CHAPTER 2
AREA DESCRIPTION/LAND USE

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201. GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan Land-Use Element and Coastal Element regulate the land uses in the Pier Bowl. The Land-Use Element has been recently updated as part of a Comprehensive General Plan Amendment and was adopted in May of 1993. The most recent Coastal Element was adopted in 1988. There are some land-use inconsistencies between the General Plan and the existing Coastal Element. The City will update the City's Coastal Element following the adoption of the General Plan to eliminate these land-use conflicts. The Specific Plan reflects the land uses in the General Plan, which is the most recent statement of the City's land-use policies (see Figure 6 in Chapter 4). The General Plan land uses for the Pier Bowl area include:

- MU 4.1 & 4.2-P-A Mixed-Use Pedestrian/Architectural Design Overlay
- MU 4.3-A Mixed-Use Architectural Design Overlay
- P-A Public Architectural Overlay
- RM-A Residential Medium Density Architectural Overlay
- RH-A Residential High Density Architectural Overlay
- CRC1-P-A Tourist/visitor-Serving Commercial Architectural Overlay

202. EXISTING ZONING/LAND USE

The Pier Bowl has a range of zoning classifications and overlays. The present zoning for the Pier Bowl includes:

- Commercial Districts: Commercial Apartment (C-A) and Historical Commercial (HC);
- Specialty and Overlay Districts: Open Area and Recreation (0-A), Shoreline (S-1), Parking (P), and Architectural Design (AD); and
- Residential Districts: Medium High Density (R-3) and High Density (R-4).
The land-use and development standards for the Specific Plan reflect the land-use policies in the General Plan. The most significant differences from the existing zoning are: the current zoning does not allow a mix of commercial and residential land uses; of property on Coronado Lane is changed from residential to mixed use; and the Robison property is changed from residential to a potential commercial use. Figure 3 shows the present zoning within the Pier Bowl Specific Plan area.

203. EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

The existing development in the Pier Bowl includes restaurants, retail shops, corner market, bed-and-breakfast inns, hotel and motels, timeshares, recreational uses, open space and institutional uses. The predominant uses in the area are residential apartments, condominiums, and homes that are mixed within and around the commercial uses.

The Pier Bowl Conceptual Plan divided the Pier Bowl into nine sub-areas. The sub-areas are distinguished by their individual qualities and characteristics and their planned land uses in the Pier Bowl Specific Plan and Draft General Plan. In the Specific Plan, the sub-areas identified in the Conceptual Plan have been adjusted to be consistent with the General Plan (see Figure 6 of Chapter 4 Land Use/Development Standards). Descriptions of the nine sub-areas are provided below:

A. PIER BOWL CORE

This area is unique from the rest of the Pier Bowl and San Clemente due to its make-up and proximity to the ocean. The area is presently both a tourist and commercial focal point. The Pier Bowl Core is the only area in the City where commercial uses are adjacent to the beach and ocean. The ocean and beach orientation of the area creates an atmosphere well suited for pedestrian- and beach-oriented activities.

Avenida Victoria is zoned Commercial Apartment, Architectural Design Overlay District (GA A-D). There is currently a mixture of residential, lodging, and commercial uses on the street. On the ground or street level, there are a number of beach- and pedestrian-oriented commercial uses. Above, on the upper stories, are apartments and lodging. The ocean side of the street is the access point to the beach, the Pier, and Parque Del Mar shoreline park. The activity in the area generated from the shops, restaurants, the beach, parking, and the Pier cause traffic to slow. All these features create an environment which makes the Pier Bowl Core popular for pedestrian use and public activity.
Coronado Lane is zoned high-density residential. This street is lined with condominiums and apartments. The Thirtieth Street Architects Draft Master Plan and General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) both recommend that this street eventually take on the same character as Avenida Victoria. The street has a pedestrian character and presents an excellent opportunity to increase commercial activity over time.

