres. The CCT improvement recommendations in this Master Plan are consistent with the NCAP recommendations. Figure 4-41 from the Area Plan shows coastal access connections in San Simeon Acres. This includes future improvement of two or three locations where “vertical” access to the beach has been accepted by the County in the form of an offer to dedicate an easement.



**Figure 4-41: San Simeon Acres Access, from North Coast Area Plan**

An existing large sewer pipe crosses Arroyo de Padre Juan near the end of San Simeon Avenue. This pipe is utilized by locals to cross over the creek. A parallel pedestrian bridge approximately 75 feet long should be built to accommodate the CCT. From this point trail users can follow a short existing sidewalk to Balboa Avenue and walk along this street about 0.1 mile to the northern entrance of the Junge Ranch area, now owned by DPR.

Junge Ranch is not subject to the Caltrans Scenic Easement, but has its own less restrictive easement document. An existing trailhead at the northern entrance to Junge Ranch offers parking on the shoulder for a few cars. It is recommended for signage and entry upgrades as part of the CCT improvements. An existing unpaved path could be upgraded to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles with the installation of a trail bridge of about 100 feet in length over Drainage 54-1 to create a continuous length of trail separated from Highway 1. Alternatively, or in addition, a trail could be developed parallel to the highway, with a sidepath utilizing the existing highway culvert at Drainage 54-1. A second trailhead at the southern entrance at the end of Las Palmas Avenue offers parking and access to bluff areas suitable for development of a small walk-in campground.

Existing volunteer trails in Junge Ranch impact wetland areas and cultural resource sites. These trails should be closed and restored to natural conditions. After exiting Junge Ranch, the CCT would continue as a signed route along Las Palmas Avenue, a quiet dead end side road with unpaved shoulders. Drainage 54-1 would be crossed on the existing road.



Figure 4-42: Segment 3-4 Recommendations

## Segment 3-5: Hearst San Simeon State Park Campground (1.2 miles)

### Photos



**San Simeon State Park Campground has other trail facilities that could connect to the Coastal Trail**



**The trail would enter Moonstone Beach Drive at this intersection, challenging due to this drainage.**

### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County

Figure 4-43 and Figure 4-44 illustrate the recommendations for Segment 3-5. The CCT route would consist of a sidepath along the west side of Highway 1 from Las Palmas Avenue until crossing San Simeon Creek.

Hearst San Simeon State Park Campground provides restrooms, campgrounds, interpretive signage, and several trails. This CCT segment would connect these amenities with the community of Cambria. The existing Caltrans ROW is generally adequate to accommodate a sidepath. The terrain is generally flat and there is currently a gravel surface. However, some segments, at approximately MP 52.5 may not have enough room between the highway shoulder and the ocean to accommodate a trail and will need to utilize short segments of the eight foot wide Highway 1 shoulder.

San Simeon Creek, drainage 53-1, has a highway bridge approximately 450 feet long, with eight-foot shoulders. An existing path on the north side of San Simeon Creek connects campground trails to the beach, crossing under the bridge. A boardwalk and unimproved route under the bridge to the beach exists on the south side of San Simeon Creek, connecting from the Washburn Day Use Area. This area, with a parking lot and restrooms, is potentially a convenient staging area and support facility for the CCT.

San Simeon Creek contains many sensitive resources. Options for creating a trail connection include: a separate trail bridge, or a seasonal bridge located within the State highway right-of-way or DPR land. The conservation and scenic easements associated with the Hearst acquisition do not extend to this area, but the constraints are still significant. Determining the best solution will require detailed study.

South of San Simeon Creek the coastline is close to the highway. The worst condition is at approximately MP 52.5, where coastal bluff retreat has left between 20 and 40 feet of available land between the edge of the highway pavement and the edge of the bluff. The trail would need to be a sidepath in the Caltrans right-of-

way in this location, and potentially others. At this point there does appear to be space to create a simple unpaved coastal trail without requirement for significant structures. Creation of a formal trail connection between the State Park campground and other visitor-serving facilities in Cambria would also be a desirable local connection.

This area is not designated as a future Highway 1 bypass project. The lifespan of the CCT west of the highway in this narrow band of coastal bluff is likely to be the medium-term at best at several points without future shoreline protection efforts. However, shoreline protection would be inconsistent with CCC, County, and DPR policies, and would only occur if Caltrans undertook shoreline protection as an emergency measure to protect the highway. Ideally in this case protection for the CCT would also be a consideration. In the long-term future presumably the highway and the CCT would be realigned together.



Figure 4-43: Segment 3-5 Recommendations (Map 1)



Figure 4-44: Segment 3-5 Recommendations (Map 2)

### Segment 4: Northern Cambria to Fiscalini Creek



Figure 4-45: Subsegment Extents: Segment 4

## Segment 4-1: Northern Cambria (1.7 miles)

### Photo



**A boardwalk along Moonstone Beach Drive provides access for pedestrians along the coast**



**The connection of Moonstone Beach Drive to Windsor Drive will need improvement**

### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County, San Simeon CSD

Figure 4-46 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 4-1. A Class III bike route on Moonstone Beach Drive connects to other bicycle facilities through northern Cambria. This existing signed class III route would be designated as the local CCT bike route, with the shoulder along Highway 1 accommodating through bicyclists. The proposed CCT pedestrian route follows an existing unpaved path from the Highway 1 corridor to State Beach Drive, where there is an improved State Park vista point parking lot that leads to a blufftop overlook and beach access path. Approximately 1,000 feet to the south on State Beach Drive above Leffingwell Creek there is another State Park parking lot, restroom, and bluff and beach access paths. After the southerly turnout/vista point, the CCT would cross Leffingwell Creek.

Leffingwell Creek, drainage 52-1, is a large scale drainage. Moonstone Beach Drive crosses by Leffingwell Creek on a major bridge approximately 265 feet long which has recently been reconstructed to provide 8 foot shoulders and sidewalks. The mouth of Leffingwell Creek opens to a beach area and boat landing.

South of the creek the CCT pedestrian route would continue along an existing boardwalk along the narrow low beach bluff, extending south nearly the entire length of Moonstone Beach Drive towards Santa Rosa Creek. Where the road turns away from the beach the boardwalk ends and the CCT route would continue on a paved roadside path/shoulder that exists except for a short gap near Windsor Boulevard along Santa Rosa Creek. This is a project of the Cambria Community Services District that is underway and will provide a roadside path connecting to Windsor Boulevard.

The intersection of Windsor Boulevard and Highway 1 features a signalized crossing with user-actuated bike and pedestrian crossing lights.

Access along the shoulder of Windsor Boulevard leads to a bridge across Santa Rosa Creek. The existing bridge is approximately 120 feet long with narrow 2-foot wide paved shoulders and approximately 3 to 4-foot wide sidewalk along the west side of the bridge.

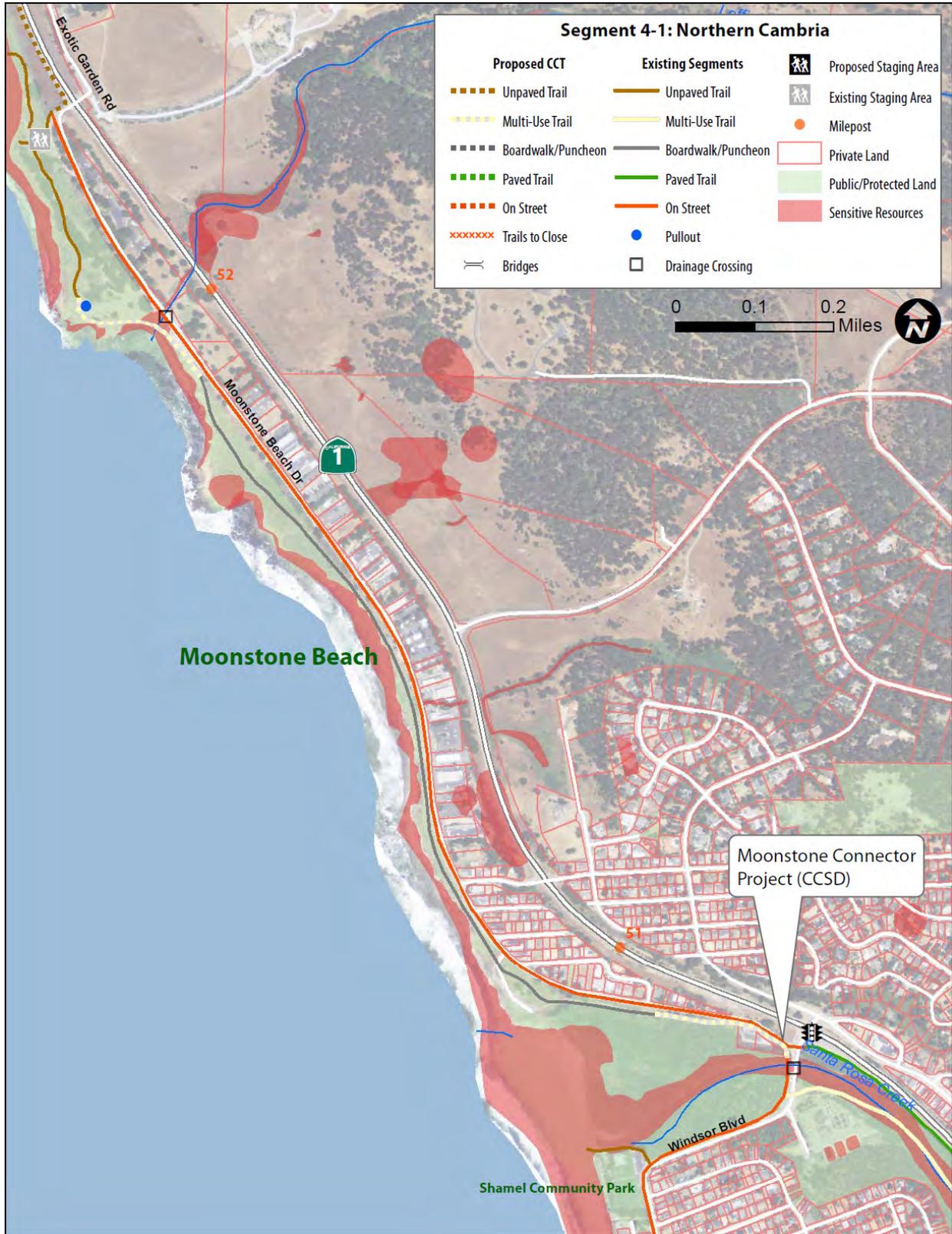


Figure 4-46: Segment 4-1 Recommendations

## Segment 4-2: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (1.7 miles)

### Photos



**The Santa Rosa Creek Trail provides another option to connect pedestrians from northern Cambria to Fiscalini Ranch.**



**The bluff trail accommodates pedestrians on an existing boardwalk near the coast through Fiscalini Ranch.**

### Description

Ownership: DPR, Caltrans, San Luis Obispo County, San Simeon CSD, Cambria Community Services District (CCSD)

Figure 4-47 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 4-2. There are multiple alternatives to access Fiscalini Ranch Preserve from the north:

### Connections to Cambria

From the junction of Moonstone Beach Drive and Windsor Boulevard an existing paved Class I paved path continues south on the east side of Santa Rosa Creek in the highway right of way to another signalized crossing at Cambria Road. The Santa Rosa Creek Trail leads from a large dirt and gravel turnout and connects to an existing trail/service road that continues south on the west side of the creek on land owned by the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD). These trailheads would be appropriate locations to add CCT signs and information, depending on the development of future connections into Fiscalini Ranch Preserve or south along Highway 1, as discussed below. CCSD has conceptual plans to connect this trail under the highway bridge at Santa Rosa Creek and beyond to existing trails that extend into the central commercial district of the small community. Caltrans previously has rejected this proposal, but other similar creek undercrossings have been implemented. In any case the undercrossing would require a Caltrans encroachment permit and compliance with Caltrans, environmental, and flood control standards. A rudimentary creek trail parking area has been constructed by the CCSD north of the creek and west of the highway. Formalizing this would require obtaining an encroachment permit from Caltrans, based on an access design that met standards and resolution of maintenance/management agreement.

