

# CONNECT THE COASTSIDE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This Executive Summary is part of a Public Working Draft of Connect the Coastsides and will be subject to extensive public review. The complete Public Working Draft of Connect the Coastsides will be available January 15, 2020 at the Planning and Building Website: <https://planning.smcgov.org/connect-coastsides>*

## Project Summary

San Mateo County prepared **Connect the Coastsides**, a Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan (CTMP) to improve safety and mobility for residents, businesses and visitors. The plan focuses on the areas surrounding Highway 1 and State Route 92, including the unincorporated communities of Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton and Miramar, as well as the City of Half Moon Bay (See **Figure 1**). Connect the Coastsides identifies and prioritizes a diverse range of road, highway and trail improvements, which address the present and future mobility needs of Coastsides communities. The plan seeks to:

- Expand transportation choices for residents and visitors
- Encourage environmentally friendly options that reduce car trips, such as walking, biking and public transit
- Respect the character of Midcoast communities and protect coastal resources
- Maintain and improve access to coastal resources for both residents and visitors



**Figure 1. San Mateo CTMP Planning Area**

The plan also helps Coastsides communities be better prepared to meet future transportation needs. As new development occurs, additional transportation improvements will be constructed to address traffic

impacts. This plan includes new land use policies that will also help reduce traffic, protect natural resources and preserve coastal community character by limiting development.

The California Coastal Act and the County's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) directs the County to "protect, maintain, and where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and artificial resources." Connect the Coastside will inform the County's implementation of the public works and land use components of its Local Coastal Program and outlines the partnerships that will be necessary to achieve these improvements. This plan will be the vehicle to apply for funding for priority projects.

Connect the Coastside was developed through an extended public process, building on the community-based Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Studies (Phases 1 and 2) conducted between 2009 and 2012. Working with a consultant team, County staff conducted several public workshops, consulted frequently with a Technical Advisory Committee and met regularly with staff and decision makers from the City of Half Moon Bay. The planning team also conducted a virtual survey and presented frequently to the Midcoast Community Council to develop Connect the Coastside. Thank you to all those who contributed to the plan's development and helped provide feedback.

San Mateo County looks forward to working with community members, local organizations and partner agencies to see that the goals of Connect the Coastside are met.

## Project Area

The project area for Connect the Coastside includes unincorporated San Mateo County along Highway 1 and the coastline between Devil's Slide and the northern border of Half Moon Bay – the area covered by the Midcoast LCP. The study area, illustrated in **Figure 1**, includes the unincorporated part of the county along State Route 92 (SR-92) between Half Moon Bay and Interstate 280. The project also considered traffic delays and key intersections in the City of Half Moon Bay, along with future development within the City. Connect the Coastside will guide the County's transportation plans for the unincorporated part of the study area.

## Planning Context & Relationship to Other Plans

Mobility and multiple transportation options are a priority for people who live and work on San Mateo County's Coastside. High levels of traffic from visitors and commuters has a negative impact on quality of life. Options for bicycling and walking are limited, as is transit service. This limits Midcoast residents' transportation choices and makes traffic worse by encouraging driving.

Transportation improvements on the Midcoast are informed by the County's General Plan and the County's certified Local Coastal Program. The proposals in Connect the Coastside were evaluated and found to be consistent with these broad policies. Connect the Coastside supports previously identified goals to encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use, while reducing auto trips. Connect the Coastside will also facilitate implementation of Plan Princeton, a land use and shoreline management plan for the Princeton-by-the-Sea community. Although Plan Princeton does not envision a substantial increase in development, it could trigger redevelopment – adding to the need for the improvements outlined in the Connect the Coastside plan.

Connect the Coastside is one of several County efforts to improve mobility on the Midcoast. From 2009-2012, San Mateo County conducted the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study, a two-phase public participatory planning effort. The study developed conceptual plans to improve safety and mobility

on Highway 1 between Half Moon Bay and Devil’s Slide. Phase 1, completed in February 2010, focused on Highway 1 from Half Moon Bay Airport south to Frenchman’s Creek Road, including Pillar Point Harbor, Princeton, and the communities of El Granada and Miramar. Phase 2, conducted during Spring and Summer 2011 in Moss Beach and Montara, evaluated an approximately 5.5-mile segment of Highway 1 from Half Moon Bay Airport through the Devil’s Slide improvement project.

In 2011, the Board of Supervisors adopted substantial amendments to its Local Coastal Program regarding the Midcoast. As part of Coastal Commission certification of these amendments, policy 2.53 was incorporated into the LCP. This policy called for preparation of a comprehensive transportation management plan to address the cumulative impacts of Midcoast development, including the expansion of public transit, consideration of mandatory lot mergers and an in-lieu fee traffic mitigation program.