B. CASA ROMANTICA

The Casa Romantica is situated on a bluff-top overlooking San Clemente's Pier and the rest of the Pier Bowl. The Spanish Colonial Revival style residence was built in 1928 and represents an important part of San Clemente's past. The original home of Ole Hanson, the founder of San Clemente, the Casa Romantica is considered an historic and aesthetic treasure of the community. The City purchased the Casa Romantica in 1988 in order to preserve the Casa Romantica as a historic landmark. The Casa Romantica is included in to the National Registry of Historic Places. The Casa Romantica property consists of 2.43 acres and is accessed by Avenida Granada. The property slopes downward, from north to south, with a coastal bluff on the ocean side that drops off to the railroad tracks and beach below. The single-story Spanish Colonial Revival style residence is designed around a central courtyard. The main building occupies approximately 8,000 square feet and has nine (9) bedrooms. Two (2) large contemporary-style condominium complexes border either side of the building.

The Casa Romantica has been adaptively reused as a cultural facility and gardens that is leased to a non-profit who operates the cultural center and gardens and other special events in the building and on the grounds.

C. PIER BOWL MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT

The Municipal Parking Lot consists of 165 off-street parking spaces on the north side of Avenida Del Mar below the Casa Romantica site. Bordering the parking lot is a parkway with a meandering red-stamped concrete sidewalk and a landscaped strip that includes palm trees, coral trees, and turf.

The primary function of the parking lot is to provide needed parking for the commercial uses and the beach. The parking lot presently provides a dramatic view corridor of the Pier and the ocean from Avenida Del Mar. As one travels down from the top of Avenida Del Mar, the Pier Bowl and the ocean can be seen as a backdrop to the street and buildings. Around the final bend of Avenida Del Mar, white water views of the ocean can be seen. At this point, the Pier, the surf, and the sand are all in view.
D. BEACHCOMBER AND ROBISON PROPERTY

The "Beachcomber Motel" consists of twelve (12) bungalows, with white-stucco walls and red-tile roofs, stepping their way up the hill along Avenida Victoria. Each bungalow looks out onto a lawn and over the Pacific Ocean. The Beachcomber, originally known as the "Tepper" apartments, was built in 1940 during the Ole Hanson period. The property is zoned C-A A-D. The Beachcomber has a Spanish Colonial architectural design and is one story in height, which gives it pedestrian scale.

The Robison property is located just up the hill from the Beachcomber. This Spanish Colonial Revival residence was originally built in 1930. The architect and designer of this building was Virgil Westbrook. Westbrook designed the vast majority of the Spanish Colonial Revival buildings during the Ole Hanson period. To this day, the Robison property remains a single-family residence. The Robison house is located on top of the coastal bluff across the Pier Bowl from the Casa Romantica. The zoning on the property is R-3 A-D, Medium High Density Residential.

E. ALAMEDA LANE PROPERTY

The Alameda Lane property is a vacant site between the bluffs and the parking lot measuring seven (7) acres in area. In 1940, a Spanish-style apartment building was constructed on this property, only to be torn down in 1987 to make way for an eleven-unit condominium project on the site. This project was never built, and the Redevelopment Agency purchased the property in 1988. The property is zoned C-A A-D, which allows commercial or residential uses. The purchase of the Alameda Lane property by the City has also allowed for the elimination of the street right-of-way of North Alameda Lane, as it is no longer required to provide access to the property. This additional land area creates an opportunity to expand the Municipal Parking Lot.

The purchase of this property not only presents development opportunities for the site, it also enhances opportunities for the surrounding City-owned property, including the Casa Romantica, the Municipal Parking Lot, and Parque Del Mar.

F. PIER BOWL RESIDENTIAL

1. Medium Density Residential Sub-Area

The Medium Density Residential Sub-Area is composed of two (2) residential districts. The first district is located southeast of the Pier Bowl Core, and the second district is located northeast of the Casa Romantica. The residential development in this sub-area is less dense than the High Density Residential
Sub-Area. Some structures exhibit Spanish Colonial Revival architecture and others were constructed in contemporary styles.