A CCSD proposed trail would connect southeast on the north side of Highway 1 to an existing trail that extends from Ramsey Road. Using the east end of Ramsey Road and Newton Drive as an on-street route, a connection could be made back to Highway 1 at the signalized crossing at Burton Drive.

### **Connections through Fiscalini Ranch Preserve**

From Moonstone Beach Drive, or Highway 1, Windsor Boulevard can accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Cyclists have a bike lane and pedestrians have an unpaved sidepath on the north side of the road. The sidepath should be widened and the overgrown vegetation removed.

Shamel Community Park is located at the curve of Windsor Boulevard, and has public restrooms and picnic facilities that could serve trail users. A beach access path along the north side of the park is in very rough condition, with erosion and exposed rocks. With some minor improvements it would afford the opportunity for an alternative beach route from Moonstone Beach Drive to Windsor Boulevard, at least during low tide and low creek flow periods.

Where Windsor Boulevard turns south, at Shamel Park, it becomes a residential street. Bicycles and pedestrians must share the road with motorized vehicles. Nottingham Drive is an alternative residential street option with fewer vehicles and outstanding ocean views. Through Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, pedestrians can follow the existing Bluff Trail on a boardwalk and bicyclists can follow the base rock-surfaced Marine Terrace Trail. An alternative route follows Cambridge Street, Whitehall Avenue, and Huntington Road to an unpaved trail along the ridgeline, providing outstanding coastal views. A trail connection to the Santa Rosa Creek trail could potentially be formalized in the future, providing a more direct link from Downtown Cambria to the Preserve.

The existing main Marine Terrace Trail through the Preserve is base rock surfaced, and while asphalt would be preferred for road bikes, mountain bikers and adventurous road bicyclists could use this route to continue as a longer scenic alternative to the Highway 1 shoulder. Through cyclists would presumably stay on Highway 1, where shoulders are eight feet wide and in good condition.

An alternative trail connection south to Burton Drive (to the CCSD trail/Ramsey Road alignment discussed above) would be to create an unpaved trail from the southeast corner of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve east along the south side of Highway 1, however, creation of this sidepath would be constrained by slopes and vegetation adjacent to the highway, which in some cases extend to the edge of the eight-foot paved shoulder.



Figure 4-47: Segment 4-2 Recommendations

## Segment 4-3: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve to Fiscalini Creek (1.0 mile)

### Photos



**Existing coastal access from Harvey Street, Cambria.**



**The highway crosses Fiscalini Creek on a large culvert.**

### Description

Ownership: San Luis Obispo County, Cambria Community Services District, Caltrans

A large single family residential district on winding streets in rolling wooded terrain exists between Fiscalini Ranch Preserve and Highway 1 to the east. These are rural residential streets without sidewalks, curbs or gutters. They generally have light traffic and low speeds. Ardath Drive serves as a main collector street, though it is not significantly wider or straighter. **Figure 4-48** illustrates the recommendations for Segment 4-3. Three options could provide pedestrian and local bicycle connections through this area of southern Cambria. Through cyclists should stay on Highway 1 on this segment, which has 8 foot shoulders in good condition.

The most direct route would exit Fiscalini Ranch Preserve on Marlborough Lane and use Drake Street and Ardath Drive to return to Highway 1. However, Ardath Drive experiences higher traffic volumes and higher speeds, though the posted speed limit is 30 mph. Ardath Drive also has blind curves and dips and rises with no shoulders along some curves, thus placing pedestrians in the travelway. An alternative scenic route follows Sherwood Drive, passing several beach access points on the way to Lampton Cliffs County Park, where there is a small parking area. This alternative follows Randall Drive, but would require an easement across mostly undeveloped private property and development of a path to connect through Strawberry Canyon Park. Kay Street, Bradford Road, Pierce Avenue, and Ardath Drive could be used to return to Highway 1, or a network of short connecting streets to the east could be used to reach Ardath nearer its signalized intersection with Highway 1. These streets also have very low traffic volumes and lack sidewalks.

A third alternative would return to Highway 1 further north by creating a new multi-use path out of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, extending south along Highway 1 to at least Burton Drive, as discussed under Segment 4-2. Wide shoulders currently exist on Highway 1, but the steep terrain beyond the shoulder would necessitate significant grading and potentially retaining walls to install a sidepath on the west side. Further south Fiscalini Creek is adjacent to the west side of the highway, and increases constraints on the development of a

sidepath. Traffic volumes on Highway 1 are high in this area, and the shoulder is not recommended for pedestrians.

The Master Plan does not propose a pedestrian facility on the Highway ROW south of Ardath Drive other than the existing wide highway shoulders. It is unlikely in the near future that the demand for a pedestrian connection would warrant the construction of a pedestrian sidepath south of Cambria given the long distance and the lack of coastal access. However, a long-term goal of the Master Plan is to create a route within sight of the ocean, which would be contingent on securing access rights across private land from willing sellers, or in conjunction with development entitlements.

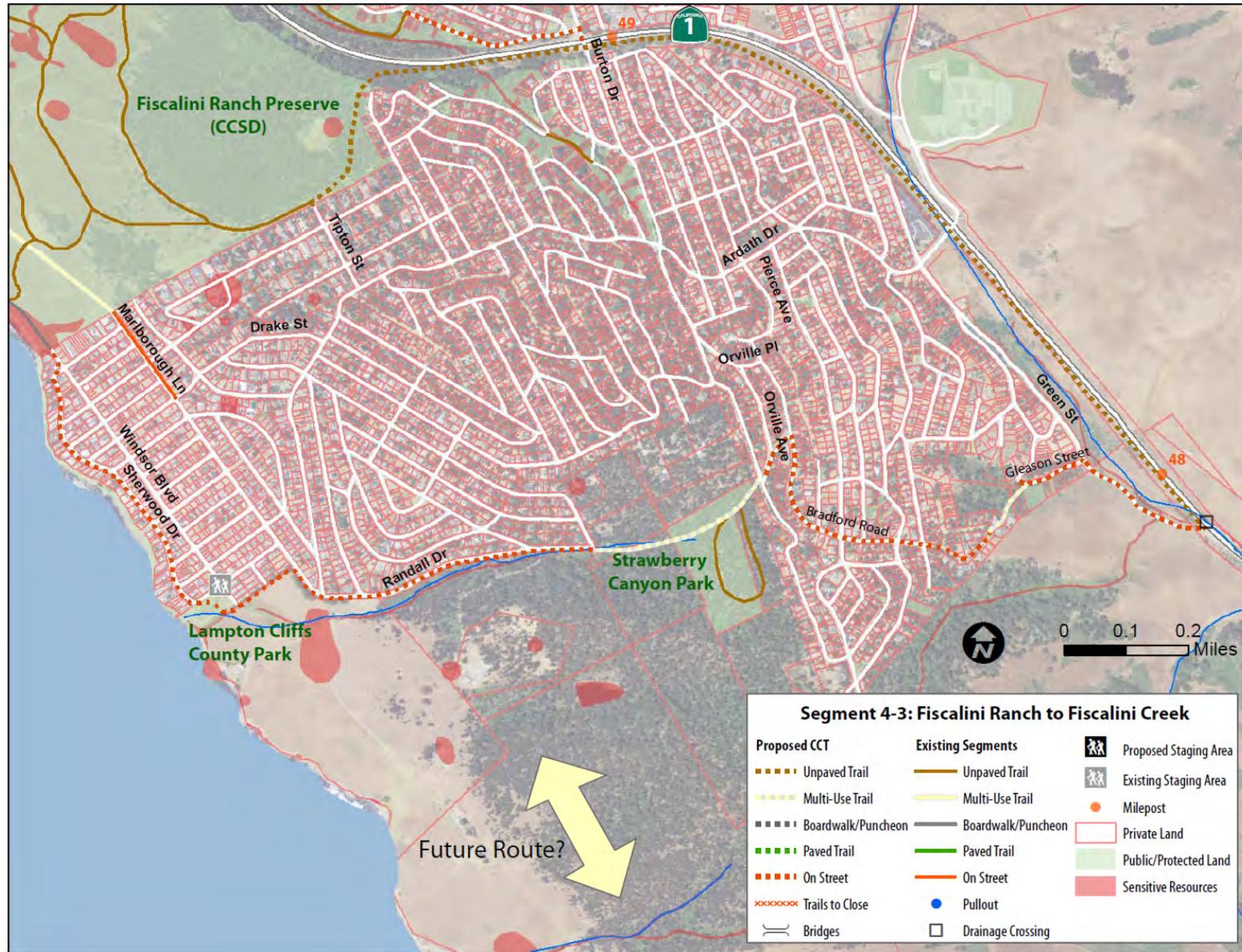


Figure 4-48: Segment 4-3 Recommendations

### Segment 5: Fiscalini Creek to Harmony Headlands State Park

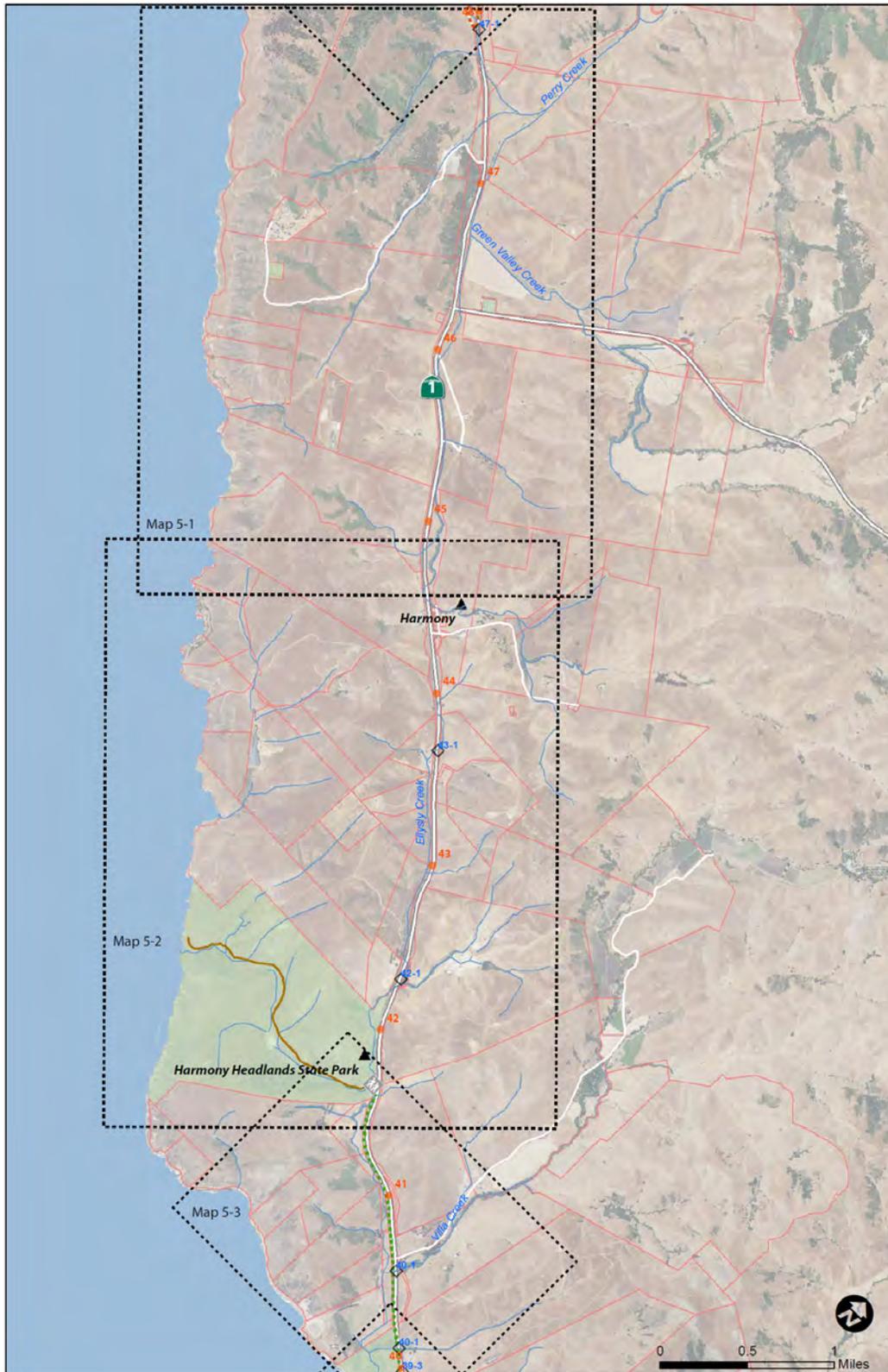


Figure 4-49: Subsegment Extents – Segment 5

## Segment 5-1: Fiscalini Creek to Harmony Headlands State Park (5.7 miles)

### Photos



**Brief stretches of highway include very little shoulder area before dropping down to a ditch.**



**The wide shoulders through the Harmony Headlands provide an enjoyable route for bicyclists.**

### Description

Ownership: Private, Caltrans, DPR

Figure 4-50 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 5-1.