Implementation of many of the initiatives in Connect the Coastsides relies on active partnerships between the County and Caltrans. Most of the roadway improvements and significant segments of the Multi-modal Trail called for in Connect the Coastsides will be constructed within Caltrans’ right of way. The County will need Caltrans’ assistance for design, planning, funding and constructing these improvements.

Connect the Coastsides will also rely on a partnership with SamTrans, the transit agency for San Mateo County. SamTrans provides bus service to the Coastsides and broader county community. Any expansion of transit service will require investments by SamTrans in vehicles, maintenance and labor. In addition, SamTrans is currently conducting “Reimagine SamTrans,” a planning effort that could yield recommendations for improvements to Coastsides service.

Connect the Coastsides was developed over a five-year period – from late 2014 through 2019 – and is based on accurate traffic data and reasonable projections. Although the study is based on traffic data gathered in 2014, the data provides an accurate snapshot of existing conditions and helps to inform other aspects of the plan, such as projected development and mobility deficiencies.

## Project Vision

The original objectives of Connect the Coastsides were based on the requirements described in LCP Policy 2.53. Based on input from community members and stakeholders gathered at public workshops and meetings, a shared project vision has evolved. The resulting Connect the Coastsides vision statement and goals were created from a combination of the requirements for LCP Policy 2.53, feedback from Midcoast community members, and the findings of the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study.

## Vision Statement

Create a safe and functional multi-modal transportation system that preserves the existing character of the Midcoast, serves both Coastsides residents and visitors and accommodates existing and anticipated future traffic.

## Goals & Objectives

The broad goals of Connect the Coast are listed below, each followed by specific objectives. The goals set the general direction of this plan and describe the community’s preferred future. The objectives describe specific measurable steps that contribute to reaching the goal.

**Goal 1** Improve existing traffic and roadway conditions on the Midcoast.

**Objective 1.1** Identify existing trouble spots on the Midcoast roadway system and propose mitigation measures.

**Goal 2** Lessen the cumulative traffic impacts from future development on the Midcoast.

**Objective 2.1** Evaluate the likely development potential of the Midcoast to identify future impacts to the transportation system and propose measures to offset those impacts.

**Objective 2.2** Evaluate the feasibility of developing an in-lieu fee traffic mitigation program so projects can pay to offset traffic impacts.

**Objective 2.3** Evaluate the development of a mandatory lot merger program that would reduce development potential by merging adjacently-owned substandard lots.

**Objective 2.4** Evaluate the implementation of a lot retirement program for subdivisions to reduce development potential.

**Goal 3** Increase opportunities for walking, biking, and riding transit on the Midcoast to provide an alternative to motor vehicles and reduce roadway traffic.

**Objective 3.1** Propose pedestrian infrastructure projects that address safety and circulation concerns, while meeting relevant performance standards.

**Objective 3.2** Propose bicycle infrastructure projects that address safety and circulation concerns, while meeting relevant performance standards.

**Objective 3.3** Identify potential improvements to transit service and bus stops on the Midcoast.

**Goal 4:** Respect the character of Midcoast communities and protect coastal resources.

**Objective 4.1** Integrate community input into plan proposals.

**Objective 4.2** Ensure improvements do not detract from the visual character of Midcoast communities.

**Goal 5:** Maintain and improve access to coastal resources for both residents and visitors.

**Objective 5.1** Identify popular Coastside destinations with access issues and propose solutions to improve access.

**Objective 5.2** Evaluate project ideas for enhanced shoreline public access.

## Guiding Principles

Several existing community plans and regulatory frameworks have guided the creation of Connect the Coastside, including the:

- California Coastal Act
- San Mateo County Local Coastal Program
- San Mateo County General Plan
- Montara - Moss Beach - El Granada Community Plan
- Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study

The implementation of Connect the Coastside will continue to be guided by the principles and policies contained in these planning documents.

The *California Coastal Act* contains basic goals that call for protection of the coastal zone environment and maximum public access to the coast. The Coastal Act further recognizes that the public has a right to fully participate in decisions affecting coastal planning and development, and that the planning and implementation of programs for coastal development should include the widest opportunity for public participation. Recognizing that public understanding and support is important for the success of any planning effort, a guiding principle of the Connect the Coast process was to follow a robust public outreach strategy and incorporate feedback from the public throughout the process.

The *Local Coastal Program (LCP)* contains Policy 2.53, which was the original stimulus for Connect the Coastside. Policy 2.53 requires the development of a comprehensive transportation management plan to address the cumulative traffic impacts of development on the Midcoast. The LCP also includes multiple other related policies, such as those requiring the phased development of public works facilities and requiring every new public works facility or expansion of capacity to go through the coastal development review process. The LCP also limits the expansion of roadway capacity to what is needed to accommodate commuter peak period traffic when buildout of the Land Use Plan occurs. The projects recommended in Connect the Coastside must conform to the Local Coastal Program, so an understanding of the policies of the LCP is important for the creation and implementation of this plan.

