

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

DATE: November 12, 2025

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Consideration of a request by the San Mateo County Harbor District (SMCHD) pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, that the County report whether its acquisition of various parcels conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

County File Number: PLN2025-00334

PROPOSAL

Consideration of a request by the San Mateo County Harbor District (SMCHD) pursuant to Government Code Section 65402, that the County report whether its acquisition of various parcels conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission report that the San Mateo County Harbor District's acquisition of various parcels conforms to the adopted County General Plan.

BACKGROUND

Report Prepared By: Chanda Singh, Senior Transportation Planner
(csingh@smcgov.org)

Applicant: James Pruett, General Manager, San Mateo County Harbor District

Owner: Princeton Lot – San Mateo County Harbor District and Bettencourt & Son, Boat Yard, Burnham Strip and Hotel Beach – San Mateo County Harbor District

Public Notification: A notice for the hearing was posted in the San Mateo County Times for general public circulation.

Location: Various locations near Pillar Point Harbor in unincorporated Princeton and El Granada, including: Princeton Lot at the corner of Columbia Avenue and Princeton Avenue; Boat Yard between Pillar Point Harbor and Princeton Avenue; Burnham Strip at the northern end of the Burnham Strip south of Capistrano Road and east of State

Route 1; Hotel Beach between State Route 1 and Hotel Beach at southern end of Pillar Point Harbor Boulevard

APN(s):

Princeton Lot	047-033-200, 047-033-190, 047-033-180, 047-033-410, 047-033-400, 047-033-390, 047-033-160
Boat Yard	047-037-060, 047-037-070, 047-037-420, 047-037-430, 047-037-170, 047-037-150, 047-037-140
Burnham Strip	047-251-040, 047-251-140
Hotel Beach	047-252-390, 047-252-360, 047-252-220, 047-252-230, 047-252-240

Size: Reference Attachment B. Total square footage (sf) provided for contiguous parcels.

Area	Parcel APNs	sq. ft.
Princeton Lot	047-033-200, 047-033-190, 047-033-180, 047-033-410, 047-033-400, 047-033-390, 047-033-160	24,268
Boat Yard	047-037-060, 047-037-070	7,003
	047-037-150, 047-037-140	4,996
	047-037-420, 047-037-430, 047-037-170	7,506
Burnham Strip	047-251-140	6,326
	047-251-040	39,937
Hotel Beach	047-252-390, 047-252-360, 047-252-220, 047-252-230, 047-252-240	132,333

Existing Zoning:

Princeton Lot	Waterfront District/Airport Overlay District/Design Review District/Coastal Development District (W/AO/DR/CD)
Boat Yard	Waterfront District/Design Review District/Coastal Development District (W/DR/CD)
Burnham Strip	El Granada Gateway District/Design Review District (EG/DR)
Hotel Beach	Coastside Commercial Recreation District/Design Review District/Coastal Development District (CCR/DR/CD)

General Plan Designation:

Princeton Lot	Industrial, General Industrial -Zone W
Boat Yard	Industrial, General Industrial -Zone W
Burnham Strip	Open Space, Open Space with Park Overlay
Hotel Beach	Recreation, Coastside Commercial Recreation; Recreation, Public Recreation

Local Coastal Plan Designation: Midcoast Project Area, a portion of the Boat Yard is in the California Coastal Commission's Permit Jurisdiction

Sphere-of-Influence: Half Moon Bay

Existing Land Use: Princeton Lot – Boat Storage; Boat Yard – Storage Lot; Burnham Strip – Undeveloped Open Space; Hotel Beach – single family residence on APN 047-252-390 and otherwise undeveloped

Water Supply: Coastside County Water District

Sewage Disposal: Granada Sanitary District

Flood Zone: Boat Yard is Zone VE (1% annual chance of experiencing a flood, high-risk flood zone); others are Zone X – Areas of Minimal Flood Hazard

Environmental Evaluation: A report that the potential acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Any future action on the subject properties would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

Setting: The Princeton Lot and Boat Yard are in industrial areas of Princeton, adjacent to other commercial and industrial uses. The Burnham Strip site is undeveloped open space with native and non-native vegetation, adjacent to central El Granada with residential land uses and Surfer's Beach and Highway 1 southwest of the site. The Hotel Beach site is largely undeveloped, adjacent to the SMCHD parking lot, beach, and Sam's Chowder House.