From southern Cambria, the CCT route is constrained to the Highway 1 right-of-way, at least in the near term, by lack of public access rights across a long segment of coastal ridgeline consisting of several large private properties. Some trail easements or conditioned offers-to-dedicate easements exist on these properties, but it will be a long-term project to complete a CCT alignment within sight of the ocean through this area. This could only be accomplished through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers, full or partial donation of easements, or by acquiring access rights in conjunction with significant development entitlements (granted by the County and the CCC in the form of offers to dedicate or OTD's).

Considerations for acquisition of easements for the CCT are contained in the objectives from *Completing the California Coastal Trail* and the *California Coastal Trail Guide for San Luis Obispo County*, both summarized in Chapter 1 of this Master Plan. In acquiring easements or offers for long term trail projects it is important to provide flexibility for the future alignment within a corridor. The easement for the trail itself could be as little as 10 feet wide, although 20 feet is a more reasonable minimum, given the potential need for minor realignments due to storm damage or other factors. Ideally the trail easement should be defined as “floating” within a larger corridor so that the trail can be sited, and if necessary moved, to avoid constraints and provide functional connections.

The alignment needs to avoid extremely steep or unstable slopes, sensitive natural or cultural resources, conflicts with private development access or use areas, and provide an enjoyable CCT experience. Access to

the beach is problematic in private areas, so a ridgeline route that avoids the temptation to access the beach may be best alternative. Access and funding for maintenance and management, is a critical consideration. Although the physical and access right challenges to this CCT alignment are significant, there are many examples of legacy trail systems that have accomplished such connections and resolved the trail system to co-exist as a good neighbor to adjoining private properties.

Any near term CCT alignments for this segment are limited to the existing Caltrans right-of-way. This highway segment includes existing eight foot wide shoulders the entire way on the west side, and most of the way on the east, and generally has moderate gradients. It is a good route for cyclists and is used by bicycle tour operators for guided group rides. It would be a desirable long-term project to widen the remaining shoulders on the east side to 8 feet.

Figure 4-50 indicates the combined constraints to widening, as discussed in Section 4.2.6 of this Chapter. The shoulder widening is not included in the costs for CCT improvement because it is already incorporated in the Caltrans Transportation Concept Report for the Highway.

Pedestrians could be accommodated by an unpaved sidepath within the right-of-way on the west side of the highway. There are a few short segments with steep slopes and/or ditches that would constrain sidepath development. Earthwork would be required at the north end of the segment near MP 44 to cut back a few steep side slopes to accommodate the CCT. Several resource sites along the CCT corridor have already been impacted by Highway 1 construction, including portions of this segment with ditches along the roadway. Furthermore, there are two drainages along this segment (Ellyslly Creek drainage 43-1 and drainage 42-1) which may require structures to cross, either retaining walls or trail bridge. These pose possible environmental constraints for creating a sidepath, as discussed in Appendix E. Given the long distance and few public lands or attractions, the consensus of the CCT Master Plan Steering Committee was that construction of this sidepath was not an efficient use of limited funds. On the west side the paved highway shoulder is at least 8 feet wide, and most of the distance there is an additional unpaved shoulder that could be utilized by the few pedestrians that are likely to make this connection.

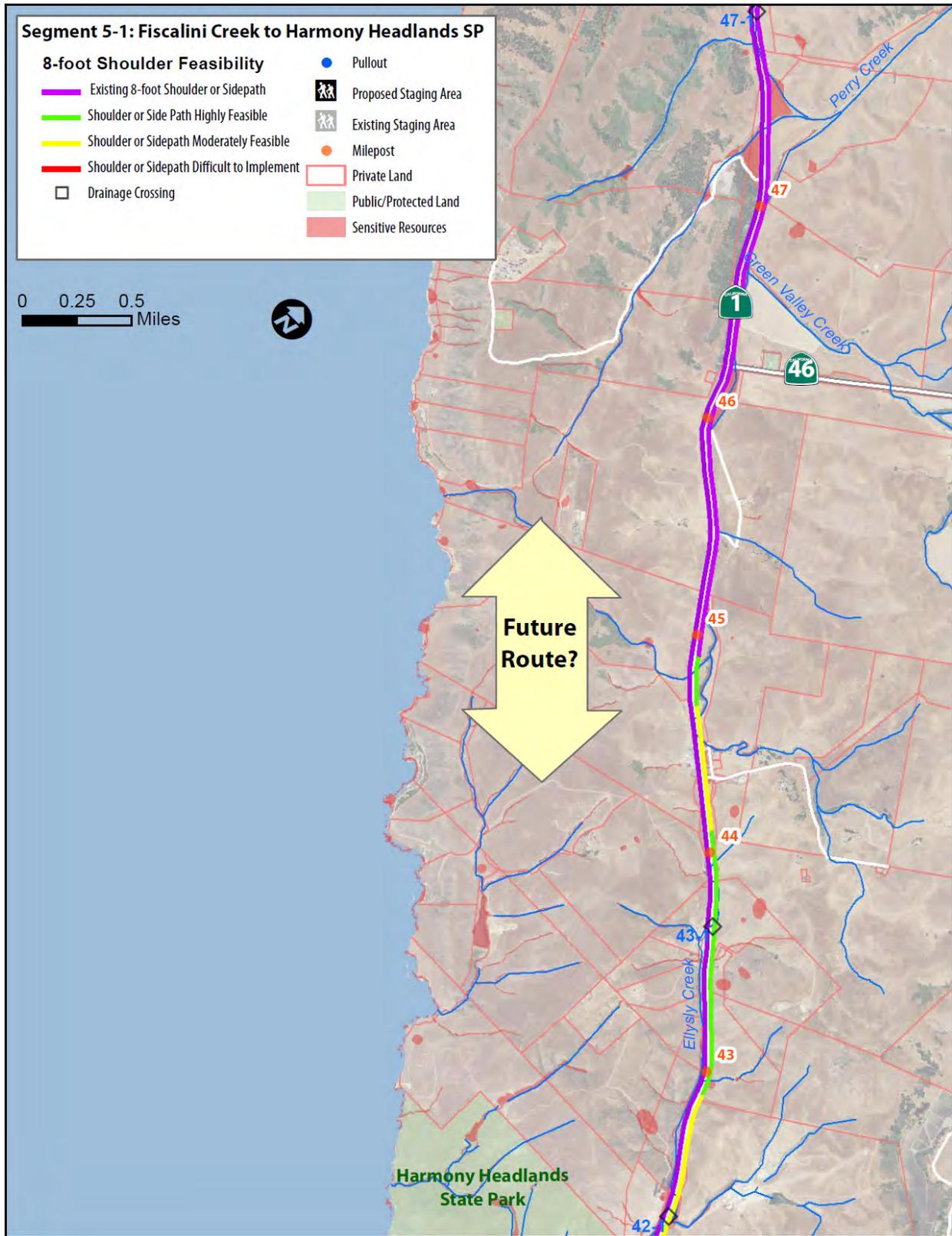


Figure 4-50: Segment 5-1 Recommendations

## Segment 5-2: Harmony Headlands State Park to Estero Bluffs State Park (1.4 miles)

### Photos



**The entrance to Harmony Headlands State Park features a small staging area that provides bluff access.**



**A vacated gravel road within the Caltrans ROW provides an easy base for a Class I path in the southern Harmony Headlands.**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, San Luis Obispo County (Easements and Offers to Dedicate)

Figure 4-51 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 5-2.

Harmony Headlands State Park provides a trail via an existing unpaved road that connects from Highway 1 to the coast. Interpretive signage and parking for about 8 to 12 vehicles are provided. Designation as a formal CCT trailhead is recommended, including improved roadway signage.

As with the segments to the north, the long-term objective is to ultimately have a CCT route within sight and sound of the ocean, subject to the ability to acquire rights for access across intervening private property.

The recommended medium-term pedestrian CCT alignment continues as an unpaved trail within the Caltrans ROW on the west side of the highway, where there is generally ample room. A separate gravel road or dirt track exists within the right-of-way along most of the west side well off the highway. The relatively close proximity of Harmony Headlands S.P. to Estero Bluffs S.P. and the availability of unconstrained space within the highway right-of-way increase the priority for a sidepath over the segments to the north.

The CCT is proposed to continue south a paved trail from Harmony Headlands State Park. The alignment crosses Villa Creek, drainage 40-2, a medium-scale drainage crossing. The existing highway bridge is approximately 85 feet long with approximately 8-foot wide paved shoulders. There is approximately 100 feet of Caltrans right-of-way from the edge of pavement. A large freshwater emergent wetland is located along the western edge of Highway 1 along this segment. Construction of a new trail bridge or boardwalk approximately 85 feet long would be required to create the trail connection. The route will need to gradually

transition down from road grade to stream grade for the crossing. The alignment and new bridge would need to be carefully sited and designed to minimize impacts to existing wetland habitat. Drainage 40-1 will also require a boardwalk crossing.