The *County of San Mateo General Plan* contains multiple policies related to transportation, including goals for the safe, efficient, and convenient movement of people and for complete streets that create a multimodal transportation system. The General Plan also has a specific policy to “seek methods to mitigate the impact of peak recreational traffic to and along the Coastside” (12.18 Recreational Traffic to the Coastside). The Montara - Moss Beach - El Granada Community Plan is an area plan that is considered part of the General Plan. It includes goals and objectives that direct the development of a road system that is compatible with the small-town character of the Midcoast community.

The *2009 and 2012 Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Studies* used an intensive community-based planning process to engage residents and stakeholders in developing transportation improvement strategies for the Midcoast. Therefore, it was important to consider the goals and findings of the Safety and Mobility Study in the Connect the Coastside plan. The goals of the study included increased safety, more transportation options, efficient traffic circulation, and consideration of both the natural and built contexts.

## Community Input and Engagement

Stakeholder outreach was a critical part of the planning process, to ensure oversight for the assumptions, results of analysis, and final recommendations of the project. Each project deliverable was produced with considerable input from a Technical Advisory Committee, the Midcoast Community Council, an online public survey and public workshops.

Connect the Coastside also builds on the community outreach that informed the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study. This community-based process developed many of the ideas for transportation improvements included in Connect the Coastside. Community members provided input on Connect the Coastside by attending public workshops and presentations to the Midcoast Community Council, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. In addition, an online survey was conducted to provide community members multiple ways to comment.

To engage specific stakeholders, the County formed a Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the committee met six times during the course of the project to provide input. The Technical Advisory Committee included representatives from transportation, infrastructure and public safety agencies,

schools, businesses and community organizations. Members reviewed and helped refine plan proposals prior to public meetings and workshops.

Community input was instrumental in shaping the proposals in the plan. In addition to the community ideas from the Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Study, community ideas incorporated in Connect the Coastsides include new transportation performance standards that avoid widening of Highway 1, a preference for roundabouts for any new intersection control, maintaining flexibility in the location of pedestrian crossings, limiting paving of the Coastal Trail, park and ride lots for transit riders, and additional transit service on weekdays and weekends.

## Summary of Key Improvements

Connect the Coastsides aims to improve transportation safety and mobility for Coastsides residents by:

- Increasing transportation choices
- Making travel safer for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improving traffic flow at bottlenecks
- Increasing use of public transit

The transportation investments outlined in Connect the Coastsides address the present and future mobility needs of Coastsides communities. Near-term projects will increase transportation choices for residents and visitors. Bike lanes, trail improvements and crossings will make it easier and safer for people to walk or take their bike. Investments in bus stops and expanded weekend bus service will help reduce traffic and encourage people to take public transit. Traffic calming, turn lanes, and intersection improvements will make roadways safer and less congested.

The plan also ensures that Coastsides communities are better prepared to meet future transportation needs. As new development occurs, additional transportation improvements will be constructed to address traffic impacts. New land use policies will also help reduce traffic and preserve coastal community character by limiting development. Lot mergers and lot retirements will concentrate development, helping to protect natural resources and preserve open space. A new traffic fee mitigation program would collect money from new Coastsides development to help pay for future transportation improvements.

## Infrastructure Improvements

Several infrastructure improvements for each mode were selected from a list of potential improvements compiled from the Technical Advisory Committee and community-suggested improvements, proposed projects identified in recent, relevant reports, as well as improvements suggested by the consultant team to address identified deficiencies. The final list of improvements in **Table 1** below were selected based on their feasibility, cost, ability to address deficiencies, and consistency with the LCP, including environmental considerations.

The following improvements will have the greatest impact on current traffic and safety conditions:

- Moss Beach corridor roundabouts
- Pedestrian crossings throughout the study area
- The Multi-modal Parallel Trail
- Increased transit service
- Transit-related park-and-ride lots

Connect the Coastside will enhance the quality of life for Coastside residents by making it safer for pedestrians to cross Highway 1, slowing traffic in Moss Beach through the installation of roundabouts, and installing acceleration lanes at key parking sites and intersections.

The plan will improve access to beaches and coastal recreational opportunities through proposed parking and coastal trail improvements, left turn pockets on SR-92, and the Multi-modal trail. Expanded transit service and roadway improvements would also help improve traffic flow on weekends for residents and visitors alike. The improvements in each community are specified in **Table 1**.