DISCUSSION

A. KEY ISSUES

1. Description

The San Mateo County Harbor District (SMCHD) has purchased or intends to purchase several properties in the unincorporated communities of Princeton and El Granada (Attachment B). The Princeton Lot parcels (~24,000 sq. ft.) are currently used for dry storage for boats and boat trailers. The Boat Yard parcels (~19,500 sq. ft.) are currently used as dry storage for boats, boat trailers, crab pots, marine and related fisheries gear, recreational vehicles, and Conex boxes. The Hotel Beach parcels (~132,000 sq. ft.) are undeveloped with the exception of one rental single-family

residence. The Burnham Strip parcels (~46,000 sq. ft.) are currently undeveloped.

In the near term, SMCHD intends to continue the current property uses. SMCHD staff are also considering future proposals to use the Burnham Strip and/or Hotel Beach parcels to support public parking to Surfer's Beach, Pillar Point Harbor, Hotel Beach, and the Coastal Trail. This preliminary concept has not been approved by the Board of Harbor Commissioners nor evaluated per CEQA and is not a formal proposed use at this time.

Per California Government Code Section 65402, SMCHD must submit a request for a report on the acquisitions' conformity with the County's General Plan. Any specific developments, future improvements, or changes proposed on the properties would require permits and would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal. Any future applications will be regulated by applicable Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, tree removal and grading ordinances, and the Local Coastal Program.

2. General Plan and Local Coastal Program Analysis

The major General Plan (GP) policies, including those in the Local Coastal Program (LCP), related to the acquisition of the subject properties include general land use and urban land use, visual quality, transportation, natural hazards, and vegetative, water, fish, and wildlife resources. The LCP considerations associated with the acquisitions are contained in the locating and planning new development, visual resources, sensitive habitats, public works, shoreline access and hazard components.

a. General Land Use Policies (GP), Urban Land Use Policies (GP), Locating and Planning New Development Component (LCP), and Commercial Fishing/Recreational Boating Component (LCP)

GP Policy 7.15 (Designation of Land Use) establishes land use designations in Table 7.1P and describes primary associated uses.

GP Policy 8.12 (General Plan Land Use Designations for Urban Areas), states to a. adopt the land use designations of the (1) Local Coastal Program.

LCP Policy 1.5 (Land Uses and Development Densities in Urban Areas) permits in urban areas land uses designated on the LCP Land Use Plan Map and conditional uses up to the densities specific in Tables 1.2 and 1.3.

LCP Policy 12.3 (Related Uses) encourages developments or uses which directly support recreational boating or commercial fishing before all others within one-half mile of the Pillar Point Harbor Area or lands designated on the Land Use Plan maps in Commercial Recreation or General Industrial.

Discussion: The subject properties' existing uses do not conflict with the GP and LCP designations:

- (1) Industrial includes manufacturing and processing uses including but not limited to fabricating, assembling, and storing products;
- (2) Open Space includes resource management and production uses including but not limited to agriculture, oil and gas exploration. Recreation uses including but not limited to stables and riding academies; and residential uses including but not limited to non-transient housing. Service uses including but not limited to hotels and motels;
- (3) Coastside Commercial Recreation includes trade and distribution uses including but not limited to retail trade; service uses including but not limited to commercial amusement, hotels, and motels; and
- (4) Public Recreation includes but is not limited to publicly-owned park and recreation facilities such as playgrounds, parks, golf courses, and natural preserves.

The existing uses at the Princeton Lot and Boat Yard support commercial fishing and recreational boating, consistent with LCP Policy 12.3. Any specific developments, future improvements or changes to the subject properties would be subject to local regulations and would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal.

b. Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies (GP) and Sensitive Habitats Component (LCP)

GP Policy 1.30 (Uses Permitted in Sensitive Habitats) requires the County permit only activities that are compatible with the protection of sensitive habitats, such as wildlife management activities, trails and scenic overlooks, and necessary public service and private infrastructure.