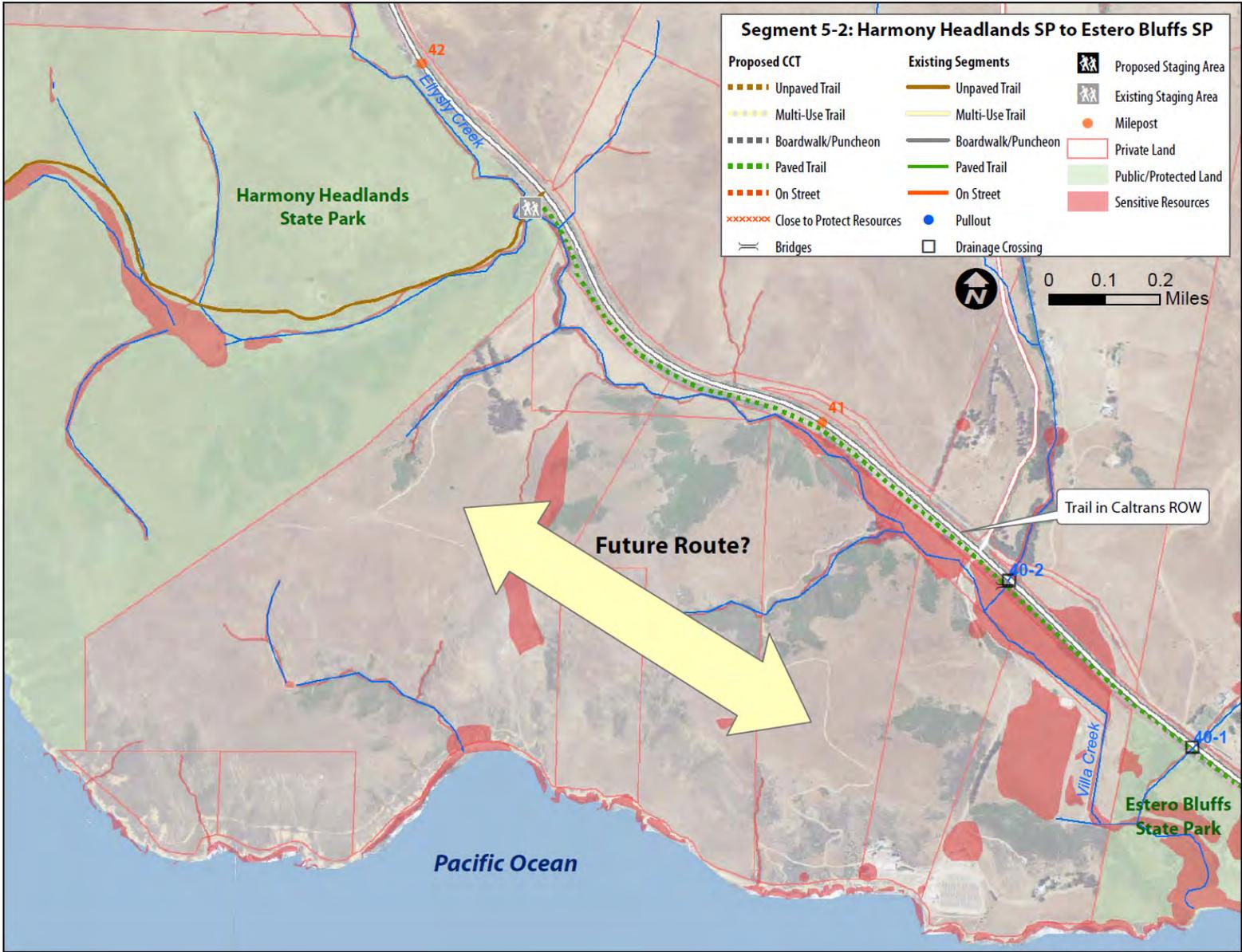


Figure 4-51 : Segment 5-2 Recommendations

### Segment 6: Estero Bluffs State Park to Cayucos



Figure 4-52: Subsegment Extents – Segment 6

## Segment 6-1: Estero Bluffs State Park West (1.2 miles)

### Photos



**The more sensitive western part of Estero Bluffs features varied terrain including coastal scrub and wetland areas**



**Existing volunteer trails currently run along the bluff edge. Those in wetland areas or sensitive historical sites should be closed.**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, easement to Cayucos Land Conservancy

Figure 4-53 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 6-1. There are several existing pullout parking areas improved with base rock surface between MP 39 and MP 40 within the Caltrans right-of way along Estero Bluffs State Park. The parking area just north of MP 39 can handle more than 40 vehicles. All can accommodate at least 20 vehicles. These are popular stopping places and potential staging areas for trail users.

The Cayucos Land Conservancy (CLC) holds a conservation easement over Estero Bluffs State Park. CLC works actively with DPR to ensure the resource values of the property are maintained and the use of the park is consistent with goals of the conservation easement.

Caltrans is currently engaged in a project to consolidate and restore native vegetation on the parking areas and pullouts that line the top of the bluff within the right-of-way. There are no formal parking or access points north of the one at MP 39.5, but there are two additional informal staging areas within .5 mile to the south. Historic access points nearer Villa Creek have been permanently closed to protect Snowy Plover habitat and the wetlands.

Preliminary plans for the Caltrans parking consolidation/habitat restoration project show installation of boulders to limit the size of parking areas, removal of existing chain link fencing, and seeding of portions of the pullouts and roads, including temporary fences and signage to protect the restoration areas. The locations

that are retained in the Caltrans consolidation plan should be enhanced with wayfinding, resource and trail information.

Several existing unpaved beach access trails connect users to the shoreline. The most northerly of these is currently posted as closed to protect Western snowy plover habitat at Villa Beach. Only the most stable and lowest impact of these trails should be retained. Others should be closed and restored as part of overall site management by DPR.

To accommodate the CCT and heavy local and visitor use, a paved Class 1 trail is proposed within the Caltrans right-of-way from Harmony Headlands State Park parking area south. It would be located in the existing graded area beyond the parking areas.

Drainages 39-2 and 39-3 are small-scale drainages with wetland features. A deep ditch runs along the west side of Highway 1 adjacent to a freshwater emergent wetland. Crossing these drainages will require boardwalks.

Drainage 39-1 is a small-scale drainage crossing with concrete pipe culvert adjacent to Highway 1. The paved path should cross as a sidepath. There is approximately 35 feet between the edge of pavement and the top of the culvert. The culvert does not have a headwall and there is a steep slope between the road grade and the stream grade. A retaining wall may be required.



Figure 4-53: Segment 6-1 Recommendations

## Segment 6-2: Estero Bluffs State Park East (2.1 miles)

### Photos



**Estero Bluffs has several existing beach accesses.**



**Culvert at drainage 38-1 at Estero bluffs**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, easement to Cayucos Land Conservancy

Figure 4-54 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 6-2. This segment continues in a similar configuration to Segment 6-1 with a paved path in the right-of-way and an existing unpaved trail near the bluff, extending south to San Geronimo Creek, and a proposed unpaved bluff trail extending south. There are a number of existing trails from pullouts along the highway with direct access to the edge of the bluffs. Only the most stable and lowest impact of these trails should be retained. Others should be closed and restored as part of overall site management by DPR.

There are two existing pullouts north of MP 38 and three between MPs 37 and MP 38. The pullout south of MP 38, indicated with a staging area symbols is the largest. It is recommended that this staging area be improved with regional CCT orientation maps and signs in an unobtrusive location..

Drainage 38-1 is a medium-scale drainage crossing with a culvert adjacent to Highway 1. A sidepath is proposed to accommodate the paved path at this drainage. There is approximately 25 feet between the edge of pavement and the top of the culvert. A retaining wall may be required. An existing trail crosses the drainage adjacent to the bluff. A short trail bridge is proposed to cross the drainage at this point.

Drainage 37-4, San Geronimo Creek, is a large-scale drainage crossing with a concrete box culvert adjacent to Highway 1. A habitat restoration project is underway along the creek. An existing trail crosses the drainage along the beach. The paved path is proposed to cross this drainage on top of the existing highway culvert. A significant steep slope separates the creek from the road grade and a retaining wall would be required. The bluff trail crosses San Geronimo Creek on an existing beach trail above the impact zone, allowing the more sensitive inland wetland to remain undisturbed. Improvements to the access paths to the beach trail need to be upgraded to meet ADA standards for recreational trails.

Drainages 37-3, 37-2, and 37-1 are small scale drainages with culverts adjacent to Highway 1. Sidepath crossings of drainages 37-3 and 37-2 will fall outside of the Highway 1 clear recovery zone (CRZ) but 37-1 would be within the CRZ and may require retaining walls. The bluff trail requires short, 20-40 foot boardwalk or bridge crossings of the drainages.

Drainage 36-2 is medium scale drainage with two tributaries and two culverts adjacent to Highway 1. The sidepath can utilize an existing access road to cross the northern tributary on top of the existing culvert. At the southern tributary, the sidepath may require a short 15 foot boardwalk. The bluff trail would require an approximately 40 foot long trail bridge.

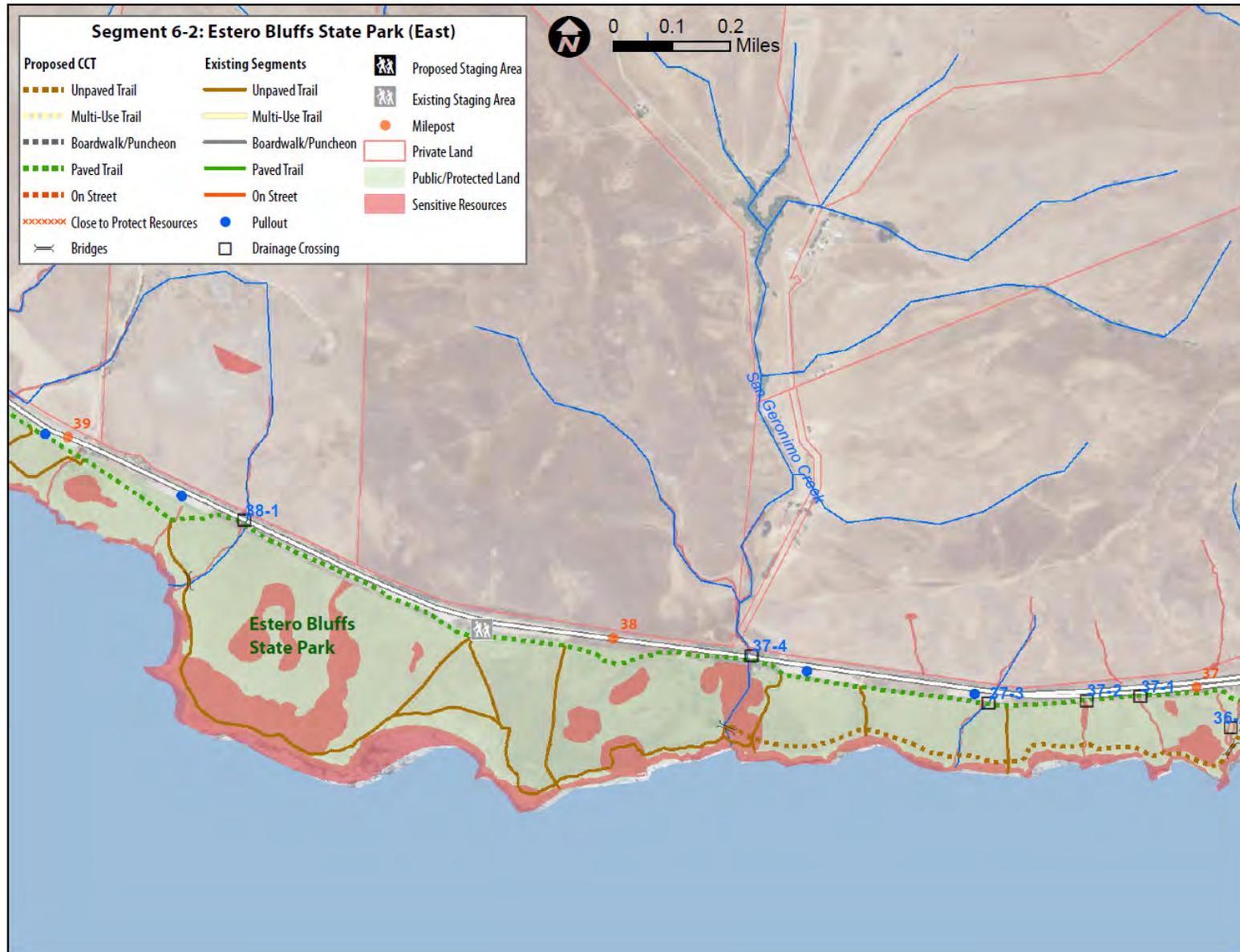


Figure 4-54: Segment 6-2 Recommendations

## Segment 6-3: Estero Bluffs State Park to Cayucos (0.9 miles)

### Photos



**Dirt roads within the Caltrans ROW near the entrance to Cayucos. This already impacted space could easily accommodate a Class I path.**



**Cyclists crossing Cayucos Creek. The bridge would need to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists.**

### Description

Ownership: Caltrans, DPR, easement to Cayucos Land Conservancy, County of San Luis Obispo

Figure 4-55 illustrates the recommendations for Segment 6-3. The recommended paved path and unpaved trail converge and continue as a paved trail to the eastern edge of Estero Bluffs State Park, where the trail connects to North Ocean Avenue in Cayucos via a gated access drive.