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**Table 1. Infrastructure Improvements Identified in Connect the Coastsides**

Mode	Project Name	Location	Project Source <sup>1</sup>
Roadways	Gray Whale Cove Turn and Acceleration Lanes	Midcoast	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study and Highway 1 Congestion & Safety Improvement Project
	SR-1 Side-Street Stop Signs	El Granada	Connect the Coastsides
	SR-1 Shoulder Treatment (Village Zones)	El Granada	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	SR-1 Shoulder Treatment (Fringe Zones)	El Granada	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	California Avenue Intersection Control (Signal or Roundabout)	Moss Beach	Connect the Coastsides
	Cypress Avenue Intersection Control (Signal or Roundabout)	Moss Beach	Big Wave and Connect the Coastsides deficiency
	16th Street Roundabout	Moss Beach	Cypress Point Development
	Carlos Street Terminus Realignment	Moss Beach	
	SR-92/SR-35 Roundabout	SMC	Connect the Coastsides
	Carlos Street Traffic Calming	Moss Beach	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	Main Street Traffic Calming	Montara	
	SR-92 Passing/Climbing Lanes	Unincorporated	Connect the Coastsides
	SR-92 Truck Signs	SMC	Connect the Coastsides
	SR-92 Left Turn Lanes	SMC	

<sup>1</sup> Project Source identifies the public study or planning report from which each proposed project concept was developed.



**Table 2. (cont.) Infrastructure Improvements Identified in Connect the Coasts**

Mode	Project Name	Location	Project Source
Pedestrian	Striped Pedestrian Crossing with Beacons	Various	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	SR-1 Multi-modal Trail	El Granada and Moss Beach	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	SR-1 Multi-modal Trail	Moss Beach, El Granada, Half Moon Bay	
	SR-1 Parallel Trail	El Granada, Half Moon Bay, Montara, Moss Beach	
	Coronado Street and Obispo Road Sidewalk	El Granada	Connect the Coasts
	Coastal Trail	All	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	Bay Area Ridge Trail Crossing of SR- 92- Project Study	SR-92 at Upper SR-35 Intersection	Caltrans, County, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Bike	Capistrano Road Bicycle Facilities	Princeton	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	SR-92 Bike Lanes	SMC	
	SR-1 Bike Lanes	ALL	
	Airport Street Class I/II/III Bike Routes	Moss Beach	Connect the Coasts
	Bike/Ped improvements in downtown Moss Beach	Moss Beach	Connect the Coasts
Transit	Bus Stop Amenities	Various	Connect the Coasts
	Increased Weekend and Commute Samtrans Service	Various	
	Transit Stop Improvements	Moss Beach	Connect the Coasts

**Table 3. (cont.) Infrastructure Improvements Identified in Connect the Coastsides**

Mode	Project Name	Location	Project Source
Parking	Montara State Beach Parking Lot Improvements	SMC	Coastside Access Study
	Upper Gray Whale Cove Parking Lot Improvements	SMC	
	Wayfinding	ALL	
	Carlos Street On-Street Parking	Moss Beach	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study
	El Granada Diagonal Parking	El Granada	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study Phase 1
	Park and Ride at Etheldore St (South Terminus)	Moss Beach	Highway 1 Safety and Mobility Improvement Study/ Samtrans Coastside Plan

### Land Use Policies

Land use patterns have a significant impact on travel patterns. In general, the Midcoast has a predominantly low density, suburban residential settlement pattern with small commercial areas adjacent to Highway 1 in each of the Midcoast communities. This settlement pattern and a range of other factors (the configuration of local streets, the limited access provided by Highway 1 and State Route 92, the dearth of multi-modal transportation choices) encourage automobile trips. The transportation improvements envisioned in Connect the Coastsides will expand mobility choices, while land use strategies to limit development can serve to reduce future traffic demand.

The lot merger program, lot retirement program and traffic fee mitigation program are strategies that can reduce future development potential, or in the case of in-lieu fees, provide a funding source for in Connect the Coastsides’s transportation improvements. The Midcoast community has expressed considerable support for policies that would limit future development to preserve the rural character of the Midcoast and moderate future traffic demand.

The lot merger program could reduce the development potential of existing single-family neighborhoods and result in some larger lots with more on-site, private open space. The lot retirement program will limit the development potential of rural lands on the Midcoast, preserving additional open space and natural resources. These programs support Coastal Act policies, such as concentrating development, protecting natural resources and protecting public access to coastal resources by limiting development and thereby reducing traffic.

A traffic fee mitigation program would collect fees for new residential and non-residential development on a per-housing-unit basis for residential and per-square-foot basis for non-residential development. The rates would be based on a specified list of projects needed to mitigate the impacts of the growth, the total estimated capital cost of those projects and the amount of new development expected. In addition to helping fund improvements proposed by this plan, a traffic fee mitigation program would also serve as a potential check on development.

## Conclusion

Connect the Coastside is a community-based plan containing transportation infrastructure proposals and land use policy options intended to improve mobility and safety for Coastside residents and visitors. This plan will require ongoing community engagement to refine the infrastructure proposals into detailed designs, to ensure the guiding principles for implementation are adhered to and to advocate for funding necessary to construct these improvements.