LCP Policy 7.1 (Definition of Sensitive Habitats) defines sensitive habitats as any area in which plant or animal life, or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable and any area which meets at least one of several criteria, including (2) all perennial and intermittent streams and their tributaries. Sensitive habitat areas include riparian corridors and wetlands, among others.

LCP Policy 7.4 (Permitted Uses in Sensitive Habitats) allows permitting only resource dependent uses in sensitive habitats, including for riparian corridors, as identified in Policies 7.9, 7.16, 7.23, 7.26, 7.30, 7.33 and 7.44.

LCP Policy 7.5 (Permit Conditions) requires applicants to demonstrate no significant impact on sensitive habitats; if impacts may occur, requires a report with mitigation measures and a monitoring program to protect resources.

Discussion: The Burnham Strip and Hotel Beach sites are proximate to Deer Creek, a hydrological feature that may include sensitive habitats. The acquisitions do not inherently conflict with GP Vegetative, Water, Fish and Wildlife Resources Policies and LCP Sensitive Habitats Component, as at present, SMCHD intends to continue the sites' existing undeveloped and residential uses. Any specific developments, future improvements or changes to the site would be subject to applicable regulations and would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal. Plans would need to identify sensitive habitats, buffer zones, and impacts to demonstrate compliance with the LCP's Sensitive Habitats Component.

c. Visual Quality Policies (GP) and Visual Resources Component (LCP)

GP Policy 4.22 (Scenic Corridors) aims to protect and enhance the visual quality of scenic corridors by managing the location and appearance of structural development.

GP Policy 4.45 (Designation of Scenic Roads and Corridors) designates those State and County travel routes listed in Table 4.6 as Scenic Roads, which designates Cabrillo Highway from Junipero Serra Freeway to the northern limits of the City of Half Moon Bay as a County designated route.

LCP Policy 8.5 (Location of Development) requires that new development be located on a portion of a parcel where the development is (1) least visible from County Scenic Roads, (2) is least likely to impact views from public viewpoints, and (3) best preserves the visual and open space qualities of the parcel overall.

LCP Policy 8.15 (Coastal Views) prevents development from substantially blocking views to the shoreline from coastal roads, vista points, recreation areas, and trails, among others.

Discussion: The Burnham Strip and Hotel Beach properties are located within a County Scenic Corridor and are visible from Highway 1. The properties are currently undeveloped, with the exception of one single-family residence on the Hotel Beach site. Grasses are mowed regularly. SMCHD currently plans to continue the existing uses, which conform to the General Plan Visual Quality Policies and LCP Visual Resources Component. Any specific developments, future improvements, or changes, proposed on the subject property would be subject to applicable regulations and would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal and would need to demonstrate compliance with the LCP's Visual Resources Component.

d. Transportation (GP) and Public Works (LCP)

GP Policy 12.21 (Local Circulation Policies) plans to provide b. improved streets, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and other features; c. minimal through traffic in residential areas; e. access for emergency vehicles; f. safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian travel, and i. parking areas for ridesharing, among others.

LCP Policy 2.50 (Improvements for Bicycle and Pedestrian) trails encourages e. through coordination with Caltrans, promote the development of a continuous Midcoast pedestrian/bicycle/multi-purpose path parallel to Highway 1 as part of the overall California Coastal Trail (CCT) system, and h. ensures that no roadway repair or maintenance project blocks or damages any existing or formally planned public trail segment.

LCP Policy 2.52 (Traffic Mitigation for all Development in the Urban Midcoast) requires new development generating net vehicle trip increases on Highways 1 and/or 92 to develop and implement a traffic impact analysis and mitigation plan, with necessary information provided before coastal development permit approval.

Discussion: The acquisitions do not inherently conflict with the GP Transportation and LCP Public Works Component. The Burnham Strip sites are along the alignment of the planned Midcoast Multimodal Parallel Trail. The Hotel Beach sites are adjacent to the California Coastal Trail. Any specific developments, future improvements, or changes proposed on the subject properties would require permits and would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal

and would need to integrate applicable multiuse trails, pedestrian crossing improvements, and on-site vehicle and bicycle parking, consistent with GP and LCP policies and based on proposed project impacts.

d. Shoreline Access Component (LCP)

LCP Policy 10.1 (Permit Conditions for Shoreline Access) requires provision for shoreline access as a condition of granting development permits for any public or private development permits between the sea and nearest road.