A new access and parking area at the southern end of the State Park is in the preliminary planning stages. There is currently a trailhead and informal parking in this area.

North Ocean Avenue has marked bike lanes and sidewalks for most of the .1 mile length to Lucerne Avenue. There are two short segments missing sidewalks, but the existing shoulder can easily accommodate a sidewalk. An on-street route for pedestrians and casual bicyclists is recommended along Lucerne Ave., where trail users can hear the ocean and see views between the houses on the south side of the street. North Ocean Avenue continues from the intersection at the west end of Lucerne Avenue without sidewalks, but with marked bike lanes. Cyclists will have a gently sloping ride of about five percent grade or less into or from Cayucos.

Where North Ocean Avenue and Lucerne Avenue connect again at the east end, the sidewalk can accommodate pedestrians down to the Cayucos Creek Bridge. The bike lanes and the sidewalk end about 20 feet before the bridge and all non-motorized users must travel in the street. On the bridge, a narrow two to three foot wide sidewalk is available for pedestrians. The access to the bridge should be improved for pedestrians and the sidewalk on the bridge should be widened to accommodate pedestrians, or a parallel trail bridge south of the existing vehicular bridge should be constructed. Cyclists may prefer to use the street at

this location. After the bridge, the trail will follow the existing sidewalk around an existing public parking lot and end at Cayucos Pier. A paved path exists along the outside of the pier parking area, but the entrance past an existing small electrical utility yard at the northwest corner should be improved. CCT signing and orientation information should be added at this parking lot/trailhead.



**Existing paved path along the western side of the pier parking area (looking north toward Cayucos Creek).**



Figure 4-55: Segment 6-3 Recommendation

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## 5. Action Plan

This Chapter describes the typical implementation steps to take a CCT project from the Master Plan through construction, along with general timeframes for project steps.

It lists the recommended CCT improvements segment by segment, summarized from **Chapter 4: Master Plan Recommendations**. For each segment the list includes the types of permits that may be required, the agencies and entities that would likely be parties to the project, and the basic operation and management requirements.

Potential project phases and priorities are then described.

Finally there is a description of the permits and approvals that may be required for project implementation.

### 5.1 Typical Project Implementation Steps

This Master Plan is a relatively general-level study of the location and configuration of the CCT. Implementation of actual trail projects will require additional site-specific processes with many subsequent steps as outlined below. Minor projects involving mainly signing or unpaved trail upgrades or construction without grading or structures may have a much simpler process and shorter schedule. The steps for any particular project are likely to vary in terms of applicability, sequence, and timing. The following steps are typically required for a major public trail project requiring a Coastal Development Permit (CDP). Each step is explained in more detail below.

**Table 5-1: Typical Implementation Steps and Timeframe**

Implementation Step	Approximate Timeframe
1. Project Agreements (agreement to participate or permission for access from project partners or landowners) Obtain Funding (little further project work can be done without project-specific funding)	Prior to initiation of other project steps (State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) can award pre-construction funds before CEQA is done but not construction funds)
Base Maps and Information (site survey - boundaries and topography)	Year 1, first quarter after start
Preliminary Design	Year 1 - first and second quarter
Technical Studies (biological, cultural resources, bluff retreat, soils, etc.)	Year 1 - first and second quarter (some may need to extend into or be completed during Environmental Document step, or even Construction Documents)
Environmental Studies and Documents (CEQA and NEPA)	Year 1 - third and fourth quarters (SCC can only approve funds to construct after CEQA is done)
Permits (prepare application and follow-up)	Year 2 – first, second, and potentially third and fourth quarters (may take significantly longer depending on complexity of issues)
Construction Documents (plans, specifications and estimate for bidding)	Year 2 – second and potentially third and fourth quarters and first quarter Year 3 (construction documents cannot be finalized until permits are received)
Project Bidding and Contracting	Year 2 third quarter to as far as Year 3 second quarter

Implementation Step	Approximate Timeframe
Construction and Related Services	Starts Year 2 fourth quarter to as far out as Year 3 third quarter – could require 1 or 2 construction seasons depending on complexity, start date relative to construction season, permit conditions and weather
Approximate total timeframe	2 ½ to 5 years from funding/initiation

### Funding - Grant Applications

Funding will be needed for detailed design, surveying, property or easement acquisition (if required), environmental documents, preparation of construction and permit documents, and for construction. Often the funding is phased, covering only a part of the implementation process. A basic map, description, photos, and cost estimate for the proposed project must be prepared, at a minimum, to support a grant application and to compete for public or private funding. The trail concepts and references in this Master Plan provide good starting material for preparing grant applications and project funding proposals. Funding for the trail could come from any level of government and from non-government organizations. Appendix I presents potential funding sources for the CCT, describes the trail types that are eligible for various funding programs, and summarizes the grant criteria and application requirements.

### Project Agreements - Right-of-Way Acquisition/Permission

If acquisition or permission for use of property for the trail is required, this will need to be secured, at least tentatively, before significant study or design work can begin, and typically must be finalized before preliminary design (when the feasible/desired alignment is defined) or at least before preparation of construction documents.

### Site Survey - Base Maps and Information

For a formal, urban area project, detailed CAD base maps with right-of-way/property lines, topography (contour lines and/or spot elevations) and features such as roads, trees, buildings and fences must be prepared by a land surveyor or civil engineer covering the trail route and adjacent areas. In a rural or remote setting, especially for less formal unpaved trails, a detailed GIS-based topographic and aerial photo map may be sufficient for laying out and designing the trail. In any case the pertinent codes, policies, adjacent plans, utilities, and other background information must be researched and analyzed for its relevance to the project.

### Preliminary Design

More detailed plans would be developed, typically by a team including a landscape architect, a trail planner, and a civil engineer. These plans would have relatively accurate locations, dimensions, materials and features, to allow a correspondingly detailed preliminary cost estimate, but they would not have all the information required for bidding and constructing the project. The preliminary plans would be the basis for environmental documents and public and agency review of the project.

### Technical Studies

The Master Plan’s analysis of conditions, resources, and requirements is intended to help configure the trail improvement concepts to avoid “fatal flaws,” but the feasibility of some solutions can only be determined through detailed site-specific studies. They often include site-specific studies of biological and cultural

resources, bluff retreat, hydrology, traffic, soil borings and geotechnical studies for design or foundations for bridges or other factors critical to design and/or project approval. These may be completed before, during or after Preliminary Design, depending on the purpose and type of study.

### **Environmental Studies and Documentation**

State and federal law and nearly all grant programs require environmental studies of a project, and findings by a responsible public agency to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If federal funds or interests are involved the document may also need to address the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which has slightly different process and document requirements. The environmental document must review and address a broad range of potential issues. Often the most complex issues to address are special status (rare, threatened, or endangered) plant and animal species that are protected under law.

### **Permits**

Project sponsors may need to obtain several types of permits and agreements. Potentially required permits are described in detail in section 5-4. Preparing applications and completing the permitting process in areas with sensitive resources and many legal conditions and constraints can be time-consuming and expensive in settings such as the CCT Study Area.

### **Construction Documents**

The preliminary plan drawings and descriptions will need to be translated into detailed construction plans, specifications and estimate that can be used to obtain permits that require such detail, and for bidding by contractors.

### **Bidding and Contracting**

Contract bid documents for the project must be prepared, and the project must be advertised for public bid. The bids must be analyzed, and the sponsoring agency must award a construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder.

### **Construction**

In addition to the work of the contractor, construction of a public project entails responsible agency and/or consultant staff to oversee the contractor and administer the project, including any grant-imposed procedures or paperwork.

## **5.2 CCT Segment Improvements and Implementation Steps**

The Improvements list does not necessarily identify the type of drainage crossing for each location. In some cases determining the most feasible drainage crossing type will require further analysis before design and implementation can occur. Alternatives for drainage crossings are listed in some cases, such as a highway culvert crossing/sidepath or a bridge, and alternative solutions at major drainage crossings/highway bridges, which could include a trail bridge, a seasonal trail bridge, or a major highway bridge retrofit. Bridge types and lengths are not defined in the list, but are preliminarily defined by type (short, medium, long trail bridge) where feasible in Chapter 4: Master Plan Recommendations and in the cost estimates in Appendix H. Table 5-2 presents the preliminary cost estimates by Segment.

Some portions of the CCT are being planned, designed, and implemented as parts of other projects – primarily the Piedras Blancas Highway 1 Realignment and the Caltrans parking improvements at the Estero Bluffs. The improvements are listed but the costs are assumed to be covered in these separate projects, as noted.

Highway shoulder widening to better accommodate bicycles is included in the Improvements list but not included in the CCT cost estimate. It is assumed shoulder widening will be undertaken by Caltrans through its normal project prioritization process, with the recommendation for shoulder widening in this Master Plan an additional factor to consider in setting priorities.

**Table 5-2: Preliminary Cost Estimates by Segment**

Preliminary Construction, Implementation and Permitting Costs <sup>1</sup>	Cost <sup>2</sup>	
	Low	High
Segment 1	\$902,481	\$902,481
Segment 2	\$3,863,415	\$16,289,142
Segment 3	\$13,518,342	\$35,427,199
Segment 4	\$706,441	\$1,947,800
Segment 5	\$2,776,317	\$2,802,337
Segment 6	\$7,043,504	\$8,095,527
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$28,810,500</b>	<b>\$65,464,486</b>

<sup>1</sup> Construction costs include trail, staging area, and drainage crossing improvements. Implementation includes surveys, technical studies, and design; environmental compliance; and project administration. Permitting includes fees to acquire applicable local, state, and federal permits.

<sup>2</sup> Cost estimates represent the range in cost associated with different drainage crossing improvement options.

### **Segment 1-1: County Line to Ragged Point (3.0 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Widen highway shoulders to four feet where feasible due to topographic, resource, and geologic constraints (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
2. Verify/formalize CCT connection to USFS ridgeline road with signage and mapboard
3. Trail bridge over San Carpoforo Creek (71-1) Trail undercrossing of Highway 1 bridge and connection on the south side of San Carpoforo Creek
4. Staging area (base rock surface) for approximately 16 cars and 3 horse trailers southeast of creek and highway
5. Driveway and access improvements from highway
6. Prefabricated vault toilet
7. Fencing and gates, including vehicular gate for parking area
8. Restoration and screening plantings – native
9. Trail improvements west of Highway 1 from San Carpoforo Creek to Ragged Point
10. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations - resolve agreement with USFS for use of site, potential sponsorship of project
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies - biological, cultural resources, geotechnical and hydrologic studies
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Federal consistency review through the California Coastal Commission
3. Grading Permit Approval from SLO County
4. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
5. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
6. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
7. CA State Water Resources Board notification
8. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
9. Caltrans and SLO County encroachment permits – bridge undercrossing and driveway connection

**Operation and Management Requirements:**

Primary Responsible Party: USFS

Secondary/supporting party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain staging area and restrooms
- Open and close main gates
- Seasonal checking and maintenance on bridge, undercrossing, and trails
- Maintain trails, replace signs, repair fences and gates
- Coordinate with user groups; potentially docents

**Segment 2: Ragged Point to Broken Creek Bridge****Segment 2-1: Ragged Point Conservation Area (1.8 miles)****Improvements:**

1. Construct 2.0 miles native surface coastal trail within the Public Access Conservation Area per the Access Plan/Recommendations
2. Construct sidepath along embankment with retaining walls at Arroyo Hondo (69-4)
3. Low-visibility fence and gate at trailhead for docent-led tours (parking, access and trail improvements for docent-led tours on Hearst property are assumed to be separate parallel project)
4. Restoration and screening plantings – native

5. Widen highway shoulders to at least 4 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
6. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – interagency/partner agreements, i.e. with Hearst Corporation
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. Caltrans encroachment permit
5. Potentially - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit

**Operation and Management Requirements:**

Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails, replace signs, repair fences and gates
- Coordinate with user groups; potentially docents

**Segment 2-2: Ragged Point to Arroyo de la Cruz (2.5 miles)**

**Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 2.2 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Close and restore about 0.2 miles of existing trail parallel to Arroyo de La Cruz
3. Widen highway shoulders to at least 4 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
4. Bridges, boardwalks or sidepath culvert crossings with retaining walls over drainages (69-3, 69-2, 69-1, 68-4, 68-3 and 68-2 – Arroyo de los Chinos)
5. One consolidated trail bridge over drainages (68-1, 67-3 and 67-2) and trail bridge over (67-1)
6. Trail bridge or seasonal bridge over Arroyo de La Cruz (66-1)
7. Improve and formalize existing parking as trail Staging Area just south of Arroyo de La Cruz
8. Restoration and screening plantings – native
9. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements

2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths

**Operation and Management Requirements:**

Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain staging area
- Maintain trails and signs
- Coordinate with user groups

**Segment 2-3: Highway 1 Realignment Area - Arroyo de la Cruz to Piedras Blancas Lighthouse (Approx. 3.0 mi)**

**Improvements:**

This segment consists of the Highway 1 realignment project which DPR is planning and designing in coordination with Caltrans. The improvements are summarized in this Master Plan, but are a separate project and process that is already underway. Implementation for improvements included in this Master Plan, such as the Arroyo de la Cruz staging area improvements at the southern end of Segment 2-2, should be coordinated with the state park highway realignment trail project.