2. High Density Residential Sub-Area

The High Density Residential Sub-Area is composed of several residential districts that are generally located inland from the Pier Bowl Core, and north and south of the Casa Romantica. The residential district located inland from the Pier Bowl Core is characterized by multi-family condominiums and apartments. While the older structures are typically smaller and exhibit Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, the newer structures are typically larger and exhibit modern, contemporary, or Mediterranean architecture.

The residential districts located north and south of the Casa Romantica are characterized by large condominium projects. Built in the 1970's, design emphasis was placed on optimizing densities and ocean views instead of the exterior architectural appearance. Thus, pedestrian orientation and beach access have been diminished. Smaller lots in this sub-area are comparable to the residential development near the Pier Bowl core.

G. BEACH FRONTAGE

Beautiful white-sand beaches stretch the length of the Pier Bowl's seashore. San Clemente beaches attract two million visitors a year. The half-mile stretch of beach around the Pier is the most popular of San Clemente beaches. Recreational attractions in the beach frontage sub-area, such as the pier, the beach, and Parque Del Mar shoreline park, contribute greatly to the Pier Bowl's popularity.

The zoning for the Beach Frontage Sub-Area is S-1, Shoreline District, for the beach and the Pier; and C-A A-D for Parque Del Mar, the shoreline park located just above the beach. The S-1 zone allows public parks, recreational facilities, and business concessions.

The quarter-mile-long historic San Clemente Pier is a major City landmark and the center of activity in the Beach Frontage district. At the base of the Pier is the Fisherman's Restaurant. Recent City approvals include an expansion of the current restaurant and bar to include a fish market, oyster bar, and expanded outside seating. Also included is the replacement of the existing concession stand. The concession stand will sell food and beverages, beach sundries, and provide beach-use rentals. At the end of the Pier is a bait-and-tackle shop for the convenience of fishermen.
The Pier is also used for nearly all of the special events in the Pier Bowl. It is often the grandstand for surfing contests, and is the focal point for the Ocean Festival and the Chowder Cook-off.

Whether it is to participate in one of the many beach-oriented activities or to take in the view, the beach is the reason most people come to enjoy the Pier Bowl. Facilities on the beach include the City's Marine Safety Headquarters, the Amtrak stop, bathrooms, picnic tables, cabanas, barbecues, fire rings, swings, and volleyball courts. The main accesses to the beach and the Pier are a controlled at-grade crossing and an underpass leading from Avenida Victoria.

The shoreline park, known as "Parque Del Mar," is a grassy narrow stretch of land that parallels the beach. This area is a passive park with palms, coral trees, and picnic tables. On a typical day, you may find people reading a book, eating their lunch, sunbathing, or enjoying the sunset.

H. LINDA LANE PARK

Linda Lane Park marks the very northerly boundary of the Pier Bowl. This park is developed at the mouth of Palizada Canyon, a designated Coastal Canyon in the City's Coastal Element. The park includes one hundred eighteen (118) metered parking spaces, picnic tables, and playground equipment. The eastern end of the park transitions into the natural coastal canyon, while the southern end opens up to the beach. Linda Lane Park cannot be seen from the Pier Bowl area, making it less popular among tourists. The primary users of the park and the beach are residents of San Clemente who have coined the area "Second Spot." Pedestrian access to the beach is provided under the railroad tracks through the storm drain channel. Because the beach access is through a storm drain, access at times is hampered by water and debris. The zoning for this sub-area is O-A, Recreation and Open Space.

204. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The land-use and development standards of this Specific Plan include commercial, recreational, mixed use, and residential uses. Discussed in the following sections are the new land uses for each of the Pier Bowl's nine (9) sub-areas (also see Figure 4-1 of Chapter 4, Land Use/Development Standards):

A. PIER BOWL CORE SUB-AREA

The Pier Bowl Core Sub-Area is a mixed-use development area. Retail shops and restaurants will be located along the street, and offices or residences will be provided in the rear or on upper floors. Motel/hotel units are also planned for this sub-area. The consolidation of parking will be encouraged for smaller lots. Avenida Del Mar is identified as the primary circulation route, and a traffic loop is recommended to redirect traffic back to Avenida Del Mar via South Alameda Lane. Development standards require pedestrian-scale development and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.
B. CASA ROMANTICA SUB-AREA

The development standards for the Casa Romantica Sub-Area allow the preservation and renovation of the Casa Romantica for a variety of public-serving activities. Additional structures are allowed if they are integrated and compatible with the Casa Romantica's architecture, scale, and design. Public views of, and from, the Casa Romantica will be maintained.

C. PIER BOWL MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT SUB-AREA

The Municipal Parking Lot presently contains one hundred sixty-five (165) parking spaces. Additional parking must be provided to ensure the successful implementation of the Specific Plan. The Municipal Parking Lot will be reconstructed to yield approximately thirty-five (35) additional spaces. A subterranean parking structure could eventually be constructed. The subterranean parking structure would provide two hundred (200) additional spaces and protect public views of the ocean from Avenida Del Mar. A satellite parking lot located outside the Pier Bowl is also being considered; a shuttle would transport visitors to the Pier Bowl during the peak summer months.

D. BEACHCOMBER AND ROBISON PROPERTIES SUB-AREA

The Specific Plan designates development of overnight accommodations, time shares, and coastal-oriented retail on the Beachcomber property. Coastal-oriented commercial and residential uses will be developed on the Robison property. All development will proceed in concert with public amenities. The pedestrian orientation of the area will be preserved and enhanced, and the development will reflect Spanish Colonial Revival architecture and conform to the natural topography. The preservation of historic structures is encouraged. Parking will be provided on-site in a subterranean facility. Public views from Avenida Victoria will be preserved.

E. ALAMEDA LANE PROPERTY SUB-AREA

The Alameda Lane property will be developed with mixed-residential and commercial uses (for examples: specialty retail shops, restaurants, entertainment, time shares, and lodging). The development will be pedestrian-oriented, and the use of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture will integrate the Alameda Lane property with the Casa Romantica. Building design will step down with the terrain. Parking will be provided either on-site or at the Municipal Parking Lot. Development will not block views from the Casa Romantica.

F. MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL SUB-AREA

This sub-area is currently developed with medium density single-family residences, condominiums, and apartments. New development will be designed to encourage the pedestrian orientation of the neighborhood and to exhibit Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.
G. HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL SUB-AREA

High density condominium and apartment development is currently located in this sub-area. New development will be designed to encourage the pedestrian orientation of the neighborhood and to exhibit Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. Bed-and-breakfast inns are also allowed. All parking will be provided on-site.

H. BEACH FRONTAGE SUB-AREA

The Beach Frontage Sub-Area will remain the recreational focal point of the Pier Bowl. Passive and active recreational activities will be continued and enhanced. Cultural, sport, and community events will be encouraged; and one (1) new commercial use will be allowed on the Pier. Beach concession stands are also allowed. A Spanish Colonial Revival style building may be constructed to house the train depot and restrooms, and maritime architecture will be encouraged for the Marine Safety Headquarters facilities and the new commercial structure located on the Pier. Parking for beach and Pier visitors will be provided at the Municipal Parking Lot and/or other consolidated parking facilities.

I. LINDA LANE PARK SUB-AREA

Linda Lane Park will maintain its residential and beach orientation. Whereas the park is presently designed for passive activities, the Specific Plan identifies more active recreational activities. The parking lot will be relocated to the east to create parkland adjacent to the beachfront.