



# PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION MEMORANDUM

Date: December 19, 2018

To: Planning Commissioners  
From: Christopher Wright, Associate Planner II  
Subject: Pier Bowl Specific Plan Update

---

The study session will provide information to the Commission on the objectives, policy issues, and timeline for the Pier Bowl Specific Plan update.

## **Background**

In the process of preparing the Centennial General Plan, the community identified the Pier Bowl area as one of eight focus areas to have the most potential for change. The City Council approved land use changes and gave policy direction for the Pier Bowl focus area (Attachment 1). See Attachment 2 for land use maps from the City's Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (LUP).

A phased work program has been underway since 2014 General Plan adoption to update implementation plans for consistency with changes to land use designations, uses, development criteria, and policies. This effort is necessary to comply with State law and Council priorities in the City's General Plan Strategic Implementation Program. The City updated its LUP in June 2018 and completed a comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance in May 2018.

Phase 3 of the work program requires completion of specific plan updates that apply to City areas within the coastal zone. An update of the Pier Bowl Specific Plan is underway and the West Pico Corridor Specific Plan will follow. The Pier Bowl is entirely located within the coastal zone and therefore subject to the LUP and Coastal Act. Updates to the coastal zone specific plans were prioritized as the City is preparing an Implementation Plan (IP) for the Local Coastal Program following the LUP update. The specific plans are anticipated to be a part of the IP that is subject to future approval by the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Therefore, the CCC may review the Pier Bowl Specific Plan with the IP and may have potential suggested modifications. In that circumstance, the City would need to consider potential modifications and perhaps revisit the Pier Bowl Specific Plan at that time. However, it is anticipated that this update will be completed before the draft IP is submitted to the CCC and therefore shared with the CCC staff for informational purposes in advance of IP completion.

## **Discussion**

The three objectives of the specific plan update are as follows: 1) improve the specific plan's organization, format, and maps; 2) update plan to reflect Pier Bowl changes that have occurred since the specific plan was first adopted; and 3) make the plan consistent with policy and land use changes in updates of the General Plan and LUP. Below is a discussion of staff's approach for the project. Currently, a working draft of the specific plan update is being prepared for internal review. Staff anticipates public review of the draft and a community meeting will occur in January 2019. Public hearings for the specific plan update are anticipated in March 2019. See Attachment 3 for a project schedule.

### Organization, Format, and Maps

There are 12 chapters in the Pier Bowl Specific Plan. The project will reorder and reformat the specific plan consistent with the simplified organization and format of five existing specific plans. Hand-drawn maps will be updated with the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) to improve the accuracy and consistency of data shown in the specific plan. See Attachment 4 for more details on changes to the specific plan's organization.

### Update to Reflect Changes in Pier Bowl

The Pier Bowl Specific Plan has not been updated since adoption in 1993 and does not reflect improvements made in the area since that time. For example, the specific plan does not account for the development of the beach trail, the Semper Fi Park, or establishment of the Casa Romantica as a non-profit cultural center and gardens. The specific plan also references public improvements that were not constructed and are unlikely. This can be due to an inconsistency with policies, expenses (and cost of more pressing capital projects), engineering constraints, or because there are different plans in more recent planning documents such as the wayfinding sign program and Beaches, Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The specific plan includes plans for a parking structure on the municipal parking lot site north of the pier and the development of a funicular over a coastal bluff to connect the Casa Romantica site and Pier Bowl Core. Staff will remove references to the projects as they are no longer supported by General Plan or the LUP policies.

Descriptions of the Pier Bowl will be updated with input from City staff in Public Works, Engineering, Utilities, and Marine Safety. The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is updated annually with the budget to identify and set priorities for capital improvements based on resources, need, and community input. Staff will refer to the CIP for identifying and setting capital improvement priorities in the Pier Bowl, and refer to planned and feasible public improvements as needed.

### Land Use and Policy Changes

The specific plan will be updated for consistency with land use and policy changes adopted in the Centennial General Plan and LUP (Attachment 5).

#### *Boundary of Pier Bowl Core Mixed Use Area*

Land use maps of the specific plan will be updated for consistency with the land use changes in the LUP. These updates would include changing properties on the block of Coronado Lane from Mixed Use 4 (MU 4) to Residential High (RH). Additionally, maps will be revised to improve the consistency and accuracy of land use boundaries by updating the old hand drawn maps with the City's GIS.

The General Plan changed the land use designation of properties on Coronado Lane from Mixed Use to Residential High (RH), while maintaining the height limit of 30 feet. The CCC certified the LUP which included approval of changes to two parcels to Mixed Use 4 (MU 4) on the south end of Coronado Lane by request of a property owner during the CCC's consideration of the LUP update. On June 12, 2018, the Council directed City staff to process a Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) that redesignates the two properties as RH consistent with the General Plan. The amendment is scheduled for Council hearing on December 18, 2018. See Attachment 6 for the LUPA amendment and related maps.

#### *California Native Street Trees*

The specific plan designates street tree species in streetscape guidelines for primary and secondary circulation routes in the Pier Bowl including non-native California species, inconsistent with policy LUP, PUB-5, Streetscapes and Major Roadways. This policy requires street trees in the coastal zone to emphasize California Native tree species, as follows:

“...emphasize planting and maintaining California Native tree species of sufficient height, spread, form and horticultural, characteristics to create the desired streetscape canopy, shade, buffering from adjacent uses, and other desired streetscape characteristics, while considering impacts to public view corridors.”

Staff is consulting with the City's landscape architecture consultant, Summer Murphy Partners, to identify alternative tree species that are California native, consistent with the policy to replace non-native tree species listed in the plan and reflect the policy's intent for streetscape canopy, shade, and buffering from adjacent uses.

### *Relocation of Marine Safety Headquarters*

The marine safety headquarters is located along the City's coastline and seaward of the railroad rock revetment, and therefore susceptible to waves, erosion, sea level rise, and storm surges. Due to these coastal hazards, the LUP includes a new policy for the redevelopment and relocation of the marine safety headquarters. Policy HAZ-50 prevents new permanent structures on the sandy beach except for the redevelopment of a headquarters until an operationally suitable alternative inland location is available (see Attachment 5 for the policy). Specific plan development standards and allowed uses are being updated to provide options for relocating the marine safety headquarters in the future if the City decides to pursue a project within the specific plan area.

### **Conclusion**

Staff is preparing a draft of the Pier Bowl Specific Plan update to address the issues discussed above. This study session will provide guidance for staff preparation of the public review draft and public hearings planned in March 2019.

### **Attachments**

1. Maps of General Plan Focus Areas and Pier Bowl
2. Land use maps from certified Coastal Land Use Plan
3. Project schedule
4. Comparison of Existing and Proposed Organization
5. Pier Bowl Goals and Policies in the General Plan and LUP
6. Draft LUP Amendment for Coronado Lane (excerpt) being presented to City Council on December 18, 2018.