**DPR Plan for Realignment Area**

1. Staging Area at Piedras Blancas Motel site – coordinate use of parking areas with redevelopment of the motel
2. Construct approximately 2.8 miles of gravel/decomposed granite surface multi-use trail
3. 4 trail bridges – 35 to 95 feet long
4. 360 feet of boardwalk
5. Add CCT signs

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Coordinate between the Master Plan, redevelopment of the motel, and the Highway Realignment CCT Project
2. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Accomplished through Highway Realignment Project

**Operation and Management Requirements**

Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain staging area
- Maintain trails and signs

**Segment 2-4: Piedras Blancas Lighthouse to South Elephant Seal Boardwalk (1.9 miles)**

**Improvements:**

1. Close and restore approximately 0.3 mile of trail on bluff north of the Elephant Seal Parking Area.
2. Bridge or sidepath on top of existing culvert over drainage (63-1)
3. Bridges over drainage (62-4)
4. Install 4 unit restroom at South Elephant Seal Parking area
5. Restoration and screening plantings for the restroom – native
6. Small boardwalk over drainage (62-3), in Elephant Seal Parking Area
7. Construct approximately 1.3 miles of native surface coastal trail
8. Construct approximately 25 feet of boardwalk (including across drainage 62-2)
9. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations –interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit

6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths

### **Operation and Management Requirements**

#### Responsible Party: DPR & BLM

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain staging area
- Maintain trails & signs

### **Segment 3: Broken Creek Bridge to Hearst San Simeon State Park**

#### **Segment 3-1: South Elephant Seal Boardwalk to San Simeon Pt. Conservation Area (2.4 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 2.5 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Utilize sidepath over existing culverts to cross 7 drainages (62-1, 61-3, 61-2, 61-1, 60-4, 60-3, 60-2 Adobe Creek)
3. Construct parallel pedestrian bridge to highway bridge across Oak Knoll Creek (60-1)
4. CCT signs and wayfinding
5. Widen highway shoulders to at least four feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)

#### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements, i.e. with Hearst Corporation
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

#### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths

## **Operation and Management Requirements**

### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

## **Segment 3-2: San Simeon Point and W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach (1.9 miles)**

### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately two miles of native surface coastal trail within the Public Access Conservation Easement
2. Install trail bridge at drainage 59-3
3. Install one trail bridge across drainages 59-1 and 59-3
4. Construct a fence between Hearst bull pasture and trail (approx. 1.5 miles).
5. Install signs to mark on-street portion of trail into San Simeon Point
6. Install crosswalk markings and signs at intersection with San Simeon Pier and Hearst Castle Access Road
7. Install crossing safety improvements, based on study, at intersection of Highway 1 and Hearst Castle Road
8. Construct paved Class I path to Hearst Castle Visitors Center within existing fenced ROW
9. Install paved path from the new crossing south and west through W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach
10. Utilize existing culvert to cross Broken Bridge Creek (57-1)
11. CCT signs and wayfinding
12. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
13. Proposed staging area near Sebastian's store and related improvements for docent-led access to San Simeon Point Conservation Area are assumed to be part of a separate parallel project and process

### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements, i.e. with Hearst Corporation
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources, crossing improvements
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification

7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths
9. SLO County encroachment permit – signs and local road improvements

### **Operation and Management Requirements**

#### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trailhead/staging area
- Maintain docent staging area
- Maintain trails and signs

### **Segment 3-3: Broken Creek Bridge to Pico Creek (2.7 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 2.6 miles of native surface coastal trail.
2. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across Little Pico Creek (56-1)
3. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across Pico Creek (54-1)
4. CCT signs and wayfinding
5. Proposed docent parking area and related improvements for docent-led access to Pico Cove Conservation Area are assumed to be part of a separate parallel project and process

#### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

#### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs, sidepaths, Little Pico Creek Bridge, Pico Creek Bridge

### **Operation and Management Requirements**

#### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

### **Segment 3-4: San Simeon Acres and Junge Ranch (1.7 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 1.7 miles of native surface coastal trail – a segment in the highway ROW, and a parallel route nearer to the bluff
2. Construct trail bridge across Arroyo del Padre Juan (54-2)
3. Construct new trail bridge and utilize existing culvert to cross drainage 54-1
4. Utilize existing culvert to cross drainage 53-2
5. Sign existing roads in the village as shared routes for the trail
6. Close and restore trails along the edge of the bluff in Junge Ranch
7. CCT signs and wayfinding
8. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)

#### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

#### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths
9. SLO County encroachment permit – signs on local roads

#### **Operation and Management Requirements**

##### Responsible Party: San Simeon CCSD

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

**Responsible Party: DPR**

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

**Segment 3-5: Hearst San Simeon State Park Campground (1.2 miles)****Improvements:**

(this segment has locations with almost no space between the highway and the ocean)

1. Construct approximately 0.8 miles of native surface coastal trail
2. Construct trail bridge or seasonal bridge across San Simeon Creek (53-1)
3. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement
4. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
5. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
6. CA State Water Resources Board notification
7. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
8. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths

**Operation and Management Requirements****Responsible Party: DPR**

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

**Segment 4: Northern Cambria to Fiscalini Creek****Segment 4-1: Northern Cambria (1.7 miles)****Improvements:**

1. Improve native surface trail from View Point access drive to a beach crossing

2. Sign existing Moonstone Beach boardwalk as CCT
3. Coordinate with Cambria CSD project to close gap along Moonstone near Windsor
4. Improve beach access road at Shamel Community Park (re-grade and erosion control)
5. CCT signs and wayfinding

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Prepare trail improvement plans
2. Coordinate with Cambria CSD project
3. Prepare sign plans
4. Prepare sign installation /location documents
5. Install CCT signs and wayfinding

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP) , SLO County – trail and sign improvements
2. Encroachment permit or other agreement with SLO County and/or Cambria CSD for placement of CCT signs and markers

Additional permits vary depending upon the level of development pursued to improve a trail at Leffingwell Creek and improve the beach access at Shamel Park and could include some or all of the following:

1. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study approval from SLO County
2. CA State Water Resources Board notification
3. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
4. County encroachment permit – signs

**Operation and Management Requirements**

Responsible Party: Cambria CCSD / DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

**Segment 4-2: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (1.7 miles)**

**Improvements:**

1. CCT signs and wayfinding on existing and new trails and /or on-street routes
2. Develop connection south and east to central Cambria (one of two alternatives):
  - a. Construct unpaved trail approx. 0.2 mi. from ridgeline trail to existing Santa Rosa Creek Nature Trail, and construct undercrossing of Santa Rosa Creek highway bridge (Caltrans has previously opposed this concept) to connect to existing Cambria CSD trail and extend south to connect to existing trails to Ramsey Road, and on-street route approximately 0.3 mi. along Ramsey to Burton Drive, OR:
  - b. Construct unpaved trail approximately 0.3 mi. from south end of ridgeline trail, extending north and east to sidepath in highway ROW, which would extend approximately 0.4 mi. east to Burton Drive.

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements

2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

### **Permit Requirements:**

Permits vary depending upon whether an undercrossing at Santa Rosa Creek is included, or potential drainage crossing for the alternative connection south of Highway 1. They could include some or all of the following:

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit from SLO County
3. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
4. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
5. CA State Water Resources Board notification
6. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
7. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs, highway undercrossing and sidepaths
8. SLO County encroachment permit – signs on local roads

### **Operation and Management Requirements**

#### Responsible Party: San Simeon CCSD

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

### **Segment 4-3: Fiscalini Ranch Preserve to Fiscalini Creek (2.0 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Sign approximately two miles of on-street route
2. Based on obtaining access rights across private parcel(s) from willing sellers, construct approximately 0.3 mile of multi-use path through Strawberry Canyon Park to Orville Avenue, and a 0.1 mile segment of multi-use path from Bradford Street to Gleason Street. Options from this point are:
  - a. Based on obtaining access rights across private parcel(s) from willing sellers, construct approximately 0.3 mi. of multi-use path and a trail bridge across Fiscalini Creek to connect southeast to the Highway 1 ROW, OR;
  - b. Sign an on-street route northwest along Green Street to Ardath Drive intersection with Highway 1.

#### **Implementation Steps:**

(Primarily associated with multi-use trail development):

1. Negotiations – property/easement acquisition, interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography  
Prepare preliminary design plans

3. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
4. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
5. Permit application preparation and follow-up
6. Prepare construction documents
7. Project bidding and contracting
8. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

(Primarily associated with multi-use trail development):

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit from SLO County
3. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
4. CA State Water Resources Board notification
5. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs, and trail connection
6. SLO County encroachment permit – signs and trail connections on local roads

(for the trail bridge):

7. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
8. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit

**Operation and Management Requirements**

Responsible Party: Cambria CCSD

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

**Segment 5: Fiscalini Creek to Estero Bluffs State Park (5.8 miles)**

**Segment 5-1: Ardath/Hwy 1 Intersection to Harmony Headlands State Park**

**Improvements:**

1. CCT signs and wayfinding
2. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
3. Construct trailhead upgrades at Harmony Headlands State Park including improved roadway signs to designate the trailhead as a CCT staging area
4. As a long-term project, based on acquisition of access from willing sellers, or through conditions on development entitlements, develop a CCT route away from the highway, generally within sight and sound of the ocean

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations –interagency/partner agreements
2. Prepare preliminary design plans
3. Environmental document (assumed to be a Categorical Exemption)
4. Permit application preparation and follow-up
5. Prepare construction documents
6. Project bidding and contracting

7. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs

**Operation and Management Requirements**

Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain signs

**Segment 5-2 Harmony Headlands State Park to Estero Bluffs State Park (1.4 miles)**

**Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 1.4 miles of paved Class I path southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the Caltrans ROW.
2. Construct new trail bridges or boardwalks along Villa Creek (40-1 and 40-2)
3. CCT signs and wayfinding
4. Widen remaining highway shoulders to 8 feet (assumed to be accomplished by Caltrans as part of objectives of Highway Transportation Concept Report)
5. As a long-term project, based on acquisition of access from willing sellers, or through conditions on development entitlements, develop a CCT route away from the highway, generally within sight and sound of the ocean

**Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations –interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

**Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit Approval from SLO County
3. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
4. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
5. CA State Water Resources Board notification
6. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
7. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepaths

## **Operation and Management Requirements**

### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

## **Segment 6 Estero Bluffs**

### **Segment 6-1 Estero Bluffs State Park West (1.2 miles)**

#### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 1.2 miles of paved (Class 1) path southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the ROW
2. Utilize the existing culverts or build new trail bridges to cross drainages (39-1 through 39-3), drainage crossing to be determined pending further analysis. Close and restore approximately 0.4 miles of existing blufftop trail
3. Coordinate with pullout consolidation and habitat restoration by Caltrans. Incorporate CCT signs, mapboards at major pullouts where appropriate.
4. CCT signs and wayfinding

#### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Coordination with Caltrans on parking lot and staging area improvements
2. Negotiations –interagency/partner agreements
3. Site survey – boundaries and topography
4. Prepare preliminary design plans
5. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
6. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
7. Permit application preparation and follow-up
8. Prepare construction documents
9. Project bidding and contracting
10. Construction and related services

#### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study approval from SLO County
3. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
4. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
5. CA State Water Resources Board notification
6. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
7. Caltrans encroachment permit – signs and sidepath within Caltrans ROW

## **Operation and Management Requirements**

### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

## **Segment 6-2 Estero Bluffs State Park East (2.1 miles)**

### **Improvements:**

1. Construct approximately 2.1 miles of paved surface (Class 1) coastal trail southwest of and parallel to Highway 1 in the ROW
2. Coordinate with pullout consolidation and habitat restoration by Caltrans. Incorporate CCT signs, mapboards at major pullouts where appropriate.
3. Construct 0.8 miles native surface coastal trail on the bluff
4. Improve or close and restore some existing trails that are in sensitive areas or experiencing erosion or drainage problems
5. Utilize the existing culvert (for paved trail) and build new trail bridges (for unpaved trail) to cross drainages (38-1, 37-4 though 37-1 and 36-2), specific drainage crossing types to be determined pending further analysis
6. CCT signs and wayfinding

### **Implementation Steps:**

1. Negotiations – make interagency/partner agreements
2. Site survey – boundaries and topography (may be able to use Caltrans data)
3. Prepare preliminary design plans
4. Technical studies – biological, cultural resources
5. Environmental studies and document (including CEQA and NEPA)
6. Permit application preparation and follow-up
7. Prepare construction documents
8. Project bidding and contracting
9. Construction and related services

### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from SLO County
3. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Section 404 Nationwide wetlands permit
4. CA Regional Water Quality Control Board permit
5. CA State Water Resources Board notification
6. CA Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Permit
7. Caltrans and SLO County encroachment permits – signs and sidepath within Caltrans ROW

## **Operation and Management Requirements**

### Responsible Party: DPR

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

## **Segment 6-3 Cayucos (0.9miles)**

### **Improvements:**

1. Sign approximately .07 miles of Ocean Ave. as a bicycle route
2. Sign Ocean Ave to redirect non-cyclists to Lucerne Rd and back to Ocean Ave

3. Install new sidewalk approaches to Cayucos Creek bridge
4. Utilize and sign the existing sidewalk or widen existing sidewalk on the bridge over Cayucos Creek (36-1)
5. Improve connection to existing Class I path along outside of the pier parking area
6. Install CCT signage information at Cayucos Pier parking area

### **Implementation Steps:**

Permits vary depending upon the level of development pursued for trail alignment and to improve Cayucos Creek crossing and would include some or all of the following:

1. Site survey – boundaries and topography
2. Prepare preliminary design plans
3. Environmental document (assumed to be Categorical Exemption)
4. Permit application preparation and follow-up
5. Prepare construction documents
6. Project bidding and contracting
7. Construction and related services

### **Permit Requirements:**

1. Coastal Development Permit (CDP), SLO County – all improvements
2. CA State Water Resources Board notification
3. SLO County encroachment permits – signs, sidewalk widening, trail connection

### **Operation and Management Requirements**

#### Responsible Party: DPR and San Luis Obispo County

- Facility monitoring and use management
- Maintain trails and signs

## **5.3 Potential Project Phasing**

Some portions of the CCT are already complete, and others were already underway in the design and permitting stages as separate projects at the time of preparation of this Master Plan. It is not feasible or necessary to determine exact boundaries or timing of all phases of the Northern SLO County Coastal Trail at this time. Project priorities and phasing will be driven by the availability of funds or ability to implement CCT improvements in conjunction with another project, public demand, the relative complexity of projects, and ability to surmount obstacles to proceeding, such as interagency agreements (e.g. for the San Carpoforo Staging Area).

This section presents potential logical CCT project phasing for further study and discussion. This Master Plan and supporting documents are designed to facilitate preparation of grant applications by combining maps, descriptions and costs for the segments and sub-segments, allowing flexibility to pursue and implement projects as needs and opportunities unfold.

## **Piedras Blancas Realignment Project**

### **Segment 2-3 Arroyo de la Cruz to Piedras Blancas Lighthouse**

This segment is being studied, planned, and negotiated by DPR in conjunction with the Highway Realignment Project. It will presumably be designed and implemented within the next few years with funding provided through the Highway Project, in part as environmental mitigation for that project. In conjunction with interim or long-term improvements at the Piedras Blancas Motel, and given its proximity to the Piedras Blancas Light Station (part of Segment 2-4), this could be a stand-alone destination.

## **Estero Bluffs State Park to Cayucos**

Segments:

6-1: Estero Bluffs State Park West

6-2: Estero Bluffs State Park East

6-3: Cayucos

Estero Bluffs State Park portion of the CCT includes the most-visited existing segments on the northern SLO County coast and should be an early phase project. Completing the Class I paved path in the highway right-of-way in conjunction with the Caltrans parking area consolidation project would decrease impacts to bluff resources and better accommodate the public. Ideally the project will ultimately include a restroom at the most northerly staging area. The project includes closing “volunteer” trails where they impact sensitive resources or are unsustainable, establishing new blufftop trails in less sensitive locations, and a new staging area at the southeast end (also a project of the Cayucos Land Conservancy). The CCT connection into Cayucos only requires wayfinding signs, except for the optional Class I path around the Cayucos Pier parking area.

## **Cambria Trails and Routes**

Segments:

4-1: Northern Cambria

4-2 Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

4-3 Fiscalini Ranch Preserve to Ardath/Hwy 1 Intersection

These segments are recommended as a priority because much of the route already exists and is marked as CCT, and other portions are relatively simple to improve and mark as on-street routes. Also it would connect the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve to Moonstone Drive and neighborhoods in south Cambria, as well as to Downtown Cambria and neighborhoods to the east. Some of the recommended CCT improvements are already underway as Cambria CSD projects. On-street routes are a possibility to bypass the envisioned connections through private land at the southern portion of the route.

## **San Carpoforo Creek Staging Area to Highway 1 Realignment**

Segments:

1-1: County Line to Ragged Point (San Carpoforo staging area and CCT connection south)

2-1: Ragged Point Conservation Area

2-2: Ragged Point to Arroyo de la Cruz

A staging area, creek crossing, and highway undercrossing at San Carpoforo Creek would open new areas to CCT users. Completing the CCT through the designated public access corridor in the Ragged Point Conservation Area south to the proposed small improved staging area just south of Arroyo de la Cruz would provide a complete facility and the opportunity to do shuttle trips. The establishment of arrangements and facilities for docent-led access at Ragged Point would complement the establishment of the CCT, but the two do not have to be concurrent.

## **Highway 1 Realignment to Elephant Seal Area**

Segment 2-4: Piedras Blancas Lighthouse to South Elephant Seal Boardwalk

The elephant seal viewing area is one of the most popular visitor destinations along the northern SLO County coast. Adding an unpaved trail connecting the Highway 1 Realignment Area trails (and potential staging area at the south end of that project), past Piedras Blancas Lighthouse to the northern Elephant Seal Parking Area, closing the unsustainable trails and adding a restroom would allow visitors to use this area as a CCT staging area. In combination with the Highway 1 Realignment Area trails, this would provide a significant trail facility. The narrow and eroding condition of the bluff south of the southern Elephant Seals parking area presents a constraint for extending the CCT south.

## **San Simeon Acres to Cambria**

Segments:

3-4: San Simeon Acres and Junge Ranch

3-5: Hearst San Simeon State Park Campground

This is a very beneficial and relatively simple phase to complete. It would connect the visitor-serving center of San Simeon Acres with Junge Ranch open space and the state park campground, trails, and facilities on the east side of Highway 1. In addition it would connect the campground to existing DPR facilities and CCT boardwalk, and visitor-serving areas in Cambria. The improvements are generally simple and unconstrained, except for the creation of a formal trail crossing at San Simeon Creek. However the existing trails on the north and south sides of the creek afford access to state park facilities and trails to the east, and the creek can be crossed at the bridge approximately 0.2 mile east, so even in the interim a continuous trail connection is available.

## **Harmony Headlands State Park to Estero Bluffs**

Segment: 5-2 Harmony Headlands State Park to Estero Bluffs State Park

There is ample highway right-of-way and some existing side road that would facilitate creation of a CCT sidepath. Though most of the connection would be a simple unpaved trail, there are some significant creek and wetland crossings issues to resolve. Connection from Harmony Headlands to the trails at Estero Bluffs could be a useful feature for CCT visitors and local residents. This segment could also be logically added to the high priority Estero Bluffs CCT improvements.

## San Simeon Point and Connections North and South

### Segments:

3-1: South Elephant Seal Boardwalk to San Simeon Point Conservation Area

3-2: San Simeon Point and W.R. Hearst Memorial State Beach

3-3: Broken Creek Bridge to Pico Creek

The narrow and eroding condition of the bluff in Segment 3-1 south of the southern Elephant Seals parking area presents a constraint for extending the CCT south. It could easily be created as a simple unpaved trail most of the way, but there are “pinch points” where bluff retreat has already limited space for the CCT to a sidepath in the highway right-of-way. Oak Knoll Creek (Arroyo Laguna) also presents a significant barrier. Segment 3-3 south of San Simeon Point has similar conditions and constraints, except that Little Pico Creek and Pico Creek present even greater crossing challenges. As both these segments are future highway realignment areas, it would be logical to tie significant trail improvements to the realignment projects. The connections could be made by trail users on an informal basis in the interim.

The formal CCT improvements in Segment proposed at San Simeon Point are relatively minor, except for the proposed Highway 1 crossing to Hearst Castle Road. Access to the Point must be implemented in conjunction with arrangements and facilities for docent-led access. The pedestrian crossing may be valuable to implement whether or not the CCT connections north or south are formally implemented.

## Cambria to Harmony Headlands State Park

### Segments:

5-1: Ardath/Highway 1 intersection to Harmony Headlands State Park

This segment is low priority/long term, due to the distance involved, and the lack of public access for a route closer to the coast – which is a long-term priority. The widening of shoulders to 8 feet would be desirable, but would be a Caltrans project and not a CCT project. Creation of a sidepath for the CCT is not warranted enough to be a recommendation, but signing of the shoulders as CCT could be an option.

## 5.4 Permitting and Approvals

Typically each CCT segment or combination of segments that is pursued as a project will involve obtaining several permits and agreements. This section summarizes the types of permits and the basic process for each. **Chapter 3 - Design Standards and Guidelines**, discusses the specific standards and criteria of the pertinent regulatory and easement documents.

### Coastal Development Permit - San Luis Obispo County or Coastal Commission

Nearly any kind of improvement – even signs, requires a Coastal Development Permit (CDP). Signs and other rudimentary improvements can be approved administratively, but the projects contained in the Master Plan are significant and will require a full permit and hearing. This permit may be consolidated with other permits such as the Coastal Land Use Permit.

SLO County will handle the majority of CDP applications, but the Coastal Commission itself will hear appeals of a locally-approved CDP, and will directly review CDP applications in retained-jurisdiction areas, such as

some portions of Segment 2-3, where State Route 1 is planned for realignment, or for consolidated CDPs. In either case the legal standard of review includes the public access and recreation policies contained in Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act.