LCP Policy 10.9 (Public Safety) requires provision of safe access to shoreline destinations which are large enough to accommodate public safety improvements and public use, including beaches and bluffs designated appropriate for public use in the Site Specific Recommendations for Shoreline Destinations (Table 10.6)

LCP Policy 10.13 (Commercial and Industrial Areas) requires the establishment and improvement of vertical (trails) and lateral (shoreline destinations) public access and parking consistent with Policy 10.22(e) as a condition for obtaining a permit for commercial and industrial development along the shoreline, except where the establishment of access would disrupt activities which are essential to public safety.

LCP Policy 10.35 (Priorities for Public Acquisition and Development) establishes priorities for expenditure of public funds, a. following the priorities as shown in Table 10.5 when unrestricted public funds are available, and d. ensuring that high priority trails and shoreline destinations are given preference in public expenditures by informing other public agencies of local priorities and by reviewing the acquisition and development plans of other public agencies for consistency with them.

LCP Policy 10.49 (San Mateo County Harbor District) encourages the SMCHD to continue its efforts developing and maintaining public shoreline access on the District's coastal properties.

Discussion: The Boat Yard and Hotel Beach parcels are within the areas identified for various shoreline access improvements per the LCP. Table 10.5 identifies the south and east sides of Pillar Point as the first phase site for the third priority of acquiring and improving privately owned trails and shoreline destinations which are adjacent to and would expand the size of existing publicly owned shoreline destinations. Table 10.6 identifies site specific recommendations for:

Pillar Point Harbor-South and East Areas including establishing access trails, developing parking for disabled and bicycles, and providing a paved trail for wheelchair access to the beach from the new lot; Princeton Beach to improve the beach at Denniston Creek, to develop small parking areas for beach access on vacant lots in Princeton, and to keep access open and eventually improved to and along the beach between West Point and Columbia Avenue and at Broadway Avenue; and Johnson Pier and Beach to establish parking for the disabled and bicycles and implement access improvements to the harbor required by the Coastal Commission. The acquisition does not inherently conflict with the Shoreline Access Component of the LCP. Any specific developments, future improvements, or changes proposed on the subject properties would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal for consistency with the LCP.

e. Natural Hazards Policies (GP) and Hazards Component (LCP)

GP Policy 15.11 (Designation of Flooding Hazard Areas) designates flooding hazard areas as those of special flood hazard on the Natural Hazards map.

GP Policy 15.43 (Determination of the Existence of a Flooding Hazard) states that when the Natural Hazards map does not clearly illustrate the presence of extent of flooding hazards, use more detailed maps and information.

GP Policy 15.12 (Location New Development in Areas Which Contain Natural Hazards) gives preference to land uses that minimize the number of people exposed to hazards in these areas and requires detailed analysis of hazard risk and design of appropriate mitigation when development is proposed in these areas.

LCP Policy 9.9 (Regulation of Development in Floodplains) requires development located within flood hazard areas to employ the standards, limitations, and controls in Chapter 35.5 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, Sections 8131, 8132, and 8133 of Chapter 2 and Section 8309 of Chapter 4, Division VII (Building Regulations), and applicable Subdivision Regulations.

Discussion: The Boat Yard is in a designated flooding hazard area, as it is within FEMA Zone VE, a 1% annual chance of experiencing a flood, high-risk flood zone. The existing use conforms with the GP Natural Hazards and LCP Hazards Component, as it is primarily used for storage with minimal exposure of people to hazards. The acquisition does not inherently conflict and any specific developments, future improvements, or changes proposed on the subject properties

would be reviewed by the County at the time of application submittal for consistency with the GP and LCP.

B. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative to a report of conformity with the General Plan is for the Planning Commission to report that the Project does not conform to the policies of the adopted County General Plan. Another alternative is to take no action. Upon expiration of 40 days from submittal, failure to make a report will be deemed a finding that the Project as described in the submittal is in conformity with the adopted General Plan.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A report that the acquisition of property conforms to the County General Plan is exempt from environmental review because the County's ministerial functions performed under Government Code Section 65402 are not an approval of a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Any future action on the subject properties would be subject to applicable CEQA requirements.