### **CCC Federal Consistency Review**

California Coastal Act policies are applicable to all state agencies, and per the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, specified federal agency activities are reviewed by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) as well. These agencies include the National Marine Sanctuary, Los Padres National Forest, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A federal consistency review step will be required for USFS lands in Segment 1-1, and original CCC jurisdiction in certain locations within the Highway 1 realignment area in Segment 2-3.

### **Coastal Land Use Permit**

A Coastal Land Use Permit could also be required, depending on the Land Use Category and the facilities proposed. There are two potential standards of review:

- Policies of the Local Coastal Plan
- California Coastal Act Public Access Policies

A Consolidated Coastal Development Permit/Land Use Permit could streamline the process, and would use the Coastal Act standard of review.

A Master Coastal Permit could be undertaken (Asilomar in Monterey is an example), which would allow the projects to be implemented under one consolidated permit (and presumably one programmatic environmental document).

The CCC policy for CCT improvements within the coastal bluff retreat zone is an “adaptive retreat plan” – with improvements designed to be minimal and movable as the bluff retreats. Although the County LCP doesn’t mention this term, Chapter 4 of the LCP allows minor earthwork, steps, and other trail structures set on natural grade to be constructed within the 75- to 100-year coastal bluff retreat zone. Also, the Hazards policies allow exceptions for shoreline protection for coastal development and coastal access. The North Coast Area Plan contains exceptions to setback requirements for the CCT.

### **Environmental Documentation**

#### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Passed in 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA’s) purpose is to assure that all branches of government give proper consideration to the environment prior to undertaking any major federal action that could significantly affect the environment. NEPA establishes the requirement that all federal agencies’ funding or permitting decisions be made with full consideration of the impact to the natural and human environment. And it requires agencies disclose these impacts to interested parties and the general public. The central element in the environmental review process is a rigorous evaluation of alternatives including the ‘no action’ alternative.

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. CEQA was created in 1970 as a way to supplement NEPA through state law.

CEQA applies to certain development activities including those of state and local public agencies. A public agency must comply with CEQA when it undertakes an activity defined by CEQA as a “project.” A project is an activity undertaken by a public agency or a private activity which must receive some discretionary approval (meaning that an agency has the authority to deny the requested permit or approval) which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect effect on the environment.

Most proposals for physical development in California are subject to the provisions of CEQA, as are many governmental decisions which do not immediately result in physical development (such as adoption of a general or community plan).

The environmental review required imposes both procedural and substantive requirements. At a minimum, an initial review of the project and its environmental effects must be conducted (Initial Study). Depending on the potential effects, a further, and more substantial, review may be conducted in the form of a Mitigated Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A project may not be approved as submitted if feasible alternatives or mitigation measures are necessary to substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the project.

### **Grading Permit and Bluff Retreat Study Approval from San Luis Obispo County**

DPR, other state agencies, and federal agencies are technically exempt from local codes, including grading and building permits, although they have their own internal standards and review and approval procedures. However, they are not exempt from the Coastal Act and its implementation through the SLO County Local Coastal Plan, which in turn requires a grading plan, and other technical studies like bluff retreat.

### **Compliance with Caltrans Scenic Easement**

Acceptance by Caltrans is required for projects within the former or current Hearst Ranch lands that are subject to the Caltrans Scenic Easement. The process for compliance will be a letter to the Easement Administrator, Steve Price at Caltrans District 5, requesting concurrence on the project plan consistency with the Scenic Easement. The American Land Conservancy is also a party to the Easement. Kara Blakeslee of the ALC is a good reference regarding expectations. The standard of review will be to follow the SLO County Coastal Permit requirements for visual impact, so the standard will generally be consistent with the LCP requirements, but Caltrans will be specifically referencing the baseline visual resources inventory prepared for the easement, and is likely to be more stringent.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Permit**

A Section 404 Permit application to the USACE for placement of fill, including consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may be required to satisfy the requirements of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

A Jurisdictional Delineation Report, or wetland delineation is part of the technical studies required in any location where there is potential for wetlands to occur. This maps and obtains USACE concurrence on jurisdictional “Waters of the U.S.,” including wetlands (if present), and/or “Waters of the State”.

### **Section 401 Water Quality Certification - Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)**

Many CCT projects will be required to prepare a RWQCB CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) notification/application to the local RWQCB, which may include a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The issuance of the WQC is necessary prior to the issuance of an USACE CWA Section 404(b)(1) permit.

### **Streambed Alteration Agreement – California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)**

A Section 1602 Lake or Streambed Notification/Application for a Streambed Alteration Agreement will need to be submitted to CDFG for any work that may impact a stream or related riparian habitat.

### **Encroachment Permit - Caltrans or SLO County**

Where the project involves work or permanent improvements within the state highway right-of-way or county road right-of-way, an encroachment permit from Caltrans or the county will be required. This typically requires a maintenance agreement with either a public agency or a non-profit organization to ensure that the CCT facilities in the highway right-of-way will be adequately maintained.

## **5.5 Operation and Maintenance**

An Operation and Maintenance (O & M) Plan should be an integral part of any trail project, and aspects of this are often formally required for environmental and encroachment permits. A thorough ongoing O & M program will benefit the basic physical, aesthetic, and biological qualities of the route, and result in many other benefits in as listed below:

- A high standard of maintenance is an effective way of helping advertise and promote the facility as a local and regional transportation and recreational resource;
- The psychological effects of good maintenance can be a deterrent to vandalism, litter, and encroachments;
- Good maintenance is necessary to preserve positive public relations between the adjacent land owners and between public agencies;
- Good maintenance can help make enforcement of regulations on the route more efficient. Local clubs, interest groups, and neighbors will take pride in the facility and will be more apt to assist in its protection;
- A proactive maintenance policy will help improve safety;
- Regular, routine maintenance on a year-round basis will prolong the life of the facility.

## What work is required and what will it cost?

The O & M requirements for trails can vary dramatically based on setting, use, facility type, and management approach. DPR has its own maintenance guidelines and practices, and this Master Plan does not attempt to analyze or supplement them; rather it provides some general information about O & M requirements and costs so that all parties to future trail projects have a starting point for resolving plans, agreements and budgets. Descriptions of typical O & M costs, examples of actual costs for other trails, and a sample form for estimating O & M costs are provided below.

### Operating Costs

Operating costs include administration and use management costs. Administration duties include managing and monitoring maintenance activities, coordinating with other agencies and organizations and adjacent property owners, routine patrol, responding to observed and reported problems, emergency response, maintaining records, managing the budget, and pursuing internal outside funding sources.

To develop a “placeholder” budget where records do not exist, these responsibilities could be estimated based on the approximate hours per project or per mile per year for applicable staff person(s), and multiplying the hours by the applicable hourly rates with benefits and overhead/expenses.

### Legal/Liability Costs

The agencies that would own the portions of the CCT within their jurisdictions would be legally liable. California laws provide broad immunities to owners and operators of public trails. Nevertheless, they may experience legal costs in the form of insurance premiums, litigation, and settlements. Typically maintenance agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are developed between agency and organization partners to the CCT to address legal, maintenance, and emergency services costs and arrangements. If properly designed and managed, the CCT should not represent a significant increase in liability costs; however, specific project sponsors may wish to include a factor for legal and liability costs this based on the cost of an insurance policy.

### Maintenance Cost

Maintenance costs for the CCT will depend on the facility type. Maintenance costs are generally most expensive for formal paved bike paths, followed by improved surface multi-use paths. The least expensive facilities to maintain are unpaved trails, and bike lanes or wide shoulders and on-street signed and marked routes. Maintenance of the latter can occur with normal roadway maintenance programs with extra emphasis on keeping the bike lanes and roadway shoulders clear of debris and keeping vegetation overgrowth from blocking visibility or creeping into the roadway, and keeping up the signs and markings.

### Examples of O & M Cost

Although, as noted above, the cost of operating and maintaining a trail project/segment can vary widely, the following examples may be useful for “placeholder” budgeting purposes:

- The East Bay Regional Park District estimated maintenance and operations costs for a mile of trail at \$25,000 annually (Source: email correspondence with Jim Townsend, Manager, Trails Development)

Program, EBRPD, January 13, 2011). This cost includes police patrol, vegetation management, litter pickup and a contribution to a reserve fund for eventual pathway replacement.

- The City of San Jose estimated \$12,500 per mile per year for operations and maintenance of a paved pathway, \$6,025 per mile per year for operations and maintenance of an unpaved recreational trail, and \$12,050 per acre for maintaining landscaping adjacent to trails (Source: email correspondence with Yves Zsutty, Acting Division Manager, Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services, City of San Jose, January 18, 2011).
- In FY 06/07 the City of Folsom, CA spent approximately \$1,600/mile for bike trail maintenance for the 32 miles of Class I bike trails, 35 bike/pedestrian bridges, and 5 bike/pedestrian undercrossings in its system. This budget does not include any substantial repairs. \$350,000 is allocated each FY for Park and Trail Renovation Projects. If half of this was allocated to trails, the additional cost would be \$5,470 per mile, or \$7,070 per mile total for maintenance (not operations).
- The 2008 Marin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan estimated cost of operation and maintenance of its 175 miles system of primarily unpaved roads and trails at \$4,190 per mile based on FY 06/07 records, but projected a cost of \$6,700 per mile to care for the trails at the level of service identified in the Strategic Plan
- The 2009 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Draft Master Plan indicated an average operation and maintenance cost of \$20,000 per mile for the District’s 226 mile unpaved trail system.

**Sample O & M Cost Estimate Form**

Table 5-3 is an example of a form that could be used to estimate O & M requirements and costs for a particular trail project. The checklist and form would need to be adapted to reflect specific conditions, trail type, staff or volunteer availability and cost, the presence of structures such as bridges that require special maintenance over the long-term, and any sensitive resources or special monitoring or management requirements. Ideally the plan and estimate will be informed by actual experience and records of O & M for such trail facilities in the same setting.

**Table 5-3: Sample Trail Maintenance Checklist and Cost Estimate Form**  
*(an example only – to be customized for specific trail setting, features, use and agreements)*

Item	Estimated Frequency	Hours per Event	Annual Hours	Estimated Materials	Estimated Annual Cost (per mile/each)
<b>Routine Maintenance</b>					
Trash pickup/disposal	Bi-weekly	2	52	--	\$3,000/mi
Vegetation trimming	As needed, assume 1 event/yr	4	4	--	\$240/mi

Item	Estimated Frequency	Hours per Event	Annual Hours	Estimated Materials	Estimated Annual Cost (per mile/each)
AC pavement repair (patch and seal cracks in AC) (or other trail surfacing work as applicable to gravel or earth surface)	Annual avg., maxing out at 16 hr/yr	Varies 0-16	8	--	\$480 /mi
Sign replacement/repair	As needed - assume 1 event/yr	2	2	--	\$700/mi
Fence/railing repair and replacement	Immediate/asap - assume 1 event/yr	4	4	500	\$980 /mi
Guard rail repair and replacement (where present)	Immediate/asap - assume 2 event/yr	--	--	\$2,000	\$4,000/mi
Pavement sweeping (where applicable)	As needed - estimate monthly	8	96	--	\$3,840 /mi
<b>Annual Cost per Mile for Routine Maintenance</b>					<b>TBD</b>
<b>Periodic Maintenance</b>					
Repaint pavement markings	Every 10 years - as needed	8	1	--	\$60/mi
Asphalt slurry seal	First time after 10 years and every 5 years after	--	--	\$30,800	\$5,100 /mi
AC Overlay	Year 15	--	--	\$63,800	\$4,300 /mi
Biennial inspection, minor maintenance of bridge, boardwalk and cantilevered path	Every 2 years	4	2	--	\$120/ea
Detailed inspection of bridge, boardwalk and cantilevered path	Every 10 years	8	1	--	\$60/ea
Repaint steel bridge	First time after 15 years and every 10 years after	--	--	\$4,000	\$320/ea
<b>Annual Cost for Periodic Maintenance</b>					<b>TBD</b>
<b>Annual Cost for Routine and Periodic Maintenance</b>					<b>TBD</b>