D. REVIEWING AGENCIES

County Attorney's Office

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Recommended Findings
- B. Location Map

County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Permit or Project File Number: PLN2025-00334 Hearing Date: November 12, 2025

Prepared By: Chanda Singh For Adoption By: Planning Commission

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

That the Planning Commission report that the San Mateo County Harbor District's acquisition of various parcels conforms to the adopted County General Plan.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

ATTACHMENT B

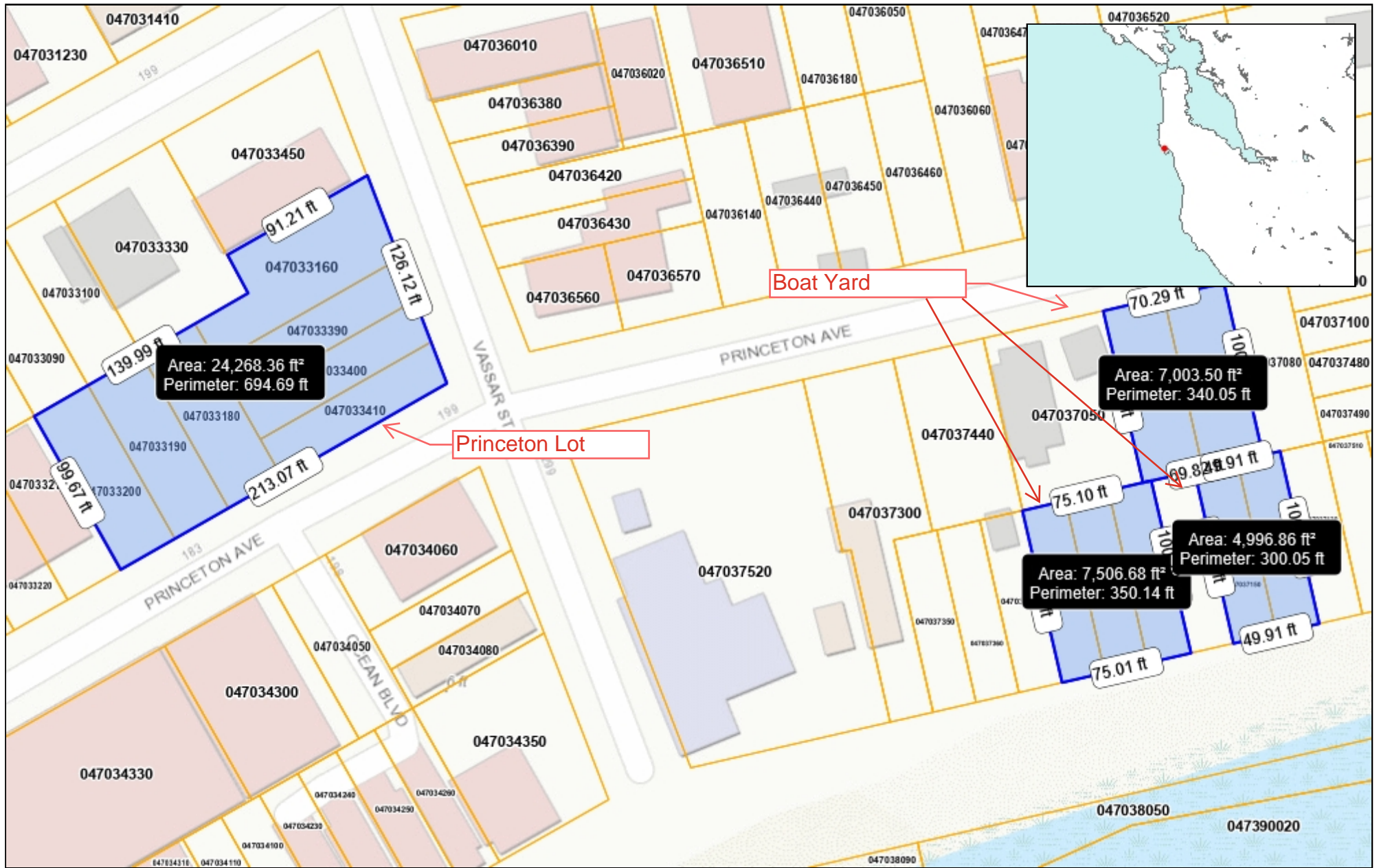


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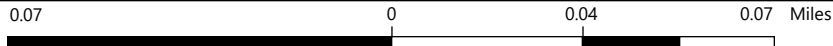
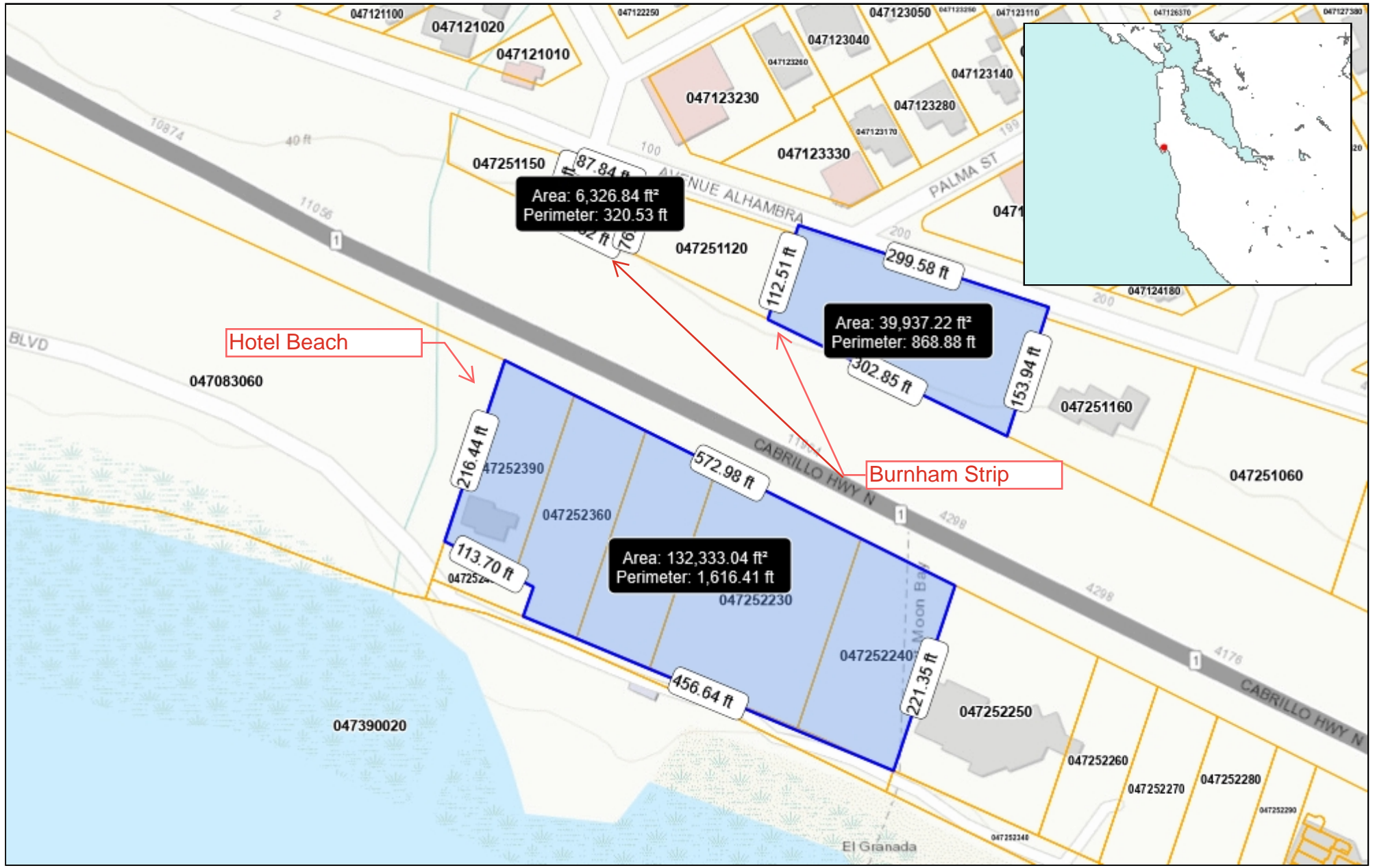
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